

**Separation After Unification?
The Crisis of National Identity in
Eastern Germany**

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ABSTRACT

On October 3, 1990 Germany was formally reunified through an extension of the legal, political and economic structures of West Germany into the former GDR. For East Germans this transformation represented a challenging process. Former values, orientations and standards were subject to severe scrutiny which affected virtually every realm of an individual's life.

The thesis analyses the development from the divided to the unified Germany and asks to what extent East Germans have adopted a collective orientation in line with that of the western part. Such identity markers are conceptualized into five distinct categories consisting of orientations in the realm of territory, economics, ethnicity, mass culture, as well as in the civic-political sphere. The study relies to some extent on public opinion surveys and on qualitative data including media sources, literature and impressionistic accounts. Political-historical analyses of the identities of the Federal and the German Democratic Republic are followed by interrogations into the state of the East German identity as it evolved between 1990 and 1996.

The study provides a deeper understanding of those processes and determinants which brought continuity or change to the German political system. Although interrogations into national identities are neither able to determine the precise moment of change, nor the precise scope and direction of political action they offer well-defined tracks along which political decisions are received in a supportive or oppositional manner. The study of national identity therefore does not represent the universal remedy for the explanation of complex political phenomena. Nonetheless, it is indispensable in enhancing the explanatory power and predictive capacity of political analyses since it broadens understanding and enriches political sensitivity. The thesis identifies a significant range of commonalities, as well as striking features of mutually exclusive areas which prevent the establishment of a common national identity shared by east and west.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Press Officer

*One has to ask whether it's really right
that we've basically taken a different system
and forced it on these people.
I don't know how the 'Wessis' would have reacted
whether they would have been able to show as much
let's call it endurance
as some of the 'Ossis' have had to have.
It's as if the Japanese had invaded West Germany and
announced
from tomorrow you are under Japanese law
everything you have been doing up until now is irrelevant
whether it's traffic regulations or tax law
even the constitution
forget it!
From tomorrow everything's Japanese*

Klaus Pohl: Waiting Room Germany, 1995

Following a year of intense public debate and rapid political developments, the German Democratic Republic joined the Federal Republic of Germany, adopting its legal, political, economic and social structures. On October 3, 1990, Germany was formally re-unified; the culmination of a process which had lasted merely one year since the decisive public upheavals in the autumn of 1989. Never before in world history have two countries been merged in this way. The unification of two societies which had been separated for four decades and had symbolised the systemic antagonisms of the Cold War marked a historically unparalleled cultural and political experiment. In rapid succession, the totalitarian system of the GDR was abolished, absorbed into the democratic FRG and taken into the European Community.

The pace of political developments indeed had been breathtaking. On October 18, 1989 Egon Krenz succeeded Erich Honecker as General Secretary of the East German Communist party SED. On November 9, the Berlin Wall opened its gates to the west. Four days later, the Communist reformer Hans Modrow became Minister President. On March 18, 1990, free elections to the *Volkskammer* were held, followed by the monetary, economic and social union with the Federal Republic on July 1. The political and state union on October 3, resulted in the first all-German federal elections to the *Bundestag* on December 2.

Proposals for reforming the Socialist system of the GDR, a federalist union with the western part, or a third alternative between Capitalism and Socialism along the Scandinavian model were not able to generate sufficient public support. Chancellor Kohl's promise of 'blossoming landscapes in the East' combined with the prospect of repeating the Federal Republic's post-war success resulted in widespread approval for a swift *Anschluß*. Popular support, the Chancellor's energetic drive to seize the unique historic opportunity for unification, as well as Gorbachev's willingness to co-operate ended in the speedy integration of the former GDR into the western federalist structure.

As with the transition processes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the collapse of Communism in the GDR and the integration into the stable democratic society of the Federal Republic attracted widespread scholarly attention. The diplomatic history of the demise of the SED regime, the subsequent negotiations between East and West German governmental officials, or the 'Two-Plus-Four' consultations between the two Germanys and France, Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union stood at the centre of much political analysis, as did structural interrogations on expanding the West German political, economic, social and legal systems onto the former GDR.

However this study intends to shed a different light on German unification; the starting point being the obvious recognition that virtually every aspect of the lives of East Germans were affected by the transition processes. For the new democratic citizens of eastern Germany, unification bore the challenge of a profound re-orientation within a markedly different environment. They had to bid farewell to the former all-encompassing welfare state as new regulations, pension schemes, medical care and health coverage spread to the East. At work, old routines broke down. For many the former constitutional right of work turned into the fear, prospect and experience of unemployment, while the new market economy introduced new notions of initiative, individuality, performance and competitiveness. Administration and bureaucracy operated under western guidelines and principles. Features of the West German political system were rapidly implemented. Elections were held according to western rules, the western party system expanded onto the eastern *Länder* and federalism was re-introduced. The former monolithic power of the SED and its affiliated mass organisations and block parties gave way to a complex system of political plurality for interest representation and participation. New laws and regulations governed the lives of East Germans in their relationship to the state. Western mass-cultural phenomena conquered the east. Commercialisation, communication, consumerism, leisure and lifestyles spilled over to eastern Germany

which stood in stark contrast to the former grey Socialist reality of suppressed demands. These new legal, political, economic, social and mass-cultural standards and rules of a new society had to be grasped and internalised. Former values and standards which had developed under forty years of Communist rule were now subject to severe scrutiny and re-consideration.

The phenomenon of a gap between the organisational principles of a society and their feedback from the population was not unique to German history. Within a period of merely 120 years, Germany has had to face the problems of continuity and change of political structure and corresponding orientations of its citizens on a number of occasions. The country had experienced several fundamental ruptures of the political system which were hardly matched by any other nation in modern history. The first German unification of 1871 established Germany as a late-comer to the European league of major nation states. Hierarchical in principle, the Second Reich represented an absolutist monarchy which survived until the end of the first World War. After 1918, the progressive *Weimar* Republic failed against economic, social and political pressures, while alienating opposing factions of Nationalists, Monarchists, Communists and Democrats which ultimately culminated in Hitler's rise to power. Out of the ruins of World War II, the emerging Cold War forced the division of the country into a stable and successful liberal democracy and a totalitarian Stalinist regime. Obviously, the structural changes during this period were radical. The relationship between the ruling elite and the population, between standards and demands of the political structure and the individual's perceptions of them, between the structural requisites and political orientations of the citizens changed drastically each time a new political system appeared on the agenda of German history.

Approaching Subjectivity: Political Culture and German Unification

All these structural transformations - from Monarchy to Democracy to Fascism and to Democracy/Communism - were rapid and abrupt. Cognitive re-orientations to structural changes however, require time. A structural revolution was always followed by the individual's evolutionary adaptation to new political rules and standards. It therefore came as little surprise that the first study on orientations of a population towards their political system included the West German case. Almond and Verba's *Civic Culture* (1963) advanced conventional institutional considerations with the postulate that a congruence between the structure and the culture of a political system was elementary in guaranteeing system stability. After conducting five national surveys, Almond and Verba confirmed distributions of three types: the parochial or traditional culture, the participant or rational-activist culture, and the subject or deferential culture. The development of a stable democratic society was therefore only complete with the establishment of a democratic culture - termed by Almond and Verba as the civic culture - which represented an appropriate blend and balance of subject and participant elements by combining trust and deference to authority with positive attitudes to the goods of active participation. Hence, the concept of political culture employed orientations of a population towards their political system as an analytical tool, suggesting that subjectivity gives meaning to, as well as influences the political system. As noted by Glenda Patrick (1984:279), political culture represents

‘the set of fundamental beliefs, values and attitudes that characterise the nature of the political system and regulate the political interactions among its members.’

Political culture forms a reservoir of collective experiences of individuals within a functioning political system and develops into a collective memory which alters according to new experiences. It is therefore fluid, since new experiences contribute and old experiences vanish from the collective reservoir. Because of the differing

experiences of political individuals within the political system, political culture is expressed in varying facets which consist of various sub-cultures along social, economic, cultural or generational lines.

However the complicated relationship of subjectivity and objectivity within a political system resulted in little agreement on the definition and theories of, methods for and paradigms of political culture.¹ Nonetheless, all approaches address a fundamental concern: the micro-macro relationship between the political individual and the overarching political system he or she lives in.² After a fierce debate on the causal relationship between structure, culture and the political system, Arend Lijphart (1989) offered a compromise, arguing that structure and culture are mutually interdependent and reinforcing by forming a reciprocal causality with both being cause or effect of the other.³ Hence, change or stability of the political system as the dependent variable are the direct effects of an interplay of structure and culture, whereas either alternately represent the independent or the intermediate variable. A stable democratic system is hereby guaranteed by a coherent democratic culture with democratic values, attitudes and behaviour and a democratic structure consisting of the social, political, legal and economic organisation of the society.

Without any doubt the East German transformation after 1989 represented a formidable case for the application of the concept of political culture and the

¹ Apart from Almond and Verba, a psychological account which stressed individual orientations to political objects had been offered by Parsons and Shils (1951). Sociological definitions which included individual orientations, as well as behaviours that carry orientations were given by Fagan (1969), Tucker (1973) and Geertz (1983). Emile Durkheim (1933) regarded culture as an objective composite of values and norms which are prevalent in society. Ideal-type constructs were applied by Weber (1968), Bell (1964) and Lipset (1960). Ronald Inglehart's 'Silent Revolution' (1977) analysed societies in light of fundamental changes in values, political behaviour and support for political parties towards the development of postmaterial attitudes, such as new political movements, lifestyle and consumerism.

² For a more thorough discussion of methodology, theoretical shortcomings and failures of political culture see for example Street (1993), Almond (1989), Gibbins (1989) or Iwand (1985).

³ The relationship between structure and culture, between cause and effect is argued in more detail in Barry (1970), Lijphart (1989) or Pateman (1989).

prospect of democratic stability. The political system of the GDR was radically transformed from a Communist dictatorship to a liberal democracy. Former beliefs, values and attitudes which developed under four decades of totalitarian rule clashed with a fundamentally different set of thought and behaviour that were introduced through the unification with the Federal Republic. While the extension of the western political, economic and social structures onto the eastern *Länder* certainly provided a stabilising impact, the same cannot be said about the citizens' subjective orientations. Democratic stability could only be achieved if East Germans were capable of mustering a profound cognitive, affective and behavioural re-orientation which approved of the new political structures.

Expanding Subjectivity: Identity and Political Culture

However this study does not intend to produce a re-interpretation of Almond and Verba's Civic Culture (1989) after their last 'visit' to Germany in 1980. On the contrary, the extent and depth of unification and its impact on the population renders a classical political culture approach difficult. As argued above, unification in East Germany affected virtually every aspect of an individual's life. East Germans experienced a radical break and discontinuity from their former life in the Communist GDR. In contrast to other Eastern European post-Communist states, East Germans joined an already well-established society and adopted its rules and regulations. The transition was not internal but external - designed to follow rather than to create.

For such sudden and colossal changes, the concept of political culture does not seem suited. For East Germans, the subjective re-orientations caused by unification go far beyond beliefs, attitudes and values towards the characteristics of the political system. Against the backdrop of these massive systemic transformations, questions such as 'who am I?', 'where do I belong?' and 'where am I going to?' automatically

arise. Hence, for many the establishment of a democratic civic culture amongst East Germans was superseded by the necessity of finding and developing a new identity in a new and largely unfamiliar environment. While the state is a political, rational and objective construct, the nation is a political-cultural phenomenon - emotional and an 'attitude rather than a fact' (Connor 1978:381). The establishment of a civic culture merely reflects on the development of formal participation patterns and cognitive support towards the new political realities.

On its own however, democracy is not capable of forging emotional ties to the new environment. It only addresses a particular aspect of the individual's new experiences - that of the political individual within a new political system. The full depth and extent of present economic, social, or cultural experiences, as well as of past experiences under Communist rule however, are left largely untouched. An investigation into the subjective dimension of German unification therefore has to broaden its scope. While a civic culture sustains the political stability of a state and addresses orientations towards political institutions, the task of establishing new identities in Eastern Germany corresponds to the unity of the nation and to a new-found sense of identity with formerly separated compatriots.

Conceptualising National Identity

Identity reflects the state of mind of an individual towards his or her social community. It represents a process of discovering and generating a consciousness towards one's environment, a social assertion of the self as being somebody in the world. Through such an identity the individual locates and defines him or herself in the world, acquiring a collective personality based on shared values, experiences and orientations. As with political culture, subjective orientations of the population give meaning to the overarching structural setting. Images of nations, of one's own as well as of foreign nations are common and widespread in society and politics. The

national community has been described as the indispensable link between the general mass of human beings and familiar local and regional environments (Wuthe 1987:203). The nation represents a prominent object for people's emotional attachment and provides the scope for the individual's search for definition and location within the world. National identity levels individuality and emphasises communality, whereas the nation forges common loyalties and emotional attachments out of a heterogeneous mass of individuals. National identity rests on common values which are born out of a shared past and a shared vision of the future. As such, the nation blends two fundamentally different sets of principles (Smith 1991:11). Ethnically, the nation corresponds to shared cultural and genealogical traits, such as customs, traditions, language, religion, or descent. On the civic level, the nation encompasses orientations towards a particular set of political ideas, towards legal rights and civic duties, towards a common mass culture, as well as towards the nation's historic territory. Hence, national identity reflects the emotional attachment and degree of loyalty of an individual towards these ethnic and civic characteristics.

Following Anthony Smith's taxonomy, the thesis organises national identity into several sub-categories which consist of orientations towards five distinct elements. They include the civic-political sphere, a common mass culture, economics, ethnicity, as well as the historical territory or the homeland (Smith 1991:15). Within these elements, the study addresses those issues which gained particular importance for East Germans in the immediate period before and after the revolution of November 1989. The underlying rationale is cogent. For East Germans, unification represented the ultimate vehicle for the formation of a national identity. Unification had such a drastic and overwhelming impact on the individual's life that orientations towards the recently unified nation were dominated and fundamentally generated by the individual's experiences and perceptions of the transformation processes. The

formation of a national identity was in reality a response to unification - a testimony of the process of self-definition within a new environment.

Table 1.1. Conceptualising National Identity in Eastern Germany

Chapter Two	Territory	the fact of the division the prospect of unification perceptions of the homeland
Chapter Three	Economics	economic structure work mentality material prosperity social structure
Chapter Four	Citizenship	participation legitimacy state-citizen relations constitutional consensus
Chapter Five	Mass Culture	consumerism leisure and life-style media
Chapter Six	Ethnicity	German ethnicity legacy of the Third Reich ethno-centrism

Chapter Two on territory addresses the division of the nation after World War II which generated contrasting territorial orientations in East and West Germany towards the stretch of land to which people feel attached to. The FRG found a new spiritual home within the community of western states, while the cold-war antagonism pushed the awareness of the loss of the eastern territory further and further out of the public psyche. In contrast, efforts by the SED to instil an artificial identity as a German Socialist nation state were not convincingly adopted by the population. The notion of the divided nation and the prospect of eventual unification continued to dominate the minds of East Germans.

In the economic analysis of Chapter Three, the discussion centers on how Easterners had to adjust to fierce job competition and the prospect of unemployment. The market economy emphasised such formerly neglected principles as self-responsibility and initiative, while the sophisticated, all-encompassing welfare system of the GDR which provided social security from cradle to grave faded into a notion of the past.

Chapter Four focuses on the relation between state and citizen, between rights and responsibilities of ruler and ruled. With unification, East Germans had to depart from the GDR's streamlined and hierarchical form of political participation. The functions of new institutions and new forms of interest representation had to be internalised. The collective goal of establishing the Communist society under the unchallenged ideological and practical auspices of the SED was replaced by the Federal Republic's emphasis on individuality and plurality.

On the mass-cultural agenda of Chapter Five, East Germans were thrown into the postmodern age without the gradual development that West Germany had experienced after World War II. Consumerism, advertising, choice of leisure activities, as well as a quantitative increase and qualitative change in media consumption washed over the new *Länder* in a gigantic wave that tried to make up for four lost decades of Communist parsimony.

Chapter Six on ethnicity addresses the question of birth and common descent which was problematised by markedly diverging experiences in east and west. The gradual confrontation of the Federal Republic with the traumatic Nazi-past left the country's identity virtually bare of ethnic elements. In contrast, the Communist elite conveniently regarded the Third Reich's genocide and moral barbarism as a western problem and responsibility. Furthermore, the *Bonn* Republic had never officially recognised itself as a country of immigration but nonetheless carried out a policy of

integration which incorporated vast numbers of 'guest workers' and ethnic Germans from East European territories. Although foreigners were by no means fully assimilated, increasing exposure to foreign ethnicities allowed for growing multi-cultural experiences. In the GDR, the SED's official rhetoric promulgated internationalism and Communist solidarity. Multi-cultural experiences however, were highly limited because of severe travel restrictions and the very low numbers of foreigners living in the GDR.

Methodology

How can political science analyse and measure the feelings, beliefs and attitudes of a population? How can the 'black box' be opened to screen the mind-sets of numerous individuals and hence, is it possible to develop a coherent orientation for the united Germany in its quest for establishing a common national identity?

Identity and political structure form a two-way symbiosis. Individuals accommodate, absorb and respond to structural requisites and shape them in the process. With unification, the political, social and economic structures of the Federal Republic extended to the new *Länder*. Over forty years these had formed, as well as were being formed by a distinctive West German national identity in a process of mutual interdependence of subjective orientations and objective structures. After 1989, the superimposed structures of West Germany generated emotional responses from East Germans towards the unified nation. These were juxtaposed against orientations towards the now defunct GDR. Past and present collided, while the individual tried to accommodate the new experiences of unification to former values, standards and beliefs. As a response, a particular set of thought and behaviour developed which ultimately affected - either changed or stabilised - the structural setting. The post-unification developments in eastern Germany are therefore analysed against the backdrop of both the West and East German identities as they evolved throughout

the post-war era. Consequently, each chapter covers four distinct areas of investigation. Conceptualising remarks about the individual subcategories of national identity are followed by political-historical analyses of the identities of the GDR and FRG. Out of these, the fourth part draws conclusions and addresses post-unification developments regarding the question of the contemporary identity in eastern Germany and its status as a separated or unified identity with the western part.

Since national identity consists of several layers, it is vital to realise that the categorised orientations towards territory, economics, citizenship, mass culture and ethnicity do not and cannot exist or develop separately. As argued by Smith (1991:14), national identity is 'fundamentally multi-dimensional'. Elements overlap, merge and mutually reinforce each other. For instance, mass-cultural behaviour and attitudes towards consumerism certainly depict an economic element, since a satisfactory participation in the new consumer society requires a certain level of material prosperity and financial stability. Given the presence of such soft borders, the thesis organises such multiple facets under the category in which where they exert the most decisive impact. Nonetheless, cross-references to other categories hopefully avoid a rigid fragmentation of national identity into five sub-groupings, while the final conclusion intends to place the analytical results of the preceding chapters into a summarising perspective.

According to Fredrik Barth (1969) aggregates of people share a common culture which develops interconnected differences that distinguish the group from other cultures. Out of social interaction, cultural traits emerge which construct boundaries for a community and ascribe an individual as a member or a non-member of the group. To maintain its integrity the community possesses two fundamental functions. On the one hand internal boundaries are created which define the member of a group as 'one-of-us', whereas the individual adopts particular patterns of behaviour and

thought and shares the group's values, symbols and traditions. Based on this behavioural, affective and cognitive reservoir, social bonds are established which guide the interaction and socialisation of the group members. On the other hand, external boundaries establish and define the community against other communities. In light of Barth's typology, identity can be understood as 'sameness' (Smith 1991:75), whereas members of a particular group define membership characteristics which mark them off from non-members. Within internal boundaries, individuals interact and socialise, while external boundaries serve as identity markers which distinguish and separate the group from other communities.

The problem of boundary creation and maintenance becomes more transparent in the context of German unification. During the post-war division, the two German states developed distinctly different sets of boundaries. Internally, the different economic, political and social organisation of the GDR and the FRG provided for different sets of thought and behaviour. Externally, the antagonistic concepts of democracy and Communism, market economy and Socialism, liberty and dictatorship, as well as the territorial separation offered numerous mutually exclusive definitions which marked one Germany off from the other.

With unification these boundaries had to be re-defined. The West German political, economic, social and legal structures were expanded on to the east accompanied by corresponding sets of thought and behaviour. The former external boundaries of West Germany were now transformed into normative internal boundaries for East Germans. With the introduction of western structures, Easterners were expected to adopt western standards and values, while the former patterns which constituted and maintained the East German community were fundamentally disrupted. The East German 'collective destiny' (Smith 1991:25) was dispersed and swallowed by the western part. Again, as with the radical system transformations of *Weimar*, National Socialism, as well as with the Federal and the Democratic Republic, national

identities had to be re-established in direct response to the vast structural changes of the political system.

For East Germans, three distinctly different choices were available. First, over time, Easterners had approved of the western set of structure, thought and behaviour and had accommodated the internal boundaries set by the western system which ultimately resulted in a common national identity. Secondly, Easterners partly accepted the western set of thought and behaviour. Despite the persistence of mutually exclusive boundaries, this scenario allowed for the co-existence of identity markers shared by both Easterners and Westerners. Thirdly, East Germans did not accept the western set resulting in dual identities of east and west. Such an outcome had been prompted by two causes. On the one hand, Easterners had been denied access, whereas West Germans continued to maintain external boundaries which excluded their fellow countrymen and denied them recognition as members of their community. Out of rejection, the East subsequently disapproved of the western set of behaviour and thought. On the other hand, Easterners had chosen to reject them, since the prospect of crossing the internal boundaries by adopting western principles did not seem appealing. Both of these scenarios resulted in a split national identity. The vacuum left by the demise of the GDR could not have been filled by the west. Subsequently, East Germans re-established external boundaries to mark themselves off from the west in a move that stressed eastern elements.

The study relies to a considerable extent on public opinion surveys. For West Germany and for post-1989 eastern Germany, polls by the *Allensbacher Institut für Demoskopie*, *Emnid*, or the 'Politbarometer' of the *Forschungsgruppe Wahlen* are consulted. Apart from contemporary ad-hoc surveys, the thesis tries to incorporate survey questions which were continuously collected over longer periods of time to demonstrate changing orientations. In the absence of quantitative material or to analyse certain phenomena further, qualitative data, such as literature or media

sources and impressionistic accounts are used which play a particular importance in the case of the GDR, where surveys were hardly conducted or published.

In 1978, the SED closed down its sole research organisation on public opinion, the *Institut für Meinungsforschung* (Förster and Roski 1990:15). The gap between the official dogmatism and rhetoric of state and party and the actual attitudes of the population caused widespread irritation amongst the political elite who feared that the strictly confidential results could eventually trickle down to the public. Instead, the SED increasingly relied on the Ministry of State Security - the surveillance apparatus of spies and unofficial informants which was nicknamed the *Stasi* - to monitor its citizens. In addition, the state-controlled media occasionally held public surveys. However politically sensitive issues were never allowed to be publicised. The *Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung* (Institute for Youth Research) was confronted with similar problems of censorship and tutelage. Focusing on young adults aged 14 to 25, the institute's research depended on the permission of state or party officials. As usual, results were strictly confidential and were not disclosed to the public.

By 1990, surveys by the *Institut für Meinungsforschung*, as well as the *Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung* which were not destroyed by state and party agencies became accessible to scholars and were subsequently published (Niemann 1993, Förster and Roski 1990). Both institutes guaranteed anonymity to their respondents, while safeguarding such research imperatives as standardised questionnaires or representative samples. The data collection was therefore legitimate. However data interpretation was occasionally complicated by the biased ideological nature of some survey questions. The study therefore excludes such overt distortion of public attitudes. Quite often however, questions hardly possessed a political-ideological undertone. Although questions unfortunately were not asked

continuously over longer time spells these results undoubtedly offered valid contemporary assessments of public opinion in East Germany.

Structure Versus Culture: The Predictive Power of National Identity

How then can the symbiosis of structure and culture, of objectivity and subjectivity, be analysed - not only for explanatory and descriptive reasons but furthermore for predictive purposes? Anthony Smith (1991:91) argues that 'nationalism is a form of culture - an ideology, a language, mythology, symbolism and consciousness' - and 'the nation is a type of identity whose meaning and priority is presupposed by this form of culture'. In a similar vein, Benedict Anderson (1983:15) defined the nation as

'an imagined political community... It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.'

Both approaches suggest that culture plays a crucial role in the subjective orientation towards one's environment, towards one's *imagined* community. But while the importance of a coherent identity for a nation seems relatively undisputed, it remains problematic to evaluate and explain the causal relationship between identity and political action. How do national identities trigger change or sustain stability within a particular political order and how do national identities drive political action?

All scholarly efforts so far have failed in establishing the 'crucial link' that explains why and which elements of a national identity are conducive or respectively opposed

to structural changes.⁴ However national identity offered a convincing explanation for instance, for the tacit approval or even rejection of 'Maastricht' by the peoples of various EU-member states. As George Schöpflin (1995:44) correctly noted, post-war European integration represented an economic, technological and administrative process. The political elite simply assumed that once those structures were in place, the importance of national-cultural differences, of nationhood and of nationalism would lose their relevance. Close-call referenda and considerable public discontent showed that this 'attempt to divorce the political community from its cultural-affective elements' was not met by adequate public enthusiasm. Commentators pointed towards a feeling of colonisation by Brussels, anticipated cultural streamlining, perceived loss of political authority or economic insecurity. In short, the identity of a common Europe based on integration and co-operation had not yet replaced the nation as the object for one's primary loyalties.

In this respect, national identity provided a deeper understanding of those processes and determinants which brought continuity or change to a political system. Since national identity is able to give early warning signs of potential dissatisfaction with policies, politics and polities, political life becomes more transparent by integrating analytic results other than those offered by structural or institutional considerations. Nonetheless, national identity is neither able to determine the precise moment in time nor the precise scope and direction of political action. National identity does not

⁴ Sidney Verba (1965:529) noted that identity with the nation legitimises the activities of political elites which in return makes it possible for them to mobilise the commitment and support of their followers. Such a commitment would enable a political system to survive in times of crises. Stephen Welch (1993:131,135) argued that national identity not only emerged as 'a response to social conditions' but also changes those circumstances, while John Street (1993:113) concluded that culture is something which both shapes and is shaped by political interests. David Easton's 'Systems Analysis of Political Life' (1965) differentiates between three distinct recipients of political support: the regime or the political order with its three components of values (goals and principles) norms and the structure of authority, followed by the authorities (the occupants of authority roles) and finally the political community, defined as 'a group of persons who share a division of labor for the settlement of political problems'. Easton argues that dissatisfaction with the authorities can be neutralised by an identification with the regime and the political community which could provide for a buffer of support in times of a declining cohesion of the common political framework.

offer the definite trigger which prompts individuals to seek political change. Instead, national identity has to be mobilised to generate political action. Agents who are capable of initiating such processes are wide-ranging - from political leaders to journalists or to international sport events, such as the Olympic Games or international football championships - as long as they touch on emotions that catalyse an understanding of belonging to the national commune. National identity clearly offers well-defined tracks along which political decisions will be received in a supportive or rejecting manner. National identity therefore does not offer the universal remedy for the explanation of complex political phenomena. It is however, indispensable for enhancing the explanatory power and predictive capacity of political analyses since it broadens our understanding and enriches our political sensitivity. Nothing more, but certainly nothing less.

CHAPTER TWO: TERRITORY

2.1. Conceptualising Territory

Territorial identities represent emotional orientations 'to a stretch of land to which people feel attached to' (Smith 1991:9). The homeland - or to use the German term the *Heimat* - constitutes the space where members of a community live and work, where generations respond to the changes and challenges of history and where people have their formative experiences which bind them to the nation. Thoughts and behaviour towards the nation that are generated by citizenship, ethnicity, mass culture and economics are complemented by a territorial or spatial repository to a clear-defined stretch of land.

How then can territorial identities in unified Germany be operationalised? An analysis of German territorial identities which encompass the 'lost' pre-war territories of East Prussia, Pomerania, Silesia and the *Sudetenland* represents a complex study in its own right. It could further include orientations towards Austria, German-speaking Switzerland, Alsace, Eupen-Malmedy or the *Schleswig* province in Denmark. However the unification treaty of 1990, as well as parallel provisions in the 'Two-Plus-Four' treaty between the FRG, the GDR, the United States, the Soviet Union, France and Great Britain acknowledged the Oder-Neisse line (the post-war demarcation between Poland and East Germany) as the permanent western Polish border (Kommers 1995:190). The issue subsequently lost its remaining political edge. Also, for the

purpose of this study considerations regarding the lost German territories hardly bore any significance. As argued in Chapter One, the establishment of new identities in the aftermath of 1989 were triggered by the vast transformation processes. As such, orientations towards the pre-war territories outside the FRG and the GDR hardly possessed an impact on the establishment of new identities towards the unified nation. Although these territories might have remained in the public consciousness of both east and west, there was no significant political movement to call for their re-integration into Germany. They were pushed aside against the backdrop of establishing territorial orientations that now had to incorporate the respective 'other' Germany across the former Iron Curtain. Orientations towards the pre-war territories were a phenomenon that did not affect the establishment of identities in their response to the structural changes brought about by unification. They are therefore left untouched.

A further approach is to ask respondents about the territorial unit to which they feel most loyal and attached to. Bettina Westle (1994:471) subdivided territorial identities in unified Germany into three categories: only the old or the new *Länder* respectively, the unified Germany, as well as double identities towards unified Germany and towards the old/new *Länder*. However such identity markers hardly lead to significant conclusions. Such loyal attachments were influenced by other identity markers which made it hard to detect the substance of territorial orientations. For instance, someone who possessed strong emotional attachments to the old *Länder* might have wanted the two Germanys to stay separate out of the significant tax burden which were imposed on West Germans to finance the massive transfer payments to the east. Likewise, loyal orientations towards eastern Germany might have been prompted by perceptions of a political take-over of western parties or an economic colonisation of the new *Länder* by western businesses which had resulted in a sense of defiance and exaggerated regional pride against the super-imposed western structures. Additionally, Germans were confronted with unification issues on a daily basis through massive media coverage. Although emotional

attachments to the 'other' German part might have been weak or even non-existent, the fact that Germany and hence the German territory was now united was an obvious political reality. This could have prompted positive responses towards feeling loyal to the German territory of both east and west. Hence by merely asking about loyalties to particular territories the explanatory power is limited because of implicit economic, political, cultural or social connotations.

A closer look at the fundamental historical prerogative of German territorial identities in east and west however, offered more rewarding analytical results. The post-war division of Germany resulted in two antagonistic political systems which stood at the front-line of two opposing ideological camps. Market economics versus Socialism, Democracy versus Communism, civic liberty versus totalitarianism separated east from west. The most obvious signs of the division however, were the tightly secured border, barbed wires, patrol guards and since 1961 the Berlin Wall. For East Germans, regular contacts between east and west were complicated by severe travel restrictions.¹ When applying for a visa to visit the FRG, East Germans were confronted with intimidating interrogations by the Communist authorities within a lengthy bureaucratic procedure that could last several months. An almost impenetrable border, tight security and limited travel opportunities to the west resulted in the effective territorial division into two separate entities.

How did Germans in east and west accommodate the fact of the division? How did they perceive the prospects of unification? One scenario would have implied that the political reality of a divided territory and the improbability of unification gradually trickled down

¹ In 1964, the SED allowed its pensioners to cross the border to West Germany. By 1984 and in return for substantial hard currency loans from the FRG, the party eased travel restrictions and in 1986, some 570,000 people (excluding pensioners) visited the Federal Republic (Weber 1993:97). Further exceptions included occasional tourist visits by Westerners which significantly increased as a result of Chancellor Brandt's détente policy with the Communist bloc.

to people's perceptions, resulting in orientations that regarded the 'other Germany' as a territory to which one did not feel an emotional attachment to; a territory which no longer represented part of one's spatial repository of emotions. Such attitudes would have profound implications on the establishment of national identities in the aftermath of 1989. Such emotional blockades which perceived the other Germany as an alien territory outside of one's loyalties would have severely hindered the unification of Easterners and Westerners as members of one national community. On the other hand, perceptions of a shared common territory of the German nation would have been able to persist despite the existence of two separated states with clearly marked borders. These would have acted as buffers of tolerance against the backdrop of significant economic, political and social pressures caused by the transformation processes. An understanding would have emerged that despite all the hardship at least the divided people were finally re-united.

In short, this chapter addresses territorial identities in east and west by examining orientations towards the fact of the division and the prospect of unification which had developed prior to 1989. They will offer important insights into whether Westerners and Easterners perceived German unification as a welcomed and long-awaited historic opportunity which re-unites the German national community or whether unification was regarded as a gift from world politics to which one merely felt indifference.

2.2. The Federal Republic

In West Germany, over a period of 35 years people became accustomed to the division and largely began to accept the post-war status quo. Surveys by the *Allensbacher Institut für Demoskopie* (see Table 2.1.) demonstrated that the number of respondents who supported to press for unification nearly halved between 1956 and 1983, while the percentages who sensed that unification should be left to the course of time more than doubled.

Table 2.1. West Germans and the Prospect of Unification (percentages)

Question: Should West Germany continue to press for unification or should it be left to the course of time?

	September 1956	October 1964	October 1983	November 1989
press for	65	69	33	19
time	25	21	55	72
do not know	10	10	12	9

Source: Noelle-Neumann and Köcher 1993:430

Although between 1979 and 1989, 75 to 79 per cent were in favour of unification and only between 4.5 and twelve per cent were against it (*Politbarometer*), the systemic antagonism of the Cold War left little hope for unification. Table 2.2 shows that the number of respondents who believed that it would surely or probably happen dropped from 27 per cent in 1951 to a marginal seven per cent in 1983. Correspondingly, the share of pessimists who thought that the nation's division was an irreversible fact increased from 29 to sixty per cent.

In addition, knowledge of and interest in the other Germany were limited. In 1979, a staggering 74.3 per cent had never visited the GDR since the building of the Wall in 1961 (*Politbarometer*). By the beginning of 1989, eighty per cent had not visited the other Germany in the last ten years (Noelle-Neumann and Köcher 1993:411). Even for

those with relatives on the other side of the Iron Curtain, where family ties provided for a particular interest, time took its natural toll since the number of respondents who had friends or relatives in the GDR decreased from 44 per cent in 1953 to 32 per cent in 1989. Thus prior to unification in 1989, two-thirds of West German respondents did not have any close social relations to East Germans (Noelle-Neumann and Köcher 1993:411). For those who still had relatives in the east, the severe obstacles for keeping in contact contributed to the gradual deterioration of family ties. Eventually, the descendants of the brothers and sisters of the immediate post-war generation mustered only a modest interest for their distant cousins.

Table 2.2. West Germans and the Likelihood of Unification (percentages)

Question: Do you think that the division of Germany will eventually disappear and a unified Germany will emerge?

	1951	1973	1983
yes, surely	10	2	2
yes, probably	17	7	5
uncertain	36	32	33
no	29	53	60
no answer	9	6	-

Source: Emnid Informationen 8/9-1983:15.

It therefore came as little surprise that the political fact of the divided nation had only a subordinate importance in the minds of most West Germans. While in 1965, German unification was regarded by 69 per cent and European integration by 24 per cent as the more pressing political problem, attitudes had been reversed by 1983 with 36 per cent and sixty per cent respectively (Emnid Informationen 5/6-1989:13). When asked what Germany actually implied, 57.2 per cent in 1979 named the Federal Republic and only 27.4 per cent referred to the FRG and the GDR (*Politbarometer*). In addition, the willingness to permanently accept the Oder-Neisse line which marked the border between Poland and East Germany since the end of World War II increased from a mere

eight per cent in 1951 to 61 per cent in 1972 (Institut für Demoskopie 1974:525). The territorial identity of West Germans could therefore be labelled as minimalist. The pre-war territories east of the GDR gradually disappeared from the public's perceptions as belonging to the German nation. More importantly however, even the separated GDR did not represent a marker for the West German territorial identity. The *Heimat* was simply the Federal Republic as the clearly defined stretch of land for one's emotional orientations.

2.3. The German Democratic Republic

In correspondence to the west, the Cold War antagonism could not erase the East Germans' will for unity. The western-based *Infratest*² reported that support for unification was even stronger than the already high numbers of the Federal Republic. In 1984, 89 per cent of respondents were in favour of unification (Köhler 1992:77). Despite decades of separate political, economic, social and cultural experiences, the idea prevailed in east and west that the divided nation should eventually reunite.

However attitudes towards the territorial division of the German nation were fundamentally different in the GDR. A survey by the East German *Institut für Meinungsforschung* in 1968 revealed that only 55 per cent regarded the GDR as their 'fatherland', while 42 per cent attributed this notion to the whole of Germany (Niemann 1993:310). Immediately after the fall of the Wall, a survey held in late November 1989 (Förster and Roski 1990:94) showed that 76 per cent had strong feelings towards being German, while the exact percentage also felt strongly about being a citizen of the GDR. Clearly, loyalties which encompassed both the GDR and the divided German nation continued to exist side by side. Furthermore, *Infratest* showed that although 85 per cent of responses perceived the FRG and the GDR as two separate states and 31 per cent regarded the respective other Germany as a foreign country, a strikingly high eighty per cent continued to uphold the notion of one common people (Köhler 1992:76).

With gradually increasing material prosperity, political stability and a firm anchoring in the west which was guaranteed by NATO and the Common Market, West Germans could live quite satisfactorily without the separated eastern part. Life was more

² Since 1968, *Infratest* had conducted surveys by combining participant observations and indirect questioning of western visitors to the GDR. Respondents were asked to answer questionnaires in representation of a person 'X' whom they had just visited (Köhler 1992:60).

prosperous, stable, free and secure than ever before in German history. Against such pleasing conditions, the situation of the compatriots across the Iron Curtain fell more and more into oblivion. This was clearly not the case in the GDR. A simple look at the data on migration to the FRG served as telling indicators for East Germans' dissatisfaction with the SED regime.³ Between 1949 and 1988, 3.3 million people left the GDR and escaped, moved or were expelled to the Federal Republic which represented an annual average of 82,500.

The people of the GDR remained 'fixated' (Weber 1993:108) on the more prosperous, more democratic and freer Federal Republic. Without anticipating analytical results of the subsequent chapters, the staggering migration statistics alone revealed that Easterners persistently perceived West Germany as the land of dreams which was far superior to one's own state. Fostered by gradually growing cross border traffic⁴ and foremost by western television which was widely received in the east,⁵ images of a better life across the Iron Curtain permeated the eastern public psyche. Despite the considerable danger that was involved when attempting to cross the border illegally and despite political harassment when applying for emigration, the possibility of improving one's situation by moving or escaping to the FRG,⁶ kept the western *Länder* as territorial identity markers in the minds of East Germans.

³ The number of total emigrants (refugees and authorised emigration) averaged around 200,000 per year between 1949 and 1961 with a high point of 330,000 in 1953; the year of the workers' uprising. In the first five years following the building of the Wall, some 32,000 per year left the GDR. Thereafter, total emigration dropped gradually to some 15,000 in the 1970's. In 1984, the flow increased significantly to 40,000, since large numbers of long-time applicants were granted permission to leave. Between 1985 and 1988 emigration averaged 27,000 (Ammer 1989:1207).

⁴ Prior to 1986, only two per cent of Easterners aged 14 to 29 had visited the FRG. For people aged 30 to 49, figures totalled 18 per cent and 80 per cent of East Germans over the age of fifty had the opportunity to visit the other Germany. In 1988 however, percentages had changed significantly: 14 per cent for people aged 14 to 29, 33 per cent for the middle generation and 54 per cent for the over fifty year-olds (Köhler 1992:75).

⁵ A notable exception represented the low-lying area around Dresden which East Germans therefore referred to as the 'valley of those who do not know'.

⁶ On the concepts of exit and voice in the GDR see: Hirschmann 1995:9-44.

The attractiveness of the Federal Republic was further helped by common cultural attributes, such as language and history, which eased the identification with West Germany as a part of one's territorial repository of emotional attachments. Also, the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law or constitution) of the Federal Republic automatically gave East Germans citizenship of the FRG. As such, Easterners were entitled to the social services and welfare benefits of West Germany. Hence, the real emigration of friends and family members, the continuing hope for emigration, sporadic visits by Westerners, as well as western television pictures kept the Federal Republic in the public psyche of East Germany. The experienced deficiencies of the SED state including the provision of consumer goods, civic liberties or inadequate material standards further manifested perceptions of West Germany as a normative proposal of freedom and prosperity. In contrast to the Federal Republic, territorial identities in East Germany were not clear-cut. Instead, they were double sided. On the one hand stood the real experiences of the GDR, where one grew up and had his or her formative life experiences. On the other hand however, the illusory Federal Republic stood as a reminder of the potential of one's existence which all too often was in sharp contrast to reality.

2.4. Conclusion

With the fall of the Wall and the opening of several border crossings in the autumn of 1989, the collective fixation on the west, accumulated interest and curiosity resulted in a rush across the border. By November 1992, only seven per cent of Easterners had not paid a visit to the western *Länder* (*Politbarometer*). This high level of interest however, was not met by western compatriots. In 1990, the share of main holidays of West Germans (usually in the summer) which had the new *Länder* as their destination totalled only 2.5. per cent. In contrast, 32 per cent of all East German holidays were spent in the old Federal Republic. By 1991, the western figures had increased only marginally to 2.7 per cent, while the old *Länder* continued to be equally attractive to Easterners with a share of 33 per cent of all main holidays (Deutscher Reisebüro-Verband 1995). Although the data did not include any short-term visits, the figures nonetheless indicated the remarkable low level of interest amongst West Germans in the new *Länder*. When visiting the former GDR in the aftermath of 1989, the limited numbers of western cars and western visitors, even in regions bordering the old *Länder* were a surprising - yet obvious feature. Although the tourist infrastructure was still rudimentary at the outset of unification, Westerners nonetheless disregarded the attractiveness of eastern towns and countryside and did not consider the opportunity to experience first-hand and without travel restrictions the state of political, economic and social affairs across the former border. The strikingly low ratio of holidays spent in the east pointed towards a lack of curiosity and interest amongst West Germans. The East German pent-up curiosity and eagerness to see the west had no emotional equivalent in the old *Länder*.

It is against this imperative that one has to judge the transformation processes in the aftermath of 1989. East Germans perceived the west as the promised land and regarded the unified nation as an eventual political goal which would give them political freedom, human rights and material prosperity. A look at the changing momentum of the October

and November demonstrations of 1989 served as a telling indicator. Calls for reforming Socialism within the GDR gradually gave way to an overwhelming support for joining the political, economic and social structures of the Federal Republic (Zwahr 1993) and choruses proclaiming 'we are the people' were gradually superseded by 'we are one people'. Attitudes towards unification were fundamentally positive in both east and west. For West Germans however, the historic chance to unite the nation did not represent the unfulfilled and desperately pursued political dream which finally came true. While West Germans had conveniently accommodated the fact of the division, East Germans had lamented over it. From the beginning, unification therefore started on an uneven footing, perfectly exemplified by the satirical joke on a prominent slogan of the eastern revolution. The Easterners' call for '*Wir sind ein Volk*' (we are one people) was merely answered by Westerners with a cynical 'so are we'.

One has to ask what made West Germans pass off their territorial identity of the divided nation and what elements compensated for the lacking loyalty to the German territory consisting of both eastern and western *Länder*? In return, why were East Germans so eager to maintain and develop loyalties towards the Federal Republic? It is against this ambivalence that the study turns to the analyses of economics, citizenship, mass culture and ethnicity within the transformation processes of unification.

CHAPTER THREE: ECONOMICS

3.1. Conceptualising Economics

A decisive cause for the peaceful revolution of 1989 was the aspiration to buy material goods, to enjoy consumer choice and to achieve better living standards. In the early autumn of 1989, banners and chants of the mass demonstrations called for freedom, democracy and reformed Socialism (Zwahr 1993). Such slogans were gradually superseded and eventually replaced by material matters. A survey taken in March 1990 asked East Germans about their expectations from unification. Forty per cent were looking forward to better living standards and 25 per cent to economic recovery. Only three per cent however, mentioned democracy (Roth 1991:115-138).

People followed the call of the *Deutschmark* hoping for levels of affluence that would match those of their western neighbours. For years, East Germans watched enviously the standard of prosperity that was displayed on West German television and in East German so-called 'intershops' which sold western products for hard currency. In return, these experiences drastically revealed the economic and material shortcomings of the Communist system. They were further highlighted by rare trips across the Iron Curtain or by western friends, family members or tourists who visited the GDR. They heightened public discontent since the Federal Republic progressed from one economic boom to another which persistently widened the gap between the two Germanys. Although the GDR generated the highest living standards amongst all Communist countries, the permanent orientation towards the affluent western part

proved to be a powerful cognitive standard for East Germans which eventually contributed to the growing scepticism of the population towards their own system.

Unification offered the unique opportunity to make up for decades of lost chances and material deprivation. In the eyes of Easterners, the market economy was the land of dreams. For many, the economic miracle that transformed the Federal Republic after 1949 was just waiting to repeat itself in the eastern *Länder*. In the run-up to the first federal elections of unified Germany, high expectations were further fuelled by Chancellor Kohl's promise of 'blossoming landscapes' within the near future.

In order to establish an affirmative national identity, these hopes generated by the arrival of capitalism had to be fulfilled. The improvement of one's economic situation was one of the decisive *raison d'être* which sparked the revolution. After unification, Easterners eventually had to come to the conclusion that the risky and brave effort of bringing down the totalitarian SED regime - quite literally - had paid off. The market economy had to offer equal chances and opportunities for both Westerners and Easterners regarding financial security and social status. For those who did not benefit from the economic transformation, lower levels of affluence and fewer opportunities for material success could not have developed into coherent points of orientation for one's loyalty and emotional attachment. Of course, inequalities which resulted from the significant gaps in the provision of material standards between the FRG and the GDR could not disappear overnight. But they could only be tolerated if Easterners at least were given the prospect of improving their economic and social status. Otherwise, frustration and disappointment would have arisen which severely hampered people's emotional commitment and attachment to a unified Germany.

The economic identity of unified Germany addressed those characteristics of the market economy that generated material security. Hence, the sphere of work as the

basic means of securing financial competence and participation in the consumer society possessed a central position. In general, work represents a potential realm for individual self-realisation and social recognition. Work, its ethic, value and status however, are determined by structural characteristics of the respective economic system. Here, the GDR possessed fundamentally different features than the Federal Republic. In East Germany, state and party organised the individual's life. The East German worker was given a job and he or she had to fulfil targets which were set by a centralised apparatus. The nationalisation of most of the economic production, as well as the ideologically streamlined education system oppressed initiative, self-responsibility and independence. The collective goal of establishing the Communist society was paramount to individual ambitions regarding professional, social or material status. In contrast, the market economy of the Federal Republic emphasised individuality. Affirmative orientations towards the market economy developed out of career opportunities and material possessions and merely the prospect of achieving higher levels of financial, social and professional status generated supportive economic identities. To benefit from the economic transition in the aftermath of 1989, Easterners were asked to change completely their former Communist mentality. Market economics depends on innovative individuals. Innovation and individualism however, were neglected for forty years.

In addition, provision and cost of social services affect the individual's material existence. Here, East Germans got used to a tight social net with progressive services that were supplied by the state and offered comprehensive coverage. Although still a sophisticated welfare state, this level of security was not provided in unified Germany. Certain social services were dismantled and costs for housing, living and medical care increased. Quite logically, people had severe problems in adjusting to these abrupt changes. In particular, the reorientation regarding employment represented a crucial issue. In the GDR, work constituted the nucleus of one's social existence. Contacts to colleagues extended into private spheres. The collective was

responsible for social services, such as day care centres for children, leisure or holidays. In the aftermath of unification, the constitutional right of work of the GDR turned into fierce competition for a limited number of jobs. Suddenly and for the first time in their lives, East Germans were confronted with unemployment that affected not only the individual's financial security but above all his or her self-esteem. A life-time guarantee turned into the need for personal effort.

In short, this chapter intends to explain the economic identity of post-unification eastern Germany by analysing the historical currents and fundamental structural characteristics of the economic system of the GDR and the FRG. From this point of departure, it investigates the individual's work ethic, the value of work and employment, as well as standards towards the provision of social services.

3.2. The German Democratic Republic

The Economic Structure

After the collapse of the Third Reich, the industrialisation of the GDR was rendered difficult by the consequences of war-destruction and Soviet occupation. Industrial plants and the transport system lay in ruins. Substantial reparations to the USSR further hampered post-war economic development. Until 1946 over 1000 industrial plants were dismantled, as were the second tracks of the rail network. In certain branches, productivity dropped significantly: 80 per cent in iron, 35 per cent in cement and paper. Additionally, the Soviet Union took reparations from the current production, mounting to 25 per cent of the overall industrial output and transformed them into two hundred USSR-owned 'Soviet Limited Companies' (Weber 1993:11). Most notably, a Communist 'Marshall plan' did not exist. The GDR had to develop her industrial base and production entirely by herself without any foreign assistance.

From early on, the GDR followed the Soviet conception of a Socialist economy. Despite lacking mineral resources and industrial plants, the SED authorities created an industrial structure that relied on heavy industry, in particular coal and steel, while neglecting consumer products and services. Industrial policies therefore did not pay attention to the particular skills of the work force and the present industrial infra-structure. The opportunity to build up competitive structures in the realm of chemistry, fine mechanics and optics with the prospect of the development of an advanced, high-tech oriented industry was lost and rendered to a reliance on ageing industrial concepts and policies and a 'simple imitation of the Soviet track' (Weber 1993:37).

Lacking mineral resources made the GDR largely dependent on foreign imports. Since foreign exchange reserves were constantly low, the regime tried to keep such imports as minimal as possible. Mineral oil was largely substituted by brown coal.

Although the GDR was able to provide the highest living standard of all Comecon countries, the economic decline became evident by the 1970's. The VIII. Party congress of 1971 confidently pronounced an economic expansion, as well as an envisaged growth in living standards. The strategy was to invest heavily during the next five years in technology predominantly through western imports. The subsequent financial liability should be cleared during the second half of the decade with increased exports.

By 1980, it became clear that the strategy had completely and utterly failed (Haendcke-Hoppe-Arndt 1995:591). The economic crisis of 1973 sent oil prices to unexpected heights which had to be compensated by increased exports. The second oil shock of 1979, the ambitious housing program and western imports of consumer goods resulted in severe debts. According to Gerhard Schürer - Head of the Planning Commission - any attempts to warn Honecker and fellow members of the *Politbüro* about the forthcoming financial catastrophe were in vain. On the contrary, the *Politbüro* chose to ignore the writing on the wall despite the depressing monthly reports from Schürer's office (Hertle 1992: 123-145). Only after 1989 did the full extent of the financial malaise reach the public. Throughout the past twenty years, SED-officials (under the knowledge of Honecker and other *Politbüro* members) had facelifted balance-sheets and therefore were able to give the impression that the financial situation was under control. However by as early as 1978, further loans were necessary to finance the already existing interest payments. By 1981/82, the GDR lost her credibility and international banks refused to give further loans (Haendcke-Hoppe-Arndt 1995:592). Only two substantial loans from the Federal Republic of one billion Deutschmark each in 1983 and 1984 prevented an early financial collapse. Nonetheless the authorities were forced to rely on a policy of autarky which subsequently resulted in severe economic and ecological problems (Glaeßner 1989:241). By 1989, fundamental mismanagement, lack of innovation and

investment, as well as structural deficiencies deteriorated and brought the GDR on the verge of bankruptcy.

From early on, the SED pursued a rigid policy of nationalisation which extensively covered all economic spheres. In industry, the importance of the VEB - the *volkseigener Betrieb* (publicly-owned company) - grew steadily, from 1,764 in 1949 to 5000 a year later. Within three years, the number of their employees doubled from 900,000 in 1950 to 1.7 million in 1953. The USSR gradually passed the ownership of the 'Soviet Limited companies' to the GDR which further increased the number of VEB's. By 1951, their share of the industrial production amounted to 79 per cent (Weber 1993:35). The 1980's saw a further concentration process. Smaller VEB's merged and combines were introduced. Combines were designed to place the various VEB's under one unified administrative structure. Subsequently, the number of enterprises dropped from 20,000 to 4,000 within the last 25 years of the GDR's existence (Glaeßner 1989:245).

The first step towards agricultural nationalisation was represented in the land reform of 1945 which broke the power of the Prussian junkers and gave small plots of land to independent farmers. By the early 1960's the regime vehemently enforced the collectivisation of the agrarian sector. Farmers who refused to join supposedly voluntary LPG's - *Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaft* (Agrarian Production Co-operatives) - were jailed. Propaganda and agitation coerced the remaining doubters. By 1961, few independent farmers were left. Co-operatives totalled 19,000 and cultivated 85 per cent of the land, while a further six per cent was owned by publicly-owned estates (Weber 1993:54).

As for craft, in 1958 still 93 per cent of the total output was produced privately. However privately-owned businesses were regarded as counterproductive to the implementation of a Socialist economy. Subsequently the number of private craft

businesses dropped to 65 per cent in 1961. In retail, the private share decreased even further, to below 10 per cent (Weber 1993:54). In 1976, the regime slightly reversed its policies and fostered the establishment of private enterprises in the realm of trade and retail through subsidies and tax reductions. The regime had to acknowledge that privately managed shops or restaurants were indispensable for the provision of goods and services (Glaeßner 1989:247). Hence, small private businesses maintained a vital position within the industrial sphere. For instance, the private share of output of craft businesses in 1985 accounted for roughly 60 per cent (Statistical Yearbook 1986:174). The overall ratio of self-employed persons however, remained persistently low. In 1955, the share still totalled twenty per cent of the work force but subsequently fell to a mere 3.4 per cent in 1970 and to 2.2 per cent in 1989 (Statistical Yearbook 1990:127).

The planning apparatus functioned under the principle of democratic centralism which covered three levels: first the central level, comprising of the Council of Ministers and the institutions with planning authority, such as the State Planning Commission, the State Inspectorate for Investment, the State Inspectorate for Balance, the Ministry for Science and Technology, the Ministry of Finance, the Office of Prices, the Secretariat for Work and Wages, as well as the Ministry for Material. In addition, for particular sectors of the economy, the respective ministries also possessed centralised planning authorities; second the regional level, consisting of councils from districts, counties and towns; third the company level with the VEB's and combines (Glaeßner 1989:255). Planning had a long-term perspective. 'Long-term prognoses' covering the future twenty to thirty years were specified by 'long-term plans' (ten to 15 years). These proposals were based on outlines by VEB's and combines and were crafted by various central planning institutions under the authority of the Council of Ministers which acted according to directives from the SED. Additionally, councils of districts, towns and regions provided territorial concepts. Based on these long-term analyses, five-year plans were

developed in accordance to the intervals between party congresses. Directives for five-year plans were passed by the party congress and subsequently served as binding legislation for the entire economy. These five-year plans were then narrowed down into one-year targets by the various VEB's, combines and regional councils (Glaeßner 1989:262).

By the mid-1960's the deficiencies in economic planning and co-ordination became all too obvious. A reform section within the SED introduced the 'New Economic System of Planning and Management' which gained the support of Ulbricht. Its aim was to integrate the VEB's into the decision-making system of planning and co-ordination. Increased self-administration and self-responsibility were supposed to enhance individual initiative down to shop-floor level. These reform tendencies however, were confronted with the dilemma of the totalitarian nature of the SED-state. Individual initiative and self-reliance ran counter to the centralised and hierarchical principles of the Communist dictatorship. They fundamentally questioned and challenged the political dogma of the Marxist-Leninist system. The hierarchical structure of state and society fostered a lack of imagination and flexibility. The strict top-down pattern of directives and orders made it extremely difficult for scientists, industrial executives and workers to participate in the decision-making process. Innovation and progressive concepts, as well as practice-oriented analyses were lost within the strict hierarchy of the SED state. Economic policies were consequently trapped between the experts' demands for reform and the party-prerogative of absolute dominance and control of internal matters. Subsequently, reform tendencies were scrutinised and in 1965 reversed by returning to rigid centralised policies (Weber 1993:62), while the introduction of combines in 1979 even further manifested the centralised nature of the GDR economy. This 'back-and-forth' pattern of tame reform-tendencies and centralised counter-action, of experts' advice and the party's claim for leadership prevailed as a striking characteristic throughout the existence of the SED state.

Given the complicated and complex nature of the planning system it came as no surprise that the GDR economy had to confront severe disruptions. Adaptation to the changing world-economic climate, to new innovation and to new technologies was limited. The correction of ill-perceived future trends and prognoses took a considerable amount of time, if it was at all possible. The principle of long-term planning was therefore in stark contradiction to economic success. While the latter demands long-term vision it always has to be complemented by the ability for short-term reaction, correction and adaptation.

Work Mentality

The GDR had one of the highest percentages of employed persons in the world. The numbers consistently increased from 68 per cent in 1955 to eighty per cent in 1988. These figures do not even include trainees, those who worked for the armed forces, the police, prisons, or family members in agricultural enterprises (Statistical Yearbook 1990:390, 1980:346). To a large extent the number of employed women was responsible for this increase. From early on, the share of females amongst the work force was considerably high. In 1955, they already totalled 44 per cent and rose to 49 per cent in 1989 (Statistical Yearbook 1990:130). Unemployment was an unknown phenomenon. The regime proclaimed the right to work as a vital asset of Socialism over capitalism and gave it constitutional status. Thus, employment became a standard which was taken for granted by the population as a natural matter which goes without saying.

The official political culture of the SED envisaged the development of the Socialist and eventually Communist society, based on such values as optimism, solidarity, studiousness, freedom, equality and social justice, and created by the 'new Socialist man' who went through a life-long process of ideologically conditioned and state-organised education. This anthropological view of the SED - the optimistic belief in

the possibility to educate man towards an utopian goal - resulted in extremely high demands and expectations in the economic sphere. They included the acceptance of the competence and responsibility of the state which was only limited by the acceptance of the normative leadership function of the SED. The citizen was expected to commit him or herself to economic growth and the enhancement of individual technical skills. These demands were complemented by the unanimous acceptance of the priority of collective and social matters over private and individual interests (Rytlewski 1989:22, Krisch 1988:158).

Theoretically, economic development therefore was dependent on the active and voluntary co-operation and engagement of self-sacrificing individuals. Not surprisingly, the regime gave this participatory role a strong legal status. The constitution of 1968 proposed a commanding moral commitment to every citizen by stating the principle of 'contribute to working, planning and governing'. The SED demanded not only an active but furthermore an affirmative participation in the development of the Communist society. The new Socialist citizen, educated and guided by ideologically sound agents should willingly contribute. His or her efforts should not be based on coercion but instead on reason and understanding for one's individual responsibility for the general development of society.

Traditional German virtues, such as discipline, sense of duty, diligence, as well as a certain desire for order and thoroughness corresponded to the SED's view of work as a space for personal ambition and self-realisation. They were useful in the attempt to develop an industrially and technologically advanced society. The GDR's ideological propagation of economic development and success tackled a traditionally high-ranking German enthusiasm towards performance and efficiency (Sontheimer 1990:65). Hence, in the aftermath of World War II, the economic policy of the GDR initially benefited from the traditional German working ethos and morale in advancing and developing agrarian and industrial structures. The mentality towards

work and production had been described as generally positive regarding performance, division of labour, time efficiency and time management, and professionalism (Rytlewski 1989:17). In this respect, such grounding principles were fundamentally similar to the market economy of the Federal Republic.

