

ARTICLE

Of Spargel and Spiegel: Networked National Feelings in Berlin

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Abstract

Social and mobile media, from Facebook to smartphones, bring together social relations in new configurations that transform experiences of space and place. For an emerging urban middle class in late 2000s Berlin, reading national news online comprised a key daily practice linked to feeling German for mobile young people who otherwise sought transnational connections and identified in non- or post-nationalist terms. Feeling German—an affective, unspoken sense of national selfhood—could take place in contexts construed as cosmopolitan and transnational, whether hip districts of Berlin or networked, online media. National selfhood took shape as a form of acceptable subjectivity linked to the nation, owing to scalemaking processes that conjoined selfhood and place, not only expanding the scope of place-based identities. Reading national media online and practices like eating traditional foods linked acceptable selfhood to the scale, that is, contingent territorial ordering, of the nation. In this article, accounts of normative national affect, in the sense of commonality rooted in shared feeling and non-representational modes of being, illuminate an emergent networked cosmopolitan nationalism as a scalemaking project that reconfigures media, selfhood, and place.

[Keywords: Media, spatial scale, affect, nationalism, transnationalism, Europe]

Introduction

Friederike was typical of many young, middle class Berlin residents in the late 2000s—born and raised in the American sector of West Berlin, she moved east to the lively Kreuzberg neighborhood after university. When I met her in 2009, she worked part-time at an art gallery while pursuing freelance photography. Like many in her close “friends’ circle” (*Freundeskreis*), she had recently joined the social network site Facebook, to “stay in touch” with friends abroad. Facebook soon became widespread among her friends, superseding platforms like MySpace and the German Studi.vz, which many described as outdated and parochial. And, like many young people in Berlin, she spoke idiomatic American English, composed her webpage and Facebook profile in English, and frequented English-language blogs. In conversations with me, she elaborated on her passions for photography, design, craft markets, and spending time with friends, and recounted her “daily ritual” of checking Facebook, e-mail, and art blogs, including *Spiegel Online* (Spiegel.de), the website of the popular national news magazine. This last activity surprised me because Friederike (who goes by Rike) and her friends rarely discussed news stories on Facebook or elsewhere—instead, they described online spaces as cosmopolitan and transnational (or non-geographic), sites for friendship and shared interests. Yet in interviews, I found most considered checking national news sites daily as essential as social media—highly unusual in a European nation where relatively few have switched to online news.¹

As anthropologists of media and transnationalism have noted for some time, media technologies, from the more static Internet of the 1990s to interactive social and mobile media, can foster national communities in virtual spaces (e.g., Bernal 2014, 2006; Franklin 2010; Lee 2007). In contrast to expectations that global communication networks would engender global identities—or fracture national ones—national forms of selfhood, belonging, and identification

inhere in online contexts. National selfhood, that is, selfhood linked to the territorial scale of the nation, endured among mobile young Germans and other Europeans. For those who preferred transnational communities of interest to national virtual communities, unspoken feelings of national belonging surfaced through unremarkable activities such as reading news websites or preparing seasonal *Spargel* (white asparagus) meals. Although national identification has long been linked to ordinary practices (such as banal nationalism [Billig 1995]), the networked, online context presents a new site for enacting identity and selfhood. Emerging technologies, particularly social media, made it possible to alternate rapidly between audiences and communities, bringing together encounters at multiple geographic levels. This multiscale quality of social media—and the affective cosmopolitan nationalism social media facilitated—requires rethinking the relationship between media, selfhood, and place.

In this article, I link media practices to ordinary ways of being and feeling German to illustrate two interrelated arguments on media and place: 1) modern national selfhood owes historically to scalemaking processes that linked selfhood to territorial organization; and 2) national publics can form through shared affect, which analyses of discursive representation do not fully address. I demonstrate how two seemingly unrelated practices—reading the news magazine *Spiegel Online* and sharing meals during *Spargelzeit*, the springtime season for white asparagus—entail unremarkable forms of national sentiment that took place in digital, networked contexts, fostering an emergent cosmopolitan nationalism. This approach offers insight into how emerging media reconfigure scales of selfhood and sociality among urban Europeans, as part of a broader inquiry into media, transnationalism, and placemaking (Kraemer forthcoming).

Anthropologists have long attended to the cultural production of place, especially in the wake of increasing mobility, globalizing capital, and processes of deterritorialization and

reterritorialization (Appadurai 1996; Gupta and Ferguson 1992, 1997; Clifford 1992; Hannerz 1996; see also Harvey 1989). Cultural geographers have called particular attention to the production of spatial scale, that is, the hierarchical ordering of social space from local to national to global (Brenner 1998, 2001; Lefebvre 1991; Marston 2000; Smith 1992). Capital's circulation tends, in Marx's terms, toward "annihilating space through time,"² yet requires spatial organization to accumulate, historically in the form of national regulation, policy, and infrastructure. It is in this sense that I approach the national as a contested level of spatial ordering, produced through constellations of economic regulations, border policies, transit systems, and so forth, in a larger system of nation-states and in dynamic relation to provisional levels like the local or the global, similar to what Anna Tsing (2005) describes as *scalemaking* (see also Massey 1993).

Questions of scalemaking remain central to understanding the supranational project of integrating Europe, whose cohesion has been in doubt since at least the sovereign debt crisis and more recently with the UK's 2016 "Brexit" vote to leave the European Union. These concerns intensified in Germany with the arrival of refugees from Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere, crystalizing fears about Muslims and immigration while kindling a resurgence of right-wing extremism, as illustrated by the rise of the anti-immigrant group PEGIDA in 2014.³ Scale is equally key to thinking through the territorial or geographic entailments of emerging media for a shifting mobile middle class. Although some predicted electronic media would destabilize geographic boundaries (e.g., Morley and Robins 1989), scholars have demonstrated that national affiliation did not disappear with the advent of globally circulating media. On the contrary, national communities reassert themselves in novel ways. For the urban, transnational friend circles I studied, national news websites and communal Spargel meals alike offered means to enact—and

generate—national sentiment that went unspoken, while linking them to worlds seen as connected and cosmopolitan.

Scalemaking and Emerging Media in Transnational Europe

Berlin in the late 2000s was undergoing rapid, sometimes vertiginous change, following major redevelopment and demographic transformation after the *Wende* (or Turn, with the fall of the Berlin Wall) in 1989 and German reunification in 1990 (see Borneman 1992; Wieszkalnys 2008, 2010; Wolf 2004). The city had long attracted those who felt like outsiders to German (and European) society, a place where artistic and social movements flourished, from the avant-garde of the Weimar era to alternative subcultures of the postwar period (e.g., Brown and Anton 2011). As Ruth Mandel puts it, West Berlin had “defined itself by an openness not found elsewhere” (2008:38), appealing equally to a burgeoning Turkish German *Ausländer* (foreigner) scene (*Szene*). After 1989, many residents of East Berlin moved westward, leaving behind low rents that attracted students, artists, and other young, mobile populations. In the late 1990s and 2000s, underground dance scenes—and an ethos of cultural experimentation—thrived in spaces long neglected (Borneman and Senders 2000; Garcia 2013; Partridge 2008).

