



The GDR Remembered

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE EAST GERMAN STATE SINCE 1989



Edited by **NICK HODGIN** and **CAROLINE PEARCE**

11: Competing Master Narratives: *Geschichtspolitik* and Identity Discourse in Three German Societies

Thomas Abbe

Two Rival German States and Two Competing Master Narratives: *Geschichtspolitik* in the 1950s and 1960s

THE QUESTION AS TO WHY, following the “peaceful revolution” in the GDR and its accession (*Beitritt*) to the Federal Republic, the issue of “inner unity” continues to be so passionately debated in Germany requires some understanding of the history as well as the deep-rooted ideological and mental positions of the two rival German postwar states.¹ After 1945 escalating conflict over political and economic development was played out in the rivalry between the two German states, and the founding principles of East Germany and West Germany created two opposing political blocs. The master narratives that informed the societies of the two new states had the same goal, namely to try and make sense of the catastrophic National Socialist period and the Second World War and the trauma of German division, but also to exonerate a large percentage of their populations and integrate them into the new system. Both postwar states claimed to have drawn the correct conclusions from the historical catastrophe, and each accused the other of continuities with National Socialism.

The master narratives of both German states sought to establish legitimacy through a distorted image of their Western/Eastern counterpart as is exemplified in the interpretations of the uprising of 17 June 1953. The GDR always regarded this as an attempted putsch orchestrated by Fascist provocateurs sent by the West in which workers, misinformed by Western propaganda, became involved. In West Germany the East German uprising was to become one of the foundation stones of national identity, and until unification this date was the only public holiday in the FRG. Almost every Western commentator characterized the uprising as anti-totalitarian and as a late attempt to make up for the absence of any mass revolt during the Third Reich.² On 16 June 1954 the federal government’s

press and information service duly announced that the uprising that had taken place the year before was conclusive proof that the Germans *did* have the inner strength to withstand dictatorships and tyranny. In 1956 the SPD politician Carlo Schmid stated, “[der 17. Juni] hat viele Flecken hinweggewaschen, mit denen das ruchlose Regime des Nationalsozialismus unseren Namen beschmutzt hat. Dies gibt uns Deutschen wieder das Recht, auch in der Mitte von Völkern, die ihren Kampf um die Freiheit schon längst gewonnen haben, das Haupt hoch zu tragen.”³

The comparison of the “brown” and “red” dictatorships and talk of totalitarian systems held ideological currency in West Germany until the mid-1960s.⁴ Until then the West German attitude to the “Eastern Zone” was mainly informed by propaganda organizations, including, for example, the People’s Union for Peace and Freedom, financed by the federal government and the American defense department, the campaigns of the non-partisan Committee for an Indivisible Germany, and those US-subsidized publishers who offered left-wing criticism of the Communist dictatorship in the East.⁵ The GDR, on the other hand, sought to provoke by stressing the Federal Republic’s strong personal ties with the Third Reich. But it was not only through the myth of anti-Fascism that the GDR sought legitimacy. One of the central tenets of its legitimization discourse was the rhetoric concerning the Fascist and revanchist powers that were allegedly dominant in the FRG.⁶ In 1965 the GDR state publishing house issued the so-called Brown Book in three editions, documenting the National Socialist past of some twelve hundred members of the elite who were now active in every professional sector in the FRG. The book allowed the GDR to kill two birds with one stone: on the one hand the normally isolated East German state was able to generate international interest; on the other it could put pressure on its Western competitor.

Once the (German) Basic Treaty of 1972 had eased the relationship between the two states, mutual perceptions began to change, especially the West Germans’ view of the East Germans. This was largely a result of the personal impressions gained through visits to relatives, business trips, and, later, school excursions to the GDR, as well as the observations of West German journalists, who were newly established and accredited in the GDR.⁷ As well as offering a critique of those in power, the latter were concerned with the problems of daily life in the GDR and considered these in the context of the state’s ideals and official self-representation, which also served the East German population as a useful point of comparison. For most West Germans, especially young adults, the GDR was no longer “evil” or the totalitarian Communist enemy, but rather a country of unfamiliar Germans who were simply different from “us” in many ways.

In the 1970s and 1980s West German research into the GDR in the fields of contemporary history and the social sciences was influenced by modernization theory, conflict theory, elite theory, and systems theory and

thus followed trends in mainstream international research. After 1990 it was totalitarianism theory that enjoyed an unexpected renaissance.⁸ The historical treatment of the GDR began to prioritize certain themes — political structures and the apparatus of coercion, crimes and terror, and the victims. The extent to which the conformity or identification of large groups of the GDR population with the regime had stabilized East German society was of less interest.

The dominance of totalitarianism theory was reflected in the work of a number of academic institutions. Soon after it was established the government of the new federal state of Saxony decided to establish the Hannah Arendt Institute for Research on Totalitarianism, which began its work in 1993. Through research, conferences, and the funding of doctoral studies the institute focuses on research into the Communist and National Socialist regimes and publishes the results in various journals including the institute's own. Beyond academic debates among contemporary historians and social scientists, the totalitarianism concept became paradigmatic in politics, the media, and political education. This discourse led to polarizations within unified German society as exemplified by political debates on recent history and broader debates on the development of memorial sites.

Middle-Class and Working-Class Society

The main tendencies in the *Geschichtspolitik* (politics of history) of East and West Germany as summarized above influenced subsequent generations and especially people working in politics, culture, education, academia, and the media. People from all walks of life underwent different kinds of socialization in East and West Germany. In the 1950s attempts were made to alter the self-perception of the working class in the FRG and to encourage a middle-class consciousness. Dirk Schindelbeck und Volker Ilgen describe a campaign conducted in 1956 in their 1999 study "*Haste was, biste was!*" *Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft*. An advertisement from the end of that year reads,

Der Klassenkampf ist zu Ende. Den Begriff des Proletariats gibt es nicht mehr. Im freien Deutschland vollzieht sich eine geschichtliche Wandlung: der ehemals klassenbewusste Arbeiter wird zum selbstbewussten, freien Bürger. Ein Mann, der auf lange Sicht plant, der für seine Kinder eine gründliche Schulung verlangt, der durch Eigentum die Freiheit seiner Familie zu sichern sucht, das ist der Arbeiter von heute.⁹

In the East, too, propaganda talked of a "geschichtliche Wandlung" (historical turn). On the centenary of the 1848 revolution a huge banner

hanging in the center of war-damaged Leipzig declared the end of the bourgeois epoch: “Das Bürgertum hat 1948 und in der Folgezeit versagt. Die Führung im Kampf und Einheit, Demokratie und Frieden ist der Arbeiterklasse zugefallen.”¹⁰

In the East denazification was part of an effort to end the class system. The middle class, the Junkers, and most of the landed gentry no longer played a role in the economy, hence lost their influence on society and everyday life. Some of them left for the West, as did many of those people who did not want to be part of the new society or who had to flee. The social profile of the East German elite thus changed: between 1945 and 1955 for example, one hundred fifty thousand former production workers took on leading roles in the state and economy.¹¹ A working-class society thus developed. The farmers, doctors, engineers, professors, and school directors may have stayed as they were and non-working-class social milieus still existed, but these had a working-class accent. The sociologist Wolfgang Engler describes the normative and dominant influence of the working class thus:

Die Ostdeutschen lebten in einer Gesellschaft, in der die Arbeiterschaft sozial und kulturell dominierte und die anderen Teilgruppen mehr oder weniger “verarbeiterlichtet”. Es wäre eine Absurdität zu behaupten, die ostdeutschen Arbeiter hätten die politische Herrschaft ausgeübt. Aber das soziale Zepter hielten sie in der Hand. Anschauungen, Meinungen, Konventionen, Kleidungs- und Konsumgewohnheiten und nicht zuletzt die Alltagsitten richteten sich nach den Normen und Idealen der arbeitenden Klassen.¹²

The focus of everyday life in East Germany was therefore quite different from that in the bourgeois West. Over generations the East German mentality began to change, though the GDR’s ideological program played only a minor role in this. Representatives of the working class did not need to be advocates of state ideology, and the bourgeois milieu was easily reconciled with pro-Socialist sentiments.

