

**Post-Unification Dissatisfaction**

**Or: Why Are So Many East Germans Unhappy with the New Political System?**

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by

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## I Introduction

Among the people of former communist countries, the East Germans appear extremely privileged. Through its unification with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) the implementation of a pluralist democratic system and the market economy was smooth and safeguarded in many ways. First, East Germany benefits from the FRG's well-proven institutional system that immediately took effect during the second half of 1990. The citizens of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) did not have to create a complete system of legal institutions, administrative agencies and representational bodies of their own. The framework of market economy, the organisations of territorial administration and local self-government, civil and commercial law, penal and public law, the social security system, antitrust and collective bargaining law, as well as the instruments of labor administration and industrial policy--none of these had to be invented in East Germany. Second, one need only recall the extraordinary advantage of large financial transfers without any obligation of repayment. Annual net transfers in the order of 160 billion *marks* have effected a rapid improvement of the public infrastructure, as do they back up the social insurance system. Thanks to massive financial aid, the impact of the transition crisis that burdens peoples of all other post-socialist countries is significantly reduced in East Germany. Third, being subjected to the political system--and the political elite--of West Germany, East Germany's process of transition is obviously the least likely to be endangered by the uncertainties and exigencies of a premature party and governance system, inconsistent concepts of reform, the bundle of socialist legacies of values and habits, or insufficient financial resources.

As the only case of an externally driven--externally directed as well as sponsored--transformation, it spared its participants, the citizens of the former GDR, most of the problems faced by the populations in other reforming countries. Whereas in fact the FRG government "transformed" the GDR, it followed a constitutional mandate to ensure "the equality of living conditions in the federation" (Article 106 (3) 2, Basic Law). This clause is widely considered not only a binding definition of the goal of transformation, but also the determinant of the ways and means of achieving it. Thus, the transition of the GDR to democracy and a market economy seems an anomaly among post-socialist countries with respect to two fundamentally positive features: on the one hand, the realisation of a strong national impulse--as demonstrated by both the East Germans shouting "We are one people" and the West German taxpayers' acceptance of the financial consequences--and, on the other, because of being relieved from the otherwise inevitable blood-sweat-and-tears strategy as is being experienced by the majority of citizens in East Central European (ECE) countries who lack the advantages of a "ready-made state"<sup>1</sup>.

However, after only two years of transformation, the optimistic view of East Germany became utterly untenable. The less favourable conditions and outcomes consisted, above all, in the sudden collapse of the East German economy after it suffered from an „exposure shock"<sup>2</sup> with a fall in domestic production from 1989 to the end of 1991 by about 40%; a loss of 37% of all jobs until 1993;<sup>3</sup> a disadvantaged status as an investment site due to the high wage level and the low level of labor productivity; and, last but not least, a considerable degree of popular frustration and dissatisfaction to be attributed to a package of drawbacks such as mass unemployment, the devaluation of skills, the transfer of property rights to Westerners, and the voluminous personnel turnover in upper and middle echelons of all decision-making bodies. Thus, the GDR's special status did not translate into only favourable conditions. The unification option entailed specific risks as well, in

particular the risk that politicians would greatly overestimate their capacity to shape and mold an entire society, while underestimating the problems of a post-socialist transformation. In fact, as an intriguing outcome, the most “comfortable” way of departure from socialism appears to have triggered serious dissatisfaction.

The discrepancy between institutional guarantees and massive financial aid on the one hand, and articulate popular dissatisfaction on the other, demands a consistent and theoretically sound explanation. In fact, there is a bundle of explanations offered in political debate and by the (German) social sciences. Thus, the aim of this paper is not to advance just another explanatory approach. Instead, an attempt will be made to place the matter in question in a comparative perspective in order to single out the most plausible explanations and then hint at causal factors that must be included in a proper explanation of post-unification dissatisfaction (PUD). In the following section (II), macroeconomic and survey data are presented that demonstrate the presence of both massive comparative advantages and strong feelings of dissatisfaction in the early years of East Germany’s transformation. Subsequently, the most common explanation of the East German dissatisfaction paradox, i.e. the thesis of unexpected economic burdens, will be discussed (section III). Thereafter, four non-economic explanations will be considered: the common knowledge related “rising expectation” thesis, the “treatment-response” hypothesis advanced in political debate, and the “socialist legacy” approach as known from scholarly work about the political culture of post-socialist societies. As to the latter approach, complementary explanations are found in unique features of East Germany as a transitory society: on the one hand, the presence of the Bonn government as an addressee for complaints and demands, and GDR’s history as an articulate socialist welfare state, on the other (section IV).

## **II Post-Unification Dissatisfaction as a “Political” Phenomenon**

In this section, evidence will be provided of the privileged position of the former GDR relative to economic conditions (1), of serious dissatisfaction with the institutional and in particular the political system (2), and of the exceptional degree to which the PDS, the East German post-communist party, shortly after the collapse of socialism has been revived with an orthodox „anti-capitalist“ profile that fits certain motives and topics of post-unification dissatisfaction (3).

(1) With regard to its economic performance, East Germany already ranked high among the CMEA (COMECON) states before 1989. As by far the most successful centrally planned economy that withstood all attempts to introduce market elements into its economic system, the East German economy was rightly labeled “socialism’s economic workhorse”.<sup>4</sup> From this perspective, one is not surprised to see East Germany again leading the list of GDP per capita after the demise of socialism. Even after the adjustment of purchasing ratios, Germany’s GDP per capita is more than twice as high as that of the Czech Republic.<sup>5</sup> However, there is still a marked discrepancy between East and West Germany in terms of economic performance as well as incomes earned. Therefore, it appears appropriate to use measures that single out the particular conditions of the eastern part. This is the case with the average income of East German households which, even after adjustment to rising price levels, appears to have grown faster than the West German per capita household income (see figure 1). Although there still exists a notable gap between eastern and western levels (the latter being the point of reference for Eastern aspirations), a

majority of East Germans, when asked in a 1993 survey, reported being able to make ends meet with earnings from their regular job.<sup>6</sup> This marks an important difference to citizens in other post-socialist countries, where a large share of the population is unable to do so and, therefore, reports disproportionately frequent activities in the “second economy”. As a consequence of the enormous appreciation of the East-German *mark* and the continuous rise in wages, salaries and pensions according to Western standards after their readjustment to a one-to-one relation, East Germans were able to participate, to a substantial degree, in West German styles of living and consumption.

#### ABOUT HERE: Figure 1

Although the promise made early on by the government that the gap remaining between income levels in East and West Germany would disappear within less than a decade (or even within five years) seems increasingly unrealistic, the citizens of the former GDR appear comparatively privileged by the terms of “transformation through unification”. This fact accounts for the one side of the paradox caused by the GDR’s sudden incorporation into West Germany: what appears to have been the fastest decline in economic performance in East-Central Europe was accompanied by the fastest and closest approximation to West European income levels (including the transfer incomes of social security systems). Accordingly, survey data presented by Richard Rose and Edward C. Page shows that East Germans overwhelmingly (60% of respondents) prefer the present economic system over its communist predecessor (32%), while West Germans’ positive assessment of the present economy (62%) significantly lags behind their endorsement of it in pre-unification times (89%).<sup>7</sup> Beyond a doubt, a majority of East Germans recognized an enormous improvement in economic opportunities and rewards.