Rike and her friends moved in the mid-to-late 2000s to central districts like Mitte, Prenzlauer Berg, and Friedrichshain (in the former East), or Kreuzberg and neighboring Neukölln (previously in West Berlin, and center of the Turkish German community). I met Rike through her friends circle, some who had grown up together in West Berlin while others, including non-German Europeans, became acquainted through shared interests in art and experimental dance music like UK dubstep. Berlin also attracted young Germans from regions such as Saxony-Anhalt, including Karoline, who had grown up near Magdeburg in former East

Germany and managed a salon in Prenzlauer Berg. Karoline shared a flat in Friedrichshain with her close friend Anja, who worked in public relations for a small firm in West Berlin. Many in their close-knit friends circle from the same rural region lived nearby, working in service, retail, or semi-professional fields. I conducted long-term fieldwork among these circles and their wider social worlds, in German and English, primarily between 2009–2010, online, in Berlin, and during visits to locales like Copenhagen, Amsterdam, and Hamburg, part of a broader project to examine emerging media and experiences of place among young Europeans.⁴



Figure 1: Kunsthaus (Art House) Tacheles in 2007, a multi-story, graffiti-covered building with nightclubs, galleries, and more, which epitomized a post-1989 aesthetic of dereliction and abandonment. Tacheles has since closed. Photo by Jordan Kraemer.

These two friend circles illustrate common trajectories for young Germans and other mobile Europeans comprising an emerging class of “knowledge workers.” Although many have

remarked on the shifting constitution of the professional middle classes (e.g., Ehrenreich 1977, Florida 2004; see also Ortner 1998; Traube 1992), for whom creativity has become the hallmark of information-based labor (e.g., Boellstorff 2008a:206–207 on “creationist capitalism”), fewer have attended to the role of networked media (though this is changing; see Franklin 2010, 2001; Nafus 2003; and literature on digital labor, e.g., Fuchs 2015; Fish and Srinivasan 2012). In the same period of the mid-2000s, an equally significant shift was taking place in media practices in Berlin, epitomized by the social network site Facebook. Facebook’s sudden popularity marked the wider adoption of social media in the US and elsewhere, where between 2005 and 2006, for example, the use of social network sites jumped to 49 percent from 9 percent among 18–29 year olds, and reaching 68 percent of all adults in the US by 2016 (Pew Research 2016; also Baym 2007, 2010; boyd 2008, 2014; Miller et al. 2016). By 2014, 76 percent of Internet users in Germany had created an account on a social network site, primarily Facebook, and mobile phone subscriptions outnumbered people (Kemp 2014).

Emerging mobile and social media entail new possibilities for experiencing space, selfhood, and sociality, by enabling rapid movement between places, contexts, and audiences. Many accounts of social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn) detail how their technological features make visible social ties and enhance social capital (boyd and Ellison 2008; Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe 2006, 2011; Young 2011). But Facebook, especially in concert with mobile phones, allows for rapid switching between local friends circles and broader transnational circuits, bringing together disparate worlds in new spatial configurations (Kraemer 2014, forthcoming).⁵ These possibilities, while intensified, are not unique to social media—radio and television broadcast in a prior era connected listeners illicitly across the Berlin Wall (Hesse 1990; Kilborn 1993). Prior accounts of online media demonstrate how virtual spaces constitute

legitimate worlds that cannot be reduced to (or predicted by) their technological features, called affordances (Boellstorff 2008a, 2012; Miller et al. 2016; Miller and Slater 2000; see also DeNicola 2012; Madianou and Miller 2013; Reed 2008). But social and mobile media accelerate oscillations between encounters in novel ways.

As young people moved to Berlin in the mid-to-late 2000s, they adopted Facebook (and to a lesser degree, Twitter and Tumblr), often abandoning platforms like MySpace or the German Studi.vz, or place-based email lists (cf. boyd 2011). Karoline, for example, used MySpace with friends in Magdeburg, but joined Facebook to stay in touch with *Ausländer* (mainly other Europeans and Americans) she met in Berlin. Facebook brought together friends from home and new acquaintances in Berlin, along with transnational networks of others with shared interests, especially music. Mobile technologies also provided new means to connect to close friends and family, including text messaging and videochat. After acquiring a home wireless network (WLAN), Karoline began spending more time on Facebook with *Ausländer*, coworkers, and friends from Magdeburg, while videochatting over Skype with family such as her *Oma* (grandmother). Yet, as she became more imbricated in life in Berlin—and perhaps, able to “visit” family virtually—she curtailed monthly trips to her home village.

Social and mobile media can pull local, national, and transnational formations into the same spaces, from Facebook feeds to kitchen gatherings, generating new configurations of scale. Scholars have long contended with media and placemaking, from print capitalism and national imaginaries in the 18th and 19th centuries (Anderson 1991; Gellner 1983) to electronic media and globalization in the 20th (Appadurai 1996; Morley and Robins 1989). These accounts, though often groundbreaking, pay less attention to the contingent ordering of social space, that is, the cultural production of scale. Cultural geographer Neil Brenner (1998, 2001), in contrast,

analyzes how capital alternates between destabilizing territorial formations—such as medieval European city-states—and what he calls a “scalar fix” (1998:462) that solidifies a new order, such as the nation-state system. These levels are always imbricated in others, such as the European Union, regional affiliations, or municipal governance.⁶ Anna Tsing similarly considers the place-making work of capital as scalemaking, in which “economic projects cannot limit themselves to conjuring at different scales—they must conjure the scales themselves” (Tsing 2005:57–58). Globalness or locality, regions or nations, do not precede the global circulation of capital but come into being through its “contingent articulations” (2005:57–58). Scalemaking invokes cultural imaginaries to render certain orderings of space legible, though such claims remain multiple and divergent: “those global worlds that most affect us are those that manage tentatively productive linkages with other scalemaking projects” (2005:57–58). Digital, networked technologies are key to envisioning global imaginaries; yet, in my findings, emerging media produce contested experiences of place that are not always enunciated.