The oft-cited “social warmth” that existed in the GDR, the feeling of social equity, also undoubtedly had a suffocating and destructive side. According to Engler:

Die Feindseligkeit, die konsequenten Außenseitern in der DDR entgegenzuschlug und zur inneren Kapitulation drängte, wurzelte in demselben Egalitarismus, der in anderen Zusammenhängen Solidarität verbürgte. In einer arbeiterlichen Gesellschaft soll sich niemand über die anderen erheben, aber auch niemand untergehen. Wer nicht nur ungewöhnlich lebte, sondern überdies Rat und Hilfe der anderen verschmähte, selber Auskunft wußte, provozierte die Normalitätserwartungen der Umwelt gleich doppelt. Ihm war nicht beizukommen und auch nicht zu helfen. Das zurückgewiesene

Beistandsangebot verband sich mit dem enttäuschten Konformitätsverlangen und pervertierte. Wer notorisch auf seiner Arroganz bestand, der durfte nicht nur, der sollte scheitern und die Überlegenheit der kollektiven Vernunft möglichst schmerzlich erfahren.¹³

For those who had internalized middle-class conventions and patterns of behavior, this proletarianization of East German society meant the loss of these traditionally held and normative functions. This is the perspective from which the author Irene Böhme comments on the process:

Sittenzerfall — Der ganze bürgerliche Plunder, über Bord mit ihm. Knicks und Verbeugung der Kinder: ein Zeichen der Verkrüppelung. Aufstehen vor Älteren, Vorgesetzten: ein Überrest des Untertanengeistes. Wir alle sind “per Du”, denn wir sind alle in der Gewerkschaft. Bei Tisch benehmen wir uns, wie es in einer Proletarierrküche üblich ist. Mit Schürze und Hausschuhen auf die Straße, mit dem Blaumann ins Gasthaus, die Arbeitskleidung ist ein Ehrenkleid. Bunte Perlonschürzen überfluten Fabriken, Läden, Ambulatorien und Kontore. Bald bemerkt niemand mehr, wie häßlich sie sind. Sie sind praktisch. . . . Zur neuen Art des Zusammenlebens gehört, daß man anders miteinander redet als früher. Man spricht deftig, grob und geradezu, nennt das offen und ehrlich.¹⁴

Though exaggerated, this reference to the aesthetic and formal dimensions of the workers’ society does underline its difference from bourgeois society.

Studies into people’s perception of their class have shown to what extent the psychological and ideological paradigms of the working and middle classes have left their mark. These studies present people’s subjective views; objective sociological criteria are not considered. It is interesting to see how the two now unified populations continue to define themselves according to subjective class distinctions. In 1992–93, 61% of those from the former GDR, descendants of the workers’ society, identified themselves as working or lower class and only 37% as middle class. It was almost exactly the opposite in the west, where only 29% saw themselves as working or lower class and 57% saw themselves as members of the middle class.

In both societies, then, a significant number of people identify with a particular class to which, according to objective, sociological criteria, they do not actually belong. The class with which they identify is that which represented the respectable pillar of society in the narratives of the two German states. In the East this was the working class; in the West it was the middle class. One might have expected these differences to level off gradually once the GDR and its conditions of socialization had vanished, but studies in 2000 and 2001 showed that the situation had barely

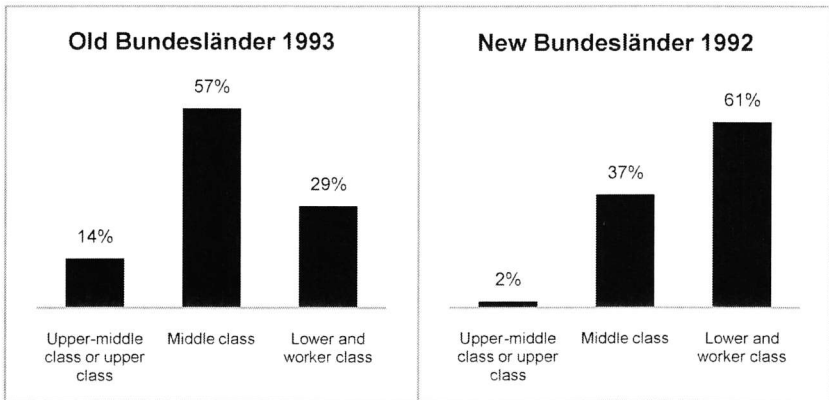


Fig. 11.1. Subjective class identification in west and east Germany in 1992 and 1993. Data taken from Thomas Gensicke, *Die neuen Bundesbürger. Eine Transformation ohne Integration* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998), 148.

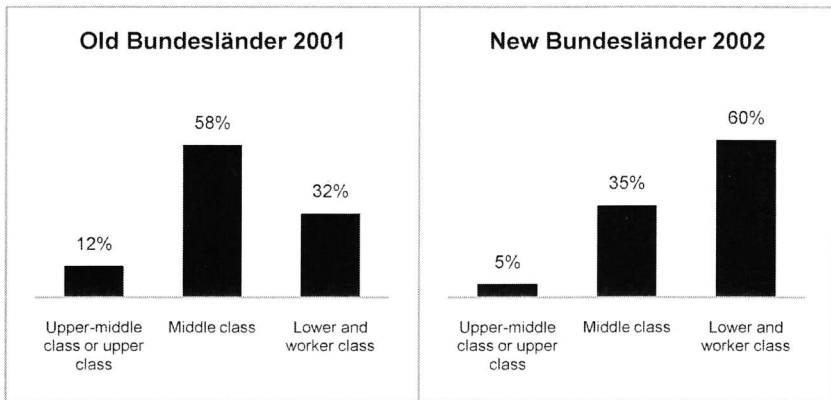


Fig. 11.2. Subjective class identification in west and east Germany in 2001 and 2002. Data from Gunnar Winkler, ed., *Sozialreport 2002: Daten und Fakten zur sozialen Lage in den neuen Bundesländern* (Berlin: Trafo Verlag, 2002), 48.

changed. Such identification with a particular class appears to be deeply ingrained in the mentalities of both eastern and western Germans.

The Socio-Psychological Aspects of Unification

Competing notions of normality that evolved from socialization processes in East and West Germany and had not previously been given much

thought suddenly collided in the years after unification. This process has been addressed in a large number of memoirs and academic studies and through wide media coverage. Studies by the political scientist and therapist Wolf Wagner have proved especially instructive here. Wagner moved from Berlin to teach at a continuing-education college in Erfurt in the former GDR and describes the tensions that emerged in the patterns of communication between eastern Germans and western Germans in the 1990s. He adopts the “culture shock” model, according to which successful communication depends on spontaneous communication patterns and established negotiation practices, the significance and appropriateness of which are repeatedly reaffirmed within a specific cultural context.¹⁵ When people from different cultural backgrounds come together and behave according to their usual patterns, they are often not understood as they would expect to be, resulting in a breakdown in communication. Wagner offers simple examples to encapsulate just how conflict-laden the differences between eastern and western German socialization were in the 1990s. In the eastern German context, for example, it is usual to shake hands with colleagues at the beginning and at the end of the day, something that happens less often in the west. An adherence to habitual modes of behavior can lead to undesired consequences and frustrations in the daily intercultural interaction between east and west Germans. The eastern Germans may be convinced that the western Germans are refusing to shake their hand, that they are arrogant, aloof, and rude. The western Germans, on the other hand, may think of the eastern Germans, who seemingly never stop trying to shake hands, as overly familiar, old-fashioned, and provincial. Similar mutual misunderstandings emerge when it comes to the conventions of small talk. Whereas eastern Germans are prone to talking about shortcomings, grievances, and even personal problems, western Germans prefer simple and trivial topics. In their respective cultures this works perfectly well: the style of communication in the east engenders closeness, a sense of belonging, empathy, or even solidarity; likewise, the established western German conduct produces a comfortable, positive situation in which the agents can be as witty or discrete as is necessary. It is only when eastern and western Germans come together and behave as is “proper” according to their respective conventions that friction occurs. The eastern Germans regard the talkative western Germans as superficial and standoffish, and the latter in turn believe the former to be carping, maudlin, and impossible to please.

Similar differences in western and eastern German socialization are apparent in the ways in which conflicts between groups are handled. While eastern Germans have a tendency to agree tacitly, to compromise, but also to ignore conflict, western Germans are generally more competitive and independent, and challenging another individual is regarded as normal rather than disruptive. When these two communication styles come into

contact, the eastern Germans regard the western Germans as aggressive, domineering, and egocentric and consider themselves to be supportive, ready to compromise, and able to see the whole picture. Western Germans, by contrast, see the eastern Germans as cowardly, conformist, and inhibited, whereas they think of themselves as open-minded, unafraid, and honest. Accordingly, those socialized in West Germany see themselves as being in competition with those around them and strive harder for individuality and self-fulfillment. According to Wagner, for those socialized in the GDR, community takes precedence over individuality, and the cohesion and attunement of the collective is held in higher regard.