(2) Unexpectedly, East Germans’ positive judgement of the economic transition does not extend to a similar opinion about the outcome of political change. Indicators of political dissatisfaction that make up for the other side of the paradox are manifold but less obvious. Although it was only in the sphere of legal institutions, i.e. law and politics, that the institutional transfer was completed relatively quickly, the incomplete changes that occurred in the economic sphere received more positive ratings. Though ratings of both the former and the present political system are showing a rise in satisfaction, data from several surveys indicate that satisfaction with the political system is significantly below the level of endorsement of the new economic system. Whereas the assessment of the economic system rose from -1.5 on a ±10-point scale for the old regime to +1.8 for the present (1993) regime, the analogous judgement of the political regimes remained in the negative range improving only from -1.4 to -0.1 points.<sup>8</sup>

Dissatisfaction with the parliamentary system, in particular, is revealed in the responses to two questions as to the probability of a suspension of parliament, on the one hand, and the approval of a suspension of parliament, on the other.<sup>9</sup> While only a 12% minority of East Germans consider a suspension of parliament probable, nonetheless about twice as many (exactly 21%) would approve of it. By doing so, East Germans detach themselves not only from West Germans (with 13% approval of parliament suspension) but from respondents in Croatia (6%), Slovenia (11%), and the Slovak Republic (19%) as well. The fact that fewer East Germans than citizens of other post-socialist countries welcome the new political system is also demonstrated in another comparison of system assessments. While East Germans favour the outcome of political change with a percentage difference of 28%

compared to the former system, Czechs (with a 55% difference) and Poles (31%) are markedly more enthusiastic about the political system change.<sup>10</sup>

Surveys carried out two years later indicate that dissatisfaction with the institutional system was not on the decline. In fact, it appears to have grown. The questions asked refer to the overall result of unification, the “entire system”, and the gains and losses from unification in particular. An opinion poll carried out by *Infratest Burke* at the end of 1995 commissioned by the newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* shows that East Germans express increasing frustration with “the system of the Federal Republic”. Whereas in 1990, a slight majority of East Germans (51%) endorsed “the system” as a whole, in 1995 positive judgments dropped to 33% (compared to 86 % of West Germans). At the same time, the share of those East Germans that held “the former system of the GDR” to be better than the present set of institutions had doubled from 11% to 22%.<sup>11</sup>

Further support of these findings is furnished by another 1995 survey undertaken by a group of researchers from the *Social Science Research Centre of Berlin-Brandenburg*, a private institute comprised of East German social scientists previously employed by the former GDR Academy of Sciences.<sup>12</sup> Asked whether they would envisage “more gains than losses” or “more losses than gains” as a consequence of five years of unification, 44% of the respondents reported positive feelings. While 41% saw no significant change, no more than 16% perceived “more losses than gains”. However, judgments relative to single areas of interest yield a less favourable picture. Relative to the field of “politics”, only 14% declare themselves to be “winners”, while 16% perceive themselves as “losers” of unification (see figure 2). Immense losses are perceived in the work sphere (32%), with regard to public administration (34%), and quite unanimously in social security and personal safety (61% and 66% respectively). In politics, where indisputably a “costless” enhancement of opportunities for political expression and participation is to be experienced over the course of unification, dissatisfaction rose considerably throughout the process of institutional consolidation.<sup>13</sup> This unexpected outcome of unification is also demonstrated by the voter turnout for the post-communist party PDS.

#### ABOUT HERE: Figure 2

(3) In the first free national elections held in the GDR, the reformed *Socialist Unity Party* (SED) renamed the *Party of Democratic Socialism* (PDS) won only 16.4% of the votes. The outcomes in subsequent elections in the newly formed East German states (*Länder*) were even worse (see figure 3).<sup>14</sup> However, already in 1993, the PDS recovered in the local elections held in the *Land* of Brandenburg by winning 21.2% of the votes. This result turned out to be only slightly above the average of the outcomes achieved in 1994 in several elections at local and state (*Länder*) levels. There is only one state, Saxony, where the PDS made a poor showing, receiving only 11.6% of the votes. The results of all other 1994 elections clustered around the 20% mark. Though the consolidation accomplished after 1990 is obvious when one looks at the results in the 1994 elections for the European parliament and the national parliament (*Bundestag*), the results in local elections in East Berlin is even more impressive. After a fall in voter share from 30 to 23.6% in 1990, already in 1992 the PDS recaptured 30% peaking with 36.3% in October 1995.

#### ABOUT HERE: Fig. 3

Scholars of voting behavior and political analysts as well agree that the PDS did not achieve its consolidated position in the German party system through efficacy in policy

formation or its prospects as a coalition partner. The political goals as represented in platforms and public debates seem to be an imbalanced mixture of defensive policies demanding for East Germans a more effective shelter from the impact of the market economy, on the one hand, and allusions to socialist principles and institutions, on the other. Whether the more realistic positions on policy being debated to date among PDS members of local and *Länder* parliaments are indications of a thorough learning process the entire party has undergone still appears unclear. A plausible suggestion is that a definite departure from the pro-socialist (and truly academic) ideology is conditional on increased opportunities to participate in *Länder* governments.

Setting aside the party game with its major consequence being that East German post-communists face many more difficulties in gaining office than anywhere else, we see the PDS faring extremely well, even from a comparative perspective. Table 1 contrasts the voter turnout of the PDS with the share of votes attained by post-communist parties in six countries after 1989. The 20% level at which the PDS succeeded in consolidating its competitive position was surpassed only by post-communists in Hungary and Poland. For a proper understanding of this fact, one has to keep in mind that in both countries the former communist elite had undergone serious changes long before the East German SED had lost its power over GDR citizens. The *Polish United Workers Party* turned into the *Social Democracy of the Polish Republic* after it resigned from autocratic rule in a prolonged period of bargaining with *Solidarity*. In the process of the “bargained revolution”, the Polish communists changed their profile nearly as completely as the *Hungarian Socialist Workers Party*. The latter had dissolved itself as early as October 1989 and was refounded as the presently ruling *Hungarian Socialist Party*, after its (then) minister of foreign affairs (now prime minister) *Gyula Horn* had personally engaged in smashing the Hungarian part of the Iron Border with Western Europe (consciously allowing several hundred thousands of East Germans to escape).

Table 1: The “Return” of Post-communist Parties

	Post-communist Parties in National Elections) (% of votes)			
	1990	1991/92	1993/94	1996/97
<i>East Germany</i>	16.4	11.1	19.8	
Croatia	33.8	5.4	8.9	
Czech Republic	13.2	14.0		10.3
Hungary	10.9		33.0	
Poland		12.0	20.4	26.8
Slovak Republic	13.3	14.7	10.4	
Slovenia	17.3	13.6		9.0

Source: Attila Ágh, *The Emergence of the Multiparty System in East Central Europe. The Partial Consolidation of the New Political Structure*, (Berlin: Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, Arbeitsgruppe Transformationsprozesse, Arbeitspapiere AG TRAP 96/2, 1996), and data collected by the author.

Whereas the Polish and the Hungarian parties underwent severe changes relative to their personnel, in terms of the political ideas represented, and, above all, their attachment to the values of democracy and economic freedom, the PDS appears comparatively conservative in a pro-communist sense. Its role in the revolutionary “turn” (*Wende*) of the GDR was not only restricted to the defensive goal of limiting the impact of the West German constitutional order. It had in fact to change its clothes several times between 1989 and

1991. Originally a determined opponent of pluralist democracy and minority rights, the SED/PDS at the end of 1989 had turned into a free-rider of the citizens movement by seizing a large part of their political platform, including a positive attitude towards democracy and minorities. After its defeat in the first democratic *Volkskammer* elections and the recovery denied them in the first all-German *Bundestag* elections, the PDS changed again and started to present itself as a major force of democratisation in the new *Länder* and the true guardian of the social interests of East Germans against supposedly self-interested Western colonizers. Given its defensive pro-socialist role during transition and its extremely limited attachment to market reforms, one question quite clearly needs an answer: Why do East Germans, though comparatively privileged over the course of transition, provide the post-communist party with a comfortable voter share of 20 to 30%?

Summarizing the evidence from the different sets of data, we envisage, beyond a large body of commonalities, a still notable--though not majoritarian in quantitative terms--difference in political attitudes between East and West Germans on the one hand, and, on the other, between East Germans and the people in other Central East European countries. These differences are predominantly articulated in the relative devaluation of the politico-institutional change as well as in a favourable opportunity structure for the post-communist party. As a consequence, the suspicion that unification created „a cultural dilemma“<sup>15</sup> and that there might be „a wall after the wall“<sup>16</sup> does not seem untenable. How are we to conceptualize the causes of this phenomenon?