Approaching media and place in terms of scalemaking—how the spaces of the “local” or “national” are contingently ordered—offers purchase to rethink narratives in which national identities give way to global or postnational ones. As Thomas Eriksen (2007) argues, such narratives construe historical change in terms of increasing complexity and geographic scope, a teleology Brenner calls “scale-expanding” (1998:477). According to Eriksen, “there is a widespread notion that increased complexity in social life creates larger and larger communities—not so many years ago, leading sociologists thus predicted the imminent rise of global identities, universal cosmopolitanism, and world governments” (2007:5). From this perspective, media, especially digital media, would contribute to delinking identity—and selfhood—from place, because, as Eriksen explains: “the deterritorialized, supra-national

character of the Internet would contribute to the fragmentation of populations and the breakdown of stable national identities; some even foresaw the coming of an all-encompassing global identity” (2007:6). Despite such predictions, anthropologists have found repeatedly that radio, television, and the Internet provide new resources for fashioning national identity and belonging (Abu-Lughod 2005; Larkin 1997; Mankekar 1999; Mazzarella 2004; Spitulnik 1996; see also Appadurai 1996). Nationally based diasporic communities thrive on websites, discussion boards, and most recently, Facebook groups (Bernal 2014, 2006; Franklin 2010; Lee 2007), what Eriksen calls “virtual nationalism” (2007: 3) In fact, digital communications make it easier for mobile and diasporic people to maintain national ties transnationally (Vertovec 2004:220, see also Madianou and Miller 2012).

National identities, of course, exist alongside—and in shifting relation to—local, regional, or transnational ones. But construing identity or selfhood in geographic terms, that is, as attached to a level of spatial ordering, means such attachments can end, for example, through globally circulating media that appear to detach identity and selfhood from place. Historian Peter Sahlin (1989:8), challenging the notion that national identities displaced local ones in early modern France, describes the history of nationalization as the “territorialization of sovereignty,” a process that fused dominant political formations with the bounded territory of the nation. This history illustrates how modern identity or, rather, selfhood in France became territorial, suggesting that nationalization depended on linking selfhood to the scale of the nascent nation—a shift in the nature of identity rather than in scope. Liisa Malkki (1992) similarly emphasizes how Western conceptions of the nation as discrete territory naturalize relationships between people and place, culture and soil (primarily through arboreal metaphors of rootedness). I consider nationalization, in these Western contexts, a process in which the nascent liberal,

individualized self formed concurrently with the incipient scale of the nation—a scalemaking project which was simultaneously a self-making project. From this perspective, the modern nation comprises the territorial facet of shifts in subjectivity from the 18th and 19th centuries, as Foucault (1977, 1988, 1997), Butler (1997), and others recount. Nations, as national communities, are not only imagined, but enacted and felt in ways that unfold through ordinary media practices.

Reconceptualizing modern selfhood as part of nationalization calls attention to how the national scale structures subjectivity, offering insight into affective media practices that contrasted with how those I studied represented themselves online. Few reported interest in virtual national communities, for example, preferring instead communities organized around shared interests, and when asked, described themselves in post- or non-national terms. For Rike and Karoline, Berlin—like Facebook—held the promise of cosmopolitan cultural belonging as part of a transnational, tech-based creative class. Aspiring to transnationalism, or consuming transnational media, was not new; on the contrary, East Germans sought US and UK popular culture, such as rock music (which some link to the end of state socialism; see Hesse 1990; also Yurchak 2006 on Soviet youth). Yet, unlike on transnational social media, they rarely sought international or English-language news as part of their daily regimen. Instead, they visited national news sites that hailed them as fellow co-nationalists.

As an ordinary practice that few mentioned, reading national news online offered a site for enacting national selfhood in a cosmopolitan, networked context. Media theories of affect—as an embodied, sensory capacity—show how media can foster communities structured by shared feeling rather than discursive representation (Berlant 2008; Cvetkovich 2007; Muñoz 2000; Stewart 2007; see also Carlson and Stewart 2014; Anderson and Harrison 2010). In

analyses of normative subjectivity and belonging, shared practices constitute collectives through moods and bodily sensing that exceed narrative experience or articulation. Normative affect structures acceptable, middle class subjects as well as queer and minoritarian ones, offering resources for political participation and community formation through what Cvetkovich calls “structures of feeling, sensibilities, everyday forms of cultural expression and affiliation that may not take the form of recognizable organizations or institutions” (2007:461). This approach to acceptable subjectivity suggests how affective attachment to the nation, fostered through media, structures normative national selfhood, posing the further question of how German and European experiences of nationalism are transforming in relation to networked, multiscalar media.

Networked National Feelings

Among members of this emerging knowledge class, few embraced national symbols or representation, or joined virtual national communities. Some explicitly refused nationalist identification, in the sense of discursive or semiotic performances of selfhood and belonging (e.g., Bucholtz and Hall 2004, 2005). This distancing, however, did not mean devaluing being German or things associated with Germanness, nor denying German citizenship. It is not surprising that many Germans disavow nationalist identity, given how *Nationalismus* and expressions of German pride conjure images of the outlawed National Socialist Party and right-wing extremism.⁷ But as one music fan who had grown up in a small East German town explained: “I never felt like ‘I am a citizen of this country, and I am proud of it’; I just lived in a little small town and that was everything I needed to know.” This claim was not particular to ethnic Germans or German citizens. A sound designer described himself simply as “European.” His parents were Danish, but he was born in Luxembourg and attended an English-language

school. These sentiments reflect the position of white Europeans for whom national citizenship was not at stake, unlike for many diasporic groups or national minorities, and who were invested in worlds they viewed as transnational and cosmopolitan. Like Michael Billig's (1995) assessment of "banal nationalism," that is, unmarked forms of nationalist representation and practice which reproduce the nation ideologically, selfhood at the national scale asserted itself despite these disavowals or potential for deterritorialized identity. I approach Germanness not only as discursive formation or imaginary, but as a normative form of selfhood constituted at the scale of nation.

The experiences of Anja, her roommate Karoline, and their friends circle illustrate how regional practices could structure Germanness, in the sense of feeling German, imbricating the regional scale in the national. Most had moved to Berlin in the mid-to-late 2000s from near Magdeburg, the capital of Saxony-Anhalt (formerly in East Germany). In Berlin, they organized weekly kitchen meet-ups at their friend Jörg's apartment, inviting a core group of friends for informal drinks and conversation (primarily in German) around the kitchen table. Although kitchens were a common locus of get-togethers, this weekly practice was particular to Jörg, Karoline, and their friend circle. When I first moved in with their friend Daniele, she warned me one night that friends were coming over for their "weekly gathering," but I was not prepared for how many people began arriving around 9 p.m., crowding around the kitchen table, easily 15 to 20. Her friends arrived in a trickle, helping themselves to beer or ginger tea, adding extra folding chairs as needed. By 10 p.m. it was hard to get in or out of the kitchen, and people were engaged in lively conversation about everything from who had won the latest election to favorite indie movies. By 11 p.m., many had returned home, though a few stayed later into the night. Because most of the crowd was from the same region, they often switched into regional speech. Jörg

explained later that they mostly avoided regional vocabulary and pronunciation except among close friends, for fear of appearing backwards or rustic.⁸



Figure 2: Apartment kitchen in Berlin Friedrichshain, 2009. Photo by Jordan Kraemer.