Nonetheless the East German work mentality was conditioned by a variety of structural prerogatives which slackened individual work performances. Although the GDR offered full employment, it could only do so by splitting jobs and spreading the work load onto more individuals. This significantly reduced the amount of work which one had to fulfil. Deficiencies in planning and a chronic shortage of parts and goods further affected the industrial process. The economy was characterised by a permanent go-slow (Scherer 1991:309) which contributed to reduced demands to the individual employee who simply did not and could not work to his or her full potential.

Furthermore, incentives for the individual to improve his or her work performance were limited. Material stimulation hardly existed because of streamlined wage levels and a restricted choice of consumer products (Belwe 1989:101). Sanctions which could have encouraged better work performances were hardly enforced. With a guaranteed job there was no fear of unemployment and no existentialist coercion to perform. Working under one's potential, laziness, dawdling and slackness did not result in significant material or professional disadvantages. The outdated reliance on heavy industries prompted a lack of innovation and modernisation.

The centralised nature of the economy had a severe impact on the individual. Interdiction and control, the permanent task of fulfilling hierarchically-designed, often unrealistic plans conditioned a lack of imagination, flexibility and participation. Individualism and private initiative were oppressed. Self-responsibility was missing, since it was all too easy to blame an abstract party apparatus for

productivity failures. The chronic weakness and shortage in innovation demonstrated the system's lack of creativity and problem-solving capacity. The GDR faced the prototypical Communist dilemma: the political-ideological indoctrination generated a monocausal, uniformed view of life which was in sharp contrast to the necessary requirements of autonomy, individuality, as well as independent and responsible decision-making in order to modernise an economy.

The economic identity of East Germans was highly ambivalent. Regarding economic achievements, Easterners undoubtedly showed a certain and well-justified pride. Asked by the East German *Institut für Meinungsforschung* in 1970, respondents gave an overall positive approval for the GDR economy. 53 per cent sensed that the GDR had achieved 'great success' in her economic development. 25 per cent attributed a 'moderate success', while only 4 per cent saw 'no success' at all (Niemann 1993:46). In contrast, the western-based *Infratest* revealed in 1973 that East Germans perceived the provision of consumer goods, as well as economic performance as the strongest disadvantages of the GDR in comparison to the FRG (Köhler 1992:73). Moreover, in 1967, the *Institut für Meinungsforschung* asked workers from ten East Berlin enterprises about economic and political problems. 52 per cent were dissatisfied with their general working conditions. Asked about areas of improvement, 56 per cent mentioned organisation and continuity in production. 53 per cent criticised the provision of material and spare parts, while 46 per cent blamed lacking financial incentives (Niemann 1993:134,135). Only 25 per cent believed that the produced goods possessed a world-class standard regarding quality (Niemann 1993:136,137).

At first glance, these perceptions did not correspond to each other. Around 1970, when the GDR's economic performance was promising (Weber 1993:82), East Germans possessed both affirmative and highly critical economic orientations. A double standard became evident. Since the fixation on the more prosperous western

counterpart was a common and predominant feature of the GDR psyche, a possible positive perception of the East German economy could only develop by looking at the other countries of the Communist hemisphere. Here, the GDR had every reason for pride. It was an obvious fact to every traveller to Eastern Europe that East Germany had achieved the most prosperous living standards and even produced goods which were competitive on the western markets, for instance in optics. Easterners were proud of their economic productivity and material living standards as compared to other Comecon countries. This achievement gained an additional importance since the GDR was forced to rebuild her industrial structure without any foreign support. Permanent reparations, as well as the almost complete destruction of the industrial base by the Soviet Union further handicapped post-war development. Against these achievements, pride and a sense of togetherness amongst the population were therefore quite justified.

Nonetheless in comparison to the west, the deficiencies in the provision of consumer goods and the standards of living were all too obvious. Pride in the economic achievements therefore displayed a classic phenomenon of human nature: the ego-enhancing comparison of one's situation with those of the less advanced. This self-deceit was able to generate into a double-standard source of pride. By the 1980's however, the widening gap to the west and the persistent organisational and structural deficiencies which hardly showed any signs of improvement caused increasing irritation. Progress was slow and there was little hope that performance and productivity would result in better standards of living. Economics increasingly had a disillusioning and depressing connotation.

The Social System

Educational policies prescribed to the ideal that the Socialist society should offer every individual equal chances to acquire training and qualifications. From early childhood, East Germans passed through a complex web of educational agencies. They included kindergartens, the ten-grade general polytechnic secondary school, vocational training, the extended secondary school leading to university entry-qualifications, engineering and other specialised schools, universities, continuous education (Glaeßner 1989:284), as well as the East German army NVA (*Nationale Volksarmee*). The system was unanimously in state hands. Private agencies were non-existent.

Benefits and achievements were impressive. Education was generally free. The percentage of secondary school leavers rose significantly from 54 per cent in 1965 to 87 per cent in 1985 (Statistical Yearbook 1986:297). Equally impressive was the growth in the number of university students. In 1960, 5.8 per cent of the total population were registered at one of the 44 universities. By 1975, the numbers had risen to 8.1 per cent and 54 respectively and remained at this level until 1989. In comparison, in 1989, university students in the FRG represented only 1.6 per cent of the population (Statistical Yearbook 1990:364).

Education in the GDR was guided by two fundamental principles. On the one hand it had to provide the skills, necessary for the development of the economic sector. Every child attended the mandatory ten-grade polytechnic school. To support the advancement of the regime's proclaimed 'technical revolution' the curricula consisted to seventy per cent of such courses as science, mathematics, technology and economics. This practical orientation found its continuation in the university system which aimed at training to high technical and scientific standards. Teaching and research were closely oriented towards practical relevance in the realms of industry and agriculture (Weber 1993:52). On the other hand, ideological

prerogatives accompanied students throughout education. The regime not only raised the expert but furthermore disciplined the loyal Socialist citizen. Education was understood as the acquisition of Marxist-Leninist principles which should guide the individual through his or her professional life and provide the ideological base for one's place in society. Educational standards presented the individual with a uniformed view of life through Communist spectacles. Such monocausality however, stood in sharp contrast to the complex nature of reality (Lemke 1989:87). Reductionism and simplicity left the student ill-prepared for modern requirements of change and adaptability.

Additionally, through the selective granting of apprenticeships, student admission and jobs, the SED was able to actively control career patterns. Compliance with and adaptation to the political and ideological norms were rewarded by enhanced career opportunities. Hence, the regime determined the socio-structural development of the society. Social and professional status were ultimately dependent on party directives, while the urge to conform and accommodate within the general totalitarian system ran counter to the development of individuality and motivation to change (Lemke 1989:87).

In 1971, Erich Honecker announced the unity of economic and social policies. Ulbricht's successor envisaged increased social service financed through economic growth. In Honecker's own terms, 'the happiness of the people' (Weber 1993:77) stood at the core of the considerations of state and party. The GDR's social system was complex and extensive. For minimal contributions, East Germans enjoyed health care, child care facilities, training and education, as well as pensions. Employment was guaranteed. Rents, energy costs, as well as certain food products and clothing were heavily subsidised. To some extent, the subsidy system had bizarre consequences, as exemplified by some LPG's who fed pigs with bread, for it was considerably cheaper than the usual hog diet.

The social system was characterised by a high degree of paternalism. From cradle to grave, the state inhibited the position of the sole provider in all spheres of life. Income, consumption, social and physical security, leisure, health and education were organised by a complex bureaucratic apparatus which determined the social and economic wants of the population. Ambitions, needs and desires were streamlined and categorised by apparatschiks. Life followed a beaten centrally planned track designed and presented by the top-down hierarchy of party and state. The citizen was placed in the position of a permanent and eternal beneficiary. This protection however, created dependence and complacency while hampering self-responsibility. The individual was solely dependant on the bureaucracy and on state measures. Self-reliance was absent. According to the poet Irene Böhme the state infantilised the citizen (Meyer 1989:45). Social security acquired a given, obvious and natural standard. With no space for individual initiative and independence, the citizen developed into a dependant and obedient recipient.

Nevertheless the social system acquired a high ranking status amongst the population. In the autumn of 1990, respondents had been asked to evaluate the particular strengths of the FRG and the GDR (Köhler 1992:78). In the social realm, East Germany was given a considerably better vote. 91 per cent of respondents regarded child care in the GDR as superior to that of the FRG. Similarly 72 per cent praised the GDR's social security (26 per cent FRG), and 43 per cent the public welfare work for the individual (22 per cent FRG). The school system was judged by 46 per cent as an advantage of the GDR (39 per cent FRG), while provision of housing (30 per cent GDR, 34 per cent FRG), as well as social justice (35 per cent GDR, 33 per cent FRG) had roughly equal support for both east and west.

Nonetheless particular programmes of the GDR's welfare conception were subject to criticism. In a survey taken in February 1990, only 12 per cent perceived the care for

elder people as an advantage of the GDR, while the overwhelming majority (64 per cent) mentioned the FRG (Förster and Roski 1990:125). The same applied to the quality of medical care (15 per cent GDR, 62 per cent FRG) and to decent housing conditions (18 per cent GDR, 48 per cent FRG). It seemed that East Germans generally appreciated the comprehensive nature of the social system. Social services provided a secure life which safeguarded against illness and age and offered educational and professional opportunities to every member of society, albeit within established ideological tracks. Despite its care from cradle to grave however, certain services, such as medical care or housing were seen as more efficient and sophisticated in the FRG. The comprehensive design was highly welcomed, while practical operation displayed deficiencies. Quantity was appreciated but quality criticised.

3.3. The Federal Republic

The development of the West German economy after the collapse of the Third Reich had been described widely as an economic miracle. Already by the 1950's the *Wirtschaftswunder* was well under way. Growth rates of ten per cent were no exception, while the generated wealth benefited broad segments of society. Gradually, the degree of financial stability, social security, industrial harmony, living standards and material prosperity became the envy of Europe.

Work Structure and Work Mentality

The strong economic performance contributed immensely to the stabilisation of the young Republic. Amidst the Cold War antagonism, the division of the nation and the shameful legacy of the Third Reich, the economic realm provided a formative focus and a source for self esteem and pride. The economic slogan of the 1950's '*Es geht wieder aufwärts*' (things are looking up) became a general motto for West Germans, who trusted their new system in generating constant and formerly unsurpassed levels of prosperity. Until the mid 1960's full employment, low inflation, export surpluses, increasing incomes, expanding social services, and growing public investment in schools, universities, hospitals and the highway system became a given standard (Schmid 1990:228). Table 3.1. demonstrates the ever-growing satisfaction with the market economy. While in 1951, a planning system was favoured by nearly half of respondents and only one third supported a free market, the figures had already reversed by 1953. Twenty years onward, market economics enjoyed almost unanimous approval.

Table 3.1. Approval of the Market Economy in West Germany (percentages)

Question: You have the choice between market economy and planned economy. Which do you prefer?

	1951	1953	1961	1974
planned	47	31	27	19
market	37	54	60	70
do not know	16	15	13	11

Source: Noelle-Neumann 1981:300

The concentration on the economic recovery served as a strong integrative factor. The general striving for material success was a cognitive point of orientation for the millions of refugees who tried to establish themselves in a new environment. The same applied to the masses of Nazi-followers who mostly managed to slip through the loose nets of de-nazification measures (see Chapter Four). Because of the economic success, formerly anti-democratic forces saw no reason for political opposition to democracy (Fulbrook 1994:217). The widespread and consistent satisfaction with the economy prompted the philosopher Jürgen Habermas to refer to this new-found pride as '*Deutschmarknationalismus*' (Habermas 1990).

The positive orientation towards the economy had its roots in the progressive concept of Ludwig Erhard's *Soziale Marktwirtschaft* (social market economy). Adenauer's Minister for Economic Affairs argued that market capitalism had to benefit both business and employees, while economic profits should partly be used to craft and finance an extensive social net. *Soziale Marktwirtschaft* meant the reconciliation and parallel importance of a competitive economy, accompanied by social justice, shorter working hours and wage increases. In addition, labour relations were characterised by *Friedenspflicht* (roughly translated as obligation for peace) which implied that negotiated terms within the process of collective bargaining between trade unions and employers associations were absolutely binding. In case of disagreement over wages, working hours or redundant workers, a mediation through a third and neutral party was required by law. Also, *Mitbestimmung* (co-

determination) of the work force which was initially designed to weaken the powers of heavy industry through union control, was a further piece of the social market economy. Trade-union representatives were granted seats on company-boards which safeguarded their influence on such matters as recruitment, promotion, dismissal or working conditions. These structural requisites proved to be highly successful since labour conflicts, strikes and lock-outs remained remarkably rare.

Despite these labour-friendly features, the *Soziale Marktwirtschaft* nevertheless displayed the typical characteristics of a market economy. Competition and competitiveness represented the bases for innovation and the striving for technological perfectionism accompanied by increasing prosperity. Higher salaries and promotion constituted the incentives for the individual's work performance. Social status was largely determined by one's professional status, income and prestigious job. Work was regarded as a sphere for self-realisation. Table 3.2 shows that such active attitudes to work as fun, commitment, challenge and ambition were more widespread than the passive notions of duty, routine or delegation.

Table 3.2. Attitudes Towards Work in West Germany, 1990 (percentages)

response category	absolutely true	more or less true
Work has to be fun and should interest me	70	25
I am committed to my work	59	33
I like new challenges	48	38
I have ambitious goals in my career	26	37
Work is primarily duty	27	35
Work is routine	16	34
I like being told exactly what I have to do	10	23

n: 5518

Source: Gruner und Jahr 1990: 282.

The sphere of work was regarded as a source for self esteem, fuelled by a craving for recognition and a striving for material and social prestige. A further incentive for improved work performances was represented in the prospect of dismissal although it was significantly softened by a complex labour legislation that offered the employee protection against unfair and disproportionate removal.

The Social System

The proportion of GDP allocated to social expenditure was persistently high in the Federal Republic. Between 1960 and 1981 the share rose from 20.5 per cent to 31.5 per cent which established the FRG in the top group of western nations. In 1981 it was only surpassed by Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium, but ahead of the United States, Japan, Switzerland, and significantly ahead of the Socialist countries (OECD 1985:81,21). West Germany followed the model of a conservative-reformist welfare state, holding a position between the social democratic concept of, for instance Sweden, and the liberal selective version of Japan and the US (Schmidt 1990:126). The social system of the Federal Republic offered security against such standard risks as age, invalidity, accident, sickness, unemployment and other loss of income, as well as further support schemes, such as children's allowance or rent subsidies. The booming economy, absence of recessions, low inflation and full employment (since the end of the 1950's) constituted the bases for increasing prosperity that safeguarded the development and further advancement of the social state. The expanding number of employees and growing wages increased tax revenues as well as the income of social insurance.

However the FRG did not offer total public assistance. Social policies paid reference to the utmost principle of the Federal Republic - currency stability - on which social security was ultimately based (Schmidt 1990:130). Also, the extent of social reforms was tied to the increase of productivity and competitiveness (Mertes 1994:11). A

further threshold for the state's social intervention was guided by the subsidiary principle. Based on the Catholic social doctrine, responsibility rested with the smallest social circle that is capable of solving arising problems (Rudzio 1991:133). Hence, public social measures came into effect only in those cases where social security could not be safeguarded by private, non-state measures such as gainful employment or family support. The state therefore functioned as a final source and not as the automatic guarantor of security.

Throughout the existence of the *Bonn* Republic, the commitment to the welfare state did not evaporate. Despite the economic recessions of 1966/67, 1974/75, 1981/82, and despite changing governmental coalitions the fundamental security measures remained intact. Based on the traumatic experiences of *Weimar* and the Nazi-era, a broad political consensus prevailed which perceived a wide social safety net as the safeguard for inner political stability (Schmidt 1990:130). Thus, social reforms were not the exclusive agenda of Social Democrats but instead transcended party boundaries. All democratic parties acknowledged their central importance within the establishment of the new democratic society. In contrast to the hegemony of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, the Federal Republic was in this respect characterised by a rigid party competition. Both Social and Christian Democrats were reform-oriented and committed to the advancement of the welfare state, while the social agenda became a battleground for the voter's support. Furthermore, with the emerging Cold War social policies were perceived as an essential field of competition between Capitalism and Socialism in general, and between the GDR and the FRG in particular (Schmidt 1990:141), which fostered the establishment of ever more comprehensive welfare measures.

Although the welfare state was gradually taken for granted, it was not a right 'per se'. The Basic Law gave only limited attention to social justice, while social rights, such as the right of work, of education, of housing, etc. were missing. Instead, the

constitutional principle of the *Sozialstaat* (social state) only referred to the legislative obligation to foster social balance, as well as to guarantee a minimum of social security. The prerogative of the *Sozialstaat* merely constituted a normative focus for the state. However it was not a social guarantee or a factual claim for the individual (Degenhardt 1988:303-315). In contrast to the GDR, a constitutional right to work did not exist. The state provided the social boundary which offered security against standard risks. Within these however, the individual had a high degree of self-responsibility for his or her financial and social security.

However vague the constitutional formulations were, they nevertheless generated a standard amongst the West German population regarding the social responsibilities of the state. The *Sozialstaat* was in reality a coercing principle for political parties, as well as for trade and business unions. West Germans could only enjoy these progressive social reforms in return for high tax burdens and significant health care contributions. The public expectation of a continuous provision of welfare measures was therefore expected out of considerable individual contributions. People paid a high price for their welfare state and thus sensed that the state was obliged to give social programmes in return. This notion was market-oriented in the sense of 'service-for-money'. With the country's increasing prosperity, people sensed that the state was even more obliged to offer comprehensive and extensive social measures in return. Nonetheless the *Sozialstaat* was not an automatic prerogative.

During the 1960's and with the exception of 1966/67, the Federal Republic enjoyed full employment. At the end of the 1960's and during the early 1970's there was even a shortage of workers which was compensated by inviting 2.5 million foreign *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers). The first recession of 1966/67 came as a sudden shock and temporarily brought the economic miracle to an end. For the first time, the Federal Republic was facing severe unemployment problems with numbers growing to over one million. The two subsequent economic crises of 1974/75 and 1980/81

further manifested unemployment on the political agenda. Although in the aftermath of the crises, inflation, productivity and balance of payments were kept under control, unemployment remained a staggering problem.

Table 3.3. Unemployment in West Germany (1980-1989)

	unemployed (1000)	unemployment rate (per cent)
1980	888.9	3.8
1985	2304.0	9.3
1989	2037.8	7.9

Source: Statistical Yearbook FRG, 1990:130

The average rate of unemployment rose from one per cent between 1963 and 1973 to 3.2 per cent between 1974 and 1979 and to six per cent between 1980 and 1985 (Schmid 1990: 230). A further stress on the job market was prevented by sending around one million *Gastarbeiter* back to their countries of origin. For West German employees between 60 and 64, social policies offered early retirement which subsequently reduced their employment rate from 75 per cent in 1970 to 33 per cent in 1985.

Between 1974 and 1983 one third of the work force had at one stage experienced unemployment. For a significant number of West Germans the experience - or at least the prospect - of unemployment became a familiar feature of life. The number of long-term cases with little employment prospects grew steadily. In 1970 only ten per cent of the unemployed could not find a job for more than one year. By 1985 the number increased to one third (Schmid 1990:233).

Unemployment amongst the young was kept under control. Although in 1982, the unemployment rate of under 20-year olds was 10.7 per cent, by 1989 the figures had

dropped to 3.9 per cent. These relatively low percentages were in part the effect of the unique apprenticeship system of the Federal Republic.¹ Still, the integration of post-trainees remained difficult. In 1982, 19.6 per cent of young adults aged 20 to 25 were without a job against the backdrop of an average unemployment rate of 7.5 per cent. In 1989, the amount of 13.4 per cent was still significantly above the overall rate of 7.9 per cent (Statistical Yearbook 1990:110,111; 1983:109). Still, in international comparison to other countries like France, Italy or the US unemployment amongst the young was relatively moderate (Schmid 1990:234).

The Federal Republic never followed a policy of full employment, as for instance Sweden or Austria had done. By the end of the 1980's *Bonn* had to confront even further stress on the labour market because of growing automation and technological advancement. Government, industry and unions discussed proposals of job-sharing, time-sharing or a four-day working week. The aim was to reduce the working hours of broad segments of the work force which could compensate for the total loss of employment of a few. Various institutional measures tried to counter the malaise. Unemployment insurance was financed through equal contributions by employer and employee, whereas both parties paid two per cent each of the latter's gross income.

The Federal Office for Employment (*Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* - BfA) offered training and vocational rehabilitation and possessed a monopoly on mediating vacant positions. Most participants in these courses significantly increased their chances of employment and found work relatively soon (Schmid 1990:240). Training measures significantly relieved stress on the job market which was estimated to amount to 100,000 people (Schmid 1990:240). Publicly funded projects (*Arbeitsbeschaffungsmaßnahmen* - ABM) created further jobs, while advancing the

¹ The publicly regulated and supervised German Internship scheme represents a dual education process. Over a two-year or three-year period, participants devote around half of their studies to practical training. The remaining part consists of various courses to be taken at public training academies designed for the various professions.

qualification levels of the participants. By the end of the 1980's around 100,000 unemployed were engaged in such projects (Schmid 1990:242). The Federal Office also granted financial support to those enterprises which for economic reasons were forced to reduce the working hours of their labour force by compensating for the employees' loss of income (*Kurzarbeitergeld*). Governmental policies and measures however, could only to some extent improve the precarious situation. By the mid 1980's, education and training, part-time work and public projects relieved unemployment figures by around 400,000, which constituted between 1.5 and two per cent of the total work force (Schmid 1990:245).

To summarise, unemployment established itself as a social phenomenon. Broad segments of society had to familiarise themselves with the experience or prospect of being laid off. Various measures by the state prevented the overwhelming majority from facing existentialist crises. Unemployment benefits provided for a certain financial back-up. Publicly-funded projects and employment mediation fostered a re-integration into the labour force. The results of these measures were largely positive, although a considerable number could not find a job on a long-term basis which caused bitterness, disillusionment, social and financial hardship. For the large majority however, unemployment represented an albeit problematic but manageable and temporary phase in their lives. Aided by public institutions and programmes, one's own initiative and eagerness to regain the former social and material status provided for a certain flexibility and adaptability in pursuing higher qualification levels or seeking different jobs in different economic sectors. Most significantly and in contrast to other western nations, adulthood did not start on a sour note, since the FRG managed to integrate most of her young work force. An affirmative experience towards the country's economic system was therefore granted from the beginning of an individual's working phase in life.

3.5. The New Länder

The Economic Structure

The currency reform of July 1990 integrated eastern Germany within the economic structure of the Federal Republic. The legal framework, the Deutschmark and the free market were abruptly introduced to the eastern *Länder*. The decision by *Bonn* to pursue a shock therapy did not fail to produce an immediate impact. When revisiting the former GDR after the first years of transition one was struck by the vast changes in the economic sphere. Between 1991 and 1995 the net transfer of public funds from west to east rose from an annual 110 to over 150 billion Deutschmark. Roads, rail tracks, airports, motorways and the telephone system had been modernised or newly built. Western consumer outlets were offering their goods and services throughout the region. Entire economic sectors had to be established from scratch, such as banking, insurance or retail. Until the end of 1993, the overall investment of private industries totalled 340 billion Deutschmark (Asche 1994:233). New businesses opened and former state-owned firms were reorganised under new ownership. Small enterprises sprung up, creating a *Mittelstand*, a formerly missing class of small and medium-sized independent businesses. In the four years following the currency reform, some 870,000 new businesses had been registered, while 450,000 were forced to close down (see Table 3.4.).

Table 3.4. New Businesses in the New Länder and East Berlin

	New businesses	closures	difference
1991	292,997	99,767	+ 193,230
1992	214,316	120,768	+ 93,548
1993	190,032	113,557	+ 76,475
1994	170,782	119,300	+ 51,482
1991 - 1994	868,127	453,392	+ 414,735

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1995:129.

Privatisation proceeded much faster in comparison to other former Communist countries. The *Treuhandanstalt*, the public but highly independent trustee agency was responsible for privatising the former state-owned enterprises of the GDR aiming to restructure, rationalise and refinance them in order to compete within a market environment. At the time of unification, the *Treuhand* administered around 14,000 companies. Only small businesses such as pubs, restaurants and pharmacies were excluded. With the agency, Bonn had established overnight the world's biggest industrial conglomerate. At the end of 1994 the *Treuhand* had fulfilled its core task of privatisation and all but 60 firms had been sold (Eisenhammer 1995:7).²

Wages increased continuously. Between 1991 and 1994, basic wages in the East rose by 53 per cent. Although western levels have yet to be equalled, trade unions equipped with experienced western staff were able to negotiate highly advantageous contracts. The financial situation for East German employees improved significantly. The choice of goods quickly approached western standards and people had the money surplus to purchase them. In mid-1994 the purchasing power had already reached between 70 and 80 per cent of the west which more than outweighed the 35 per cent rise in living costs (Asche 1994:234). The percentage of respondents who claimed that they could afford more since unification rose from 27 per cent in August 1990 to 47 per cent in April 1994 (Gensicke 1994:807).³

Financial means increased significantly. Prior to unification, the *Ostmark* had a market exchange rate of approximately 4.50 to 1 to the Deutschmark. Chancellor Kohl's decision to introduce an average 1.8 conversion rate turned the sizeable East German savings into a respectable financial surplus. In 1993, the sum of private

² The agency is still in operation albeit on a much smaller scale. One of its successor organisations, the *Bundesanstalt für vereinigungsbedingte Sonderaufgaben* is responsible for supervising contractual obligations made by purchasers of sold businesses. As a second successor, the *Beteiligungs-Management Gesellschaft* supervises the remaining un-privatised enterprises (Eckart 1995:585).

³ During the same period the percentage who could afford equal standards dropped from 57 per cent to 37 per cent, while the number of people who could spend less stayed at 16 per cent.

financial capital doubled in comparison to 1992 and reached DM 35 billion (Asche 1994:235). In this respect, the market economy provided for exciting prospects of prosperity and participation in the consumer society.

However these clear indicators of a successful and rapid economic transformation were overshadowed by the state of the eastern German economy. During the initial unification euphoria unrealistic parallels were drawn to the successful post-war transformation of the West German economy after World War II which led to a fundamental misjudgement of the extent of the structural deficiencies. In 1991, Detlev Rohwedder, the first head of the *Treuhand*, who was later assassinated by Red Army Faction terrorists estimated that the sell-off of the GDR's state-owned enterprises would result in revenues of 600 billion DM. In the end, the *Treuhand* recorded losses of 265 billion DM.

After unification, productivity fell by more than half, down to 35 per cent of the western standard. Production costs were twenty per cent above the already high levels of the old *Länder*. Industrial production rapidly declined. By 1991 it had reached a mere one-third of that of 1989. Many enterprises without any hope of reaching profitable standards in the future closed down. Analysts were quick to offer cogent explanations. The 1.8 conversion of the *Ostmark* was regarded as economically unwise. Political necessities however, superseded economical rationality. Against a growing tide of emigration from the east, the government was forced to provide a generous financial package which was able to convince Easterners not to move to the prosperous west. It also served as a welcoming gesture, expressing the spirit of uniting the nation, not only in territorial but moreover in social and financial terms.

Although the GDR claimed to be the 10th industrial power in the world, economic deficiencies were revealed drastically in open competition. Infrastructure had been

neglected for years. Capital stock was worthless. State-owned firms of the GDR were highly overstaffed. The constitutional right of work resulted in astonishingly high labour forces in enterprises, as well as in the administrative sector. They stood in no relation to the degree of productivity. With the introduction of the free market, managers did not hesitate to reduce labour capacities. These efforts towards better efficiency and competitiveness were undertaken in a climate of disadvantageous economic circumstances. Despite massive public subsidies to improve infrastructure and communication systems, eastern firms had to confront rising labour costs, legal obstacles over ownership questions and administrative inefficiencies. The breakdown of the formerly important markets of Eastern Europe, as well as the general world-wide recession added to this precarious situation. Foreign business remained reluctant to invest in the new *Länder*. To secure the market in the east, companies preferred to ship supply from outside instead of investing directly in the region.

The issue of ownership represented a severe damper to economic activity. In the days of the GDR, people acquired land and property according to the contemporary status of law. This right was now questioned by former owners who were expropriated in the aftermath of World War II. Conflicting claims on confiscated property were the consequence. It made the *Treuhand's* ambition of selling and breaking up the vast state conglomerates a difficult task of utmost proportions. The government's decision to favour restitution over compensation meant that every property claim had to be processed. Legal battles over ownership stretched over years. Consequently, notions of distrust, anger and hatred towards the new authorities and the new legal system emerged quickly. Legal controversies formed psychological barriers between east and west, between defendants and plaintiffs, between winners and losers in the post-unification battle of property.

The *Treuhand* attracted western opportunistic businesses people, eager to take advantage of the agency's requirement to proceed rapidly with selling and restructuring. According to one official of the *Treuhand*

‘the jackals were everywhere, people looking to snap up companies and flog them for the real estate...In those first two years there was never time to check out investors properly. It was a mass business and everything had to go’ (Eisenhammer 1995:7).

This gold-digging mentality caused further resentment amongst Easterners. The massive take-over of eastern firms by western managers accompanied by lacking commitment to local matters, job losses and cases of bribery brought harsh feelings of anger and disgust - of a colonisation of the east by the prosperous and scrupulous west. Gold digging was further encouraged by *Treuhand* policies. The agency was hard pressed to sell off unattractive units. Quite often, it attracted only one bidder. It therefore came as no surprise that governmental inducements regularly totalled forty per cent of the costs (Eisenhammer 1995:7).

Until 1992, the government pursued a policy of moderate tax increases (tobacco, insurance, petrol, telephone). A solidarity token of 3.75 per cent of one's income tax had to be paid by all employees in 1991 and 1992. By 1992 it became clear that these revenues amounted to only 23 per cent of the required transfer payments to the east (*Der Spiegel*, April 27, 1992:20). Subsequently, the political rhetoric evolved around mutual accusations of responsibility between the respective economic actors. Employers argued for cuts in wages, trade unions for increased taxes on business profits, while federal, state and local authorities blamed each other for excessive spending. It became obvious that the unforeseeable extent of the costs of unification and of the reorganisation of the eastern economy caught political and economic elites by surprise. By 1995, the government had re-introduced the solidarity token with a rate of 7.5 per cent with an envisaged reduction to 5.5 per cent by 1998.

In contrast to governmental authorities and economic analysts, East Germans initially were more realistic as to the amount of time it would require to approximate living conditions between east and west. In the spring of 1990, Easterners sensed that it would take an average of seven years in order to reach the western level of affluence (Förster and Roski 1990:67).⁴ Hence, only a small proportion of East Germans had the illusion that prosperity would come within a short period of time. From early on in the unification process people had already realised that the economic gap between east and west was far too wide to allow for a rapid approximation.

However in the early days of unification, the political rhetoric gave the impression of an albeit historic and challenging but nevertheless manageable task. In the run-up to the federal elections in December 1990, Chancellor Kohl's promise of blossoming landscapes earned him considerable support in the new *Länder* and was taken as a promise. The political rhetoric that the market economy single-handedly could finance the colossal transformation processes fostered a mixture of naiveté and optimism. Political decisions were determined by political pressure to seize the historical opportunity of unification. Thus decisive measures, such as the approximation of wages and the conversion of the *Ostmark* were made hastily, regardless of their economic consequences. This initial positive outlook on the manageability of unification left the public in both east and west ill-prepared for the enormous task of unification, including economic restructuring, unemployment and financial burdens.

Expectations regarding the speed and practicability of unification were increasingly out of proportion. Impatience in the east was accompanied by ignorance in the west. The aversion against unification grew steadily. In 1991, two-thirds of all Westerners sensed that the limit of acceptable financial burdens had been reached (*Der Spiegel*,

⁴ The responses differed only slightly according to age or party allegiances with the margin of answers lying between 6.5 and eight years.

January 18, 1993:53). Although West Germans regarded the collapse of Communism as a unique chance in history, they were not willing to confront the upcoming and foreseeable financial and economic burden.

Table 3.5. East Germans and the Approximation of Living Standards (cumulated data, percentages)

Question: Are you satisfied with the actions taken to approximate living standards between east and west?

	1992	1994
satisfied	27.2	35.9
not satisfied	72.3	63.6
no answer	0.5	0.5
n	8587	4297

Source: Politbarometer.

As shown in Table 3.5., in 1992, 72 per cent of East German respondents were dissatisfied with the approximation of living conditions. By the end of 1994, the figures were still considerably high and amounted to 64 per cent. Supporters for the PDS, as well as the middle generation between 25 and 40 year-olds were particularly critical.⁵ This widespread dissatisfaction can be explained by the prevalent notion of comparing the current economic situation with the much higher level of prosperity in western Germany, but not with the status quo of the old GDR or of other ex-Communist countries.

⁵ In October 1994, for instance, dissatisfaction amongst PDS supporters amounted to 82 per cent. For those between 25 and 40, disapproval rates rose to 70 per cent (age 25 to 29) and 68 per cent (age 30 to 39).

Table 3.6. Evaluation of Economic Situation in Comparison to GDR (cumulated data, percentages)

Question: In comparison to the days of the GDR, in economical terms do you now fare better, worse or is there no difference at all?

	1992	1993	1994
better	46.8	49.1	53.5
worse	21.7	22.6	19.0
no difference	31.1	27.5	26.8
no answer	0.4	0.8	0.7
n	1080	2062	1068

Source: Politbarometer.

In reality however, people realised that their personal situation had improved. Table 3.6. shows that in 1992 47 per cent evaluated their economic standard as better in comparison to the old days of the GDR. By 1994, the figures had increased to a solid 54 per cent. This notion seemed rather logical, since the FRG represented a blueprint of life for the people in the former GDR. For decades, East Germans watched enviously the increasing material wealth as expressed on western TV and as displayed by western visitors. By the 1980's, the growing number of tourist visas issued by the state provided for an additional hands-on experience of life in the west. West German standards and images of prosperity had already penetrated East Germany prior to the revolution and served as a normative focal point. Since the orientation towards western levels of affluence was one of the contributing factors that brought down the SED regime, the continuous comparison and evaluation in the aftermath of 1989 seemed only logical in particular since the political and economic principles which created the western material wealth were now introduced to the east. Thus, the salary gap between east and west caused widespread bewilderment and dissatisfaction. Over a period of 31 months, the figures of disapproval hardly changed. In February 1991, 85 per cent and still 79 per cent in November 1993 thought of the wage difference as being unjust (*Politbarometer*).

The blame for the economic malaise was directed against the economic and political elites which orchestrated the change. Table 3.7. demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of eastern respondents thought that *Bonn* was not doing enough for the approximation of living conditions between east and west. The figures only changed slightly between 1992 and 1994. PDS supporters and respondents between age 25 to 50 were particularly critical.⁶ The same applied to west German managers, where 88 per cent agreed that measures by western industries were not sufficient (*Politbarometer*).

Table 3.7. East German Attitudes Towards the Federal Government (cumulated data, percentages)

Question: Is Bonn doing enough for the approximation of living standards between east and west?

	1992 (*)	1993	1994
too much	--	0.7	0.7
too little	81.3	77.8	74.8
just right	17.9	20.9	23.9
no answer	0.8	0.6	0.6
n	8587	4227	4297

*: in 1992 'too little' and 'just right' were replaced by 'not enough' and 'enough'.

Source: *Politbarometer*.

The work of the *Treuhand* was perceived even more critically. In 1992, 92 per cent held the opinion, that the *Treuhand* did not fulfil its task properly. A year later, the figure rose to 94 per cent. In the east, the *Treuhand* became the symbol of merciless western capitalism, western arrogance and colonisation. Rohwedder's successor Birgit Breuel acknowledged the scapegoat function of the agency and stated that 'for four years we protected the backs of the politicians by taking unpopular decisions' (Eisenhammer 1995:7).

⁶ In October 1994, for instance, dissatisfaction amongst PDS supporters totalled 91 per cent. For those between age 25 and 50, disapproval rates amounted to 82 per cent (age 25 to 29) and 81 per cent (age 40 to 49).

Table 3.8. East Germans' Evaluation of the *Treuhand* (cumulated data, percentages)

Question: Did the Treuhand fulfil its task ...

	1992	1993
rather well	6.5	4.7
not so good	92.1	93.8
no answer	1.4	1.5
n	4249	4165

Source: Politbarometer

Furthermore, Easterners developed the notion that they alone had to carry the burden of unification while the rich western neighbour showed a rather indifferent attitude. In January 1993, 68 per cent of the eastern population agreed that West Germans, despite their material wealth had not learned to share. Only 16 per cent acknowledged that unification represented a great burden to Westerners, while 33 per cent sensed that the financial load for the West was minimal (*Der Spiegel*, January 18, 1993:58).

Politbarometer further asked respondents to evaluate their personal economic situation. Whereas in May 1991, only 26 per cent regarded their economic situation as 'good', responses stabilised over the following three years with percentages between 34 per cent in 1992 and 39 per cent in 1994 (see Table 3.9.). In all, only a minority of under fifteen per cent was not satisfied with their economic situation.⁷

⁷ In 1994 and by age groups, young adults (age 21 to 24) particularly regarded their economic situation as bad (21 per cent). This does not seem surprising, since this age usually just enters or is about to enter employment. Also, over sixty year-olds were particularly satisfied, most likely caused by western pension schemes and early retirement.

Table 3.9. East Germans' Evaluation of Personal Situation and General Economic Situation in Eastern Germany (cumulated data, percentages)

	1992	1993	1994
personal situation:			
good	33.6	35.9	38.9
so-so	53.3	51.0	48.3
bad	12.9	13.0	12.7
do not know	0.2	0.1	0.1
general situation:			
good	2.4	2.0	4.4
so-so	37.1	37.3	52.1
bad	60.4	60.6	43.4
do not know	0.1	0.1	0.1
n	11746	11647	12849

Source: Politbarometer

The evaluation of one's own personal situation differed sharply from perceptions about the general economic condition. East Germans regarded their own situation as profoundly better than the state of the economy in the new *Länder*. Between 1992 and 1993, a constant proportion of around 60 per cent regarded the general economic situation as bad. During the same period however, a constant number of only around 13 per cent perceived their own personal fortunes as bad. By 1994, eastern respondents were less fatalistic but still only four per cent regarded the eastern economy as 'good' in comparison to 39 per cent who were quite satisfied with their individual fortunes. Judging from experiences in the west, evaluative discrepancies between the personal and the general situation are common. This is largely attributable to a media effect. Media tends to dramatise and overemphasise 'bad' news which influences people's perceptions towards the negative. This alone however, could not explain the dramatic gap in attitudes between individual and general economic conditions.

Although at first glance, the east presented a functioning economy, this was only achieved through massive transfer payments. The new *Länder* were the most subsidised region in the world. In 1993 alone, eastern Germany received between DM 150 and 180 billion DM (Gensicke 1994:806). The discrepancy was further documented by the striking difference between productivity of the eastern economy and personal spending. In 1994 domestic consumption exceeded production by DM 150 billion (Eisenhammer 1995:7). With the approximation of wages and the advantageous *Ostmark*-conversion Easterners benefited directly from unification. With this massive flow of public funds, it came as no surprise that East Germans positively evaluated their own economic situation. However the newly acquired standard of living was subsidised. East Germans were lulled into prosperity. Nonetheless the problematic restructuring of the eastern economy did not pass unnoticed by Easterners which explained the sizeable gap in perceptions of personal and general economic conditions.

Work Mentality

After decades of centralised, planned economics that fostered obedience and conditioned a lack of initiative, imagination and flexibility the new arrival of the market economy demanded a radical re-orientation for East German employees. Self-reliance, risk-taking, and individual decision-making often came as novel concepts. How did the individual adapt to these new requirements in the sphere of work?

In his play 'Waiting Room Germany' author Klaus Pohl interviewed a western insurance manager who was sent east to set up a new dependence. He complained bitterly about a traditional working ethos that persisted as a legacy of Communism. His colleagues went to the hair-dresser during working hours, showed severe

deficiencies in the polite handling of customer relations and were in general overwhelmed by the new-found freedom and self-reliance.

By the same token, the 'Federal Association of Independent Businesses' (*Bundesverband mittelständischer Wirtschaft*) referred to a deficit in managerial qualities. In 1995, according to its bureau in Potsdam, entrepreneurial shortcomings lay in the realms of sales, internal organisation, as well as hortatory and contract proceedings. Moreover, a lack of knowledge about the 1200 sources of economic and financial assistance was widespread. The development of an entrepreneur culture still lagged drastically behind western standards. People were hesitant to take economic risks and to invest. The ability to 'think big' regarding horizontal and vertical expansion was pushed aside by a traditional, minimalist and safeguarding approach, perfectly exemplified in the old German proverb of '*Schuster bleib bei Deinen Leisten*' (stick to your last).

A study for the employment ministry of the state of Saxony-Anhalt by the eastern based *Institut für sozialwissenschaftliche Informationen und Studien* ('Isis') largely substantiated such perceptions. The study of 2000 small and medium-sized businesses pointed towards managerial deficiencies of eastern business executives.⁸ In 1995, 'Isis' showed the prevalence of traditional values as diligence, sense of duty, honesty and reliability (see Table 3.10.). Crucial entrepreneurial skills, such as creativity, flexibility, compromise and willingness to take risks however, were lacking. Proper market analyses were missing in two-thirds of the queried enterprises as were innovation and the emphasis on the development of future products. Only twenty per cent employed trainees which pointed towards a lack of commitment to vital investment in personnel and training. Co-operation with other businesses were hardly established. Instead of having recourse to former Socialist contacts in order to enhance regional economic structures, sixty per cent of the respondents simply had

⁸ Information according to Saxony-Anhalt's Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Health, Press Office, August 1995.

no intentions to do so. Instead, the eastern manager was characterised by a high degree of social competence, who valued amiable social relations.

Table 3.10. Ranking of Entrepreneurial Skills Amongst East German Managers (1995)

Skill	male	female
reliability	1	1
responsibility	1	2
diligence	3	5
sense of duty	4	3
honesty	5	4
determination	6	6
decision making	7	9
optimism	8	12
self-confidence	9	11
thoroughness	10	7
establishing social contacts	11	8
ability to prevail	12	15
rigidity	13	15
vision	14	18
thriftiness	15	17
creativity	16	15
intuition	17	10
willingness to compromise	18	20
flexibility	19	19
willingness to take risks	20	21
orderliness	21	14

Source: Press Office, Ministry for Employment, Social Affairs and Health, Saxony-Anhalt, Aug.1995.

However the eastern work mentality was by no means as bleak as suggested by these accounts. Over the short period of merely five years since the currency reform, Easterners showed a remarkable potential to adopt to market economical standards.

The high number of new-found businesses - 850,000 between 1991 and 1994 (see Table 3.4.) - furthermore indicated a strong dynamic to face the challenges of the transition, in particular the prospect of Unemployment. 'Isis' itself pointed towards the high degree of motivation of young entrepreneurs which was supported by a strong desire for self-responsibility and self-realisation. Moreover, the eastern manager was characterised by a preparedness to accept personal hardship, such as long working hours and low income in order to uphold their businesses.

Table 3.11. Working Morale in East and West (1994)

Respondents were presented with certain behavioural patterns at work. Categories ranged from 1 (not serious at all) to 6 (very serious) Listed below are the average scores.

	West	East
Longer breaks than allowed	3.6	4.1
stay away from work on the pretext of being ill	4.4	5.0
arrive late	4.1	4.7
work slowly	4.2	4.1
private phone calls	4.0	4.2
illicit work	4.4	4.8
n	1162	309

Source: Emnid Informationen 7/8:1994:72-76.

In an east-west comparison the eastern employee possessed an even higher working morale than his or her western counterpart. Table 3.11. demonstrates that the sense of duty and commitment of Easterners within their working environment not only met but more often exceeded western standards. Longer breaks, calling in sick and arriving late were particular attitudes which were more discredited by East Germans. Even if lack of initiative, self-reliance and flexibility - as criticised by 'Isis' and the *Bundesverband mittelständischer Wirtschaft* - clouded work performances,

commitment and sense of duty certainly represented valuable attitudes which no enterprise could do without.

Further massive adjustments to the new market economy were represented in the considerable numbers of commuters and migrants to the west. Faced with the prospect of unemployment, Easterners did not hesitate to seek their fortunes in the more prosperous and stable old *Länder*. Unemployment figures were given a significant relief because of the vast numbers of commuters. Up to 600,000 people worked in the old *Länder* or in the western part of Berlin (see Table 3.12.). In 1993, more than nine per cent of the total labour force of eastern Germany had a job in the west. An additional 15,000 found an apprenticeship outside eastern Germany (Asche 1994:234). Migration further embellished the statistics. Since unemployment was a less pressing problem in the old Federal Republic, many East Germans chose to seek their fortunes there. In 1991, 250,000 people moved away from eastern Germany and set up their home in the west or the western part of Berlin. By 1992, the figures had dropped by 20 per cent down to 200,000. A year later, a further decrease resulted in a still astonishingly high 170,000 people leaving the new *Länder* (Statistical Yearbook 1995:80, 1994:88, 1993:88).

Table 3.12. Commutes to Work (from East to West)

Year	numbers (in 1000)
1990	200
1991	540
1992	500
1993	600
1994	550
1990-1994	2390

Sources: Press Office, Bundesanstalt für Arbeit; Statistical Yearbook 1995:105.

Unemployment

Economic restructuring carried the heavy burden of a dramatic decrease in overall employment. Since the GDR had a job guarantee for every citizen, unification revealed formerly hidden unemployment of overstaffed enterprises. With unification, excessive manpower was drastically reduced. By sector, manufacturing was affected most with a decrease of 60 per cent. Mining and energy (39 per cent) and services (22 per cent) also had severe reductions. Only in construction did the number of jobs increase by 10 per cent (Kocka 1994:181). High profile investments by Elf, Siemens or Opel (the German subsidiary of General Motors) which were all supported by heavy governmental inducements could by no means compensate for such heavy reductions.

Between 1991 and 1994 the number of employees dropped from 9.3 to 6.6 million. The degree of unemployment occasionally reached higher levels than the depression of the late 1920's and early 1930's. The disproportion of unemployment between east and west was striking. In 1994, figures reached 17 per cent in the new *Länder* and nine per cent in the old Federal Republic. Between forty and fifty per cent of all eastern employees had experienced unemployment at one stage since unification. These figures did not include migrants and commuters to the west, those who registered for public work schemes or retraining courses, and early pensioners who in 1993 alone totalled some 600,000 (Sakowsky 1994:118).

Table 3.13. Unemployment in East and West (per cent of work force)

	East (*)	West
1991	12.0	5.8
1992	17.4	6.2
1993	17.6	7.9
1994	17.3	9.0
1995	15.9	8.9

(*): excluding western Berlin

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1995:105,124, Bundesanstalt für Arbeit, Press Office.

Table 3.14. 'ABM' and Part-Time Work in the New Länder

	ABM (in 1000)	Part-Time Work (In 1000)
1991	183.3	1616.2
1992	388.0	370.0
1993	259.9	181.4
1994	280.2	96.8
1995	180.6	60.2

ABM: *Arbeitsbeschaffungsmaßnahme* (public work scheme)

Sources: Statistical Yearbook 1995:123,125; 1993:131; Bundesanstalt für Arbeit, Press Office.

At the outset of unification, Easterners were largely positive about their material and social future. In April 1990 respondents were queried about their personal perspective for the next two to three years and were asked to place them into four categories from highly optimistic to highly pessimistic. Regarding employment, the two categories for optimism totalled 67 per cent. In addition, the responses for material situation (63 per cent) and social security (61 per cent) were also largely positive (Förster and Roski 1990:84). In contrast, unequivocal pessimism was expressed by only seven per cent (employment) and six per cent (material situation and social security).

Table 3.15. Perceived Security of Employment Amongst Easterners (cumulated data, percentages)

	1992	1993	1994
secure	55.4	59.4	59.8
in danger	43.6	39.3	39.4
no answer	1.0	1.3	1.8
n	5681	5214	5303

Source: Politbarometer

Over the course of the year discomfort, in particular about the security of employment grew. In December 1990, 59 per cent sensed that their job was in danger. Only 40 per cent were sure about keeping their employment (*Politbarometer*). Two years later however, the proportion had reversed. Now 55 per cent perceived their job as secured and only 44 per cent feared unemployment (see Table 3.15.). Nonetheless between 1992 and 1994, figures did not improve. The percentage of East German respondents who were uncertain about their employment future remained at around forty per cent. According to age cohorts differences were marginal.⁹ Hence, a considerable proportion of the eastern work force perceived their employment prospects as worrying and as a leap into the dark. Not surprisingly, Easterners, confronted with the loss of jobs and with a sudden re-orientation towards more demanding and skilled work performances, as well as often towards an entirely different working environment became increasingly critical of 'Capitalism'. Whereas support for 'Socialism' remained at constant levels,¹⁰ the approval of the market economy amongst East Germans dropped drastically, from 77 per cent in the spring of 1990 to only 44 per cent in the summer of 1992 (Eisel 1994:160).

For East Germans, still used to the tight social net of Socialism which provided for jobs and a steady income, the sudden confrontation with unemployment and financial insecurity was harsh and devastating. For those without jobs, a feeling of betrayal and exclusion from the material benefits and the increasing prosperity around them became prevalent. The sudden changes in the sphere of work, fear of unemployment and increasing competitiveness for jobs had drastic implications on the individual's life and found their expression in a general perception that one's social relations to friends or family were worse than in the days of the GDR. In 1992, only five per cent of eastern respondents sensed that the relations within their social environment had improved since unification. On the contrary, 44 per cent held

⁹ 50 to 59 year-olds were slightly less and people over sixty years slightly more secure.

¹⁰ The cumulated data of the *Politbarometer* for 1990 showed that 28 per cent of respondents thought 'much' or 'very much' of Socialism. By 1994, the figure had increased slightly to thirty per cent.

the opinion that things got worse (*Politbarometer*). As shown in Table 3.16., between sixty and 67 per cent regarded social safety as being worse since unification.

Table 3.16. Perceived Social Security in Eastern Germany (cumulated data, percentages)

Question: When thinking about your social safety do you fare better or worse as compared to the days of the GDR?

	1992	1993	1994
better	15.6	14.4	20.5
worse	60.5	66.5	59.7
no difference	23.7	18.7	19.0
no answer	0.2	0.4	0.8
n	1080	2062	1068

Source: Politbarometer.

The former stable and foreseeable circles of work, family and friends were now under pressure. Demographic statistics undermined the perceptions of change and uncertainty. Between 1989 and 1993 the birth-rate of eastern Germany had fallen by sixty per cent, the marriage rate by 62 per cent and the divorce rate by 63 per cent (Statistical Yearbook 1995:69,70,79). These drops can to some extent be explained by the reduction in certain social services. The comprehensive welfare state of the GDR was designed to enable women to combine work and family. Over ninety per cent of all women of working age were employed, as compared to fifty per cent in the FRG (Pittmann 1987:16). After unification, the alternative of choosing between housewife and mother versus employee which had virtually disappeared from the conscience of East German became again an option. With the loss of affordable child care facilities and day nurseries, accompanied by the abolition of the 'Baby year' (maternity leave granted to first-time mothers at full pay) or the monthly free household-day, women found it hard to combine motherhood and employment.

In addition, women were disproportionately affected by unemployment. In 1990, 54 per cent of unemployed in the east were female. By 1994, the figure had risen to 63 per cent (Statistical Yearbook 1994:130). In the same year, the unemployment rate of women in eastern Germany stood at twenty per cent, in comparison to 11.5 per cent for men. Preferential treatment of male employees was obvious and widespread (Helwig 1995:342). Still, in times of financial insecurity women often had no choice but to look for jobs. Some also appreciated the social and material independence which comes with employment. Hence, family and marriage plans were often postponed. Still, such vast changes are extremely rare and find no comparable expression in western Germany or in any other western society. Instead, they represented strong indicators for the transitory, unstable and imbalanced life in the east.

3.5. Conclusion

Economics had an ambivalent connotation in the GDR. On the one hand, the country's status as the champion of the Comecon represented a significant source of pride amongst East Germans. The establishment of an economy that generated the highest living standard amongst Communist countries was perceived as a tremendous effort. On close scrutiny however, economics was a source of continuous frustration. In comparison with the west and in particular with the other Germany, people all but ignored the fundamental deficiencies of their own system and the increasing wealth that prospered outside the Iron Curtain. At home, economic stagnation, mismanagement, the outdated reliance on heavy industry and growing ecological problems prompted resignation and embitterment. By the 1980's the GDR was permanently on the verge of bankruptcy. Hence, economics possessed a distinctly negative undertone. Internal comparisons to other Communist societies merely functioned as temporary remedies for the battered collective self esteem which tried to restrain the thought that years of struggle and hard labour had resulted only in minor economic and material accomplishments.

In contrast, economics had a very positive connotation in the Federal Republic. The economic miracle brought widespread prosperity. West Germany was united under the principle of material reconstruction which safeguarded the integration of millions of refugees and silenced potential anti-democratic opponents. The social market economy benefited employers with increasing productivity and very low strike rates, while employees appreciated the general rise in living standards, the sophisticated system of social securities, as well as increasing wages and decreasing working hours. Despite some economic crises, in particular in the 1970's, peace, harmony and conciliation characterised the economic process. The continuous improvement of the national economy, as well as the increasing individual material standards turned from prerogatives into expected underlying currents which were taken for granted.

The necessity to establish a formative focus after the catastrophe of the Third Reich resulted in a highly consensual economic system. Inevitably, it generated a good deal of conformism to the principles of economic success and general prosperity.

With unification, economics continued to possess a negative undertone for Easterners. The dead-beat state of the eastern economy rubbed further salt into the wounds that in retrospect decades of hard work constituted only a period of failure and underachievement. The eastern economy did not represent a contribution but a mere burden to the unified Germany. The introduction of market principles destroyed any remaining sources of pride. Production and productivity dropped, over-staffed enterprises were restructured and unemployment spread. The necessary investments in roads, railways, communication or housing further documented the discrepancy between western standards and eastern shortcomings. East Germans had to confront the bitter reality, that one's past working life did not pass the western test of time. Instead, it was an utter failure.

There remained a solution however, in looking ahead and leaving the past behind. Here, unification provided for exciting and optimistic prospects. The choice and variety of goods grew dramatically. Houses were newly built or modernised. People had more money to spend because of the growth in wage levels and the advantageous currency conversion. Despite the persistent shortage of employment, for those with jobs, the financial situation improved and was evaluated in a positive manner. Moreover, in regard to the future people showed a certain supportive saturation with their financial existence. Only five years after unification, East Germans had already reached a level of considerable contentment with their material situation.

This new-found affluence however, was an automatic given from the political elites. East Germans were lulled into prosperity. The so called *Aufschwung Ost* (Progress

East) changed the economic landscape of the new *Länder*. Public funds were allocated for governmental projects, investment and subsidies. Western trade unions which extended their network to the east negotiated successful wage terms, while the government introduced a generous conversion rate.

As with the former Communist regime, Easterners were passive recipients. The economy of the GDR with the principles of centralism, nationalisation and planning fostered lack of self-responsibility and independence. Initiative and self-reliance ran counter to the totalitarian hierarchy of the SED state. The individual was a streamlined underling, excluded from participation and responsibility in the economic process. Just as the Communist system was imposed on East Germany, so was the market. In each case, East Germans were the passive 'victims' without choice. This was bound to create a rather inactive economic identity. Prior to unification, the blame for general economic deficiencies was directed against an abstract and inefficient, centralised apparatus. Now, political elites, western industries and business people, and foremost the *Treuhand* had to bear the brunt of public discontent. This passive recipient-mentality was further evident in the dissatisfaction with the approximation of living standards. Although the majority recognised that they fared better as compared to the past, people were not content with increased wage levels and material standards. The mechanism remained the same: blaming distant authorities. As with the old days, the individual did not attribute responsibility to him or herself but to the apparatus, to the elites who organised and determined one's working life.

Back in the GDR, work performance did not necessarily determine social and material status. Ideological compliance played as much a role. The absence of efficient incentives to work more and harder accounted for a lack of cognitive commitment to work. With the oppression of autonomy and individuality the worker obediently fulfilled prescribed tasks. Work was not a sphere for self-realisation but a

financial necessity and duty to the state. Initiative came from above and not out of personal ambition. The worker was a mere tool and means of production within the economic process, utilised by the totalitarian system.

These perceptions of the mechanisms of one's working life lingered on in the new *Länder*. Again, economics was regarded as a utilisation of the individual by elites and authorities: opportunistic business people from the west bought eastern companies in search for the quick money while disregarding local needs, in particular employment. The post-unification battles over property further manifested people's impression of a colonisation of the east by merciless western capitalism. Easterners were overwhelmed by market principles, their firms degraded to investment opportunities, their jobs made redundant, their social safety being threatened. People felt as though they were being left to carry the burden of unification alone, since the arrogant west was not willing to share or contribute.

Such attitudes were in sharp contrast to those generated during the successful economic miracle of the FRG. Work was an integrative factor for refugees and potential anti-democratic forces and represented a formative focus and an affirmative experience for the individual who was thriving for financial success and craving for social recognition. Responsibility lay with the individual, capable of determining his or her own life. In the new *Länder*, such inbred notions of democracy and capitalism as activity and self-realisation clashed with the conditioned passive and recipient mentality of the Communist years. The active compelling urge to perform collided with the passive notion of provision. Subsequently, the frustration and anger caused by the post-unification economic malaise was channelled into expressions of defiance and lamentation, such as perceptions of a colonisation and exploitation by the west, as well as the discomfort with the persisting gaps in wages and living standards.

In addition, the nature of Socialist economics generated cognitive and behavioural patterns, which left East Germans ill-equipped for the upcoming transformation to a market economy. The strict hierarchy of the GDR's economic structure with rigid top-down patterns of planning and target fulfilment severely hampered the individual's capacity regarding imagination and flexibility. It nurtured apathy, lethargy and self-complacency, as well as tutelage and the readiness to obey and oblige. Also, deficiencies in planning and chronic shortages of parts and goods slackened the economic process, while the spreading of work loads onto several individuals further contributed to lower working demands. Furthermore, the GDR's economy had considerable difficulties in the realms of innovation, as well as adaptation, correction and response to emerging economic trends and necessities.

These shortcomings were already conditioned under a streamlined educational apparatus. Despite emphasising technical skills and qualifications, educational facilities fostered an urge to conformity, compliance and accommodation within the totalitarian system. They suppressed individuality and motivation to change. Upon unification, such skills were badly missed in a market environment that thrived on competition and competitiveness and where initiative, individuality, independence and constant readjustment were paramount principles. The underdeveloped entrepreneur culture as well as the general difficulties of the labour force in adapting to new working environments and demands served as telling examples.

Nonetheless although market-oriented skills, such as initiative, flexibility, risk-taking or responsibility were still underdeveloped, East Germans showed remarkable signs of adaptation. The presence of an attitude to succeed within the free market - whether out of personal ambition or of financial necessity caused by the prospect of unemployment - was documented by the committed and conscientious work ethic and the readiness to commute or move to the west for better employment opportunities. Departing from a life on the beaten track of the Communist society,

people left well-established social circles and re-adjusted to an unfamiliar environment. These were promising signs which indicated that Easterners would eventually muster the mental transition to market-economic standards. Skills are learned over time. They however, have to be preceded by the individual's willingness to acquire them.

