

United and Divided: Germany since 1990. An Introduction

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Unification after Division

The German Democratic Republic (GDR) existed as a separate state between 17 October 1949 and 3 October 1990 when it opted to join the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and subscribe to its constitutional order, the Basic Law. The formal act of unification put an end to a postwar history of political division that commenced in 1945 with the occupation of Germany by the victorious Allies after the Second World War. Since then, the Cold War and its competition for political control and military dominance between East and West, placed Germany at the hub of these rivalries, not as a major actor but as a testing ground and showcase. The creation of the two German states in 1949 – the FRG in May, the GDR five months later – was closely linked to the policy aims of the rival blocs and their determination to document their strength inside Germany. The West German and the East German states, therefore, became outposts for conflicting systems, each of them aiming at reinventing its part of Germany in its own way. Although Cold War rivalries had largely subsided at the time of German unification, the political, economic and social divides between the two Germanies were slower to fade, or refused to do so altogether.

In reinventing their part of occupied Germany, each of the Western Allies initially sought to recast the political order in their respective zone of influence in accordance with the democratic processes and institutions of their own country. As zones were merged from 1947 onwards, national differences were superseded by a concept of democracy which owed more to the Weimar Republic and the experiences gained there by the German political leaders of the first hour than to American, British or French assumptions as to how democracy should operate. As the Basic Law took shape, it defined the Federal Republic of Germany as a democratic polity and society, stipulating institutional parameters that proved, over time, successful in facilitating the emergence of a stable parliamentary government and a democratic political culture

(Almond and Verba, 1963; Smith, 1986). In the mid-1950s, this remade Germany 'rejoined the powers' as a sovereign state and established itself as a leading political force at a European and international level (Conradt, 1980; Edinger, 1986).

Inside Western Germany, the spectre of a National Socialist revival disappeared in the wake of rapid economic reconstruction, unprecedented growth rates and an increase in living standards across all social strata (Dahrendorf, 1965). Initially, Germany's new democracy may have been a fair-weather product based on economic performance and policy output rather than a liking for party pluralism, parliamentary decision-making and other hallmarks of democracy. In time, however, material output ceased to be a precondition for democratic orientations as Germans stopped asking whether they needed more than one political party, took party pluralism for granted and began to ask more searchingly about how each party served the citizens and their personal interests (Röhrig, 1983; Kolinsky, 1991). West Germany's affluent society offered multiple opportunities of education, training, advancement and social mobility that exceeded those enjoyed by previous generations. While this remade society entailed risks, such as unemployment, income poverty or experiences of social exclusion, it also held the promise, and even the chance, of realising personal life goals and reaping the rewards for individual efforts and achievements (Hradil, 1993; Beck, 1986).

In the Soviet zone, recasting occupied Germany took a different turn. While the Soviet Union was interested in extending its sphere of influence by adding a buffer state modelled on its own political and economic order, it was concerned, above all, to recoup some of the losses incurred during the Second World War by extracting reparations from the German territory under its control and by securing long-term trading advantages (Naimark, 1995). On the one hand, the Soviet Union directed German Communists, who had fled there from Nazi Germany and had been groomed as a future elite, to implement a socialist order and a centrally planned economic system in Eastern Germany, on the other hand it syphoned resources from the country and impeded post-war recovery. The project of reinventing Eastern Germany was, in any case, much more ambitious than that in the West, and involved the abolition of private enterprises, the collectivisation of agriculture, the creation from scratch of steel production in the region, and the mining and exploitation of lignite on a massive scale to meet energy needs. A system of state control and central planning was to determine all aspects of economic and social life (Schröder 1998). In the 1950s, state policy was aimed at excluding the former middle classes from leading positions and at giving an advantage to the working class in education, employment and political or economic leadership. Ten years on, the new elite contrived to retain their positions and secure similar privileges for their descendants (Dennis, 2000a). Increasingly, conformity with state ideology mattered in gaining access to education, advancement and social status (Geissler, 1996). Despite its self-proclaimed status as a Workers' and Peasants'

State, functionaries and officials operated the system that had developed in the GDR and also benefited from it.