### **III The Insufficiency of an Economic Explanation**

From 1991 on, dissatisfaction with the institutional system seemed to grow at the same pace as unemployment. According to a widespread assumption, the dissatisfaction articulated by a minority of East Germans is political only with regard to its form, but economic in its content and true causes. A typical assessment of the underlying cause-effect relationship goes like this: Since neither the macroeconomic nor the microeconomic costs of transition had been calculated, let alone announced at the outset of transition, its immediate effects came as a surprise. In particular, the transformation of East Germany's economy exemplifies the risks and costs inherent in the infamous shock therapy. As a short-cut taken in order to escape increasing difficulties with migration to the West and a disintegrating economy, the governments of both German states agreed upon the once-and-for-all strike of an economic, monetary and social union (EMSU) as became effective on July 1, 1990. This “Kaltstart”<sup>17</sup> or “jump start”<sup>18</sup> model of transformation is said to follow predominantly “external” interests, i.e. the preferences of West German political and economic elites. Though closer inspection of the decision-making process would reveal proof of considerable opposition, namely by economic experts on behalf of investors and taxpayers, this assumption by and large is correct. Had the Bonn government chosen a different option for uniting with the GDR, the GDR government is unlikely to have prevailed with its preference for rapid integration.

Whereas an economic contraction of a similar degree is absent in other post-socialist countries, even if governments preferred a shock therapy approach to economic reform, East Germany appears to be the victim of an extremely ruthless crash program of liberalisation. According to Andreas Pickel, Peter Murrell<sup>19</sup> and several other critics of the radical approach, the economic shock, and EMSU in particular, is responsible for the unfavourable social and economic consequences of unification: “(1) the collapse of the

state sector, resulting in massive unemployment, and serious problems in the existing private sector; (2) the restitution of pre-communist property rights and titles, which has produced hundreds of thousands of claims and created an atmosphere of insecurity for investors; (3) the uninterrupted migration of labor from East to West; and (4) the socio-psychological and political disempowerment of large sectors of the East German population ('colonisation', creation of a *de facto* group of second-class citizens)".<sup>20</sup>

### 3.1 Neither EMSU nor Privatisation Resembles Shock Therapy

Since at least the first three effects highlighted by Andreas Pickel can be related to the terms of EMSU, frequently the concept of economic reform is seen to be the major cause of post-unification dissatisfaction (PUD). However, East Germany is by no means a case of shock therapy. For example, large discrepancies are evident between the decisions taken at the start of EMSU in July 1990 and the decisions made at the beginning of the economic transformation in Poland. As outlined earlier,<sup>21</sup> the policy prescriptions for shock therapies were by and large ignored by the Bonn government as the collective author of EMSU. This is easily demonstrated by reference to the five substantial measures that make up the standard toolbox of shock therapy:<sup>22</sup> Only two items, namely price liberalisation and the cutting of subsidies, were introduced with the economic unification on July 1, 1990. However, currency convertibility was obtained in conjunction with an enormous revaluation of the East German *mark* by nearly 400 per cent whereas all the other post-communist countries had to accept a devaluation. As a further deviation from the concept of economic stabilisation, wages and social incomes were subject to a rise by leaps and bounds when adjusted to a one-to-one ratio to the West-German *mark*. This triggered a third deviation from the concept of shock therapy: the state's abstention from an austere budgetary policy. Altogether, because of its bias in favour of private households at the expense of the former state enterprises, the pattern of policies for the transformation of the GDR economy was significantly lacking in consistency. While consumers benefitted from the free flow of goods due to market liberalisation on the one hand, and opulent income guarantees given in order to improve the government's chances for re-election, on the other, enterprises experienced extremely worsened conditions for survival. As a consequence, the financial transfers until the end of 1996 for both private consumption and public and private investment added up to one billion *marks*. Thus, the fastest decline in economic performance in East-Central Europe was accompanied by the fastest and closest approximation of West European income levels.

Among the measures employed, the privatisation policy of the *Treuhändanstalt* (THA) was assigned a major and presumably destructive role. However, on closer inspection,<sup>23</sup> one has to acknowledge that the policy for industrial modernisation and job preservation adopted in early 1992 looks quite reasonable in view of the difficulties inherent in every concept of economic „de-statisation“. This was at least true after the government's decision to maintain a relatively high level of employment in order to relieve the unemployment fund of a part of its increased burden. Thus, even if in principle the THA opposed subsidizing firms for the purpose of combating unemployment, it nevertheless worked as a kind of employment agency in the period from spring 1992 until its dissolution at the end of 1994. For this reason, the instrument of single contracts negotiated individually between potential buyers and the privatisation agency became the primary mode of THA privatisation.

Compared with the alternative methods of either auctions (implying the complete liberation from public control) or the emission of vouchers (not automatically associated with a

thoroughgoing modernisation led by responsible management), negotiated single contracts would appear to have been a reasonable compromise. Quite often, they allowed for detailed regulations committing buyers to certain volumes of investment and levels of employment. Additional obligations included environmental reconstruction and cooperation with other formerly state-owned firms.<sup>24</sup> In several cases with extremely restrictive obligations, buyers were relieved of any cash payments or even the THA paid the buyer for purchasing an outmoded factory and making a commitment to a voluminous investment. The occurrence of “negative” prices indicates very clearly the policy shift to the once “secondary” social and developmental goals of privatisation. Although a number of contracts turned out to be improperly beneficial for Western buyers, on the whole, neither corruption nor ignorance of social demands were characteristic of the overall style of privatisation policy.<sup>25</sup> The privatisation policies enacted in East Germany offer little support for an “economic failure” explanation of PUD. However, East Germans appear correct in attributing their fate to discretionary political decisions, the results of which would appear ambivalent: individually beneficial on a short-term basis, becoming suboptimal and, hence, unsatisfactory in the long run.

### 3.2 *East Germany is No Exceptional Case of Economic Decline*

After half a decade, a comparative assessment of the fate of the former GDR’s economy became possible. How did the „jump-started“ economy of East Germany fare when compared with the economies of other post-socialist countries? Before looking into the statistics of relative decline and recovery, let us resume the argument in short. Put simply, the hypothesis “PUD results from EMSU” would read as follows: Because massive lay-offs caused by the de-industrializing impulse of EMSU--to a more than inevitable degree (so the critics say)--deprived the East Germans of income and social security, not to mention self-esteem and foreseeable life plans, East Germans responded with political dissatisfaction to an above average degree.

Given that the most severe shocks inflicted by market forces had to be experienced by the outmoded manufacturing industries, the decline and recovery of industrial (manufactured) output appears an appropriate indicator of the socio-economic costs of transition. Thanks to OECD statistics, figures for the development of industrial output from 1990-95 are available for several countries. The group of countries chosen for comparison with East Germany includes the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Slovenia. Equating the level of production at the start of transition--1989 in Poland, 1990 in all other countries--to 100%, the decline and recovery of industrial output until 1995 are documented by the curves in figure 4.

#### ABOUT HERE: Fig. 4

In view of the suggestions made about a below average performance of the East German economy following the shock received from EMSU, the results seem surprising. It is true, that the ex-GDR’s economy was hit by a serious contractional shock leading to a decline in output of 32.4% in 1992. However, recovery took place with more speed than anywhere else with the exception of Hungary. All other countries lag behind. Thus, East Germany can hardly be regarded as having been exceptionally hit by the measures of EMSU. Contrarily, one is inclined to assume that given the correctness of the OECD data, satisfaction with the results of transition should be strong, particularly in Hungary and East

Germany. Obviously, such inferences lack empirical evidence. However, a more serious question that arises in view of the rather converging decline-and-growth rates of industrial production would be why the obvious variety of transformation policies have had so little impact on economic outcomes.