With unification, the value of work underwent a drastic reorientation. In the GDR, employment represented a constitutional right and a natural given that was automatically organised by the state. Under Communism, work had no particular value. Every citizen was entitled to it. Identities which were constructed around employment, such as self-realisation in the private sphere or social contacts with colleagues were not seen as arising out of any individual achievements at work. West Germany however, was the reverse. Individual work performances had an indisputable impact on one's social and material status.

In addition, unemployment was a regular phenomenon in the Federal Republic which affected a considerable number of people at one stage in their working lives. Still, individual initiative offered the prospect of a re-integration within the labour force. Aided by governmental schemes and job mediation, people were able to join training programs or public work projects. For most of the jobless, unemployment therefore constituted only a temporary phase. For the overwhelming majority, unemployment in itself represented a huge incentive to look for work, since it considerably affected one's material situation and social status.

The severe job cuts in eastern Germany therefore came as a shock. Unemployment was an entirely new experience which now affected up to half of the labour force. In 1994 two-fifths still perceived their jobs as being in danger. Thus, it came as little wonder that the fear of unemployment remained the most important issue in life for Easterners. Approximately two-thirds of the eastern population regarded

unemployment as the most important issue in their lives (Gensicke 1994:802). A life-time guarantee turned into a never before experienced feeling of existentialist uncertainty. Self-contentment and complacency about work were now replaced by demands to show initiative in finding new jobs, in acquiring new qualifications and in improving work performances. Disorientation and loss of self-esteem were the consequences.

In the realm of social services, the GDR citizen internalised an extensive system of comprehensive care at minimal costs. The welfare state which provided security from cradle to grave achieved a high standard amongst Easterners and was gradually taken for granted. As with work, people developed a recipient mentality. Although East Germans appreciated the comprehensive nature of the system, they criticised the lack of quality in certain fields which indicated an attitude of pretentious demands to the state. Accordingly, the welfare state of the Federal Republic represented a comprehensive and extensive system. However it was not an automatic guarantee against social misfortunes. The *Sozialstaat* constituted more of a normative focus for the state than a prerogative for people's demands. Despite the ever increasing intensity of the services, they were nevertheless tied to currency stability, productivity and competitiveness of the economy and were financed by substantial contributions from the individual and the private sector.

It therefore came as no surprise, that Easterners perceived general living circumstances as harder now than in the days of the GDR. Progressive social services, such as subsidies for housing and food products, full health coverage, children nurseries or the right of work were abolished. Old routines broke down. The period of transition and uncertainty was documented by vast demographic pressures indicated by the drastic declines in marriages, birth rates and divorces. It showed that the collapse of the GDR was not merely the demise of a system but moreover the collapse of a particular form of life. Against the backdrop of such dramatic changes

the growing criticism of capitalism and the persistent support for Socialism was inevitable. The transformation from secured and infantilised recipient to self-responsible individual was too harsh and too rapid. Faced with social and financial risks and uncertainties the retrospective attachment to a safe and secure past represented a logical emotional escape.

Nonetheless several positive developments allowed for cautious optimism. Satisfaction with one's personal financial situation represented a vital systemic stabiliser. People realised that they benefited from the introduction of the market economy and that they fared far better in comparison to the days of the GDR. Despite some depressing economic facts, in particular unemployment, there was no major social unrest. The hardship caused by the decline in social services, unemployment, as well as new working requirements and environments seemed to have been outweighed by material gains for those who were able to secure jobs.

Furthermore, East Germans adapted remarkably to the gloomy reality of the economic transformation. Despite the euphoria at the outset of unification, Easterners initially showed a great deal of realism regarding their employment prospects and the approximation of living standards. Individual prognoses about one's future were far more accurate than contemporary statements of political and economic experts (Wagner 1992:85). Such realism prevented against overambitious material demands from unification and provided a cognitive buffer of acceptance of the persistent gap in the approximation of living standards between east and west. Also despite the shock of encountering a hitherto unknown phenomenon, the early familiarisation with the possibility of unemployment psychologically prepared East Germans for the actual experience of it.

Still, the economic identity in unified Germany stood on shaky grounds. The transition from Socialist to market structures significantly contributed to the growing

antagonism between east and west. The two-class society continued to exist and manifested itself. Despite some impressive advances, wages, living standards and employment opportunities in the east had not reached western levels. Such economic inequalities bore the dangerous potential to heighten psychological discontent (Stern 1993:121). Anti-western sentiments emerged and did not fade, such as the perceived colonisation and exploitation, merciless capitalism and western indifference to eastern problems.

Positive evaluations of East Germans were largely attributable to the increase in the material well-being of the population, in comparison to the Communist period. This however, was only made possible through massive governmental subsidies. Before unification, Easterners followed the call of the *Deutschmark*. After unification, they were kept on the life-support by billions of transfer money. This approval of the western-imposed market economy could only be maintained through the continuous improvement of the individual's material basis. Thus, the expectations of East Germans regarding material standards have to be met by increases in job opportunities and levels of affluence. Hence, the eastern economy has to progress from a subsidised case of illness to an economically sound region. People at least have to be given the prospect of advancing material standards to complete unification in economic terms. Only then are Easterners capable of developing a positive orientation towards economics which would equal that of the western part. Only then can recipient mentalities, passivity, frustration and embitterment turn into affirmative experiences in the sphere of work, including the development of notions of initiative, self-realisation and self-fulfilment. East Germans had already shown supportive attitudes towards market economics. The persistence of defiant notions however, indicated the fragility of the collective psyche.

CHAPTER FOUR: CITIZENSHIP

4.1. Conceptualising Citizenship

Citizenship can be understood as the relationship between the individual and the political community he or she lives in. The citizen is entitled to a variety of rights and privileges in return for a set of duties and responsibilities. The state offers its citizens political, legal, civil and social rights, while the individual is expected to obey laws, pay taxes or fulfil military duties. This interdependence forms a vital anchor for the establishment of loyalties and emotions. What are the citizen's attitudes, and emotions to his or her political community? Can the individual form an identity towards the state out of willingly-accepted responsibilities and confidently-claimed rights?

Rights and responsibilities within state-citizen relations were fundamentally different in the two Germanys. The official political culture of the GDR (Rytlewski 1989:22, Krisch 1988:158) was derived from the principles of Marxism-Leninism which transcended and penetrated all spheres of life and society. At the core of this *Zielkultur* stood the development of a Socialist and eventually Communist society, based on such values as optimism, solidarity, studiousness, freedom, equality and social justice, and created by the 'new Socialist man', who went through a life-long process of ideologically-conditioned and state-organised education (Sontheimer 1990:61).

This philanthropic view of the SED - the optimistic belief in the possibility to educate man towards an utopian goal - resulted in extremely high demands and

expectations from the citizens of the GDR. East Germans were forced to accept the state doctrine of Marxism-Leninism as the ideological basis of their political, social and economic lives. They were obliged to accept the leading role of the SED including its normative interpretations of all aspects of society. They had to accept the competence and responsibility of the state in all political, social and economic matters which were only limited by the leadership function of the SED. The citizen was expected to show interest and engage in political and social organisations under the dogmatic and practical guidance of the party. Demands also included a personal commitment to economic growth, the improvement of individual technical skills, as well as military duties. Collective matters possessed priority over private and individual interests. The supreme goal of the GDR was represented in the creation of a new and better society. The envisaged development of the Socialist towards the Communist society depended on the active and voluntary co-operation and engagement of self-sacrificing individuals which required a firm, rational and emotional commitment to the Communist cause.

Hence state-citizen relations in the GDR followed rigid top-down patterns. The individual was expected, even coerced, to participate. The Communist party's monopoly on the interpretation and implementation of Marxist principles was justified by Lenin out of its 'avant-garde' position within society as the leader of the revolution. Only the party possessed the political conscience and scientific knowledge to lead society towards the logical end-point of historical development - the Communist society. In contrast, democracy and hence the Federal Republic, possessed fundamentally different values of citizenship. While the Communist society emphasised collectivity, democracy stresses individuality.

Greek philosophers paid particular attention to direct participation of the individual in the political process. Within the liberal tradition of Montesquieu, James Madison, Adam Smith or John Locke sovereignty lies within the people, circumscribing the power of the state. Rousseau argued for an enlightened citizenry, individual liberty

and accountable governments. Even the elitist philosopher Schumpeter (1992:269) who viewed democracy as an 'institutional arrangement where individuals acquire decision-making power in a competitive struggle for the people's vote' cannot but emphasise the individual within the political process. Today, while neo-conservative thinkers point towards deferential and orderly behaviour, and liberal theorists stress active participation in public and community affairs, democracy in either conception offers the individual the opportunity for active engagement in political affairs.

Thus citizenship in unified Germany required the individual to pursue an active, informed and conscious interest in public affairs. As a normative standard, the ideal citizen had to be knowledgeable, concerned, supportive and participative to his or her social community.¹ In reality however, the common citizen represents only an unsatisfactory approximation to this ideal. Societies have to accept that various circumstances remove the individual from such normative virtues. This perfect model is simply not a part of any political reality. Obstacles may include access to information, knowledge, time pressure, or differing intellectual capacities. Also, the demands of liberal democracy for the individual's initiative and self-responsibility can be counteractive to the citizenship ideal in regard to the well-being of the whole society and the sublimation of selfishness.

But how do these deviations affect the stability of the political system? An answer can be given by analysing the causes which made a citizen pass off citizenship attributes. Someone who cheats on income-tax declarations does not necessarily want to abolish democracy. Danger occurs however, when the principles of citizenship are surrendered to anti-democratic ideological objectives and political party advantages or when loyalty and allegiance to a democratic community turn into destructive disobedience or antipathy.

¹ For a more thorough discussion on the concept of citizenship see for example: Heater 1990, Janowitz 1983, Oppenheim 1977.

Here the question of legitimacy of the political system enters the agenda. In the GDR, Marxism-Leninism offered legitimacy to the SED regime since the party in its vanguard position possessed the Communist conscience and scientific knowledge to lead in the revolutionary process of establishing the Communist society. For the young *Bonn* Republic growing support for democratic institutions and parliamentarism, as well as high turn-outs at elections represented strong processes of legitimation for the recently established democracy. In both societies however, the quest for a stable political community became one of acceptance of the political system by the individual. As the SED had to realise in 1989 form of government and political organisation of society were only well-established as soon or as long as the political system enjoyed a certain degree of legitimacy amongst the citizens. Max Weber viewed legitimacy as equivalent to a belief in legitimacy. Legitimate power is simply the power that is regarded as legitimate by the people (1956:23,157,659; 1958:493). Seymour Martin Lipset (1958:88) defined legitimacy as the 'capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate one's for society'.

Weber and Lipset emphasised the ability of states or governments to persuade citizens of the legitimate nature of the political system in a top-down process. In contrast, David Beetham (1991:100) stressed the importance of a society's values and rules. A government can only be successful if it represents a rightful source of authority, while its action meets consent within society and is based on established legal rules. Here the pattern is one of interaction between top and down, between ruler and ruled.

In either case the emphasis is on the positive and meaningful identification of the citizen with the rules and principles of the political community. This implies that the individual's thought and behaviour should be guided by a constitutional consensus which, in unified Germany, included agreement on parliamentarism, acceptance of political institutions, as well as respect for human rights and civic liberties (dignity,

equality, freedom of expression and belief). Additionally, in a democratic system a proper mediation between ruler and ruled holds centre stage. The citizen is entitled to an adequate aggregation and representation of interest. The governing elites ought to maintain reasonable contact with its subjects which provides for a mutual exchange of information, ideas and demands. Regarding the legitimacy of the system, it remains vital that the citizen possesses the capacity, or at least is given the prospect to influence the decision-making process.

In short, in the understanding of this chapter, participation and legitimacy represent the cornerstones of citizenship. In the context of unified Germany the public's general knowledge of and interest in the political process are analysed. The chapter furthermore addresses participation patterns in east and west, including turn-outs at elections and membership of political parties, interest groups, or citizen-initiatives. The question of legitimacy of the new democratic system is analysed with the help of public attitudes towards the state, while asking whether East Germans had accepted the institutional setting of democracy and whether their thought and behaviour complied with the implicit values and rules of democracy. The chapter therefore addresses attitudes towards the bureaucracy, political actors and institutions. Mediation of power between ruler and ruled is analysed by looking at attitudes towards the system of interest representation, while trying to examine the extent to which East Germans at all felt represented.

4.2. The German Democratic Republic

Marxism-Leninism understands politics as the relationship between various classes of society and the political power of the state. Generally speaking, the state serves the ruling class: the capital-owning bourgeoisie in the capitalist and the working class in the Socialist society. In a Marxist-Leninist state the individual has to submit all private ambitions to the paramount interest of society which is formulated through the avant-garde role of a Communist party. To define and redefine the proper needs and interests of a Socialist society, a constant and reverse exchange of ideas between party and citizens is necessary. Marxism-Leninism therefore requires the 'new Socialist man'; an active participant in the political process with a permanent interest and eagerness in creating the Communist utopia.

The SED regime gave this participatory role of citizens strong legal status. The constitution of 1968 proposed a hefty moral commitment to every citizen by stating the principle of 'contribution to working, planning and governing'. The SED demanded not only an active but furthermore an affirmative participation in the development of the Communist society. The new Socialist man, educated and guided by ideologically sound agents should willingly contribute. His or her efforts should not be based on coercion but on reason and understanding for the individual's responsibility in the general development of society. But how did the theoretical and normative concept of the participative, informed and affirmative citizen correspond to the political reality of the GDR? What were the opportunities and chances of each individual to exert an influence on the political process?

4.2.1. Participation

The SED

The SED had a strong base within society. In 1981, 17 per cent of all people over age 25 and even 42.5 per cent over age forty owned a party membership card. As of

1986, the SED had 2.3 Million members which equalled to around one sixth of the total population of the GDR. Workers (employed in production) represented 38 per cent, followed by the 'intelligentsia' (22 per cent), white-collar employees (7.7 per cent), farmers (4.8 per cent), students (2.1 per cent) and housewives (0.9 per cent; Weber 1993:98). Hence, the membership base was broad and covered all segments of society. Apart from the significant share of workers, the economic, political and cultural elites, as well as the functionaries from mass organisations not only maintained but further manifested the power and stability of the regime.

Table 4.1. Membership Figures of the SED

Year	Members (in million)
1947	1.786
1958	1.473
1967	1.770
1976	2.044
1986	2.304

Source: DDR Handbuch 1985:1185, Central Committee Report, XI. Party Conference 1986:84, Wissenschaftlicher Kommunismus 1985:290; in Glaeßner 1989:127.

A political career within the SED hugely depended on an ideologically sound performance. A move towards influential political positions was manipulated and controlled by the hierarchical structures of the Communist party or its political and societal mass organisations and were only awarded after a certain period of SED membership. The demands of the party upon its members were striking. They had to be moral and professional role models, both at work and in the private sphere. The comrade was asked to represent the SED in all aspects of life, to forego private and uphold party interests. The SED did not accept members, but instead recruited them. It required two sponsors and a one-year probation period in which the candidate was instructed in his or her duties and responsibilities. The judgement of the party apparatus was ultimate. The way in which the party member performed within the

SED structures affected his or her life, not only on the political level but also professionally and socially (Zimmermann 1988:237).

After achieving an influential position, the political participant was confronted with the next limitation to interest articulation. As a Leninist rule, the SED forbade any form of factionalisation which consequently severely limited the development of interest plurality. Directives, goals and programmes trickled down from the centralised party hierarchy to every party cell. The flow of information from base to top, however, was almost lacking. Any particular cell had to follow orders and directives from its superior level (Zimmermann 1988:230). The stream of information and interest aggregation was exclusively in the top-down direction.

Political nominations were also based on academic and professional qualifications (Zimmermann 1988:209). Access to universities was granted through evaluation reports by secondary schools, the collective, the FDJ youth organisation, or other SED-controlled institutions. Finally the individual seeking political influence, constantly had to improve and complete his or her political knowledge through continuous political-education courses, seminars or workshops. These were designed to further advance the knowledge of Marxism-Leninism and to indoctrinate the politically interested according to the interpretation of the SED.

From early on the SED followed the example of the Soviet KP. In 1949, the *Politbüro* was installed which crafted all political guidelines and basic principles and decided upon their implementation. It constituted the true government of the GDR. The scope of activities included decisions on various annual and five-year plans, foreign policy, security and defence, and central issues of domestic concern (Glaebner 1989:143). In short, the *Politbüro* addressed all aspects of life in East Germany, from the social and economic to the political and cultural realm. Resolutions made by its members had the character of laws (Weber 1993:73).

The centralised power of the *Politbüro* was complemented by the Secretariat of the Central Committee. This body was responsible for managing day-to-day affairs, such as control and implementation of party directives, or recruitment and promotion of personnel. The Secretariat represented the SED's central organ to control both party and party members and secure their conformity with the guidelines set forth by the *Politbüro*. Overlaps in personnel between *Politbüro* and Secretariat ensured the proper implementation of the *Politbüro*'s decisions. The *Politbüro* and Secretariat assured the centralised and hierarchical structure of the party.

The SED further introduced the Soviet system of nomenclature which implied that the respective superior organisation was solely responsible for the appointment and promotion of the cadre (Weber 1993:20). Selection to posts followed strict qualification criteria, such as political knowledge, education, performance, as well as personal and practical skills (Zimmermann 1988:239-240). It guaranteed the recruitment of party-conforming individuals to the apparatus and further manifested the unchallenged position of the party within the state.

By eliminating any form of inner-party democracy and interest aggregation social, political and economic decisions were exclusively undertaken by the SED elite. With the help of the hierarchical party apparatus they were able to govern the GDR in a totalitarian, oligarchic fashion. The SED did not allow any form of power sharing. Instead, it oppressed pluralism and reached a position of comprehensive, all-embracing, dictatorial and uncontrolled rule (Weber 1993:98). The GDR gave a classic example of democratic centralism with a strict party discipline and a rigid hierarchy of all party organs. Control commissions safeguarded the ideological purity of all organisations which had to be in line with the principles set forth by the party. The vanguard role of the SED implied that the party and only the party had the right and knowledge to transfer and interpret Marxism-Leninism into practice. The SED derived its legitimation from an ideology which was deemed to be perfect. Inputs from below were therefore unnecessary and even damaging because the party

was the sole guardian of the ideology. Thus politics and policies were grounded in the scientific knowledge and application of Marxism-Leninism which led the SED to the conclusion that 'the party is always right'.

Such 'monolithic unity' (Weber 1993:32) was a fiercely safeguarded principle of the SED. Because of its central position in the political process, the party theoretically had to fulfil two opposing functions. On the one hand, it reflected the political spectrum of society. On the other hand, it brought together various strains and antagonisms within society. The SED escaped this functional ambivalence by denying open discourse and inter-party pluralism, while pursuing a path of purges and internal political clean-ups. In the period prior to Stalin's death in 1953 the SED tried to assure its absolute supremacy not only through ideological indoctrination but foremost through repressive measures which were designed to discipline and intimidate party functionaries (Weber 1993:33). In 1950/51, 150,000 members were expelled from the SED, including the *Politbüro* member Paul Merker.

The demise of the Soviet dictator sparked a reconsideration of Communist policies throughout the Eastern Bloc. In the GDR, prominent intellectuals, such as Ernst Bloch and Robert Havemann advocated a 'third way' which criticised both Stalinism and Capitalism. The discrepancies between theory and practice, between idealist notions of social justice, freedom and emancipation on the one hand and oppression and paternalism amongst the elites on the other, prompted the formation of an inner-party opposition. The political establishment around Ulbricht however, was keen to undermine any open discourse. Paranoid and power-obsessed, they perceived their authority as threatened. Subsequently, the judiciary and the Ministry for State Security - nicknamed the *Stasi* - were engaged in purges and trials. By 1958 the opposition movement lost momentum and the reactionary course manifested its superiority. The party ideologist Wolfgang Harich was imprisoned. Ulbricht's deputy Karl Schirdewan and the Head of State Security Ernst Wollweber lost their political functions. The Secretary of the ZK, Gerhart Ziller, committed suicide

(Weber 1993:47). In the end the Stalinist faction managed to eliminate any form of opposition. Opponents from within the party chose internal exile, were expelled to the FRG or imprisoned. Until 1989, the hegemony of the SED and its Stalinist principles remained unchallenged.

Block Parties

Apart from membership in the SED, the citizen was able to join various so called 'block parties'. Closely watched by the Communist authorities, these parties had to submit themselves to the avant-garde role of the SED and its program as a compulsory guideline for their activities. The totalitarian regime established a new version of Communist rule in the form of a Socialist plural party system where block parties possessed an 'alibi function' (Weber 1993:33) by disguising the one-party rule of the SED. They represented valuable transmitting vehicles with the task of integrating 'bourgeois' and religious groups, as well as 'capitalist' classes into the Socialist society.

Table 4.2. Membership in Block Parties (in thousand)

Year	CDU	LDPD	NDPD	DBD
1987	137	104	110	115
1982	125	82	91	103
1977	115	75	85	92

Source: Weber 1993:93

As such, the Christian-Democratic CDU offered East German Christians a source of representation, although its commitment to the SED state and Communist principles was unanimous. The DBD (Democratic Farmers Party) was actively involved in the collectivisation of the 1950's and 1960's, and represented the interests of the agricultural and rural sectors. The LDPD (Liberal Democratic party) was geared

towards white collar workers, the intelligentsia, and small independent businesses. Finally the NDPD (National Democratic Party) was founded under the active influence of the SED to integrate former members of Hitler's NSDAP, as well as army officers of the *Reichswehr* (Glaeßner 1989:184-6). However formulating and advocating political alternatives were absent from the block parties' political agenda. Again the SED did not allow any opposing interests or policies. In the end the role of the block parties was more social than political. They functioned as a structural part of the totalitarian regime with hardly any intellectual or practical independence (Zimmermann 1988:275).

Mass Organisations

Mass organisations functioned as further means of mediating Communist concepts and programmes to individual members and were utilised to educate ideologically and control the citizens. Theoretically, mass organisations were designed to represent the interests of their members and to form a consultative, informative and critical source of information. In practice however, interest articulation and aggregation again were dominated by top-down patterns, hierarchical structures and dogmatic biases.

Table 4.3. Membership in Mass Organisations 1988

Organisation	Membership Figure
FDBG	9.6 Million
FDJ	2.3 Million (1986)
DFD	1.5 Million
Kulturbund	277.000
Verein der gegenseitigen Bauernhilfe	646,000
Pionierorganisation Ernst Thälmann	1.5 Million
Gesellschaft für deutsch-sowjetische Freundschaft	6.4 Million
Volkssouveränität	2.1 Million

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1989: 410,412,414.

Since 1949, the SED determined the organisations' political agenda, as well as the recruitment to key positions. As with the block parties, all mass organisations were forced to accept the vanguard position of the SED unanimously (Weber 1993:33).

Table 4.4. Allocation of Seats in the *Volkskammer* 1986:

Organisation	Seats	
	Total	Percentage
SED	127	25.4
DBD	52	10.4
CDU	52	10.4
LDPD	52	10.4
NDPD	52	10.4
FDGB	61	12.2
FDJ	37	7.4
DFD	32	6.4
Kulturbund	21	4.2
Verein der gegenseitigen Bauernhilfe	14	2.8
total:	500	100

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1989:401

Mass organisations were vital components of the political system and were allocated seats in parliament (see Table 4.4.). Their mediating and controlling function in society completed the totalitarian hegemony of the SED. The FDGB (*Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund*) represented the uniformed and all-encompassing organisation for blue and white collar workers. The FDJ (*Freie Deutsche Jugend*) and its subsidiary, the pioneer organisation *Ernst Thälmann* were the only legal groups for younger people in the GDR. The DFD (*Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands*) was founded to foster women's Socialist conscience and encourage active political participation. The *Kulturbund* was designed to support the development of a Socialist national culture, as well as to broaden the cultural horizon of its members in such fields as history of the *Heimat*, preservation of monuments or

nature and environment. The VdgB (*Verein der gegenseitigen Bauernhilfe*) was the Socialist mass organisation for the collectivised farmer and gardener and promoted agricultural policies of the SED (Glaeßner 1989:187-8).

Mass organisations were caught between the interest of the party and the interest of their members. Influential positions were staffed with high-level functionaries from the SED. The SED however, expected ultimate obedience from its members. The interests of mass organisations were subordinated to those of the paramount party. Functionaries of mass organisations therefore struggled between party discipline and pressure from the organisation's base. Although participation in mass organisations was voluntary, it nevertheless represented an elementary condition to advance politically and professionally, as well as to gain social status (Zimmermann 1988:267). For instance, for school children and university students membership in the FDJ was almost a prerequisite for later professional success and university placements. The complete structuring of all aspect of life through the help of mass institutions imposed the totalitarian principle on every individual in every aspect of his or her existence and secured the unchallenged supremacy of the SED.

Elections

The election process in the GDR resembled a general mobilisation of the whole society rather than a conscious decision between political alternatives. The results were mostly predetermined. Political contents and procedures were controlled through directives of the Central Committee and the *Politbüro*. Elections represented mere agitational propaganda to show consent to a centrally-designed program and unity amongst the population. The electorate had to cast its vote openly. Pressures not to abstain or invalidate the ballot were immense. Not surprisingly, the turnout reached absurdly high figures. Approval votes for the unity list amounted to little below 100 per cent. By simply looking at the vast number of refugees (see Chapter

Two), the people's dissatisfaction with the political reality became evident and cast doubts on the legitimacy of elected representatives (Weber 1993:31).

Hence elections in the GDR were symbolic actions. They did not guarantee but merely reflected participation. The hitherto 'chosen' candidates possessed a mediating function. As opposed to western democracies, where representatives are supposed to transform the interests of their constituents, the political representatives of the GDR instead were asked to encourage active participation and the fulfilment of party-directives. They furthermore informed the state apparatus on public opinion in their constituencies. The representatives tried to stay actively involved in their communities and generally kept their jobs to provide closer social contact. However suspicion against the party 'big-shot' who had a newer car and bigger house remained. Again, a reversal flow of information and interest was absent since top-down directives ruled over a discourse between base and elite.

The Church

With the establishment of the GDR in 1949, Christians had to confront severe pressure from the state. From the outset the SED attacked religion as a cultural trait and faith, as well as its institutions. Classic Marxism regarded the church as a representative of the ruling class with religion being the 'opium for the people'. With oppressive measures and indoctrination in particular of the young the SED believed it was able to systematically push back the influence of the churches. They were the logical extension of the party's ambition for total control of society and the elimination of independent organisations. Students were barred from attending universities. Petitions for badly needed repairs to church-owned buildings were postponed or rejected altogether. Religion was erased from school curricula. With the introduction of the *Jugendweihe* in 1954, the state further tried to undermine the churches position within society. This secular confirmation service for 14 year olds sought to supplant religious loyalties by an oath to Socialism, the GDR and the

Soviet Union (Cordell 1990:49). Although not compulsory, refusal to participate in the *Jugendweihe* hampered educational and professional opportunities. The measure prompted harsh protests from clerical ranks. In return, the Evangelical church banned children who had received secular confirmation from the religious counterpart. In 1960 however, the church was forced to lift its ban because of a dramatic decrease in the number of communicants. Until the demise of the GDR up to 97 per cent of the children participated in the *Jugendweihe* (Cordell 1990:49).²

In contrast issues of controversy between the Evangelical church and the authorities were represented most notably in the realm of peace and military affairs. In 1978, the SED added *Wehrkunde* (military science) as a compulsory subject for 15 and 16 year olds to school curricula. Apart from theoretical indoctrination children were taught practical skills relating to military preparation, including shooting exercises. The Evangelical church immediately issued protests since its own agenda increasingly included engagement in peace activities. In 1982, the 'Dresden Peace Forum' was given church sponsorship in order to avoid official cancellation. In the same year Pastor Rainer Eppelmann, who after the demise of the SED state became Disarmament Minister of the GDR, and the dissident Robert Havemann wrote the 'Berlin Appeal'. It called for a withdrawal of all occupying troops from both German states and issued a proposal for the establishment of a pacifist political order in the whole of Germany. Additionally the Evangelical church organised 'peace weeks' and 'workshops' which attracted thousands of young people (Cordell 1990:53).

Despite permanent pressures churches in East Germany therefore were able to establish themselves as the only legal autonomous organisation which was

² The Catholic church never achieved a level of importance and influence comparable to that of its evangelical counterpart and largely refrained from politics altogether. Former officials of the *Stasi* department for church relations acknowledged that the apparatus regarded the Catholic church as a minority church which tried to maintain the highest possible distance from the state, while possessing a mostly apolitical attitude (Insider Komitee 1994:377). Hence, the goal of the *Stasi* was to prevent the Catholic church from acquiring an equal status of political involvement and interest as the Evangelical one - a policy which undoubtedly succeeded.

independent from state and party. Throughout the existence of the GDR they remained the sole institutions which were disentangled from the principles of democratic centralism, while their principles and programmes represented the only alternative to the SED-dominated political and cultural institutions. The churches acknowledged the leading role of the SED and did not engage in ideological competition with state and party. In 1957, Evangelical churches in the GDR issued a statement of loyalty to the regime. In return the state guaranteed religious toleration (Cordell 1990:50). Furthermore in 1969 the eastern Evangelical churches departed from the all-German umbrella organisation EKD (*Evangelische Kirche Deutschlands*; Evangelical Church of Germany) and founded their own organisational unit, the BEK (*Bund der evangelischen Kirchen in der DDR*; Association of Evangelical churches in the GDR). This move was welcomed by the SED since it recognised the political reality of two separate and independent Germanys. In 1971 the head of the BEK Bishop Schonherr further accepted the legitimacy of the SED state by declaring that 'we do not want to be a church against, or alongside, but in Socialism' (Krisch 1985:123). Finally in 1976 Honecker emphasised the common ground of church and state, such as third world issues, a humanitarian mission and the desire for peace.

Subsequently the SED granted significant concessions. The Evangelical church gained broader access to the media. It possessed its own mostly uncensored publishing house and news agency. Most importantly, Honecker reaffirmed the internal autonomy of the Evangelical church and stressed the continuation of the party's policy of freedom to practise religion (Cordell 1990:54). The SED finally had to acknowledge that religious belief continued to persist in the GDR despite the secular and anti-clerical official rhetoric. Against this backdrop, the party gradually withdrew from a policy of aggressive atheism and concentrated on disentangling and eventually stopping all-German relations between eastern and western churches (Glaeßner 1989:215).

Prior to the revolution, the Evangelical church provided the protection necessary to establish the civic movement. *Demokratie Jetzt* (Democracy Now) was established during a meeting of the BEK synod in Eisenach in September 1989. *Demokratischer Aufbruch* (Democratic Awakening) was co-founded by Eppelmann. The Evangelical church provided the only realm where people could escape from state and party. It offered a 'sanctuary' (Cordell 1990:55) for political and individual expression in an otherwise streamlined and stifled society. Leading clerics publicly addressed political problems and shortcomings (Weber 1993:94), such as authoritative state-citizen relations, military training at school (*Wehrkunde*), propaganda or censorship. From this perspective, the Evangelical church provided the basis for a political potential that was capable of initiating a peaceful revolution.

Although the significant contributions by the Evangelical church in sparking the revolution should not be underestimated, the BEK remained an institution that was pulled into politics as a surrogate for absent interest representation for which it ultimately was not suited. Increasingly the Evangelical church had to confront enormous difficulties in incorporating the various political groups, such as peace movements, feminists, or human rights activists, as well as maintaining its mediating function between state and society. Not only were these particular interest groups dependant on the protection of the church against authoritative seizures, but the church also found it extremely difficult to maintain a *modus vivendi* with the regime that would guarantee its autonomy. Hence, the BEK was forced to walk along a tightrope between appeasement of state and party, as well as the incorporation of an opposition movement which was directed precisely against the same authorities.

As an autonomous body, East German churches encompassed a safety valve function to relieve frustration and anger caused by the lack of political freedom. Moreover as a protective umbrella they fostered the establishment of a widespread and organised opposition. However the churches were only able to survive by avoiding a direct challenge to the regime. The BEK neither issued a single official stance against the

regime nor did it help formulate opposition (Lease 1992:269). Instead the churches were institutionalised within the political system. Their autonomy was safeguarded by state and party since both recognised their vital importance as a release for tension and frustration. Thus the churches did not constitute institutional outsiders of the system but were in fact an integral part of it.

Most importantly churches were crippled by a massive loss in membership. Judging from the rate of secularisation the SED had clearly won the battle between religion and Socialism. In 1946, around eighty per cent of the population in the eastern *Länder* were still Evangelical. By 1970, only 40 per cent of East Germans retained membership. In 1986, the number of Evangelical followers had dropped to 30 per cent of the populace. All religious denominations together, including around one million Catholics totalled only 38 per cent (Statistical Yearbook 1990:451).

The churches lacked popular appeal and eventually religious customs and beliefs were replaced by Socialist secularisation. The revolutionary upheavals of 1989 undoubtedly originated within the environment of the Evangelical church. Clerics such as Eppelmann and Stolpe personally shaped the unification process. Organisationally opposition movements were founded under the protective shield of the BEK. However the role of the Evangelical church was limited to the - quite literally - provision of space, as a site for 'pluralistic thought' (Lease 1992:269). It functioned as a meeting place for political opponents to the regime who had nowhere else to convene but within the sphere of the only autonomous organisation of the GDR. Nonetheless the BEK did not call for the downfall of the regime. It merely provided a hollow protective shell whose contents were ultimately filled by programs and demands that did not have their cognitive origins within the church.

4.2.2. State-Citizen Relations

Distrust and Repression

The political process in the GDR was characterised by a strong distrust towards the political maturity of the masses. The failure and fatal experiences of other Eastern European countries in reforming their societies - the upheavals in Hungary and Poland in 1956, the end of the Prague spring in 1968, strikes and unravelling tendencies of the political system in Poland in the 1980's - as well as the paramount strategic position of the GDR and a vast presence of Soviet military forces further manifested the suspicion of the totalitarian elite towards a more participatory involvement of the population. Article six of the constitution of 1949 addressed the encouragement to boycott democratic institutions and organisations' and declared it a felony. It provided the SED with a judicial base to persecute any form of opposition. With political freedom being severely curtailed, Article six further contributed to despotism and arbitrary rule of law (Weber 1993:28) to safeguard the status quo of the political system.

Throughout its forty-year long hegemony, the SED vigorously defended its position of monopoly. As the central means for surveying and controlling the population, the Ministry for State Security (*Stasi*) was established as early as 1950. As an independent body it was only responsible to the *Politbüro* (Weber 1993:30). A far reaching web of informants and agents guaranteed an almost total observation of the entire society. The opening of the *Stasi* archives in the aftermath of 1989 revealed that the apparatus employed a full-time staff of 97,000 people with perhaps as many as 170,000 unofficial informants (Golz 1994a:344). From this source of sheer manpower, the *Stasi* was able to trace and eventually destroy any signs of opposition.

Further repression was exerted through direct intervention of the SED in the judicial process. Relying on the cadre principle the party recruited judges and lawyers according to their ideological conformity. By the 1970's hardly any jurists came

from outside the party ranks. Judicial independence was a myth. The *Politbüro* and Central Committee were directly involved in the crafting of bills in an evident attempt to adjust the law and the constitution to political circumstances. Party officials, including Honecker or Mielke actively intervened in the jurisdiction by submitting their opinion on a particular case to the Director of Public Prosecutions. Additionally, criminal prosecution was mostly handled outside the realm of publicity to avoid repercussions on the growing international reputation of the GDR (Meyer-Seitz 1995:32-33).

Apart from these direct interventions, a variety of indirect measures restricted any notions of individuality. The strictly hierarchical organisation and bureaucratisation of society, the cycle of regulations, applications and permissions, as well as the cadre principle guaranteed that any activity within the GDR - whether official or not - was controlled and supervised by the regime. Educational agencies, mass organisations, work brigades and political parties safeguarded the principle of paternalism, as well as the conditioning and utilisation of conforming followers, subjects and obedient individuals. The party's monopoly on information resulted in a selective view of life. Not only was the citizen brainwashed with one-dimensional, ideologically-filtered information but he or she was also excluded from certain information and ways to absorb them (see Chapter Five). Books and news were censored, travel granted only to ideologically sound citizens. Economic activity required the permission of state and party. Free choice of employment and profession were limited. In the GDR there was no public arena for discussion or discourse. Opportunities to express individual demands were absent. The individual could only comply or be silent. The party's monopoly was total in qualitative and quantitative ways.

Protest and Discourse

Against the powerful and centralised state and party apparatus, the individual possessed limited options to protest against political decisions. Some bureaucratic

procedures tolerated complaints as legal options for citizen action. The director of the office which was responsible for a particular measure, ruled if and when a complaint was justified. The involvement of a third and neutral party to oversee just or unjust causes was missing. A second option were simple petitions to be addressed to any institution of state or party. These merely represented comments on general problems for a community or an individual, caused by bureaucratic action, or prospects for the improvement of bureaucratic measures. Again, petitions were handled internally. No outside party was involved (Zimmermann 1988:276).

The SED state justified the oligarchic nature of the administrative process in an ideological manner. The Socialist state existed as a state for all people. It did not cater for special interests but realised the paramount interest of the whole Socialist society. Individual complaints could only be regarded as exceptions which justified an internal handling of the matter. Individualism and the individual right for justice were superseded by the general interest of the Socialist society. Therefore, the classic Marxist-Leninist system that was preserved in the GDR excluded the idea of neutral arbitration as inherently impossible.

For more than 35 years the upheavals of June 1953 represented the last occasion when East Germans took their frustration and disillusionment with the regime to the streets. By early 1953, conditions worsened for the population. Shortages in the provision of consumption goods became imminent accompanied by growing political oppression against farmers, independent businesses, intellectuals and members of the church, which at that stage had a following of eighty per cent of the population (Weber 1993:39). With the death of Stalin in March 1953, the KP of the Soviet Union embarked on a trail of modest reforms and directly criticised some of the policies of the SED. Subsequently, in June the East German regime announced the 'New Course' by promising better provision of consumption goods, while withdrawing price increases and criticising its own drastic repressive measures against the population. However the SED persisted with the recently introduced and

demanding planning targets which caused widespread resentment amongst workers (Weber 1993:40). On June 17, strikes and demonstrations were held in more than 300 towns and villages. In Halle-Merseburg and in Magdeburg, strike committees seized power and set prisoners free. Increasingly, economic demands were complemented by political calls for freedom and free general elections. For a short while, the SED elites lost control over their state until Soviet tanks crushed the uprising and restored order.

The events of 1953 fundamentally eroded the legitimacy of the worker-and-peasant state. It became obvious that the SED state had to rely on oppression and military strength, while Socialist idealism and the Communist utopia were disguised as myths. People realised that a transformation of the Stalinist system ultimately depended on Soviet policies and directives. The idea however, to actively participate in improving and designing one's society was given a decisive blow.

In 1970 the visit of the Federal Republic's chancellor Willy Brandt to Erfurt gave East Germans a welcomed opportunity for public expression. In front of the eyes of western cameras, the ovations for Brandt were interpreted as critical signs of condemnation of the SED state. The overwhelmingly positive reception for Brandt who was about to receive the Nobel prize for peace for his détente policy with the Communist bloc caught the SED elites by surprise. It indicated that the apparent stability which emerged in the 1960's was not caused by supportive public attitudes towards the regime. Instead on rare occasions such as Brandt's visit, the SED became to realise that they had mistaken tranquility in the GDR for system conformism. This merely reflected the nature of the Communist dictatorship. Conformism to the system was forced by oppression. The individual was infantilised in the political process and became indifferent. Brandt's visit represented a rare break from the streamlined participation that was offered by the totalitarian regime.

By the mid 1970's, growing criticism within the Communist bloc against the Soviet way and the advocacy of Euro-Communist alternatives did not fail to produce an impact on the GDR. In June 1976, the SED organised a conference of 29 European Communist parties. Propagated notions of independence from the Soviet Union and of political and ideological pluralism (Weber 1993:90) found a strong echo in the GDR. However, the regime persisted on Stalinist politics and continued to crush any form of opposition, let alone criticism. Subsequently the intellectual scene in the GDR was subject to severe repression. Rudolf Bahro whose book *Die Alternative* was only published in the west was put on trial, imprisoned and later expelled to the FRG. Intellectuals, such as Wolf Biermann and Reiner Kunze were forced to follow him. Robert Havemann, who was ousted from the party in 1964 and lost his professorship at the Humboldt University in East Berlin continued to argue for democratisation and rule of law and was victim to persistent harassment by the *Stasi*. Even Christa Wolf, the world-known writer and former member of the Central Committee was criticised by the authorities. Eventually, the party re-established its 'monopoly on opinion' (Weber 1993:90). Repression and expulsion demonstrated that the regime was not willing to share power and responsibilities practically, as well as ideologically. In the conflict between open discourse and power, the free mind was the ultimate loser.

Only on these few occasions - 1953, Brandt's visit and ultimately 1989 - did public discontent caused a destabilising challenge to the regime. Indeed, the GDR did not have a prominent public figure of the stature of Vaclav Havel or Lech Walesa around whom a dissident movement could have developed. Oppression and surveillance in the GDR were driven to perfection. Dissidents and intellectuals were 'interviewed' by the *Stasi*, indicted, imprisoned or more vigorously expelled to the FRG. A critical opposition therefore could never get off the ground. The coercive conformism deprived the SED of much needed feed-back and information. Imprisonment and expulsion to the west caused a 'brain-drain', while others chose or were forced to adopt internal exile. Moreover, the vast numbers of refugees who fled

the GDR contributed to an ever decreasing potential for opposition. In the end, accommodation with and within the system, retreat into the private sphere and political indifference were the remaining solutions. The SED regime succeeded in silencing any form of dissent. The Orwellian web of surveillance and oppression had the country under firm control.

However by 1989 the discrepancy between the ideological notion of the Socialist society and the dictatorial reality became unbearable for the population. The dramatic series of events which lead to the downfall of the Democratic Republic were sparked by public discontent over local elections in May 1989. Although the authorities persistently forged election results over the past decades, East Germans were no longer willing to accept the distortion of their public will. Hundreds of citizens lay criminal charges against officials, accompanied by protests, most notably in Leipzig. For the regime, the downward spiral into defeat had begun. In June further protests emerged after the SED's strong denouncement of the democracy movement in China and the party's approval of the Tianmen Square massacre. The easing of border restrictions between Hungary and Austria lead to a mass emigration wave. Over the summer thousands of East Germans travelled south to escape through the first hole in the 'Iron Curtain' since the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961. On its own territory the regime had to confront a growing number of protest groups, who decided against emigration but instead demanded reform. In August the social democratic party of the GDR (SDP) was founded. In September the civic movements *Neues Forum* and *Demokratie Jetzt* emerged on the scene. The *Neues Forum* demanded a democratic dialogue with the authorities. *Demokratie Jetzt* issued a proposal for the democratic reform of the GDR (Weber 1993:104).

The regime did not see the writing on the wall both at home and in other countries of the Communist bloc which followed Gorbachev in his pursuit of change. In an arrogant fashion they denounced any reform tendencies as counter-revolutionary. 'The party is always right' still determined its dogmatic attitude. Consequently, the

state responded with force. Mass arrests and imprisonment followed. These further heightened public discontent and aggravated even politically-neutral citizens. The indignation over the Stalinist dictatorship, its mis-interpretation of the sweeping changes within the Bloc and the all too obvious out-of touch state of their elites finally prompted East Germans to challenge the regime and - after 36 years - take their anger to the streets. But not only civic deficiencies were addressed. Growing confidence now resulted in the expression of resentment at the systemic shortcomings in the realm of consumer provision and economic production.³

In Leipzig the weekly 'Monday demonstrations' became the barometer for the dawning of the revolution. On October 2 20,000 marched through the streets. Two weeks later, the numbers had increased to 120,000, followed by 300,000 on October 23. The civic movements enjoyed growing support. By mid-October, *Neues Forum* already had 25,000 members (Weber 1993:105). On November 4, around one million people demonstrated in East Berlin for freedom of speech and press, for the easing of travel restrictions but foremost for free elections. With the fall of the Wall the peaceful revolution reached its climax. On December 8, Honecker's successor Egon Krenz resigned and the SED dictatorship finally collapsed.

Civic Standards

The implications of forty years of totalitarianism for the civic standards of the population were extraordinary. The ambition of the SED to infiltrate all aspects of political life resulted in political apathy and passiveness. This was indicated by a sample survey in 1967, where 53 per cent of the respondents were not able to answer how their parliamentary representative fulfilled his or her responsibilities (Niemann 1993:229). Moreover in 1987, a representative survey amongst workers of all age groups revealed that only 33 per cent had experienced that their opinion had influenced a decision within their working environment. The majority of 51 per cent

³ For a gripping account on the mass protests in Leipzig see Helmut Zwahr 1993.

totally denied this (Förster and Roski 1990:48). The propagated ideology of Marxism-Leninism, of the 'new Socialist man' and the 'Communist utopia' remained shallow dogmatism, their contents did not infiltrate the political conscience of the general population. The citizens fulfilled their participative duties, often as in the case of elections in a ritualised, dispassionate manner. The people gave the state what the state required, but nothing more and hardly anything voluntarily.

Life in the GDR was characterised by a peculiar arrangement between the political elites and the population. Over the course of forty years a consensus developed that guaranteed the former a certain degree of respect and obedience, and the latter social protection and general material benefits (Grunenberg 1988:98). The relationship between the totalitarian apparatus and the masses can be described as toleration for security. As long as the regime was able to pass on guarantees, the people were willing to sustain public order and to accept the political power structures (Rytlewski 1989:19). Hence, by the late 1960's economic consolidation and an increased provision of consumer goods accounted for a modest contentment with the regime.

However the emotional commitment remained shallow. Official duties and private identification with the political system stayed on separate grounds. The people accommodated themselves with the state. The fulfilment of duties lacked any idealistic notions. They were performed out of material concerns. Ideological conviction was missing. Conformity to the principles of society was honoured by the authorities with the provision of education, pensions and general social security in a Socialist welfare state. Generally speaking, identification with the political principles of a society generates a buffer of support which is able to overcome periods of crises. This buffer of ideological commitment was absent in the GDR. By the mid 1970's the gap between official promises and reality grew wider. World-wide recession, oil shocks and the influence of Euro-Communism ended the short spell of system satisfaction. Criticism against the inadequate provision of consumer goods, stagnating living standards and the persistent repression of opposition and

individuality (Weber 1993:87) demonstrated that attitudes towards the political system were strictly output-oriented. Clearly, ideological commitment was severely lacking in the GDR.

The upheavals of June 1953 vigorously demonstrated to every East German the consequences of political activism and opposition: Soviet tanks and political repression. The legacy of June 1953 further contributed to the dominating feeling of resignation and helplessness, due to the overwhelming power and omnipresence of the regime which controlled the entire political process. The SED and its satellite block parties and mass organisations, its socialisation and education agencies formed a network which had the GDR society under firm control. From kindergarten to school to university, from societal organisations to the military, from leisure and vacation to education and work, the impact of the regime was felt continuously throughout an individual's life.

To achieve political, professional or societal status, the citizens were required to accommodate themselves within the totalitarian system. People had to function, had to follow orders. Individualism, creativity and plurality were suppressed which resulted in a generalised and streamlined society. Interest aggregation was subject to party domination, articulated through state or party institutions, while the consideration of particular interests rested upon the exclusive approval of the party. The state withdrew any individual political responsibilities from its citizens. It interfered in private affairs and lay down the tracks for every individual's life. The people were in fact politically and socially incapacitated.

4.3. The Federal Republic

4.3.1. The Era Adenauer

After the collapse of the Third Reich a general disillusionment with politics was widespread in the newly established *Bonn* Republic. The catastrophic experiences of *Weimar* and the Nazi-dictatorship left a deep and traumatic mark on the population, where people never again wanted to get involved in politics (Sontheimer 1990:37). Over a period of less than thirty years three political systems - the Wilhelmian Empire, the *Weimar* Republic and the Third Reich - had failed. Political supporters of the previous regimes were often subject to harsh punishment after a new political order had been established. The treatment of the political opposition after the rise of Hitler and the de-nazification programs in the aftermath of World War II convinced many people that politics was a dangerous, unrewarding business.

The tasks of organising the new state, of crafting the new constitution and of designing new policies were undertaken with hardly any public participation. Participation during the Adenauer era was characterised by a strong representative principle. The *Grundgesetz* showed little trust in the political individual. Based on the experiences of *Weimar*, plebiscitary elements were regarded as a potential danger to democracy. For the founding fathers of the Basic Law and for the allied authorities the enthusiastic mass support for Hitler represented the critical point of departure for the instalment of democracy in Germany. A consensus emerged which sought to safeguard the newly democratised citizens from the danger of populist and demagogic appeals. Consequently, the active participatory rights of the *Weimar* constitution, such as the direct election of the President or provisions for the initiative of referenda were carefully avoided in the Basic Law. Mass political participation was 'simply not encouraged' (Conradt 1989:238) but instead was designed to be guided by parties and interest groups as the main agents for articulating political interest.

Table 4.5. Participation in West German Elections (percentages)

Legislative Period	Federal Level	Länder Level
1949-53	78.5	73.8
1953-57	86.0	77.5
1957-61	87.8	75.9
1961-65	87.8	74.8
1965-69	86.8	76.9
1969-72	86.7	78.1
1972-76	91.1	82.3
1976-80	90.7	79.2
1980-83	88.6	81.8
1983-87	89.1	75.7
1987-90	84.4	72.5

Source: Statistical Yearbooks.

As indicated in Table 4.5. turn-outs at federal and *Länder* elections already reached high standards by 1953. Although generally speaking, participation in elections has the tendency to turn into a dutiful habit, the high numbers were particularly impressive in light of the absence of a compulsory obligation to cast one's vote. Moreover in international comparison, turn-outs were already higher than in the United States or in Great Britain (Dalton 1993:179) and constituted a 'permanently renewed legitimacy for the political system and the political parties' (Hesse and Ellwein 1992:208).

Nevertheless beyond the civic duty of voting, participation remained reluctant and by no means active as demonstrated by the total membership figures of all political parties which during the 1950's hardly exceeded one million (Rudzio 1993:465). The already existing political infrastructure would have given ample opportunity for active participation. However although the formal legislative, executive and judicative institutions of democracy, as well as political parties and interest groups were well-established, passivity prevailed. The individual kept a suspicious distance

from politics. It seemed that the intense and often forced political commitment and involvement of the Nazi era was followed by a reverse retreat from politics, resulting in a 'detached, practical and almost cynical attitude towards politics' (Almond and Verba 1963:429). For instance in 1955, only nine per cent would have liked to see their son holding a political post, while seventy per cent disapproved of the idea (Noelle-Neumann 1981:153). The Civic Culture study of Almond and Verba of 1959 noted the lack 'of the underlying set of political attitudes that would regulate the operation of these [political] institutions in a democratic direction (Almond and Verba 1963:496). Instead, attitudes towards the political system and the performance of the government were 'pragmatic' (Almond and Verba 1963:429) with a widespread complacent satisfaction with political output.

The early years of the *Bonn* Republic until 1960 were characterised by a succession of political and economic successes. The new system mastered an economic miracle, industrial harmony and the expansion of social services, while also achieving membership in NATO and the Common Market, the return of the *Saar* region by France and the restoration of full sovereignty. The young Republic provided the framework for a miraculous economic recovery, for growing material wealth, as well as for international security during the emerging Cold War. Indeed, the proverb '*Es geht wieder aufwärts*' (things are looking up again) accurately described the Adenauer era. The post-war success story was designed and implemented by political and economic elites. The public's participation in politics until the 1960's however, was characterised by passivity. Formal participatory acts such as voting required little commitment. Almond and Verba (1963) described the civic attitude of the populace as a 'passive subject orientation' which yet had to be balanced by a 'participant orientation'. For most West Germans, there was no apparent reason for dissent or dissatisfaction with the new system which would have forced him or her to seek more active participation and involvement.

These notions of passivity and obedience strongly reflected the historical German etatistic tradition. Since the mid 19th century, German political thinking regarded the state as ‘the incarnation of common interest (Sontheimer 1990:36). The state represented the guarantor of safety and order. It was not however, perceived as an instrument for the political organisation of society. Values of obedience and order dominated those of individualism, freedom and opposition. The interest of the state as a common and organised entity were paramount to individual aspirations. Individual freedom could only be realised within the given structures of the state. Consequently, a certain discomfort in accommodating particular manifestations of interest developed, since these were regarded as counter-productive to the state as the embodiment of the public weal. Instead of embracing reasonable conflict and political discourse as means for a productive societal process, the German tradition regarded such notions as disturbing factors to harmony (Sontheimer 1990:39).

Despite their discontinuities, the three political systems prior to the *Bonn* Republic had managed to subordinate the public under the power of the state. Their governments had always ‘conditioned’ (Dalton 1993:115) or forced the public into accepting authority. Democratic standards such as majority rule, minority rights, individual liberties and pluralism were alien concepts to most West Germans (Dalton 1993:125). Stability and order were superior to individual freedom. Political power originated from the state and not from the people. This cultural trait fostered the establishment of the new political order after the demise of Hitler. As the public was used to subordinating individualism, political decisions and directives from the new authorities were accepted in a obedient fashion. Paradoxically, the legacy of the *Obrigkeitsstaat* helped to get the new democracy off the ground.

4.3.2. Participation After 1960

By the mid-1960’s, the prevalent patterns of passivity, obedience and subservience were subject to an impressive transformation. Beginning in 1967, the student

movement vehemently criticised the *modus vivendi* of political representation and participation. An anti-authoritarian protest swept across the Federal Republic. Fostered by leftist intellectuals from the 'Frankfurt School', criticism was directed against the strictly representative and oligarchic nature of the political system. The limited chances of contributing to the political process were judged as an authoritarian relic of the past. The absence of a clear break from the Nazi era was criticised, arguing that the *Bonn* Republic had merely been built on economic and material wealth, while neglecting a moral resurgence and democratic commitment.

The elitist, strictly representative phase of the early Federal Republic came to a gradual end. The symbol of post-war stability, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, had already departed in 1963. The rise of Willy Brandt and the SPD to governmental power signalled the dawn of a new era. *Politik wagen* (dare to do politics) the slogan of the Social Democrats found a far-reaching echo. Controversial policy innovations of the Brandt government of 1969 (in particular *Ostpolitik*) fostered a widespread political discourse which was accompanied by a growing involvement of the population in election campaigns (Conradt 1989:248).

These trends combined, elevated West Germany towards a more politicised democracy. Although the student movement also brought elements of political radicalism, even culminating in terrorism, the cultural and generational clashes of the 1960's and 70's did not fail to exert a permanent participative impact. The legacy of the student movement was represented in the political mobilisation of a formerly passive and recipient society. Extra-parliamentary activism, peace initiatives or public interest groups were significant approximations to the normative citizenship virtues of active, concerned and informed political individuals.

The increase in and growing opportunities for political participation prompted a more positive evaluation of the degree of perceived freedom of expression and in particular to the more open character of that participation (Conradt 1989:243). West

German society was now regarded as freer and more inviting for political discourse and expression. As shown in Table 4.6. the number of respondents who held the opinion that one can freely express oneself politically rose from 55 per cent in 1953 to a peak in 1971 with 84 per cent. Clearly, by the 1970's affirmative democratic experiences during the *Bonn* Republic outweighed obedient and subservient notions which were generated during the oppressive era of the 'Third Reich'.

Table 4.6. Attitudes Towards Freedom of Political Expression in West Germany (percentages)

Question: Do you have the feeling that today in West Germany one can freely state one's opinion, or is it better to be cautious?

	1953	1962	1971	1976 (June)	1976 (Dec.)
can speak freely today	55	71	84	78	73
there are limitations, better be careful	35	21	13	18	23
undecided, other	10	8	3	4	4

Source: Institut für Demoskopie, quoted in Conradt 1989:242.

The reversal trend by 1976 was largely caused by a shift in the attitudes of younger, better-educated and politically active citizens. While the aggregate decline between June and December 1976 was six per cent, the drop amongst those under thirty was 15 per cent. Such a decrease within one specific group suggested that political experiences since 1971 must have had an inhibitory effect on political expression which was specific to this group. Indeed, as demonstrated by Conradt (1989: 243-247) the implementation of compulsory security checks for all candidates for public employment (including teachers) had the greatest effect on younger, educated respondents. It indicated that post-war socialisation - the experience of growing up in an open society - created a natural, given standard. For the younger, educated and politically active citizens political freedom and expression developed into essential norms. Any attacks on these were therefore perceived as threats to individual liberties. In contrast older generations were more likely to compare the

contemporary relative degree of freedom in the Federal Republic to the worse conditions as experienced under the Nazi regime. The decline of 1976 therefore also indicated a trend towards more critical, confident and politically aware citizenry - albeit predominantly amongst the social strata of the younger and educated middle class.

Interest in Politics and Active Participation

As shown in Table 4.7. the general interest in politics increased considerably from 27 per cent in 1952 to 48 per cent in 1980. Although the significance of this data may have been limited by the social desirability of a positive answer which could have prompted respondents in giving the impression of a politically informed individual, the stark differences between 1952 and 1980 nonetheless allow for the conclusion of a trend towards a politically more interested citizenry. Undoubtedly, interest in politics grew from almost apathetic beginnings to respectable figures.

Table 4.7. Political Interest in West Germany (percentages)

Question: Are You Interested in Politics?

	1952	1960	1969	1973	1980
	June	Jan.	Sep.	Feb.	Jan.
Yes	27	27	41	49	48
not very much	41	40	44	38	43
not at all	32	33	15	13	9

Source: Noelle-Neumann 1981:150

Although this rather general trend should not be overestimated, other indicators supported the pattern of improved participation. The proportion of citizens who frequently held political conversations grew from sixty per cent in 1952 to 79 per cent in 1979, whereas the most significant advances were made during the late

1960's. Accordingly, the number of people who rarely held political conversations dropped from forty to 21 per cent (Conradt 1989:248). Active political participation took a decisive step forward. Total party membership rose from 1.1 million (1960) to over two million (1980). In 1975 membership of unions and other interest groups amounted to 59 per cent of the total adult population, as compared to 44 per cent in 1959 (Rudzio 1993:471).

Suspicion towards politics and the political profession gradually decreased. Although in 1976, 43 per cent of the population would still not have liked to see their son become a politician, the figures nevertheless improved significantly from their former count of 70 per cent in 1955 (Noelle-Neumann 1981:153). Furthermore in 1975, 59 per cent of a national survey stated that they were members of at least one organisation - a political party, interest group or citizen-initiative - which represented a considerable increase from the documented 44 per cent of the Civic Culture study. Moreover within this time-frame the number of active participants in these organisations rose from seven to 17 per cent (Institut für Demoskopie 1980:21).

This trend towards more active political involvement coincided with the growing importance of citizen-initiative groups. By the mid-1960's such public interest groups addressed issues as peace, environmental protection, women's emancipation, educational reforms or the prohibition of nuclear plants. The development of these new political orientations were analysed by Ronald Inglehart's theory of value change (1977). Within his typology of materialism and postmaterialism, Inglehart maintained that in times of depression or civil unrest, economic stability and security receive superior attention. After satisfying such needs however, a society may shift towards other values, such as individual freedom, participation or equality.