East Looking West

At the heart of the GDR's collapse was a sense of injustice felt by its citizens that their own state had failed to offer them adequate rewards for their commitment and hard work (Jarausch, 1994). The urgency of this sense of injustice is borne out by the fact that migration from the GDR to the FRG could not be halted despite closed and guarded borders, and despite the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 to plug the loophole of those fleeing to the West by travelling from one side of Berlin to the other. While its borders were sealed or virtually sealed, the GDR lost some four million inhabitants who fled to the West (Zwahr, 1994: 438–447). After the Berlin Wall was declared open on 9 November 1989, about 300,000 left within a year, while a further 500,000 have moved from the former GDR to the former West since unification.

Several experiences contributed to a sense of injustice among East Germans. One such experience relates to the proximity of the Federal Republic. While the GDR leadership applied its most ardent rhetoric to rubbish the Western state and vilify it as a hotbed of National Socialist and reactionary politics, East Germans noted the rise in living standards and income, the freedom of West Germans to travel, and envied them their liberty and, even more fervently, their affluence. Of course, the GDR made progress and achieved successes in rebuilding the economy and in guaranteeing life without poverty for most. However, persistent shortages and a political pricing policy, which rendered consumer goods, such as television sets and cars, extremely expensive relative to family incomes, made East Germans resentful of their deprivation and of a government unable or unwilling to improve matters. Once Western television programmes could be viewed in the GDR, East Germans constructed their image of the West on the basis of advertisements, and developed a keen sense of quality brands and modern lifestyles, accessible in the GDR only in special outlets called 'intershop' and with payment in foreign currency, which most East Germans, of course, did not possess (Faulenbach *et. al.*, 2000). Blue collar workers in particular, whose status and rewards fell far short of those proclaimed in state ideology, lost confidence in the socialist project and grew increasingly detached from its aims and disillusioned with its functionaries (Vester *et. al.*, 1995). When East Germans took to the streets in 1989 with the chant 'we are the people', to admonish the government for having become too detached from ordinary citizens, the critical intent changed as soon as the students and intellectuals of the first demonstrations were outnumbered by blue collar workers and rank-and-file East Germans. To voice their sense of injustice, they coined the slogan that was to dislodge the regime: 'we are one people'.

East Joins West

Unification was intended to remove the differences that had accumulated over forty years between Eastern and Western Germany. Decisive in achieving this new equilibrium was the resolve to extend to the former GDR the institutional planks that had generated stability and prosperity in the West and had made the FRG into the more successful of the two Germanies (Grosser, 1998). The first of these planks consisted of the social market economy, its commitment to capitalism and free enterprise, and its use of a convertible currency as a measure of economic strength and an entry point to world markets. Prior to unification, therefore, economic and currency union introduced the Deutschmark to the GDR and placed its economy on a market footing, even before the formal process had started. This entailed abolishing state control, dismantling the fifteen vast cartel-like *Kombinate* (combines) that dominated all industrial sectors, and creating in Eastern Germany an economic structure based on private ownership. The second of these planks, intended to guarantee a successful transformation to the Western German model, consisted of extending the scope of the Basic Law to apply in Eastern Germany. This was accomplished by reconstituting five *Länder* in the GDR in place of the fifteen administrative districts (*Bezirke*) that had operated there since 1952, and by activating clause 23, whereby any East German *Land* was entitled to adopt the Basic Law and effectively become part of the Federal Republic. The Basic Law had been drafted in the 1940s when *Länder* existed in Eastern Germany, while the chance of unification arose after their abolition. For this reason, recreating *Länder* was a requirement if unification was to take place without formulating a new, tailor-made constitution for the united country. Given the perceived strength and success of the Basic Law, its ascribed status as the backbone of democratic stability, and also a reluctance of West German political decision makers to give East Germans an equal voice in shaping post-unification developments, unification followed the administrative route of transferring Western institutions, structures, intentions and policies to the East in order to adapt it, instead of initiating a process of mutual adjustment.