Thus, the thesis that a comparatively high degree of political dissatisfaction (i.e. PUD) is caused by the measures and/or the immediate consequences of EMSU, is to be rejected. In the light of this finding, a comment on the peculiar economic position of East Germany must be included. Looking at unemployment and inflation rates of transition economies, we find reliable indicators for a certain uniqueness of East Germany. Whereas its inflation rate after 1994 was as low as 2%, East Germany's unemployment rate, after it passed the 15% mark in 1992, kept climbing until it approached the 20% level in 1997. Since 1995 East Germany leads in unemployment rates among the "better-off" ECE countries. This appears, at least to some extent, to be the accepted outcome of the macroeconomic preference ordering of the Bonn government. As is well known, Bonn put the goal of minimizing inflation and budget deficits--the Maastricht criteria for the European monetary union--clearly ahead of any other competing goals including economic growth and increased employment. Another part of the explanation is to be sought in the causes of institutional inertia impinging on both the agenda of administrative reform and the multi-layered system of joint decision-making.

## **IV Non-Economic Explanations of PUD**

Since the growing dissatisfaction with the new institutional system is unlikely to be explained by the size of social burdens from de-industrialisation, a different explanation is required. There are at least three more causal hypotheses circulating which will be dealt with in the subsequent paragraphs. At the end of this section, a preliminary test will help to identify the most plausible explanation among the given alternatives.

### *4.1 The "Rising Expectation" Thesis*

The argument developed in the rising expectation thesis closely resembles to the thesis of economic failure. Though it has thus far received little attention among social scientists, it is common knowledge among (predominantly West German) politicians and journalists. Implicitly building on the theory of cognitive dissonance and the concepts of cognitive framing--with special attention being paid to reference groups and reference points<sup>26</sup>--the theory focuses on the expectations developed by East Germans. PUD, so it is claimed, would emerge as a consequence of expectations that were set too high and impossible to satisfy. Keeping in mind the promise of article 106 (Basic Law) and the overly optimistic announcements made by the *Bonn* government in 1990, East Germans wanted to believe in the possibility that their living conditions would soon equal those of the West. Thus, the progress they so impatiently await, is not measured by the increasing differential between present and former conditions, but by the remaining, though gradually decreasing, discrepancies between East and West Germany.

The thesis relates to the peculiar temporal pattern of transformation. The early experience of improvements in everyday life together with far-reaching promises might have given rise

to optimism and heightened aspirations. In this context, highly unrealistic expectations were in fact bolstered by the *Kohl* government, according to whom transformation in the special case of the GDR would run its course without individual sacrifices or costs to bear. In light of these expectations, the GDR's transformation lacks a certain advantage which an ideal-type shock therapy would have delivered through the allocation of major social hardships in the initial stages of transformation. Since in East Germany most "goods" that might become available over the course of the transformation were distributed at the start, awareness of the inevitable „bads“ would accompany the lengthy period of economic restructuring.

Not only is the rising expectation thesis extremely plausible, it is open for empirical tests as well. Constructing a test model requires only a supplementary assumption as to which social categories were most susceptible to the formation of unrealistic expectations and wish-driven beliefs. One has reason to suspect the younger generations as possible candidates for wishful thinking, whereas the older ones, given their experiences in life and/or adherence to an anti-capitalist ideology, would remain more skeptical. This means that if PUD is unequally distributed over age groups, it will disproportionately occur among the younger generations.

#### 4.2 *The "Treatment-Response" Hypothesis*

The assumption underlying the treatment-response hypothesis is as follows: After unification, East Germans experienced not only that the West German institutional system was less perfect, less impartial, and less open than had been expected, what is more, even individual West Germans--including politicians, businessmen and ordinary people--when taking part in the transformation of GDR, one way or the other, rarely presented themselves as the unselfish brothers and sisters as experienced throughout the years of division, be it on TV, or through chance personal encounters. Though this reasoning sounds a bit naive, there is ample evidence of a lot of "responsive" (reactive) behavior and attitudes among East Germans. Let us first look at empirical phenomena serving as references or indicators of "reactive" beliefs.

Though it seems erroneous to label the externally guided and excessively sponsored transformation of East Germany a process of colonisation, complaints about ruthless and paternalistic behavior on behalf of a lot of Western "change agents" appear well founded. The extensive personnel transfers from the West and the replacement of administrative elites at top and intermediate levels should be mentioned as well. As a consequence, unification set into motion a process of social differentiation along multiple dimensions of social status, resulting in experiences of deprivation and increased personal uncertainty. In this context, one cannot deny the existence of a relevant minority whose social circumstances in certain respects have deteriorated rather than improved in the wake of unification. They have arrived at a critical view of the transformation which they now share with those who advocated far-reaching reforms in 1990 but without wanting unification. The beliefs held by this group, and even by some of the so-called "transformation winners", are inspired by a critical (but usually "non-comparative") assessment of the outcomes of transformation. Further objects of fundamental critique are the representative bodies and collective actors (including trade unions, business interest and professional associations) that were transferred to the East together with the West German institutional system.<sup>27</sup>

The treatment-response thesis finds analytical support in the fields of political psychology and cultural research.<sup>28</sup> Put simply, while the East Germans with regard to their values and cultural patterns of behavior would appear to have been quite similar to the West Germans *before* unification, the experience of Western supremacy gave way to a process of increasing cultural differentiation. Feeling labeled as being more naive, less professional, less competent, and culturally outdated, East Germans would appear to be lining up for a counter-attack. They remind themselves of “their”, up to now, not so deeply held “socialist” and “communist” values and confront “the West” by claiming allegiance to a revived East German collective identity.<sup>29</sup> This becomes quite clear when referring to statements made publicly about the “true” values of egalitarianism, modesty, solidarity, social security and stability.<sup>30</sup> Presenting themselves as collectively devaluated, many East Germans--according to the treatment-response thesis--appear to be on their way to becoming what they never were before: true believers in democratic socialism. From this perspective, PUD is an epiphenomenon of something else. It appears to be a vehicle for creating--or maintaining--a collective identity by exaggerating existing differentials.<sup>31</sup>

At first glance, this approach seems less open to empirical tests with survey data since it is impossible to distinguish whether a critical statement about the outcomes of unification resembles “true” dissatisfaction or accounts for a defensive act of identity creation. However, with age being the analytical distinction that is most easy to handle, we would expect to find an unequal distribution of PUD. For two reasons, older generations should be more inclined to protest against „unfair“ treatment: first, because we can assume an above average share of “true” socialists among them and, second, because older generations were disproportionately hit by forced early retirement, removal from office and the deprivation of „system“ privileges. In other words, among senior citizens there were more who had something to lose, either in terms of social status or collective identity, than among the younger age groups.<sup>32</sup>

#### 4.3 *The “Socialist Legacy” Approach*

The “socialist legacy” approach is quite common among scholars of post-socialist transformation who are looking at cultural phenomena. In essence, here we assume continuing effects of political socialisation under communism. Studies provide us with behavioral and attitudinal profiles in which certain traits such as conformism, dogmatism, intolerance and double-dealing come together in a fatal, mutually reinforcing whole.<sup>33</sup> Frequently and even years after the collapse of communist dictatorships, individual orientations are said to be based on dichotomous world views and mythical interpretations of the political, among them the common equation of democracy and prosperity, as well as the neglect of interest and value pluralism. “Socialist legacies”, however, are a rather ambiguous concept. On the one hand, there might be certain authoritarian traits and a preference for “strong” leadership as well as “social justice” in terms of equality of outcome. On the other hand, we envisage over-shooting responses to the lack of political freedom, i.e. a longing for self-realisation through political participation, direct (plebiscitary) democracy and consensual decision-making at „Round Tables“.

The assumptions underlying the “legacy” thesis can easily be placed in the categories of “social capital” and “civicness”.<sup>34</sup> “Social capital” is in great demand, because individuals living in communist societies were deprived of experiencing voluntary associations, civic responsibility and consciousness, as well as public debates on policies, goals and values.