This theoretical background bore great significance to the societal development of the Federal Republic. By the mid-1960's a growing generation gap emerged between

those who experienced their formative years under the oppressive regime of the Third Reich (followed by years of severe economic hardship and material privation) and between those who grew up under the influence of an ever increasing prosperity, international stability, social security and an open society that fostered political involvement and broader cultural experiences. Material values of economic security and stability, of law and order collided with postmaterialist notions of freedom of expression, participation, gender equality, or environmental protection. The post-war consensus of the Adenauer era ceased to exist and was replaced by a growing political polarisation.

By the mid 1970's there were about 3000 such groups with a total membership of two million (Ellwein et.al. 1975:136-179). By the 1980's membership in public interest groups had exceeded that of political parties, totalling 13 per cent of the adult population in 1985. Most of these initiatives operated at a local level and predominantly gathered around one central issue, most notably housing, urban development, schools or traffic. On the national level, the *Bundesverband Bürgerinitiativen Umweltschutz* (Federal Association of Citizen Initiatives for the Environment - BBU) gained central importance. At the high point of its influence, the BBU co-ordinated the activities of some 1000 citizen-initiatives with nearly one million members (Dalton 1993: 193-94, 260).

This development towards direct citizen participation was complemented by the rise of the Greens. The party conquered the political landscape of the Federal Republic with an ever increasing, impressive level of support. Founded in March 1979, the Greens already had 10,000 registered voters by December - a figure which eventually reached its peak at the end of 1987 with 42,000 (Müller-Rommel and Poguntke 1992:349).

Also the peace movement did not fail to produce a striking impact on the political agenda. The early 1980's witnessed a mushroom-like growth of peace groups in the

wake of the planned deployment of NATO Cruise Missiles on West German territory. Some demonstrations were amongst the largest in the history of the Federal Republic, such as in *Bonn* on June 10, 1982, which amassed some 300,000 protesters. With the *Bundestag's* decision in favour of deployment in October 1983, the movement temporarily lost momentum only to resurface in 1990. In between, with the demise of the East-West antagonism and programmatic problems of the Greens a sense of disorientation seemed to have prevailed amongst civic movements. Saddam's seizure of Kuwait in 1990 however, revitalised the struggling peace movement and resulted in the strongest anti-war demonstrations amongst all western nations against 'Operation Desert Storm'.

Initiatives worked mainly outside of the electoral setting and mostly lacked a party-political focus with the exception of some environmental and peace issues. The majority of participants were drawn from younger, well-educated, middle-class segments of society. Still, during that period surveys indicated that over a third of the adult population - though not actively involved - at least considered membership in some public-interest group (Ellwein et.al. 1975:139). Citizen-initiative groups represented an important advancement for a participative society. The scope of political issues broadened significantly. The numbers of politically interested people increased considerably. Most importantly, participation in public-interest groups demanded a higher level of commitment - intellectually as well as time wise - than the simple ritualistic notion of voting.

4.3.3. State-Citizen Relations After 1960

Not surprisingly increased political involvement paved the way for more critical attitudes towards political authorities. The notion of subservience gradually decreased and resulted in a growing civic confidence - in the belief that citizens can influence the course of political decisions. As shown in Table 4.8. more people were willing to express their dissatisfaction with an administrative measure. Moreover in

1978, 76 per cent of people below the age of thirty would have protested, as compared to 61 per cent aged sixty and over. It seemed that the formative experience of growing up in a free society had an impact on the individual's willingness to address grievances and defects.

Table 4.8. Potential Protest Against Unjust Action In West Germany (percentages)

Question: What would you do if an administrative agency acted unjustly in a matter that concerns you?

	1950 (Jan.)	1958 (Nov.)	1964 (Dec.)	1978 (Nov.)
Would Protest	52	53	51	70
No point in protesting	37	33	32	22
Undecided	11	14	17	8

Source: Noelle-Neumann 1981:190

Furthermore the number of people who felt that they could do something against an unjust law climbed from 38 per cent (1958) to 59 per cent in 1974. In international comparison this subjective perception of one's participative opportunities was well above the respective numbers in Britain (26) and the US(23) (Rudzio 1993:471). Hence, the majority of West Germans thought that their participation could influence the political process. Such a perception represented a fundamental prerogative of democracy: the individuals' belief that his or her action has the potential to alter the course of politics.

Constitutional Consensus

The social upheavals caused by the student revolution and the more critical civic confidence however, did not undermine the constitutional consensus. Parliamentarism gradually but firmly established itself as the favoured principle of political organisation. A guarantor for the success of democracy in the Federal

Republic was represented in the stability of the party system. While the first federal *Bundestag* consisted of ten parties, the number continuously decreased to six in 1953 and to four in 1957. The concentration along the political centre was the consequence of a variety of post-war developments. With the introduction of the five per cent threshold in 1953, smaller parties came increasingly under existential pressure. While some groupings joined the Christian Democratic Union others failed to establish themselves as significant political forces and hardly achieved political mandates on both federal and land levels (Rudzio 1991:119-120). In the end, smaller parties all but disappeared from the political scene, resulting in a parliamentary concentration on CDU/CSU, SPD and FDP.

In addition, decreasing societal cleavages fostered the further mainstream orientation of the voter. The continuing secularisation revoked religions parties such as the conservative *Zentrum* of their electoral bases. Growing economic prosperity and social integration undermined the *raison d'être* of groupings which catered for the rights of refugees and emigrants from pre-war German territories. Prospects for regional *Sonderwege* and separatist tendencies, particularly in Bavaria or the *Saarland* lost in importance as exemplified in the decline of the *Saarländische and Christliche Volkspartei*, the *Bayernpartei* or the *Deutsche Partei*.

The political, social and economic success of the Federal Republic encountered a potential resurgence of extremist parties. The strikingly positive performance of democracy and the *Soziale Marktwirtschaft* managed to draw growing support from former anti-democratic sympathisers. Although the decline of extremist parties was aided by banning the right-wing *Soziale Reichs Partei* (Social Reichs Party; SRP) in 1953 and the Communist party (KPD) in 1956, extremist parties nevertheless had hardly any impact. Only between 1965 and 1969, did the right-wing 'National Party' (NPD) gain access to some *Länder* parliaments, but fell short of entering the *Bundestag* in 1969 with 4.3 per cent of the votes. This moderate success was repeated by a further right-wing grouping, the *Republikaner* (Republicans) which

emerged on the political scene in the mid-1980's. The party had several surprising successes on local levels and gained access to some *Länder* parliaments. Its most spectacular showing was 10.9 per cent in the *Länder* elections of *Baden-Württemberg* in 1992. The *Republikaner* too however, failed to enter the *Bundestag*. In 1990 the party achieved only 2.1 per cent.

Left-extremist parties were also never able to attract a decisive share of the votes. After the re-installment of the Communist party in 1968 under the new name DKP, the strongest performance was 1.3 per cent in the European elections of 1984. Democratic parties, most importantly, Christian and Social Democrats were able to absorb political extremes to the left and right within their party agenda. The *Bonn* Republic therefore succeeded in avoiding the diversion and splintering of political groupings which characterised the *Weimar* Republic and eventually contributed to the collapse of the political centre and the rise of the NS regime. Hence, already by 1961, a three-party system emerged on the federal level, consisting of Christian, Social and Free Democrats. In 1983 the 'Greens' expanded this prevailing pattern with their election to the *Bundestag*.

The voters' orientation along a mainstream line can largely be attributed to the appeal of the two big parties. Both CDU and SPD established themselves as *Volksparteien* (catch-all parties). The electoral support for the SPD increased dramatically, from 29 per cent in 1949 to 46 per cent in 1976 which established the party as a viable electoral alternative to the CDU. This success was partially aided by societal changes. The share of self-employed people dropped from around thirty per cent in 1950 to some 15 per cent twenty years later. Secularisation and a reduction in regular church-goers were widespread phenomena, while psychological barriers between blue and white collar workers decreased (Rudzio 1991:124).

The *Godesberger Programm* of 1959 documented the new post-war orientation of the SPD. With this programme, the party intended to open avenues towards broader

segments of society. While formerly the SPD regarded itself as representative of the working class, now middle and even upper-middle classes were addressed. In addition, the former anti-clerical attitude lost in importance. The program was ideologically neutral and shed the former Marxist rhetoric. Although the party had fought vehemently against Adenauer's course of west-integration and re-armament, *Godesberg* acknowledged the post-war development of the Federal Republic as an irreversible fact. The programme furthermore acknowledged the superiority of market-economic mechanisms over planning procedures and approached the Catholic church on the basis of mutual tolerance (Schmitt 1992b:149). *Godesberg* documented the fundamental point of departure for the SPD towards a mass-oriented party that adapted to the changing social, economic and political situation of the young republic. After 1959, the party represented itself not as the ideological alternative to the CDU but instead as 'the better party' (Rudzio 1991:124) - an advance rather than a break from conservative politics in an open competition with the CDU along the established policy tracks of the *Soziale Marktwirtschaft* and the integration within NATO and the Common Market.

The Christian Democratic Union had been described as the 'prototype of a *Volkspartei*' (Haungs 1992:172). After World War II, the party emerged as a cross-denominational alliance between Catholics and Protestant liberals and conservatives. While during the *Weimar* Republic the political spectrum around confessional, conservative, national and national-liberal forces was heavily fragmented, the post-war era saw the CDU as the monopoly-like political reservoir at the right of centre. The party appealed to civil servants, self employed people and white collar workers, albeit from the outset the share of workers reached a respectable one tenth. Although the legacy of *Weimar* with its traditional Catholic dominance continued to prevail in the CDU, the Christian Democrats neither represented a Catholic-ideological party nor a general Christian movement. Instead, conservative and liberal forces influenced the party's agenda with a tendency towards pragmatic as opposed to dogmatic political solutions (Haungs 1992:174).

Thus in absence of a stark left-right dichotomy, CDU and SPD tried to win voters across traditional milieus, by avoiding affiliations along the lines of class, profession, religion or material status. The social developments of post-war West Germany further fostered the establishment of the all-encompassing *Volksparteien*. The number of social groups which oriented themselves exclusively around one political force, such as farmers, workers, Christians, or self-employed people decreased. Subcultural cleavages lost in importance. Blue-collar workers enjoyed a wider social integration. The landed nobility, as well as the military were not able to re-install their pre-war political influence, while the 'successful integration of over 10 million refugees from the former eastern territories reduced the importance of regional cleavages' (Conradt 1989:260).

In return, the number of people with only loose party affiliations grew, for whom Social and Christian Democrats represented equally viable political solutions. Over forty years, SPD and CDU alternately shared the governing responsibility. The third force, the Free Democrats (FDP) functioned as a regulating power. With the exception of the absolute majority of the CDU between 1957 and 1961 and the 'Grand Coalition' between Social and Christian Democrats (1965 to 1969), neither SPD nor CDU were able to form a federal government without including the FDP as a coalition partner.

The established party system gave West Germany a remarkable continuity and stability. The political rhetoric was spared the ideological division between Left and Right. The splintered party politics of the *Weimar* Republic, traditional conservatism with its anti-democratic, nationalistic and confessional cleavages on the one hand and anti-clerical, anti-bourgeois Socialism on the other were replaced by centrist mass parties. Competition for political responsibilities was a 'constant battle for the centre' (Mertes 1994:14). After decades of political turmoil and sweeping system changes, the West German voter perceived stability as the utmost desire. 'No

experiments', the slogan which brought Adenauer the absolute majority in 1957 represented the vital denominator in electoral preferences. The parties moved along a rather narrow choice of policies within the lines of economic stability, international security and social welfare. Politics was characterised by a striving towards harmony and peace, both on the domestic as well as on the international level (Mertes 1994:17). Drastic policy changes occurred only rarely in practice (as with Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* rapprochement with the GDR in 1969), or even in rhetoric (as with Helmut Kohl's propagated *Wende* in 1983).

Major crises, such as the first economic recession in 1966/67, the oil-price shock in 1973, the subsequent recession of 1974-76, or political terrorism in the 1970's and 80's did not arouse a reorientation but instead strengthened the already established policy principles. Even the emergence of the 'Greens' as a leftist addition that incorporated alternative forces of the citizen-interest groups and the SPD did not constitute a threat to the prevailing system but instead followed along the established tracks of party politics through a number of coalition governments with the SPD on both local and *Länder* level.

Over the years, parliamentarism gained a strong support amongst the population. While in 1950, 25 per cent favoured a one-party rule and 53 per cent opted for a multi-party system, the figures subsequently improved. By 1978, 86 per cent approved the multi-party system and only five per cent still perceived the existence of one party as the best solution (Institut für Demoskopie 1979:78). Positive attitudes towards the Federal parliament consolidated. In eighteen surveys taken over time, respondents had been asked to place their opinions about the *Bundestag* into four categories, ranging from 'exceptionally good', to 'good', 'mediocre' and 'bad' (Emnid 4-1983:11, 5/6-1983:30). Between 1951 and 1983, the average percentage for the top two categories combined was 50.7 per cent, for the remaining two categories 40.1 per cent. In 1951, positive answers accounted for 35 per cent. Since

1965 however, 'exceptionally good' and 'good' were consistently above average, ranging from 52 per cent in January 1965 to 77 per cent in May 1983.

Table 4.9. Attitudes Towards Political Institutions in West Germany (January 1979, percentages)

Question: Do you tend to think well of these institutions or are you inclined to think poorly of them?

	very good	good	good and bad	rather poor	very poor	no opinion
Federal President	43	39	12	2	1	3
Bundestag	12	38	37	7	1	5
Bundesrat	8	33	39	6	1	13
Federal Government	17	35	35	8	2	3
Government of Länder	8	29	49	5	1	8

Source: Noelle-Neumann 1981:185

The public's approval of the *Bundestag* was further documented in Table 4.9. In 1979, only eight per cent thought of the federal parliament in a negative fashion. Additionally, the trust in the competencies of other political institutions and in their abilities to solve problems was astonishing. Perceptions towards the federal President, the *Bundesrat* (the second chamber consisting of representatives from the *Länder*), as well as towards the federal and *Länder* governments were overwhelmingly positive. Pride in the political system and institutions rose from meagre seven per cent in 1959 to 31 per cent in 1978. For those aged below thirty who therefore had their formative experiences in a democratic environment, the figures reached 38 per cent (Conradt 1989:230).

Approval for political institutions was complemented by a rise in the general support for democracy. In 1967, at the outset of the student protests, one fourth of respondents questioned were dissatisfied or undecided as to whether democracy was the best form of government. By 1976 the ratio of support had improved to a solid ninety per cent (Conradt 1989:234). Moreover, responses showed little differences according to party affiliations, and socio-economic or age groups. This trend was

particularly impressive against the backdrop of the political and economic crises of the 1970's. The oil shock related recession of 1974-76, political terrorism, criticism against *Ostpolitik* and the resignation of Chancellor Brandt did not undermine the democratic commitment of the population. The decline in support for the 'government of the day' had little effect on the overall support for liberal democracy (Conradt 1989:263). Instead, by the mid 1970's the political system of the Federal Republic could rely on a broad and strong consensus regarding its basic character and structure.

In sum, between 1960 and 1990, attitudes towards the state changed significantly. Increasingly, traditional expectations of order and security, of economic prosperity and social welfare were complemented by a variety of demands which emerged out of the growing levels of affluence and stability. The policy agenda of Adenauer, including west-integration and *soziale Marktwirtschaft*, served as a formative focus for the young republic. With the emergence of the Cold War, these rock-solid stabilisers functioned as cognitive antipodes to the Communist GDR with whom the Federal Republic fought a constant battle for the status as legitimate successor to the German *Reich*. Because of this external polarity, it came as no surprise that the policy tracks for the FRG were characterised by such a pronounced consensus (Smith 1982:216). Adenauer's rationale for the 1957 election campaign exemplified the mind frame of the era. The east-west antagonism gave no room for 'experiments'.

After 1960, the increase in political interest, growth in membership in political parties and interest groups and the development of grass-roots politics transformed West Germany into a new stage. With growing civic confidence, society was perceived as more open to political discourse and individual expression. Politics were evaluated on a more informed and critical basis. West Germans developed into a more active, informed, outgoing and involved citizenry which prompted commentators to describe this transformation as a 'participatory revolution' (Dalton

1993:179). Since West Germans had become accustomed to and increasingly approved of the formal institutions of democracy, the time was ripe for a broadening of values and standards. The passive and obedient 'no experiments' was replaced by the active 'dare to do politics'. Materialism was complemented by Post-materialism. Predominately younger, middle-class, educated segments of society initiated the transformation. The impact of some of their demands however, such as grass-roots participation, peace, environment, nuclear safety or gender equality, fundamentally changed the political agenda. State-citizen relations moved from mere recipient and obedient attitudes towards a participatory, confident and demanding engagement in shaping society.

Rechtsstaat

One traditional trait of German political culture however, continued to maintain a staggering influence. As a vital principle of the Basic Law *Rechtsstaat* does not only translate as the rule of law, but furthermore as the just state. The *Rechtsstaat* of the *Bonn* Republic was based on the establishment of a constitutional court which resembled the US American Supreme Court, as well as on the emphasis of the constitutional rights of the *Grundgesetz*. These included liberal protective rights against the state (dignity of man, right of privacy, freedom of religion, equality before the law, property or citizenship) and democratic participatory rights, including freedom of opinion and speech, right to vote, right to petition, and freedom of the press. Hence, the *Grundgesetz* belonged to the liberal-democratic tradition, as expressed in the American and French revolutions.

The Constitutional Court was frequently called upon to arbitrate disputes caused by governmental policies and the contrasting views of the parliamentary opposition. For instance in 1950, the SPD challenged Adenauer's defence and de-armament policies. In 1973, the CSU appealed against the SPD's Basic Treaty with the GDR. Judicial verdicts were subsequently treated as political victories (or losses). The lines

between law and politics became blurred. The judiciary had the tendency to become politicised - a trend which was further enhanced by the appointment of judges by either *Bundesrat* or *Bundestag*. Nonetheless, although party patronage could not be denied, verdicts stayed largely clear of party affiliations.

In return there was enough evidence for a judicialisation of politics. With jurisdiction, the Constitutional Court was able to impose conditions on the legislature. Hence, while crafting laws parties were careful about their prospective implications to avoid a subsequent overruling. In the end, the Court's position lay between the two extremes of party influence and judicial independence. Since its establishment in 1951 the Court acquired awareness and sensitivity for the political realities, without faltering under political pressure imposed by parties or federal and *Länder* governments (Smith 1982:196).

Generally speaking, constitutional rights and legal regulations provide for one of the most essential organising principles of a society. While lawful and organised procedures are necessary and common in any society that is based on the rule of law, West Germans pushed these notions to the extreme. The traditional German obsession with rules and regulations helped to support a society which was organised strictly in accordance with legal codes. Law - the respect for, as well as the certainty of it - functioned as the superior guideline for both private and public life. There was an apparent tendency to discuss political problems in a formal and legal manner. In this 'atmosphere of legalism' (Smith 1982:188) political conflict revolved around the correct interpretation of law while neglecting the search for compromise. Even in the private realm, minor disputes were often tackled with reference to legal textbooks, disregarding common sense that would have solved the conflict.

Legalism and formalism were further stressed by the powerful influence of the legal professions on West German public life. Jurists dominated political parties, interest

groups, as well as administrative bodies, resulting in a code of practice that strictly followed along the lines of the established legal patterns. This fixation and obsession with formal law had the tendency to distort the view of true problems (Sontheimer 1990:40). As a consequence, the just state mostly related to the rule of law. ‘Just’ was equated with ‘Law’ and justice was sought after more in the legal process and in the courts than in the political arena (Muller 1994:40).

Table 4.10. Confidence in the Legal System in West Germany (percentages)

Question: Can we or can we not have complete confidence in German justice, that is the judges and the courts?

	1964 (Nov.)	1974 (Jan.)	1978 (Nov.)
can have complete confidence	26	32	40
cannot have complete confidence	28	32	26
To some extent	30	29	28
Undecided	16	7	6

Source: Noelle-Neumann 1981:156

The central position of legalism in the political process, as well as in the private sphere was complemented by a solid trust in the judicial system. As shown in Table 4.10., in 1978 two-thirds of respondents expressed at least some confidence in the German justice system. Moreover throughout the years, the Constitutional Court acquired a high degree of respect and authority amongst the population. In fact it was heralded as the most trusted public institution. In 1990, the levels of confidence for the Constitutional Court (84 per cent) were well above those for the federal parliament (65 per cent), local authorities (62 cent) or the federal government with 61 per cent (von Beyme 1991:67).

Although the German party system acquired a high level of stability and although parliamentary democracy gave West Germans their most peaceful and successful experiences ever, the population still perceived the Constitutional Court as the

superior achievement. Legalism, the recourse to the clarity, security and certainty of the law and consequently to the ultimate and irrevocable decisions of the Constitutional Court were still preferred over the confrontational, consensus-searching style of parliamentary politics.

4.4. The New Länder

4.4.1. Participation

In the immediate aftermath of the revolution interest in politics in eastern Germany was high. Prior to the first free elections to the *Volkskammer* in March 1990, 50 per cent of respondents had attended several public campaign addresses (Noelle Neumann 1991:104). Sensitivity for political matters continued throughout the summer. According to Table 4.11., in August 1990 fifty per cent had a strong or very strong interest in politics. By the end of the year, these figures had dropped to 45 per cent. By 1994, 'very strong' and 'strong' were further reduced to 36 per cent. A certain downward trend in political interest became evident.

This however, came as no surprise against the backdrop of the overwhelming importance of unification for the individual's life, as well as against the extensive media coverage of the first months after the upheavals of autumn 1989. Unification turned from revolutionary excitement into a daily, routine affair. After five years, the effects of novelty, of systemic-democratic changes, or of *Stasi* allegations began to show signs of wear. Lessened interest in politics however, should not be confused with a trend towards apathy. Instead, it represented a step towards normalisation - a fact which was further supported by the comparison with the western level of political interest. According to *Politbarometer*, east and west showed quite similar figures by 1993. The top two categories combined accounted for 44 per cent in the west (east 40 per cent), while the two negative answers amounted to 13.5 per cent (east 17 per cent). In contrast to the Federal Republic of the immediate post-war era, political interest was well-developed in the eastern *Länder*. Although three years after unification, the eastern levels were slightly lower than those of the west, they nonetheless were satisfactory.

Table 4.11. Political Interest in the New Länder (percentages)

Question: How strongly are you interested in politics?

	08-1990	12-1990	1990 (*)	1993 (*)	1994 (*)
very strong	16.3	10.3	13.0	11.1	9.4
strong	34.3	35.4	34.9	29.0	27.1
a little	34.0	43.4	39.2	42.4	45.1
hardly	9.6	7.9	8.7	12.3	14.1
none at all	5.7	3.0	4.2	5.2	4.3
n	967	1182	2149	5197	6415

(*): cumulated data

Source: Politbarometer

Furthermore, participation in elections initially reached astonishing figures in the east. In March 1990, 93.2 per cent cast their votes for the *Volkskammer* (Förster and Roski 1990:133). Hence, the first free elections had a turn-out which was almost as high as the forged results of the SED era. Clearly, the run for the ballot was prompted by a thirst for participation and for expression of free will after four decades of party tutelage. The popular upheavals of autumn 1989 generated a momentum in which the political future of the GDR and the prospect of unification with the FRG dominated people's thoughts. Political involvement and consequently participation in elections were the logical outcome.

As with political interest, the course of unification demonstrated that these high levels of participative euphoria were only short-lived. Elections for the *Landtage* - the parliaments of the *Länder* - in October 1990 already showed lower turn-outs which however still interested a satisfactory number of voters. The same can be said for the subsequent election for the federal *Bundestag* in December 1990, where participation in the east was only marginally lower than in the west. Hence over the course of one year, voter participation in the new *Länder* turned from euphoria to normalisation.

Four years onward, electoral participation in the east had yet to equal that of the west, although differences remained few. Comparing the elections for the *Bundestag* in 1990 and 1994, the margin between east and west rose from five to eight per cent in favour of the west. In addition, voter participation for the eastern *Landtage* in 1994 dropped by seven per cent in comparison to 1990. Since *Länder* elections in the west regularly had lower turn-outs than those for the *Bundestag*, the average participation of 62.1 in the east still reached satisfactory numbers, in particular against the backdrop of western turn-outs, such as 64 per cent in Northrhine-Westfalia in 1995 or 67.8 per cent in Bavaria in 1994. Hence political interest and election turn-outs in the east stabilised at acceptable levels. Judging from these basic and passive virtues of citizenship, Easterners adapted well to the introduction of democracy.

Table 4.12. Participation of East Germans in Elections (percentages)

	Bundestag		Landtag	
	1990	1994	1990	1994
Brandenburg	73.8	71.5	67.1	56.3
Mecklenburg-Westpomerania	70.9	72.8	64.7	72.9
Saxony	76.2	72.0	72.8	58.4
Saxony-Anhalt	72.2	70.4	65.1	54.8
Thuringia	76.4	74.9	71.7	74.8
total new Länder *1	73.3	72.2	69.1	62.1
total old Länder *2	78.5	80.5	---	---

*1: excluding Berlin

*2: including Berlin

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1994:98,100; 1995:91,94.

Political Parties

The respectable figures for passive participation however, were not met by active participation in political parties. The downward trend was so striking that one could suggest a widespread rejection of the party system. Upon unification, the West German party system was to a large extent transformed to the east. The major political parties quickly sought for partners in the new *Länder*. Within one year following the mass demonstrations of 1989, the party system had consolidated along western lines. The DSU (*Deutsche Soziale Union*, German Social Union) found a willing ally in the Bavarian CSU. In February 1990, the party joined forces with the former eastern Block party CDU and the civic group DA (*Demokratischer Aufbruch*, Democratic Awakening) to form the electoral *Allianz für Deutschland* (Alliance for Germany). With the *Volkskammer* elections in March looming on the horizon the western CDU and in particular Chancellor Kohl pushed for a co-operation of centre of right forces. Unification with the western CDU followed in October 1990.

In February 1990, an equally streamlining process in the run-up of the *Volkskammer* elections occurred in the liberal democratic camp. The former Block parties LDPD and NDPD joined forces with the civic group *Deutsche Forum Partei* (German Forum Party) which in itself was a splinter group from the *Neues Forum* (New Forum), as well as with the eastern *Freie Demokratische Partei* (FDP, Free Democratic Party). Unification with the western FDP followed in August 1990. The eastern Social Democrats (SDP) established themselves as an independent party from its western counterpart in October 1989. Unification with the western branch occurred in September 1990. The SED successor organisation of Honecker's Stalinist party changed its name to SED/PDS in December 1989 only to drop the first three letters two months later. The eastern Greens were founded in November 1989. Here, the various *Länder* organisations joined the corresponding western party throughout 1991. The three civic movements *Neues Forum*, *Demokratie Jetzt* (Democracy Now) and the *Initiative für Frieden und Menschenrechte* (Initiative or Peace and Human Rights) merged immediately before the *Volkskammer* elections in

March 1990 under the name *Bündnis 90* (Alliance 90). As the last merger, *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* had to wait until March 1993.

Table 4.13. The Transformation of the Eastern Party Landscape

Party (East)	Founded	Merged with(western party)	Date
Block parties			
- CDU	06-45	CDU	10-90
- DBD	06-48	CDU	10-90
- LDPD	07-45	FDP	08-90
- NDPD	05-48	FDP	08-90
New Parties			
- SDP	10-89	SPD	09-90
- Die Grünen	11-89	B'90/Die Grünen	11-93
- DSU		none; only regional importance	none
Civic Movement			
- Demokratischer Aufbruch (DA)	10-89	CDU	10-90
- Neues Forum	09-89	B'90/Die Grünen	11-93
- Demokratie Jetzt	09-89	B'90/Die Grünen	11-93
- Initiative Frieden und Menschenrechte	10-85	B'90/Die Grünen	11-93
PDS	02-90	none; successor party to SED	none

Source: Press Offices of respective parties

While the PDS was able to fall back on an extensive infrastructure of local and regional offices, the eastern branches of SPD, CDU and FDP were guided by their western allies in setting up a network of local and regional organisations which safeguarded participation in elections and the staffing of political posts. At first glance, the system seemed established. Soon however, cracks appeared on the surface.

Table 4.14. Membership in Political Parties in East and West

	12-1991 (1000)		12-1992 (1000)		12-1994 (1000)	
	East	West	East	West	East	West
CDU	111.0 (1)	650.0	94.3	619.6	92.5 (2)	578.9 (2)
SPD (3)	27.2	892.6	25.7	860.2	27.7	821.6
FDP (2)	73.9	63.6	41.2	62.0	29.1	58.5
PDS (4)	171.7	0.8	145.8	0.9	119.4	2.3
Bündnis 90/ Grüne (3)	1.3	37.5	0.8	35.4	2.8	41.1

(1): estimates

(2): East: including Berlin. West: excluding Berlin

(3): East: excluding eastern Berlin. West: only old Länder

(4): East: excluding western Berlin. West: including western Berlin

Source: Press Offices of respective parties

Membership in political parties remained persistently low. In 1990, the Christian Democratic membership stood at over 130,000 since the party took over 100,000 members from the GDR Block-CDU. Four years onwards, the CDU had lost some 40,000 members in the east. The Social Democrats could not rely on a Blockparty organisation and five years after unification, membership had consolidated at low levels. The FDP reached its high of 114,000 members in the east in 1990 by incorporating the Block parties LDPD and NDPD. Two-thirds of the all-German membership came from the new *Länder*. Subsequently, the downward trend within the FDP represented the most radical of all parties. Within four years, the Free Democrats lost almost three-fourths of its eastern members. Within *Bündnis 90/die Grünen* the extremely low levels of membership could partially be explained by organisational turmoil within the civic movement and the existence of separate eastern and western Greens. With the party mergers of 1992 however, membership was not given a significant boost. In fact, by 1994 only 2800 members joined their ranks. Even the impressive electoral successes of the PDS did not result in more party activists. Instead, numbers fell dramatically from 172,000 in 1991 to 122,000 in 1994.

The ratio of party membership per capita further accentuated the striking differences between east and west. With the eastern population constituting some twenty per cent of unified Germany, the ratio in the CDU/CSU was 2 to 1 in favour of the west. Within the SPD, the figures were 7 to 1, within *Bündnis 90/die Grünen* 3.5 to 1. Of the established western parties, only the FDP had more members per capita in the east with a ratio of 2:1. In contrast, the PDS continued to maintain its almost exclusive eastern orientation. Four years after unification, membership in the west remained insignificant.

For party officials, the search for candidates and activists to fill various political posts represented a frustrating task. For instance, in the communal elections of *Brandenburg* in December 1993, the mighty *Volksparteien* SPD and CDU failed to provide a complete list of candidates for all constituencies. The CDU managed to cover only half of the municipalities, while the SPD fared even worse and competed for only one-third of the seats (Schmid 1994:797).

Formal ties to the SED or allegations over the involvement in *Stasi* activities forced several leading eastern politicians to resign. Within the CDU, the Block party's long-time leader Gerald Götting had to step down in November 1989. Lothar de Maizière - the only freely elected Prime Minister of the GDR - resigned from his posts as deputy chairman and chairman of *Brandenburg* in 1991. Other cases included the chairman of Saxony, Klaus Reichenbach (1991), the Minister President of Thuringia, Josef Duchac (1991), the party chairman and Interior Minister of Thuringia, Willibald Böck (1992), the chairman and Minister President of Saxony-Anhalt, Gerd Gries (1991), as well as the Minister President of Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, Alfred Gomolka (1992). By late 1992, three out of four CDU Minister Presidents had been forced to step down. Within the Social Democrats, the leader of the eastern SDP, Ibraim Boehme resigned in April 1990. In 1992, *Brandenburg's* popular Minister President Manfred Stolpe had to face stiff media scrutiny over alleged conspiracies with the SED authorities during his time as an Evangelical

pastor. The charismatic leader of the PDS, Gregor Gysi, had to confront rumours over his *Stasi* involvement as an unofficial informant. By the same token Wolfgang Schnur, former chairman of the *Demokratischer Aufbruch* was forced to appear in court in January 1996.

The carousel of personnel in the political parties resembled the general societal process of coming to terms with the past existence during a time of sweeping political system changes. The eastern branches of SPD, CDU, and FDP, as well as the PDS were torn between reformists and the establishment (Schmid 1994:795). The latter led the parties towards unification, held key positions and banked on a reservoir of political knowledge and experience. The former criticised the clear relationship with the totalitarian authorities, arguing that the systemic involvement within the SED-state as members of block parties disqualified any politician from seeking political influence in a markedly different political setting.

Involvement in the SED state and *Stasi* allegations of the old leadership, as well as the lack of political expertise of younger recruits forced the political parties to fill the void with western staff. This import of politicians caused widespread resentment amongst Easterners. It severely hampered the process of establishing trust amongst the eastern populace. Most 'imports' were of modest or fading political reputation. Quite often it seemed that their western careers were about to draw to a close which made the new position in the east look like an extension of one's political fortunes. Many refused to take up permanent residence in the east and continued their involvement in western politics. The notion of imported political 'second-hand ware' spread amongst the population.

Also, East Germans were under-represented in the party's decision-making bodies. In the FDP, only 260 out of 626 delegates for the unification congress in August 1990 came from the east. Of 13 members of the presidium, four were Easterners. Only the ratio of deputy chairmen gave the east a proper representation with two out

of five (Ammer 1992:469). In the CDU, three posts on the 14-member presidium and seven on the 26-person executive committee were reserved for Easterners. The position of deputy chair was created for de Maizière. In 1992, his successor Angela Merkel won re-election, although the post was expanded to five seats, opened to all contenders which then included Saxony's Interior Minister Heinz Egger. The first 'unified' cabinet of 1991 incorporated only two East Germans, who were both given minor portfolios - Transportation to Günther Krause and Family and Youth to Merkel (Clemens 1993:215-217).

Within the SPD, one out of five deputy chairmen came from the east (Wolfgang Thierse). The 39-member executive committee consisted of only six Easterners. In 1995, the committee was expanded to 49 seats. Still, Easterners accounted for only seven posts. Only the Greens managed to establish a representation according to the population ratio between east and west. 150 out of a total of 750 party conference delegates, as well as four out of nine federal executives come from the east. In the end, some forty per cent of all *Länder* ministers were from the west. They occupied central positions and were supported by top ranking civil servants who also had been recruited from the old *Länder*.

The feeling of a political take-over by the west came therefore as no surprise. In a survey in 1993, the strikingly high number of 93 per cent perceived that only those who have lived in the east have the right to talk about problems in the east (*Der Spiegel* 3-1993:56). Clearly, the feeling of mis-representation was widespread. Easterners wished for authentic political officials, who if not from the east at least were familiar with the eastern situation.

However this did not result in a resentment *per se* of western politicians. Asked whether top political posts should only be filled with eastern politicians, a majority of respondents (69 per cent) argued that it depended on the respective person. 27 per cent insisted on eastern politicians, while 3.6 per cent favoured a western official

(Politbarometer). Although one fourth still flatly rejected any Westerners at all, the large majority showed a readiness in accepting representation by a western official - as long as he or she was willing to further the eastern cause.

This notion became evident in Saxony. After the demise of the Minister President Reichenbach (CDU) over alleged *Stasi* co-operation, the incoming western Kurt Biedenkopf - the former CDU chairman for the state of Northrhine-Westfalia - managed to acquire the nickname *Sachsenkönig* (King of Saxony). With compassion, initiative and eagerness, Biedenkopf overcame initial suspicious sentiments of 'yet-another-Wessi' which subsequently culminated in the absolute majority in the land elections of 1994.

Given the prevalence of sentiments of a political take-over, political parties faced severe difficulties in establishing electoral loyalties. They were forced to aggregate the interests of a population that had just experienced abrupt and severe upheavals in their lives. The rapidity of the political, social and economic changes of unification could not allow for the emergence and establishment of sound party affiliations. 'Roller coaster rides' of voter support were no exception. For instance in February 1990, a sample indicated that 48 per cent intended to vote for the SPD in the upcoming *Länder* elections. The numbers fell to 37 per cent in the first week of March, while on election day (March 18) only 22 per cent voted for the Social Democrats (Noelle-Neumann 1991:103). Voter support for the CDU dropped from 43 per cent in the federal elections of 1990 to 31 per cent in 1994.

Four years after unification, party affiliations remained persistently weak. The CDU stayed at 19 per cent between November 1991 and November 1994. During the same time SPD dropped from 24 per cent to 17 per cent. A downward trend also affected *Bündnis 90/die Grünen* with a decline from 5.6 per cent to 2.3 per cent. The FDP dropped more drastically from 6.5 per cent to 0.9 per cent (*Politbarometer*). As indicated in Table 4.15. the number of people who did not have any kind of

orientation towards a political party continued to stay at exceptionally high levels. While the identification with fringe parties, such as the right-extremist *Republikaner* paled into insignificance, the established parties of SPD, CDU, FDP and *Bündnis 90/die Grünen* were not able to generate sound voter orientations. In contrast, the number of people who leaned towards these parties decreased from 48 to 44 per cent. Hence nearly half of eastern respondents did not possess a party identification as compared to one-third in the west. Even according to age groups the numbers stayed at similar levels. Only the younger generations were slightly more hesitant to identify themselves with a political party.⁴

Table 4.15. Party Identification in the New Länder (cumulated data, percentages)

Question: Do you have general leanings toward a particular party?

	East			West
	1992	1993	1994	1994
PDS	5.7	7.0	10.1	0.1
Remaining Parties	48.2	40.8	43.9	26.5
none	46.1	52.2	46.0	32.9
n	11746	11647	11793	11130

Source: Politbarometer

Party identification describes a long-term, stable orientation, a form of ‘psychological party membership’ (Rattinger 1995:232). One might argue that such affiliations were not able to develop given the short time-span since unification. However prior to 1989, East Germans by no means lived in a political vacuum. Information about the political landscape in West Germany was transmitted through the media or visits from friends and relatives (Schmitt 1992a). In a survey taken in early 1993, forty per cent of respondents agreed to have had identifications towards a western party before the *Wende* (Rattinger 1995:233). After unification the total

⁴ In November 1994, 54 per cent below thirty had no party identification as compared to 49.6 per cent of the total population.

number of respondents who developed party affiliations did not increase on a substantial level. In fact, until 1993 the number of East Germans who before 1989 possessed an identification towards a western party but now abandoned it totalled 32 per cent, while the amount who did not have a party identification but developed one after unification was only 28 per cent (Rattinger 1995:236). Thus, in total the transformed party landscape of eastern Germany was not able to generate stronger affiliations amongst the population. Identification with political parties persistently stayed at moderate levels trailing significantly behind western standards.

Multivariate analyses so far had failed to offer cogent insights into the causes for the reluctance to form party identifications. Admittedly, these were 'very hard to explain' (Rattinger 1995:252). However the concept of party identification implies the identification not only with political parties but also with their task of generating public demands in the process of interest representation. Hence the lack of party identification leads towards a general dissatisfaction with the output or with concrete political achievements for whom political parties were held responsible. Here a variety of factors spring to mind. The stiff economic recession of 1991 to 1993, real or feared unemployment, the scrapping of the former all-encompassing welfare state all pointed towards the perceived failure of the new system (see Chapter Three). For some, unification simply did not pay off. Political parties as the agents who administered the change were subsequently blamed for individual financial misfortunes and hardship. Kohl's hasty promise of 'blossoming landscapes' failed to materialise, while the governing CDU/FDP coalition was held responsible for the persistent split between east and west regarding living standard and wages.

The programmatic base of some political parties and the orientation towards particular societal segments could not aggregate reliable support. The civic movement almost disappeared into oblivion. In the aftermath of unification, the agenda which developed in opposition against the SED regime, such as individual liberties and human rights was sidelined against the overall importance of material

issues. Parallel to this, the minor importance of environmental issues rendered campaigning problematic for the Greens.

The Liberal Democrats traditionally supported free market mechanisms to support small or independent businesses, while stressing *Rechtsstaat* principles. As with the civic movement liberal concerns of freedom and civil liberties had only minor significance against the paramount importance of materialist concerns. Also independent and small businesses were still few in numbers, while the CDU established itself as a strong contender for this subgroup. The SPD still had to carry the baggage of its fatal *Bundestag* campaign of 1990. Arguing for a moderate pace of unification, the party was perceived as a traitor to German unity. The initial surplus of respect which Brandt's *Ostpolitik* generated in the 1970's melted away over Oskar Lafontaine's approach to handle German unification. Furthermore, the traditional orientation of the SPD towards workers and those with lower incomes was obsolete in the east. As a promulgated classless society the differences in wages and status - excluding party apparatschiks - were minimal in the GDR. With unification, the party's traditional support amongst the less well-off could therefore not materialise since a societal rift along the lines of poor versus rich, of blue versus white collar was virtually non-existent.

Parteienverdrossenheit (weariness of political parties) aptly summed up the attitudes of East Germans towards the political system. Despite high interest in politics, despite satisfactory turn-outs at elections, people failed to identify with political parties as their agents for interest representation. The political parties were left with the daunting task of establishing long-term loyalties. Five years after unification they had yet to succeed.

The PDS

In this atmosphere of disorientation one party made a considerable exception. Growing out of the ashes of the Stalinist SED, the PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism) turned into an authentic body of interest representation for eastern issues. In December 1989, after the ousting of Honecker's successor Egon Krenz, the party re-named itself as SED/PDS and argued for a democratic renewal around the reformists Gregor Gysi and Hans Modrow. Two months later, the neo-Communists dropped the SED from their name and five years onwards the party continued to surprise the political establishment.

In the numerous elections of 1994, the PDS enjoyed surging successes and was able to significantly increase its share of votes, as compared to the first free elections in 1990. It drew support from all political corners, notably from the SPD but also to some extent from the CDU. In addition, young and first-time voters, as well as former non-voters found the party particularly appealing (Bortfeld 1994:1284). Beginning with the elections for the European Parliament in June 1994, the PDS did surprisingly well in all of the five new *Länder*. In the eastern part of Berlin, the party took forty per cent of the vote and emerged as the strongest party there. The five *Länder* elections of the same year firmly established the party on the political agenda. The PDS achieved between 16.6 per cent in Thuringia and 22.7 per cent in Mecklenburg-Westpomerania. As shown in Table 4.16., the share of votes increased in everyone of the new *Länder*, between 5.3 per cent in *Brandenburg* and 7.9 per cent in Saxony-Anhalt. In Saxony-Anhalt co-operation with the neo-Communists safeguarded the minority coalition of Greens and Social Democrats which was subsequently termed as the 'Magdeburg model of tolerance' (*Der Spiegel* 44-1995:24). In Thuringia and Mecklenburg-Westpomerania only grand coalitions between Social and Christian Democrats prevented the party from assuming governmental responsibility.

Table 4.16. Percentage of Votes for the PDS

	1994	1990
Bundestag:		
East	19.2	11.0
West	0.9	2.0
Total	4.4	2.4
Länder:		
Mecklenburg-Westpomerania	22.7	15.7
Brandenburg	18.7	13.4
Saxony	16.5	10.2
Saxony-Anhalt	19.9	12.0
Thuringia	16.6	9.7

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1995:91,94; 1994:98,100.

Particularly on a local level, the PDS was able to achieve some remarkable success. In several counties - both urban and rural - the majority of votes went to the neo-Communists. As of early 1996, 180 towns and municipalities were governed by PDS mayors. Examples include the cities of Rostock, Schwerin, Neubrandenburg, Suhl and Halle. The party had 129 seats in the various *Länder* parliaments and 6000 parliamentarians in local governments (*Der Spiegel* 3/1996:40). In the local elections of Berlin in November 1995, the neo-Communists emerged as the strongest political force, capturing 36.3 per cent. Often only the anonymous co-operation between the remaining parties prevented the PDS from capturing further county and city halls (Golz 1994b:676). On the federal level, the split between east and west was aptly documented by the share of votes for the neo-Communists. Table 4.16. shows the striking disparities between the respective percentages. In the east, the PDS further manifested its political position, while in the west the party sank into insignificance. Still, both in 1990 and in 1994, the PDS entered the German parliament.⁵

⁵ In 1990, the Federal Constitutional Court ordered the introduction of separate five per cent thresholds for east and west. While in 1994, the all-German threshold was re-instated the peculiarities of the German electoral system which combines majority and representative elements gave the PDS 30 seats in the *Bundestag*.

Although the demise of the SED regime resulted in a dramatic drop in membership - from 1.8 million in December 1989 to 119,000 in 1994 - the PDS still had by far the strongest membership base of all political parties in the new *Länder* which stood in sharp contrast to the west, where the neo-Communists largely failed in attracting new members (see Table 4.14.). Nonetheless as relics of the SED past, the PDS possessed an extensive network of local offices, solid financial resources, and experienced party activists. The party consisted of up to to 95 per cent of former members of the SED (Spittmann 1994:673). Only around one fourth were gainfully employed (in contrast CDU/CSU 64 per cent, SPD 65 per cent, B'90/Greens 74 per cent). Also the PDS recruited heavily amongst older generations. 64 per cent of party members were pensioners, 38 per cent over age 65, and only seven per cent were between 18 and 34 (in contrast CDU/CSU and SPD 14 per cent, B'90/Greens 32 per cent). The average income of PDS members was below that of other political parties. Eighty per had a net monthly income below DM 3500 (in contrast CDU/CSU 31 per cent, SPD and B'90/Greens 38 per cent). Only two per cent had a net monthly income of more than DM 6500 (in contrast CDU/CSU 26 per cent, SPD 17 per cent, B'90/Greens 13 per cent; Golz 1994c:903).

The party's electoral base transcended the broader segments of society, moving beyond the traditional support from the old, unemployed and former SED functionaries. One fourth of PDS voters were between 18 and 34, and 39 per cent between 35 and 54. Apparently, a considerable number of former SED members left the party out of perceived employment disadvantages but still upheld their electoral preferences (Golz 1994c:903). In the local elections for Berlin in November 1995, the PDS was able to attract younger voters, as well as the middle class. While the party took 36.3 per cent in the eastern districts, 39 per cent of people aged 18 to 24, as well as forty per cent of white collar workers and civil servants gave the party their support (*Der Spiegel* 44/1995:23). In general, PDS voters were slightly more affluent than PDS members but still trailed behind voters of other political parties.

Most strikingly, political interest amongst party members and voters of the PDS was particularly well developed (Golz 1994c:904).

The programmatic base suffered from vague explorations of the GDR history. In the party programs of 1990 and 1993, the SED past was only addressed in general terms, while lacking a critical confrontation with economic and political shortcomings of the system. The party obviously tried to distance itself from the SED by drawing a final line. The PDS simply rejected the past without interrogating the causes of the failure of the Socialist experience (Pfahl-Traugber 1995:28). Further programmatic points included a stronger position of the state (promotion of meaningful leisure activities, banning of right-extremism) and direct democratic devices (plebiscites, extra-parliamentary action, or the incorporation of councils consisting of union members, employer's association, interest groups and parliamentarians in the legislative process). Capitalism was largely blamed for social and economic shortcomings, culminating in the accusation of having caused an 'existential crisis of civilisation' in the program of 1993. André Brie, head of the program commission, admitted that the PDS was lacking a coherent overall concept (*Der Spiegel* 3/1996:441). The party was torn between several factions. The realist wing under Gysi and party chairman Lothar Bisky promoted a course towards governmental responsibility, while fundamentalists embraced notions of extra-parliamentary activism, Communism and even eco-fundamentalism.

These programmatic points could not leave the impression of a reformed Socialist party. However although the PDS emerged from the Stalinist SED whose totalitarian grip on society prompted East Germans to take their anger to the streets, the public seemed relaxed about the surging success of the neo-Communists. Gradually, the PDS managed to leave the image of the successor party to the SED behind. Gysi's *bunte Truppe* (colourful troops) - a mixture of former dissidents, intellectuals and reformist *SED* apparatchiks included Bismarck's great grand nephew Graf Einsiedel, the former GDR economics minister Christa Luft and the writers Stefan

Heym and Gerhard Zwerenz. The tactics of naming prominent people - even without party membership - as candidates proved to be a striking success. Despite the ageing membership structure and the persistent internal quarrels the party's image was unorthodox, young, uncomplicated and bold.

The predominantly eastern success of the PDS can partly be explained by its exclusively eastern orientation. With the exception of *Bündnis 90* (the struggling successor party of the civic movement) and the DSU (which paled into insignificance and remained present only in the local area around Dresden), all other political groupings had their origin in the west. This sense of western domination of the political process was further highlighted by the vast number of western officials who occupied key posts in state and local administrations, as well as by the comparatively minor political weight of eastern politicians at the federal level. This feeling of mis- and under-representation opened the gates for the spectacular rise of the PDS. In July 1994, 62 per cent of respondents in the east declared that the PDS was needed in the new *Länder* to assert east German interests. Consequently, 57 per cent wanted to see the PDS in the federal *Bundestag* (*Politbarometer*).

In addition, the PDS had the tactical advantage of voicing particularly eastern issues and grievances, while being the only party in the east that possessed a strong social, locally-oriented network. Political activism include regular talks and discussions, communal activities, advice and information on such critical issues as rents or pensions. This network did not only operate during the build-up to major elections, but instead represented a permanent institution.

Six years after the demise of the GDR dictatorship, the PDS established itself as a genuine *Volkspartei* in the eastern *Länder*. Accusations over the *Stasi* activities of Gysi and Bisky, internal divisions between reformers and former SED-apparatschiks, as well as hostile political rhetoric from established parties and the media could not undermine the PDS's growing success. The aversion of western political elites, most

notably Chancellor Kohl who labelled the party as red-painted fascists was not shared by the eastern public. In 1994, 39 per cent of respondents believed that the PDS had parted from its SED past. Relying on this considerable stock of trust, the party was taking advantage of the void of affiliation which the Christian, Social and Free Democrats failed to fill. In contrast to the traditional western parties, the PDS was the sole political agent capable of generating the spirit of solidarity and communality in a time of abrupt and sweeping changes to an individual's life.

The Civic Movement

In contrast, the former power and influence of the civic movement gradually decreased. As with the PDS, the civic movement found itself without a powerful ally in the west. The ideologically most suitable western counterpart, the Greens were the party which most resented unification (Poguntke and Schmitt-Beck 1994:93). Additionally, whereas most political groupings supported quick unification and consequently geared towards an organisational merger with western parties, the civic movement held on to the notion of an independent East Germany, arguing for a Socialist alternative with a human face.

From the start the civic movement was organisationally dispersed. The centralised and oppressive political regime of the GDR fostered a tendency towards decentralised organisational patterns, while the security and surveillance apparatus prevented the establishment of cross-organisational communication channels (Poguntke and Schmitt-Beck 1994:93). Furthermore, the movement was ideologically fragmented. In the revolutionary days of autumn 1989, attitudinal differences were only brushed aside by the common goal of achieving political freedom. Hence during the popular upheavals of 1989, several opposition movements emerged on the political scene. In addition to the *Initiative für Frieden und Menschenrechte* (founded as early as 1985), *Neues Forum* and *Demokratie Jetzt* were established in September 1989. In October they were joined by the

Demokratischer Aufbruch. While the latter merged with the CDU in October 1990, the remaining three joined forces in March 1990 under the name of *Bündnis 90*.

The eastern Green Party which also grew out of the resistance movement against the old regime was founded in November 1989. The decision by the Constitutional Court to introduce separate five per cent thresholds in the east and west for the upcoming federal elections in December 1990, as well as ideological prerogatives of a separate East German party identity relieved pressure towards a merger with the western Greens until after the election (Poguntke and Schmitt-Beck 1994:94). The merger with the western sister party took place over the course of 1991, with individual *Länder* associations joining the merger. Finally, *Bündnis 90* and Greens joined forces in March 1993.

The first electoral results were depressing. Standing separately in the *Volkskammer* and *Länder* elections in March 1990, the Greens and the citizen movement trailed far behind those parties which had found western allies. In the first all-German elections for the federal *Bundestag* in December 1990 the western Greens failed to cross the five per cent threshold. The electoral alliance of eastern Greens and *Bündnis 90* sent only two representatives of the eastern Greens and six from the citizen movements to the *Bundestag*. The prospect of staying under the all-German threshold in the federal elections of 1994 undoubtedly boosted pragmatism towards a unification of the Greens and citizen movement (Poguntke and Schmitt-Beck 1994:93) - a move which paid off by achieving 6.9 percent. On the *Länder* level however, the impact of the party remained moderate. In 1994, only the parliament of Saxony-Anhalt had representatives from *Bündnis 90/die Grünen* which had received just 5.1 per cent of the votes.

Membership participation in the civic movement declined dramatically. In late 1989, some 200,000 signed the founding declaration of *Neues Forum*. This figure however, represented more of a protest and rejection vote against the regime than actual

support for the movement. With western parties appearing on the eastern political scene, public interest in *Neues Forum* and other civic movements decreased. The prospect for rapid unification with the west was clearly more appealing to Easterners than the persistence of an eastern Socialist alternative. By June 1991, *Neues Forum* had a membership base of 5,000, while *Demokratie Jetzt* consisted of sixhundred and *Initiative Frieden* of twohundred active participants.

Although the formation of *Bündnis 90/die Grünen* brought the organisational diversification within the civic movement to an end, membership figures did not receive a boost. By 1994, *Bündnis 90/die Grünen* were still largely based in the west with some 41,000 supporters as opposed to a mere 2,8000 in the east. In retrospect, the role of the civic movement in the eastern *Länder* became clear. Although their activists initiated the downfall of the regime, they were mere 'catalysts rather than leaders of a mass rebellion' (Poguntke and Schmitt-Beck 1994:94). The movement's programmatic base soon eroded. The quest for freedom, human rights and civic liberties was pushed out of the realm of relevance. With unification in October 1990, those goals were practically achieved. Other issues, such as unemployment, wages, and social security now dominated people's minds. The civic movement however, was left with programmatic problems in attracting post-unification voters. So far, environmental and grass-roots politics found it hard to establish themselves in the east.

Interest Groups

Not only political parties, but other interest-representing bodies also expanded their spheres of influence to the new *Länder*. Since no free interest aggregation had existed in the GDR, a network of groups and organisations had to be established. Subsequently, western business and farm organisations, trade unions, the churches, or civic groups developed structures in the east.

The State Treaty of May 1990 called for the adoption of the entire West German system of labour organisation and collective bargaining. The *Bundesverband der deutschen Industrie* (BDI - Federation of German Industry), the *Bundesvereinigung der deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände* (BDA - Confederation of German Employers' Associations) and the *Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund* (DGB - German Federation of Trade Unions) quickly set up offices in the new *Länder*. Various aspects rendered their work difficult. With rising unemployment interest organisations were confronted with reductions in revenues from membership fees. For the BDA and the BDI, the increasing numbers of cases of liquidation and bankruptcy resulted in high fluctuation of constituent companies. Also, growing numbers of eastern companies refused to join or left the associations to avoid tariff agreements that were negotiated with the unions. Instead these firms negotiated directly with the respective factory committee. In 1992, the Federal Labour Court intervened ruling that even non-organised enterprises must pay wages and salaries according to tariff regulations (Boll 1994:116).

Table 4.17. Membership in Unions: East Versus West

Year (31.12.)	East		West	
	Members (1000)	Percentage Work Force	Members (1000)	Percentage Work Force
1991	4,158	54.8	7,643	26.4
1992	3,392	50.4	7,624	26.2
1993	2,907	44.6	7,384	25.8
1994	2,589	39.3	7,179	25.4

Source: DGB Bundesvorstand, Statistical Yearbook 1995:105.

Trade Unions had an immediate impact on the political situation in the eastern *Länder*. They emerged as 'the best advocates for the interests of East Germans', as well as the motor of the 'equalisation of life conditions' (von Beyme 1991:163). With an aggressive policy of continuous threats of strikes, unions pushed for

increases in wage levels. Although such action was beyond any economically-responsible, inflation-concerned means (see Chapter Three), it helped in return to ease social tensions and to avoid political unrest.

The unions achieved high levels of moral credibility and political competence (Tiemann 1994:155) amongst Easterners. As shown in Table 4.17. their impressive achievements however, were not awarded with an increase in membership. Similar to political parties, unions suffered from a dramatic loss in membership. In 1992, more than 750,000 or 18 per cent of the total membership in the eastern *Länder* left the DGB. The western branches documented only a minor fall in the ratio of organised employees - from 26 per cent to 25 per cent. In the east, the drop was staggering. Between 1991 and 1994, more than 1.5 million (or some thirty per cent) left the unions. The loss in membership was regarded as a reflex to the economic situation in eastern Germany. Redundancies on a massive scale caused by restructuring processes resulted in a decreasing base for recruitment of new members.

Still, the percentages of employees with a union membership card was considerably higher in the east than in the west. This however, was a relic to the artificially high level of labour organisation in the GDR. After unification, the virtually compulsory membership of the SED-controlled FDGB came to an end. As a result, the number of organised employees dropped from 55 to 39 per cent. Against the backdrop of tight individual budgets, a considerable number of eastern workers preferred to save membership fees by leaving the unions. It remains to be seen, at which state the still higher eastern membership will consolidate. Only then can one assess whether it represents a dying habit taken over from the GDR past or an affirmative willingness to participate in the political process. Until the end of 1994, the dramatic downward trend did not come to a close. Declining membership figures were further aggravated by severe problems in recruitment of activists (Boll 1994:127). Unions suffered from

the same phenomena which also rendered the work of political parties difficult: the Easterners' preference of 'exit' over 'voice'.

In the GDR, environmental politics was channelled through the official *Gesellschaft für Natur und Umwelt* (GNU - Society for Nature and Environment), founded in the late 1970's. As an official mass organisation, the GNU was controlled by the state with a membership of about 50,000 (Boll 1994:124). Unofficial groups were formed by the late 1980's and were predominately organised in the citizen movements of *Neues Forum* and *Demokratie Jetzt*. This antagonism between official and unofficial groupings, between state control and opposition movement was bound to split the ecological political scene after unification. Indeed, civic movement activists often refused to co-operate with GNU members.

Hence in the aftermath of 1989, a variety of environmental groups emerged on the political scene. Out of the GNU, the *Bund für Natur und Umweltschutz* (BNU - Association for Nature and Environment) and the *Grüne Liga* (Green League) emerged. Additionally, the *Naturschutzbund der DDR* was established in March 1990 which subsequently merged with its western counterpart. In October 1990, the west German *Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz* (BUND - Association for the Environment and Protection of Nature) set up offices in the east and merged with several district branches of the BNU. Additionally, Greenpeace set up headquarters in Berlin.

Table 4.18. Membership in Civic Groups in 1994

	East	West
Greenpeace	8,000	499,000
BNU	10,500 (1)	197,000 (2)
Bund	3,500 (1)	212,000 (2)
(1) including Berlin		(2) excluding Berlin

Sources: Press Offices of Organisations

Five years after unification membership remained low. While the *Grüne Liga* could count on some 4,000 eastern activists (Boll 1994:124), Table 4.18. shows the striking disparities between eastern and western membership figures. Prior to unification, ecological groups were vital organisations in the opposition against the regime. An entire society was united and determined to bring down the regime. Opposition *per se* to the SED mattered and not the particular content of it. This common political focus was lost after 1989. 'Bread and butter' issues of unemployment and social security, as well as the general task of coming to terms with new political and economic structures were more pressing to East Germans. Environmental protection took second stage.