The differences between eastern and western German socialization are perhaps best illustrated by the impressions of a West German journalist who lived in the GDR in the 1970s and an eastern German journalist's experiences in the 1990s. They offer two reflections of the so-called spur of ambition (*Stachel des Ehrgeizes*), or different forms of self-presentation. During the course of her research into the GDR the West German journalist often visited private parties and noticed that West German women often made the best first impression since they were more glamorous. Apart from a little eyeshadow, the East German women avoided make-up altogether. During the course of the evening, however, the East German women would begin to catch up: they had, she noted, "eine unnachahmliche Art, zu beobachten, leise zu lächeln und dann plötzlich aus dem Stand heraus sehr direkt zu sein." Moreover,

Dahinter stecke ein Selbstbewusstsein, das nicht von äußeren Dingen abhängt. Andererseits brächte die Gleichheit einen Typ Mensch hervor, dem der Stachel des Ehrgeizes fehle, der gehorsam, obrigkeitstreu und angepasst sei. Biederkeit allüberall. Die Salzstangen, die Sofakissen mit Kerbe, die Parteinelken in Zellophan, die verstaubten Blattpflanzen unter Neonlicht, die Aktentaschen und Wattejacken, die geblühten Einkaufsbeutel und die Nylonblusen überm Rock, außerdem werde zuviel Torte gegessen. Alles wahr, alles unwahr.¹⁶

The journalist from the GDR takes this as a cue for her own observations:

Der Knick im Sofakissen kommt in den besten Familien vor, auch im Westen. Biederkeit zeigt sich so oder anders. Provinzialität, Mittelmaß und Opportunismus existieren in vielerlei Spielart. Auch Karrierismus kann spießig sein. Kurz nach Mauerfall bin ich auf einem wichtigen Empfang eines wichtigen Verlagshauses. Man plaudert, macht einander Komplimente, ist nett, wo es sich lohnt. Da erscheint der Boss. Ich kenne ihn, weil sein Konzern die Zeitung, bei der ich arbeite, aufgekauft hat und er öfter in die Redaktion kommt, um Auflagensteigerung anzumahnen. Der Boss steht an einer Art Tresen, ich daneben, in diesem Moment bin ich der Macht zufällig nahe. Und

dann, erst ungläubig, dann irritiert, nehme ich eine unterirdische Bewegung wahr. Männer im Smoking drängeln mich Schritt für Schritt weg vom Tresen, weg von dem Mann, der die Macht verkörpert. Unaufhaltsam wie eine Naturgewalt schiebt sich die schwarze Herde näher und näher zum Mächtigen. Als gehorche sie einer Vorbestimmung. In der Herde ist auch der nette Kollege aus Hamburg, mit dem ich mich eben noch prima unterhalten hatte. Ein physisch spürbarer Verdrängungsvorgang spielte sich da ab, unbewusst und instinktiv, sozusagen genetisch, der Stärkere überlebt. Nach zehn Minuten bin ich Weg vom Fenster, der “Stachel des Ehrgeizes” war mir noch nicht gewachsen.¹⁷

The differences of opinion described by Wagner — conformist/authentic East Germans and egocentric/individualistic West Germans — are typical of the conflict between the middle classes from the former East and West Germany. After unification the gulf was at its greatest in the communication practices and self-presentation of employees, qualified personnel, and academics. Other east-west conflicts arose in the world of the eastern German industrial worker, where it was less a question of behavior and conduct and more an issue of eastern German industrial workers having lost their power to negotiate, the “passive strength” that they had had in the GDR, as well as their symbolic status as the most important, indeed, the “vanguard” class. The industrial sociologist Werner Schmidt identifies not just the usual conflict of interests between workers and managers but the clash between those socialized in middle-class and working-class societies. In his study of the transformation process in the metalworking industry, he found a so-called ideology of productive work among industrial workers from the former GDR. Related to this, according to Schmidt, is “die schwer korrigierbare Überzeugung, daß die eigene Gruppe die einzig wirklich produktive, . . . und damit wichtigste sei, auf die niemand verzichten könne.”¹⁸ The same ideology was used to identify those groups that did not actually do any (meaningful) work. Workers distinguished themselves from those “below” them — the “lazy,” the “anti-social” and “work-shy” — and from those “above” (in higher positions) — the “big heads” and the “useless lot up there.”¹⁹ After 1990 this working-class consciousness and “ideology of productive work” clashed with new procedures and hierarchies. The eastern German manager of a ball-bearing works described the asymmetrical privileges that had been introduced between 1992 and 1994 and the simultaneous dwindling respect of the worker thus: “Wir haben also, wir haben immer gelernt: ein Mensch ist ein Mensch! Egal, ob der nun Werkleiter ist oder ein Kumpel an der Maschine, du hast die alle gleich behandelt. So. Und das ist hier [im nun westlich gemanagten Wälzlagerwerk] nicht so.”²⁰ Both of these examples from the 1990s serve to highlight how different the results of being socialized in the workers’ society are from being socialized in bourgeois society.

The cultural phenomenon of the working class is also sustained by the economic and social factors that were behind the transformation process in the east.²¹ The economy of the former GDR is dependent on and dominated by that in the west. The new *Bundesländer* thus constitute “eine Region mit kapitalistischer Marktwirtschaft ohne einheimisches Kapital und einheimische Eliten.”²² In the two decades of transformation the new *Länder* have not, for the most part, been able to emulate the West German model of middle-class society or to establish the middle class required for this purpose.²³ Instead, 25% of the population in the new *Länder* are now part of the “abgehängte Prekariat” (“neglected underclass”).²⁴ Only 4% of western Germans belong to this same group. The members of this “underclass” comprise skilled workers on the minimum wage, the unemployed, people attempting to be self-employed, and those on welfare benefits. Another significant group is the unemployed, half of whom are caught in the spiral of poverty and hopelessness generated by the Hartz IV reforms to the welfare state. Of those people of working age, it is these individuals who have the least job security (if they have a job at all) and who face the greatest financial uncertainty. They see themselves on the losers’ side and without any opportunity of getting back on track.

East-west differences continue to exist in everyday life. There are differences in fertility rates, in attitudes toward justice and freedom, and in combining motherhood with a career. In 2004 eastern German mothers were having their first child on average about a year earlier than those in the west,²⁵ and eastern German mothers between the ages of twenty-five and forty-five are four times more likely to agree with the idea of combining career and motherhood than their western counterparts.²⁶ More western Germans prefer the idea of having no children and of staying single, and when western German women do have children, they tend to marry. Eastern Germans, by contrast, are more interested in having children but consider parenthood and marriage much less a matter of course. For this reason the eastern German pattern is described as a “Kombination von Familialismus und Deinstitutionalisierung,” which is to say that there is less faith in (new) institutions than there is in the family (as authority).²⁷ Accordingly, while parents and children are emotionally closer in the east than in the west, there is a greater distance between them and social institutions. This applies also to the institution of marriage: at 58%, the number of children born out of wedlock is almost three times higher in the east than the 22% in the west.²⁸

Eastern and western German identities also vary in terms of social values. Eastern Germans are generally as committed to the state as they are to issues of freedom and equal opportunity,²⁹ hence they also perceive considerable tension between the values that they believe should be a priority for society and those that actually are its priority. They believe that social justice should be the most important value but find that in fact “free-

dom” is.³⁰ They believe that the value of freedom is not sufficiently emphasized in connection with other key values such as social justice and responsibility, and that it is therefore played down. This is reflected in the varying interpretations of the value of freedom and justice between eastern and western Germans. While most educated western Germans understand freedom as “freedom of action,” eastern Germans define it as freedom from need.³¹ Social justice, meanwhile, is understood by the majority of eastern Germans to mean a society in which “everyone has the same opportunities” and not, as is often suggested, a society in which “everyone has the same standard of living.”³²