As a consequence of this lack of “social capital”, the new democracies in ECE suffer from a low rate of participation; politics is still seen as a private game among the ruling elite; and the formation of collective actors such as parties is--in the absence of structural cleavages--shaped by secondary, perhaps even “accidental” points of differentiation. Even the elites of the successful opposition movements became subject to disaggregation into groups with diverging cultural orientations--between the poles of national traditionalism and a liberal republicanism, as well as in the tension between working-class culture and a cosmopolitan intellectual milieu--, thus diminishing their impact on the ongoing transformations.<sup>35</sup> Taken altogether, the legacy thesis claims the existence of a value clash between the “Eastern” and the “Western” political cultures.<sup>36</sup>

Of course, applying this thesis to East Germany would not bring about the exact same outcomes as in other ECE countries. Since the society in transition is by and large (though not altogether voluntarily) relieved of the responsibility of its own fate, everyday politics is not burdened by a lack of “social capital”. Western “experts” filled the gap. What we recognize instead, is the limited degree of appreciation for the institutional changes, remainders of a „socialist“ understanding of politics, and enthusiastic desires for direct democracy. Thus, an explanation of PUD grounded in the “socialist legacy” thesis does not seem unrealistic.

If tested with respect to age, this approach suggests that dissatisfaction with the institutional fruits of transformation would increase in line with the respondents’ „system affiliation“ and--probably less strongly--with age. The more intense and extended the „socialist socialization“, the stronger the values of the former society and its understanding of politics. Younger individuals who spent both a shorter period of time under socialism and benefited from a slight increase in tolerance, privatism and informational freedom in the “*Nischengesellschaft*” (according to *Günter Gaus*) during the last decade of socialism, are assumed to exhibit less PUD.

#### 4.4 A Test of the Three Approaches

The survey results delivered by EMMAG,<sup>37</sup> though they come neither from a strictly representative sample nor allow for a comparison between East Germans on the one hand and West Germans or ECE citizens on the other, provide the opportunity to explore the significance of age as the major indicatory variable. At first, we will inspect the age distribution of responses to the question „What does German unification, after five years, mean to you *in the sphere of politics*, predominantly a gain or predominantly a loss?“ (emphasis added by HW). According to the overall results already presented in figure 2, 44% of respondents report a gain, whereas 16% claim to have experienced a loss. Table 2 (as well as the subsequent tables 3 and 4) displays only the “extreme” responses. Differentials are computed for each age group by subtracting the relative frequencies of the negative (“loss”) statements from the frequencies of the positive (“gain”) statements. We thereby get an index of distributional gains and losses from institutional change as perceived by respondents of different age groups. The differentials might serve as indicators of the net gains or losses as perceived by the relative majority of age group members. The results are presented in row 3 of table 2.

Table 2: Assessment of Political Gains and Losses (% of respondents)

	„In politics, unification means predominantly ...“ (Q26a/C176)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
age group	a gain	a loss	(4)./(5)
18-24	25.	12.	<b>13.</b>
25-34	17.	13.	<b>4.</b>
35-44	15.6	16.	<b>-4</b>
45-59	11.8	17.5	<b>-5.7</b>
60+	12.1	15.5	<b>-3.4</b>
chi-square		< .05	

Source: EMMAG, *Leben in Ostdeutschland (Leben '95)*.

Answers “no change”, “balanced result”, and “don't know” are ignored.

Fortunately, we must not solely rely on assessments of abstract „political gains“ or „losses“. In its survey, EMMAG used a different set of questions in order to investigate how many respondents feel satisfied with their political influence in former days and at present. The question asked reads as follows: “Looking back five years ago, were you more satisfied--with your political influence--then, or are things at present as they were before, or, are you more satisfied at present than in former days?” The disaggregated results are presented in table 3.

Table 3: Assessment of Influence on Political Institutions (% of respondents)

	More satisfied with political influence (Q10/C82)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
age group	at present	then	(1)./(2)
18-24	15.	2.	<b>13.</b>
25-34	13.	10.4	<b>2.6</b>
35-44	14.6	11.9	<b>2.7</b>
45-59	11.6	19.7	<b>-8.1</b>
60+	9.7	15.3	<b>-5.6</b>
chi-square		< .001	

Source: EMMAG *Leben in Ostdeutschland (Leben '95)*.

Answers “no change”, “balanced result”, and “don't know” are ignored.

The differentials as shown in row 3 of both tables 2 and 3 indicate that a considerable (relative) majority of the youngest age group envisages a positive balance of the politico-institutional change, while respondents of the age groups 45-59 and 60+ report a negative balance of „gains and losses“. The exact same age groups declare to be more satisfied with the political influence they believe to have had in the times of the GDR.

Even more informative are the answers given to questions relative to certain fields of potential personal influence, namely at the different levels of politics (local, state, and national), through associational involvement in clubs and associations (*Vereine*), and over workplace affairs. Whereas overall data shows a positive („gains“ dominating) balance in all fields of politics<sup>38</sup> as well as in clubs and associations (-18% vs. +23%), predominantly losses in influence are reported for trade union involvement (-35% vs. +11%) and influence over workplace affairs (-40% vs. +14%). The results of the inter-generational comparison are presented in table 4. Here, we envisage a demarcation line between age groups that are by and large satisfied with the given conditions and those that more often than not are displaying disappointment.<sup>39</sup> While the youngest persons (18-24) appear only moderately

convinced by the changes in their socio-political environment (the reasons of which would probably have more to do with age than with system change), middle age groups (25-44) report a significantly positive balance. Contrarily, older persons (45-59) present themselves more satisfied with the bygone circumstances. Looking at the figures for the oldest age group (60+) many members of which probably held responsible positions in whatever functions and occupations, we envisage signs of extreme dissatisfaction with the present institutions. The experiences with influence change in less remote spheres of action are obviously more articulate than the assessments of “general” changes in the remote institutional system. Whatever experience members of the age groups 45-59 and 60+ would have made after unification, their assessments diverge extremely from what the neighboring age group of 35-44 year-olds had learned: by 23.1 percentage points in local politics, 21.7 points in workplace affairs, and 16.6 points in associational activity.<sup>40</sup>

**Table 4: The Redistribution of Personal Influence after Unification (% of respondents)**  
More personal influence could be exerted over

	Local politics (Q11/C85)			Activity in clubs/ associations (Q11/C88)			Workplace affairs (Q11/C86)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
age group	to date	then	(1)./(2)	to date	then	(4)./(5)	to date	then	(7)./(9)
18-24	8.5	1.2	<b>7.3</b>	6.8	4.5	<b>2.3</b>	8.1	3.3	<b>4.8</b>
25-34	23.5	10.2	<b>13.3</b>	22.4	14.8	<b>7.6</b>	36.	15.	<b>21.</b>
35-44	24.4	11.8	<b>12.6</b>	24.1	15.5	<b>8.6</b>	29.4	19.3	<b>10.1</b>
45-59	24.1	34.6	<b>-10.5</b>	26.1	34.1	<b>-8.</b>	22.7	34.3	<b>-11.6</b>
60+	19.5	42.3	<b>-22.8</b>	20.4	30.3	<b>-9.9</b>	3.8	27.7	<b>-23.9</b>
chi-square	< .001			< .001			< .001		

*Question asked:* “Over which subject could you exert more influence before 1989 than to date, over which the same influence, and over which have your opportunities for exercising influence improved?” Answers “no change” and “don’t know” are ignored.

Source: EMMAG, *Leben in Ostdeutschland (Leben '95)*.

On the basis of these findings, we are entitled to dismiss the „rising expectation“ explanations of PUD. Its prediction that younger generations should be more inclined to show dissatisfaction proved inaccurate. This leaves the „treatment-response“ and the „socialist legacy“ approaches as keys to the most plausible explanation of PUD.<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately, the survey data at hand does not allow to delve further into the causal structure of PUD. At this point, the thesis of emotional or tactical responses to discriminating treatment over the course of unification appears to have *prima facie* the same explanatory value as the „legacy“ approach linking long-term socialization to actual patterns of („survey“) behaviour.