To summarise, although the structure of interest representation, including a network of political parties, employers associations, trade unions and civic groups was well developed in the east, it represented 'little more than an organisational shell' (Boll 1994:114). Although political interest and passive political participation reached satisfactory levels that almost equalled those of the west, they did not materialise in active political participation.

The Churches

After unification indifference and apathy towards participation in churches remained widespread throughout eastern Germany. The differences in general church membership between east (fifty per cent) and west (eighty per cent) were profound (Eisel 1994:155). The Evangelical church became subject to widespread criticism for quickly demanding the introduction of the western state-supported taxation system. Allegations over the *Stasi* involvement of clerics certainly did not help to stop the decreasing level of sympathy. The church argued that relations with the security apparatus and hence with the state were unavoidable in a totalitarian regime and

represented part of the arrangement with the authorities which still allowed for a respectable degree of independence. The Catholic church defended its close co-operation with the state security with the same rationale. If it wanted to achieve anything within the SED-state the Ministry of Security offered the most influential contact (Haese 1994:132). Although the Catholic church maintained that it utilised the *Stasi* as a source of information, for clarification of church-state issues and for complaints, *Stasi* files revealed the considerable material benefits which some clerics enjoyed out of their conspiracy (Haese 1994:133).

Such public limitation of damage was faced with severe scepticism. Although in March 1992, 58 per cent acknowledged that close contacts with the *Stasi* were vital for church leaders to maintain a *modus vivendi* with the state, a significant proportion of 39 per cent rejected the notion altogether (Politbarometer). Also, the prevalent secularisation of the GDR continued to have a persistent legacy in the new *Länder*. For decades religious habits and customs played an ever decreasing role in the lives of East Germans. Five years after unification, religious loyalties were still moderate. In post-war West Germany, Catholic and Evangelical churches enjoyed a phenomenal revival. At that time they provided a mental refuge and source of hope and spirit in a depressed and derelict environment. In post-unification eastern Germany the churches failed to generate emotional attachments. Despite the sweeping system changes, churches were not perceived as institutions to offer spiritual and mental support. Forty years of Socialism simply pushed them out of the sphere of practical relevance to the individual. In retrospect, the people's passivity towards the churches pointed towards the churches' function as a hollow protective shell for the opposition movement of the GDR. They were welcomed and utilised as the only autonomous organisations. The religious content however, left the population largely unaffected. As the only political alternative to the streamlined SED society of the GDR, the churches were embraced for their participative opportunities. Religious belief however was secondary. With unification,

opportunities for participation increased and the legacy of secularisation in the GDR became visible.

4.4.2. State-Citizen Relations

At first glance, East Germans were rather sceptical towards the arrival of democracy (see Table 4.19.). Between 1990 and 1994, the figures hardly improved. With only around one third of respondents being satisfied with the democratic system and a striking two-thirds dissatisfied, the adopted West German political system failed to attract a sizeable following. In comparison, the numbers in the west were just the opposite. Here, around two-thirds of respondents were content with democracy.⁶

Table 4.19. Satisfaction with Democracy in East and West (cumulated data, percentages)

Question: Are you satisfied with the democratic system?

	East			West		
	1990	1993	1994	1990	1993	1994
satisfied	36.2	31.6	37.8	78.0	57.3	68.6
unsatisfied	63.8	68.4	62.2	22.0	42.7	27.9
n	2052	9419	6324	10671	8643	1038

Source: Politbarometer

However the data requires a more detailed analysis, since attitudes towards the level of satisfaction with democracy represent rather broad, generalising statements. For East Germans, the arrival of democracy did not only imply pluralism, free elections and legitimate interest representation, but furthermore an entire system change. When asked about democracy, attitudes towards one's general situation within unified Germany were likely to dilute the picture. This was indicated in the drop of

⁶ In the east, PDS supporters were particularly critical. In 1994, 89 per cent of respondents with a strong PDS identification were dissatisfied with democracy. For those with a moderate or weak PDS identification the level of dissatisfaction was still strikingly high at 79 per cent. According to age cohorts, respondents under 24 and between age 40 and 49 were slightly more sceptical, while people over sixty shared an evaluation which was little above average.

support in 1993, which coincided with mounting experienced or perceived pressures of unification, in particular rising unemployment and the loss of the former financial and social security which the SED state was able to offer. Parallel to this, in 1993 the west also experienced a drop in satisfaction. Here rising unemployment, the economic recession and the realisation of the cost of unification clouded a proper assessment of the fundamental characteristics of a democratic system. Hence, a more detailed look seemed necessary to assess whether Easterners were indeed that sceptical.

Table 4.20. Perceived Personal Freedom in the East (percentages)

Question: Thinking of your personal freedom, do you fare better or worse as compared to the days of the GDR or is there no difference?

	03-1992	1993 (*)	08-1994
better	76.2	69.7	72.2
worse	3.9	6.5	6.1
no difference	19.9	23.8	21.7
n	1079	2053	1059

(*) cumulated data 04,06-1993

Source: Politbarometer

East Germans generally appreciated the arrival of an open society. Freedom of expression, freedom to travel, or to pursue one's ambition in the sphere of work were overwhelmingly approved as a welcomed departure from the rigid, oppressive and restrictive life of the GDR. As argued above, the decline of 1993 can largely be attributed to the perceived pressures of unification. Still, more than two-thirds of respondents were positive about the changes in personal freedom that unification brought about. By 1994, the figures had consolidated and approached the levels of 1992.⁷ In 1994, the number of respondents who fared better (44 per cent) almost

⁷ Throughout this period, differences according to age cohorts were marginal. Only PDS supporters possessed more sceptical attitudes.

equalled that of people who fared worse (41 per cent). The relationship of Easterners towards their new political system and its implications for the individual were therefore not as dismissive as the low approval rates for democracy would have suggested.

The Arrival of New Administrative Structures

The staffing of key positions within the administration was complicated by severe limitations to human resources. Because of the hierarchical and oligarchic nature of the SED regime, East Germans hardly had opportunities to become accustomed to such notions as individual responsibility and decision making. The SED's ideological streamlining infiltrated the intellectual potential with a political dogmatism that was hardly apt for the requirements of a modern democratic administration. Since administrative institutions in the east were not gradually established but instead introduced almost overnight, the demand for efficient, experienced and reliable staff was pressing. As a result, western civil servants were recruited in large numbers to work in the east.

Western officials predominantly held positions within the higher civil service, as well as in finance and justice departments. As of June 1992, 20,000 western civil servants worked in eastern administrative bodies (Grundmann 1994:34). In 1991, in the state of *Brandenburg* 52 per cent of officials within the higher civil service came from the old Federal Republic (Hansch 1993:291), who worked most notably in the state chancellery (72 per cent), the Ministry of Justice (72 per cent) and the Ministry of Finance (67 per cent).

Asked in September 1990, the majority of 44 per cent of eastern respondents strongly approved of western bureaucrats taking positions in the east. Only 6.7 per cent rejected the measure altogether (Grundmann 1994:35). Since the overwhelming majority of East Germans had just approved of joining the political, economic, social

and administrative structures of West Germany, such a largely positive vote came as a logical consequence. Supporters of western democratic parties, as well as people with secure employment showed stronger approval ratings, as compared to voters for the PDS and people who feared for their jobs. Hence, East Germans who favoured the implementation of western structures also favoured the transformation of western officials who represented the new system. In contrast, people who possessed a certain distance to the western system or did not benefit from the unification processes showed a more critical attitude.

By 1992, perceptions had changed drastically. In November of that year, only 14 per cent of respondents in Saxony-Anhalt and twenty per cent in eastern Berlin expressed unanimous approval of western officials. Resentment grew to twenty per cent in Saxony-Anhalt and to 13 per cent in eastern Berlin (Grundmann 1994:37). Disapproval was particularly prevalent amongst the 18 to 25-year olds and amongst those above age 50. Insecurity about employment and job prospects amongst the young, as well as a decline in social status caused by redundancies amongst the middle generation had a direct impact on the disapproval ratings for western officials. Also, supporters of the PDS and non-voters showed lower levels of acceptance than those of the CDU. It seemed that the 'losers' of unification, such as former SED members and people whose material status was particularly threatened resented western bureaucrats.

Despite these differences however, the approval of western civil servants was in general 'not very high' (Grundmann 1994:38). The western official who more or less voluntarily worked in the east experienced first-hand the cultural clash between east and west. For most civil servants, the east was formerly a distant and unknown world. Problems of integration and little interest in familiarising with eastern problems were common. The low level of acceptance by Easterners was also caused by behaviour and attitudes of the western official. Mentality and living standards, were too diverse to allow for a smooth integration of Westerners in the east. Friction

was hard to avoid. The persistent post-unification rhetoric of denunciation of the SED regime - not only of its political failures and shortcomings but in general of every aspect of life in the GDR - contributed to the notion of the victorious west in the fight for systemic supremacy between capitalism and Communism. As representatives of the west, western officials often displayed a rather arrogant, know-it-all manner. The civil servant remained within already known and experienced administrative structures. He or she was sent to implement those structures in the east - as a sort of bureaucratic missionary. Against this backdrop it came as no surprise that perceptions of the incompetent Easterner and the arrogant Westerner would emerge. As a result, the perception of a political take-over was complemented by notions of an administrative subordination of the east.

Table 4.21. Attitudes Towards Public Administration (percentages)

Question: Do you agree that ...

	East 1993			West 1990		
	yes	no	neutral	yes	no	neutral
public offices do NOT work satisfactorily	43.4	33.3	23.3	23.3	52.5	24.2
public offices work more slowly than necessary	72.9	13.5	13.6	65.9	17.6	16.4
citizens do not have many opportunities to protest	51.6	27.8	20.6	47.1	33.3	19.6
citizens are treated like numbers	50.8	31.3	17.9	45.9	37.0	17.1
civil servants are NOT friendly and helpful	28.8	45.6	25.6	23.9	51.3	24.8
it is better not to argue with the administration	34.0	48.4	17.6	39.9	45.7	14.4

Source: Löwenhaupt 1995:158

In a further survey taken between January and March 1993, around 1500 respondents in eastern Germany were asked to evaluate orientations towards public administration (Löwenhaupt 1995). In comparison with responses by Westerners taken in 1990, the public service was perceived in a more critical way. In particular attitudes towards the general functioning of public administration (statement 1) were markedly different with half of the population in the west being satisfied, as opposed

to only one third in the east. When asked specifically about some deficiencies (statements 2 to 6) however, the differences between east and west were not as drastic although they remained in general more negative in the east. Nonetheless, 73 per cent of eastern respondents were not satisfied with the speed of work, 52 per cent saw little opportunity for protest against administrative action and a considerably high 34 per cent thought that it was better to remain quiet and refrain from challenging the authorities. Furthermore, the bureaucratic dilemma of being caught between the provision of an efficient service and anonymous, impersonal routine was perceived in a more pronounced manner in the east than in the west (statement 4 and 5).

Based on these findings, Löwenhaupt (1995:160) organised the eastern respondents into four categories: the confident client (46 per cent), the obedient subject (23 per cent), the frustrated (11 per cent) and the dissonant, conflict-ready individual (20 per cent). The two former were characterised by a positive orientation towards public administration and civil servants, while the two latter shared negative attitudes. The confident client, as well as the conflict-ready individual showed a readiness for protest which was not evident with the obedient subject and the frustrated individual. In a multivariate analysis, satisfaction (69 per cent) or dissatisfaction (31 per cent) with public administration strongly correlated with (dis)satisfaction with democracy, market economy and the system of social security within unified Germany.

Hence more than two-thirds (69 per cent) of respondents only had minor problems with the authorities. The remaining 31 per cent however, showed a specific combination of deep dissatisfaction with public offices and a lack of willingness or potential to embrace conflict. Also, 34 per cent showed passive characteristics, either frustration and resignation or obedience. People might complain in private but they did not protest. People might have noticed certain injustices but they did not stand up against them. Here, the forty-year old pattern of choosing the path that offered the least resistance was still prevalent.

While such notions ran counter to the ideal of an informed and participative citizenry, the dissonant conflict-ready individual posed a greater challenge to state-citizen relations. With almost one fifth of the population, this strata was characterised by general or specific dissatisfaction with public administration and high competence for action combined with lack of knowledge or acceptance for the institutionalised mechanism of conflict regulation (Löwenhaupt 1995:168).

Protest

The mass demonstrations during the autumn of 1989 impressively demonstrated the capacity for political mobilisation in Eastern Germany. Hundreds of thousands of citizens took their anger and frustration to the streets and brought down the SED dictatorship. Undoubtedly without this massive public protest, the system transformation would not have been possible. With the near eclipse of the civic movement as the catalyst of the revolution one has to wonder whether such political activism was only short-lived or generated into a prevalent standard within unified Germany.

Table 4.22. Political Protest in the New Länder, 1992 (percentages)

	have done	would do	would possibly do	would never do	n
approved demonstration	32.2	14.1	17.5	34.5	2090
discussion at public meeting	20.9	17.6	19.5	40.5	2092
sign petition	16.0	18.0	22.8	41.6	2093
participation in citizen initiative	8.1	18.9	26.9	44.4	2090
illegal demonstration	7.6	4.8	16.3	69.6	2089
violence against - police	0.9	4.7	16.8	75.8	2086
- citizens	0.5	6.7	16.2	75.0	2090
- politicians	0.5	4.8	11.7	81.2	2086
damage to property	0.3	2.8	6.9	88.2	2089
take possession of house, factory or public office	0.3	4.2	13.0	80.7	2086

Source: Gabriel 1995:180

Table 4.22. showed that by 1992, the willingness to enforce demands through protest had not disappeared. Considerable numbers of respondents had already participated in various forms of protest, most notably approved demonstrations. Only between 35 and 44 per cent flatly denied a general willingness to protest with constitutional means. Hence, the protest potential for such activities as approved demonstrations, discussion at public meetings, signing of petitions and participation in citizen initiatives reached around sixty per cent. Moreover, only a small fraction of respondents regarded participation in illegal and violent activities as a possible alternative or had already participated in them. The overwhelming majority was clearly opposed to such means. Thus, the protest potential in eastern Germany had anything but disappeared after the *Wende*, while the channels for uttering demands followed constitutional means.

The Legacy of the Stasi

State-citizen relations were further complicated by the painful task of coming to terms with the former totalitarian regime. The unification treaty called for the establishment of an independent authority to reveal the extent and activities of the state-security apparatus. The 'Gauck' office - named after the responsible state secretary Joachim Gauck - began its task as early as October 1990 and subsequently created a central archive of all available data from the security apparatus. The passing of the *Stasi-Unterlagen-Gesetz* (Law on *Stasi*-documents) in December 1991 complemented the comprehensive governmental action. As a consequence, eastern Germany remained the only country of the former Communist bloc to fully open its files for inspection. The disclosure of the archives of a secret service represented a unique step - not only in Germany but probably in world history. Anyone who worked for the secret police had been barred from public office. This ensured that allegations over *Stasi*-involvement could now be based on fact rather than rumour and allowed East Germans to find out who was spying on them for all those years.

However the 'Gauck office' did not offer open access, neither for individuals, nor for administrative bodies, research institutions, or intelligence purposes. Instead applications had to be filled out and individuals including former *Stasi* officials were then given information for reasons of personal rehabilitation. Public institutions were provided with data on the involvement of their employees in the security apparatus to assess employment matters. Judicial bodies were given information only in cases of the prosecution of grave criminal offences (Strotmann 1995: 808-812).

In addition, the 'Gauck office' instated a department for education and research to aid research projects with material, advice and information. The department also conducted its own studies and organised events (talks, film, etc.) to educate the public (Strotmann 1995:821). Until May 1995 the office was flooded with applications. 1.6 million requests for information on individual persons were made in addition to 950,000 East Germans who asked to inspect their personal files (Strotmann 1995:820).

This striking interest documented the sensitive and complicated nature of addressing the legacy of the old regime. The official propaganda of the GDR as the first Socialist state on German ground proved to be a bitter lie. The revelations of the lifestyle of the political elite who owned luxurious mansions, hunting grounds, and even private islands turned the proclaimed egalitarian society into a retrospective farce. Disappointment and anger was directed particularly against the former political elite. The suspension of Erich Honecker's trial in January 1993 caused widespread irritation. Despite the former leader's incurable cancer 63 per cent were still opposed to the proposal of letting Honecker escape without judicial consequences (*Politbarometer*).

The discovery of the extent and practicalities of the *Stasi* apparatus with a ratio of around one informant for 95 citizens (Golz 1994a:343) created a strong sense of shock and a 'retroactive dissolution of trust' (Stern 1993:115). Subsequently, any

revealed connection to the repression apparatus caused suspicion. The list of prominent public figures who collaborated with the *Stasi* demonstrated the all-encompassing web of surveillance in the GDR. It included intellectuals such as the writers Christa Wolff and Heiner Müller, the regime critic Monika Maron, and the popular Radio-DJ Lutz Bertram. Even the dissident Robert Havemann, an ardent idealist of Communism who vehemently criticised the SED state collaborated with the *Stasi* between 1956 and 1963 (*Der Spiegel* 21-1995:87). On the private level, formerly intact social circles came under stress, with the realisation that one's friends or even family member served as spies.

Table 4.23. Handling the *Stasi* Past (cumulated data, percentages)

Question: Should more measures be taken in order to work out the Stasi past?

	1992	1994
do more	36.4	18.8
same extent	27.8	28.0
close the issue	35.0	52.2
undecided	0.8	1.0
n	6519	3212

Source: Politbarometer.

These revelations left a decisive mark on the population. Not only the political elite but virtually every segment of society from writers, to journalists and even to regime critics had its conspirators. Through secret meetings, the state managed to infiltrate the most inner life of its citizens to such an extent that privacy was non-existent and total surveillance guaranteed. Although all East Germans were quite aware of the apparatus, the qualitative and quantitative depth of the gathered information came as a sudden shock. The feeling of betrayal is indicated in Table 4.23. In 1992, 36 per cent favoured increased measures of interrogation in order to work out the *Stasi* past. The discovery of the regime's suspicion, of surveillance, of voyeurism for the sake of political stability, and of distrust sought for an emotional safety valve in order to

achieve a sense of retrospective justice towards an unjust regime which categorically assumed its citizens to be disloyal.

For those who were actively involved in the *Stasi* - as so-called unofficial informants or as permanent members of staff - the demise of the regime left many in a state of severe moral crisis. The formerly familiar environment disappeared almost overnight. With unification the individual was forced to adapt to new political and societal norms. However most informants failed to recognise any moral deficiencies on behalf of their former behaviour. As a typical example, Lutz Bertram argued that he joined the *Stasi* without any feeling of injustice and stated that if he had not done it, somebody else would have. He never knowingly damaged anyone, adding that he merely passed on information while the responsibility of the application of it rested with the apparatus (*Der Spiegel* 22-1995:96).

In retrospect and from a western perspective one would have assumed a conflict between the collaboration with an oppressive totalitarian regime and individual moral ethics. Such a conflict however, was not necessarily present. Despite a certain level of discontent with the SED state, people such as Wolff or Maron nonetheless supported the *raison d'être* of the GDR. Criticism against the regime and subsequent spying for the regime were merely intended to improve the state of Communism in Germany. The official rhetoric of the GDR always emphasised the development of the Communist man and the evolution of Socialism towards Communism. Despite its repressive measures, the *Stasi* represented a tool for this process as a sort of secretive educational agency. Furthermore, the State Security was part of the political establishment and represented the political norm. Working with the *Stasi* meant working with the state which fostered a sense of solidarity and togetherness amongst individuals who were united for the common goal of establishing a Communist society. For the benefit of this society, for the benefit of Socialism, informants were willing to spy, even on friends.

With unification, moral intentions were now judged as moral crimes. The climate of democracy, human rights and individual liberties left no space for sentimental notions of Communist idealism. The collaboration with the SED regime turned from self perceived virtue into publicly perceived reprehension. The sudden system changes hardly left time for reflection. New norms required immediate adaptation. Hence, the past was repressed, the necessary process of coming to terms with one's action was postponed. For former *Stasi* informants, the process of acknowledging immorality against the former Socialist-idealist conscience remained difficult if not impossible.

Nonetheless, a certain level of sympathy and compassion amongst East Germans remained. After all, Table 4.23. showed that in 1992, 35 per cent of respondents wished the *Stasi* controversy to come to a close. East Germans experienced first-hand how hard it was to function within a system of constant surveillance and repression. Their own past was now examined along a thin line between ideological commitment and existential necessity. Hence as shown in Table 4.24. in 1990 the overwhelming majority of two-thirds of respondents supported a limited prosecution against only the leading officials of the *Stasi*. A mere 29 per cent were in favour of drastic measures which would have placed the entire surveillance apparatus including official staff members and unofficial informants under judicial scrutiny.

Table 4.24. Criminal Prosecution against *Stasi* Members, 1990 (Cumulated data, percentages)

Question: Should there be criminal prosecution against former members of the Stasi?

against all	28.8
only for executives	63.7
against nobody	4.8
undecided	2.7
n (total)	1108

Source: Politbarometer

Manfred Stolpe, Minister President of *Brandenburg* served as an archetypal example. As a former political activist in the Evangelical church of the GDR, he had to confront severe accusations over his role as an informant to the *Stasi*. Charges however, were dropped and Stolpe justified his action by arguing that an albeit minimal involvement with the SED regime was necessary in order to achieve political influence at all. At the height of the controversy in the autumn of 1992, 39 per cent in the east believed that the allegations were justified, as opposed to 55 per cent who rejected such accusations. Moreover, 63 per cent held the opinion that he should remain in office, while 34 per cent preferred his resignation (*Politbarometer*). The entire controversy however, by no means damaged Stolpe's political career. In contrast, his popularity subsequently increased. At the *Länder* elections for the state of *Brandenburg* in September 1994, Stolpe's Social Democratic party achieved an absolute majority of 54 per cent, up from 38 per cent four years before.

Stolpe incarnated the dilemma that every Easterner had to face: on the one hand the co-operation with, or at least the adaptation to the totalitarian state, and on the other, the craving for recognition and the adaptation to new societal, political and moral standards. The majority of East Germans supported Stolpe in manifesting his position as an influential eastern politician against the political take-over of the west. This pattern represented an envisaged blueprint of life for Easterners: the struggle in the initial aftermath of unification ought to be followed by overcoming the yoke of the GDR-past and eventually result in a new status of influence and respect within the united Germany.

Thus by 1992, East Germans were divided into three camps which were roughly equal in size: those who favoured stronger measures in coming to terms with the *Stasi* past, those who were satisfied with the current *modus vivendi* and those who resented the issue altogether. However two years later, public perceptions performed a drastic u-turn. Table 4.23. shows that the number of contented people stayed at 28 per cent. But now, only 19 per cent favoured an increased discourse, with a majority

of 52 per cent wanting to finally close the issue.⁸ A certain sense of over-saturation emerged which resulted from the constant media exposure of such issues. The results indicated an attitude that society should go on with life by looking ahead instead of interrogating the unpleasant, morally reprehensible and increasingly distant aspects of a past existence. For collaborators and sympathisers to the regime, any emerging guilt could have been circumvented by avoiding the confrontation with one's former moral deficiencies. Hence, the collective memory of eastern Germany looked for convenience and comfort that worked on a selective base which remembered the positive and repressed the negative. The *Stasi* and the involvement of a considerable number of GDR citizens certainly belonged to the latter.

⁸ According to age brackets, the figures offered nearly identical proportions.

4.5. Conclusion

The basic requirements for political participation were well-established in the new *Länder*. Structurally, a web of interest groups, citizen initiatives and political parties were in place to cater for the interest mediation of the newly democratised citizens. Moreover, the general interest of the population in politics, as well as electoral turn-outs already reached satisfactory levels and pointed towards a citizenry that seemed to have adapted remarkably quickly to the sudden system transformation. Nonetheless, active involvement in politics remained reluctant. In fact, the implementation of western structures of interest representation was largely rejected by East Germans. Political parties were confronted with declining membership figures and were facing difficulties in nominating candidates. Former hierarchies and affiliations which had been established during the SED era were completely demolished. They have yet to be replaced by new commitments.

Here, the legacy of forty years of totalitarian rule offers cogent explanations. Patterns of participation in the GDR and the FRG shared some essential features. Both systems encouraged active political participation and offered a variety of opportunities for the politically interested. In the west, the rise of the Greens broadened the existing party agenda of Christian, Social and Liberal Democrats, while trade unions and citizen initiatives offered ample opportunities to voice political demands. In East Germany active and informed participation was regarded as a vital cornerstone of the official political culture. Individuals were expected to participate through membership in mass organisations and cast their votes at election time. A considerable number of citizens joined the SED or the Block parties. From a quantitative perspective, East Germans were actually more involved in politics than their western counterparts.

However participation in the GDR was streamlined and followed rigid top-down patterns. The party did not represent political interest but instead mediated it from

the *Politbüro* and the Central Committee to the individual. With the exception of brief phases in the mid-1950's and mid-1960's, internal party democracy and factionalisation were virtually impossible. Democratic Centralism ruled the GDR. Between 1953 and 1989, the party oligarchy was never severely challenged. Political alternatives were rare. Mass organisations and block parties were forced to accept the vanguard position of the SED. Elections represented an agitational, propagandistic mobilisation of society, as a mere reflection of participation instead of a conscious choice between alternatives. Involvement in politics was dependent on an ideologically-sound performance and conscience. Without voluntary participation, university placement, social status and career advancement were threatened. Hence, participation was coercive and state-mobilised. Interest representation suffered from a paradoxical antagonism. The regime encouraged participation but undermined expression of citizens' interest. Participation was welcomed as long as it followed the designed tracks of interest aggregation. Involvement in politics was encouraged as long as the citizen accepted the vanguard role of the party in policy-making. The dictatorship allowed political activity only in those ways that strengthened the citizen's allegiance to the state but would not question its authority.

This infantilisation of the individual, the suppression of individual demands under the common goal of society continued to shape political participation after unification. The SED regime promoted political activity and fostered political knowledge - albeit with strong dogmatic implications - amongst a public that eagerly observed West German politics through the help of western TV and visits from relatives and friends. With the demise of the GDR these norms of mass participation and knowledge did not disappear but instead significantly contributed to the strikingly high turn-outs and interest in politics in early 1990. Although the participative euphoria was also caused by a thirst for free expression after four decades of totalitarian suppression, such astonishing turn outs of more than 90 per cent would not have been possible without an already informed citizenry that was

accustomed to participation. These virtues of information and participation were even strong enough to guarantee a stabilisation at a satisfactory level, despite the massive over-exposure of unification issues in the media and the general easing of the revolutionary and highly politicised climate.

What the GDR failed to teach however, was the substance of democracy. Participation was not designed to aggregate individual interest and demands and ultimately to influence the government's course of policies and politics. Instead it represented a way for the government to influence its citizens. The rigid top-down hierarchy did not allow for the expression of individual concerns.

The development of West Germany after World War II showed that the citizen virtue of confidence can be a learning process. With the founding of the *Bonn* Republic, West Germans displayed indifference towards politics. Apart from acceptable election turn-outs, active involvement in trade unions or political parties was poor, while the general interest in politics was weak. Passivity, subservience and obedience to the political authorities dominated. The participatory revolution of the 1970's however, dramatically changed the political climate. Since then West Germans have developed into a participative, interested and informed citizenry. Overall interest and active involvement in politics increased significantly. Public interest groups expanded the political agenda to include post-materialist issues. Demonstrations, protests and other direct-action methods broadened the array of political activities. Political freedom and expression of political will turned into standards which were taken for granted.

The West German citizen of the 1980's was more aware, more confident and critical than his or her counterpart of the 1950's. In contrast to this evolutionary process, Easterners were forced to develop their citizenship virtues in a crash course. While it took almost twenty years for Westerners to become actively involved in party politics and public-initiative groups, the rapid extension of the western structures of

interest mediation onto the eastern *Länder* demanded a sudden commitment to active participation from the newly democratised citizens of the east. With the coercive nature of participation of the SED regime being swept aside, and with only rudimentary experience in confidently expressing individual demands it seemed only logical that active engagement and participation in politics were underdeveloped in the east. Trade unions, civic groups and political parties in eastern Germany quickly became aware of this in light of their rapidly declining membership figures. Unified Germany therefore faced the challenge of expanding the already existing prerequisites of democratic citizenship - political interest and knowledge - into active participation. Easterners needed to realise that active involvement in politics had its benefits, with individual demands resulting in policy changes and individual commitment improving the state of society.

In the first six years since unification however, East Germans had experienced exactly the opposite. The revolutionary upheavals during the autumn of 1989, the participation in demonstrations and the civic movement represented highly positive individual commitments. The Monday marches in Leipzig called for freedom and civic liberties, for the individual's right to determine one's destiny. One year later, people's destinies lay in the hands of the political elite, most notably from the west. The feeling of mis- and under-representation within unified Germany grew. The import of western officials and western politicians to occupy key posts in administering and governing the new *Länder* was not flatly resented but the lack of personal ties to the east and identification with eastern problems were clearly criticised. Easterners sensed a political and administrative colonisation by the west.

The predominantly western parties were logically regarded as the agents of change in the new *Länder*. Social, Christian and to some extent Liberal Democrats designed the policies and were responsible for their implementation. The changes brought about by unification however, were hard, sometimes devastating for the individual. The prospect or experience of unemployment, the loss of financial security and

social services, or price increases imposed severe cognitive changes and hardship on the individual. Since hopes of 'blossoming landscapes' did not materialise, criticism against - western - political parties increased. They administered the change but the change did not live up to its promise.

This negative attitude was further strengthened by the fact that the programmatic bases of some political parties were simply out of touch with the fundamental concerns of East Germans. The SPD was criticised for its tacit approval of the rapid course of unification. The FDP's concerns over civic liberties and free market were not able to strike a chord with East Germans against the backdrop of immediate material and existential problems. This also accounted for the marginal popularity of *Bündnis 90/die Grünen* which stressed human rights and ecological ethics.

Inter-party turmoil between renewalists and the establishment, as well as persistent revelations of former *Stasi* ties of top eastern politicians certainly did not promote the legitimacy of the party system. It only stressed the sense of a lost cause. While the revolution was supposed to mark the dawn of a new era it merely resulted in the continued involvement of Communist collaborators within the new western political setting. The persistently weak party identification showed that political parties faced enormous difficulties in getting accepted as vital agents of political representation. Surprisingly, the amount of people who dropped their identification with a western party since unification outnumbered those who developed new affiliations. The western party system was on the verge of destructive rejection.

Consequently, the PDS was able to cash in on such negative attitudes. Gysi's *Bunte Truppe* represented a lively contrast to the established party elites of the west. The PDS took the role of the advocate of the east and was supported by people with wide-ranging societal backgrounds. With local advisory groups, an extensive local network and backed by financial resources from its SED past, the party managed to

stay in touch with the populace and therefore compensated for the problems of western parties in establishing sound party affiliations in the east.

By voting for the PDS, East Germans turned the notion of mis- and under-representation into an affirmative statement. Defamation by western elites (the red-painted Fascists) only strengthened support for the party. Despite its legacy as the successor organisation of the SED and despite allegations over *Stasi* involvement of some of its leaders, the party was perceived by a considerable number as the only viable alternative. The PDS emerged as the catalyst for protest votes, exemplifying the discontent with the western party system and the defiance against the perceived political colonisation. Seven years after the revolution, the initial euphoria surrounding unification, the naive idolising of the west complemented by the denunciation and flat rejection of anything that was connected to the GDR was replaced by a more realistic and critical understanding of politics. Notions of confident pride in the east emerged. As the only exclusively eastern party, the PDS served as a vital anchor for this emerging mentality.

Within the near future it remains unlikely that electoral support for the PDS will vanish. Although more protest vote than actual political orientation, the mere fact that 95 per cent of PDS members used to own a SED party book accounts for an electoral potential of at least 15 per cent in the eastern *Länder*. Unless western parties are able to establish more comprehensive affiliations with the eastern populace, the PDS will not disappear from the political scene.

The political agenda of the FRG and the GDR was to some extent comparable. Despite the system antagonism, concerns about peace or environmental protection were shared by East and West Germans. However the economic development of the Federal Republic and the resulting affluence, as well as civic freedom and pluralism accounted for a fundamentally different outlook on politics. In the west, post-materialism and 'New Politics' emerged by the late 1960's, embracing a departure

from such former principles as stability and security, as well as new forms of interest representation, for instance extra-parliamentary opposition or citizen initiatives.

In the east, politics was strictly confined to the static patterns of interest aggregation which were controlled by the SED. The expression of political opposition was a careful undertaking in order not to alienate the authorities. Real dissent however, was never tolerated. Only the protective function of the church provided some form of autonomy from state and party. Hence, individual expression which lay outside of the official agenda bore the potential of system criticism. To argue for peace as a private citizen or to point out ecological exploitation represented ultimate challenges to the regime.

Hence 'New politics' in east and west had fundamentally different prerogatives. In the FRG, they were evolutionary, developing out of the gradual maturity of society. In the GDR the same principles were revolutionary (Dalton 1993:263). With the demise of the regime and the transitional processes within unified Germany, the revolution however, gave way to the adaptation to western political, social and economic standards. Principles of 'New Politics' lost in significance. Materialist notions of social and job security, rising prices or wage levels dominated people's thoughts. In the GDR, 'New Politics' was a form of protest against the regime. With the regime confined to history, 'New Politics' ultimately lost its rationale. Thus, citizen-initiatives or ecological organisations had to face severe difficulties in generating a political impact in the eastern *Länder*. The churches were confronted with additional problems. Their functions as protective umbrellas for opposition and interest articulation disappeared after unification. No longer useful as political instruments, the true level of secularisation in the east became visible.

Until the 1960's, behaviour and attitudes of the individual towards the state were to some extent comparable between the Federal Republic and the GDR. Out of the statist tradition of the Wilhelminian monarchy, the *Weimar* Republic and the Nazi

dictatorship, the West German society emphasised obedience and order over individual freedom and opposition. The interest of the state was still regarded as paramount to individual aspirations. In the GDR, the dogmatic prerogative of establishing the Communist society in combination with totalitarian oppression curtailed the citizens' liberties for expression of individual demands. Hence, in east and west, pre-war history as well as the post-war mode of interest representation, conditioned the public in accepting and obeying authority. Obedience and notions of the *Obrigkeitsstaat* heavily contributed to the stability of the two divergent political systems. In both societies individual freedom could only be realised within top-down structures of interest representation. Conflict and political discourse were regarded as disturbing - to political harmony in the FRG and to the goal of creating the Communist society in the GDR.

The experiences of the Federal Republic after the mid-1960's however, resulted in dramatically different state-citizen relations between east and west. Apart from the participatory revolution and growing interest in politics, West Germans displayed an ever increasing civic confidence, indicated by the emergence of citizen-initiative groups and the growing readiness to protest or demonstrate against unjust administrative actions and policies. In return, the constitutional consensus over democracy as the best form of political organisation became solid and unchallenged. Declining cleavages along the lines of class, religion or profession accounted for a strong centrist drive in politics. Integration within the west, social security, economic stability and industrial harmony functioned as stable policy anchors. The appeal of the two *Volksparteien* SPD and CDU stabilised the party system and pushed extremism out of the realm of relevance. The approval rate of parliamentarism and the institutions of democracy consolidated at high levels which provided for a buffer of support in times of economic crises or political terrorism. The former recipient and obedient mentality progressed towards an active, participative, confident and informed citizenry.

In contrast, state-citizen relations in the GDR represented a succession of negative experiences. The upheavals of 1953 were answered with Soviet tanks and imprisonment. Not only was active participation and the expression of individual demands crushed to the ground but most importantly the legitimacy of the state was fundamentally eroded. After 1953, East Germans came to realise that the propagated workers' and farmers' paradise was in fact a totalitarian dictatorship which persecuted individual liberties and activism as soon as they challenged the authority of the ruling elites. The near-perfect surveillance apparatus, political terror, imprisonment and expulsion to the FRG suffocated any potential for opposition. Together with the limited options for expressing complaints or putting forth petitions, the citizen was therefore forced to comply with the system. If one did not agree with the *modus vivendi* of Stalinist principles and policies he or she could only choose intellectual, internal emigration and a retreat into the private sphere.

The regime deceived itself into the perception of stability. However infantilising and incapacitating citizens does not necessarily result in system conformity. Instead, while individual responsibility and maturity were suppressed, a feeling of resignation and helplessness against the authorities became widespread. East Germans became indifferent towards the political ideology and the political process. System-conformist behaviour was required for professional advancement and social status, but it hardly emerged out of a conscience which approved of the SED state. Only as long as the regime was able to offer a minimum of material benefits and social security was the individual willing to obey to totalitarian rules.

Infantilisation of the individual and the general distrust by the authorities towards a more participative and politically emancipated role for their citizens finally backfired in 1989. Captured by decades of political indifference, East Germans had apathetically accepted restrictions imposed on individual liberties. They needed a catalyst to transform imminent dissatisfaction with the regime into concrete political action. Gorbachev's 'perestroika', the subsequent opening of the Iron Curtain in

Hungary and the SED's reactionary response to Tianmen finally got the East German revolution off the ground. By 1989, even forged election results - a common practise throughout the existence of the GDR - were no longer accepted. Demonstrations which involved thousands and thousands of people, the supportive climate within the Communist bloc, and the helpless response of Honecker's triumphirat, as well as from their successors made an entire society believe that the end of an era was near. The whole of East Germany was in a state of high political mobilisation.

The civic movement showed promising democratic virtues. Participation in demonstrations and the signing of petitions underlined notions of an actively involved citizenry. Demands for open discourse, free elections and human rights confidently expressed fundamental democratic principles. The highly charged political atmosphere which began in the summer of 1989 continued even after the demise of the SED-regime in early 1990. East Germans eagerly followed the political campaigns surrounding the *Volkskammer* elections of March 1990, as well as the preceding 'Round Table' discussions between representatives of the Civic Movement and the government. The optimistic attitude prevailed that the future held the prospect of compensating for the wasted years under Communism.

This euphoria however, was only short-lived. Although the arrival of an open society with its freedom of expression and freedom to travel was overwhelmingly appreciated, the new system of democracy failed to gain unanimous support. A variety of factors accounted for the eastern public's largely sceptical attitude. First, hardly any East German - as well as hardly any western politician - could foresee the hardship which unification would bring to some citizens. The loss of the all-encompassing welfare state, the subsidy system and employment security confronted many Easterners with a notion of instability for the first time in their lives. Democracy which had caused these ruptures, was consequently perceived in a more negative way.

Secondly, in retrospect the feeling of colonisation by the west turned the people's revolution into an obsolete effort. One superimposed system - although democratic - had replaced another superimposed one. For decades Soviet-type Stalinism ruled the GDR. Now West German principles of government ruled the eastern *Länder*. Instead of unification, Easterners were annexed. The brave and risky undertaking of ousting a totalitarian regime generated hopes of reforming the run-down society. Until the end of 1989, unification was only regarded as an eventual step somewhere in the not-so-distant future. The emphasis however, was on reforming Socialism. Although the 'Round Table' talks of early 1990 already addressed the question of unification, emphasis was still on reform which was indicated by the lengthy constitutional draft for a unified Germany. In the end however, envisaged reform turned into the implementation of the western mode of government. Although the overwhelming majority of Easterners initially supported quick unification with the west, the subsequent experiences of the transition processes showed a severe lack of democratic legitimisation which consequently weakened the emotional attachment to this new-found democratic unity.

Thirdly, although East Germans were rightfully proud to have initiated and participated in the only successful revolution ever on German ground, the subsequent performance within a new political environment demonstrated that the civic democratic virtues of Easterners were only weakly developed as a result of the forty year-long oppression of civic liberties. The high levels of participative involvement in the SED state was artificial with hardly any cognitive support. After unification, the dramatic decline in membership in political parties and interest groups showed the hollow mode of participation of the GDR era. For East Germans democracy still had to be filled with meaning and content. Although a willingness to protest was widespread and although Easterners felt under-represented within the post-unification political process, a reluctance to become actively involved was nonetheless prevalent. In contrast to the revolution of 1989 which offered a prime

example of direct citizen action (Dalton 1993:189), East Germans returned to their former indifferent and incapacitated attitudes. A recipient mentality re-emerged that took life as a given destiny and undermined the confident and self-reliant effort of improving one's situation.

Hence in contrast to the post-war Federal Republic, the new system of democracy faced enormous difficulties in generating positive and affirmative orientations amongst the population of the eastern *Länder*. The arrival of democracy was held responsible for individual economic and social hardship. The extension of the West German form of government ridiculed the revolutionary experience, while the subservient and obedient behavioural standards of the GDR era rendered an active and confident expression of demands and interests difficult.

Within a relatively short period satisfaction with administrative action reached acceptable standards. The large majority of Easterners were content with bureaucratic measures which represented a good sign against the backdrop of the vast changes in this area. The relatively low proportion of one fifth of citizens who shared negative perceptions in combination with a readiness to express resentment allowed for moderate optimism. However the critical perceptions towards western officials in the new *Länder* gave reason to worry. Work relations within public administration served as telling examples of the persistent mentality clashes between east and west. Westerners were perceived as arrogant. Easterners were perceived as incompetent. The western missionary collided with the eastern pupil. Diverging socialisation and cultural experiences, as well as considerable differences in living standards further exemplified the rift between two societies which had not yet merged together.

These clashes however, possessed an important buffer that safeguarded the democratic development of the eastern *Länder*. A stable democracy also relies on stable institutions. In contrast to other East European societies, the solid and time-

tested democratic structures of West Germany were implemented in the former GDR. The proven ability of the *Bonn* Republic to defend its system against anti-democratic principles renders a reversal of the democratic transition difficult. In that respect, even if political orientations of East Germans would tend towards a return to authoritarian rule, they have less opportunity and chances to do so, in comparison to other post-Communist states. Eastern Germany is therefore privileged by being exempt from institutional conflicts.

Moreover notions of obedience, subservience and the *Obrigkeitsstaat*, the judicialisation of life in general and politics in particular, as well as the central position of law-abiding behaviour as a political standard helped the young West German democracy off the ground. Because of the totalitarian and oppressive nature of the SED regime these notions were to an even larger extent prevalent in the east. Although East Germans had to adapt to democracy with its confrontational style of politics and despite the moderate level of satisfaction with democracy, despite criticism of an administrative and political take-over and despite the mentality clashes between east and west, the traditional willingness of the German citizen to obey to authority provides a vital safeguard for system-conform behaviour in the aftermath of unification.

These complicated state-citizen relations were further aggravated by revelations of the practicalities of the totalitarian elite. The GDR state betrayed its citizens. The discovery of the extent of the *Stasi* apparatus came as a sudden shock and split the eastern society. On the one hand, *Stasi* informants and permanent staff showed severe problems in acknowledging their unjust behaviour. There was hardly a feeling of guilt since one worked for the Communist cause or left the responsibility with higher authorities. On the other hand, anger and bitterness prevailed amongst those who perceived themselves as victims of a oppressive regime. Ideological commitment or existentialist necessity clashed with indignation and outrage. The state - the political system that organises the citizens' lives - gave the citizen yet

another reason for caution and scepticism. The state deceived the individual, showing disloyalty and indifference towards people's needs, concerns and demands.

Over the course of the past few years however, this societal rift in eastern Germany seemed to have healed. The majority showed sympathy for *Stasi* collaborators, while a desire to close the issue of the *Stasi* controversy became widespread. Here lies a potential danger for leaving permanent scars. Without a confrontation with the *Stasi* past, a mental departure from the GDR will never be possible. Repressing the inhuman aspects of the oppressive regime, resulted in a selective memory that disproportionally remembered the positive aspects, for instance social welfare or job security. For the actual *Stasi* collaborator, repressing the involvement within the apparatus made him or her subject to dependence, threat and blackmail. In post-unification Germany, the *Stasi* legacy affects only the eastern psyche. However without a clear working out of the *Stasi* past in both east and west, Westerners will not be capable of understanding the psychological trauma which haunts a large numbers of Easterners. Without it, East Germans will not be forced to understand and acknowledge past failures and moral shortcomings.

CHAPTER FIVE: MASS CULTURE

5.1. Conceptualising Mass Culture

As the final anchor of civic identity, a common mass public culture had been defined as 'common historical memories, myths, symbols and traditions', generated by a 'set of common understandings and aspirations, sentiments and ideas' (Smith 1991:11). Mass culture however, goes well beyond this conceptualisation. It defines itself not merely in reference to the past - from history, myths and symbols - which are then expressed in traditions and common understandings, but furthermore refers to a society's reaction to modern technological, economic, political, or social developments in the process of establishing prevalent attitudes, standards and behaviour which fill one's life with meaning. Meaning in this sense simply implies how individuals organise and conceptualise their lives. Where to go on holiday, what to do after work, where to live, how to define career, work and social relations or what to consume, are questions of mass-cultural relevance which could also be described as life-style.

During the five decades before unification, West Germany had established distinctly different mass-cultural features in comparison to the GDR. One can argue that after World War II, West Germany underwent a transformation into a post-modern society. In general, postmodernism indicates the belief that a new age has begun which transcends modernity with a distinctly different set of behaviours, experiences and attitudes. The postmodern society shows such features as the development of an

information and consumer society, a conflict between private and public realms, a much looser form of organisation and discipline, or new attitudes towards expenditure, work and leisure which are fostered by growing levels of consumption, affluence and the desire for immediate gratification (Gibbins 1989:15).

Some critics disrespect postmodernism as a fad with limited explanatory power. However it is not part of this study to pursue the discussion of whether new economic, social, political and societal phenomena justify the promulgation of a new age. Nonetheless, postmodernism undoubtedly reflects on developments within western industrial societies during the past thirty years. An inclusion of postmodern characteristics therefore provides telling insights on how the two merging systems of East and West Germany had developed distinctly different mass-cultural standards of thought and behaviour. East Germany was thrown into this new age without the slow and gradual development that West Germany had experienced since 1945. With unification, mass-cultural characteristics which had become standard features of life in the Federal Republic splashed over the new *Länder* in a gigantic wave which drastically changed the lives of most individuals and therefore, fundamentally shaped people's perceptions towards the unified reality. East Germans opted for the social, political and economic order of the Federal Republic but in return, mass culture was included in the package when Easterners favoured unification over reforming the Socialist GDR.

Three mass-cultural phenomena in particular fundamentally changed the East German existence, whereas an adaptation of (or at least a trend towards) their standards would indicate the development of a common national identity. They include consumerism, life and leisure, and the media. During the first months following the opening of several border crossings, scenes of a massive consumer migration dominated the news agenda in Germany. On the *Autobahn* and in numerous towns along the border, convoys of East German '*Trabis*' and

‘Wartburgs’ brought the traffic to a standstill. East Germans were flooding West German shops. Supermarkets and departments stores had to close down temporarily because of the unpredictable rush for western goods. Ingenious western entrepreneurs travelled eastward in trucks packed with oranges and bananas, and returned with empty crates and full wallets. The 100 Deutschmark ‘welcome gift’ that every Easterner was entitled to collect upon arrival in the west was quickly spent on such long wanted consumer products as tropical fruit, jeans or trainers. Millions had their first taste of life in the west. The consumer world with its affluence and choice was taken as a vital performance indicator for the market economy of the Federal Republic. In the eyes of most East Germans consumer products manifested the superiority of the west and functioned as focal points for own individual needs and desires. After a day-out in the west, the return to the grey reality of the GDR came as a shock which drastically highlighted the material deficiencies of one’s daily existence.

An analysis of identity-creating processes within the unified Germany has to take such a spectacular mass phenomenon into account. The exclusion of an assessment of consumer patterns and preferences would mean the exclusion of formative experiences of East Germans after the fall of wires and fences. The unexpected opening of the Iron Curtain on the evening of November 9, 1989 represented the ‘true caesura’ (Weber 1993:106) of the East German revolution. Suddenly, people were exposed to the vast gaps between the differing consumer societies and their respective living standards. It was then that the notion of reforming the old system gradually gave way to an anonymous support for a rapid unification. As individuals in the hostile consumer environment of the GDR, Easterners voted with force for the western consumer society.

Aside from this spectacular mass hysteria, two further mass-cultural phenomena shaped East German perceptions towards the unified existence. The admittedly

generalising heading of 'Life and Leisure' addresses the fundamental changes caused by modernisation, restoration and renovation programmes in eastern cities and villages. For years, buildings or road and rail networks in the GDR had been largely neglected. After unification, Easterners gradually were able to enjoy the comfort and convenience of modern housing and the redevelopment of urban landscapes. Unification also brought the highly welcomed freedom to travel. The pent-up desire to visit the 'other Germany' and to experience foreign countries other than those of the Communist bloc resulted in a tourist boom. In addition, the increase in leisure opportunities brought Easterners a wider choice of how to spend their spare time. The rather limited range of leisure activities in the GDR gave way to a wide selection which was capable of satisfying any taste - from eclectic and uncensored forms of art to new fashion waves of sport, such as tennis, squash or bodybuilding. They exemplified the introduction of new societal standards of individuality, independence and free will.

Finally, the extension of the western dual system of private and public media, stood in sharp contrast to the parsimonious media diet that was offered by the SED state. While the eastern press scene was subject to significant changes which were caused by the influx of western publishing houses and new-found eastern papers, in particular the new media age of television represented the most dramatic mass-cultural change. Despite being able to receive West German television even before 1990, the eastern consumer could now choose between some 25 channels and was exposed to new standards of information, entertainment and presentation which redefined his or her viewing preferences.

In short this chapter conceptualises mass culture as a further marker of a national identity by analysing the most striking changes to the life-styles of East Germans: consumerism (levels of material prosperity, consumer patterns and preferences), life

and leisure (restoration and renovation programmes, social relations, leisure activities, travel), as well as media (in particular television).

5.2. The German Democratic Republic

Consumerism

Compared to other countries of the Comecon, the GDR was a prosperous and successful industrial state. By the mid 1970's East Germany had established a 'functioning economic system' (Weber, 1993,:83) and showed a respectable growth in general living standards. In 1974, industrial production was seven times higher than in 1950 and had increased by an impressive thirty per cent as compared to 1970. Despite the world-wide recession, the GDR was proud to present full employment, stable prices for essential food items, as well as a sizeable growth of the average monthly income (from 755 Mark in 1970 to 860 Mark). As shown in Table 5.1, the provision of consumer goods grew steadily. The state heavily subsidised basic consumer needs, such as dairy products, bread or housing, while poverty, unemployment and homelessness were virtually unknown.

Table 5.1. Provision of Consumer Products in the GDR (percentages per household)

	1955	1965	1975	1985	1988
Car	0.2	8.2	26.2	48.2	54.7
Refrigerator	0.4	25.9	84.7	137.5	159.6
Washing Machine	0.5	27.7	73.0	99.3	107.3
Television Set	1.2	53.7	87.9	117.6	125.2

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1989: 53

In return, low prices for basic goods were financed through the disproportionate costs of luxury items. Prices for cars, refrigerators, washing machines and television sets stood in no relation to the average monthly income. The purchase of such products was a long-term investment that required years of saving. Moreover, the often scarce production of luxury items resulted in long waiting lists which stretched out over several years. Eventually, persistence and thriftiness paid off and by the

1970's, nearly every household enjoyed the convenience of modern appliances. The luxury goods were no longer the exception but became a standard feature - albeit with a delay of at least ten years as compared to West Germany.

Despite a period of economic stabilisation and success in the early 1970's, the gap in living standards with the western rival did not decrease but widened. By the late 1970's, the economic tide turned and living standards began to stagnate (Weber, 1993:83,91). During the last decade of its existence, the GDR was permanently confronted with the prospect of financial bankruptcy. Only substantial loans from West Germany kept it alive (see Chapter Three). Hence the shortage of supply and often poor quality of consumer goods re-emerged as constant features of life in the GDR.

In contrast to common western marketing slogans which confidently praise the virtues of a product, East-German goods were presented in a plain matter-of-fact style. Both language and design were dull and lacked any appeal (Schmidt 1994:367). This was all the more logical, since the planned Socialist economy did not promote such concepts as advertising, marketing or competition. The GDR product was not challenged by the prerogative of any market economy to sell to maximum profit. Every article was offered at a fixed price with a fixed quality. Production was geared towards the satisfaction of often only basic demands. Stimulation of demand was absent, and innovation towards the improvement of standard products was severely lacking. Demand for consumption products in the GDR quite often exceeded the supply and consequently even the most unattractive product eventually found its buyer (Schmidt 1994:367).

As a telling example, shop windows were as dull as the products. The most striking characteristic was represented in the massive display of identical consumer goods. Within a system of short supply, East German shops built on the 'magic of

repetition' (Schmidt 1994:368), by organising numerous tins or boxed cartons into decorative sculptures, pyramids and ornaments, in order to give the impression of affluence. Regarding luxury goods or electronic products such tactics only served the purpose of mere spectacles in light of the exorbitant prices and shortage in supply. In an ambivalent manner, shop windows fostered individual consumer desires which the Socialist planned economy was unable to satisfy.

By displaying political slogans, shop windows fulfilled propagandistic functions for the regime. Messages promulgated Socialism with the usual appraisal of its superior capacities and potentialities. This coexistence of consumer products next to propagandistic messages within a compact space gave shop windows a political status (Schmidt 1994:370). The contexts of product and society were interwoven. The striking contrast to reality could not have been more cynical. Poor quality and lacking diversity of consumer goods, as well as the almost immanent shortage of supply outside the realm of daily essential products constituted permanent performance indicators for the daily consumer in his or her evaluation of the political and economic system.

The public's experiences of shortages and scarcity were further emphasised by the vast affluence and luxury that was prevalent in the west. Western television in particular transmitted advertising images of a consumer paradise and generated consumer wishes which could by no means be met by the Communist authorities. With the easing of restrictions on cross-border travel (see Chapter Two), personal hands-on experiences of western life-styles gradually became possible for larger segments of society. These occasional western experiences - travel to the west, western friends and families staying in the east, the Christmas package filled with western goods - were highly appreciated and treasured exceptions from the streamlined Socialist consumer reality which drastically revealed the deficiencies of the GDR.

The traumatic reality of the Wall and barbed wires, as well as the complicated and time-consuming application procedure to travel to the west gave consumer products a powerful position as additional communicators, as 'ambassadors' (Diesener and Gries 1993:23) of a different and affluent world. Not only were western goods the topic of much conversation but furthermore they became relics, while their possession quite often meant an elevated social status. West Germany provided an immensely important focal point for choice, variety and quality of consumer products and for affluent living standards. East Germans were in fact 'fixated' (Weber, 1993:91) on the more prosperous Federal Republic and the persisting gap between east and west.

Thus consumerism generated political attitudes. Since television, telecommunications, and the gradual easing of travel restrictions gave East Germans increasing opportunities to experience a share of life in the west, western products and the western consumer world acquired a normative status. They constantly reminded the population of how life could be. During daily shopping trips however, East Germans were confronted with the Socialist reality of suppressed consumer wishes, lack of choice, shortage of goods and long queues. These deficiencies of the planned economy generated into judgmental variables where the gap between potentiality - as seen in the west - and reality became increasingly unbearable.

Life and Leisure

In comparison to western societies, life in the GDR was characterised by a distinctly slower pace and was visibly less stressful and hectic (Woods 1993: 59-60). With a limited choice of leisure activities, people focused on their social environments of friends and family. When asked about their priorities in life, respondents mentioned 'harmony within the family' and 'happy marriages' as the most important goals (Lemke 1989:88).

At work, permanent gaps in the provision of material allowed for several breaks. Attitudes towards time and performance at work were markedly relaxed. In a survey by the East German *Institut für Meinungsforschung* taken in 1968 amongst several industrial co-operatives, an overwhelming majority of 63 per cent felt 'comfortable' within their general working environment. 34 per cent still felt 'partially comfortable' (Niemann 1993:339). Apart from its productive function, the Socialist collective also had an individual, personality-enhancing ambition (Belwe 1989:97). The working environment represented an essential focus for one's social life. After work, colleagues jointly participated in sport, organised picnics and went on holidays together. Such tight social networks were widely regarded as highly positive achievements of the Socialist society (Belwe 1989:103). Ninety per cent of all workers in the GDR thought highly of harmonious working environments, as well as of companionable relations to their fellow workers (Sailer 1989:148). Advanced social services including guaranteed employment and pensions, subsidised housing, child and health care complemented the widespread sense of security.

Cultural exchanges with other societies were hardly possible. While abroad, East Germans were only allowed to experience another Socialist reality. On the shores of Lake Balaton or the Black Sea, the cultural broadening of horizons was severely limited by talking to your East European comrade who lived under similar ideological principles, a similar one-party rule and experienced a similar Socialist life-style. In addition to being confined to travel only to Socialist countries, the regime's restrictive currency policy further hampered cultural exchanges. East Germans were only allowed to buy foreign Socialist currency in such low amounts that often even simple hotel expenses could not be paid for. With little money to spend, East Germans were regarded as second-class tourists who were only reluctantly served. Consequently, Easterners often grouped together at camp grounds which represented affordable accommodation. Thus even in a foreign country, travellers of the GDR often spent their holidays with their compatriots. Experienced

cultural differences could be regarded as marginal. They were in fact only shades of grey.

The SED understood culture as a high culture of fine arts, represented in classical music, literature or pictorial art. In search of a genuine Socialist form of cultural entertainment, the party borrowed from humanistic ideas of the German Classic and the age of enlightenment, while aspiring to the bourgeois categories of truth and beauty in a historical-dialectical manner. Art was instrumentalised as a pedagogic means for the general political and social education of the individual (Stiller 1989:148-150). Artists were obliged to close the gap between 'art and real life' (Weber 1993:52) by expressing images of Socialist reality. Decadent notions were politically unsound, while abstract art opposed the fundamental imperative of tangibility. Hence the SED preferred, encouraged and implemented Socialist realism as the binding form of artistic expression.

Consequently, the regime did not only criticise the 'trivial' art of light entertainment but furthermore attacked all forms of capitalist/western art which according to the SED rhetoric lacked class consciousness and depicted decadence. After a short-lived liberal interregnum during the 1960's, authorities increasingly arrested artists or expelled them to the FRG, cancelled events or censored books, while conjuring up morality and tradition (Stiller 1989:148). In the end, theatre, film and literature found it increasingly difficult to contribute to a spirit of discourse and confrontation. On the contrary, art in East Germany was heavily supervised, controlled and largely streamlined.

By 1980, the reservations against western and light entertainment gradually decreased. The SED adopted a more pragmatic approach and slowly abandoned its idea of establishing a Socialist form of culture. In fact, art and culture turned into consumption goods (Stiller 1989:147). To counter the danger of simply copying

western patterns, the SED fostered its own version of contemporary, mass-oriented forms of entertainment by initiating an FDJ chanson-movement and by concentrating on German folklore. Eventually, by the mid 1980's, diversity and quantity of entertainment increased. The party finally acknowledged the 'compensatory function' (Stiller 1989:152) of simple entertainment as a welcomed diversion and relief from daily pressures. Still the emphasis on the symbiosis of culture and education remained, albeit the former rigid prerogative of a high culture of fine arts was significantly softened. Now, even western rock music found its way onto East German stages. Between supply and demand however, a gap was still apparent. While the high-cultural offerings such as theatre, classical concerts and belleslettres literature were quite sufficient, 'lower' forms of entertainment were still characterised by a shortage in provision.