East German Discourses since 1990

Once the smaller GDR had decided to accede to the larger (old) FRG, which involved taking on all of its institutions and norms, the old East German elite and its skilled and managerial staff were ousted as a result of legal rulings and the dismantling and restructuring of businesses and institutions. They were partly replaced by western Germans and also by those members of the eastern German sub-elite whose professional advancement had been hindered by the GDR authorities. In general, eastern Germans remain underrepresented in elite positions and managerial roles. Sociologists in Germany routinely conduct detailed surveys of elites, and the last such pre-unification study was carried out in 1981. By the time of the next study, in 1995, it was clear that the representation of eastern Germans in various elite sectors in Germany needed to be researched. In 1995, 20% of the population were from the former GDR, but the percentage of eastern Germans in elite positions was an altogether different matter. To give some examples, in the judiciary and military the percentage of eastern Germans in elite positions was zero, in the economy it was 0.4%, and in academia 7.3%. At 12% and 13% the underrepresentation of eastern Germans was slightly less dramatic in the media and culture industries. The one area where they were not underrepresented was in politics.³³ Overall, the supervision and management of the authorities, the economy, academia, media, and culture in the new *Länder* was in the hands of the so-called *Wessis*, and these personnel and ideological hierarchies have proved to be self-perpetuating; in 2004 the numbers of western Germans in leading managerial positions in the economy and in the public sector had increased further.³⁴ By the end of the 1990s, however, the first generation of eastern German journalists, social scientists, and historians had qualified and trained under the guidance of western German mentors and begun to exert some influence on eastern discourse, and now the issue of eastern or western German provenance has begun to lose meaning; of future significance will be the question of identification — in

other words, the guiding values and master narratives of the new members of the “media and political classes.”³⁵

These personnel developments and the related mindset form the parameters for the discourse on eastern German identity since 1990. In united Germany the media approached this new development in the way that all media does in a modern critical culture: it surveyed, investigated, interpreted the “other,” and compared it to western German norms. Discussing eastern Germans — the stranger, the other — meant talking about one’s own identity. Since 1989 ongoing “Ost-Diskurse” have determined the presentation of the eastern Germans and their culture.³⁶

Three factors have governed the way the “Ost-Diskurse” have been shaped and articulated in the media. First, national broadcasters and broadsheets were able to take over the small market in the former GDR without any major editorial changes. Second, the management of the newly implemented broadcasters and most of those working for the newly restructured regional newspapers in the new federal states were from the west.³⁷ And third, the eastern Germans failed to provide an adequate professional counter-discourse. Eastern German spokespeople were used only so long as they conformed to the established direction of the “Ost-Diskurse.”

The westernization of the eastern German media landscape meant that the eastern Germans saw themselves, their GDR past, and their culture — including their success or failure in the process of rebuilding the East (“Aufbau Ost”) — described and evaluated mainly from a western German perspective and thus missed a forum through which their views could be presented, be it the eastern German experience of the transformation process or their newly-won insights into the GDR and the recently unified Germany. The national papers, that is the western German print media, mostly wrote about the eastern Germans from a western perspective and were therefore ignored by eastern German readers.³⁸

Ostalgie as Reaction

One of the consequences of this absence was the development of various forms of *Ostalgie*, five of which will be outlined below.

1. *Ostalgie* in Advertising

The advertising campaign for a cola brand originating in the GDR is paradigmatic for the commercially motivated use of this discourse. In 1992 Club Cola identified itself as eastern German; its slogan — “Hurrah, I’m still alive!” (“Hurra, ich lebe noch!”) — declared its allegiance and portrayed it as a survivor of the transition process. The

Hurra, ich lebe noch!

Von einigen belächelt, ist sie doch nicht tot zu kriegen: Club Cola – die Cola aus Berlin. Natürlich frisch. Weniger süß. Aber mit viel Geschmack. Gibt es jetzt auch light. Freuen Sie sich mit.



Club Cola. Unsere Cola.
Mit natürlichem Mineralwasser
in der Mehrwegflasche.

NEU
Nur 1 kcal
pro Glas

CLUB COLA
MIT NATÜRLICHEM MINERALWASSER
KOFFEINHALTIGE LIMONADE
0,5l

CLUB COLA Light
MIT NATÜRLICHEM MINERALWASSER
0,5l

Fig. 11.3. Advertisement from 1992. Kultur- und Werbegeschichtliches Archiv Freiburg.

remainder of the advertising text — “it may be laughed off by some, but it won’t be killed off” (“Von einigen belächelt, ist sie doch nicht totzukriegen”) — echoed the discussions about identity being conducted in eastern German canteens and living rooms, essentially: We made it and we won’t let them get us down. The advertisement continues: “Club Cola — The Berlin cola. Naturally refreshing. Not as sweet, but plenty of taste. . . .” (“Club-Cola — die Cola aus Berlin. Natürlich frisch. Weniger süß. Aber mit viel Geschmack . . .”). It thus takes on some of the eastern German stereotypes of the western Germans, namely that the “other” Germans are perfumed and thus artificial, fake — that is, the opposite of “naturally refreshing, not as sweet.”³⁹ The eastern German electronics brand RFT provides another example of the use of *Ostalgie* in advertising in trying to attract customers by inverting previously existing assumptions in the slogan “east German and therefore good” (“ostdeutsch, daher gut”).

Ost-
deutsch,
daher **gut.**

Viele unserer Bürger kaufen Waren von überall, nur nicht aus inheimischer Produktion. Wen wundert es da, wenn sich die Lagen unserer Unternehmen nur langsam bessern?

Dabei können es gerade hochwertige ostdeutsche Waren mit jeder Konkurrenz aufnehmen. Was von neutraler Seite bestätigt wird.

test gut TV 55-113
video Gut TV 63-182
video Gut TV 70-100

Wir sind stolz auf diese Urteile. Unsere Investoren in modernen Fertigungsanlagen haben sich also gelohnt. Wie gut für uns alle.

Fragen Sie Ihren Fachhändler nach den Modellen der neuen RFT-Fernsehgeneration:
SIESTA - SIESTA NOVA - SIESTA PLUS

RFT
Technology made in Germany

Fig. 11.4. Advertisement from 1992. From *Horizont: Zeitung für Marketing und Medien* 45.6 (November 1992): 40.

2. *Ostalgie* as a Layman's Practice

Ostalgie has frequently been identified as GDR nostalgia. Some define it as an increasing trivialization of the GDR accompanied by a defensive position regarding the challenges of transformation, or even as a provocative polemic that relativizes the crimes of the GDR state. Such forms did exist, but *Ostalgie* in the 1990s was more complex. It was an informal way of

working through profound changes. These included the “peaceful revolution” and the sudden dissolution of the GDR — which had always emphasized its power and longevity — the sudden replacement of its omnipresent and uniform range of products, and the subsequent introduction of the federal German system in East Germany. By attending or organizing “*Ostalgie* parties,” members of certain eastern German milieus were finally able to bid farewell to the GDR and take a degree of self-assurance with them into the new present.

Ostalgie parties were like historical carnivals: the costumes were typical GDR outfits or uniforms, the rooms were decorated with flags, portraits of politicians, and banners sporting ironic propaganda slogans. Just as carnivals have a stage repertoire, so, too, did *Ostalgie* parties: Honecker and Ulbricht look-alikes presented the grotesque pathos and convoluted jargon of the GDR’s self-identity, hit songs and pop songs were played, parodies of Socialist hymns and “workers’ songs and battle songs,” and people sometimes danced to modified Young Pioneer songs. Those who attended these parties may have been wistful, but they were also celebrating this restaged GDR’s loss of power.

3. *Ostalgie* as Business

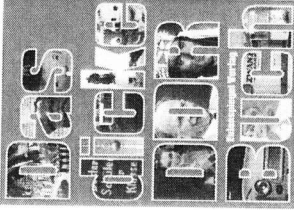
In both the former East and West Germany, industry has capitalized on East German memories repackaged as books, audio-recordings, games, and cult and designer products. But *Ostalgie* products also serve new fashions, for symbols and signs from the GDR period are now welcomed by young people looking for a style that distinguishes them from others.