Some East Germans, notably intellectuals and stalwart supporters of the discredited Socialist Unity Party, SED, condemned the one-directional process of unification as a take-over and as humiliating and destructive in its effects as colonialism had been in Third World countries (Jaraus and Gransow, 1994). Most East Germans, however, were too distrustful of their own leaders, politicians or institutions to doubt that anything Western would be better than the quagmire of inefficiency and double-speak it was to replace. Above all, they were persuaded by the promise that the material gap to the West would be closed. After the opening of the Berlin Wall, consumer goods began to fill East German shops, and after the currency union in July 1990, the consumer society appeared to have arrived for good (Segert and Zierke, 1997). East Germans, who had been waiting to purchase a car for ten years or so and had only been

able to keep their place on the waiting list if they complied with the ideological norms laid down by the ruling party and interpreted by local functionaries, could now enter a showroom and acquire the car of their choice. The same liberating experience applied to television sets, automatic washing machines, furniture and all the other items defined as luxury goods by the GDR government and priced out of reach for most East Germans. Longer standing injustices also seemed set to disappear. In the mid-1950s, wages in both parts of Germany had been at about the same level. In 1990, average earnings in Western Germany were about three times higher than in the East (Winkler, 1990). Unification promised to close the gap and raise earned incomes of East Germans to 'normal' German levels. Moreover, in Western Germany, the working week had been reduced to thirty-five hours without loss of income. In the GDR, it had remained above forty-three hours, a discrepancy exacerbated in a comparative perspective by the lower income levels. At the macro level, unification seemed to pave the way for private and public investment to flow into the region and invigorate what East Germans continued to perceive as a sound economy. Their personal sense of disadvantage compared to Western conditions did not lead to the conclusion that the East German economy had failed and could not be sustained. Although East Germans were widely aware of constant shortages of raw materials and the disruption they caused to all processes of production, distribution and administration, official figures had always projected a positive picture to the country and to the world at large. Moreover, planning procedures tended to obfuscate weaknesses rather than illuminate or remedy them. Only a small inner circle of top functionaries, possibly confined to the *Politburo*, knew that the GDR was virtually bankrupt before its leadership succumbed to the popular pressures for change, helped by the refusal of the Soviet Union, under Michael Gorbachev, to keep the GDR afloat by providing military backing.

Expectations after Unification

Unification, therefore, occurred in a unique and problem-laden setting of expectations and assumptions. East Germans anticipated that material conditions would improve rapidly to match Western German levels. They also believed that their home-grown economy could flourish with new investment and could close the modernisation gap with the West (Dennis, 1993). Joining forces with the West would underpin the productive strength of the region and complement the expected rise in living standards after unification. At no point did East Germans regard their economy and its enterprises beyond salvation or connect restructuring with plant closures, unemployment and extensive de-industrialisation.

Expectations about the kind of changes that would impact on everyday lives after unification incorporated assumptions about the permanency of GDR

institutions and practices. They also included pockets of personal dissatisfaction and models of Western living (Kolinsky, 1995). The East German vision of life after the GDR did not include the risks and uncertainties at the heart of the competitive and individualised culture of the West. When such risks and uncertainties penetrated their personal space, East Germans were disorientated and frequently responded by glorifying the GDR in retrospect as a more secure and humane living environment (Schmitt and Montada, 1999). For example, unemployment as a structural risk of a market economy had been virtually ignored in the run-up to unification. In their attempt to gain favour with an East German public impatient to partake in the successes of the West, most media and political parties painted a vibrant picture of future gains. Chancellor Kohl promised 'blooming landscapes' for Eastern Germany.