In accordance with the SED's demanding ambition of establishing a Communist society, the regime expected from its citizens the pursuit of political activities in their spare time and encouraged participation in political parties and mass organisations (see Chapter Four). In practice however, leisure preferences differed strongly from this theoretical imperative and were instead in line with other industrial nations. According to a sociological survey in 1966, 68 per cent chose to watch television in their spare time, complemented by walks (50 per cent), reading newspapers and magazines (47 per cent) and reading books (42 per cent). 35 per cent preferred to spend time with their children, while political activities were only attractive to 16 per cent (Weber 1993:65). An additional favourite pastime was sport. The membership figures of the 'German Association for Sport and Gymnastics' grew steadily from 8.4 per cent of the population in 1960 to 21.9 per cent in 1988 (Statistical Yearbook 1989:330).

Despite the powerful social impact of political parties and mass organisations, East Germans showed a strong urge to design their life individually. People looked for a

partial escape from the ever-present and often annoying official political rhetoric by retreating into private spheres, into individual, non-political entities, where state and party did not exert any influence. Over the years the system fostered a society of niches, where five-year plans, the collective, party propaganda and Communist rhetoric were left outside. After the military intervention following the Prague Spring, party officials became increasingly suspicious of any citizen involvement in politics which could have generated criticism of the system and was potentially troublesome as a source of dissent. Party pragmatists therefore silently tolerated and even welcomed such escapism. It functioned as an important safety valve within the closed and totalitarian society (Sontheimer 1990:72) and furthermore represented the nucleus of social existence in the GDR: a society of little, unpolitical cells.

A telling indicator for this phenomenon was represented in the figures for the solitary sport of fishing. In 1988, 13.9 per cent of all sport enthusiasts spent their pastime equipped with rod and hook (Statistical Yearbook 1989:330) which is all the more striking in comparison to such popular sports as football (15.3 per cent) or gymnastics (10.7 per cent). The most prominent aspect of this retreat was the *Lauben* culture. The idea of a community of small garden lots originated in the German industrial revolution of the mid 19th century. The entrepreneur Schreber, a protagonist for a more healthy environment offered his employees a parcel of land for individual use. Over the years, this concept developed into a vital cornerstone of social life, both in West and East Germany. Membership figures for the association of allotment-gardeners in the GDR grew from 940,000 in 1965 to 1.5 million in 1988 (Statistical Yearbook 1989:414). In East Berlin, forty per cent of families owned a garden (Rytlewski 1988: 639), most of them equipped with a *Laube* (cottage). Gardeners emerged as a mass organisation and the private entity of the *Laube* transformed into an escape from daily life and represented the focus of leisure and activity on the week-end.

Apart from the *Laube*, the car constituted the other unofficial ambition of private leisure and activity. The demand for individual transportation remained constantly high. The annual production of *Trabants* and *Wartburgs* increased steadily, from 64,000 in 1960 to 218,000 in 1988 (Statistical Yearbook 1989:27). But production could by no means meet the consistently high demand. The waiting list for a new *Trabant* increased to an impossibly long period of twelve years. It therefore came as no surprise that the car acquired the status of a fetish. In 1984, East Germans spent an astonishing 28 per cent of their total expenses on items associated with an automobile (Rytlewski 1988:639). The car truly represented the most precious possession.

Media

After the demise of the Nazi-dictatorship, the Soviet military administration gradually passed the authority of the media sector to the East German Communists. With the subsequent establishment of a one party rule, the SED enjoyed a 'monopoly on opinion' (Weber 1993:25) by controlling radio, publishing houses and newspapers. Over the years, the regime not only functionalised the media as a propagandistic means for the political legitimisation of its totalitarian rule, but also as an instrument for the psychological mobilisation and political indoctrination of the population (Meyer 1989:41).

Abstract ideological and political issues were rather under-represented. Instead, the media of the GDR focused on the documentation of tangible achievements and successes of the system. At the centre stood the general relationship between state and citizen which the SED regarded as a mutual contract of service and performance. Thus, the media reported on concrete deeds and accomplishments of both the population and the Communist authorities (Meyer 1989:41). Society was portrayed as a large family where state and party provided security in return for the personal

commitment of the individual to the goals of Socialism. Particularly before elections, party congresses or political holidays, the amount of mobilising campaigns, appeals, proclamations and political discussions increased significantly in trying to present the image of a united and dynamic society (Meyer 1989:42). But even without such events, the political orientation of the GDR media was obvious, by portraying the superiority and accomplishments of the Socialist system. The constant exposure to the achievements and successes of Socialism in general and the SED state in particular constituted a permanent indoctrinary irrigation for the population.

The regime regarded newspapers as articles of daily consumption and heavily subsidised their prices. East Germans were amongst the most ardent newspaper readers in the world with over 550 daily copies per one thousand inhabitants (Grubitzsch 1990:140). Since information was strenuously filtered and censored by the political authorities, the reader often tried to acquire as much diversity of information as possible by buying copies of several different papers. The 39 daily newspapers had a total circulation of 9.7 million. Out of these, 16 were published by the SED, 18 by block parties, and one each by the GDR trade union FDGB and the youth organisation FDJ. The '*BZ am Abend*' (the Berlin evening news), a sports paper and a publication for the ethnic minority of the Sorbs complemented the scene.

The influence of state and party was compelling. SED publications numbered 6.6 million copies. Block parties which unanimously accepted the vanguard role of the SED published 800,000 copies. The 1.9 million copies of *Tribüne* (FDGB), *Junge Welt* (FDJ) and *BZ am Abend* (Berlin evening news) also remained under the auspices of the Communist party. All papers were subject to licensing from the press office within the Council of Ministers which also allocated the supply of paper and consequently determined the numbers of copies. The key SED publication *Neues Deutschland* was directly supervised by the Central Committee secretary Joachim Herrmann who often received specific orders from Honecker. Regional papers were

directly assigned to the Central Committee, as well as to the regional offices of the SED. Through both channels, party executives gave orders regarding form and content (Grubitzsch 1990:141). The SED hierarchy even went so far as to declare political developments as taboos, as exemplified by the lack of information on the historic events in China and Hungary in the summer of 1989. As with all spheres of society, the infiltration with official staff and unofficial informants of the *Stasi* further manifested the unchallenged dominance of the Communist party in the media sector.

The official news agency ADN (*Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst*) possessed the monopoly on foreign news and represented the main source of information for regional papers regarding news from the capital. Apart from ADN, only '*Neues Deutschland*' employed foreign correspondents. As a state agency, ADN directly responded to instructions and guidelines of the SED and the Central Committee. Hence 'news' was often re-formulated, censored, extended or shortened by party executives in the Department for Agitation within the Central Committee and occasionally directly by the *Politbüro*. Reports which were formulated by radio or the TV news broadcast *Aktuelle Kamera* were strictly ordered to report the ADN version of the story which gave the agency the status of the 'prime collective provider of information' (Olivier 1995:246). According to a former senior employee, the overwhelming majority of journalists accepted and adapted to the role of functional weapons in establishing the Communist society (Olivier 1995:248) which gave ADN the key position as the central henchman for the regime in the process of ideologically streamlining the population.

Magazines with high circulation were directly supervised by the Department for Agitation within the Central Committee. Smaller publications were subject to direct censorship. Trade journals and even the sports press were confronted with intervention, as soon as articles fell under the competence of the Ministry for Public

Education or the SED's chief ideologist Kurt Hager (Grubitzsch 1990:144). Consequently, critical journalism was almost absent. Even without the direct intervention of party and state officials, journalists and reporters internalised the mere threat of censorship and avoided conflict by circumventing issues and interpretations that could have aroused official criticism. After decades of tutelage, the 'scissors in the mind' (Olivier 1995:250) worked in a pragmatic manner.

In 1988, 99 per cent of households in the GDR possessed a radio and 96 per cent owned a television (Statistical Yearbook 1989:291). As indicated in Table 5.2., television represented the most important source for information and entertainment. With an estimated weekly spare time of some 25 hours devoted to media consumption, Easterners spent 13 hours watching television, 10 hours listening to the radio and 1.5 hours reading newspapers, magazines or books (Warnecke 1989:87) which qualitatively and quantitatively placed the GDR in line with other European societies.

Table 5.2. Use of Media in the GDR, 1984,
(Blue and White-Collar Households, Minutes per Capita)

		Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
Television	MA	75	133	128
	SA	16	27	32
Radio	MA	2	2	3
	SA	74	117	99
Press	MA	12	12	12
	SA	3	3	2

MA: main activity

SA: secondary activity

Source: Warnecke 1989:87

Television, radio and newspapers in the GDR were characterised by a constant flow of political messages. While listening to the GDR state-radio, one was permanently

confronted with such issues as a collective's overachievement of a production plan or the stunning fertility of this year's potato crop. This impression was supported by the statistical shares of the respective programmes as shown in Table 5.3. Since 'music' accounted for roughly half of the output of the five national and twelve regional radio stations, it seemed striking that 'politics and economics' were allocated around 70 per cent of the remaining air time. Consequently, 'culture, drama and entertainment' achieved only an insignificant status with some five per cent of the total broadcast hours.

Table 5.3. Radio Broadcasts in the GDR (percentages)

Year	Politics and Economics	Sport	News	Culture, Drama Entertainment	Music
1965	38.8	0.8	5.2	5.7	49.4
1975	38.2	0.9	6.2	5.4	47.8
1980	38.2	1.2	7.0	4.8	47.1
1985	38.3	0.9	6.7	5.0	46.9
1988	34.0	1.2	6.1	5.5	51.1

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1989:325

Unfortunately, the official data on the two television channels was not as telling as the one on radio. In particular, the vague category of 'television-journalism' made compelling conclusions on the degree of politicisation of East German television difficult. Nonetheless between 1965 and 1988, the category 'informative political broadcasts' combined with the category 'television-journalism' accounted for a minimum of 24.1 per cent in 1988, and for a maximum of 29.2 per cent in 1965 (Statistical Yearbook 1989:325). The largest percentage belonged to 'drama and entertainment' (between 33.8 and 42.5 per cent) which usually consisted of ideologically-correct movies, soaps or theatre productions. Hence, the politicisation of television was comparable to that of radio. Both media devoted considerable time to light entertainment - music on the radio and film/theatre/soaps on television.

Political broadcasting however, still exerted a significant impact on the media timetables.

Western television and radio represented welcome and widely appreciated changes from the streamlined media diet that was offered by the Communist authorities. With the exception of the greater area around Dresden¹ the two major West German public channels at least could be received through standard aerials. According to estimates, some 80 per cent of East Germans were able to receive western channels (Wilke 1989). In the end, the GDR represented a home-turf for West German television, its news, political magazines, as well as soaps and game shows. Table 5.4. demonstrates the permanent presence of western television. Although the survey was taken amongst a small number of emigrants, it still provides a telling look at the western penetration of eastern mass culture. All respondents at least watched western news programmes sometimes. Moreover, the most popular news broadcast in the west - the 'Tagesschau' - was watched by two-thirds on a regular base. The entertainment sector also enjoyed respectable numbers of followers, since around two-thirds were familiar with US-American television series and West German game shows.

Table 5.4. East Germans Watching Western Television

Broadcast		regularly	sometimes	never
News	Tagesschau (8.00 p.m.)	65	35	--
	Tagesthemen (10.30 p.m.)	28	64	8
	Heute (7.00 p.m.)	46	64	11
	Heute-Journal (9.45 p.m.)	24	59	17
Soaps	Dallas	29	33	38
	Dynasty	26	26	48
Game shows	Dalli-Dalli	23	44	33
	Der Grosse Preis	22	47	31

n = 162 emigrants from the GDR who received West German television

Source: Hesse 1988: 43

¹ Ironically, the SED had to install extra transmitters throughout Saxony to prevent people from moving.

Since the media in the GDR lacked such vital concepts as plurality and diversity, West German television provided an important source of information and entertainment and furthermore exposed Easterners to the vast differences between the two Germanys regarding life-style or political attitudes.

Table 5.5. East Germans Consuming Eastern and Western Media (Young Workers Aged 18 to 25)

	GDR media				FRG media			
	Radio		TV		Radio		TV	
	often	daily	often	daily	often	daily	often	daily
1985	76	35	89	47	80	47	77	41
1889	54	34	73	42	85	62	77	55

Source: Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung; in *Mediaperspektiven* 02-90:98.

A further survey by the East German *Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung* (Institute for Youth Research) documented the considerable preference for western media. Table 5.5. shows that by 1989, twice as many young East German workers tuned into western radio stations on a daily base. Western television was also more attractive with a 13 per cent edge. Moreover between 1985 and 1989, figures for the GDR media consistently decreased, while rates for the western media rose continuously. In an additional survey, the Institute specifically asked young East Germans about their favourite source of political information (see Table 5.6.). Between 1976 and 1988, support for the GDR media as the sole source of information decreased drastically, while in return trainees, young workers, as well as students listened and watched western radio and television in larger numbers. Although these surveys only questioned the younger generation, retrospective interviews with East Germans after the fall of the Iron Curtain strongly indicated that western media became an integral part of daily life in East Germany.

Table 5.6. Source of Political Information for Young East Germans

		mostly GDR media	GDR and FRG media	mostly FRG media	not/ hardly interested
trainees	1976	38	54	3	5
	1985	23	57	17	4
	1988	11	62	24	3
young workers	1976	39	46	6	9
	1985	22	63	11	4
	1988	12	64	23	1
students	1976	55	35	2	7
	1985	35	56	8	1
	1988	13	70	16	0

Source: Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung; in *Mediaperspektiven 02-1990:99*

Official efforts to stop the downward trend of consumers of eastern media included an emphasis on drama and movies which geared for mass tastes, or the launch of the youth radio station *DT 64*. Such efforts however, could only soften the landslide. Instead, West German media acquired the status of a normative reference point for information, truth and entertainment as an escape from the often monotonous, streamlined and propagandistic SED-recipe.

5.3. The Federal Republic

Consumerism

The first years after the capitulation of the Third Reich were characterised by severe material privation. Towns lay in ruins, food was rationed and energy supplies were limited. The daily struggle to survive and to organise bare existential necessities left a traumatic mark on most West Germans. For the next two decades, material security dominated the public's consciousness and the gradual improvement of living standards was on top of the agenda of every household. By the mid 1950's, the booming economy gradually brought prosperity to broader segments of society. A wave of gluttony swept over the country and West Germans seemed to compensate for years of scarcity and self denial of the preceding decade. To own a 'Volkswagen-Beetle' became the aspiration of the common man and the car's cheap and robust design gradually allowed for the motorisation of the entire society. *'Es geht wieder aufwärts'* (Things are looking up again) - a slogan widely used by media, politicians and commentators - aptly characterised the public psyche. 'Made in West-Germany' was not only a label guaranteeing the quality and endurance of industrial products, but furthermore constituted a source of pride in the recently established consumer society.

The unprecedented choice and variety of consumer products, and gradually the ability to purchase them, became vital agents for the enhancement of low self-esteem. After the demise of National Socialism and severe material privation, the Federal Republic offered West Germans a form of political and economic organisation which was able to generate increasing and widespread prosperity, and consumerism emerged as a vital systemic bastion for the approval of the young democracy.

By the 1970's and merely 25 years after the total collapse of the Third Reich, West Germany developed into a highly affluent society. Widespread prosperity was all too obvious. Table 5.7. indicates that nearly every household sported a comprehensive range of modern appliances. With 425 cars per 1000 capita in 1988, only the United States (561) and Luxembourg (453) fared better in international comparison (Statistical Yearbook 1990:685). The GDP per capita increased from 5,466 Deutschmark in 1960 to 11,141 DM (1970) and to 34,528 DM in 1988 (Statistical Yearbook 1990:566). Salaries rose persistently and made the West German labour force one of the most expensive in the world. By the mid 1980's, the 35 hour working week was gradually introduced. The number of annual holidays was unparalleled and reflected the country's enormous economic success with the average employee being entitled to thirty days on top of eleven to thirteen church or public holidays.

Table 5.7. Consumer Products in West German Households (percentages)

	1972		1989	
	Type II	Type III	Type II	Type III
car	65.6	88.0	96.4	99.3
colour TV	9.1	12.9	95.2	93.8
black-white TV	86.8	84.7	30.6	36.5
refrigerator	98.1	99.0	80.6	82.0
freezer	28.2	30.6	74.7	79.9
combined refrigerator-freezer	--	--	25.3	30.5
dish washer	2.7	18.2	52.6	88.5

Type I (not included): two-person household incl. Pensioners and socialsecurity recipients with low income
Type II: four person household, medium income
Type III: four person household, higher income
Source: Statistical Yearbook 1991:540; 1976:496.

Life and Leisure

After World War II, the social composition of West Germany underwent radical changes. By the mid-1950's the contribution of the agrarian sector to the economy began a steady decline. With the *Wirtschaftswunder* gradually proceeding, the industrial sector attracted large numbers of workers. The expansion of the service industry resulted in an increase in white-collar jobs and contributed to the manifestation of the *Mittelstand*, a class of independent, small-business owners. The vast amounts of refugees became an 'additional agent of change' (Mertes 1994:18), since twelve million people, mainly from the former eastern territories of the Third Reich were confronted with the tasks of finding work and establishing new social circles.

These developments largely caused the 'erosion of traditional political and social milieus' (Rudzio 1991:480). Formerly, people had organised their lives around social, political or religious affiliations, such as proletarian-Socialist, Catholic, bourgeois-liberal or agrarian-conservative. In post-war West Germany however, these formerly strong societal divisions gradually broke down and allowed for the emergence of distinctly classless and egalitarian elements. The media bridged traditional milieus and catered for broader societal segments. With the exception of some Catholic boarding schools, educational affiliations to specific milieus disappeared and neighbourhoods gradually had a more mixed social composition. Eventually, West Germany became a more flexible and mobile society. Tribal, social and religious homogeneity diminished, while the formerly close communal networks of family, church and neighbourhood were gradually eroded.

These processes were dramatically boosted by the cultural revolution. By the late 1960's, norms of personal and group behaviour became less disciplined and authoritarian, as well as visibly more relaxed in comparison to the Adenauer era (see Chapter Four). By the mid-1960's the material orientation to build up one's life from

the ruins left behind by World War II were gradually replaced by a consumer mentality which forever sought new outlets and satisfactions (Bark and Gress 1993:70). In particular the younger generations no longer accorded work, career and material security the same priority as their parents whose thoughts and behaviour were commanded by years of reconstruction. These changing material perceptions, combined with the ongoing social developments of urbanisation, increasing personal mobility and prosperity drew attention to new issues, including environmental concerns and citizenship initiatives, but also leisure and quality of life. The generation gap in West Germany was particularly pronounced because of the loss of millions of members of the now middle generation who had died during the war. Since the young hardly had any recollection of the immediate aftermath of the Third Reich, generation differences were more defined than ever before in recent German history.

Within these social trends, student radicals were able to set the agenda and transformed the political culture. Student revolts rocked the country, arguing that the *Bonn* Republic had been built solely on the prospect of increasing prosperity and economic wealth. The student movement criticised the lack of a spiritual and intellectual renewal which would have represented a clear break from the Nazi past and argued that elitism, obedience and subordination to the political and economic establishment had not disappeared, while the restoration of authoritarian structures had prevented a thorough establishment of democracy. Subsequently hierarchical patterns in schools, universities, at work and in the family were subject to severe scrutiny. Notions of 'independence and free will' (Mertes 1994: 20) and a general objection against authoritarian standards became increasingly popular. The student revolts were in fact both cause and consequence (Mertes 1994:20) of a cultural revolution that transformed West Germany into a new era and in retrospect represented the strongest caesura in the country's post-war history. Life in West

Germany became freer and more open, while breaking with the former rigid patterns that characterised work, family and leisure.

By the 1980's accumulated prosperity, short working hours and long holidays supported a marked rise in leisure activities, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Between 1980 and 1989, the average four-person household with a medium income spent between seven and eight per cent of their net income on costs related to a car, between thirteen and fourteen per cent on general leisure activities, and around per cent on travel.² With increases in the GDP per capita of 31 per cent (1980) and 50 per cent (1988) as compared to 1970, West Germans were able to spend more money in absolute terms on travel, sport or in restaurants.

Throughout the 1980's the sport industry enjoyed a remarkable boom. Membership in the *Deutscher Sportbund* - the central umbrella organisation for all sports clubs - more than doubled from 8.3 million (14 per cent of the total population) in 1970 to 18.4 million (30 per cent) in 1989 (Statistical Yearbook 1990:394, 1983:375). Sporting activities became more diversified. The traditional German passion for football and hiking was gradually complemented by more sophisticated physical undertakings, such as aerobics, bodybuilding, mountain-climbing, windsurfing and foremost by tennis.

Spending on travel increased steadily and destinations became ever more extravagant. According to the *Deutscher Reisebüro-Verband* (Association of Travel Agents) in 1960, 69 per cent of West Germans spend their holidays within Germany. By 1989, the figures had reversed and a markedly high 71 per cent preferred to spend the most precious weeks of the year abroad. Average spending on holidays increased from some 700 Deutschmark per person in 1970 to over 1,300 DM in 1989. As

² Data according to Statistical Yearbook, 1990:487, 1987:472, 1983:453, 1990:566.

demonstrated in Table 5.8., the most popular foreign holiday destinations of 1960, - Austria, Switzerland and Italy - combined for a total travel spending of 58 per cent. By 1989, the top three countries Austria, Italy and Spain only attracted 43 per cent, while the share of countries not listed in the table rose to 25 per cent as compared to only six per cent three decades earlier. Clearly, the summer rushes to the Alps and the teutonic bathtubs along the Italian coast were eventually regarded as rather philistine and West Germans gradually conquered the remaining continents. By 1989, spending in foreign countries amounted to an astonishing 44 billion Deutschmark or some 650 DM per capita.

Table 5.8. Travel Expenses (in DM) and Destinations, West Germany

	1960	1970	1980	1989
Austria	560	2206	6183	7123
Italy	467	1930	6417	6533
Spain	67	749	2770	5470
France	207	692	2593	3514
Switzerland	512	1152	2468	3211
Netherlands	228	791	1711	2351
USA	288	640	1050	2070
Great Britain	90	279	906	1276
Yugoslavia	21	409	1055	1038
Belgium-Luxembourg	50	208	469	608
others	161	1174	5849	11086
total	2651	10230	31471	44280

Source: Deutsche Bundesbank, Press Office, 1995.

Despite these vast changes, some traditional mass-cultural patterns remained unchanged. Apart from the family, *Vereinsmeierei* probably represented the most fundamental social structure in West Germany. The term roughly translates as 'clubism' and describes the German habit of organising nearly all social activities in clubs; from sport to allotment-gardeners to the keepers of carrier-pigeons. In most cases clubs were highly structured, with a proper constitution, accompanied by a variety of rules and regulations. Clubs provided a feeling of community and

solidarity within a stable and secure social environment. Clubism however, also indicated the underlying desire for order and organisation, Notions of predictability and security lingered on which were generated by the individuals' readiness to oblige to and function within a hierarchical structure of social organisation.

Media

Prior to the founding of the *Bonn* Republic in 1949, the western occupying forces had already established a dual principle of media organisation, consisting of private press and public radio and television. The system remained virtually unchanged for some three decades.³ West German households received three public television channels through traditional terrestrial transmitters. In regions bordering other *Länder* or foreign countries these increased to four to five. Public radio stations which roughly followed the federal structure of the *Länder* broadcast between two and four programmes. By the early 1980's proposals which were largely inspired by the CDU/CSU called for radio and television licenses for private operators, arguing that more programmes would result in more variety and hence more freedom and consumer choice (Schatz et.al. 1990:352).

With the demise of the SPD/FDP coalition in 1982, the media landscape in West Germany gradually became subject to massive changes. By 1990, all *Länder* with the exception of Hesse and Bremen had altered legislation to allow for the establishment of private radio and television. Aided by the new technical infrastructure of cable and satellite, the number of television channels jumped to around twenty-five within a period of only five years. In urban areas, numerous private radio stations competed with public providers. The former dual principle was

³ Exceptions included Adenauer's unsuccessful attempt to install a government-run television channel in 1961, the launch of a second public TV station a year later, as well as the introduction of 'Third Channels' operated by the individual corporations of the *Länder* in the mid-1960's.

transformed into a one-and-a-half duality of private press, as well as private and public radio and television.

However programme variety turned out to be rather minimal. Supply only multiplied quantitatively but not qualitatively. In contrast to public channels which benefited from significant licensing fees and tax revenues, private television was solely dependent on advertisement revenues. Private stations therefore hardly established distinctive profiles, since most geared towards the satisfaction of mainstream tastes. Although numerous in numbers, specialised programmes remained surprisingly rare and a mediocre mixture of sport, soap operas, game shows and movies which totalled some 75 per cent of their output (Schatz et.al 1990:352) emerged as the streamlined recipe for attracting consumers. The only exceptions were two sport networks, as well as the French-German public co-operation *Arte* which broadcast a high-profile mix of art, culture and documentaries.

Educational and informative programmes however, were notably rare on the new television agenda and were neglected in favour of readily consumable simple-mindedness and the 'eternal repetition of sameness' (Frei 1989:454). As a consequence of the free flow of market forces, broadcasting became increasingly sensational to gear towards the public's inherent lust for the digestible extraordinary. News programmes adopted a casual style of presentation. Talk-shows which formerly addressed political issues now gave centre stage to the ordinary citizen and his or her unusual experiences. Clamorous reports about crime and sex, or 'shocking revelations' from celebrities introduced the West German television public to a new form of tabloid-type journalism which was formerly the exclusive terrain of the mass-daily '*Bild*'.

Concentrating processes soon affected the privatised television market. Media giants, such as Bertelsmann, Springer, Leo Kirch, Silvio Berlusconi, Holtzbrinck,

Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, or Burda held shares in the two biggest private stations *SAT1* and *RTL-plus* or the second tier consisting of *Pro7*, *Tele 5/DSF* or *Kabelkanal*. To a significant degree, the established public stations were forced to follow the programme pattern which proved so successful for private operators. With increasing numbers of cable households and satellite dishes, more and more West Germans turned to private television. In 1990, private providers had a 40 per cent share of the national television audience. In households with cable hook-ups the figures were even higher at 57 per cent (Humphreys 1994:272). Although partly financed by taxes, public channels still depended on advertising revenues to balance their budgets. Since the popularity of private stations grew constantly, public television tried to regain viewers by providing the same mix. Consequently, the number of soaps and sport broadcasts increased, while documentaries and political analyses were pushed to late-night slots. Only in the realms of news and information was the public sector able to maintain its position as an unsurpassed bastion of quality and reliability, although a ‘private’ element of info-tainment visibly crept into its standard of presentation.

Table 5.9. West Germans Watching Television (minutes per day)

	Adults (13 and over)	Children (6 to 13)
1985	147	92
1987	154	88
1991	160	93

Source: Darschin and Frank 1988: 214-228, 1994:98-110

Hence the argument of variety regarding both programming and providers which swung the debate in favour of privatisation in the early 1980’s remained an unfulfilled promise. Nonetheless, West Germans did not seem to mind the arrival of the new media age. As shown in Table 5.9., West Germans spent more and more time in front of their television sets. The downward trend of the early 1980’s clearly

had been reversed. Over a period of less than ten years, West German television was 'Americanised'. More channels offered less variety. Quality standards dropped with the emphasis on cheap and quick productions. Deliberate 'channel surfing' over longer hours replaced selective viewing and the former prerogative of television as a source of information and education was undermined by the desire for instant gratification of entertainment needs, using low standards as the common denominator of mainstream tastes.

5.4. The New Länder

Consumerism

Despite incredible advances since unification, material preconditions for participation in the consumer society were still markedly different between east and west. As seen in Chapter Three, general income and living standards were improving, but for Easterners they did not reach satisfying levels. An overwhelming majority were discontent and expressed widespread bewilderment with the slow approximation of living standards between the old and new *Länder* which was caused by the evident gap in salaries and wages. Initially the wealth and prosperity on display in shop windows, on television and billboards were answered by the shrug of shoulders and the realisation that the consumer illusions that had prospered with unification were in sharp contrast to one's personal financial reality.

Table 5.10. Consumer Products in Households, East and West (percentages)

	1991		1993		1994	
	East	West	East	West	East	West
Type II (1)						
car	93.8	96.5	96.6	96.4	97.3	95.8
video recorder	39.9	58.5	62.6	71.1	67.7	73.4
video camera	3.3	11.9	16.4	24.0	21.6	26.1
dish washer	1.1	61.8	7.3	64.9	9.3	68.7
micro wave	4.8	49.1	18.7	59.3	25.7	61.6
Type III (2)						
car	93.1	98.5	97.3	98.0	97.9	98.0
video recorder	40.2	54.8	60.6	69.5	71.5	72.8
video camera	6.9	14.2	15.6	27.8	25.3	33.7
dish washer	3.1	85.3	4.9	86.0	13.6	85.3
micro wave	11.9	47.7	24.1	58.5	33.8	57.6

Type I (not included): two-person household incl. Pensioners and socialsecurity recipients with low income

(1) Type II: four-person household medium income

(2) Type III: four-person household higher income

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1995:543,544.

Although lower than in the west, income and wages nonetheless offered enough financial resources to participate in the free market consumer world. By 1994, east German households generated a financial surplus (capital after standing charges) of 439 Deutschmark per month which represented a significant increase from 304 DM three years earlier (Allensbacher Berichte 27/1994:1). Gradually, the gap in wages between east and west narrowed, income levels began to rise and people had more money to spend. Table 5.10. demonstrates the dramatic rush on consumer products between 1991 and 1994. By 1994, car ownership had reached equal levels in east and west. Easterners quickly sold *Trabants* and *Wartburgs* and invested heavily in new automobiles. Between 1991 and 1994, the percentage of 'type II' households which bought a brand-new car rose from 39 to 43 per cent. The figures of 'type III' household increased even more from 45 to 54 per cent.

Leaving more basic products, such as washing machines, or television sets out of the equation (since their demand had already been satisfied prior to 1989), East Germans hardly wasted time in purchasing items which some years earlier were either unavailable or outrageously expensive. Gaps between east and west regarding video cameras and recorders had largely been closed by 1994. Although equipment levels of dish washers and micro waves still showed distinct disparities, the increase in purchases of these products was nevertheless striking in both medium and higher income households. Hence, five years after unification and despite lower financial resources, the trend towards prosperous consumerism was firmly established in the new *Länder*.

Further insights into perceptions towards the arrival of the western consumer culture were offered by a closer look at consumer pattern and preferences. By 1991, prominent products of the GDR era enjoyed a surprising resurgence. The sweet and artificial tasting '*Rotkäppchen*' sparkling wine re-emerged as a popular item. Prior to 1989, the company had sold some 15 million bottles annually. By 1991, sales

dropped to 2.9 million, only to increase dramatically to 5.7 million in 1992 and to 17 million in 1994. In 1994, only 50,000 bottles were sold in the west. The cigarette brand 'F6' which was exclusively sold in the new *Länder* established itself as the best selling make in eastern Germany with a market share of over 30 per cent (*Der Spiegel* 27/1995:59).

The initial consumer orientation after the *Wende* however, offered no indication for such a revival. After the currency union in July 1990, western products overwhelmingly dominated the eastern market (Gries 1994:1044). Years of material scarcity, limited choice and often questionable quality, as well as pent-up consumer wishes now found their expression in an unequivocal thirst for western products. In particular, established and comparatively expensive brand products benefited from this trend (Diesener and Gries 1993:21). It was not the no-name product that attracted the consumer but in contrast, the brand that was already familiar to most Easterners. Over the years, advertisement on western television generated a product socialisation which now provided for the competitive edge in the newly liberalised consumer market. Despite often limited financial resources, Easterners followed the promising yet costly advertising messages, while showing 'a lack of consumer competence' (Diesener and Gries 1993:21) that otherwise would have properly evaluated the products' value for money.

During this consumer euphoria, eastern products hardly stood a chance against their western rivals. They were stigmatised as representatives of an inefficient economy of short supply: outdated, unaesthetic and unattractive. Gradually, eastern products vanished from the shelves of supermarkets and shop owners were eager to sell the remaining stock by dumping price levels. As far as East Germans had access to them, west German goods were for decades almost worshipped in the east which now lead to a nearly total boycott of eastern products (Schmidt 1994:371).

Nonetheless, Easterners increasingly had their first unpleasant experiences with the new consumer society. Dubious western business opportunists claimed the east as the new frontier of capitalism and Easterners made the acquaintance of credit sharks, overpriced used cars or disproportionate insurance policies. The markets of eastern towns were packed with stands, offering clothes and food products whose value-for-money ratings were all too often simply ridiculous. The appreciation of and curiosity towards western consumer products and the often sheer helplessness when confronted with the new-found choice and diversity gradually turned into bewilderment and scepticism. For some, these first approaches to western-style consumerism left a bitter aftertaste which further determined their future consumer preferences.

Soon a clear reversal trend towards the appreciation of eastern products became visible. In December 1991, almost three-quarters out of a total of one hundred surveyed households deliberately preferred eastern over western products which represented a sharp rise from fifty per cent in December 1990 and 65 per cent in mid 1991 (Gries 1994:1045). By the end of 1993, 82 per cent of surveyed consumers stated that they preferred eastern over western products (*Der Spiegel* 52/1993:46). Furthermore, in a survey taken in February 1993, respondents had been asked, whether they buy eastern products during their regular shopping trips. 65 per cent answered with 'often', 31 per cent with 'sometimes' and only three per cent replied with 'hardly' or 'never' (Gries 1994:1045).

Western advertising images, language and symbols faced increasing difficulties in reaching the eastern consumer. Uniformed marketing campaigns which simply transferred western slogans to the east failed to generate a successful impact. Also, East Germans simply did not always appreciate the taste, style or character of certain western products. Surveys by the eastern *Institut für Marktforschung* showed that in particular eastern dairy products, meat, bread, as well as eastern cigarettes and beer

had a better reputation regarding taste when compared to their western counterparts (Gries 1994:1048,1050). Market strategists were forced to respond to this new consumer orientation and began to design specifically eastern strategies. Former GDR products underwent rapid transformations regarding design, quality and presentation but kept the brand name of the former Socialist article. Labels and stickers, such as 'fabricated in Thuringia', 'brewed in the *Vogtland*' or 'fresh from our *Heimat*', as well as the display of the emblems of the new *Länder* acknowledged local and regional loyalties.

The cigarette market served as an intriguing example. After unification, the tobacco giant Philip Morris incorporated the *Dresdner Tabakwerke* with their brands 'F6', 'Juwel' and 'Karo' into its corporate structure. The western strategists at Philip Morris in Munich managed to run a strikingly successful campaign. 'F6' was advertised as a product that stood for the good and the familiar, as a symbol of tradition and persistence in a time of sweeping changes and as a vital representative of East German cultural history.⁴ 'F6' declined to change its design and the distinctively strong taste which differed strikingly from the much preferred 'light'-types of the west remained. Philip Morris avoided western advertising clichés, such as sophistication and affluence and instead stressed tradition and authenticity which gave the impression that valuable achievements of the GDR still had a right to exist. Slogans such as 'the taste stays the same', 'the original from Dresden', or 'our classic' paid further reference to the era prior to unification. The strategy had a remarkable success. At the end of 1989, 'F6' already possessed a dominant market share of thirteen per cent. A year later the make reached a peak at 33 per cent which subsequently only dropped slightly to 31.3 per cent at the end of 1994.

⁴ Information according to the Press Office at Philip Morris, March 1995.

'Karo', formerly nicknamed the 'Gauloise of the East' went even further in emphasising GDR references and pronounced an aggressive 'attack against the *Einheitssgeschmack*'.⁵ The advertisement for the cigarette 'Juwel' trumpeted: 'I smoke Juwel because I already tasted the West'.⁶ In contrast, 'Cabinet', a cigarette brand that belonged to the West German company Reemtsma performed a U-turn regarding its marketing strategy. After a disastrous campaign which tried to establish the make amongst other western counterparts by using western language and design, sales plummeted which forced Reemtsma to praise the taste of 'Cabinet' as 'unperfumed and unadulterated' (Gries 1994:1049-51).

Other market segments had equally successful advertising campaigns by following the same prerogative of designing a uniquely eastern strategy. The former GDR cola 'Club' trumpeted: 'Hooray, I'm still alive. Club Cola - our Cola'. 'Burger Knäcke', a crispbread from Saxony-Anhalt achieved an astonishing market share of 65 per cent in the east by 1993 (in contrast to 15 per cent in the west). An essential product to the GDR diet, 'Burger Knäcke' ran a successful campaign, promoting the product as a 'crispy piece of *Heimat*' (Gries 1994:1052-3).

Life and Leisure

When wandering through the towns of eastern Germany only a few years after unification, the visible changes in the cityscapes were striking. The vast difference to the grey and dull impression which was so prevalent during the Communist era became even more breath-taking by comparing the advances of eastern Germany to those of other post-Communist societies. Even the more prosperous Hungary or the

⁵ The term has a double meaning which can be translated as the taste of unification, as well as streamlined and indifferent taste.

⁶ The campaign built on a double meaning, since 'the West' also stood for a West German cigarette brand. By 1989, its prominent slogan 'Test the West' became a symbolic stimulus for freed East Germans.

Czech Republic represented no comparison to the already accomplished massive transformation processes in the former GDR. The entire region resembled one gigantic construction site. Roads were being modernised, traffic by-passes built, historic buildings and entire blocks of houses restored or renovated. In particular in the centre of towns, a difference between east and west became hard to depict. The western corporate culture, including shops and advertisement quickly established itself and eventually represented an almost perfect mirror image of the west. Even small businesses like cafes, restaurants or pubs showed a striking similarity to western standards.

Away from the city centres however, eastern towns entered a process of turning into archetypal US-American commercial suburbia with gigantic shopping malls and the conglomeration of such services as petrol stations, furniture outlets, or car dealers. According to *Die Zeit* (September 2, 1994: 23), shopping malls in suburban districts already accounted for an astonishing 55 per cent of the turn-over in retail in 1994, which was in sharp contrast to the west (25 per cent) where space in the hinterlands of urban concentrations were not that readily available anymore.

The consequences were alarming. Inner cities had to face the prospect of turning into deserted areas, while the newly emerging '*Mittelstand*' which was just about to establish itself and to profit from the market transition was confronted with severe losses in revenue. A reversal of this trend was nowhere in sight. Instead, by 1994 fifteen giant shopping malls were already in operation in the east, complemented by a further 27 which opened their doors in 1995.

Despite these trends and the presence of horrific satellite towns which continued to dominate the outskirts of every urban area, the Communist period offered a paradoxical, yet highly potential chance for urban and architectural improvement. For decades, urban planning and modernisation was almost absent because of the

lack of financial resources and commitment which left historic buildings and entire towns at the status quo of 1945. In return, eastern Germany was spared the modernising sins of the post-war era which western communities now struggle with. In the east, historic lines of streets remained intact and life in inner cities was still relatively unaffected by four-lane highways, inhospitable ‘match-box’ apartments and large office complexes. Federal, *Länder* and local authorities in eastern Germany seized this unique opportunity and began a wide range of restoration programmes which had the potential of establishing highly satisfying urban landscapes, not only regarding their historical aesthetics but also in terms of maintaining and fostering a socially advantageous neighbourhood community.

But how did East Germans respond to these developments? When queried about beauty within one’s general living environment, different conceptualisations between east and west prevailed. As shown in Table 5.11. modernity, affluence and technical innovation were on top of the eastern agenda which indicated that the recent arrival of the western consumer society was largely appreciated. Born out of decades of material scarcity and consumer privation, Easterners envisioned their living environments with shop window displays, expensive cars and modern houses.

Table 5.11. Attitudes Towards Beauty, East and West 1991 (percentages)

Question: On this list (presentation of options) are there certain items which you have recently noticed and which you find beautiful? (Multiple answers possible).

	East	West
shop window displays	49	30
modern houses and office complexes	37	15
expensive cars	34	17
old houses	29	36
neon advertising	18	6
bunch of flowers	36	32
nice gardens	35	36
tall old trees	25	36
sunset, sunrise	24	33

Source: Allensbacher Archiv, IfD-Umfrage 5059, December 1991.

In sharp contrast, Westerners favoured idyllic and romantic things. On top of their agenda were such antipodes to modernity and technological progress as old houses, gardens and trees. Forty years of diverging experiences therefore generated fundamentally different aesthetics. In the east, modernity was embraced. The west however, had already experienced the downside of modernity, with inhospitable city centres, traffic congestion or urban alienation and instead favoured a retreat into the idyllic as an escape from Chaplin's vision of 'Modern Times'. While West Germans might have despised shopping malls as ugly and anonymous architectural monstrosities, East Germans appreciated their convenience and vast display of choice and affluence.

Also, while west German observers were enchanted by the restoration of medieval towns, Easterners placed more emphasis on the provision of central heating or well functioning plumbing. This seemed only a logical reaction since the state of housing in the old GDR left much to be desired. Half of all houses were built before 1945. In early 1990, the average apartment size comprised only 61 square metres as compared to 84 in the FRG. Forty per cent had grave structural deficiencies. Eleven per cent were completely unsuitable for housing and a further forty per cent had minor defects. Only ten per cent of apartments in the GDR were in a satisfactory condition. The provision of heating, hot water, interior WC, bathroom and kitchen reached 75 per cent in new apartments, but only a mere 30 per cent in old houses (Crow and Hennig 1995:101,102). Hence after four decades of Communist parsimony, East Germans eagerly absorbed 'modernity' with such notions as convenience, comfort, change, progress and innovation. In this respect, they displayed comparable intentions to their western counterparts in the immediate post-war era. The retroactive distancing from modernity with the contemplation of such notions as tranquillity, sensuality or peacefulness had yet to reach the new *Länder*.

Table 5.12. Attitudes Towards Social Relations in the East (percentages)

Question: Are relations to your fellow neighbours better, worse or is there no difference in comparison to the GDR?

	March 1992	June 1993	August 1994
better	4.9	4.2	5.7
worse	43.8	49.7	56.7
no difference	51.3	46.1	37.6
n	1078	996	1062

Source: Politbarometer.

Life in general became harder and faster in eastern Germany. Working environments and requirements changed. Progressive social services were abolished and old routines broke down. The individual was asked to adjust and comply to new economic, political and social principles, since the transformation stressed notions of initiative, individuality and independence which were in marked contrast to the old totalitarian system that had nurtured obedience, hierarchy and apathy (see Chapter Three). These pressures had a profound impact on every individual's life and East Germans evaluated the new social climate in a strongly negative fashion. Table 5.12. showed that nearly half of the respondent's social relations had worsened since 1989. By 1994 the figure had increased to a staggering 57 per cent. The middle generation (people aged 40 to 49) was particularly disillusioned with numbers reaching 69 per cent.

These strikingly negative perceptions showed the level of security - both mentally and materially - that the Communist system was able to offer its citizens. These figures also demonstrate the vast social ruptures since unification which will require years of adjustment. Despite improved material conditions, despite increased comfort, convenience and choice, people were ill-prepared for the sudden arrival of 'consumer paradise' and found it hard to adopt the underlying prerogatives of prosperity and affluence within a market economy: competition, performance and individual responsibility.

Table 5.13. Leisure Opportunities, East and West 16-29 years (percentages)

	East	West
sports club, sports ground	65	89
swimming pool	44	73
parks	46	63
disco	63	55
youth clubs	29	57
clubs, unions etc.	16	55
fitness gym	36	59
cinemas	37	59

Source: Allensbacher Archiv, IfD-Umfrage 5070, October 1992.

Although East Germans were all too aware of the negative side-effects of prosperity, they nonetheless showed a confident demand towards their positive connotations. Hence, the choice of leisure activities could not keep pace with people's expectations. In early 1993, only eight per cent of Easterners were satisfied with the variety of leisure opportunities in their neighbourhood or close by, as compared to 57 per cent in the west (*Der Spiegel* January 18,1993:56). More specifically, the *Allensbacher Institut für Demoskopie* queried people aged 16 to 29 about leisure choices. Table 5.13. shows the drastic disparities between east and west in almost every leisure sector.

In particular, the western structure of clubs had yet to fully replace the former comprehensive social network of party and mass organisations or worker collectives. In 1991, the number of registered eastern sports clubs within the *Deutscher Sportbund* (the national association of sports clubs) reached only some 9,000 or a mere 12 per cent of the national total. Regarding membership, only 6.9 per cent of Easterners were members of a sport club which was in striking disparity to the west with 30 per cent (Statistical Yearbook 1995:429). Three years later the figures had improved slightly but nonetheless documented the tacit extension of the western club system. Now, 14 per cent of all clubs were based in the new *Länder* but still only 8.9 per cent of the population were members (Statistical Yearbook 1992:453). The

Deutscher Sängerbund (the national association of singing clubs) had to face similar problems. In 1991, only 2.2 per cent of clubs and less than one per cent of members came from the east. By 1994, although eastern clubs accounted for ten per cent, eastern membership figures did not exceed five per cent of the national total (Statistical Yearbook 1992:447; 1995:423).

Table 5.14. Leisure Activities, East and West, 1994 (percentages)

Activity	Frequency	West	East
Movies	at least once a month	15.1	11.9
	rarely	34.2	28.7
	never	50.5	59.1
Theatre, Concerts	at least once a month	12.9	7.9
	rarely	41.4	37.2
	never	45.5	54.7
DIY	at least once a month	35.1	35.5
	rarely	26.1	22.7
	never	38.5	41.4
Sport	at least once a month	43.5	32.0
	rarely	15.8	22.9
	never	40.4	44.8
Hiking	at least once a month	24.3	26.7
	rarely	36.9	39.0
	never	38.4	39.9
Going out (restaurants, clubs etc.)	at least once a month	64.7	43.2
	rarely	25.0	33.7
	never	10.1	23.0

Source: Mediaanalyse; in Baldauf and Klingler 1994:414

Apart from the diverging leisure infrastructures, the prevalent economic disparities which affected broad societal segments in the new *Länder* accounted for different leisure preferences and activities for East and West Germans. A survey amongst some 51,000 respondents (Baldauf and Klingler 1994:409) showed that DIY, hiking,

as well as sport received almost identical responses. However clubbing and eating out, as well as going to theatres, concerts and movies were markedly more common on the leisure agenda of West Germans, while more East Germans never participated in such activities at all.

The persistent economic instability made inexpensive leisure activities ever more attractive to most Easterners. Affluent leisure pursuits, such as clubbing or theatre were regarded as expensive extravaganzas. The drastic price increases in restaurants and for theatre, concert and cinema tickets further contributed to the reluctant acceptance of western patterns of leisure consumption. While these were substantially subsidised in the old GDR, the sudden introduction of market principles prompted many East Germans to simply erase them from their leisure agenda.

Shortly after unification, East Germans showed a marked interest in travel. This came as no surprise since in the autumn of 1989, demands for the lifting of travel restrictions were prominent features of various demonstrations. Banners even depicted 'DDR' (the German abbreviation for GDR) as '*die dauernde Reiselust*' (persistent desire to travel). By 1991, average daily travel expenses per capita had reached 787 DM. The figure trailed significantly behind the western level of 1468 DM, but nonetheless represented a sixty per cent increase in comparison to 1990 (Deutscher Reisebüro-Verband 1995). Against the backdrop of considerable economic disparities between east and west and the substantial material insecurity of East Germans, most Easterners preferred to spend their holidays in Germany. Travel to the old *Länder* satisfied a pent-up desire to experience life on the other side of the former 'Iron Curtain'. Table 5.15. also shows the marked lack of interest of West Germans in visiting the new *Länder*. Although the data only referred to main holidays (usually in the summer), the meagre shares of 2.5 and 2.7 per cent stood neither in relation to the attractive tourist offerings of eastern Germany, nor the

opportunity to freely visit a part of the country without the former hassles of border controls or visa restrictions. Even the often rudimentary state of eastern tourist facilities at the outset of unification could not explain such indifference on behalf of West Germans.

Table 5.15. Destination of Main Holiday, East and West Germans (percentages)

	East		West	
	1990	1991	1990	1991
Germany old Länder	31.9	33.4	27.2	27.9
Germany new Länder	43.4	20.8	2.5	2.7
foreign countries total	24.8	45.5	70.3	69.4
Spain	3.0	7.4	13.0	13.7
Italy	2.5	4.9	10.2	10.5
Austria	4.3	9.7	7.0	8.8
France	1.4	2.2	5.9	5.8
Eastern Europe	9.6	10.8	3.8	3.4
Non-European	0.5	3.0	9.8	10.3
Others	3.5	7.5	20.6	16.9
total	100	100	100	100

Source: Deutscher Reisebüro-Verband, Press Office 1995.

As with the west, Spain, Austria and Italy emerged as popular foreign holiday spots. When looking only at foreign destinations, 40 per cent of East Germans in 1990 and 49 per cent in 1991 travelled to these three countries. The figures were in marked similarity to the west with 43 per cent in 1990 and 48 per cent in 1991. The former ‘Comecon-bathtubs’ in Hungary, Romania or Bulgaria still featured prominently on the East German travel agenda. In 1990, 39 per cent of all foreign holidays did not take advantage of the new freedom to experience other countries which was largely prompted by attractive low prices levels and currency advantages in eastern Europe. The often reported indifference towards new and more exotic holiday experiences however, represented a false conclusion. By 1991, only 24 per cent of foreign

holidays were spent in the former Communist states and more and more East Germans travelled to southern, western, northern and non-European countries.

Media

With unification, political authorities wasted no time in radically transforming the eastern media landscape along the lines of the established West German system. The Hamburg-based *Norddeutscher Rundfunk* expanded to Mecklenburg-Westpomerania. The *Sender Freies Berlin* now catered also for the eastern part of the city. Two further public stations, the *Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk* (covering Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia) and the *Ostdeutscher Rundfunk Brandenburg* filled the void left behind by the demise of the state-owned radio and television network of the GDR.

Private television stations highly welcomed the arrival of millions of new customers. By 1993, 93 per cent of all households in Germany were able to receive more than four channels. 60 per cent could choose between 16 or more stations and only seven per cent were still limited to the public television diet. While in the west, most households had already been connected to the cable system, eastern viewers installed satellite dishes until their neighbourhood was connected. Differences between east and west regarding the reception of private stations were therefore only marginal (Darschin and Frank 1994:98).

Patterns of media consumption displayed marked differences between east and west. Although television viewing softly increased between 1991 and 1994 in both the old and new *Länder*, Easterners spent significantly more time in front of the 'box'. As shown in Table 5.16. adults over the age of fourteen watched some twenty per cent more, children occasionally (1991) even forty per cent more which was largely the

result of increased consumption of light entertainment programmes (Darschin and Frank 1995:160).

Table 5.16. Television Consumption, East and West (minutes per day)

	East		West	
	Adults	Children 6-13 years	Adults	Children 6-13 years
1991	189	132	160	93
1992	199	124	160	97
1993	209	125	168	100
1994	207	114	170	95

Source: Darschin and Frank. 1995:154, 1994:98

While western viewers continued to prefer the two public channels *ARD* and *ZDF*, Easterners showed a marked preference for private stations. In 1994, viewing shares for *ARD* and *ZDF* in the west totalled 17.5 and 18 per cent respectively. In the east however, numbers amounted to only 12.5 and 13.5 per cent. In contrast, viewing shares for *SAT.1* were 14 per cent in the west and 17 per cent in the east, while *RTL-plus* pocketed 16.5 per cent of western and 20 per cent of eastern air time (Darschin and Frank 1995:156). The figures for 1994 were thereby only marginally different from 1993 which indicated a consolidation of differing consumer behaviour.

In particular, the eastern television audience was more receptive for the sensationalist news journalism of private channels. While in 1994, the most popular news show *Tagesschau* (from the public *ARD*) was watched by 15 per cent of West Germans, it only interested a total of eleven per cent in the east. In contrast *RTL Aktuell* reached four per cent of Westerners and eight per cent of Easterners. Also, public news magazines attracted far less viewers than their private counterparts. The most popular *ZDF* show *Bonn direkt* was watched by eleven per cent in the west and by ten per cent in the east. However 19 per cent of Easterners tuned in to the *RTL*

infotainment-show *Explosiv*, as compared to only nine per cent of Westerners (Darschin and Frank 1995:162). It seemed that the casual, tabloid-type of presentation struck a popular cord with East Germans. More than in the west, informative broadcasts fulfilled additional functions as sources of entertainment and diversion.

Radio was more popular and more widely used in the east than in the west. As shown in Table 5.17. on an average weekday Easterners had a higher consumption of some thirty minutes. Private radio had an increasing impact on consumer preferences in eastern Germany. In 1993, the market shares for private stations totalled between ten and fifteen per cent in Thuringia, Saxony-Anhalt, Mecklenburg-Westpomerania and Saxony. *Brandenburg* was already the beneficiary of numerous private stations from Berlin which increased the total to some forty per cent.

Table 5.17. Radio Consumption, East and West (weekly averages)

	West		East	
	Listeners (percentages)	Minutes (per day)	Listeners (percentages)	Minutes (per day)
1991/92	80.6	163	86.8	189
1993	80.9	169	87.0	192
1994	79.9	168	86.2	192

Source: Baldauf and Klingler 1994:413, Franz and Klingler 1992:450.

A year and various launches of new private stations later, growth rates for market shares reached between 24 per cent (Mecklenburg-Westpomerania) and thirteen per cent (Thuringia) which positioned the new *Länder* amongst such western states as *Saarland*, *Baden-Württemberg* or Lower Saxony (Baldauf and Klingler 1994:418). These figures demonstrated that with increased coverage by private stations, Easterners did not show any signs of reluctance in embracing the new private media.

The market for magazines also displayed sharply diverging reading preferences between Easterners and Westerners. As with television, eastern readers remained rather sceptical towards serious news journalism. As seen in Table 5.18., the two main news magazines, *Der Spiegel* and *Focus* found it hard to establish loyal readerships in the east. *Stern*, the Hamburg-based info-tainment magazine shared the same problem and could only attract meagre numbers of East Germans. Of the most popular western papers only the tabloid *Bild* achieved respectable figures.

Table 5.18. Print Media Preferences 1995, East and West (percentages)

	West	East
Der Spiegel	12.7	4.4
Focus	8.8	3.7
Stern	17.4	3.5
Super Illu	0.8	16.1
Bild am Sonntag	20.1	13.3
n	6013	1532

Source: Gruner und Jahr 1995:548

In contrast, *Super Illu* enjoyed a remarkable success. Articles in the magazine were exclusively devoted to eastern issues, problems and concerns. Stories, for instance included an analysis of the success of GDR actors in post unification Germany, exclusives of eastern celebrities or reports on governmental scams with the average East German as the victim. The figures indicated not only the preference for light entertainment over serious political discourse but furthermore the existence of a considerable market niche which cashed in on feelings of resentment and anger.

5.5. Conclusion

Despite the persistent disparities regarding prosperity between east and west, East Germans generated enough money to participate in the western-style consumer society. Immediately after unification, a rush on consumer goods emerged, where in particular formerly overpriced or unavailable items, such as cars and electronic goods were quickly purchased. Within a short period, the western consumer world was embraced by Easterners. These first consumer experiences within unified Germany were in marked resemblance to the West German economic boom of the 1950's where a wave of gluttony and consumerism compensated for years of material privation. The *Bonn* Republic's consumer society offered its citizens affirmative experiences within the recently established free market economy which persistently generated widespread prosperity, higher wages, longer holidays and shorter working hours.

In the seven years since unification, the consumer euphoria in the new *Länder* exemplified similar positive orientations towards the arrival of western-style consumerism. Participation in and approval of it served as a buffer of support within the general and often demanding and unsettling transformation processes. These positive orientations were boosted by drastically different consumer experiences in the old GDR. Despite being a - for Comecon standards - relatively successful economy, shortage of supply and poor quality of products were frequent. A distorted consumer system subsidised basic needs but overpriced fundamental consumer desires. Since images of the western consumer society were transmitted through television and tourism, the comparative material privation of the GDR fostered the population's fixation on the west, as well as the fetishisation of its products which subsequently functioned as systemic de-stabilisers for the SED regime during times when the gap to the more prosperous western counterpart increasingly widened. Western consumer products served as cultural ambassadors of a normative consumer

paradise which eventually paved the way for unification. By 1989, pent-up consumer desires exploded and almost overnight, western consumerism with its images of affluence and choice became a firmly established part of the eastern psyche.

This initial open embracing however, transformed into a unique consumer mentality. Although affluence and choice as offered by the new market economy were not rejected, Easterners defined them differently and filled consumerism with political meaning. The product of consumption thereby acquired the status of a miniature plebiscite that reflected on the general transformation processes in the aftermath of unification. As argued in Chapters Three and Four, attitudes prevailed that unification merely represented a corporate take-over and colonisation by the west since the political, economic, social and administrative structures of the *Bonn* Republic were simply extended to the eastern *Länder*. Initial hopes of a literal unification, of merging eastern and western assets in establishing a better society were crushed to the ground and gave way to the realisation that the uprising against the SED regime had ended in the superimposition of western norms and standards.

In the realm of consumerism, the resurgence of eastern products - whether newly introduced or rejuvenated from the GDR past - expressed the widespread resentment against these developments. In buying 'east', Easterners articulated notions of defiance against the general eradicating processes of unification which perceived anything East German as unsuitable for the new system of democracy and capitalism. East Germans sensed that the west was not always the best, while the east had achieved and produced worthy assets as well.

Defiance was furthered by growing scepticism and bewilderment. The initial rush towards western products which was largely caused by the product socialisation of western television during the SED era, as well as by the poor standards of GDR products gradually cooled down. As one of the first lessons of market economics,

Easterners realised that glamorous and polished products did not always keep their advertised promises. Subsequently, the normative consumer paradise of the west which had prevailed in the parsimonious days of the GDR was de-mystified. Overpriced articles, alien tastes and artificially-created demands fostered a re-orientation towards eastern products. Whether as cause or as reinforcing consequence, marketing and advertising exerted a profound impact. Western images, language and symbols found it increasingly hard to impress eastern consumers. Old GDR-brands were re-launched with improved design and quality. Prevalent western advertising clichés of sophistication and luxury were pushed aside by images of honesty, authenticity and tradition. Coded political messages such as ‘I am still alive’ or ‘Against the taste of unification’ captured the *Zeitgeist* of the eastern *Länder*.

The orientation towards eastern consumer goods also became an indicator for emerging regional pride. Once spotted, differences in consumer behaviour and preferences between east and west were cultivated and turned into relics of self-esteem. Marketing strategies connected mass products to sentiments of the east German *Heimat*. New brands with an emphasis on regional/eastern affiliations emerged. Easterners responded to the streamlining processes of transition and the perceptions of a second-class citizenry by proudly heralding the quality, beauty or performance of ‘their’ products. Eastern goods were attributed with highly positive characteristics, such as value for money, trust, integrity or honesty which confidently expressed the difference to the presumably untrustworthy and sleazy west and thereby acquired a vital identity-creating function.

In addition, notions of escapism and nostalgia became apparent. The rapid unification process brought profound and abrupt changes to East Germans. For some the sheer size, speed and depth of the post-Communist transition were hard to grasp and digest. During these massive transformations people were longing for a piece of

familiarity, for a stable constant in a time of sweeping changes. Such emotional cosiness was offered by former GDR products which had kept their old brand names. They reminded East Germans of the past prior to unification - not necessarily of its totalitarian implication but simply of a time when life was not as complicated and demanding. Idyllic advertising images, such as a river valley in the *Vogtland* mountains, the Isle of *Rügen* with dunes and fields, or a mountain range in the Thuringian forest represented a further retreat from the stress and demands of the reality of unification and modern civilisation. They stood in sharp contrast to the daily experiences of post-unification, including job insecurity or challenged social status. Such advertised romanticism provided an easy escape from reality, away from the grave changes and the urgency to adapt to new social, political and economic demands.