4. *Ostalgie* in Films and TV Shows Made after 1990

These films and programs are a composite of the third and fifth examples since they are just as much about business as they are messages about self-understanding and the defense of an eastern German identity. Trivial comedies such as *Go Trabi Go* (1991) and *Sonnenallee* (1999), which offered a slapstick treatment of the GDR past, were particularly successful. The tragi-comedy *Good Bye, Lenin!* (2003) offered a more thoughtful perspective and duly won awards at home and abroad. It did not just try to make sense of the GDR past or thematize the post-1990 problems between east and west, but also managed to address the mourning of the disappearance of the GDR, the project with which the protagonist’s mother and a not insignificant number of eastern German viewers had been engaged for a considerable part of their life, as well as a non-judgmental belief in a Socialist vision. It was notable that when the then minister of culture Christina Weiss invited members of the Bundestag to a special screening of the film on 2 April 2003, only a third of them attended. In the summer of the same year, various TV stations began broadcasting “*Ostalgie* Shows.”⁴⁰ The Trabis, mopeds, wall-to-wall cupboards and domestic products,



DDR-Box
 Die Grundausstattung
 Blechdose, 23 x 23 x 7 cm
 14,95 €, 26,90 SF**
 ISBN 3-359-01470-7



Das dicke DDR-Buch
 224 S., mit vielen, durch-
 gängig farbigen
 Abbildungen, geb.
 mit SU
 19,90 €, 34,90 SF*
 ISBN 3-359-01445-6



Das Rekordbuch
 224 S., mit vielen, durch-
 gängig farbigen
 Abbildungen, geb.
 mit SU
 19,90 €, 34,90 SF*
 ISBN 3-359-01461-8

Fig. 11.5. "DDR Box" and GDR books published by Eulenspiegel-Verlag Berlin, from Eulenspiegel's Autumn 2004 catalogue.

fashion and pop music of the GDR were reproduced on stage while artists, athletes, and TV stars from the former GDR, as well as western GDR correspondents, chatted about East Germany amid these props. Criticism concerning the programs' aesthetic was uniform, and the political assessment of the *Ostalgie* shows provoked heated debates and even the conclusion, "They minimize the dangers that represent an ideological threat to democracy and ridicule the victims."⁴¹

5. *Ostalgie* as Marginalized Counter-Discourse

The *Ostalgie* parties are over. What remains is a multitude of amateurish GDR museums, a few of which are now beginning to achieve professional standards. It seems as though the people who established "alternative" GDR museums did so in order to present a counter to the "official" and professional GDR museums, where the emphasis is on representing repression and indoctrination as well as the poverty and ugliness of daily life in the GDR.

The various small-circulation newspapers, internet platforms, underfinanced journals, and small publishing houses are an important aspect of this counter-discourse. They provide many professionals with a forum not available to them in the better-established institutions and media. Contributing to this discourse are former GDR academics and professionals who lost their positions after 1990. On the one hand, GDR history is now written from a Socialist perspective that is no longer restricted by party discipline, censorship, and the once off-limits archives. In other words this is a version of GDR history that was not possible under the specific conditions governing academic research in East Germany. On the other hand it is a reaction to the dominant discourse on confrontation with the GDR past. The questions posed within this discourse are addressed and discussed from a personal perspective, and the results of official research into the GDR are added to or amended. Sometimes the contributors to this discourse seek to emphasize that they were right at the time, defending their opinions just as polemically and tendentiously as those defending the opposite view.

These aspects of *Ostalgie* do not by themselves constitute an eastern German identity. Through their representation in the media they also define western German identity, presenting it as a counter-identity to that in the east. The specific character of the western Germans' discourse on the former GDR, which in the 1990s led to the aforementioned gaps in the discourse and the emergence of *Ostalgie*, does not appear much changed today, as several recent articles analyzing recent media discourses have shown.⁴² These conclude that the media image of eastern Germans, which sometimes relies on a highly selective use of facts, continues to support western German identities.⁴³ What this means for eastern Germans is that they operate in a (media) world in which the media's prevailing view of

them is as an unknown, “foreign” group. This view stems from a western German position that, as the Germanist Kersten Sven Roth has convincingly argued, functions as the “Normal Null.”⁴⁴ “Eastern German discourses” determine the rhetoric and the ways of thinking about the former GDR. They comprise a “wirklichkeitserzeugender Modus” (method that shapes reality), a socio-institutional matrix of understanding, interpretation, and presentation.⁴⁵ All of this means that the competing identities rooted in German division do not diminish but in fact are reasserted.⁴⁶

The specific eastern German identity depicted through these discourses is often seen as romanticizing or suppressing the GDR, or even as constituting a direct threat to democracy. Surveys, however, do not substantiate these fears. Only a small percentage of eastern Germans (10% in 2002⁴⁷ and 2006,⁴⁸ and 9% in 2010⁴⁹) want to “have the GDR back at all costs.” Surveys conducted in 2010 offer a more differentiated picture. A significant number of eastern Germans confirmed that life is better for them now compared to life in the GDR: 19% agreed that life had mostly improved in the years since 1990, and 23% agreed that the years have “improved rather than worsened.” This contrasts with the 27% of eastern Germans who believe that life during this period “has improved as much as it has worsened” and the 18% for whom life after unification has “worsened rather than improved.”⁵⁰ In total then, only 42% of eastern Germans see themselves as on the winning side. This is partly due to the fact that East German workers, who in 1990 constituted 63% of the GDR population, count as “unification’s biggest losers.”⁵¹ Half of them have been forced into early retirement, into job-creation schemes, into low-capital start-up businesses, and into unemployment, while many women have had to give up their careers altogether. A quarter of the eastern German population is living in unfavorable economic circumstances (“abgehängte Prekariat”) and the majority of this group comprises members of the former working class of the GDR.⁵²

A rather different picture emerges when eastern Germans compare their current lives not with their lives in the GDR, but with those of contemporary western Germans. Although 42% of eastern Germans identify improvements in their personal lives, they still feel themselves to be members of the eastern German community and as such feel they are second-class citizens. In 1995, 72%⁵³ of eastern Germans believed this; in 2002 the figure was 57%,⁵⁴ and it was 64%⁵⁵ in 2008. One of the possible reasons for this is that as a “dependent economy,” a region with a capitalist economy but with “no local capital or indigenous elite,” eastern Germany makes the west wealthier — while the west poses obstacles to development in the east.⁵⁶ The east lacks the local elites that might exert independent influence, articulate the eastern German experience, opinions, and wishes, and utilize economic, social, and cultural resources to facilitate a more independent eastern German society and help overcome the differences between east and west.

The discrepancies between eastern Germany and western Germany are in part attributable to the significant differences in eastern and western Germans' savings and salaries, which have hardly changed in the twenty years since unification. In 1996 eastern German employees earned 75% of what those in western Germany earned, and this figure had risen to only 79.6% in 2009.⁵⁷ The differences in average financial assets in east and west are even more pronounced. West Germans aged seventy or over have on average savings and assets of 62,400 euros compared with the 23,700 euros of their contemporaries in the east; for those aged between sixty and sixty-nine the ratio is 52,200 euros in the west to 20,500 in the east; for those aged between fifty and fifty-nine the ratio is 38,100 euros in the west to 17,700 euros in the east. It is only among younger generations that the differences are less marked.⁵⁸

The feeling of being second-class citizens, still widespread among eastern Germans, is based as much on the tangible sense of being materially worse off as it is on the feeling that the specific memories, interpretations, and values of most of the former GDR's population are not integrated into "eastern German discourses" in the media, education, and politics, but simply ignored or even stigmatized. This is particularly evident in the remembrance culture and the politics of history.

Opposing Memories in Two Decades of German Unity

Political scientists, historians, sociologists, and cultural historians have carried out detailed research into the GDR in the two decades since its collapse.⁵⁹ Both the nature of inquiry and the interpretation of results, however, tend to be from a western German perspective. Furthermore, the political and media discourses present a one-sided account of the current research in history and the social sciences: the history of the SED regime and its crimes still resonates more profoundly than does the GDR's social, cultural, and everyday history, something that was especially apparent in the anniversary year of 2009.⁶⁰

These discourses have led to a fragmentation of collective memory of the GDR, of which the historian Martin Sabrow has identified three forms:⁶¹

(1) the state's preferred memory of the dictatorship, which is predominant in public memory and focuses principally on the apparatus of power and repression and on the duality between perpetrators and victims. This type of memory attaches greater importance to the fundamental difference between political freedom and subjugation than to socio-economic benefits and thus regards the Stasi rather than "the feeling of security within society" as the key to understanding and evaluating the GDR.

(2) the memory of having adapted oneself to the regime to “get by,” which is predominant throughout the society of the former GDR and centers on the conflicts, solutions, and successes in a predominantly heteronomous society. These memories are concerned with the relationship between the power of the state and everyday normality. It is thus a narrative of “the right life in the wrong one” and of self-assertion in politically and materially challenged circumstances — in other words the sentiment that “we will not allow our biographies to be taken from us; not everything was bad.”

(3) the memory of progress that clings to the Socialist or post-capitalist project ideology, which is much less present in public memory and is maintained by former members of the GDR elite and by younger left-wing activists. In addition to the process of sanitizing and justifying the GDR past, the central issue concerns the moral and political comparison of the two German states. Major contemporary problems such as the global financial crisis and the consequences of German military deployment are thus always bound up with the question of the GDR’s legitimacy. This form of memory can be summarized using an old GDR phrase coined in the sixteenth-century Peasant’s War: “our grandchildren will fight it out better.”