At the time, many leaders believed that the economic miracle of the post-war years could be replicated and even improved upon after unification; some surmised that the concerted effort of rebuilding and upgrading the East would soon make it the most modern, most advanced and most successful region in Germany, turning the old FRG into a backwater by comparison (Dennis, 2000a). Of the established political forces, only the Social Democratic Party remained sceptical and warned, in its policy statements and its election campaigns of 1990, that the cost of unification might threaten Western German prosperity, and that the East was destined for a massive economic decline and a rise in unemployment. Few voters in East Germany believed these warnings (Padgett and Poguntke, 2001). Even the Party of Democratic Socialism, PDS, which had replaced the Socialist Unity Party in the GDR when one-party government finally collapsed in December 1989, could not turn its disdain for unification into electoral gains beyond a hard-core of staunch SED supporters determined to warn of impending disasters. Since the East German public had learned to dismiss proclamations by their ruling party as untruthful, they were unwilling to listen to its successor, not least since the public mood in 1990 had swung emotively and fervently against a continuation of the GDR and in favour of unification as a new beginning.

New Divisions and Opportunities

The unexpected outcomes of unification have been too numerous to list here (see Reissig, 1993). After all, a whole system was replaced, its economic structure, its political organisation and processes, its social fabrics and patterns of opportunities remodelled, abolished, reinvented. At its core, unification was lopsided, intended to change the East while the West would emerge unaltered and even confirmed as superior in all aspects of its political, economic and social system. These parameters of system transfer ignored the fact that most East Germans had never questioned the key institutions of the GDR and liked many (although not all) manifestations of state policy in their lives. Thus, sta-

ble employment biographies were taken for granted in Eastern Germany when West Germans had already learned to live with unemployment and endure periods of income poverty and social exclusion (Kolinsky, 1998a). Employment for women and the provision of state-funded child care were taken for granted in Eastern Germany, but not in the West. A flat wage structure with modest differences between income groups in Eastern Germany was taken to signify equal treatment of all working people; the wage differentiation after unification, based on educational and professional qualifications, occupational groups and levels of seniority, created winners and losers and defined new risks of income poverty (Hanesch *et al.*, 1994).

These risks were exacerbated by the unexpected fundamental significance of money (Starke, 1995). In the GDR, the cost of housing, energy, essential food-stuffs and child rearing, for instance, had been heavily subsidised. After unification, market principles applied while state support was phased out, leaving east German families and individuals to face newly significant costs and unfamiliar demands on household budgets. The increase of rental charges in particular created a new dependency on state benefit and heightened risks of homelessness (Flockton, 1999). At the same time, the dismemberment of the socialist order reversed decades of social demotion. House owners, whose property had been taken into state administration or was left to decay for lack of building materials and access to repair work, found themselves reinstated as landlords or owner-occupiers, able to improve, dispose of and profit from their inherited assets in a manner that had been impossible in the GDR. Of course, owners from outside eastern Germany could also reclaim their rights and were resented for doing so. Among east Germans, however, home ownership through inheritance became more meaningful than it had been for decades, while high earners utilised their new purchasing power to acquire property and, above all, buy their own homes (Kolinsky, 1998b: 107). Moreover, a significant number of fledgling entrepreneurs used their own premises to open a business. While the location of such business premises was not always suitable for attracting customers and building success, property ownership opened opportunities for income generation and constituted a potential entry route to an emerging middle class.

East Still Looking West

The state-administered levelling of GDR society fractured when unification unleashed the multiple forces of social mobility, income differentiation, class difference, personal opportunity and unexpected exclusion that had characterised western German society for decades. The recasting of eastern Germany left no marks in the west beyond a policy commitment to curtail social dislocation and stifle discontent by transferring substantial funds into the region to provide a borrowed affluence and sustain social peace. In responding to their