The drastic infrastructural changes of living environments were largely approved by East Germans. Extensive renovation and building programmes, the arrival of the western corporate culture, shopping centres, road and rail networks, or modern housing were highly welcomed. After decades of lacking innovation and investment, the SED had left Eastern Germany in a run-down state. Crumbling balconies in uninhabitable houses, collapsing roofs or pot holes in pre-war cobbled stoned roads exemplified the parsimonious nature of life in the GDR. Not surprisingly, the incoming convenience, comfort and progress brought about by unification were therefore perceived as the long-awaited arrival of modernity. Like their western countrymen in the 1950's and 1960's, ideal living environments were conceptualised as new, bright, clean and prosperous. Unlike their countrymen of the 1990's a notion of a backlash on modernity and an emphasis on tranquillity, serenity or romanticism only had minor importance.

'Catching-up' with the reference culture of the old *Länder* was on the mind of many Easterners. As an indication for the much desired approximation to the west,

Easterners complained about the still insufficient provision of leisure choices. The marked interest in travel and in particular holiday destinations which largely resembled those of the west furthermore pointed towards the internalisation of western mass-cultural standards. Differences regarding the pursuit of leisure activities or travel patterns were not the result of different preferences but instead were caused by the still existing gaps in the material standards between east and west. For years, the normative mass-cultural proposal of the FRG built up strong desires to equally experience the good sides of life. Western travel and leisure patterns were therefore embraced as fundamental currents of a western life-style.

However certain diverging conceptualisations of life and leisure remained. East Germans overwhelmingly complained about the deteriorating social climate. The pressures of transition, the urge to perform at work, the stress on social circles caused by material insecurity and changing social status, as well as the general speed and depth of the massive system transformations left many in a state of imbalance. For most East Germans and despite the welcomed arrival of modernity, life became harder. When looking at the tight-knit social environments of the GDR, the unsettling consequences of such changes became even more transparent. Life in the GDR followed a slower pace. Performance at work was less demanding. Amiable social relations, a certain lack of competitiveness and a strong feeling of security and safety characterised one's social relations.

In return, the incoming western culture emphasised fundamentally different notions. With the erosion of traditional social and political milieus and the break-down of formerly strong societal divisions, life in the *Bonn* Republic gradually had become freer, more mobile and more flexible. The cultural revolution of the 1960's resulted in considerably less disciplined and authoritarian attitudes, while notions of independence, individuality, and free will fundamentally altered West Germany. The single-mindedness of the Adenauer-era with its orientation towards stability and

material security gave way to a desire for new outlets of satisfaction. The corrupting influence of affluence sought for ever increasing and ever changing material and spiritual gratification. Growing material prosperity allowed for increased and diversified spending. Leisure activities grew in qualitatively and quantitatively. Affluent travel became a common feature, while life in general became faster and more complex.

Easterners had yet to accommodate these cultural standards. The former stable and foreseeable patterns and circles of life became subject to sudden changes. In the realm of work, growing demands and pressures had to be met. Increased horizontal and vertical mobility accounted for flexible and unstable social environments of friends and colleagues. The former collective solidarity spirit at home and at work was replaced by the competitive elbow-mentality of a free society. Former rigid regulators of life, such as state, party and ideology disappeared and a complex web of multiple determinants emerged. Suddenly the individual was confronted with freedom of choice. Questions such as 'where to go on holiday', 'what consumer goods to buy', or 'what to do after work' were enriched by vastly increasing opportunities. The freedom to choose and to freely determine one's life however, did not always constitute a positive asset, but instead often a confusing and demanding imperative. Life in a freer, faster, more complex and less anchored society was sometimes daunting. This sudden flexibility and fluidity of life made Easterners pessimistic about the state of their rapidly altered social climate.

Indeed, change and flexibility were hardly imperatives during the Communist era. Severe travel restrictions - mostly limited to Socialist countries - allowed for only marginal cultural exposure or the experience of cultural differences. Limited choice of leisure activities made the individual concentrate on one's immediate environment of work, friends and family. However the society of niches which was so prevalent in the GDR had a comparable equivalent in West Germany. While in the east, the

retreat into the private, unpolitical sphere of the *Lauben* culture fostered an intimate atmosphere of social harmony, the same can be said about the western social organisation of clubs. This structured and secure environment which offered a strong sense of community and solidarity had the potential to compensate for the lacking social stability in a climate of constant and sweeping changes. With clubs slowly but steadily entering the social agenda in the new *Länder*, clubism provided much needed oases of tranquillity and security.

Media consumption in the new *Länder* strongly accommodated western mass-cultural standards, and western radio and television hardly met any resistance from Easterners. Television and radio were more consumed in the east, while in particular private TV channels enjoyed higher viewing figures than in the west. The strong attractiveness of private television was further documented by the exorbitant number of satellite dishes. Since the provision of cable in the new *Länder* remained patchy, consumers heavily invested in electronic equipment to receive more than the standard public media diet.

Despite the radical extension of the western media system after 1990, the arrival and subsequent extensive use of private radio and television did not represent a caesura, but instead a continuation of consumption patterns of the GDR era. Before unification, western radio and in particular western television constituted integral parts of life in eastern Germany as normative references of information, truth and entertainment and were widely used as alternatives to the politicised eastern media. Some were even able to watch the new private television channels in particular around Berlin and in regions close to the border. East Germans were therefore quite familiar with the new developments in the media sector of the Federal Republic in the 1980's.

In the west, the arrival of the new media age brought an unprecedented choice of channels but only minimal programming variety. Private stations offered a mediocre mix of soap operas, sports, game shows and movies. Education and informative programmes surrendered to low standards of presentation and content. Forced by the huge success of this recipe, public stations were forced to follow to some extent the private footsteps, resulting in the 'Americanisation' of West German television. The enthusiastic response of East Germans to these trends had its roots in the GDR past and in the regime's dissatisfying offerings in the entertainment sector. Television and radio were politicised and functioned as propaganda tools, as well as means of political indoctrination. While the SED understood culture as a high culture of fine arts and despite a gradual liberalisation which allowed for more trivial, lower or western forms of entertainment, the demand for light entertainment by far exceeded supply. The function of simple entertainment as a compensation for daily pressures although was acknowledged by the SED, but nonetheless never accordingly acted upon.

With unification, this 'vacuum of fun' could suddenly be filled. More than their western compatriots, East Germans watched more television and in particular preferred the light forms of entertainment which were offered by '*SAT1*' or '*RTL-plus*'. Sensationalist news reports, banal stories and in general a distinctively casual form of presentation answered a need for easy entertainment. With other entertainment sources, such as cinema, theatre or books suffering from drastic price increases, and leisure opportunities still relatively underdeveloped, television acquired to an even greater extent the escapist function of a retreat into the private sphere where one was able to relax and unwind and to tune out of the daily pressures of unification.

CHAPTER SIX: ETHNICITY

6.1. Conceptualising Ethnicity

Anthony Smith (1991:20) describes an ethnic group as

a type of cultural collectivity, one that emphasises the role of myths of descent and historical memories, and that is recognised by one or more cultural differences like religion, customs, language or institutions.

In this respect, not only objective factors of laws, regulations and civic standards, of economic resources and practises, of borders and territorial properties constitute vital anchors for a national identity. Moreover, subjective factors, 'permanent cultural attributes of memory, value, myth and symbolism' (Smith 1986:3), the historic glory of a nation, legends, historical figures and events or a mythical homeland shape the emotional attachments of members of a community. Although ethnic identities are generated by objective indicators, such as language, religion, customs or skin colour they are also derived from meanings which developed over generations on 'cultural, spatial and temporal properties' (Smith 1986:22). Smith terms this ethnic conception of the nation as non-western (1991:11). Whereas most western nations emphasise a historic territory, a legal-political community, the legal-political equality of members and a common civic culture and ideology, the ethnic conception is grounded in the belief that the nation has its roots in a common ancestry, therefore stressing notions of a community based on birth and a shared native culture.

Against this theoretical backdrop, Germany represented a highly peculiar case. By the mid 19th century, E.T.A. Hoffmann's political slogan of '*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*' which subsequently became the first strophe of the national anthem suggested the paramount goal of uniting the several kingdoms and duchies into one coherent nation. Germans were scattered out over various states, while the envisaged unification found its rationale in fostering ethnic-national loyalties to a common nation. With the first unification of 1871 the united Germany found its identity in shared cultural heritage, in a common language and in common descent, while other nations, such as Britain or France had already developed a sense of common citizenship in the western terminology as applied by Smith. As a reminder of the past, even today German citizenship is still granted on the principles of *jus sanguinis* (citizenship based on descent) rather than on *jus soli* (country of birth).

The rhetoric of the Third Reich perverted such loyalties. '*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*' now implied German racial, political and military supremacy. Ethnic attributes of Aryan glorification were complemented by digging deep into historical myths of the 'Roman Reich of German Nations'. Against this vigorous and fanatical over-emphasis of ethnic components, the civic-western conception of a national identity hardly stood a chance. With the demise of Hitler and the country's division, the ethnic element radically disappeared from the public psyche. In the west, any expressions of pride in being German were seen to have ethnic connotation and were regarded as anti-democratic or even Fascist. The legacy of the Third Reich gave German ethnicity an almost immoral attribute. Indeed German ethnicity largely vanished from the political rhetoric. '*Verfassungspatriotismus*' (Sternberger 1979), namely civic loyalties to the new system of democracy and '*Deutschmarknationalismus*' (Habermas 1990), the emerging pride in economic achievements served as an additional antipode to the Third Reich.

For the young GDR, the *raison d'être* lay in the state's postulated identity as the Socialist alternative within the German nation. Fundamentally different modes of politics, of economics and of citizen's responsibilities pushed the ethnic component into oblivion. Under Ulbricht, the regime drew its legitimacy from the establishment of Socialism in the sovereign Socialist German state. Although unification was still perceived as an eventual political goal - albeit under the Communist guidance of the SED - ethnic orientations to the common German nation were nonetheless superseded by orientations to Socialism and the state which culminated in the doctrine of the peaceful co-existence of two states within one nation. Under Honecker, modest attempts to integrate German ethnicity to further the new officially-propagated notion of two German nations were often awkward. Although German ethnicity, history and myths were addressed in memorials, speeches and in school curricula, the dogmatic Socialist reading of the past was one-dimensional and failed to generate significant emotional attachments amongst the population.

The Cold War antagonism emphasised political-ideological differences between Communism and democracy. Caught between these systemic rivalries, the identity markers for the young Federal Republic and the GDR lay in spheres others than ethnicity. Both states placed considerable effort on integration within their respective political and economic camps. NATO and Warsaw Pact, market economy and Socialism, Democracy and Communism dominated the public psyche and further blocked any notions of addressing ethnic factors. Hence both the GDR and the FRG were what Max Weber (1958) had termed 'incomplete nations'. Ethnic pride was absent from the official rhetoric, as well as from the public psyche. Over forty years ethnic loyalties failed to re-emerge in East and West Germany. The dark shadow of the NS-past in the FRG and the novelty of the concept of the new Socialist Germany in the GDR proved too high as obstacles.

Given this striking insignificance of ethnic identities prior to 1989, one could have assumed that unification would have provided ample opportunity for demonstrating ethnic loyalties. After all, the German ethnicity in the FRG and the GDR was finally re-united and neither the Cold War nor the systemic antagonism stood in the way of expressing references to historical memories and myths, or ethnic attributes such as common language or common descent. However forty years of neglecting ethnic identities - of repression in the FRG and of one-dimensional distortion in the east - did not fail to exert a considerable impact. When visiting the united Germany on the third of October (the country's national holiday) foreign observers were amazed by the distinct absence of a festive mood. Hardly any flags, public speeches or rallies (with the notable exception of Berlin) were visible as reminders of the presumably glorious day in 1990 when the nation was finally reunited. At major sport events, the reluctance of the crowds to join in singing the national anthem stood in sharp contrast to such occasions held in France, the United States, Great Britain or Italy. It took the persuasive power of the national football team and the likes of such sports heroes as Klinsmann, Beckenbauer or Matthäus to introduce the public to the concept of singing '*Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit*'. The obvious discomfort of some team members strongly reflected the awkwardness which most Germans felt during the occasion. Until the end of 1995 and six years after the fall of the Wall, cultural attributes to German history, myths, symbols, ancestry or descent did all but constitute significant identity markers for the recently unified nation.¹

¹ In striking contrast, during the European Football Championships of June 1996, German games were preceded by a vibrant and noisy chorus of thousands of fans who filled stadia, such as Wembley or Old Trafford with '*Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit*'. The German Football Cup Final in Berlin a month earlier, had already witnessed the participation of the large majority of the crowd in singing the national anthem. These incidents could mark the start of a new era, where such ethnic-cultural expressions will indeed enter the public agenda in a more widespread and common fashion. This study however, is forced to exclude them, since the possible consolidation of this very recent trend has yet to be seen.

Such reluctance in expressing ethnic loyalties renders an analysis on diverging ethnic identities between east and west difficult. Against this background, Fredrik Barth's typology of internal and external boundaries (1969) offers a cogent approach. As seen in Chapter One, the mechanisms of boundary creation are used as the overall theoretical framework for this study in order to analyse the existence of common and/or diverging identities in east and west towards the unified nation. Apart from this broad perspective, the typology is also able to shed light on the nature of ethnic identities. In general, ethnic boundaries canalise social life and organise inter-ethnic relations. Internal boundaries serve the purpose of identifying others as members, while external boundaries dichotomise others as strangers. 'Prescriptions' govern and 'proscriptions' prevent inter-ethnic interaction.

The post-unification period offered plenty of evidence for Barth's conceptualisation. 'Prescriptions' - the positive expression of ethnic loyalties to the nation remained almost absent. 'Proscriptions' - the establishment of external boundaries, whereas the individual was denied access to the ethnic community were widely documented. Germans demonstrated to ethnic outsiders - to foreigners, immigrants or refugees - that a dividing line still existed between Germans and non-Germans. By 1991, the international media reported various incidents of violent attacks on hostels for asylum applicants. Documentaries on the neo-Nazi scenes in both eastern and western Germany stirred up emotions and raised parallels to the Third Reich. Bewildered politicians urged tolerance and civility, fearing xenophobia and violence against foreigners.

This chapter therefore addresses ethnicity in its negative understanding. An interrogation into ethnic markers of identity leaves positive, prescriptive expressions aside and analyses negative, proscriptive notions, asking why and to what extent did East and West Germans establish ethnic external boundaries. Hence, the emphasis

lies on xenophobia, on racial intolerance and ethnic chauvinism as distinct characteristics of preserving an ethnic identity by preventing outsiders from entering the German ethnic community. These notions have to be viewed in a wider historical context in order to assess contemporary attitudes in the post-unification era. Throughout its history, Germany never experienced a multi-cultural society. The short period of colonisation prior to World War I had hardly any cultural or social impact on the Wilhelminian Reich. In the aftermath of 1918, other nations such as Britain or France maintained their colonial ties which even after the de-colonisation waves of the 1950's and 1960's granted them a better exposition to, and understanding of foreign cultures and customs. In contrast, from Bismarck to Hitler and to the FRG and GDR, German societies remained truly homogeneous. After unification such multi-culturalism - appreciation of cultural diversity, as well as ethnic tolerance - could have provided for a regulating mechanism in a time when growing numbers of refugees and asylum seekers altered the *modus vivendi* of social relations.

The moral and political legacies of the Third Reich were handled in a fundamentally different manner in East and West Germany. The *Bonn* Republic accepted responsibility for the genocide and pogroms of the Nazi era. A confrontation with the past, with *Auschwitz* or the *Reichskristallnacht* was reluctantly but nonetheless painstakingly pursued. In contrast, the SED regime avoided a thorough interrogation into National Socialism. Anti-Fascism emerged as a state doctrine without addressing the moral failures of Hitler's regime but by merely offering political and economic antipodes to capitalism. While *Auschwitz* remained an essential part of the political conscience of West Germans, East Germans were given absolution from the crimes of the Third Reich.

Finally, the old FRG and the GDR acknowledged the divided nation in a fundamentally different manner (see Chapter Two). In the west, the division was largely accepted as a irrevocable fact. West integration, democracy and economic achievements compensated for the cognitive void caused by the division and the separated eastern part of the nation gradually disappeared from the public's conscience. In contrast, East Germans continued to uphold the notion of one common nation. Marxism, Communist brotherhood and Socialist internationalism could not provide the identity markers as envisaged by the regime. Instead, the prospect of re-unification maintained the status of a powerful source of emotional attachments. Hence, this chapter explains the establishment of ethnic external boundaries not merely out of their political, economic, or social contemporary context. Instead, it traces the historical-cultural timelines of these attitudes by analysing differences in east and west regarding the legacy of the Third Reich, the different accommodation of the fact of the division in the understanding of German ethnicity, as well as implications for post-unification Germany caused by the prevalent cultural homogeneity of the GDR and the *Bonn* Republic.

6.2. The German Democratic Republic

Distorted German Ethnicity

Despite the liberal intentions of the 1949-constitution, the official political rhetoric of the SED focused on the ideological notion of the creation of a Marxist-Leninist state. Intentions to propagate a national identity which incorporated German ethnicity and heritage were largely ignored. Nonetheless unification was still regarded as an essential political undertaking. For the SED and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the German question remained open to negotiation, albeit under the condition of preserving the established political system of the GDR (Meuschel 1992:144). The 'Stalin-note' of 1952 offered unification to the Germans under the condition of political neutrality and even guaranteed free elections on Communist territory. The political consultations however, never actually materialised, since *Bonn* regarded Stalin's move as an attempt to prevent further integration of the FRG into the west. For Ulbricht, the progressive development of the GDR would have eventually resulted in the establishment of a superior system that was highly attractive to the workers, farmers and intelligentsia of West Germany (Meuschel 1992:145). In 1954, he therefore referred to German unification as an 'incontestable inherent law' (Weber 1993:44).

However the FRG's accession to NATO, the subsequent incorporation of the GDR into the Warsaw Pact, as well as its sovereign status by 1954 drastically reduced the importance of German unification on the political agenda. By 1955, unification was finally laid to rest by Khrushchev's insistence on the maintenance of two separate German states. It now became clear that the Soviet Union would never allow its westernmost Communist bastion to depart from its hegemonial sphere of influence. Unification was only possible, if Socialist principles and Soviet influence were safeguarded (Weber 1993:45).

In the processes of the growing systemic antagonism of the Cold War, the GDR gradually emerged from the shadow of the divided nation and subsequently stressed its status as a sovereign state. Its identity and legitimacy were now represented in the doctrine of two states within one nation. The development of two antagonistic systems which were firmly rooted within their respective ideological camps was confidently acknowledged by stressing peaceful co-existence with the FRG. Consequently, Article 1 of the constitution promulgated that 'the GDR is a Socialist state of the German nation'. With the replacement of Walter Ulbricht in 1971, the self perception of the GDR took a decisive turn. Ulbricht's successor Erich Honecker manifested the notion of two separate German nations, while propagating the Socialist German nation state. At the VIII. party congress in 1971, Honecker argued that the Socialist society, the Socialist state, the Socialist personality, and the Socialist culture formed the Socialist nation (Meuschel 1992:279). From this perspective, two different German identities were the logical consequence. The revised constitution of 1974 therefore stated that 'the GDR is a Socialist state of workers and farmers', while all references to German unification were eliminated. The SED therefore emphasised the GDR's right of self-determination; not only regarding the state's sovereignty and its particular social-economic organisation, but furthermore regarding the self-determination of the Socialist nation.

This growing confidence allowed for a gradual recall of the German past. Interpreted under the Communist dialectic, German history was resumed and incorporated into the official political rhetoric. National identity, national community and national history of the GDR and its citizens and not the history of Germans (Meuschel 1992:285) stood at the centre of historical analyses. From the peasant uprising in 1525 to the war of liberation against Napoleon in 1813, from the history of the German labour movement to the proletarian resistance against Hitler, history was

reconstructed in a patriotic fashion (Meuschel 1992:68) along the progressive lines of the Communist dialectic. 1983 was declared the 'Luther year' and Honecker explicitly honoured the religious reformer as a role model. The regime also paid respect to Frederick the Great and even Bismarck (Weber 1993:96). In combining two principles, the GDR tried to implement a Communist-national conscience by emphasising its German heritage and emergence out of German history, as well as the notion of a Socialist state with the ideological concept of the establishment of a utopian Communist society.

The regime's aspiration to artificially create a new legitimacy as a German nation state was not convincingly adopted by the population. As seen in Chapter Two, notions of the GDR and the whole of Germany as one's 'fatherland' existed side by side. The same applied to emotional orientations of being German and being a GDR citizen. The overwhelming majority in 1984 was still in line with Ulbricht's dogmatism who regarded the FRG and the GDR as two separate states. East Germans however, could not follow Honecker's dictum of two separate nations. Instead, eighty per cent upheld the notion of one common people (Köhler 1992:76). The official rhetoric of a separate German ethnicity - of the capitalist West German and the Socialist East German - was far from corresponding to real attitudes amongst the people.

Anti-Fascist legitimacy

The GDR considered itself as a genuinely new German Socialist and anti-Fascist state. In line with the declaration of the Komintern in 1937, the SED defined Fascism as the terrorist dictatorship of reactionary, chauvinist and imperialist elements of the finance capital. National Socialism was merely regarded as the utmost form of Fascism. From this generalising perspective, the SED perceived

Fascism as an anti-Socialist counter-revolution which had its roots in the imperialist bourgeoisie of capitalist societies. The SED's interpretation of historical events prior to World War II addressed the destruction of the labour movement, concentration camps or the war against the USSR. Anti-Semitism, racial supremacy and the systematic extermination of Jews however, were only minor parts of the official political rhetoric and even disappeared as soon as the SED joined the East bloc campaigns against Zionism (Meuschel 1992:30).

From the beginning, anti-Fascism became an alternative form of politics and constituted a fundamental *raison d'être* for the young GDR. The failures and shortcomings of the past provided the moral and political legitimation for the new regime. Anti-Fascism offered a political and moral integrity that represented a radical departure from National Socialism. Unity of the working class, peace and cooperation with the Soviet Union, land reform, equality and the destruction of the political power and influence of finance capital represented decisive markers for the dawn of a new era, where the GDR offered those who had resisted National Socialism a spiritual home. Hence the official interpretation of anti-Fascism offered the convenient political and moral advantages of presenting the GDR and its citizens as victims of and winners over National Socialism. They were victims of a Nazi-regime that had ultimately emerged as the logical consequence of a capitalist society. They were winners out of the GDR's legitimacy as a workers' and peasants' state that overcame the exploitation of the masses and the imperialist expansion of capitalism in its quest to create the Communist society. From this understanding, the Federal Republic represented a mere restoration of a bourgeois-capitalist society. As with National Socialism, the suppression of the working class, the power of the bourgeoisie, of the land-owning class and of capital continued to represent fundamental characteristics of the *Bonn* Republic. According to the official rhetoric of the SED, the imperialist bourgeoisie maintained its grip on power in West

Germany. In sharp contrast to the GDR, a departure from the Nazi-past was absent. Hence, the SED perceived the NS regime as an exclusively West German issue and problem.

Prior to the founding of the GDR in 1949, the Soviet military administration implemented a thorough de-nazification programme in its zone of occupation. During the first two years after the capitulation of 1945, 520,000 people lost their jobs, most notably in the public sector. 16,000 former members of the NSDAP, the SS or the *Gestapo* were put on trial. 28,000 teachers who had been members of the NSDAP were gradually replaced by quickly trained personnel (Weber 1993:10,14). From a practical point of view this action allowed the Soviet authorities to fill the existing gaps with German Communists, in particular in such sectors as the police, justice, administration and education. This move considerably strengthened the political power and influence of the Soviet Union over its new satellite state. Moreover, Soviet de-nazification was the most profound amongst the four occupying forces. While the western zones increasingly re-installed former civil servants within the administrative or judicial systems, the eastern zone in comparison was given the cleanest break with the Nazi past.

In contrast to this promising point of departure, the forty-year long history of the GDR largely refrained from any historic debate about guilt and responsibility for the crimes of the Hitler-era. Issues connected to the Third Reich almost represented taboos (Schulz 1994:408). Instead, from early on there was an institutionalised - yet selective - form of historical remembrance. According to the SED paper *Neues Deutschland* the GDR had 411 memorials relating to the anti-Fascist resistance, while 217 schools and 4377 worker collectives bore the name of resistance fighters (Kleßmann 1993:198). The GDR developed a cult of anti-Fascism. It uncritically hero-worshipped the Communist resistance, while avoiding a discourse on the

historic background of Nazism, its cause and consequences. Such a handling of the past was one-dimensional and very convenient. It circumvented any personal confrontation or responsibility with German National Socialism. The silent majority that experienced and sustained the Third Reich was not forced to work out its past. As Christoph Kleßmann (1993:198) noted,

‘there was never a comprehensive biography of Hitler in the GDR - nor were the millions of his followers, not least among the workers, ever subjected to close scrutiny’.

Nor was there a historic or political analysis of Fascism or National Socialism. An interrogation into the *modus vivendi* of Hitler’s dictatorship ultimately would have resulted in the condemnation of the *Führer* principle, the one-party system, blind obedience, violence against and repression of citizens. Such underlying characteristics of the NS-regime however, bore a direct significance to the established political status quo of the totalitarian, Communist dictatorship of the GDR. The Ministry for State Security, judicial arbitrariness, the monolithic power of the SED, as well as the party’s tutelage in all economic, political and societal aspects would have made coherent parallels to the NS regime all too obvious. From this perspective it therefore came as no surprise that Fascism and National Socialism were addressed in such generalised terms.

Any critical confrontation with the Third Reich ought to have differentiated between the totalitarian, anti-democratic structures of the NS-regime and the totalitarian, anti-democratic attitudes of the people who supported Hitler and brought him to power in the first place. This vital difference however, between personal guilt and involvement and the unjust structures of the NS-regime was avoided. In line with the Communist dialectic, the capitalist system, the bourgeoisie, the capital-owning classes merely deceived and exploited the working class. The rise of and support for

National Socialism was not a problem of individual behaviour and attitudes but instead of the inherent failures and shortcomings of the general capitalist system. Hence East Germans were able to quickly move on in their daily lives. A critical and probably painful confrontation with an immoral past was suppressed by giving absolution and a collective psychological guilt-free stamp to the population.

The rather limited importance of the Nazi past to the collective perceptions was documented in a survey by the western *Institut für Demoskopie*. In December 1990, people were questioned as to whether German history possessed unique features that were particularly German and which distinguished Germany from other nations. An overwhelming majority of 67 per cent answered positively. Out of these, only four per cent mentioned the Third Reich. Only one per cent named Nazi crimes. These answers were markedly different from the western survey, where responses totalled 52 per cent for the Third Reich and 13 per cent for Nazi crimes (Noelle-Neumann 1991:203).

A further survey by the East German *Institut für Meinungsforschung* asked whether a statutory period of limitation should apply to Nazi crimes. In 1965, out of over 1000 respondents a staggering 89 per cent answered 'never', only 3.3 per cent agreed (Niemann 1993:103). In contrast, in the same year in the west, the *Institut für Demoskopie* recorded an approval of 57 per cent as opposed to 32 per cent who rejected this idea. Clearly, the absence of an official discourse on individual involvement in the Third Reich had a massive effect on East Germans. Anti-Fascism represented part of the political psyche. Since state and party continuously condemned Fascism (and thus at least implicitly the Hitler-regime), the documented public outrage about the horrors of the Nazi era did not come as a surprise. However the strikingly high numbers offered a telling insight into the psychological mechanism of the official guilt-free stamp. Since no personal working out of the past

was demanded from the authorities, the past could conveniently be repressed. In line with the official rhetoric, the individual could perceive him or herself purely as a victim to the NS regime. Victims however, often demand revenge which explained the astonishingly high numbers of respondents who did not express any mercy for Nazi collaborators.

In the Federal Republic, the more serious and more frequent debate about the past did not provide such an absolution. Despite the re-installment of civil servants in the administrative and judicial sectors, revelations or allegations about former Nazi affiliations continued to sweep through the media, affecting top-ranking officials, such as the former Minister President of *Baden Württemberg* Filbinger or even the former Federal President Carstens. In the FRG, repression of personal involvement in the Third Reich was fundamentally more complicated than in the GDR. Every now and then, a public discourse, a movie, a television documentary or a judicial trial confronted West Germans with their past. Thus, a statutory period of limitation for Nazi crimes could have offered a 'breather' in the persistent psychological battle to justify one's past.

Homogeneity of Society

The GDR committed itself to internationalism, yet it did not allow its citizens to cross its own western border. Apart from highly restricted visits to West Germany, the experiences of East Germans in getting to know foreign cultures and peoples were limited to visits to other Socialist states. Even then, tourist stays were a tiresome and complicated undertaking with time-consuming application procedures and restrictions on the amount of East German money to be spent abroad. The official ideology promulgated international friendship and understanding, while supporting emancipatory ambitions within the Third World. However the regime's

cosmopolitan rhetoric did not correspond to the attitudes of the population. Instead, a broadening of horizons and fostering of understanding was almost impossible in the 'ghetto-situation' (Kleßmann 1993:207) of East Germany. When talking to Easterners in the aftermath of unification, the former feeling of superiority over other East bloc countries, based on the - for Communist standards - GDR's respectable material wealth, economic performance and social welfare standards became quite obvious. The notions that their own economic achievements were largely passed on to the Soviet Union or used to sustain other Communist countries were widespread. The officially imposed friendship with Communist Poland never reached beyond the status of artificiality. Cognitive reconciliation along the officially declared 'peace border' was a myth. In 1973, an open-border experiment had to be terminated after a few months, since resentment grew to dangerous proportions. Suspicion and arrogance towards the 'lazy Poles, who buy up all our meat' prevailed and were highlighted by the territorial loss of Silesia after World War II.

Only one per cent of the population of the GDR was foreign (*Der Spiegel* August 31, 1992:21) mostly students and workers from various Socialist countries. As many as 90,000 employees worked in the GDR as parts of bilateral agreements (Golz 1995:7). East Germans however, maintained a profound indifference towards foreign cultures and peoples. Relationships towards fellow workers from Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique or Cuba were frosty. Foreign students were housed in special hostels and therefore tightly separated. Cultural approximation stopped short outside of factory and classroom, while foreigners in the GDR were isolated and excluded from socialisation, culminating in the widespread racist jargon of '*Fijis*' which referred to people with a differently coloured skin.

Fundamental characteristics of the Nazi-era were by no means given a clean break in the GDR. The prevalent ethnocentrism of National Socialism was able to flourish in

East Germany because of a lack of multi-cultural exposures, as well as because of the impact of a combined 55 years of totalitarian rule which suppressed open-mindedness. Since the SED regime avoided a full exploration of the genocide of the Third Reich, the ethnic jingoism of German Fascism silently continued. The regime's official rhetoric treated National Socialism as a political-economic phenomenon. Capitalism - and not racism and xenophobia - was blamed for the disastrous German past. In a frightening continuation of the ethnic chauvinism of the Third Reich, foreigners, from the Soviet soldier to the Polish worker to the Vietnamese engineer were exposed to indifference and intolerance. Multi-culturalism, the interest in and appreciation of foreign cultures was stifled by the overemphasis of 'Germanness' regarding race, customs and virtues. School curricula failed to address such issues as anti-Semitism, racism or hostility towards other nations. In short, education in tolerance was absent.

Overt racial violence was only suppressed by the totalitarian nature of the GDR with its rigid judicial and surveillance apparatus. Nonetheless, by the 1980's the first signs of Skinhead and neo-Nazi movements became visible. A hard core of some 1500 neo-Nazis was already active prior to unification. By 1988, elite cadre parties, such as the *Nationale Alternative*, the *Freiheitliche Arbeiter Partei* (Free Workers Party), the *Deutsche Alternative* or the *Nationale Front* had been organised (Merkl 1995:434). Football hooligans increasingly became a common feature. Centres of organisations were typically larger cities. Most often, alienated teenagers looked for an escape from the total control of one's professional and private life by state and party. Reasons for joining right extremist movements were predominantly apolitical and often represented a mere rebellion against 'authority'. By the late 1980's the regime answered with increasing repression (Merkl 1995:435). Although still officially denied or at least bagatellised, the police and the *Stasi* lay siege to rock concerts and meetings and issued penalties and prison sentences. However instead of

looking inwards in order to analyse the causes which prompted juveniles to turn their backs on Socialism, the regime merely attributed their actions to seduction by the deranged west.

6.3. The Federal Republic

The Legacy of the Third Reich

The collaboration with or at least the silent approval of the Nazi regime and the denial to take action against the genocidal barbarism, drastically formed the West German psyche after the demise of the dictatorship. From the outset, the *Bonn* Republic was morally handicapped by the collective guilt of its people. The FRG and its newly democratic citizens carried the burden of succeeding from a political system which trampled upon humanity and morality and which abandoned tolerance, respect and intellectual enlightenment for the cause of racial supremacy and military superiority. School curricula, literature, film and political rhetoric reflected on this consciousness and persistently had the Third Reich as an issue. Even forty years into the existence of the *Bonn* Republic, it was virtually impossible for West Germans to escape a confrontation with the past.

Nonetheless confrontation with National Socialism was marked by four distinctly different phases. In the immediate aftermath of the capitulation, the occupying powers arranged compulsory tours of concentration camps in several towns and municipalities. De-nazification programmes were implemented to screen the population of Nazi supporters and collaborators. Lectures and films represented further attempts to educate the public about the horrors caused by the Hitler regime. Most notably, in the immediate post-war years, the *Nürnberg* trials of 1945/46 dominated the political discourse.

However the controversy surrounding war crimes and anti-Semitism were undertaken in a generalising and abstract fashion (Wilenga 1994:1060). Apart from *Nürnberg*, criminal charges against Nazis were hardly put forward. The de-nazification processes turned into the cunning attempt to outwit allied authorities.

The public was placed into five categories according to their alleged involvement in the NS-regime, ranging from 'highly guilty' to 'unincriminated'. Category IV termed *Mitläufer* (follower) was the threshold for moral re-instatement and employment within the public service. Hence, de-nazification was termed the 'Persil permit' - a proverb which drew parallels to the detergent that washes everything whiter. Instead of a coherent confrontation with the past, de-nazification turned into repression. Although the collective guilt of Nazi Germany was accepted by West Germans (Wilenga 1994:1060) the mental process of acknowledging one's personal involvement in the unjust NS-regime faded against the task of proving that one complied with the new moral standards of a political system that advocated *Rechtsstaat* principles and human rights.

Moreover, in the chaotic first years after 1945, the public was pre-occupied with mere survival. Emigration, expulsion, food or housing dominated peoples' thoughts. Against these material and political insecurities, the mental and moral confrontation with the past only had secondary importance. Instead of confrontation, West Germans looked for relief; from material hardship, as well as from former moral deficiencies.

Repression was even further accentuated in the Adenauer era. West integration, economic resurgence and increased material standards pushed the past further away from the realm of relevance. The initial discourse over guilt, war crimes and de-nazification came to a gradual close. Between 1945 and 1950 some 5000 verdicts had been passed in relation to Nazi crimes. Between 1950 and 1955 the number dropped to twenty per annum (Wilenga 1994:1062). Despite growing approval for democracy and its institutions, which indicated a departure from the political values of National Socialism the 1950's were nonetheless characterised by denial. The focus was on the present: re-building devastated towns, producing the economic

miracle, or safeguarding international stability, whereas West Germans gradually got accustomed to the new principles of democracy and the social market economy. A confrontation with the past would have been only a disturbing backlash to these new affirmative processes.

A thorough confrontation with National Socialism had to wait until the 1960's. The wave of anti-authoritarianism generated by the student revolts, accompanied by growing civic confidence allowed for a critical interrogation into personal responsibilities for contributing to the moral barbarism of the Nazi regime. The personal backgrounds of the protest generation were free from guilt, participation in or approval of the NS regime which made the confrontation with the Hitler-era such a colossal burden for their parents. In addition, growing interest in politics, the participatory revolution of the 1960's, as well as a more open political discourse contributed in paving the way for an uninhibited and unbiased mental confrontation with National Socialism.

The judicial system increasingly tackled Nazi matters. Between 1961 and 1965, the number of trials related to the NS regime doubled in comparison to the period from 1951 to 1960 (Wilenga 1994:1062). Günther Grass's novel *die Blechtrommel* (the Tin Drum) , published in 1959 sparked a wide-ranging public discourse. The Eichmann trial in Jerusalem in 1961/62 drew further attention. On several occasions, the *Bundestag* extended the statutory period of limitation for murder until it was finally scrapped in 1979.

By the end of the 1980's the governments of Schmidt and Kohl had attempted a moderate return to normality. The 'moralising impulse of the 1960's' (Wilenga 1994:1064) was followed by a consciousness that confidently expressed the democratic achievements of the Federal Republic. Nonetheless, the horrors of the

Nazi era continued to form the West German psyche. Numerous public commemorations (fifty years since the rise of Hitler in 1983, forty years since the end of World War II in 1985, fifty years since the *Reichskristallnacht* in 1988) kept historical memories of the Third Reich on the political agenda. In contrast to the 1950's, denial or repression were no longer possible. Instead, the barbarism of National Socialism, the moral failures to stop genocide and other war crimes continued to form an integral part of the Federal Republic's identity.

Repressing German Ethnicity

The close mental link of 'Germanness' to Nazi Germany resulted in the almost complete absence of an affective orientation towards the nation. Even the simple intention of expressing one's pride to be German was labelled as Fascist or right-extremist. For the public, national symbols had a minor if not repressed importance. In 1961, 38 per cent could not remember to have heard the national anthem since 1945. Furthermore, in 1961, as well as in 1981, roughly one fifth did not know the first line of the anthem ('*Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit*'), while 46 per cent in 1961 and still 37 per cent in 1981 referred to '*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*' (Noelle-Neumann 1991:29,42).

West Germans developed an 'anti-German' identity. In the 1950's the country's strong drive towards integration within the west (NATO, the Common Market), as well as emerging pride in economic achievements served as new anchors for a national identity during a time when national pride was crushed due to the traumatic legacy of the Third Reich. By the 1970's these were complemented by those principles that the Nazi dictatorship denounced in such a fierce manner: democracy, humanity and morality. Such values and orientations served as 'a counterpoint to *Auschwitz*' (Le Gloannec 1994:137). These notions however, did not relate to

German ethnicity. Instead, they were cognitive principles of citizenship virtues. Since 'German' still bore the attribute of the Nazi past, the denial of 'German' could easily be accommodated into this new agenda of national identity. Paradoxically, a good West German, therefore, was the individual who denounced anything 'German'. The new patriot for humanity, morality, co-operation and democracy represented an antipode to the past, in fact an anti-German patriot. Sidelining German ethnicity, West Germans assumed a new 'patriotism for the constitution' (Sternberger 1979), deriving from the remarkable performance of the 'Basic Law' in establishing and securing democracy.

This schizophrenic attitude towards one's own country led to the description of West Germany as 'the world's most dialectical nation' (Ash 1994:75). On the one hand, the Federal Republic established itself as a stable democracy, with a high degree of harmony, inner peace, openness and civility, complemented by a firm and secure anchoring in the west. Out of the ruins of World War II a 'post-national democracy' (Ash 1994:66) emerged, with a strong constitutional consensus that had replaced traditional notions of nationalism and diverted state sovereignty upward to Europe and downward to the federal states. On the other hand however, the traumatic past of the NS regime continued to haunt West Germans, resulting in insecurity and guilt when dealing with other nations and their people.

The evident rejection of any ethnic-nationalist notions was even further accentuated by the fact of the division. As seen in Chapter Two, West Germans became accustomed to the divided nation and the acceptance of the post-war status quo was widespread. With diminishing knowledge of and interest in the other Germany, the fact of the division increasingly possessed only a subordinate position in the West German psyche. Moreover, with Europe and the west serving as new anchors, the

division was accepted almost as an irrevocable political fact and was therefore pushed even further out of the realm of relevance.

Ethno Centrism

West Germany, like most European states had traditionally been a country of net emigration. Despite being an attractive magnet for foreign populations which resulted from her economic prosperity, high wages and comprehensive social services, post-war governments therefore paid little attention to ethnic integration or arising demographic pressures (Chandler 1995:344). In sharp difference to the utter racism of National Socialism the Basic Law was characterised by a highly liberal protection from political persecution. Article 16(2) gave 'every politically persecuted person ... the right to asylum'. Article 16(1) guaranteed the right of return for ethnic Germans who after 1945 found themselves outside the now reduced German territory. The provision was later extended to include ethnic Germans under Communist rule. A rather broad interpretation of the Basic Law asked for only vague German ancestry which effectively opened the doors for hundreds of thousands of immigrants from Eastern Europe (Marshall 1992:247). Within the first ten years after the founding of the Federal Republic, some nine million refugees and expellees moved to West Germany, most notably from Silesia, East Prussia and the *Sudetenland*. Between 1950 and 1991, some 2.6 million ethnic Germans outside of pre-war German territory (mainly the Soviet Union and Romania) migrated into the Federal Republic (Fijalkowski 1993:851).

Despite the constitutional provisions, West Germany remained a largely homogenous society. *Jus sanguinis* (citizenship based on blood) made it difficult if not impossible for immigrants to gain German citizenship. To receive German citizenship was a time-consuming undertaking. Naturalisation was only possible

after a permanent residence of at least ten years. A legal claim for naturalisation was only granted after fifteen years, as long as financial security was safeguarded. 16 to 23 year-olds could apply after eight years of residence in addition to at least six years of German schooling (Golz 1995:4).

A notable exception however, was represented in the cases of the vast numbers of *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers). After the economic boom of the 1950's, a shortage of labour endangered economic prosperity. The *Gastarbeiter* of the 1960's were seen as temporary remedies. Beginning in 1955 various bilateral agreements between *Bonn* and several southern European states allowed for the recruitment of workers on limited term contracts. West Germany highly welcomed the foreign influx of workers who supplied cheap, un-unionized, and easily exploitable labour (Fulbrook 1994:226) to fill semi-skilled and unskilled positions. Italians were followed by Turks and guest workers from the former Yugoslavia. Millions of *Gastarbeiter* took up permanent residence. For the first time, West Germans were exposed to foreign cultures on a wide scale which brought with them different traditions and religious practises.

Gastarbeiter were perceived as economic solutions to the lack of manpower. The government however, failed to recognise the human aspect of this massive transformation of labour. The fact that migrants would eventually seek to establish social and family roots in their host country was not given much attention. Until the late 1980's, the established principles of the Adenauer era towards *Gastarbeiter* remained virtually unchallenged. Successive governments did not perceive the Federal Republic as a land of immigration. Politics of guest workers were politics of employment, while labour migration was regarded as a temporary phenomenon (Leenen 1995:605). By 1977 however, net immigration became a political reality but neither in rhetoric nor in policies did the authorities tackle the problem. Only

occasionally did the matter of foreign ethnicities enter the political agenda, most likely in the run-up to elections where the CDU tried to bind its right-wing political spectrum. Most often, SPD/FDP governments of the 1970's, as well as incoming CDU/FDP governments of the 1980's treated it as a non-issue.

With the oil crises and subsequent recessions of the 1970's, the former shortage of labour increasingly turned into severe unemployment problems. Incentives to persuade Italians, Portuguese, Greeks, Spaniards or Turks to return to their home countries were introduced. In 1973, the SPD/FDP coalition issued a ban on further recruitment. Nonetheless, the number of foreigners in West Germany continued to increase since many who were born or had been living in West Germany for many years decided to stay, partially out of economic reasons, but also because of the continuing social integrative processes within their new environments. Family members arrived and the second generation of guest workers was born. As a result, by the late 1980's the percentage had reached some eight per cent (see Table 6.1.).

Table 6.1. Foreigners in the Federal Republic (1961-1990)

	total number (1000)	share population (%)	Italy	Greece	Spain	Portugal	Turkey	Yugosl.	Poland
1961	686.2	1.2	28.7	6.1	6.4	0.1	1.0	2.4	-
1970	2600.6	4.3	20.3	11.7	9.2	1.8	16.5	15.8	0.7
1987	4240.5	6.9	11.8	6.0	3.0	1.6	34.3	13.2	1.8
1990	5342.5	8.4	10.3	6.0	2.5	1.6	31.7	12.4	4.5

countries: percentages of total foreigners

1990: only old Länder

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1995:67

The nature of migration changed fundamentally, while the share of asylum applicants increased considerably. In 1977, the authorities received only some

16,000 applications. Three years later, numbers had risen to 108,000. In particular, Turkish migrants came in higher numbers. Their figures rose from 7,900 in 1979 to 58,000 in 1980 (Leenen 1995:606). By 1990, Turks represented one third of all foreigners living in West Germany. With the demise of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, mass immigration of ethnic Germans reached considerable numbers. In 1990, some 400,000 arrived, mainly from the USSR, Poland and Romania (Braunthal 1995:211). As with guest workers, these ethnicities which originally had emigrated from Germany as early as the 18th century faced similar problems as *Gastarbeiter*. Few and low-skilled jobs, hostility and social isolation which were further accentuated by cultural (if not religious) backgrounds that were in marked difference to the prevalent customs of their host country.

By the 1980's, *Gastarbeiter* were no longer welcomed. In 1982, 62 per cent agreed that there were too many foreigners in the country, while a further fifty per cent argued that they should be forced to go back to their home country (Fulbrook 1994:227). Against the backdrop of persistent inequality in employment opportunities, few foreigners had been able to rise into professional or managerial positions. Some opened small enterprises, such as restaurants or grocery shops. Nonetheless foreign workers contributed considerably to West Germany's impressive GDP and economic strength (Braunthal 1995:207), but few West Germans acknowledged this achievement. Many complained about guest workers and their spouses who received equally comprehensive social benefits as West Germans, including social and unemployment insurance, or subsidised housing. Often guest workers, immigrants or refugees were confronted with a wall of social isolation, resulting in prejudice, rejection and discrimination.

Heightened economic pressure and instability looked for a safety valve. Twenty years after the moderate successes of the right wing *Nationale Demokratische Partei*

Deutschlands (NPD) between 1966 and 1968, a further right wing grouping shocked the political establishment. By the late 1980's, the *Republikaner* enjoyed increasing support. The party made asylum and foreigners its central campaign motives. Racist television adverts and a polemical political rhetoric finally woke up the established parties and firmly placed immigration and ethnocentrism on the political agenda. The *Republikaner* - founded by dissident members of the CDU/CSU - consisted largely of younger supporters: right-wing, racist, anti-democratic and disillusioned with contemporary political institutions and practises. After initial successes in 1989 (7.5 per cent in Berlin, 7.1 per cent in the elections for the European parliament) the *Republikaner* suffered a temporary electoral setback in 1990. In the *Landtag* elections in the *Saarland*, in Lower Saxony and in Northrhine-Westphalia the party failed to cross the five per cent threshold. The 1991 elections in *Bremen* (7.7 per cent together with a further extremist grouping; the DVU) and in *Schleswig-Holstein* (7.7 per cent), as well as in *Baden-Württemberg* (10.9 per cent) in 1992 however, gave ample evidence that the *Republikaner* had hit an electoral nerve. Apart from the decreasing support of the *Volksparteien* and growing numbers of non-voters, analysts reckoned there was a strong potential for political protest. The *Landtage* elections of that period demonstrated the voter's readiness to express dissatisfaction with the political establishment. Political asylum and immigration as issues of controversy functioned as focal points for heightened discontent which extremist parties such as the *Republikaner* were able to capitalise on (Leenen 1992:1042).

Despite a wave of tourism (see Chapter Five) that exposed West Germans to foreign cultures, and despite an increasing hands-on experience within their own country, multi-culturalism remained an alien concept to most West Germans. Although *Politbarometer* noted in 1988 that 25 per cent of respondents had personal contacts with foreigners through friends or acquaintances and 46 per cent stated that

foreigners lived in their neighbourhoods, the appreciation of foreign cultures hardly went beyond culinary delicatessen or tourist sights.

Table 6.2. Rejecting Attitudes Towards Guest Workers in West Germany (percentages)

Year	Adaptation	Sent Back	Political Abstinance	Endogamy
1980	66	52	51	44
1984	61	42	47	34
1988	57	36	38	33
1990	51	31	36	24
difference 1980-1990	-15	-21	-15	-20

Source: Allbus (*Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften*); in Leenen 1992: 1049.

Foreigners were tolerated but not accepted. As shown in Table 6.2., *Allbus* survey data analysed critical attitudes towards foreigners in West Germany between 1980 and 1990. Response categories included ‘*Gastarbeiter* should adapt their lifestyles to German standards’ (adaptation), ‘*Gastarbeiter* should be sent back’, ‘*Gastarbeiter* should be denied any political activity’ (political abstinance), as well as ‘*Gastarbeiter* should marry only within their ethnic group’ (endogamy).

Throughout the 1980’s, support for all four categories decreased considerably. According to age, younger respondents displayed significantly higher levels of tolerance (Kühnel and Terwey 1994:76) which was attributed to differing socialisation experiences.² Also, the participatory revolution of the 1960’s and 1970’s brought with it growing political interest and civic confidence (see Chapter Four). Younger generations in the Federal Republic were less likely to adopt nationalistic and conservative values and standards of the Third Reich or the early

² Generally speaking, elder generations are more likely to evaluate general problems in a more sceptical manner, since idealistic and over-optimistic outlooks on the future mature with age and life experience.

Adenauer era. A further correlation was documented between tolerance towards guest workers and the level of education (Kühnel and Terwey 1994:78). With more years spent at school, individuals were more likely to become exposed to such ideals as equality, justice and tolerance. Here, sociological changes in the Federal Republic fostered liberal attitudes towards guest workers. The share of West Germans with an *Abitur* (the entry qualification for university) rose from 14 per cent in 1980 to 27 per cent in 1990.

However multi-cultural attitudes developed only reluctantly. Although the racist notion of 'endogamy' dropped from 44 per cent in 1980 to 24 per cent ten years later, a majority continued to insist on the cultural adaptation of lifestyles. Attitudes in this category improved the least (together with 'political abstinence'). While in 1980, most foreigners in West Germany came largely from southern-European countries, the influx of large numbers of Turks who shared distinctly different, non-western customs and religious practises made the cultural clash of immigrants and native West Germans more obvious than the preceding contacts with Italians or Spaniards. The persistent support for 'cultural adaptation' which was prevalent in spite of the growing levels of tolerance in the remaining three categories indicated that multi-cultural experiences were welcomed only as long as they did not threaten or undermine prevalent German customs and traditions. Interestingly, from a semantic point of view, guest workers or asylum seekers are referred to as *Ausländer* (foreigners) rather than *Einwanderer* (immigrants; Chandler 1995:354) which shows an emphasis on exclusion over integration.

In addition, foreigners were occasionally victims of violent attacks. Limited outbreaks of foreign hostility first occurred during the first post-war recession of 1966/67 with the parallel success of the neo-Nazi NPD in several *Länder* parliaments. The 1970's saw some violence particularly against Turks in context

with economic slow-down and growing unemployment. Between 1983 and 1990, the number of violent legal offences (homicide, arson and explosive attacks, bodily harm, damage to property with use of heavy violence) with a right-extremist background rose from 76 to 306 (Bundesministerium des Inneren 1993:71). Still, xenophobic incidents were only 'sporadic' (Chandler 1995:351). Despite the resentment in accommodating foreign cultures and customs, the prevalent ethnocentrism in the *Bonn* Republic ought therefore not to be confused with xenophobia. Many West Germans may have disapproved of the growing number of foreigners, but nevertheless rejected the idea of racial violence. In fact, regarding foreign hostility, West Germany ranked amongst such presumably tolerant nations as Denmark or the Netherlands (von Beyme 1991:72). The *Sinus* study of 1980 determined a share of 13 per cent of the electorate with right-extremist attitudes. In European comparison, this figure was by no means exceptional (Sinus 1981). Further research revealed that right-extremism in West Germany was not much different from its counterparts in other EC-countries regarding quantity, socio-economic correlates, or concentration in political parties (Bauer and Niedermayer 1990: 15-26). Throughout western Europe, xenophobic violence emerged as a worrying phenomenon in the 1980's. West Germany made no exception to this trend, but it was also not at the forefront of a new extremist movement.

6.4. The New Länder

A Multi-Cultural Society?

Table 6.3. shows that by the end of 1993, the number of foreigners living in Germany had increased to some 6.9 million as compared to 5.9 million two years earlier. In international comparison, the ratio of foreigners of 8.5 per cent of the total population ranked well above that of France (6.3 per cent), the Netherlands (5 per cent), or Great Britain (4.3 per cent; Golz 1995:4). Only 22 per cent were citizens of EU member states. Turks by far constituted the largest foreign ethnicity, representing some thirty per cent of the overall foreign population.

Table 6.3. Foreigners in the Federal Republic (1990-1993)

	total number (1000)	share popul. (%)	Italy	Greece	Spain	Portugal	Turkey	former Yugosl.	Poland
1990	5342.5	8.4	10.3	6.0	2.5	1.6	31.7	12.4	4.5
1991	5882.2	7.3	9.5	5.7	2.3	1.6	30.3	13.2	4.6
1992	6495.8	8.0	8.6	5.3	2.1	1.5	28.6	15.7	4.4
1993	6878.1	8.5	8.2	5.1	1.9	1.5	27.9	18.0	3.8

countries: percentages of total foreigners

1990: only old Länder

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1995:67

As shown in Table 6.4., the share of foreigners varied dramatically according to regions. In 1992, 97 per cent lived in the old *Länder* and in the western part of Berlin. Western cities like Frankfurt (28 per cent), Stuttgart (23 per cent), Munich (22 per cent) or Cologne (18 per cent) accommodated significantly higher numbers of foreigners than their eastern counterparts. For instance, in Leipzig, Rostock, Dresden and Halle the percentage of foreigners was under two per cent (Golz 1995:4).

Table 6.4. Foreigners in the Federal Republic, East and West, 1993 (in 1000)

	total number	Italy	Greece	Spain	Portugal	Turkey	former Yugosl.	Poland
East(1)	212.4	1.0	2.1	0.1	0.9	3.3	16.3	1.9
West(2)	6665.8	562.0	349.9	133.1	104.7	1915.1	1222.7	258.6
total	6878.2	563.0	352.0	133.2	105.6	1918.4	1239.0	260.5

(1): excluding Berlin

(2): including Berlin

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1995:67

The considerable increase was largely caused by the dramatic transformation processes in Eastern Europe, as well as the civil war in Yugoslavia. Between 1989 and 1992, the number of applicants for asylum rose from 121,000 to 450,000. The vast numbers of asylum applications resulted in a tremendous administrative backlog. In 1992, the number had swollen to 400,000 cases. Including incoming applications, authorities were asked to process some 950,000 cases (Fijalkowski 1993:858). In addition, ethnic Germans from eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union came in increasing numbers. In 1989, 377,000 moved to Germany, followed by 397,000 in 1990 and 220,000 in both 1991 and 1992.

The demand for legislative modification became pressing. After lengthy negotiations between CDU, CSU, SPD and FDP a constitutional compromise emerged which stated that the asylum title of the German constitution may not refer to those who enter German territory from another EC or third country. Legislative organs now determined the countries where political and inhuman treatment or punishment were excluded from domestic political life. Hence, applications originating in these countries could be recognised as unfounded and immediate expulsion could be ordered. The constitutional changes took effect in July 1993. Since then, the number

of asylum applicants decreased drastically. In the first six months of 1994, the authorities registered only 62,000 cases (Golz 1995:6). In addition, the active citizen right to be elected, as well as the passive right to vote remained highly restrictive. The former only applied to the election to work committees, while the Federal Constitutional Court declared the right to vote in communal elections as unconstitutional.

Table 6.5. shows the public's response to the growing numbers of immigrants. In 1992, the overwhelming majority of both Easterners and Westerners supported restrictions on immigration regardless of the cause or the country of origin. Germans in east and west differentiated between different groups of foreigners. Ethnic Germans faced the least and non-EU citizens the most criticism which had to be interpreted as a reaction to the highly publicised wave of political refugees and asylum applicants and the subsequent heated debate over the reform of immigration laws in 1992. It showed that liberal attitudes towards foreigners did not disappear but were significantly influenced by the prospect of immigrants seeking economic and material advantages by taking up residence in Germany.

Table 6.5. Attitudes Towards Immigration, East and West, 1992 (percentages)

	Ethnic Germans		Asylum Applicants		EU-Citizens		Non EU-Citizens	
	West	East	West	East	West	East	West	East
free immigration	19	15	12	15	35	13	10	5
restricted immigration	71	74	64	67	56	63	62	59
no immigration	10	11	24	18	9	24	29	36

Source: Allbus; in Kühnel and Terwey 1994:89.

The relatively small numbers of respondents in the old *Länder* who completely rejected immigration continued the positive trend which had started in the mid-1980's with increasing tolerance towards guest workers. Between 1990 and 1992 rejecting percentages dropped from 20 to 10 for ethnic Germans, from 30 to 24 for asylum applicants, from 13 to 9 for EU citizens and from 34 to 29 for non-EU citizens (Kühnel and Terwey 1994:89).

In eastern Germany, attitudes towards immigration were not necessarily more negative. Disapproval of ethnic Germans showed similar levels between east and west, while immigration of asylum applicants faced even less criticism. Attitudes towards immigrants from EU and non-EU countries however, displayed marked differences. EU citizens were significantly more accepted in the west which represented a reflex to the fundamentally different experiences within Europe. Indeed, some fifty years of West German European integration were hardly comparable to the short period since unification in which Easterners were exposed to the concept of Europe as a spiritual home. Finally, the rejection of non-EU immigrants was more pronounced in the east. It seemed that insecurity over employment and material status further accentuated resentment against foreigners who merely entered Germany in the hope of benefiting from its high economic standards and social security.

Spreading Xenophobia

Right-wing extremism emerged as a worrying phenomenon. Racist violence by neo-nazi splinter groups was widely documented in the media. Subsequently, the *Deutsche Alternative* and the *Nationalistische Front* were banned. The *Verfassungsschutz* (Germany's intelligence agency) spoke of a right-extremist potential of 32,000 in 1990 and of 40,000 in 1991 with a peak of 41,000 in 1993.

Only in 1994 did the figure drop to 36,000. The numbers did not even include the *Republikaner* with some 20,000 members. Membership in militant right-extremist groups (in particular Skinheads) rose from 4,200 in 1991 to 6,400 a year later and consolidated with 5,400 in 1994 (Bundesministerium des Inneren 1995:77).³

As shown in Table 6.6. the number of violent legal offences with right-extremist backgrounds doubled between 1991 and 1992. With one fifth of the population, one third of such offences occurred in the new *Länder*. In international comparison, this amount of xenophobic acts did not represent an outstandingly high figure. The state of New Jersey alone regularly reported some one thousand crimes every year. In France, 722 racist incidents were recorded in 1991. In the same year, an astonishingly high 7780 racial hate crimes were committed in England and Wales (Merkl 1995:430). Nonetheless, the dramatic rise in xenophobic acts in Germany over the course of just two years was without any parallel in the country's post-war history.