Fortunately, it seems possible to attribute relative weight to each of the competing explanations by putting the question of PUD in its original context. This means to ask for reasons why dissatisfaction with the results of thoroughgoing political and economic changes is stronger in East Germany than in the neighbouring post-socialist countries. The „treatment-response“ approach provides a plausible first-hand explanation: only in the case of the former GDR, do the concepts of „treatment“ by and „response“ to a third party make

sense. All other cases of transformation lack an analogous situation of imagined communicative exchange. Given this preliminary result, the „treatment-response“ thesis as the most likely explanation of PUD underlines one of the peculiar characteristics of the East German case: the presence of a responsible and resourceful addressee for complaints and demands. Furthermore, if understood in the light of the „response“ thesis, PUD can be seen as a chip in a strategic game between „Western“ experts and „Eastern“ clients. As long as the experts can be expected to do more and act in a more beneficial way, the clients would prefer to stress their dissatisfaction instead of responding with a balanced account.

Taking a closer look, however, the idea that all symptoms of PUD could be identified as simple reactions to perceived mistreatment or as tactical responses to a favourable (favourable in terms of options given) opportunity structure, appears unconvincing. Though it by and large fits to the fact that PUD arose after a heyday of enthusiasm about Western values and West German institutions, the notion of behaviour according to a stimulus-response scheme or as an outcome of calculated rational choice both seem highly improbable as general explanations. However, the standard version of the “socialist legacy” approach cannot substitute for the discriminating power of the „response“ thesis. „Legacies“ are expected to impinge on transformation in all post-socialist societies. Therefore, the „legacy“ approach is of little help when an explanation is demanded as to why East Germans are more dissatisfied than people in ECE. Since political dissatisfaction in East Germany is far beyond anything found in the other ECE countries, a complementary explanation has to account for its peculiar magnitude in the former GDR.

#### 4.5 *Why Political Dissatisfaction May Be Stronger in East Germany*

A supplementary explanation of PUD as an indication of “excessive” dissatisfaction that goes hand in hand with the “socialist legacy” approach can easily be detected. It refers to categorial and gradual dissimilarities between the GDR and, say, Poland, both of which were self-declared socialist states before 1990. Though the former Poland seems similar with respect to structural features of the economic and political systems, it forms an inspiring contrast to the socio-economic and political phenomenon of what once was the GDR.

The GDR was an unique socialist formation with regard to two structural features: its character as both an authoritarian model of state socialism and an articulate socialist welfare state.<sup>42</sup> When German communists obtained power in the Soviet zone of occupied post-war Germany in 1949, they could not claim legitimacy by referring to national traditions. After the three zones governed by the Western allies had united and formed the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, the legitimacy of a separate East German state was challenged. The alliance of German communists with the superpower USSR was unlikely to serve as a normative ground for a separate nation state. Under these conditions, the communist party SED, with assistance from its big brother CPSU, resorted to the values and institutional order of socialism as a substitute for national identity. Since the efforts made in response to the lack of a “natural” national identity were not in vain, the GDR became a place where, on the one hand, socialist values and beliefs were authoritatively enforced and imposed upon society with outstanding rigor, and, on the other, were taken more seriously than anywhere else. The size and strength of the state’s security agencies (among them the notorious *Stasi*) as well as the lack of any attempt to apply market

reforms to the inefficient economy illustrate the “totalitarian” nature of the GDR’s institutions.

In fact, the SED succeeded in shaping society to an extent that has no counterpart in other ECE countries. The intensively disseminated ideology with its simple dichotomies such as the secular contradictions between capitalism and socialism, private and public property, or revolutionary and counter-revolutionary action became cornerstones of a peculiar socialist value system. Probably, these ideological topics were less extensively accrued by the citizenry than the distributional “socialist” values stressing equality and social security. That in fact socialist world views and values had encroached on the society of GDR became clear in late 1989: Unlike Poland, Hungary, and even Czechoslovakia, the GDR was void of any pragmatic non-socialist opposition. Its civic movement was exclusively made up of peace and environmental groups as well as initiatives for human rights and true democracy, all of whom remained committed to socialist values and the goal of a better, democratically reformed, „non-capitalist“ system. Unlike the anti-socialist opposition in other socialist countries, the GDR’s democratic movement, e.g., lacked any branch that would have favoured the ideas of economic liberalism. As a welfare state of sorts, the GDR presented a friendlier side to its citizens than one would expect in the light of its authoritarian nature. Driven by the fear that the precarious legitimacy of the GDR could become endangered by workers’ protest as manifested itself on June 17, 1953, the SED leadership always hastened to accommodate the demands and volitions of the “working class”. Blue and white collar workers as well as the academic professions actually acknowledged that the state served more than merely their basic needs. This came along with the standard characteristics of work life in the late socialism such as guaranteed incomes (decoupled from individual performance), full job security, relief from the duty of regular presence at work, significant elbowroom for pursuing private interests at the workplace, and ample opportunities for informal co-determination, at least at the shop-floor level.<sup>43</sup>

The institutional system of the GDR as the most developed socialist welfare state could well provide sufficient references for a thorough socialist political identity. Its basic traits would have been collectivist, etatist, egalitarian, and security-oriented. Of course, we do not know how many East Germans acquired a consistent pattern of value orientations in line with the institutionalized political promises.<sup>44</sup> Neither do we know the share of those who succeeded in effectively converting recent negative experiences into some sort of factual support of the „socialist“ value pattern. However, what we can do is to infer that--for a minority of East German citizens--the post-unification might have entailed strong incentives to rethink socialist values and the (however unmet) promises of socialism. In such a situation of value clash, a retreat to what in 1989 appeared as outmoded beliefs is in no way surprising.

Returning to the question as to what would be the most probable explanation for PUD, we have to admit that--in the absence of more differentiated data--a two-fold explanatory approach appears to be the most appropriate. PUD might follow from reactive or tactical „protest“ motives as well as from some sort of value clash. Paradoxically it is the citizens movement, i.e. the politically least suspicious group of East Germans, that lends plausibility to this explanation. Effectively contributing to the collapse of the system, their political clout and intellectual honesty did not stem from any sort of association with the liberal pro-market philosophy, but instead was rooted in an articulate understanding of human rights that was expressed in terms of „true“ socialism and direct democracy.

Learning that the incorporation into the Western political system did not allow for more than symbolic gestures in favour of their values, the majority of the members of the citizens' movement withdrew from the political process. Though there exists no valid quantitative analysis of the individual reasons that led to the „de-politization“ of the movement, detailed case studies, statements made by the movement elites as well as recent publications<sup>45</sup> suggest the importance of two sources of frustration: unsatisfactory interaction with Western partners on the one hand, and the tensions from the experience of an unbridged gap between Eastern and Western orientations, on the other. As far as political dissatisfaction is articulated by both the privileged strata of the former system and its most determined and ultimately successful opponents, there is ample evidence of „a bond with the GDR regime that remains effective even long after the regime's collapse“.<sup>46</sup> In quantitative terms, however, it is predominantly the members of the older generations who form the core group of articulated PUD.

## V Conclusion

A proper understanding of the symptoms of post-unification dissatisfaction presupposes that we take into account two sets of historic factors: the peculiar features of unification as an externally led and sponsored project designed to secure a wholesale societal change on the one hand, and the biographical, institutional and axiological impact of the GDR as a unique variant of socialist society. At the intersection of these two perspectives two things become clear: first, frustration could grow even in the context of individually experienced economic gains; second, for the encoding and articulation of frustration a positive reference system could be invoked by relating to what is remembered as the „true“ values of socialism. This, however, is not to maintain that GDR citizens held a strong “system” identification save a tiny minority of true believers. Instead, we have to recall the once widespread perception that the mass opposition to the SED regime in the autumn of 1989 was to a large extent inspired by a critical stance to the ruling elite. One of the reasons why the latter was expelled from office was that it definitely had failed to realize the values it had publicly claimed to advance. In fact, the collapse of the GDR would never have occurred without the participation of those who in this way or another upheld some variant of „socialist“ beliefs.