Some aspects of their rural upbringing in former East Germany provoked anxiety or embarrassment in certain contexts, as I will discuss. Yet others, such as regional food, engendered warm memories of childhood and home. Notably, beloved foods like white asparagus (Spargel) were popular with most Germans, but were prepared and served in regionally specific ways. Conflicting expressions of feeling German illustrate how national selfhood was structured by normative affect, refracted through regional identities. This relationship between national and regional German identity requires further explanation. While Anja, Karoline, and their friends grew up in East Germany (most were school children when the

Berlin Wall came down), the regional borders have shifted over centuries of territorial re-ordering. Now one of the five *Neue Länder* (new federal states) since 1990, Saxony-Anhalt first unified in 1945 as a province of Prussia, then was later divided into the East German administrative districts of Magdeburg and Halle. The social and cultural divide between East and West is relatively recent; before the Cold War, the axis between north and south took greater prominence (Berghahn 1982; Breuilly and Spears 2005; Staab 1998). In fact, many common stereotypes about German culture derive from regional southern traditions, such as Oktoberfest or *lederhosen*.

Berlin, like Saxony-Anhalt, is situated in the historically Protestant north, in what became East Germany. Regional histories and associations, of course, have since been refracted through 40-plus years of division between capitalist West and socialist East. After the Wende, for example, Eastern Germans experienced widespread stigmatization by West Germans who portrayed them as backwards, provincial, and intolerant of foreigners, blaming them for German ethnocentrism and extremism as Dominic Boyer (2006) has argued. Yet young eastern Germans I knew rarely articulated “*Ostalgie*,” nostalgia for the lost East German past and its signifiers, such as oft-denigrated but now beloved consumer products like the Trabi, a notoriously unreliable car (Berdahl 1999, 2000). Instead, they described things associated with the era as “*typische DDR*” (typically East German) in apologetic or embarrassed tones, illustrating the legacy of the Cold War territorial division (what some call *die Mauer im Kopf*, the Wall in the mind). These regional, rural, and eastern origins represent separate facets of identity and experience that combined to shade ways of feeling German.

The events of one evening illustrated awkward feelings associated with life in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), which Anja, Karoline, and others rarely discussed

otherwise. Their friend Sabine invited us to watch a film, *Boxhagener Platz* (2010), which she had acquired through the music magazine where she worked. The film was named for a nearby square in Berlin ringed by hip bars, boutiques, and cafés, the site of a popular farmer's market and flea market, and depicted life there in 1968, when it looked quite different. Because of regional accents and terminology, I, a non-native German speaker, had trouble following the dialogue and occasionally asked what was happening. "Ah," said Sabine, "you might have trouble with the dialogue because they are speaking in typical Berliner speech" (for example, in Berlinerisch "*ich denke*," I think, is pronounced "*ik denk*"), adding, "we also have to listen closely to understand it." At times, they seemed to find the film boring, chatting over the dialogue or laughing at moments that did not seem humorous. At multiple points, Sabine explained apologetically "this is a very typical GDR [typische DDR] story about typical German life," involving traditional foods, heavy drinking, strong family ties, and a close-knit neighborhood where everyone gossiped frequently.

Partway through the movie, Daniele shifted attention back to her new Apple laptop. She was borrowing a data surfstick from Sabine and asked again for the password. Sabine looked over, provided the password, and returned to watching the movie. Daniele then navigated to Facebook to browse her News Feed. Although she had added me as a Facebook friend earlier that day, I saw the request only then, so I grabbed my iPhone, logged into Facebook, and accepted her friend request. I caught her eye as she received the notification, and we laughed. Facebook, unlike the film, was engaging and required no apologies. But Sabine's tone in describing the film reminded me of other times when she or her friends sounded embarrassed and even self-deprecating about their origins. On another evening, a friend of Daniele's was visiting from Magdeburg (the regional capital). I was leaving for an event at the nightclub

Tacheles. When I asked her friend if he knew the spot, he shrugged, suddenly awkward, and demurred, “I’m just a country boy” (“*vom Land*,” the colloquial equivalent of “from the sticks”). He self-consciously attributed his unfamiliarity with the venue to his regional, rural origins. As Jörg had mentioned, he and his friends often avoided regional dialect and appearances for fear of being marginalized. This fear was linked specifically to class formations in which the regional idiom marked them as rural and uninformed, unlike the networked, cosmopolitan citizenship associated with both social media worlds and life in Berlin.

Knowing Spargel

Not everything associated with childhood in the GDR, however, provoked shame or inadequacy. Every spring, beginning in late April, white asparagus (Spargel) come into season across northern Europe, and as anyone who visits Germany then can attest, are exceptionally popular. I had eaten Spargel in restaurants, with hollandaise sauce or ham, but for Karoline, Daniele, and especially Jörg, *Spargelzeit* (literally “asparagus time”) meant purchasing large quantities of fresh asparagus at the Boxhagener Platz market to cook and eat together. Many across Germany love Spargel, to be sure, and say it must be eaten fresh, ideally just after picking. Among those I knew, only the friends circle from Magdeburg organized regular Spargel group dinners. As a national German pastime, eating Spargel generated potent affective ties to home, in regionally inflected ways. Many anthropologists have analyzed food as a means for enacting and articulating shared belonging, implicated in the circulation of capital and the world-system (Appadurai 1981; Bordin 2006; Leitch 2003; Mintz 1985; Wilk 1999). I draw attention here, first, to embodied, affective ways of preparing and sharing Spargel; second, to warm feelings

associated with regional identities (and facilitated by online media); and third, to how ordinary practices constituted participation in normative selfhood linked to the scale of the nation.

In early May, Jörg organized many Spargel meals, usually group dinners among his friend circle. One Wednesday, he invited me for lunch after a visit to the nearby farmer's market. When I arrived at his apartment, he proudly showed me a large box of *Beelitzer* Spargel. Beelitz is a nearby region of rural Brandenburg, and, as he explained, although freshness was key, so was regional provenance. Elsewhere in Europe, food quality is often framed in terms of naturalness, artisanal production, or authenticity (Heller 2007; Klumbyte 2010; Leitch 2003; Paxson 2010), but for Jörg, regional origin mattered—the more widely available Greek Spargel would not do. And while Spargel is eaten across Germany (and northern Europe), the accompaniments vary regionally. Jörg demonstrated practiced proficiency wielding a dedicated Spargel peeler that was dulled with use, to strip away the woody outer hull of white asparagus. It took me numerous tries to get the hang of it. He then boiled the Spargel while toasting breadcrumbs, *Semmelbrösel*, in butter, and steaming potatoes (*Dampfkartoffeln*). As he served the meal, he explained that the *Semmelbrösel* were supposed to crackle and sizzle noisily when ladled over the asparagus, as his mother had showed him. He remained silent, however, about the unadorned potatoes, a dish too ordinary for comment. Spargelzeit appeared to incite this performance of regional identity in a way I had not previously observed.