Table 6.6. Violent Legal Offences with Right-Extremist Background, East and West

	1990 (*)	1991		1992	
		West	East	West	East
Homicide	2	3	1	8	7
Arson/ Explosive Attacks	47	260	123	500	222
Bodily Harm	102	251	198	418	307
damage to property with use of heavy violence	119	477	171	793	329
total	270	990	493	1719	865

(*) only old Länder

Source: Bundesministerium des Inneren 1993:70, 1992:76

³ Unfortunately, the official statistics on membership in right-extremist organisations did not differentiate between old and new *Länder*. However in 1991, the Ministry of the Interior estimated the number of Skinheads with 3,000 in the old and 1,2000 in the new *Länder* (Leenen 1992:1044).

After 1992, the potential for violence further increased. Although official statistics now only documented general anti-foreign legal offences without elaborating on violent attacks in east and west, Table 6.7. demonstrates the drastic jump from 2426 cases in 1991 to 6721 in 1993. By 1994, tension decreased significantly with a reported number of only 3491 cases (a drop of 52 per cent). Regarding offences per capita, the east stayed markedly behind western levels. With one fifth of the population, the number of cases in the east amounted to one twelfth in 1993 and one sixth in 1994.

Table 6.7. Legal Offences with Anti-Foreign Motivation, East and West

	1991 (3)	1992 (3)	1993	1994
West (1)			6181	2970
East (2)			540	521
Total	2426	6336	6721	3491

(1) including Berlin

(2) excluding Berlin

(3) no separate statistic for east and west

Source: Bundesministerium des Inneren 1995:85, 1994:101

Not only the active potential for violence, but also the passive approval of it were pronounced. According to a survey by the *Institut für Demoskopie* in late 1992, 17 per cent of eastern males below age thirty stated that they support violence (seven per cent in the west). Out of the total population, eight per cent in the east and four per cent in the west approved of violence (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 12, 1992:5). Hence, within three years after unification, xenophobia had reached a dramatic climax in Germany. According to statistics, racial violence in 1991 and 1992 was more widespread in the new *Länder*. However as the data on general anti-foreign offences indicated, xenophobia did not represent an exclusively eastern problem.

Four key events shaped the political psyche of Germany. Over five days in September 1991, rioting youth firebombed a hostel for asylum applicants in the north-saxonian town of Hoyerswerda. Several hundreds of people - mostly local residents of the area - openly declared their solidarity with the delinquents by disrupting police forces in their attempts to calm the situation. Since their safety could no longer be safeguarded, hostel residents had to be transferred to other towns. During the same week, some twenty asylum hostels came under attack elsewhere, half of them with incendiary devices and about half of them in eastern Germany (Merkl 1995:443). In August 1992, the north-eastern town of Rostock witnessed the worst outbreak of racist violence. Over six days, some one thousand young extremists attacked another hostel for asylum applicants, while a crowd of thousands of spectators - young and old - were unwilling to interfere. They watched enthusiastically and applauded every detonation of a Molotov cocktail, cheered every further attack and booed the rescuing police and fire brigade forces. The international public was frighteningly reminded of Germany in the 1930's. Shortly after that on November 25, 1992, public attention shifted to the west where three Turkish nationals were murdered in a firebombed private house in the town of Moelln near Hamburg. The attack prompted even further perplexity since the victims were neither refugees nor lived in a hostel. The same was true for the incident in the westphalian town of Solingen, where in May 1993, five Turks died in an arson attack on a family home.

Public attitudes towards foreigners were largely influenced by these four incidents. As indicated by Table 6.8. the level of acceptance towards foreigners were markedly different between east and west. In the aftermath of the riots in Rostock (August 28, 1992) more than half of respondents in eastern Germany disapproved of the many foreigners living in Germany. A year later and against the backdrop of the arson

attack in Solingen (May 29, 1993) attitudes were considerably more positive but still remained significantly behind western levels.

Table 6.8. Attitudes Towards Foreigners in Germany, East and West

Question: Many Foreigners live in Germany. Do you think this is...

	October 1992		July 1993	
	East	West	East	West
all right	39.8	60.1	56.9	70.1
not all right	59.5	34.9	42.6	26.8
do not know	0.7	5.0	0.5	3.1

Source: Politbarometer.

Moreover attitudes in the east were consistently less tolerant throughout the period between 1991 and 1993. Before the riots in Hoyerswerda (September 22, 1991) support was slightly below 40 per cent (west: slightly below 50 per cent). In the run-up to the events of Rostock support dropped from a high of 58 per cent down to 35 per cent (west: consistently around 60 per cent). Rostock actually had a re-enforcing effect on those who shared anti-foreign attitudes. Immediately after the riots, disapproval rates of foreigners increased to an all-time high of sixty per cent. Between Rostock and Moelln (November 23, 1992) support in the east recovered to over 50 per cent (west: over 70 per cent), while between Moelln and Solingen acceptance of foreigners in the east ranged between 60 and 45 per cent (west around 70 per cent).

The new legislation which came in effect in July 1993 undoubtedly had a calming effect. With fewer foreigners and in particular asylum applicants, the political controversy lost a vital edge, media presentation decreased and tension amongst the population eased. Moreover, public counter-demonstrations against racial hatred sparked a profound re-orientation. Political commentators drew parallels to the

xenophobia of the Third Reich. In particular the incidents in Moelln and Solingen functioned as moral wake-up calls. Subsequently, public initiatives and solidarity committees were founded. Candle marches were organised by unions, churches or schools and held in hundreds of towns. Between November 1992 (Moelln) and January 1993 some three million people participated in such demonstrations (Leenen 1995:623). Dismay, compassion and solidarity grew.

By 1994 political discourse, solidarity marches and public appeals showed moderate educative effects on the population. Nonetheless, as shown in Table 6.9., differences between east and west regarding foreign tolerance prevailed. 18 months after the series of shocking xenophobic attacks in Hoyerswerda, Rostock, Moelln and Solingen came to a close, only 17 per cent of the eastern respondents categorised 'more understanding for foreigners' as a very important priority. Here, the west was considerably more sensitised with 27 per cent. The difference between old and new *Länder* became more visible when looking at the top two response categories. Although in both east and west the majority regarded understanding for foreigners at least as a 'fairly important' issue, the numbers in the west (72 per cent) were considerably higher than those in the east (61 per cent).

Table 6.9. Attitudes Towards International Understanding Regarding Their Importance for Society, East and West (1994)

	more understanding for foreigners in our society (percentages)		stop further immigration of non EU-foreigners (percentages)		dual citizenship for foreigners who have been living in Germany for a long time (percentages)	
	East	West	East	West	East	West
very important	17	27	32	37	9	14
fairly important	44	45	34	30	28	30
little importance	31	24	26	23	38	32
not important	7	5	8	10	24	23

n: 1532 (east)

6013 (west)

Source: Gruner und Jahr 1995:54-58.

This moderate ethnic tolerance however, did not imply that Germany should continue to open its gates to foreign cultures. Both eastern and western respondents agreed on the importance to prevent further immigration from non-EU citizens. The margins between east and west showed only little differences. In the west, 67 per cent agreed to the top two response categories in comparison to 64 per cent in the east. Such pronounced rejection of a multi-ethnic society was further documented by the very low numbers of respondents who regarded dual citizenship for foreigners as a pressing concern. In the west, the top two categories attracted 44 per cent, while Easterners were even more reluctant with 37 per cent.

Reasons for Xenophobia:

Foreigners were not resented *per se*. The American tourist or the Japanese businessman were hardly confronted with racist rhetoric let alone violence. Television celebrities in particular from the Netherlands or Pop-stars from Italy or Greece enjoyed widespread popularity. Instead, resentment was directed against migrants and refugees from eastern Europe and the Third World. Such a selectively sceptical attitude towards foreigners was not an exclusively German phenomenon. A study on ethnocentrism in the twelve member states of the EU showed that resentment was most widespread in centres of foreign migration, such as in parts of Belgium, France or Germany. The project also revealed that public opinion was related to the speed of immigration. Thus, strong resentment was particularly prevalent in states like Italy and Greece which had recently turned from emigration into immigration countries (Fuchs et.al. 1993:238-53).

Although the number of foreigners in the east was quite limited, xenophobia nonetheless emerged as a worrying phenomenon. Some analysts even concluded that foreign hostility almost occurred without foreigners (Golz 1995:7). From an

organisational point of view, the eastern *Länder* were simply not prepared to provide accommodation for thousands of refugees and asylum applicants. After unification, the federal Minister of the Interior, Wolfgang Schäuble decided that accommodation had to follow strictly according to the population ratio between east and west. Hence, the five new *Länder* were asked to provide housing for some twenty per cent of the incoming refugees. Local councils had to provide shelter for asylum applicants against the backdrop of precarious housing markets. Occasionally sports complexes, school yards and youth centres were transformed into provisional hostels. Local councils often were unable - if not unwilling - to convince the public of the political necessity and moral obligation of such measures out of financial, attitudinal or time reasons.⁴

For East Germans, this situation represented a sharp difference from the limited experiences with foreigners under the SED-regime. Foreigners who constituted a mere one per cent of the total population were barely a social feature of life in the GDR. After unification, Schäuble's decision resulted in a significant concentration of foreigners in one area, since asylum applicants were housed together in large shelters. With the precarious housing conditions in overcrowded hostels, the sudden exposure to foreigners had a distinctly negative undertone. The first-hand experience of foreign cultures was accompanied by the sight of filth and overcrowding. For such a sudden confrontation with foreign ethnicities, most people were overstrained in accommodating notions of compassion or understanding. Clearly, the speed of immigration which happened almost overnight, as well as the density of foreigners in one area were too much to bear for many East Germans.

⁴ In Rostock, asylum hostels were heavily overcrowded which forced some applicants to camp outside or on balconies. Subsequently, allegations arose that local politicians did everything to increase public outrage in order to draw attention to the scandalous state of affairs which in their view was caused by unsuitable federal and *Länder* regulations (Leenen 1995:615).

Research also pointed towards correlation based on levels of education and security of employment (Leenen 1995:609), whereas longer and higher education foster a certain degree of tolerance towards foreigners. Additionally, those with a secure material status were less likely to feel threatened in conflicts of distribution over social services, such as housing or unemployment benefits. Higher education furthermore resulted in better job prospects and consequently in higher social and material status. Those people however, belong to a segment of society that did not necessarily share their private and professional environments with migrants. In contrast, lower classes were more affected by such cultural clashes on a daily basis. Lower professional qualification and lower income provided for direct competition for jobs and direct collision in one's living environment. The perception of an existential threat was therefore more pronounced amongst the socially and materially challenged.

Such socio-economic explanations were particularly apt in the new *Länder*. The anticipation of mass unemployment increased dramatically by mid-1991; just some weeks before the riots in Rostock. High unemployment rates (in Rostock-Lichtenhagen some 17 per cent), the loss of the former all-encompassing welfare state and the subsidy system significantly affected the material situation of large segments of society (see Chapter Three). In conflicts of distribution over scarce jobs, affordable housing or unemployment benefits, the abstract political issue of asylum application and migration turned into a concrete phenomenon of practical xenophobia. While East Germans had to struggle to come to terms with the new realities of the market economy and a competitive labour market, asylum applicants were perceived as free-riders and even economic parasites, who were instantly given accommodation and a weekly allowance. Dissolution and uncertainty over the future lead to insecurity and aggression which occasionally erupted in hatred or violence. People, marginalised out of material disadvantages projected their own inadequate

status on the foreigner, while claiming a lack of solidarity amongst fellow Germans and criticising the preferential treatment of foreigners. These crises of self-esteem caused many to adopt a racist rhetoric or even to commit xenophobic attacks. Suddenly, foreigners were utilised by both Easterners and Westerners as convenient scapegoats for the economic malaise. Against the backdrop of the raging civil war in Yugoslavia and the political upheavals in eastern Europe, such generalisations revealed weak civic virtues of compassion and tolerance, which were clearly sidelined by the prevalent material concerns over one's immediate future.

A further explanation was offered by general modernisation processes within society. Indeed, xenophobia also originated in social milieus which were not characterised by economic hardship or low levels of education. Commentators (Merkl 1995:454, Fijalkowski 1993:856) therefore referred to the crisis of the family, including the deterioration of civic values or the break-up of supportive and integrative social ties which result in general disorientation, individualisation, a feeling of social exclusion, as well as a 'sociopathic inability to feel remorse or compassion' (Merkl 1995:454) particularly amongst the young.

After unification, social relations in eastern Germany were subject to fundamental transformations. Although ideologically streamlined, mass organisations and work co-operatives provided a tight social net. The individual was integrated and taken care of; both at work and during leisure activities. After 1990, growing competition for jobs, closure of leisure facilities which formerly had belonged to co-operatives, or unemployment represented strong social ruptures. The former highly emancipatory role of women in society was subject to a radical change. After the demise of the GDR, child care facilities closed, financial support for families dropped, while women were over-proportionally affected by unemployment. Many were forced to return to the traditional role of housewives, leaving behind the former

double challenges of work and family (see Chapter Three). In short, life was off-balance in the new *Länder*. The break-down of former patterns of a regulated and organised life became threatening to those who were unable to replace them with new contents. The young generation was particularly affected by these changes. In general, people in their teens and early twenties go through affirmative processes, where values and standards develop and consolidate. On top of these, the systemic transformation of an entire society added an additional source of unpredictability and insecurity to many young East Germans.

At this point one should keep in mind that xenophobia was not exclusively prevalent amongst the young. Although 75 per cent of criminal offenders with foreigners as their victims were under age twenty and 95 per cent were male (Fijalkowski 1993:856), surveys indicated that negative attitudes towards foreigners were also common amongst elder generations. The cheering, if not enthusiastic approval of bystanders in Rostock or Hoyerswerda indicated that the criminal action against asylum hostels struck a chord not only with the young. When talking about the rioting youth, 'adults' never explicitly or unanimously distanced themselves. Although they did not excuse the action, they nonetheless failed to condemn it (Klinger 1994:150).

The young often functioned as mouthpieces for the frustration and dissatisfaction of larger segments of society. Not only juveniles had severe difficulties in adapting to the transformation processes. The new political, social and economic standards of unified Germany were also felt by those generations who experienced their formative years under the SED regime. In particular unemployment had a more devastating effect on the middle generation, since future re-employment became increasingly difficult with rising age. Being young however, furthered passionate and emotional reactions. In a generational cycle, the streamlining socialisation effects at work or as parents resulted in a more sedate, sober and responsible

approach to life. Civic values and standards consolidate out of social interactions with fellow employees and friends. The 'rebel' however, can predominately be found amongst the young. Therefore one should not conclude that anti-foreign resentment generally softened with rising age out of maturing experiences in the economic and social sphere. Quite often, the scope of resentment merely altered: from active readiness for violence to passive tolerance of it.

Within the general modernisation processes, the impact of the media, its sensationalism and exaggeration, as well as its voyeuristic tendency towards shocking news had its fair share in mobilising public attitudes on foreigners. By 1991, press and television widely reported on the dramatic increase in asylum applications. Metaphors of a 'tidal wave of free-riders' or a 'full boat which cannot carry further passengers' entered the public arena. After the arson attack in Moelln, the *Presserat* (the commission safeguarding ethical standards within the media) revealed the existence of an unofficial tariff system for posing in front of cameras with swastika or Nazi salute. In the immediate aftermath of Hoyerswerda, Rostock, Moelln and Solingen, the number of xenophobic crimes increased drastically (Leenen 1995:619). Hence, media presentation of these incidents did not only foster a public discourse and moral re-consideration. Instead, it also generated violence from segments of society who were in need of a catalyst, whereby the media offered a ready blueprint for action.

All these explanations however, were either of political-organisational, economic or sociological nature. Nonetheless political shortcomings, the 'frustration theory' (Fijalkowski 1993:855) of a hostile social environment and collapsing family structures, economic hardship or media sensationalism could not fully explain the level of aggression. The violent potential did not suddenly emerge after unification. It was already present in the GDR. Violence and hooliganism however, did not reach

the surface of public attention because of the strong repression apparatus of police and state security.

Surveillance and repression in the totalitarian system generated notions of helplessness and renunciation towards state authority and its monopoly on political power. The state and in particular the police and the *Stasi* entailed a historically negative image amongst Easterners. After unification, the potential for violence however, was given ample opportunity to erupt. Repression and surveillance, as well as the official rhetoric of internationalism and Socialist brotherhood became notions of the past. The re-organised police forces of the new *Länder* were often understaffed and lacking in experience in handling incidents of such dimensions as Rostock or Hoyerswerda. These organisational deficiencies were regarded by the rioters as a welcomed weakness of the 'enemy'. Therefore, the violent clashes with the police in Hoyerswerda and Rostock also represented moments of reckoning with the totalitarian past, where a mixture of a 'continuity of violence and a distance to the state' (Klinger 1994:151) fuelled the riots.

Despite the significant level of extremist violence, the political influence of the neo-Nazi movement remained very moderate. Only four per cent of perpetrators of right-extremist attacks were members of right-extremist organisations (Klinger 1994:157). Only ten to 15 per cent were politically right-wing motivated (Fijalkowski 1993:856). The scene was highly fragmented. Six years into German unification, neo-Nazi groups and parties had failed to function as a forum for hopes and needs of societal segments. Despite some occasional successes at *Länder* or local elections, the *Republikaner* never emerged as the sole political representative of the far right. The party found it impossible to take over its competitors, such as the *Deutsche Volkunion* (German People's Union; DVU), the *Nationale Partei Deutschlands* (National Party; NPD), or the *Freiheitliche Arbeiter Partei* (Free Workers Party;

FAP). Neo-Nazism had virtually no impact on the academic or intellectual scene. As a political programme, the resurgence of Nazi-ideology, Nazi-symbolism, or the revision of the '*Auschwitz* lie' were restricted to a highly limited number of followers. This political de-ideologisation of xenophobia was further documented by the spontaneous nature of Rostock or Hoyerswerda, where even weak traces of organised right-extremism could not be identified (Klinger 1994:152).

6.5. Conclusion

In establishing a concrete external boundary, the overwhelming majority of Germans in both east and west supported restrictions on immigration. In particular the presence of asylum applicants and non-EU citizens faced strong criticism, while most people remained sceptical towards dual citizenship. With the exception of immigrants from EU countries - an idea to which East Germans were still largely underexposed - differences between east and west were only marginal. In light of these surveys the public outcry over the four key racist incidents did not represent a demolition of such external barriers. Instead, they were statements of morality and civility which condemned violent racism. The underlying intention of preserving an ethnic integrity however, constituted a completely different matter. The attempt to maintain ethnic homogeneity was further boosted by the restrictive citizenship laws. In regard to the growing percentages of foreigners - at least in the western part of Germany - homogeneity however, was a mythical idea which did not correspond to reality.

The racist attacks on asylum hostels in Hoyerswerda and Rostock, as well as the arson attacks on family homes in Moelln and Solingen represented the highly noticed tips of an iceberg in a series of racist, anti-foreign incidents which rose sharply between 1990 and 1993. Racist violence in 1991 and 1992 was proportionally more prevalent in the east but the data on general anti-foreign offences suggested that xenophobia was not an exclusively eastern phenomenon. In addition, although only a minority was involved in xenophobic violence - predominantly young, economically and educationally challenged males - the resentment against asylum applicants, against incoming ethnic Germans and against political refugees covered the whole of Germany. Nonetheless despite equal support for restricted immigration and despite the large numbers of racist legal offences in

the west, resentment against foreigners was significantly more common in eastern Germany. Opinion polls demonstrated that fewer Easterners approved of foreigners living in Germany, while understanding for foreigners was also significantly and consistently less prevalent. Leaving racist violence and legal offences aside (since these were committed by a very small minority) the attitudes of the general public in east and west towards foreigners and consequently towards notions of tolerance and of respect for foreign cultures and customs showed considerable disparities.

A coherent national identity which incorporated German ethnicity would have been able to provide a buffer of tolerance for the influx of foreigners. A confident notion of 'Germanness' established over decades would not have seen the increasing numbers of foreigners as a threat but as a challenge and enrichment to the national identity. In fact, the cultural impact of the incoming wave of foreigners of the 1990's was very limited. Ethnic Germans from the Volga or the Danube hardly introduced their customs and traditions to the German folklore. Political refugees and asylum applicants stayed segregated in hostels and shelters until they were returned to their countries or given permission to settle in Germany. In either case, the German way of life hardly came under attack. However no political system can for a long period sustain schizophrenic policies. Both the FRG and the GDR compromised the very notion of the nation. In West Germany, ethnicity was ignored out of the shameful, genocidal legacy of the Third Reich. The general acceptance of the division further weakened the ethnic factor of the *Bonn* identity. Instead, *Wirtschaftswunder*, *soziale Marktwirtschaft*, west integration and democracy served as new principles for establishing emotional attachments amongst the population.

In the GDR, the official doctrine of the German Socialist nation did not infiltrate the hearts and souls of the population. German ethnicity was further undermined by the regime's propaganda of internationalism and Socialist brotherhood which

streamlined the peoples of the Communist bloc into an ideological fraternity without paying respect to ethnic differences. Officially promulgated international understanding, cultural tolerance and co-operation were mere hypocrisies in the eyes of most East Germans. Instead, Easterners continued to uphold the notion of one common nation and possessed a strong will for German unity (see Chapter Two). The official political culture however, left no room for such intentions. Hence the post-war experiences in East and West Germany revealed that notions of an ethnic identity were largely marginalised.

Intolerance towards foreigners was further enhanced by deficient multi-cultural experiences. Although West Germans developed a supportive civic identity to the Federal Republic (a strong constitutional consensus, citizenship virtues of participation, interest and tolerance, accompanied by affirmative experiences in the sphere of economics), the political system never demanded that this civic identity had to accommodate multi-culturalism. Multi-cultural exposure at home remained limited and selective. Governmental authorities failed to provide coherent integrationist policies in social and economic environments. Despite highly liberal constitutional provisions that provided for the generous immigration of ethnic Germans and political refugees and despite the growing influx of *Gastarbeiter*, West Germany remained a largely homogenous society. *Jus sanguinis* did not only rule German citizenship law it also ruled the attitudes of most West Germans. Unless one was of German descent, neither tax and insurance contributions, nor professional status or lengthy residence could offer comprehensive integration into society.

Through guest workers, West Germans often experienced their first exposure to foreign cultures. However appreciation of foreign cultures was limited to occasional personal contacts, a wider choice of restaurants and increasingly by the 1960's tourism. During the 1980's, the rise of the *Republikaner* highlighted West German

ethnocentrism. While the integration of the first generation of foreigners (mainly Southern Europeans from Italy, Greece, Spain and Yugoslavia) went comparatively smoothly, the growing influx of Turks prompted widespread resentment partially caused by the perceived economic threat to jobs, but also caused by marked cultural, religious - non western - characteristics. It showed that by and large, multiculturalism remained an alien concept to most West Germans.

In the GDR, severe travel restrictions and a very limited number of foreigners accounted for an even more restricted multi-cultural exposure. Ethnic chauvinism against Russians, Poles or Czechs was widespread. Foreign workers and students remained segregated and socially isolated. In a society whose regime coerced its citizens into obedience and infantilised the individual for the intellectual supremacy of state and party, notions of tolerance and respect found an inhospitable environment. As a result, the ethnic jingoism of the Third Reich was never given a clean break and was able to continue to flourish throughout the existence of the GDR.

Against these historical developments, the organisational failures of the political authorities after 1989 represented disastrous mistakes. The federal government in Bonn, as well as local and *Länder* executive bodies ignored the writing on the wall. Neo-Nazis and Skinheads had already emerged in both east and west by the 1980's and had been surveyed by police and intelligence services. Racist violence was already on the political agenda in such countries as France or Great Britain which would have given ample opportunity to further study the cause of xenophobia. Nonetheless, the distribution of asylum applicants in strict accordance to east-west population quotas displayed a profound incompetence. Not only the almost complete absence of multi-cultural experiences, but foremost the speed and extent with which asylum applicants were sheltered in the new *Länder*, provided for a logical hotbed

for racism. Neither were the political and sociological causes for xenophobia addressed, nor were the actual outbreaks of violence handled in an organisationally satisfying manner. The long overdue reform of the immigration law resulted in a rapid decrease in racist attacks. It demonstrated the potential of political action in preventing social unrest. Unfortunately, measures were implemented after Hoyerswerda and Rostock had already shocked the public in Germany and abroad.

Overt racism could also have been reduced by coherent educational policies. Although the growing numbers of *Gastarbeiter* and refugees outnumbered emigrants by 1977, the *Bonn* Republic never considered itself as a country of immigration. Guest workers were regarded as temporary economic remedies. The social challenge of integrating foreign ethnicities was simply ignored. After unification, ignorance prevailed. School curricula did not give much attention to the history and culture of ethnic minorities within Germany - a telling example of how *jus sanguinis* dominated the mind. In the media, foreigner related issues were still treated with an aura of exceptionality over matter-of-fact presentation which was hardly apt in a country, where almost one of ten residents was foreign. Temples and synagogues were still not perceived as common features of cityscapes, but as cultural oddities. Educational enlightenment was badly needed; a challenge which politicians failed to address.

Although the outlined reasons for the establishment of external boundaries were shared by Easterners and Westerners, fundamentally different experiences and historic legacies account for the markedly more rigid boundary creation by East Germans. Firstly, civic values were less developed in the east. In the old Federal Republic, there was no escape from the traumatic past of the Third Reich. *Auschwitz* and Nazi-barbarism had a profound impact on the psyche of politicians and citizens. Faced with the collective guilt of the entire society, West Germans agreed that

genocide and racial jingoism should never again originate from German soil. As a consequence, virtues of civility and morality emerged, enhanced by successful democratic experiences which stressed discourse, reason and rationality over simplification, generalisation and vulgarism. Although West Germans did not develop into utmost tolerant, multi-culture embracing cosmopolitans, forty years of democracy and increasing travel opportunities at least implemented a certain respect for foreign customs, traditions and ethnicities. West Germans did not necessarily assimilate foreign cultural standards but they tolerated them, as long as these did not fundamentally challenge the German way of life.

In the east, the totalitarian regime generated fundamentally different experiences. The GDR's *raison d'être* as an anti-Fascist state was a mere political and economic departure from National Socialism which gave East Germans the questionable moral opportunity to perceive themselves as both victims of, and ultimate winners over Fascism. Anti-Fascism in the GDR represented an uncritical worshipping of resistance fighters, while avoiding an analysis of the historical background of the Third Reich. By denying a thorough interrogation into the past which could have raised obvious parallels to the SED regime's dictatorial nature, the population was given a convenient moral guilt-free stamp. A public discourse on the moral shortcomings of the Third Reich, on genocide and ethnic jingoism was never encouraged.

In addition, the very nature of the totalitarian SED state further undermined notions of civility and morality. East Germans were never treated as responsible, mature citizens. In a society where the authority of state and party was never questioned, the relationship between ruler and ruled was strictly hierarchical. The state generated a negative, oppressive and dictatorial image amongst the population. Citizens were degraded to mere tools in the overall process of manifesting the SED's supremacy

and were never given the opportunity to freely express their will in the political, economic or social spheres. Civic values did not emerge out of affirmative experiences in a process of interdependence and trust between state and citizen, but were simply delegated from above. Socialism as interpreted by the SED provided the GDR with a moral order, with a set of values to which people were forced to adjust to. With unification, this regulatory role of state and party vanished. In contrast to the west, the acquired civic virtues of tolerance and respect were weak. They were neither fostered nor part of the moral code of the GDR. Instead, after 1989 ethnic chauvinism and cultural indifference were free to roam.

Aggressive ethnocentrism and xenophobia also had their roots in internal aspects of society. As seen in the preceding chapters, the transformation processes of unification had a dramatic impact on the new *Länder*. With the demise of the GDR, social networks which formerly provided for stability, security and emotional shelter were subject to severe pressure. Unemployment was widespread. Reduction in social services affected many. The demise of the extensive network of societal organisation fundamentally altered daily life in eastern Germany. A society which for decades emphasised communitarian principles was now forced to accept individuality and self-responsibility. The experienced economic insecurity and social imbalance were aggravated by a generalising, irresponsible and insensitive media which further spread fear and discontent and which depicted a convenient emotional safety valve: asylum seekers in hostels and non-European foreigners in general were convenient scapegoats in a world of economic struggles and social re-orientation. The painful perception of most East Germans that they were years away from harvesting the promised benefits of the transition made it all the more easy to project inferiority, anger and disappointment on foreigners. While in the west, media reports aroused anger against foreigners, they prompted mass hysteria in the east. Journalistic

sensationalism and voyeurism were treated at face value in an attempt to find answers in the complex and complicated world of unified Germany.

The young in particular violently expressed their frustration. Growing individualisation of society and the dissolution of traditional milieus of friends and family accounted for a severe lack of orientation and support. Faced with material pressure, unemployment and a general societal drive towards performance and competition, the simplistic scapegoating of foreigners who were held responsible for individual economic and social shortcomings provided a convenient solution for one's mental balance. 'Simplistic rules of violence and simplistic reasoning of cause and effect' (Leenen 1992:1045) tempted many into racial hatred. The evaluation of one's deprived material and social status resulted in overt aggression against ethnic minorities as a reflection of the growing antagonisms within society.

Ethnic exclusion in the new *Länder* emerged as a result of the continuous decline of other identities. Economically, unemployment, financial insecurity and material gaps between east and west gave Easterners a sense of inferiority. Perceptions of political colonisation by the arrogant and condescending west resulted in feelings of being second-class citizens. With these identity markers under attack, the vigorous defence of ethnicity provided an obvious solution for East Germans in their search for ego-boosting affirmative orientations. Ethnicity represented a ready repository of identity that was not directly challenged by the processes of unification. Attacking foreign elements compensated for the weak and hurt self-esteem of Easterners in an attempt to safeguard German ethnicity as one of the last remainders for one's emotional attachments. One solution would have been to rejuvenate the ethnic factor from within. But the distorted notion of German ethnicity of the SED regime and the prevalent neglect of positive prescriptions in unified Germany gave way to a morally questionable remedy: the rigid establishment of external barriers against foreigners.

Germans in general, but Easterners in particular have to come to terms with the fact that the influx of foreigners cannot solely be held responsible for the limited importance of ethnicity in public life. Despite the significant waves of immigrants, their social, economic and cultural impact was too limited to pose a severe threat to the integrity of German cultural values and traditions, language or blood. Instead, German ethnicity was undermined by an overemphasis on other identity markers. In the old Federal Republic, growing prosperity, social security, consumerism, west integration and the remarkable performance of the *Grundgesetz* served as new formative anchors for the *Bonn* Republic's consciousness. In the GDR, the SED tried to generate loyalties through the envisaged establishment of a Socialist society which would offer equal chances to all citizens, complemented by notions of Communist brotherhood and internationalism. Both civic identities however, were too weak in coping with the increasing ethnic variety of post-unification Germany. Ethnic identity markers in the FRG and GDR were largely ignored in the quest for establishing new civic identities in the aftermath of National Socialism. By 1989, German ethnicity therefore already represented an ailing patient that blamed the incoming waves of foreigners as culprits for its identity deficiencies.

Hence the problem lay within the self-perception of the nation. With the end of the systemic antagonism of the Cold War and fifty years after *Auschwitz*, the world's most dialectical nation still had to find a coherent balance, where ethnic pride was re-integrated properly into a national identity. Germany ought to establish 'prescriptions'; to fill the empty shell of German ethnicity with meaning by carefully addressing the German ethnic heritage without falling back on the ethnic chauvinism of the Third Reich.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

With this century drawing to a close, images of Berliners chiselling away pieces of the Wall, tearful people embracing each other and partying together in the streets until the early hours, 'Trabis' making their way from the wasteland of the *Potsdamer Platz* through a provisional hole in the soon to be dismantled Iron Curtain and onto the *Kurfürstendamm* represent some of the most vivid and moving memories of recent history. These days in November 1989 highlighted the end of an era that had dominated world politics for over four decades: the systemic antagonism of the Cold War with the divided German nation as one of its most prominent victims. The subsequent years witnessed formerly unimaginable transformation processes and the successful structural integration of a former Communist society into a stable democracy. However was the structural unification of the *Bonn* Republic and the GDR followed by the cognitive and emotional unification of Easterners and Westerners? Did Germans follow former Chancellor Willy Brandt's call who on November 10th stated 'what belongs together has to grow together now'? Or were Germans more likely to adhere to Peter Schneider's image of the 'Wall in the mind' (1983:119)?

Shared Boundaries

At first glance, various identity markers shared by both East and West Germans pointed towards the establishment of a common national identity. 'Affirmative economics' which were introduced by the west implied a positive orientation towards economics based on the successful experiences of the *Bonn* Republic; in particular high productivity, industrial harmony,

growth in living standards and widespread prosperity. In the initial aftermath of unification, Easterners were shocked by the run-down state of the GDR economy. Overstaffed and inefficient companies and a deficient infrastructure resulted in low productivity. Businesses closed down and unemployment spread. Gradually however, East Germans made their first positive experiences within the newly introduced market economy. For those with jobs, the financial situation improved significantly. The individual had more money to spend as a result of the generous conversion rate and advantageous wage negotiations by the trade unions which allowed for the participation in the consumer society. Hence East Germans were allowed to share this western standard.

The standard of 'active economics' also made advances in the new *Länder*. Virtues of initiative, self-reliance and responsibility which represent vital qualities of any market economy were gradually adopted by many East Germans. This cognitive transition became even more impressive when looking at the economic legacy of the GDR whose planned, centralised and outdated economy generated such attitudes as apathy, lethargy and indifference. After 1989, many Easterners were confronted with the prospect of unemployment and limited job opportunities. The significant numbers which migrated or commuted to the west to find work however, indicated an adaptive capacity to take matters in one's own hands. Whether out of personal ambition to succeed within the market economy or out of existential necessity, the formerly neglected virtues of initiative and self-reliance became widely established in the new *Länder*.

On a mass-cultural level, the arrival of the western consumer society, its choice and variety of goods was largely approved by East Germans. From early on there was a rush on consumer products, in particular those that were formerly unavailable or overpriced, such as cars, electronics or household appliances. Prior to 1989 the penetrative power of the western media

established the Federal Republic as a reference consumer culture that was in stark contrast to the parsimonious reality of the GDR. With unification East Germans did not waste any time in following in the footsteps of their western compatriots who had experienced a similar wave of consumption in the 1950's that had made up for years of material and consumer privation of the immediate post-war era. With the money surplus to participate, this embracing of the western consumer world by East Germans represented a vital buffer of support for the challenges and hardship caused by the massive transformation processes. This corrupting influence of affluence convinced many Easterners that unification indeed had worthwhile and comforting assets to offer. Hence the western standard of consumerism was overwhelmingly adopted by the east.

'Convenience and comfort' which implied modern housing, improved infrastructure, as well as western consumer outlets were highly appreciated. The arrival of these western expressions of modernity hardly met any resistance against the formerly experienced run-down state of the GDR including inhospitable housing, poor maintenance work and repressed consumer wishes. Catching-up with the western levels of comfort and convenience stood on the agenda of many East German households. Regarding leisure and in particular travel, qualitative and quantitative increases followed established western standards. This came as no surprise against the backdrop of pent-up desires during the SED regime which had effectively locked up its citizens from any non-Communist experiences and offered rather spartan leisure opportunities that stood in stark contrast to the sophisticated life-styles as shown on (western) television. Quantitative and qualitative differences between east and west nonetheless remained which were largely caused by the still evident material gaps between the old and new *Länder*. The trend towards western patterns of leisure however, was undoubtedly present.

In a similar vein, Easterners overwhelmingly adopted and even expanded western patterns of media consumption. Easterners watched more television than their western counterparts and showed no signs of hesitation in consuming the increasingly Americanised programme structures. Post-unification viewing patterns represented the continuation of media consumption during the GDR era. The 'vacuum of fun' and the politically distorted broadcast of the SED media diet was filled with western television as a normative reference of truth and entertainment. After 1989 the already conditioned consumers of the new *Länder* saw no reason in breaking with their existing habits. On the contrary, television provided a cheap and ready form of entertainment that provided a welcomed leisure activity in a time of economic instability and financial insecurity.

In the civic-political sphere, the positive reception of the arrival of an open and free society represented a vital stabiliser for the recently introduced democratic structures. Easterners welcomed highly the departure of despotism and suppression, and the arrival of free expression and justice. In addition, the large majority of the eastern vote was given to established democratic western parties. From a behavioural perspective, this indicated a promising level of integration into the Federal Republic's system of political representation. As with the *Bonn* Republic in the 1950's the introduction of democracy was fostered by traditional law-abiding and subservient standards that remained as a legacy of the SED regime. While the sound and time-tested western democratic structures provided an effective barrier against a potential return to totalitarian rule, the traditional system-conformist behaviour of the *Obrigkeitsstaat* further facilitated the introduction of democracy.

In addition, the democratic transition from the Communist dictatorship was aided by the eastern public's considerable interest in politics, as well as by satisfactory levels of electoral participation. Regarding these crucial

democratic virtues, Easterners adapted thoroughly to western standards. However such fundamental basics of democratic citizenship - participation in elections and political interest - were already promoted by the SED regime which had possessed high norms of political participation and had fostered political knowledge, albeit in an ideologically streamlined manner. Political interest was further boosted by the highly politicised climate of the immediate months before and after November 1989. Broad segments of the eastern society were involved in mass demonstrations and the political, social and economic future of eastern Germany were the central topics of much private and public conversation. The repressive and coercive nature of political participation under the SED regime resulted in a thirst for free expression in the aftermath of 1989. These highly positive democratic virtues significantly contributed to the relatively smooth and rapid introduction of western democratic structures of political representation.

Western External Boundaries

Apart from these mutually agreed standards which supported the establishment of common national identities shared by East and West Germans, a variety of exclusive barriers emerged that gave ample testimonies to the emerging 'Wall in the mind'. Territorially, Easterners had remained fixated on the Federal Republic throughout the existence of the GDR. While West Germans had largely accepted the fact of the division and found a new spiritual home within the community of western states, Easterners continued to perceive of the unification of the nation as a political goal that would offer them freedom and prosperity. While for West Germans unification came as a welcomed but not desperately pursued political opportunity, it was the fulfilment of a life-long ambition for most Easterners.

From this ambivalent point of departure, a tidal wave of dividing experiences followed. Economically, the prospect and experience of unemployment came

as a sudden shock for many East Germans. In sharp contrast to the GDR which gave the constitutional right of work to every citizen, the transition to a market economy resulted in an ever decreasing work force. Unemployment became a widespread phenomenon and by far the issue of most concern to Easterners. Socialism had hardly prepared East Germans for this abrupt transformation. Over night, work turned from a given without any particular financial or social value into one of the fundamental requisites of one's existence on which social and financial status depended upon. Unemployment turned into a decisive barrier that separated east from west. The revolutionary upheavals of 1989 left many Easterners with the belief that years of consumer privation and lower living standards in comparison to the west would finally come to an end. On the contrary however, many found themselves excluded from the material benefits which unification had promised initially. A two-tier society emerged in the new *Länder*. On the one hand those who regularly received their pay cheques which offered satisfying participation in the newly-established consumer society, as well as the pursuit of individual career ambitions; on the other hand those who were excluded from the benefits of market economics. But even for those with employment, the prosperity gap between east and west represented an issue of much dissatisfaction. Although the large majority fared better economically than in the days of the old GDR, the advances after 1990 were regarded as insufficient. Images of the rich west and the poor east persisted and were counter-productive to the establishment of common economic identities of a unified nation based on material equality.

The formerly wide ranging network of social services became subject to significant cuts. While the GDR comprehensively took care of its citizens, the West German *Sozialstaat* was tied to the country's economic competitiveness. East Germans now had to accommodate the fact that social security did not constitute an automatic given for individual demands. Hence for most Easterners, living circumstances became unstable. The incoming

western culture stressed notions of individuality, performance, flexibility and mobility. These stood in marked contrast to the slower pace of life in the GDR with the pronounced emphasis on amiable and harmonious social relations, as well as state-guaranteed material and social safety. After 1990 tough competition for limited number of jobs, the decline in rent and food subsidies or family allowances combined in a widespread feeling of insecurity. The vast demographic pressures, including the dramatic drop in marriage, divorce and birth rates, the continuous support for the idea of Socialism, as well as the declining approval of Capitalism represented telling indicators for a feeling of dissatisfaction with and confusion about the speed and extent of the economic transformation processes.

Such deep-felt ruptures to one's existence required a safety valve of aggression. The scapegoat was a conspiratorial apparatus of western managers, western politicians and foremost the *Treuhand* which were blamed for the economic malaise. East Germans hereby revealed a characteristic that represented a legacy of the SED regime. In the GDR, the individual was the passive recipient of guaranteed work and social security. Notions of self-responsibility, independence and initiative hardly stood a chance against powerful and centralised administrative apparatuses which organised virtually every aspect of life. Despite increased pressure to perform at work and to compete for jobs, economics continued to inhabit a passive and recipient undertone after unification. One super-imposed system (West German Capitalism) had replaced another (Soviet-type Socialism). The generous currency conversion, as well as highly advantageous wage and pension levels lulled Easterners into a subsidised prosperity. The individual was therefore often not forced to accept responsibility for the economic decline and to confront personal shortcomings and deficiencies. Instead, as with the old system of centralism and planning, people blamed abstract political and economic hierarchies that had caused such hardship. Notions of 'exploitative' economics, of a colonisation by the west became widespread.

Opportunistic western managers degraded the individual to a mere production tool, and enterprises to investment opportunities. Merciless Capitalism fought property battles, made jobs redundant and threatened social safety. These perceptions of western economic opportunism and superiority marked a further severe dividing line between east and west. Within such an atmosphere, East Germans felt reluctant to identify with the unified nation under western economic leadership.

The frustration, shock and anger caused by widespread unemployment, the decline of the former all-encompassing welfare state and 'exploitative' economics were further aggravated by alarming developments in the civic-political sphere. A paradoxical situation emerged. On the one hand, East Germans continued to give the large majority of their votes to western parties. On the other hand however, throughout the first four years after unification, around fifty per cent could not identify with any western political party. Easterners began to perceive unification as the political take-over by western parties and politicians. For many people, attitudes prevailed that the formidable effort of ousting a totalitarian regime merely resulted in the superimposition of another political system without any appropriate popular involvement. Indeed, with the exception of the PDS and the *Bündnis 90*, political parties which had their origins in the west took control of the eastern *Länder*. The import of western politicians and civil servants, as well as the limited impact of eastern politicians on the national political scene further nurtured emerging attitudes of a western political colonisation and gave the political transformation processes a distinctly illegitimate characteristic. For many, political choices were limited and unsatisfactory. Western parties did not represent properly eastern interests. The PDS still had the stigma of the successor party of the SED. *Bündnis 90* turned from a civic movement into a fringe party on the edge of the political agenda. As a consequence, active participation in politics, such as membership in political parties or trade unions decreased consistently. Interest in politics - although still at

respectable levels - nonetheless had dropped significantly since 1990. A growing indifference towards the political process emerged which regarded the newly-introduced mode of interest aggregation and representation as an alien western system.

Revelations on the extent of the state security system and the astonishingly high numbers of private individuals and public officials who worked for the *Stasi* left a further dividing mark between east and west. The initial pride in the successful mass revolution was gradually replaced by a widespread feeling of disgrace. The imposition of western economic, political, and social structures, the complete demolition of the entire GDR state and its particular way of life, and finally the scrutiny with which the *Stasi* past was interrogated, represented humiliating experiences for many East Germans. People were forced to justify their survival strategies of accommodating and adapting to a totalitarian regime to which many felt hardly any loyalty to.

The *Stasi* legacy divided the public psyche of the nation. Western-dominated media, western laws and the western 'Gauck-office' called for an uncompromising interrogation. West Germany's own reluctance in confronting the people's involvement in the Nazi regime should not be repeated in the east. The west ordered utmost scrutiny. Not surprisingly, against this condescending western standard, the east responded with escapism. Gradually, perceptions dominated which repressed the *Stasi* controversy and intended to draw the matter to a close. Understanding and compassion amongst West Germans for this complex and complicated issue however, were severely lacking. After all, not every citizen of the GDR was either an ardent Communist supporter or involved in spy-activities. Many were forced to collaborate out of coercion and existential necessity. The frantic and unrelenting manner with which media and public officials handled the matter pushed East Germans into an uncomfortable corner. Repression and denial were the only options for exiting this dilemma which

prevented a thorough working out of the past. Instead excluding barriers developed between western plaintiffs and eastern defendants, between those who accused and those who justified their actions.

With these developments in mind, Easterners over-emphasised the one remaining identity marker that was still shared by east and west: ethnicity. Throughout the existence of the GDR, East Germans never surrendered to the officially propagated notion of two German nations. In the Federal Republic the shameful legacy of *Auschwitz* and the gradual confrontation with the Nazi past resulted in a distinctly un-ethnic identity, while the widespread accommodation of the fact of the division further weakened any potential ethnic identity markers. However national unity and the goal of the unified nation which offered freedom and prosperity were firmly on the eastern public's mind. Indeed the desire for unification with the west was largely based on ethnicity. East Germany could very well have remained a separate state. A democratised GDR would have been possible, just like the democratised Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia emerged out of the ashes of Communism. However the common German ethnic identity tipped the balance in favour of unification within a single German state.

While Communism had stressed internationalism and Socialist brotherhood, unification brought a political system which - although not expressively encouraged - but nonetheless allowed the identification with ethnic elements. With the continuous decline of other identity markers, ethnicity for East Germans represented one of the last remaining bastions to generate self-esteem. Xenophobia and ethnic-chauvinism offered the ready compensation for widespread feelings of frustration and inferiority. Although the desire to preserve the German ethnic homogeneity was also undoubtedly present in the old *Länder*, the higher degrees of racist violence and general resentment against foreigners in the east pointed towards the functionalisation of ethnic-chauvinism and xenophobia as pressure valves. Condescending attitudes

towards foreigners, foreign cultures and customs offered a considerable boost to one's badly-hurt self-esteem in a time of severe pressures to one's existence.

Eastern External Boundaries

Against these dividing barriers, East Germans soon began to establish their own excluding boundaries which marked their identities off from that of western Germany. These new boundaries overcame the strong sense of inferiority and instilled desperately needed pride. As the widely noticed marker of this new found self-esteem, the PDS enjoyed spectacular success. Votes for, as well as party identification with the neo-Communists increased continuously. As the advocate of the east, the party represented the catalyst for the eastern defiant protest vote against the political and economic colonisation by the west. The PDS was able to instil a sense of community and emerged as a regional identity party that attracted support not necessarily for its programmes and ideas but moreover for its defiance against the political - western - establishment.

The PDS was also able to benefit from an increasing nostalgic and selective reference to the GDR. As the successor party to the SED, East Germans related the party to a past (the so-called '*Friedenszeiten*'; time of peace) that offered more stability, more security and more harmony; when life was not subject to such sudden and colossal changes. While in the first year after unification, the political and economic rhetoric of the elites and the media denounced practically all economic, political and cultural developments that had ever emerged from the east as unworthy, the reversal trend became more and more evident by 1992. Now, Easterners put the past into a selective perspective. Although hardly any East German wanted a return to totalitarian rule, certain routines and life-styles of the GDR era were now fondly treasured. '*Trabis*' were restored and driven with pride. GDR consumer

products such as 'Rotkäppchen' or 'F6' enjoyed an astonishing resurgence. Saluting the past represented miniature plebiscites against the speed and extent of the general transformation processes. They expressed one's defiance against the western take-over, as well pride in one's achievements and personal history. The transition with its sudden changes implicitly expected East Germans to start a new existence and to accommodate to new values, standards and demands. Nostalgia however, proudly stated that life did not simply start in 1990 but had its worthwhile and memorable assets before the time when the Wall came down. Here was the confident resistance against the streamlining processes of unification that had initially threatened to suffocate any particularly eastern cultural, political, social and economic expressions. Nostalgia was the proud establishment of an external boundary which no Westerner was able to cross. It was an exclusively eastern standard which formed a distinct 'Us-against-them' attitude in the entire region of the new *Länder*.

The dramatic responses of East Germans to the transformation processes, including growing indifference to the political process, the attempts to preserve ethnic homogeneity, the rising popularity of the neo-Communists, the consumer preference of eastern products pointed towards the conclusion that people reacted out of self-defence. The speed and extent of the transition, the imposition of new standards and the subsequent adaptation to them did not allow any time for reflection. In 1989 East Germans possessed clearly defined aspirations: civic liberties, freedom and material prosperity. After unification, a confused storage of Communist experiences, new demands and expectations emerged. The past had just been invalidated by the nature of the transition which despised all former hierarchies, structures and emotional anchors to one's past existence. With one sweep, unification sought to erase eastern identities and streamline them into common all-German identities of western origin. This however, was not an acceptable option for most East Germans. Confused standards of a fondly remembered past (which also held

traumatic experiences of repression and curtailed liberties) and a complicated and demanding present full of abrupt cognitive changes left the individual struggling to find his or her place within the radically changed environment.

The Future of German Identity

The acceptance by East Germans of numerous western standards offered plentiful evidence for the emergence of common national identities. 'Affirmative' and 'active economics', the establishment of the western consumer society, media consumption, leisure and travel patterns, the approval of the arrival of a free and open society, as well as the basic civic virtues of participation and political interest had all reached comparable levels in east and west.

Nonetheless, unification never constituted a project for both east and west. The transformation processes were implemented with hardly any public involvement. Westerners had no choice but to accept the incorporation of the eastern *Länder* into the Federal Republic. Tax burdens, solidarity tokens and a spreading economic recession gave the euphoric days of 1989 a sour aftertaste. In the east, the cognitive discrepancy between the active mass involvement of 1989, as well as the confident constitutional proposals of the 'Round Table' discussions on the one hand, and the economic and political super-imposition of western structures on the other could not have been more drastic. Many Easterners felt betrayed twice. First by the totalitarian lie of 'real-existing Socialism' and now by the hasty promises of 'blossoming landscapes'. In the end the imposed unity, its speed and extent represented a burden which often threatened to undermine the public's psychological balance in both east and west. Sharing and growing together turned out to be more complicated than the preceding decades of co-existence. Inner unity often was a mere utopia. The establishment of which was hampered by a yoke of scepticism and intolerance.

Numerous excluding boundaries whether of eastern or western origin severely disturbed communication and reconciliation between the two German societies and continued to drive Germans apart. Instead of focusing on common grounds, Easterners and Westerners built new loyalties around excluding standards and only very reluctantly attempted to integrate the compatriots across the former demarcation line into one's identity. Instead, the development of post-unification national identities in east and west often represented the psychological exclusion of the other German part which potentially bears grave consequences.

Although living standards and wage levels continued to approximate and although the generous conversion rate and advantageous wage negotiations allowed for an immediate participation in the consumer society, the persistence of widespread unemployment imposes a considerable threat to the country's political stability. Although so far no major civil unrest had been reported, this does not guarantee that there will not be any in the near future. Employment not only offers the financial means to participate in the consumer society but foremost affects one's self-respect and self-esteem. Political and economic authorities have to realise that the western levels of prosperity and consumption were one of the decisive *raison d'être* of the revolution. To reach the 'promised land' of the west gave the *Wende* a different direction and called for the unification with the Federal Republic. These fundamental motivations ultimately have to be met by the unified Germany. Otherwise, perceptions of a two-class society, of Westerners exploiting Easterners will continue to haunt inner unity.

Social safety and security go hand in hand with employment. With a secured job, stability and predictability could again re-emerge as patterns of life for East Germans. The dramatic demographic pressures in the east not only showed a remarkable adaptability to the sudden and abrupt changes that

affected one's existence but also indicated a widespread feeling of insecurity of what the future might bring. To develop affirmative loyalties to unified Germany, people at least have to be given the prospect of re-establishing a sound balance in their lives.

When looking at empirical evidences, the Easterners' inferior perception of a political take-over by the west was certainly justified. The feeling of misrepresentation and prevailing attitudes of the illegitimate nature of the transformation processes have to be addressed to avoid further disintegration which could possibly lead to separation. Although inexperience and involvement with the SED regime represented a severe obstacle in the recruitment of East Germans to public appointments, political parties, public administration and private enterprises are well-advised to deliberately employ Easterners in particular in senior posts that carry responsibility and publicity. East and west have to realise that they share a common political destiny. In this respect, sharing a nations' destiny implies sharing responsibility. As a vital step in this direction, the impact of Easterners on the national public agenda - within the media, within political parties, within political and economic decision making processes has to be increased. Only then can East Germans come to the conclusion that they are contributing to the processes of shaping the nation's future.

Such developments would undermine the most important reason for voting for the neo-Communists. The PDS so far did not challenge the democratic political structures of the Federal Republic and it remains unlikely that the party will do so in the future. Instead the PDS represented a lively contribution to the existing party landscape as an alternative on the political left, as well as a vital agent of political representation in the new *Länder*. Nonetheless, the party constituted a reservoir for the anti-western protest vote. The continuous support for the neo-Communists in the east and their almost complete lack of status in the west symbolised the split between the

eastern and western psyche. For East Germans, the PDS formed a vital excluding identity marker which raised the eastern public's self-esteem as a defiant, special and different community. The need to define the party and its voters on difference and exclusion resulted from the eastern impression of a second-class and colonised eastern citizenry. The above described integration processes however, would significantly soften the motivation to vote for the PDS.

The legacy of the *Stasi* added further bricks to the 'Wall in the mind'. In rhetoric, the entire eastern society was put on trial over the alleged collaboration with the totalitarian SED regime. Western accusations were complemented by eastern suspicions as to whether one's friend or even family member had been a spy. In the east, repression and denial emerged which intended to close an unpleasant and tormenting chapter in one's personal history. Nonetheless, only a full address of the *Stasi*-practicalities, of personal involvement and guilt is able to overcome denial and repression. This however, should be undertaken without the condescending arrogance that divided the nation into western prosecutors and eastern criminals. The discourse should also include references to West Germany's failures in properly addressing the Third Reich in the immediate post-war era. *Stasi* informants might be the most recent immoral villains, but this collaboration with an unjust regime was certainly not unique to German history. From this perspective, Westerners have no right to judge Easterners on their moral deficiencies.

Despite the presence of the basic civic standards of participation and political interest, Easterners showed considerable deficiencies in the civic-political sphere. All too often the blame for economic or political shortcomings was simply directed against abstract elites; predominantly from the west. This tendency to look for scapegoats survived as a legacy of the GDR era. Communism and totalitarianism did not prepare the individual for

competition in a democratic, pluralistic and market-oriented environment. People longed for the former guardianship of the state that had organised their lives. The urge and necessity to make decisions and to accept responsibility for them however, was perceived by many as a great burden. Not surprisingly, the six year crash-course in citizenship left much to be desired. People found it difficult to re-define their relationship to the state when they consistently used to be against it. This 'deficit of trust' (Stern 1993:124) born out of repression and curtailed liberties during the GDR era represents a severe danger to democracy.

East Germans have to internalise citizenship virtues of democratic rights and democratic responsibilities. The structures of political parties, interest groups, or federal and *Länder* parliaments had been recognised and used as agents of individual demands. Nonetheless democratic stability in the new *Länder* relied on the implementation of sound political western structures and satisfactory levels of material prosperity. These have yet to be complemented by affirmative orientations. Democracy in the east needs to be filled with meaning. People obeyed democratic rules as organising principles of society. However East Germans have to internalise that democracy not only offers such givens as freedom and justice but furthermore offers opportunities to participate and to influence. As seen in West Germany, fostering civic virtues demands time. In the *Bonn* Republic it took some twenty years for a confident citizenry to emerge that expressed and pursued democratic rights and civic opportunities. This however, should not prevent the agents of political education, such as political parties, the media or schools from placing deliberate efforts on overcoming the existing gap in citizenship virtues.

Such affirmative and confident developments in the economic and civic spheres have the potential to encounter the resurgence of ethnic-chauvinism and xenophobia in the new *Länder*. The over-emphasis on ethnicity would

lose its ultimate edge as the last bastion of self-esteem since other identity markers are able to compensate for it. Nonetheless the establishment of such standards as multi-culturalism and ethnic tolerance was complicated by confused ethnic standards in the old GDR. The official political culture propagated internationalism and Socialist brotherhood, yet ethnic chauvinism against Poles or Czechs was widespread and strict travel restrictions hindered the appreciation of foreign cultures and customs. Additionally, the ethnic homogeneity and the political climate of the GDR did not foster tolerance or respect, while the SED never properly addressed the genocide and moral barbarism of the Third Reich. Civic values of tolerance and respect did not develop naturally but instead were delegated from above with the state as the regulator of moral codes. With unification, this watchdog function of the state disappeared and ethnic chauvinism was given the opportunity to freely develop. In the west, tolerance and civility were more advanced. Yet the xenophobic violence between 1991 and 1993 was not an exclusively eastern phenomenon. The political system of the *Bonn* Republic was never forced to accommodate multi-culturalism. Despite granting political asylum and immigration to ethnic Germans, and despite incoming guest workers, West Germany remained a largely homogenous society.

Half a century after *Auschwitz*, ethnic identities are likely to appear more pronounced in the German public psyche. In the west, the third post-war generation does not so readily accept the collective shame and responsibility as their parents had done. In the east, the demise of the Communist bloc gives ethnic identities the chance to re-emerge after decades of officially propagated Socialist internationalism. The united Germany therefore faces the challenge of giving emerging ethnic identities a positive direction. Both West and East Germans still have to develop a proper balance in their ethnic identities; one which is proudly aware of the culture, customs and traditions of the German nation combined with tolerance for and appreciation of cultural difference and diversity.

Nostalgia and the sentimental longing for a secure past provided an emotional anchor of orientation for many East Germans. Values and standards which were generated by forty years of Socialism and totalitarianism could not easily be left behind or replaced by orientations to the unified nation. Subsequently, Easterners started to place their past into a selective perspective. This longing for safety, stability and familiarity indicated a fear of failing within the new societal, economic and political systems. Nobody wanted the GDR back, but also nobody wanted it to be taken away from them. This virtual GDR-reality imposed a significant threat to inner unification. Germany's democratic stability could be in danger when people selectively and affectionately remember the totalitarian past and disproportional criticise the present.

Germany therefore ought to establish an environment that gives eastern identities enough room to flourish. In the first years after unification, Easterners were streamlined into second-class Westerners. But with only six years of adapting to a vastly different form of life, East Germans still possess emotional attachments and loyalties that are linked to the GDR past. After 1989 the transformation processes heavily condemned all former experiences and formative orientations. However identities are not only embedded in the present but also in the past. The specific form of life under the SED regime will for some time feature as an identity marker in particular for those who found it difficult to succeed under the new political, economic and societal rules. It therefore remains crucial to allow for the continued existence of a particular East German identity that gives reference to past experiences and orientations. Only then can alienating attitudes to the unified nation be avoided. Dual identities based on the vastly different eastern experiences under totalitarian rule should develop alongside supportive orientations to the unified nation. The GDR era has to be integrated into the public psyche of both east and west. Education authorities, the media and the general public

discourse ought to give marked attention to East German life prior to 1989 - not the current selective nostalgic expression but instead the conscious address of all positive and negative aspects of it. Germans in east and west now share a common political destiny but as yet they do not share a common mental base on which to build the future on. Furthering knowledge of, as well as fostering interest in the respective other German part however, could mark a vital step towards inner unity.

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