There is now a clear difference between the western German idea of the GDR, which is largely shaped by contemporary history, and that of most eastern Germans, and this is evident in the surveys that consider the GDR’s historical legitimacy. Most eastern Germans surveyed do not believe that the GDR was a reprehensible regime that was doomed to fail from the start. When asked whether “it was an attempt to build a fairer society that ultimately failed,” eastern Germans answered as follows:⁶²

	Yes	To some extent	No
1990	63.4	19.3	12.2
1995	74.8	14.9	6.6
1999	72.9	17.3	7.1

Eastern responses to the question of whether the GDR was an *Unrechtsstaat* (state not governed by the rule of law) make for interesting reading. In 1994, not long after the GDR’s demise, 33% answered “true,” 17% were unsure and 50% said “untrue.” Western Germans saw things quite differently:⁶³

If someone says: “The SED state was an *Unrechtsstaat*,” would you say it is true or untrue? (Figures in percent)

June 1994	Western German	Eastern German
True	73	33
Untrue	15	50
Undecided	12	17
Total	100	100

The situation in 2009 was different due to the new generations surveyed. That eastern German opinion had changed was evident from a survey conducted by the Institute for Market Research in Leipzig for the magazine *Super Illu*, which published the results in March 2009.⁶⁴

“Was the GDR an *Unrechtsstaat*?” (Figures in percent)

March 2009	Total East Germans	18–29 year olds	30–49 year olds	50 years and over
yes	28	32	29	25
to some extent	25	18	23	29
no	41	37	43	41

It is noticeable that the number of those unsure as to whether the GDR was an *Unrechtsstaat* (“to some extent”) had risen to 25%, and there had been a larger decrease in the numbers of those who saw the GDR as an *Unrechtsstaat* than in those who denied this. What is particularly striking about the 2009 survey is the difference between age groups: on the one hand it shows that the younger generation, which only knew the GDR from the media, judged it more harshly than those who experienced the state as young people and adults: 32% of 18–29-year-olds agreed that the GDR was an *Unrechtsstaat* as opposed to 29% of 30–49-year-olds; and only 25% of those aged 50 and over agreed. The statistics are similar for those for whom the GDR was not an *Unrechtsstaat*: 37% of 18–29-year-olds agreed compared to 43% of 30–49-year-olds and 41% of those aged 50 and over.

The second noticeable development in terms of age is apparent in the variance in those responding “to some extent.” Only 18% of 18–29-year-olds believed that the GDR was partly an *Unrechtsstaat* and partly a *Rechtsstaat* (state based on the rule of law); by contrast, the older generation sided more firmly with this point of view (23% of 30–49-year-olds and 39% of those 50 and over). It is apparent, then, that the three possible options (yes, to some extent, no) are more evenly distributed among the older generations than among 18–29-year-olds, where there is a sharper divide.

In their assessment of the GDR, young people are less willing or able to acknowledge any nuances or grey areas than are older generations. They tend toward an unequivocal view of the GDR as either an *Unrechtsstaat* or a *Rechtsstaat*. Less than a fifth of them chose the option “to some extent.” This black-and-white view is a reflection of the tendency for young people not just to make undifferentiated assessments but also to identify strongly with or distance themselves from certain issues. It also points to the tensions between the various memory narratives that young eastern Germans must draw upon to construct an image of the GDR — either the informal, relatively marginalized memory discourses within families and in alterna-

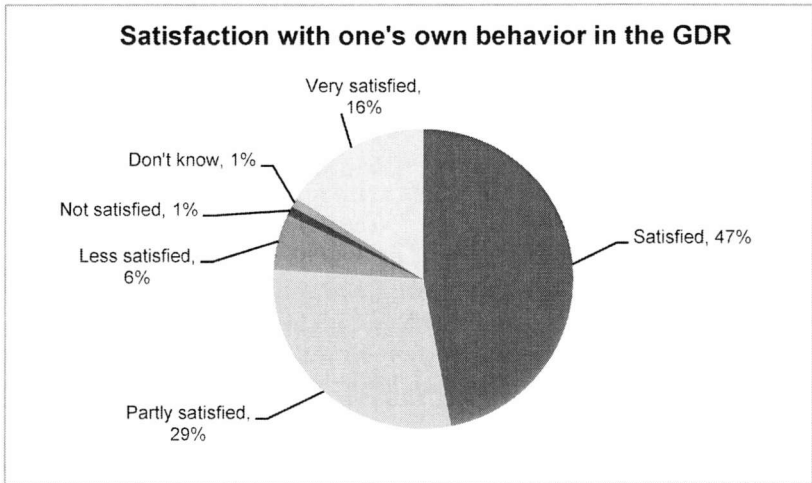


Fig. 11.6. Level of satisfaction with one's own conduct in the GDR (2007). Data from Jenaer Zentrum für empirische Sozial- & Kulturforschung, ed., Zur sozialen Lage der Opfer des SED-Regimes in Thüringen: Forschungsbericht im Auftrag des Thüringer Ministeriums für Soziales, Familie und Gesundheit (Erfurt, 2008), 52.

tive contemporary history, which range from a romanticized, simplified approach to a self-critical view of the GDR, or the critical or even demonizing discourse shaping the image of the GDR in schools, politics, political education, and the media.

The respondents assessed their own behavior during the GDR more positively than they did the conditions in which they lived. Most eastern Germans claimed that, despite difficult circumstances, they behaved decently or worked to improve things. At the same time, they are confronted with images and accounts of the GDR and of eastern Germans in the media, politics, and education that may reinforce western Germans' sense of identity but that remain unacceptable to most eastern Germans.⁶⁵ These discourses imply that eastern Germans did not sufficiently distance themselves from the dictatorship and thus underline their apparent guilt and involvement. On the other hand, these debates also point to the constant repression and the state's shortcomings and thus establish the majority of eastern Germans as victims, though the latter pride themselves on having coped with life in the GDR. These views invariably prompt the indignant reply that the GDR cannot be understood if you did not experience it first-hand. A study conducted in Thüringen in 2007 is representative of how eastern Germans regard their own conduct in the GDR. The majority (63%) stated that they were

either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their own conduct; only 7% were less satisfied or dissatisfied.⁶⁶

***Geschichtspolitik* since 1990: The Return of a “New” Master Narrative?**

In unified Germany, discourses on identity, history, and politics are informed by the master narrative of the “two German dictatorships.” This narrative is bound up with totalitarian theory, according to which the unified Federal Republic is positioned equidistant from the Third Reich and the GDR. Talk of the “two German dictatorships” narrows the gap between the crimes of National Socialism, with its racist and imperialistic ideology and social Darwinism, and the crimes of the GDR, with its anti-capitalist and collectivist class-war ideology. In so doing, it legitimizes history as well as contemporary politics in the Federal Republic; however, this may give western Germans a sense of identity, but the majority of eastern Germans are unable to connect with such a narrative.

Totalitarian theories are particularly evident in the policies and debates regarding history and memorialization. The law concerning the establishment of the Saxony Memorial Site Foundation, which was passed by the government of Saxony in 2003, is a perfect example. It does not distinguish between the Third Reich and the GDR, but rather aims to commemorate “politische Gewaltverbrechen von überregionaler Tragweite, von besonderer historischer Bedeutung, an politische Verfolgung, an Staatsterror und staatlich organisierte Morde . . . , die Opfer politischer Gewaltherrschaft und den Widerstand gegen *die Diktaturen*”⁶⁷ (italics added). The current conflicts surrounding the official inauguration of the memorial site at Fort Zinna in Torgau and the memorial’s inscription also exemplify the difficulties facing the Saxony Memorial Site Foundation in highlighting the differences and historical causalities between the Nazi and GDR regimes (for details of this controversy, see the chapter by Caroline Pearce in this volume).

Unified Germany’s master narrative, which is based on totalitarian theory, not only influences perceptions of contemporary history, in narratives on identity and in political education it focuses on the importance of parliamentary structures and political freedom, while other issues that are just as important for a democracy receive inadequate attention. This implies that the social deficits that do not explicitly affect the political right of freedom — issues such as equal opportunities or social justice, freedoms compromised by economic factors, the state’s weakness in relation to the private economy — have a latent potential to threaten democracy. For most of the western German population, whose ideology and socialization is shaped by middle-class society, this narrative has an integrative impact

and helps to shape identity, but it will hardly resonate with the population of the former GDR, whose ideology and socialization were shaped by a working-class ethos.

This politics of history has implications for public understanding and for identity formation. It supports the unified FRG's master narrative, which is weighted in favor of political freedoms and parliamentary democracy, and routinely ignores other issues such as the social foundation of democracy and the material and cultural resources that facilitate wider social participation throughout the population. Any indignation in response to the social problems mentioned above, which only indirectly affect the political right of freedom, is repeatedly denounced as an attack on democracy.