altered environment, east Germans engaged with the new opportunities but in doing so relied on values, orientations and assumptions that were familiar to them from the GDR era. This blend of GDR-legacies with the system parameters and social conventions that had been extended to the east from the west had not been expected by the architects of unification. They had been confident that abolishing the GDR would free east Germans to emulate west German models of organisation and behaviour. They had not expected to find east Germans more firmly conditioned by their history and past and had not anticipated that the transformation unleashed by unification would be experienced negatively as uncertainty and serve to reconstruct a positive image of the GDR as a stable, caring and secure setting. At the time of unification, only a handful of east Germans found anything to recommend the GDR. More than a decade on, few wish to reinstate it, but a majority claim that the wholesale abolition of its institutions and practices had been rash, and to the detriment of ordinary people (Dennis, 2000b). Even the young generation, who grew up in eastern Germany after unification, believe that unification exacerbated inequalities and would have yielded better results if more had been preserved of the GDR and its defined pathways through life.

In evaluating their own circumstances and socio-economic prospects, east Germans tend to look back to the GDR and sideways to the old FRG. Conclusions rely to some extent on perceived advantages and disadvantages, on personal memories or second-hand images, notably of life in western Germany. Increasingly, however, conclusions can draw on information in the public domain and define their own evidence. While public authorities in the GDR had controlled virtually all information flows and muzzled the media in an attempt to institutionalise consensus and suppress critical comment, unification ended these restrictions. Of course, East Germans had learned to read between the lines and detect the spin, but the policy of non-information or mis-information left them short of hard facts, data and reliable insights into their own situation and that of others. Unification changed all this. Now, the media, politicians, political parties, members of the elite or celebrities were free to report, comment and voice opinions, leaving east Germans, for the first time since the early 1930s, free to assemble information from a variety of sources with different slants, and to make up their own mind.

The outcome has been a dual perspective on post-unification developments. At the personal level of material circumstances, income change and long-term prospects, a majority of east Germans hold that matters have improved for them. At the collective level, negative conclusions prevail. Thus, most east Germans think that they are treated as second class citizens in unified Germany and that their region remains disadvantaged (Reissig, 2000; Schmitt and Montada, 1999). These perceptions are borne out, for example, by the federal government's report on poverty and wealth, the first of its kind in post-war German history. Published in April 2001, the report showed that in 1998, west German households remained, on average, three times as wealthy

as households in the east. Here, the division of Germany casts a shadow, since West Germans had been able to accumulate wealth in addition to earned income while East Germans had not. The east/west gap was at its widest among the over sixty-fives for whom unification offered few chances, since it occurred near the end of their working lives or limited their earnings potential through early retirement or unemployment. Best placed, by comparison, were east Germans under the age of thirty-five whose assets amounted to 52 per cent of their west German peers and who were able to benefit from the new opportunities in a market environment. The wealth gap between west and east remains considerable (Preller, 2001: 5). The same survey showed that in the late 1990s, the richest 10 per cent in western Germany controlled, on average, assets worth 1.1 million Deutschmark, the richest 10 per cent in eastern Germany just 422,000. At the bottom end of the spectrum, a similar discrepancy prevailed: the poorest half of the population owned assets worth 22,000 Deutschmark in the west and just 8,000 Deutschmark in the east (*ibid.*: 6).

Discrepancies of this kind are no longer camouflaged by socialist state ideology nor hidden from public view. Although wage adjustments have narrowed the east/west gap to 25 per cent and public policy is committed to its disappearance, east Germans understand the difference between reliance on earned income and wages on the one hand, and on the other the accumulation of wealth in the shape of property, investments or savings. In basing their sense of injustice on these discrepancies, they do not point the finger at the GDR and the after-effects of curtailing private ownership and imposing state administration. Their comparative perspective is confined to the period between German unification and the present time because they expect the state to intervene with special measures in order to remove the perceived material disadvantages. Meeting these expectations of equality with the west is all the more difficult since many east Germans continue to view the GDR as a polity and society that had been committed to the equality of its citizens, and was successful in instituting it (Kolinsky, 2002). While previously unpublished information has shown that discrimination and unequal treatment had been practised in the GDR, few east Germans adjusted their GDR-image to reflect its shortcomings.