After eating, we sat discussing food and food production. He borrowed my laptop to launch Google Maps in a browser. With the satellite image overlay selected, he navigated to his grandmother's house outside the city of Magdeburg. He zoomed in to point out the family farm, including a farmhouse dating back many generations which had since been sold off, and the land around the property. "My grandmother used to grow vegetables there when I was growing up,"

he explained. Unlike the *Boxhagener Platz* film, Spargelzeit appeared to evoke warm feelings associated with *Heimat* (home or homeland), specifically the regional land where he grew up, and where his family had lived for generations. Networked geospatial media (or “geomedia,” DeNicola 2012) made possible virtually visiting the regional place that produced these intimate ties—and his close friends circle—from a flat in hip Friedrichshain.



Figure 3: Spargel dinner, with steamed potatoes and Maultaschen (dumplings), 2010. Photo by Jordan Kraemer.

Another Sunday that month, Jörg and his roommates organized a large group dinner, including other Ausländer, such as Nathan, an American on an internship in Berlin. Unlike at weekly gatherings or casual lunches, the hosts laid out the kitchen table more formally, setting out plates and silverware. Nathan, a third English-speaking guest, and I all marveled at the nearly 11 kilos

of Spargel—more than two pounds per person. As we ate, Jörg, Nathan, and Dieter joked boisterously in German and English, teasing Jörg about his passion for indie music and making off-color remarks about the asparagus spears. One person proclaimed no love for Spargel, but then ate large quantities, which Daniele captured in a digital photo that on Facebook garnered the humorous comment “*Spargelkönig!*” (asparagus king). Shared meals were a site for experiencing and enacting regional associations that did not provoke embarrassment or disavowals, unlike watching *Boxhagener Platz*; on the contrary, these were occasions for inviting new acquaintances and sharing photos on Facebook. I link these practices to ways of feeling German because Spargelzeit connected memories of childhood and home to being German at the national scale; that is, with acceptable, national selfhood.

In this approach, I draw on the work of Lauren Berlant (2008), José Muñoz (2000), and Jennifer Carlson and Kathleen Stewart (2014), for whom shared affect incites acceptable subjectivity. Affect here indexes not individual emotional experience, but a bodily response that exceeds awareness and self-narration, a capacity for affecting and being affected. Brian Massumi considers affective responses to media as “intensity” that is “irreducibly bodily and autonomic” in nature (1995:89). Emotion, in contrast, represents “the socio-linguistic fixing of the quality of an experience,” which becomes personal (1995:88). Muñoz (2000:68) locates affect in the production of ethnicity, arguing that U.S. cultural citizenship, in the sense of political belonging, requires performing appropriate, dominant feelings and comportment—restrained, emotional neutrality that minoritizes queer and Latino/a subjects who are stereotyped as excessively emotional. A minoritized structure of feeling, “feeling brown,” situates ethnicity in affective ways of being in the world, in contrast to normative affects prescribed for participation in a mainstream national public: “what unites and consolidates oppositional groups is not simply the

fact of identity but the way in which they perform affect, especially in relation to an official ‘national affect’ that is aligned with a hegemonic class” (2000:68). Berlant (2008) analyzes how mass media “women’s literature” in the US constitutes women as collective subjects of shared suffering. An aspirational structure of feeling (Williams 1977) here incites acceptable forms of subjectivity and national belonging, through attachments to the nation rarely articulated in words.

These accounts attend to marginalized subjects, detailing how acceptable or dominant forms of selfhood depend on normative belonging at the national level. My eastern German interlocutors inhabited an ambiguous or liminal position in this sense, marked as Other when they spoke regional dialect outside intimate settings, yet still white and aspiring to an emerging consumer middle class. Anja, Jörg, Karoline, and others never called themselves “*Ossis*” (a colloquial, sometimes derogatory term for East Germans) and rarely indexed themselves explicitly as easterners (though they implied such in other ways). More frequently, regional and eastern German identities unfolded through material and affective practice, what Carlson and Stewart call “mood work.” For rural East Frisian housewives Carlson describes, in western Germany, ecologically-minded consumption offered a means to sense out promised middle-class lifeworlds, through shared activities and feelings:

More felt than spoken, these emergent forms compel modes of analysis that account for their lived materiality, their constituents and their impact. Mood work points to everyday ways of making life in a political moment that may one day be remembered in nostalgic tones, like cult consumer goods from a formerly divided Germany, or stories of post-war hardships. (2014:125)

Eastern Germans in Berlin experienced—and sensed out—regional connection through Spargel meals and at informal weekly gatherings. One Sunday, Jörg attempted to correct the way Sabine was using the Spargel peeler. “That’s not how you do it,” he exclaimed. She rebuked him indignantly, insisting “ich *kenne* Spargel”—“I *know* Spargel!” The verb *kennen* means to know, not in the abstract sense of *wissen*, of possessing knowledge, but as concrete, embodied know-how (what Pierre Bourdieu 1977 called *habitus*: acquired, class-specific competencies that appear natural). In her response, Sabine defended not only her Spargel-peeling technique, but her (likely gendered) affective competence, derived from knowledge acquired informally at home, like regional speech. Shared ways of knowing and feeling about Spargel, and Heimat, constituted this circle as minoritized (and ethnologized) eastern German subjects. But unlike Ostalgie or the story in *Boxhagener Platz*, Spargelzeit connected them to warm, acceptable ways of feeling German. When they invited *Ausländer* acquaintances to join them and posted humorous photos of the Spargelkönig to Facebook, Spargel meals equally connected them to cosmopolitan life in hip, transnational Berlin.

Reading *Spiegel*

National belonging took shape through affective means, felt rather than spoken, as Carlson and Stewart (2014) detail. Approaching national selfhood as affective offers insight into online practices that contrasted with cosmopolitan or transnational self-representations. National affect calls further into question the link between territory and subjectivity, that is, how selfhood became linked to the emerging nation. As Malkki (1992) and others have shown, nationalist projects depend on naturalizing the relationship between people and national territory, as part of a system of nations. It remains less clear, however, what this naturalizing process means for

selfhood and subjectivity. For many Germans and others in Berlin, social media in the late 2000s offered new sites for transnational connection (potentially, de- and reterritorializing identity), as I detail elsewhere (e.g., Kraemer 2014). Media circulated transnationally before the Internet, of course, including among youth cultures and fan communities, from music magazines and satellite television (Hesse 1990; Kosnick 2000) to handmade ‘zines and mixtapes¹⁰ (see also Yurchak 2006; Willis 1990). But networked media accelerate such circulations, bringing together relationships at multiple scales rather than separating selfhood from place.