For most of the western German population, whose ideology and socialization are shaped by middle-class society, this narrative helps to shape a common identity, but it will hardly resonate with the majority of the population of the former GDR, whose ideology and socialization were shaped by a working-class ethos. This master narrative would seem only to serve the current elite, for the enduring one-sided and negative portrayal of the GDR curtails ideas about political alternatives and reform, and simply validates the current federal German political system.

*Translated from the German by Nick Hodgkin,
with assistance from Caroline Pearce*

Notes

¹ The process known as unification or reunification is termed "accession" in the "Decision by the People's Chamber Concerning the Accession of the German Democratic Republic to the Federal Republic of Germany's Basic Law of 23 August 1990" and in the Unification Treaty ("Upon the accession of the German Democratic Republic to the Federal Republic of Germany in accordance with Article 23 of the Basic Law . . ."). The term "accession" will be used here to refer to this process.

² Edgar Wolfrum, *Geschichtspolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Der Weg zur bundesrepublikanischen Erinnerung 1948–1990* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1999), 78.

³ Wolfrum, *Geschichtspolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 385.

⁴ Up to the 1960s scholarly debates on the GDR tended to center on totalitarianism theories, although these did little to change attitudes in either state. After this period a more differentiated approach emerged with the introduction of new theories on the GDR. See Jens Hüttmann, "'De-De-Errologie' im Kreuzfeuer der Kritik. Die Kontroverse um die 'alte' bundesdeutsche Forschung vor und nach 1989," *Deutschland Archiv* 40, no. 4 (2007): 671–81.

⁵ See Klaus Körner, *“Die Rote Gefahr”: Antikommunistische Propaganda in der Bundesrepublik 1950–2000* (Hamburg: Konkret Literatur Verlag, 2003); Stefan Kreuzberger, *Kampf für die Einheit: Das gesamtdeutsche Ministerium und die politische Kultur des Kalten Krieges 1949–1969* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2008); and Stefan Kreuzberger, “Das BMG in der frühen Bonner Republik,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 1/2 (2009): 27–33, http://www.bpb.de/publikationen/11SG4B,0,Das_BMG_in_der_fr%FCchen_Bonner_Republik.html.

⁶ Monika Gibas, “‘Bonner Ultras’, ‘Kriegstreiber’ und ‘Schlotbarone’. Die Bundesrepublik als Feindbild der DDR in den fünfziger Jahren,” in *Unsere Feinde: Konstruktion des Anderen im Sozialismus*, ed. Silke Satjukow and Rainer Gries (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2005), 75–106.

⁷ See especially Jutta Voigt, *Westbesuch: Vom Leben in den Zeiten der Sehnsucht* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2009).

⁸ See Hüttmann, “‘De-De-Errologie’ im Kreuzfeuer der Kritik,” 676.

⁹ Dirk Schindelbeck and Volker Ilgen, *“Haste was, biste was!”: Werbung für die Soziale Marktwirtschaft* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1999), 147.

¹⁰ The image comes from Karl-Detlef Mai’s archive and was published in Monika Gibas, *Propaganda in der DDR* (Erfurt: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2000), 16.

¹¹ Rainer Geißler, *Die Sozialstruktur Deutschlands: Zur gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung mit einer Zwischenbilanz zur Vereinigung*, 2nd ed. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996), 240.

¹² Wolfgang Engler, *Die Ostdeutschen: Kunde von einem verlorenen Land* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1999), 200.

¹³ Engler, *Die Ostdeutschen*, 300.

¹⁴ Irene Böhme, “Jugendbande oder der missbrauchte Idealismus,” in *In Sachen Erich Honecker: Kursbuch 111*, ed. Klaus Markus Michael and Tilman Spengler (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1993), 13–23, here 18.

¹⁵ Wolf Wagner, *Kulturschock Deutschland: Der zweite Blick* (Hamburg: Rotbuch, 1999), 127–46.

¹⁶ Voigt, *Westbesuch*, 125. Voigt is citing the following publication by her West German colleagues Eva Windmüller and Thomas Höpker, *Leben in der DDR* (Hamburg: Gruner und Jahr, 1976).

¹⁷ Voigt, *Westbesuch*, 125–26.

¹⁸ Werner Schmidt and Klaus Schönberger, *“Jeder hat jetzt mit sich selbst zu tun”:* *Arbeit, Freizeit und politische Orientierungen in Ostdeutschland* (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 1999), 62.

¹⁹ Schmidt and Schönberger, *“Jeder hat jetzt mit sich selbst zu tun,”* 59.

²⁰ Werner Schmidt, *Betriebliche Sozialordnung und ostdeutsches Arbeitsnehmerbewusstsein im Prozess der Transformation* (Munich: Hampp, 1996), 79.

²¹ See Gunnar Winkler, ed., *Sozialreport 2004. Daten und Fakten zur sozialen Lage in den neuen Bundesländern* (Berlin: Trafo-Verlag, 2004), 68.

²² Winkler, *Sozialreport 2004*, 72.

²³ Michael Hofmann, "Schwierige Suche nach gesicherten Verhältnissen: Von einer erwerbstätigen sozialen Mitte kann kaum gesprochen werden — Was die Region prägt, ist eine neue Armut," *Das Parlament* 38 (2009): 6.

²⁴ Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, "'Gesellschaft im Reformprozess': Die Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung untersucht Reformbereitschaft der Deutschen" (2006), http://www.fes.de/inhalt/Dokumente/061016_Gesellschaft_im_Reformprozess.pdf, 83, accessed 20 June 2010.

²⁵ Evelyn Grünheid, "Überblick über die demographische Entwicklung in West- und Ostdeutschland von 1990–2004," in *Die Bevölkerung in Ost- und Westdeutschland: Demographische und gesellschaftliche Entwicklungen seit der Wende*, ed. Insa Cassens, Marc Luy, and Rembrandt Scholz (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009), 12–47, here 24.

²⁶ Jürgen Dorbritz and Kerstin Ruckdeschel, "Die langsame Annäherung — Demografisch relevante Einstellungsunterschiede und der Wandel in den Lebensformen in West- und Ostdeutschland," in Cassens, Luy, and Scholz, *Die Bevölkerung in Ost- und Westdeutschland*, 261–94, here 279.

²⁷ Dorbritz and Ruckdeschel, "Die langsame Annäherung," 287.

²⁸ Grünheid, "Überblick über die demographische Entwicklung in West- und Ostdeutschland von 1990–2004," 24.

²⁹ Thomas Bulmahn, "Das vereinte Deutschland — Eine lebenswerte Gesellschaft?" *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 52, no. 3 (2000): 405–27.

³⁰ Erik Gurgsdies, "Demokratie ohne Gerechtigkeit — Wasser auf die Mühlen rechtsextremistischer Parteien: Anmerkungen anlässlich der Landtagswahl in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern im Lichte neuer empirischer Untersuchungen," *Deutschland Archiv* 40, no. 2 (2007): 215–22, here 216. See also Michael Edinger and Andreas Hallermann, *Politische Kultur in Ostdeutschland: Die Unterstützung des politischen Systems in Thüringen* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004).

³¹ Gunnar Hinck, "Ostdeutsche Marginalisierung," *Deutschland Archiv* 40, no. 5 (2007): 808–14, here 811.

³² "Social justice" was translated as "equal opportunities" by 81% and as equal living standards by 17%. See Gurgsdies, "Demokratie ohne Gerechtigkeit," 216.

³³ Jörg Machatzke, "Die Potsdamer Elitestudie — Positionsauswahl und Ausschöpfung," in *Eliten in Deutschland: Rekrutierung und Integration*, ed. Wilhelm Bürklin and Hilke Rebenstorf (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1997), 35–69.

³⁴ Winkler, *Sozialreport 2004*, 72.

³⁵ Siegfried Jäger, *Kritische Diskursanalyse: Eine Einführung*, 2nd ed. (Duisburg: DISS, 1999), 143.

³⁶ See also Thomas Ahbe, "Ost-Diskurse. Das Bild von den Ostdeutschen in den Diskursen von vier überregional erscheinenden Presseorganen 1989/1990 und 1995," in *Diskursmauern: Aktuelle Aspekte der sprachlichen Verhältnisse zwischen Ost und West*, ed. Kersten Sven Roth and Markus Wienen (Bremen: Hempen, 2008), 21–53; and Thomas Ahbe, Rainer Gries, and Wolfgang Schmale, eds., *Die*

Ostdeutschen in den Medien: Das Bild von den Anderen nach 1990 (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2009).