Regardless of the changed parameters since unification, east Germans do what they have always done: look west to compare lifestyles, and define their expectations of the future. For those who remain in eastern Germany, the comparative focus on the west translates into a sense of being disadvantaged, treated unjustly and shortchanged by unification. This distrust of transformation and its effects in eastern Germany continues to persuade significant numbers to leave for the west. The migratory pressures that had prevailed in, and finally dislodged, the GDR continue to manifest themselves more than a decade after its demise.

United and Divided: Eastern Germany since 1990

In applying the west German model to recast the east, unification initiated a transfer of institutions, structures, policies and personnel that closed the west-east divide that had opened in the post-war era, but it did so in a one-sided way. It confirmed the processes and practices that had emerged in the west as a blueprint for successful development in the east. In so doing, unification obfuscated shortcomings pertaining to the west and approached eastern Germany as if it contained nothing but shortcomings. Unification could have been an opportunity to embrace reform by transferring policies and structures only after faults, that had been evident before 1990 in western Germany, had been ironed out. Instead, unification served as a protective shield against pressures for change and allowed west German policy makers to upgrade to the status of a model in terms of whatever happened to be current practice. Flaws that had inspired political debate and a search for improvements in West Germany when the division was still in force, were condoned and implemented in the East in the course of system transfer.

The one-directional thrust of unification created its own imbalances. The architects of unification were right to expect that system transfer would aid stability and curtail many of the uncertainties that plagued other post-communist countries in their bid for a new beginning. They were too confident in assuming, however, that the east would replicate the west once the system was in place. Rather than replicating the west, the east produced its own divided history after unification. This divided history is the theme of this book.

In the opening chapter, Mike Dennis reviews the writing of GDR history since unification. Generally speaking, research on the GDR has been buoyed by access to new archival materials, the availability of personal testimony by former functionaries as well as by standard-bearers of opposition, and has been freed from the ideological pressures of matching historical interpretation to political assumptions about the nature of East Germany which were present in the era of division. Dennis argues that the GDR was a paradigm of a modern dictatorship in its practice of political control and its agendas of economic and social modernisation. Some studies have highlighted the multiple injustices perpetrated by the state, its Ministry of State Security (Stasi) or major leaders and minor functionaries against ordinary citizens, dissidents and others deemed to violate the prescribed consensus with state policy. Yet, the GDR was more complex than the notion of an unjust state, an *Unrechtsstaat*, suggests. Former members of the elite have not only tried to use autobiographical accounts to document their hidden motivations and personal sensitivities. More important has been a new emphasis for historical research on everyday history and assumptions of normality in the GDR. These accounts have unearthed a wealth of detail on the lifestyles, expectations and values of East Germans before unification and their lasting impact as east/west differences since then.

The main body of the book explores some of the changes triggered by unification inside eastern Germany and evaluates their impact on the proximity or distance between west and east. In chapter two, Chris Flockton reviews the massive financial support provided by west Germany to the east as soon as unification got under way. The story he tells is one of ambitious intent to achieve system innovation by means of monetary transfers, and also one of repeated shortfalls, revisions, and new initiatives. Transforming the east has been much more complex and demanding of additional resources, requiring west Germans to make much larger contributions via taxation and special aid programmes than anyone had anticipated. In the second decade after unification, confidence is wearing thin that funding can close the east/west gap and inject the same momentum and formula of success into the east German economy that had lifted its west German counterpart from post-war gloom to post-war miracle.

On the face of it, political transformation to the west German model should have been more straight forward. The transfer of electoral and party legislation replicated the framework for political participation, while the west German parties themselves sought east German partners and extended their organisations, machinery and policies to apply in the new *Länder*. A hidden assumption underlying this aspect of system transfer was that the Socialist Unity Party (SED) had been so discredited that its successor, the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), stood no chance of revival. Peter Barker shows in chapter three that after a slow start, the PDS gained ground from the mid-1990s onwards inside east Germany as a potential coalition partner, and at a national level as the trusted voice of east Germany in the parliamentary and political arena. While the political system has been united, the German party landscape has displayed new diversity and divides.