Erik, an acquaintance of Rike’s (the photographer and electronic music fan), summed up the transnational appeal of social media, saying: “things like Twitter—when you’re following the people who share the same interests, you’re learning so much about those people—it’s worldwide, it’s got so many possibilities. People from warzones can Twitter (sic) and write e-mails and everyone knows [about it]; the world gets a little smaller and I like it.” Erik grew up in a rural town near Leipzig, “a small town in the middle of nowhere” in East Germany,¹¹ and moved to Hanover after attending *Gymnasium* (preparatory school, primarily for university). After taking the *Abitur* (the German university entrance exam), he spent time working before studying communications at a vocational school (*Berufsfachschule*). He was working for a public relations firm in Hanover when we met, while his wife attended university. I met him in Berlin on a regular visit to see electronic music shows, shop for records and comic books, and spend time with friends like Rike and Alex, a DJ and promoter. National identity or self-representation, he averred, was not meaningful to him (although of course it might matter differently under some circumstances), nor did he ground his identity territorially: “nationality never really was my thing—I know I live in Germany; it’s not important to me—I could live in France, or the States, or whatever.” He enjoyed being online as a means of connectedness, saying: “I’m always online,

almost always [*immer, fast immer*]. I have a laptop at work, next to my screen, so I can check my personal stuff 24/7. I like being connected, getting my e-mail, and Twitter. It feels good.” On Facebook, he often posted about electronic music, sharing music videos and discussing new releases (in English, typically with close friends who were also German¹²). His Twitter profile listed interests like “sound,” “comics,” and “robots,” in English; his avatar was, accordingly, a comic book robot. He posted mostly (but not exclusively) in English, referring to shows in Hanover but not, that I observed, national news.

Rike described the importance of Facebook for maintaining an extended circle of “very international friends,” and similarly sought out transnational media, a potential resource for building identity detached from place. She downloaded American television shows (like many young people, she did not own a television), streamed music over Last.fm (partly because other services were blocked by international licensing agreements), and perused blogs. As she explained: “I feel more connected by reading blogs in the US and UK.” Her friend Annika, a studio artist, echoed these sentiments and evinced similar heterogeneity in social media practices. On Facebook, she shared links to a British design magazine, bantered with Rike, and responded to events organized by Alex and others. Rike and Annika framed many of these activities in terms of “getting informed,” and, as mentioned earlier, recounted a “daily ritual” of checking e-mail, blogs, Facebook, and news (first in the morning, then in regular intervals throughout the day). Many repeated this language of “informing” (when in English, or *sich informieren* in German) and a daily ritual (or routine), as practices with regular rhythms and quotidian temporality. These descriptions aligned with what I observed, as when Erik checked his phone or laptop throughout the day for e-mail, Twitter, and Facebook updates, Alex messaged with me in

the afternoons, or Daniele returned home in the evenings to browse Facebook and chat with friends.

Given the topics most people discussed on Facebook or when hanging out, however, I did not expect news to take such prominence, a finding which emerged later when analyzing interviews. Some mentioned news or politics at kitchen gatherings, especially around an election, but typically they discussed music, films, or personal lives. And they rarely circulated news stories online—music videos or posts about daily life were more common (though this changed by 2015 if not earlier; sharing news became more frequent on Facebook by 2013¹³, see Kraemer 2017). What’s more, I rarely saw print newspapers—the few that circulated were free city papers, such as the *Berliner Morgenpost*, or “city magazines” (*Stadtmagazine*) like *Tip Berlin* or the English-language *Ex-Berliner*, a popular arts-and-culture monthly. Anja, Karoline, Daniele, and other women accumulated back issues of fashion magazines like German *Vogue* or *Neon*, to peruse on excursions to city parks and lake beaches. Glossy magazines, and sometimes newspapers, were a fixture at many Berlin cafés, neatly stacked in hanging racks, but I rarely saw anyone actually read them.¹⁵ And while television news covered national and international politics, I seldom observed anyone watch it (football matches were another matter; see Kraemer forthcoming).¹⁶

Online, however, Karoline, Anja, Rike, Erik, and others reported reading news daily, specifically the same national publications, including *Spiegel Online* or FAZ.net (of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*), and to a lesser degree, *Die Zeit*, a weekly paper.¹⁷ Consistently, co-nationalists read the same national papers, despite the availability of international or European news on one hand, and regional publications on the other. While not surprising, these practices contrast with other ways the divide persists between East and West (“die Mauer im

Kopf”), including language competences—more of the music fans were fluent in both English and German, for example, than the friends from Magdeburg. Rike, who grew up in West Berlin, read *Spiegel Online* daily, as did others in her friend circle, like Erik, who grew up in East Germany—and so did Karoline, Anja, and their close-knit circle from Saxony-Anhalt. As Alex recounted, he frequently checked *Spiegel Online*, set as his browser’s default website, although he was experimenting with making *Die Zeit* his “start page” (*Startseite*) instead:

The [site I visit] most is *Spiegel Online*, which is Germany's biggest news site, but since it's too biased with a certain political view, I actually switched my starting page to *Zeit*, which is a big newspaper. Unfortunately their site is not structured really well for real-time news, like *Spiegel* is. You can keep a bit of a better update on what's happening out there, because they are just updated more frequently. After *Spiegel*, it's Facebook. Facebook is, well... I'm really, really, really fascinated by the way my communication with my friends changed through Facebook.

Part of what fascinated Alex was how Facebook supported more dispersed forms of communication among his (often transnational) friends and acquaintances, what he called a more “efficient” way to stay informed and receive feedback¹⁸; news sites were for ordinary political news. A sound engineer, Niels, said he most often visited *Spiegel Online*, Facebook, and Google, but preferred Google as his *Startseite*. Though he and others read Facebook, Twitter, and blogs in English and German, most Germans read news in German. Alex explained this preference in detail, even though at other times he went to lengths to consume media, such as American movies, in English:

I sometimes go on to the *New York Times*, sometimes *BBC*, [when] I get sent news articles from the *BBC*. But I feel like the news coverage in German is quite sufficient for what I want to know. Everything in German, like, German topics, I read in German because this is the best way to get the information. But if I'm interested in American news, then I get them from American newspapers, like, mostly the *New York Times* and sometimes the *Financial Times* because I'm interested in financial news.

Alex's friend Sal described checking e-mail and news in the morning, initially saying: "I read a lot of newspapers, mostly German, and British. *Spiegel*. *Frankfurter Allgemeine*. And *BBC Worldnews*. Mostly, that I do right after reading my e-mail." But he qualified: "I'm more drawn to blog stuff, to blog kind of news, because I'm really tired in the morning, I don't want to read that much. I want to have everything distilled. So certain blogs are much more important. *The Onion*, of course [US satirical news]. And that's that. I'm not very versatile in that regard." But, as a skilled electronic music producer, bilingual in German and English, Sal was highly versatile in other media practices, from managing a professional profile on social media to following underground music trends on web forums. Sabine similarly reported reading news in German, primarily *Spiegel*, though as an avid fan of indie music (and music journalist), she read music blogs in English and German, such as concert reviews, and occasionally posted to Facebook in English. Daniele spoke limited English and preferred national German news, "*Spiegel* or *Zeit Online*, all in German, but everything else is not necessarily German," and posted to Facebook in German, but sometimes chatted over Facebook Messenger in English—with the help of Google Translate—and spoke some English with clients at work.