³⁷ See also the study conducted by the Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (MDR) and the 2004 edition of *Umschau* cited in Peer Pasternak, “Wissenschaftsumbau: Der Austausch der Deutungseliten,” in *Am Ziel vorbei: Die deutsche Einheit — Eine Zwischenbilanz*, ed. Hannes Bahrmann and Christoph Links (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2005), 221–36, here 224–25.

³⁸ For further details see “15 Jahre nach dem Fall der Mauer: Die Entwicklung der Zeitschriftennutzung in den neuen Ländern,” Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2004: 21; for a summary see <http://www.ifd-allensbach.de/main.php?selection=73&rubrik=0>.

³⁹ The advertisement is pictured in Thomas Ahbe, “Deutschland — vereintes, geteiltes Land: Zum Wandel sozialer Strukturen und Meta-Erzählungen,” in *Fremde Brüder. Der schwierige Weg zur deutschen Einheit*, ed. Niels Beckenbach (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2008), 55–97, here 76.

⁴⁰ ZDF began with its “Ostalgie-Show” on Saturday, 17 August 2003; on Friday, 22 August, MDR started its weekly “Ein Kessel DDR” (six episodes); a day later SAT-1 began its Saturday show “Meyer und Schulz — die ultimative Ost-Show” (broadcast on 23 und 30 August); and on 3 September the weekly “Die DDR-Show” began on RTL (four episodes). The wave of *Ostalgie* finished with two trashy “GDR Specials” as part of Pro Sieben’s “Kalkofes Mattscheibe” series on 6 and 13 October.

⁴¹ See Ahbe, “Deutschland — vereintes, geteiltes Land,” 922.

⁴² For more on this see Julia Belke, “Das Bild der Ostdeutschen im öffentlich-rechtlichen Fernsehen: Eine Diskursanalyse des ARD-Politmagazins KONTRASTE in der Zeit von 1987 bis 2005,” in Ahbe, Gries, and Schmale, *Die Ostdeutschen in den Medien*, 135–80. In the same volume see also Juliette Wedl, “Ein Ossi ist ein Ossi ist ein Ossi . . . Regeln der medialen Berichterstattung über ‘Ossis’ und ‘Wessis’ in der Wochenzeitung *Die Zeit* seit Mitte der 1990er Jahre,” 113–34.

⁴³ Bettina Radeiski and Gerd Antos, “‘Markierter Osten’: Zur medialen Inszenierung der Vogelgrippe auf Rügen und am Bodensee,” in Roth and Wienen, *Diskursmauern*, 55–67.

⁴⁴ Kersten Sven Roth, “Der Westen als ‘Normal Null’: Zur Diskurssemantik von ‘ostdeutsch’ und ‘westdeutsch,’” in Roth and Wienen, *Diskursmauern*, 69–89.

⁴⁵ Sabine Hark, “Feministische Theorie — Diskurs — Dekonstruktion: Produktive Verknüpfungen,” in *Handbuch Sozialwissenschaftliche Diskursanalyse*, ed. Reiner Keller, Andreas Hirsland, Werner Schneider, and Willy Viehöver (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2001), 1:353–71, here 362.

⁴⁶ Thomas Ahbe, “Du problème de ‘l’unité intérieure’ dans l’Allemagne unifiée,” in *L’Allemagne unifiée 20 ans après la chute du Mur*, ed. Hans Stark and Michèle Weinachter (Lille: Editions Septentrion, 2009), 71–89. See also Ahbe, “Ost-Diskurse.”

⁴⁷ Gunnar Winkler, ed., *Sozialreport 2002: Daten und Fakten zur sozialen Lage in den neuen Bundesländern* (Berlin: Trafo-Verlag 2002), 54.

⁴⁸ Klaus Schroeder, *Die veränderte Republik: Deutschland nach der Wiedervereinigung* (Stamsried: Vögel-Verlag 2006), 725.

⁴⁹ Sozialwissenschaftliches Forschungszentrum Berlin-Brandenburg e.V. (SFZ), “Sozialreport 2010: Daten und Fakten zur sozialen Lage 20 Jahre nach der Vereinigung — 1990 bis 2010 — Positionen der Bürgerinnen und Bürger” (Berlin: SFZ, 2010), 28, <http://sfz-ev.de/>.

⁵⁰ SFZ, “Sozialreport 2010,” 22.

⁵¹ Michael Vester et al., *Soziale Milieus im gesellschaftlichen Strukturwandel: Zwischen Integration und Ausgrenzung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), 533.

⁵² See Vester et al., *Soziale Milieus im gesellschaftlichen Strukturwandel*, and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung & TNS Infratest Sozialforschung, *Gesellschaft im Reformprozess*.

⁵³ “Stolz aufs eigene Leben: SPIEGEL-Umfrage — Viele Ostdeutsche trauern der alten Zeit nach,” *Der Spiegel*, 3 July 1995: 40–42, here 49.

⁵⁴ Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann and Renate Köcher, eds., *Allensbacher Jahrbuch der Demoskopie: 1998–2002* (Munich: K. G. Saur, 2002), 11:521.

⁵⁵ Institut für Interdisziplinäre Konflikt- und Gewaltforschung der Universität Bielefeld: Presseinformation GMF-Survey (2008), <http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/ikg/download/Pressemappe2008.doc>.

⁵⁶ Winkler, *Sozialreport 2004*, 69, 72.

⁵⁷ SFZ, “Sozialreport 2010,” 73.

⁵⁸ Western Germans aged between forty and forty-nine had savings of 29,900 euros compared with savings of just over 18,700 euros among eastern Germans; for those under forty the ratio was 13,200 euros to 10,700 euros. See SFZ, “Sozialreport 2010,” 77.

⁵⁹ Rainer Eppelmann, Bernd Faulenbach, and Ulrich Mählert, eds., *Bilanzen und Perspektiven der DDR-Forschung* (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2003). Four years later Jens Hüttmann mentioned 1,800 completed research projects about the GDR. See Hüttmann, “‘De-De-Errologie’ im Kreuzfeuer der Kritik,” 671.

⁶⁰ The Bonn-based media institute Media Tenor was clearly relieved to observe that “the commemorations and reviews of the fall of the wall and GDR history brought the negative image of the GDR to the fore. In recent years television news reports have been less concerned with the Stasi and the border regime.” According to this institute, the contemporary historiography of the GDR is directly analogous to its trivialization: “The less the news reports mention the GDR’s shadowy sides, the more the nostalgic retrospection of well-connected ex-functionaries and memory propagandists such as Gysi and Thierse will penetrate.” See Media Tenor, “Gedenktage dämpfen die Ostalgie,” 29 September 2009, http://www.media-tenor.de/newsletters.php?id_news=668.

⁶¹ Martin Sabrow, “Die DDR erinnern,” in *Erinnerungsorte der DDR*, ed. Martin Sabrow (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2009), 11–27.

⁶² Jürgen Hofmann, “Identifikation und Distanz,” in *Deutsche Fragen von der Teilung bis zur Einheit*, ed. Heiner Timmermann (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001), 431–49, here 435 (note: not everyone surveyed responded, hence the discrepancy from 100% here).

⁶³ These statistics are from Noelle-Neumann and Köcher, *Allensbacher Jahrbuch der Demoskopie: 1993–1997*, 10:584.

⁶⁴ *SUPER Illu*, March 2009, no. 13: 23 (note: not everyone surveyed responded, hence the discrepancy from 100% here).

⁶⁵ Thomas Ahbe, “Die Ost-Diskurse als Strukturen der Nobilitierung und Marginalisierung von Wissen: Eine Diskursanalyse zur Konstruktion der Ostdeutschen in den westdeutschen Medien-Diskursen 1989/90 und 1995,” in Ahbe, Gries, and Schmale, *Die Ostdeutschen in den Medien*, 59–112.

⁶⁶ Heinrich Best and Michael Hofmann, eds., *Zur sozialen Lage der Opfer des SED-Regimes in Thüringen: Forschungsbericht im Auftrag des Thüringer Ministeriums für Soziales, Familie und Gesundheit* (Erfurt: Thüringer Ministerium für Soziales, Familie und Gesundheit, 2008), 52.

⁶⁷ “Gesetz zur Errichtung der Stiftung Sächsische Gedenkstätten zur Erinnerung an die Opfer politischer Gewaltherrschaft” (Sächsisches Gedenkstättenstiftungsgesetz — SächsGedenkStG), 22 April 2003, §2, <http://www.stsg.de/cms/sites/default/files/u9/errichtungsgesetz.pdf>.