From a system perspective, the GDR and the FRG occupied opposite poles of the political spectrum. The state socialist order in the East may have linked its organisation as a dictatorship with extensive welfare provisions and an agenda of modernisation, but it had no place for personal liberties, social or political diversity and unconditional human rights. In this perspective, the better Germany was situated in the West. Yet, as Anthony Glees argues in chapter four, the Federal Republic did not live up to its constitutional promise of equal rights and political accountability but allowed infringements to be perpetrated that undermined its credibility and credentials. Glees interprets the financial scandal surrounding Helmut Kohl, the former German Chancellor, as a violation of democratic principles, perpetrated at the very heart of democracy and contrasts this case with the human rights violations perpetrated on behalf of the state by the Stasi in the GDR era. The chapter challenges the complacent view that democracy has been well served by the west German model without minimising the scale of injustices it replaced in the east.

Economic renewal of the east also revealed the absence of a transferrable model. Of course, the dismemberment of state enterprises and a massive

programme of privatisation were prerequisites of implementing social market principles. As Chris Flockton shows in chapter five, eastern renewal was designed with small and medium-sized businesses at its centre, a formula that had stood West Germany in good stead in the post-war era and placed regions such as Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg in pole position with regard to economic success. In eastern Germany, however, small and medium-sized business proved unstable, inadequately financed and badly served by product development with limited export potential and without an innovative edge. Moreover, a plethora of new funding programmes at regional, national and European levels have failed to promote growth and successful performance in the sector. Developments since 1990 have disproved the assumption that the eastern German economy could best be rebuilt from below. Here, as in the political arena, the west German model lacked the strength ascribed to it and failed to produce the expected results.

As a trajectory of social mobility and enhanced opportunities, education occupies a central position in modern society. In chapter six, Rosalind Pritchard compares the higher education cultures in the GDR and the FRG and evaluates the advantages and disadvantages of system transfer. The GDR had utilised higher education to institutionalise political consensus and produce skilled personnel who were loyal to the state and able to fill positions in the professions, the economy, the political apparatus, the arts and sports. Their number, focus and seniority were pre-determined and their holders had to perform to the satisfaction of the state authorities and their functionaries. While access was restricted, well structured courses, small seminar groups, extensive tutorial and social support, and a strong vocational orientation shortened study times and optimised students' chances of obtaining a degree. The West German system of higher education, by contrast, had already been plagued by exorbitant study times and legacies of Humboldt's educational philosophy that were ill-suited to the demands of a modern economy, while overcrowding and fuzzy objectives that oscillated between research training and vocational purposes resulted in high drop-out rates and irrelevant qualifications. Despite the transfer of a flawed system to the east, students there have retained a vocational focus and a determination to shorten study times, reminiscent of the GDR era.

Drawing on her first-hand knowledge of east German universities, Marianne Kriszto, who has been Equal Opportunities Officer at the Humboldt University in (east) Berlin since 1993, examines in chapter seven how the imposition of west German staffing levels and appointment criteria affected women. At each institution of higher education, individuals had their track record, the quality of their research and their suitability for appointment evaluated by a special committee. Since the criteria applied had been derived from west German practices, many east Germans were judged wanting. Academic staff in the humanities and those of middle rank were particularly at risk of losing their employment. Even those who were judged to meet the new quality

standards might still have lost their tenure. Women were strongly represented in both categories. By 1993, it appeared as if east Germans generally, and women in particular, would be squeezed out of higher education in the region. As the cleansing of the first hour gave way to new developments and as young east Germans intensified their participation rate and qualified for academic appointment by gaining higher degrees, these fears proved unfounded. As with the educational system generally, the transfer of staffing policy imported flawed practices with limited opportunities for women. The decade after unification, however, saw gradual improvements in women's academic opportunities in the west, and a consolidation of appointment practices in the east. At the top level of professor, women were better represented in east Germany than in the west, and also more visible than they had been in the GDR. At the lower level of academic assistant, special programmes to support women's appointments helped to redress the gender imbalance that had opened up after 1990, while the freedom of research, teaching and decision-making resulted in the creation of several centres for Women's Studies, new undergraduate programmes and a new network of Equal Opportunities Officers to address and help to remedy disadvantages based on gender.