Like eating Spargel, reading *Spiegel* incited an ordinary, felt sense of Germanness that few put into words. Massumi describes the affective response in media reception as a “gap between *content* and *effect*,” (2002:24) that is, a bodily capacity not fully captured by constructed narratives of emotion. For Berlant, media texts generate affective “intimate” publics that “[foreground] affective and emotional attachments located in fantasies of the common, the everyday, and a sense of ordinariness” (2008:10). Sites like *Spiegel* hail an audience of co-nationalists, as Anderson argued (1991:46), whether or not they explicitly identify as such. But participating in a national reading public also unfolds through shared affect, a felt rather than discursive connection, and which may not register as emotion. Certainly, as Alex articulated, German-based news covers topics relevant to life in Germany, in the Habermasian sense of topics “of national interest” (Rasmussen 2013:99), which partly explains why non-German residents consistently read news sites from their home countries. French-born David, for example, owned a small record label, spoke English and German, and rarely mentioned his family or French origins. But online, he read French newspapers *Le Monde* and *Libération*, alongside German- and English-language ones. Conversely, German-American Pascal made *Spiegel Online* his “start page” when he lived in the US for a few months, explaining: “that’s how I’d catch up on my German news.” He added: “I must say, I’ve gotten so hooked on NPR since I was in the States, that I have no clue about German politics.” In this way, he expressed attachment to national news, in the form of US public radio. The sound engineer with Danish parents, Viktor, described his nationality as “European,” and visited English- and Danish-language sites, primarily Danish ones for news, “good Swedish and Danish news sites, like Politiken.se, etc.” He also participated in an online forum for a close group of male Danish-

speaking friends with similar hobbies and interests—a rare example of a nationally based online community in my research.

As Eriksen 2007 points out, networked media facilitate rather than undermine national identity, but this capacity cannot account for why my interlocutors preferred national news (online) on one hand, but *transnational* (often US-based) social media on the other—on the contrary, most rejected national social network sites. Many recounted leaving the German site Studi.vz for German university students. Alex migrated to Facebook when he moved to Berlin, but had used Studi.vz as a student: “I had a Studi.vz [account] from, like, the first day of university, but I don't use it at all anymore. I'm only in there to keep track of people I'm actually not interested in any more.” Alex rarely associated social media with negative or unpleasant feelings, but here, he maintained his account only to monitor former friends. Daniele similarly linked Facebook with moving to Berlin and meeting *Ausländer*: “everyone had been using Studi.vz, MySpace, etc., before, but then I began to use Facebook with foreigners [*Ausländer*] in Berlin, because it was easier to stay in touch with them.”

National news reflects the role of the nation-state in shaping topics of concern, but the classic model of the bourgeois public sphere does not account for those who disavowed national belonging, read little or no local, regional, or supranational news online, and spurned national social network sites. One person I interviewed—one of the few not connected to the friends circles—did mention regional news in recounting his daily online activities. A freelance journalist originally from Austria, Jan had grown up in Hamburg, and read regional news sites: “for 20 minutes [a day] I read news—*Der Spiegel*, daily papers, *Berliner Zeitung* subscription, and Hamburg regional news.” But this was partly because, as a journalist, it was his “24-hour job to stay informed,” and he sometimes wrote for regional papers. Networked social media, more so

than other mass media, make it possible to participate simultaneously in—or at least, rapidly switch between—national, regional, *and* other geographically-based communities. To address this multiplicity, Rasmussen (2013:100) reworks Habermas’s view of a unified public sphere, describing the heterogeneity of online media as a “networked community” that combines both public and private forms of communication, while McGuigan (2005) proposes a “cultural public sphere” that accounts for affective engagement with media.¹⁹

Given the multiplicity of media platforms and channels, decisions about which media to use matter. Terming this multiplicity “polymedia,” Mirca Madianou and Daniel Miller (2013) contend that, when media choices are not constrained by technological and social barriers, they entail social, emotional, or even moral decisions (170).²⁰ Reading *Spiegel Online* while rejecting Studi.vz entailed an affective choice that constitutes social worlds. There were practical reasons, certainly, for reading German (or French, or Danish) news. But the ordinariness—and predominance—of the same national news sites, as important to daily living as social media, testifies to the tenacity of national projects in the absence of discursive articulation. Like print news, national news websites hailed audiences as part of a nationally imagined community, with similar temporal rhythms of reading, yet, unlike fashion magazines, newspapers were rarely in evidence. This silence around news reading suggests participating in a national public was, like steamed potatoes, too ordinary to warrant comment.

Conclusion: Multiscalar Nationalism

In Benedict Anderson’s classic formulation, print capitalism fostered national sentiment by addressing readers as an imagined community of anonymous co-nationalists: “these fellow-readers, to whom they were connected through print, formed, in their secular, particular, visible

invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community” (1991:46). This fellowship resulted in part from homogenized, daily rhythms of newspaper circulation. It seems no coincidence that my interlocutors read the news according to daily rhythms, despite the “always-on” availability of online news. And national papers online still address audiences as co-nationalists, fostering a reading public at the national scale. These national publics, however, are shifting in relation to globally circulating media, especially on social media which reconfigure local, regional, and transnational connections. A deeply felt sense of national selfhood endures for young Germans who prefer transnational cultural circuits, yet enact national belonging through ordinary practices such as consuming German foods and German (or other national) news. Mobile young Berlin residents I studied, in contrast to a majority of Germans, participate in implicitly national publics online, engendering a connected, cosmopolitan Germanness I consider multiscale.