Insofar as common aspirations for a better life--which, of course, was expected to be led in a socialist order-- furnished the citizens of the GDR with a common understanding of the good society and a sense of collective belonging, these thoughts could be revived after the demise of socialism. They could become a basis for self-esteem after most other indicators of success and social integration lost significance in the drastically changed social environment. By resorting to values that previously had rarely been interpreted in line with the official meaning, East Germans would reject the reproach of having lived the “wrong” life in the “wrong” place. Coping with the challenges of a new and thoroughly ambiguous environment, as well as with the humiliation associated with West German paternalism, East Germans might revive elements of their “system” identity either in good faith or cynically.<sup>47</sup>

The GDR's cultural legacy appears to be wrongly interpreted when reduced to a set of official beliefs and norms that were the outcome of discretionary policy-making by the SED. Rather, from a wider perspective it is to be understood as an emergent outcome of the German division. Beliefs in the legitimacy of socialist norms and institutions are related to

the positions taken by East and West Germans respectively in the “system competition” between a socialist and a capitalist-democratic institutional order. This causal condition of assessments of the outcomes of transformation has no counterpart in other ECE countries.

Seen from this perspective, post-unification dissatisfaction appears not only independent of the level of economic burdens, but resistant against further improvements in terms of social welfare as well. It would disappear faster than through the process of intergenerational substitution only if serious changes within the German political culture as understood by the political elites were to occur: If the West German citizenry and, in particular, its political and intellectual elites, could account for the legacy of the GDR’s history as an integral part of an all-German history, that is to say: their own history as well, then the need for turning one’s mind back to the distinctive cultural roots of East Germany would probably disappear. This, however, implies that in an emerging common German political culture the historic fact of 40 years of institutional competition between democratic capitalism and authoritarian socialism could be analyzed soberly and thought of with „cool“ interest in the facts. Unfortunately, this is, in the short run, not an all too realistic prospect.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Richard Rose and Christian Haerpfer, ‘The Impact of a Ready-made State. Die privilegierte Position Ostdeutschlands in der postkommunistischen Transformation’ in Helmut Wiesenthal (ed.), *Einheit als Privileg. Vergleichende Perspektiven auf die Transformation Ostdeutschlands* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 1996), pp. 105-140. See also Richard Rose and Christian Haerpfer, ‘The Impact of a Ready-made State: East Germans in Comparative Perspective’, *German Politics*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1997), pp. 100-121.
- <sup>2</sup> Michael Hüther, ‘Integration der Transformation. Überlegungen zur Wirtschaftspolitik für das vereinigte Deutschland’, *Jahrbuch für Sozialwissenschaft*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (1993), pp. 31-52.
- <sup>3</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt, *Zur wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Lage in den neuen Bundesländern* (Stuttgart: Metzler & Poeschel, 1993-96). Job losses in the manufacturing industries are even more tremendous. The number of gainfully employed fell from 3.408 million at the end of 1989 to 1.135 million at the end of 1993.
- <sup>4</sup> Daniel Hamilton, ‘Dateline East Germany: The Wall behind the Wall’, *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 76 (1989), pp. 176-197.
- <sup>5</sup> See Rose and Haerpfer, ‘The Impact of a Ready-made State’, p. 117.
- <sup>6</sup> See Rose and Haerpfer, ‘The Impact of a Ready-made State’, p. 118.
- <sup>7</sup> Richard Rose and Edward C. Page, ‘German Responses to Regime Change: Culture, Class, Economy or Context?’, *West European Politics*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1996), pp. 1-27 (here p. 8).
- <sup>8</sup> See Rose and Page, ‘German Responses to Regime Change’, pp. 9-11 and fn. 27.
- <sup>9</sup> Wolfgang Seifert: *East Germany and Eastern Europe Compared*, (Glasgow: University of Strathclyde Studies in Public Policy No. 233, 1994), p. 23.
- <sup>10</sup> Richard Rose and Christian Haerpfer, ‘Democracy and Enlarging the European Union Eastwards’, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (1995), pp. 427-450 (here p. 435).
- <sup>11</sup> Infratest Burke, *Deutschland in zehn Jahren. Ausgewählte Ergebnisse einer Studie des Süddeutschen Verlages und der Infratest Burke Kommunikationsforschung GmbH*, (Bonn, Mimeo, 1996).

- <sup>12</sup> EMMAG (Empirisch-Methodische Arbeitsgruppe am Sozialwissenschaftlichen Forschungszentrum Berlin-Brandenburg e.V.), *Leben in Ostdeutschland (Leben '95). Daten und Feldbericht*, (Berlin: SFZ, 1996). The sample was taken exclusively in East Germany and was comprised of 1,506 persons. Interviews were conducted in May and June 1995.
- <sup>13</sup> For further evidence see Wilhelm P. Bürklin, 'Die politische Kultur in Ost- und Westdeutschland: Eine Zwischenbilanz' in Gerhard Lehmbruch (ed.), *Einigung und Zerfall. Deutschland und Europa nach dem Ende des Ost-West-Konflikts*, (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1995), pp. 11-24, and Dieter Fuchs, 'Welche Demokratie wollen die Deutschen? Einstellungen zur Demokratie im vereinigten Deutschland' in Oscar W. Gabriel (ed.), *Politische Orientierungen und Verhaltensweisen im vereinigten Deutschland*, (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1997), pp. 81-114. According to the latter, only 31% of Easterners (against 80% of Westerners) approve the West Germany democracy as „the best possible political system“ (p. 106).
- <sup>14</sup> For more details of PDS performance in the competitive party system and an assessment of its internal structure as well as its political profile see the study of Gero Neugebauer and Richard Stöss, *Die PDS. Geschichte, Organisation, Wähler, Konkurrenten*, (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1996).
- <sup>15</sup> Barbara Kienbaum and Manfred Grote, 'German Unification as a Cultural Dilemma: A Retrospective', *East European Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (1997), pp. 223-240.
- <sup>16</sup> Michael Minkenberg, 'The Wall after the Wall: On the Continuing Devision of Germany and the Remaking of Political Culture', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (1993), pp. 53-68.
- <sup>17</sup> Gerlinde Sinn and Hans-Werner Sinn, *Kaltstart. Volkswirtschaftliche Aspekte der deutschen Vereinigung*, (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991).
- <sup>18</sup> Andreas Pickel, 'Jump-starting a Market Economy: A Critique of the Radical Strategy for Economic Reform in the Light of the East German Experiences', *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (1992), pp. 77-191.
- <sup>19</sup> Peter Murrell, 'What is Shock Therapy? What Did it Do in Poland and Russia?' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1993), pp. 111-140.
- <sup>20</sup> Pickel, 'Jump-starting a Market Economy', p. 180.
- <sup>21</sup> Helmut Wiesenthal, 'East Germany as a Unique Case of Societal Transformation: Main Characteristics and Emergent Misconceptions', *German Politics*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (1995), pp. 49-74.
- <sup>22</sup> See Jeffrey D. Sachs, 'My Plan for Poland', *International Economy*, Vol. 3 (Dec. 1989), pp. 24-29; Jeffrey D. Sachs, 'Crossing the Valley of Tears in East European Reform', *Challenge*, Vol. 34, No. 5 (1991), pp. 26-34; Stanley Fischer and Alan Gelb, 'The Process of Socialist Economic Transformation', *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (1991), pp. 91-105; Josef C. Brada, 'The Transformation from Communism to Capitalism: How far? How Fast?', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1993), pp. 87-110.
- <sup>23</sup> See Wiesenthal, 'East Germany as a Unique Case'.
- <sup>24</sup> For more details on the structure and activities of the THA see Wolfram Fischer, Herbert Hax and Hans Karl Schneider (eds.), *Treuhandanstalt. Das Unmögliche wagen*, (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag 1993).
- <sup>25</sup> For a comparison with privatization policies in other post-socialist countries see David Stark, 'Path Dependence and Privatization Strategies in East Central Europe', *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1992), pp. 17-54; Philippe Aghion and Wendy Carlin, 'Restructuring Outcomes and the Evolution of Ownership Patterns in Central and Eastern Europe' in Salvatore Zecchini (ed.), *Lessons from the Economic Transition*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997), pp. 241-261.
- <sup>26</sup> E.g. Daniel Kahneman, 'Reference Points, Anchors, Norms, and Mixed Feelings', *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (1992), pp. 296-312.
- <sup>27</sup> A systematic comparison, however, would reveal that the system of interest representation introduced in the former GDR instead of suffering from a „liability of newness“, appears quite efficient and relatively "open" to Eastern interests. This can, among other things, be shown by several improvements made with respect to social security entitlements of East Germans and amendments to the original