In rethinking the relationship between media and place, I have turned, first, to the analytic of scale to denaturalize territorialization as a process conjoining sovereignty, culture, and place in scalar progression. I have proposed, second, an affective approach to media and subjectivity to illustrate how shared feelings and practices constitute national selfhood alongside (or in contrast to) semiotic representations, for young people who desire to be connected and cosmopolitan. Together, these accounts of scalemaking and affect offer insight into cosmopolitan experiences of national selfhood which do not necessarily correspond to the expanding scope of territorial organization or concomitant circulation of media. Eriksen sums up the conventional view that geographically based identities expand in scope as media enable new imaginings, in his reflections on Ernst Gellner and nationalism after the Internet:

Global cultural history of the Big Ditch kind favoured by Gellner—the movement from bands and tribes to cities and states—can fruitfully be seen as a movement from the concrete to the abstract.... In relation to the Internet, McLuhan's (1964) cliché of the global village is often invoked to argue that since the web of communication is now global rather than national, the community with which individuals identify can also, for the first time in human history, encompass the globe. (Eriksen 2007:5–6)

I reproduce this quote at length to elucidate a view of media, territory, and identity that invokes a teleology of scale. I advocate instead breaking down territorial ordering into components—policies, infrastructures, media practices, and so forth—to understand the geographic entailments of capital. Reconceptualizing the nation as a contingent, albeit dominant, ordering of social space recasts place online as a multiplicity of practices (Graham 2013; see also Marston et al. 2005), beyond the binary of local versus global. This approach entails rethinking nationalization, that is, how territorializing the nation gave rise to new experiences of identity and selfhood. This transformation included cultivating (and naturalizing) affective ties to the imagined national territory in a system of nation-states. Modern selfhood entailed, historically, a new relationship between subject and place, in which cultural and political belonging requires—and incites—acceptable ways of being and feeling. From this perspective, national belonging is more than imagined; it is felt and embodied, entwining subjectivity with the territorial ordering of the nation.

Nationalization as scalemaking project incites national subjects, and structures online activities such as news reading (the recent interweaving of news on social media may be reshaping national publics further, e.g., Kraemer 2017). National selfhood—and national

publics—are shifting in relation to other geographic formations. According to one person, the 2006 World Cup championship held in Germany was “one of the few times Germans can sing the national anthem, display the flag, and so forth, without feeling the stigma of the past—it’s okay in part because everyone else is doing it too,” perceiving Germany as part of a supranational or transnational system. Despite the appeal of transnational connection, however, few Europeans identify with the level of integrated Europe or the EU (Rasmussen 2013; Tarrow 2005). Germans (and other Europeans) I studied participated in national communities in ordinary, unspoken ways, whether reading *Spiegel* or eating Spargel, precisely because accessing middle-class lifeworlds depends on normative subjectivity at the national scale. Yet feeling German online or in Berlin enmeshed national selfhood in cosmopolitan, transnational circuits. Like Sidney Tarrow’s (2005) “rooted cosmopolitans,”²¹ they pursued transnational connection while maintaining affective ties to place.²²

In closing, I offer a final ethnographic encounter that limns the contours of this networked, multiscalar nationalism²³: watching the Quentin Tarantino film *Inglorious Basterds* (2009) in Berlin. One January evening in 2010, Alex and his roommate invited me to their Neukölln apartment for dessert and a movie. It quickly became clear that the film departed from my expectations. I was afraid it would be awkward to watch, especially as an American Jew, until I saw how the film re-imagines the ending of World War II (which I won’t give away here). It became evident that my hosts, fans of cult and indie films, had watched the film numerous times (in English, never dubbed; cf. Boellstorff 2008b), and considered it a favorite. They delightedly dissected the performances of the German-speaking actors, especially Austrian-born Christoph Waltz, who won numerous awards for the role. “He used to be on television,” Alex explained to me, “but he wasn’t the best actor.” Another actor (likely Michael Fassbender), they

claimed was among the best German performers in American cinema, which seemed to please them. They commented on the German-speaking actors' lines, their accents (Saxon, Austrian, and so forth), and laughed at some characters' names ("I cracked up in the theater for many minutes after hearing that one!"). Relatively few Hollywood films take place in Germany with German actors and dialogue—in fact, an American character's accent speaking German is pivotal to one scene. The film allowed Alex and his roommate to participate *as Germans* in precisely the kinds of transnational cultural circuits opened up by Facebook and online media. They brought German cultural competencies to analyzing the film in a way I could not as an *Ausländer*. In this sense, emerging media contribute to a networked cosmopolitan nationalism, allowing them to be and feel German as affective national subjects, while connecting them to a multiscalar world-in-the-making.

Endnotes

¹According to the Reuters Institute (Newman 2012), as of 2012 more Germans got news from "traditional" sources like TV (87 percent in the past week) and print media (68 percent), compared to those in the UK, US, France, and Denmark, though print news declined to 64 percent as of 2015 (Newman 2015). In the US, younger people consume news least of all age groups, regardless of source; this has changed little over 20 years. US print news consumption halved between 2000 and 2012, to 23 percent from 47 percent, more so than magazines or books, but largely because news reading has shifted to online and digital sources (Doherty 2012).

² "Thus, while capital must on one side strive to tear down every spatial barrier to intercourse, i.e. to exchange, and conquer the whole earth for its market, it strives on the other side to annihilate this space with time, i.e. to reduce to a minimum the time spent in motion from one place to

another. The more developed the capital, therefore, the more extensive the market over which it circulates, which forms the spatial orbit of its circulation, the more does it strive simultaneously for an even greater extension of the market and for greater annihilation of space by time” (Marx 1993 [1939]).

³ “Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes,” Patriotic Europeans against the Islamicization of the West.

⁴ For further reflections on conducting fieldwork on and with emerging media, see Kraemer 2015.

⁵ Risking what boyd (2014) calls “collapsed contexts.”

⁶ For more on the social construction of scale, see Marston (2000, but cf. Marston et al. 2005).

⁷ Even as extremist groups are having a political resurgence (e.g., Holmes 2000).

⁸ This was mitigated by the similarities of their regional speech to Berlinerisch, which was not as stigmatized in Berlin.

⁹ Deutsche Demokratische Republik, the official name of the East German state.

¹⁰ Examples can be found in the Archiv für Alternativ Kultur in the Institut für Europäisches Ethnologie, Humboldt Universität, which I visited in 2010.

¹¹ Not Saxony-Anhalt.

¹² For further analysis of language practices and scalemaking on social media, see Kraemer forthcoming.

¹³ According to *Reuters Institute Digital News Report* (Newman et al. 2015).

¹⁵ Nor did they spend time on laptops—cafés are mainly popular for meeting friends.

¹⁶ Despite my observations, TV-news watching remains high in Germany, even among young adults (Newman 2012, Newman et al. 2015), but not among those I studied in Berlin.

¹⁷ *Spiegel.de* is the most popular German news website by a large margin, *Die Zeit* and FAZ.net less so.

¹⁸ As I detail in Kraemer 2014.

¹⁹ And rework understandings of private and public (see Lange 2007).

²⁰ Also see Ilana Gershon's work on media ideologies and morality (e.g., Gershon 2010a, 2010b).

²¹ An inversion of "rootless cosmopolitans," used to denigrate Jews in the Soviet Union under Stalin because of their alleged disconnection from place, similar to representations of refugees as disloyal, immoral, and without culture in Malkki's analysis (Malkki 1992).

²² Though, as Malkki (1992) argues, this risks reproducing dominant arboreal metaphors of place and belonging.

²³ For more on emerging European transnationalist sentiment, see Kraemer 2017a.

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