unification law. For different positions on this issue see Heidrun Abromeit, ‘Die Vertretungslücke. Probleme im neuen deutschen Bundesstaat’, *Gegenwartskunde*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (1993), pp. 281-292, and Helmut Wiesenthal, ‘Interessenrepräsentation im Transformationsprozeß’ in Brandenburgische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung (ed.), *Die real-existierende postsozialistische Gesellschaft*, (Berlin: GSFP, 1994), pp. 186-199.

- <sup>28</sup> For an overview see Claudia Ritter, ‘Politische Identitäten in den neuen Bundesländern. Distinktionsbedarfe und kulturelle Differenzen nach der Vereinigung’ in Helmut Wiesenthal (ed.), *Einheit als Privileg*, (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 1996), pp. 141-187.
- <sup>29</sup> Detlef Pollack, ‘Das Bedürfnis nach sozialer Anerkennung. Der Wandel der Akzeptanz von Demokratie und Marktwirtschaft in Ostdeutschland’, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, No. B13/97 (1997), pp. 3-14.
- <sup>30</sup> Laurence McFalls, *Communism’s Collapse Democracy’s Demise? The Cultural Context and Consequences of the East German Revolution*, (New York: New York University Press, 1995).
- <sup>31</sup> See Claudia Ritter, ‘Politische Identitäten in den neuen Bundesländern’.
- <sup>32</sup> Because this hypothesis refers to non-economic „losses“, it in no way contradicts the finding that older generations disproportionately benefited from the appreciation of transfer incomes, in particular a considerably increased level of pensions. Cf. Richard Hauser Hauser, ‘Die Entwicklung der Einkommensverteilung in den neuen Bundesländern seit der Wende’, in Martin Diewald and Karl Ulrich Mayer (eds.), *Zwischenbilanz der Wiedervereinigung*, (Opladen: Leske+ Budrich, 1996), pp. 165-188.
- <sup>33</sup> Nikolai Genov, ‘The Transition to Democracy in Eastern Europe: Trends and Paradoxes of Social Rationalization’, *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (1991), pp. 331-341; Piotr Sztompka, ‘Civilizational Incompetence: The Trap of Post-Communist Societies’, *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (1993), pp. 85-95; Klaus Schroeder, ‘Die blockierte Vereinigung. Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede der Deutschen in Ost und West’, *Gegenwartskunde*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (1992), pp. 297-308.
- <sup>34</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work. Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Richard Rose, *Social Capital: Definition, Measure, Implications*, (Glasgow: University of Strathclyde, Mimeo).
- <sup>35</sup> See Grzegorz Ekiert, ‘Democratization Processes in East Central Europe: A Theoretical Reconsideration’, *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 21 (1991), pp. 285-313; Grzegorz Ekiert, ‘Peculiarities of Post-communist Politics: the Case of Poland’, *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (1992), pp. 341-361; Attila Ágh, ‘The Paradoxes of Transition: The External and Internal Overload of the Transition Process’, *Journal of Communist Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1994), pp. 15-34.
- <sup>36</sup> See McFalls, *Communism’s Collapse Democracy’s Demise?*
- <sup>37</sup> See EMMAG, *Leben in Ostdeutschland (Leben ’95)*.
- <sup>38</sup> The figures for local politics are -16%/+ 23%, for politics at the *Bezirk* or *Länder* level -9%/+ 21%, and for national politics -11%/+ 21%. See EMMAG, *Leben in Ostdeutschland (Leben ’95)*.
- <sup>39</sup> It should not be overlooked that the clarity of results was achieved by excluding the answers of those respondents who formed the “median”. Their share amounts to 30-50% of the sample.
- <sup>40</sup> Because we are neglecting the answers of all those that took no clear position on the question, we are neither entitled to attribute our findings to a specific age group as a whole nor to the “average” member of the respective group.
- <sup>41</sup> This finding, by and large, appears to be congruent with the analysis of Richard Rose and Edward C. Page. From their causal model of explanation, it is inferred that the „biggest determinants of change are the direct effect of context and evaluation of the present regime“ (Rose and Page, ‘German Responses to Regime Change’, p. 18), with „context“ being equivalent to residence in either East or West Germany. However, a proper comparison of results suffers from the incomparability of the respective samples. Whereas the sample of Rose and Page includes both German populations, the EMMAG sample is confined to East Germans.

- <sup>42</sup> For a more comprehensive analysis of these features of the GDR see Brie, ‘Staatssozialistische Länder Europas im Vergleich’, and Helmut Wiesenthal, ‘Die Transition Ostdeutschlands. Dimensionen und Paradoxien eines Sonderfalls’, in Helmut Wiesenthal (ed.): *Einheit als Privileg*, (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 1996), pp. 10-38.
- <sup>43</sup> Furthermore, socialist enterprises performed a bulk of non-economic functions. They provided social services which in a market environment would usually be supplied by private producers: housing estates, hospitals, kindergartens, homes for the elderly, holiday homes, sports facilities, community centres, and cultural institutions including libraries, cinemas and theatres. As these “socially responsible” enterprises, though operating at low levels of economic productivity and permanently in need of state subsidies, enjoyed a high level of “political productivity” they influenced expectations as to what would be adequate substitutes under the more efficient system of capitalism. Cf. Roman Frydman and Andrzej Rapaczynski, *Privatisation in Eastern Europe. Is the State Withering Away?*, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1994).
- <sup>44</sup> Indicators of a different „culture of social policy“ among East Germans are discussed by Edeltraud Roller, ‘Sozialpolitische Orientierungen nach der deutschen Vereinigung’ in Oscar W. Gabriel (ed.), *Politische Orientierungen und Verhaltensweisen im vereinigten Deutschland*, (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1997), pp. 115-146.
- <sup>45</sup> For alternative approaches to the politico-cultural legacy see e.g. Jan Wielgohs, Marianne Schulz and Helmut Müller-Enbergs, *Bündnis 90. Entstehung, Entwicklung, Perspektiven*, (Berlin: GSFP, 1992); Delef Pollack and Dieter Rink (eds.), *Zwischen Verweigerung und Opposition. Politischer Protest in der DDR 1979-1989*, (Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 1997); Hans Misselwitz, *Nicht länger mit dem Gesicht nach Westen*, (Berlin: Dietz, 1996); and Jürgen Fuchs, *Magdalena. MfS, Memfisblues, Stasi, Die Firma, VEB Horch & Gauck. Ein Roman*, (Berlin: Rowohlt 1998).
- <sup>46</sup> Oscar W. Gabriel, ‘Politische Orientierungen und Verhaltensweisen’, in Max Kaase, Andreas Eisen, Oscar W. Gabriel, Oskar Niedermayer and Hellmut Wollmann, *Politisches System*, (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1996), p. 270 (translated by HW).
- <sup>47</sup> See Pollack, ‘Das Bedürfnis nach sozialer Anerkennung’.