In chapter eight, Eva Kolinsky traces one of the most unexpected consequences of unification: the onset of migration in a region that had kept its borders closed for more than forty years in both directions. East Germans were forbidden to leave, while the entry and residency of others, notably labour migrants, refugees and asylum seekers was strictly controlled by the state or banned altogether. How can a society where migration had not been embedded reinvent itself to accommodate, as east Germany was required to do after unification, a certain proportion of asylum seekers in accordance with population figures, and how did it interpret the civil rights of these newcomers and process their applications to settle? The chapter argues that the GDR's treatment of foreign workers (*Vertragsarbeiter*) and other migrants was designed to prevent residency and ensure segregation. It amounted to institutionalised exclusion. From 1990 onwards, Foreigners' Commissioners began to operate at local and regional levels. Initially set up to co-ordinate the departure of unwanted migrants, they soon emerged as key agencies of support and advice to would-be residents, although hostilities and negative views about cultural differences continue to exist among officials who deal with non-Germans and among east Germans who tend to eye migrants with suspicion and appear to have replaced the institutionalised exclusion of the GDR era with personal expressions of dislike.

In the concluding chapter, Karin Weiss surveys a transformation that affected both west and east, albeit it not to the same extent: the migration and settlement of Jewish refugees from the former Soviet Union. Originally agreed by the last GDR *Volkskammer* in 1990, and limited to a maximum of 2,000 individuals, German legislation was amended in 1991 and removed the numerical restrictions. A decade later, Jewish migration into Germany had reached nearly

100,000. While the German government celebrated the restoration of Jewish communities and Jewish life after the devastation inflicted by the Holocaust, the scope of Jewish migration and its composition posed major problems for the communities charged with integrating newcomers. In west Germany, existing communities more than doubled in size, often leaving Russian Jews in a majority. In east Germany, where the number of Jewish community members had dwindled to below 500 by 1990, the influx and the policy of dispersion across the region meant that new Russian-only communities were founded in Potsdam, Schwerin and elsewhere. What, at first glance, might appear as revitalisation and enrichment amounted in reality to massive financial burdens on existing communities and divisive cultural pressures. Most of the newcomers are without earned income, unable to secure employment and look to community organisations for support. These, in turn, cannot collect membership dues from these impoverished newcomers. Yet, they are challenged to provide social care and avenues of cultural integration. Few Russian Jews have any knowledge of the German language, and continue to communicate in Russian, even years after their arrival; few have any knowledge of Jewish religious or cultural traditions since these were criminalised in the Soviet Union. Moreover, many of the newcomers are non-Jewish family members, or do not have a Jewish mother and are, therefore, not deemed to be Jewish by the religious authorities and the community leadership. In eastern Germany at least, the 4,000 or so Jewish newcomers are too few in number to restore Jewish life as a visible and vibrant social or cultural force.

Outlook

Unification in 1990 united East and West Germany. It confined to history the existence on German soil of two separate states with their own governments, flags, anthems, borders and other symbols of nationhood. As shown in this volume, unification celebrated the western model and denigrated what had developed in the east. It institutionalised an east/west imbalance. Of course, when socialist control collapsed in the GDR in 1989, a majority of East Germans had already lost confidence in their system and wanted it abolished. In the west, by contrast, the disintegration of the GDR buoyed the belief that the FRG had been the better Germany all along.

Uniting Germany always meant doing so along West German lines. Underpinning this approach were assumptions about common German priorities and values that had survived the GDR unaltered, and would result (again) in shared orientations and attitudes after its abolition. Unexpectedly, east Germans were willing enough to discard their discredited system but clung to different interpretations of their own past and how it compared with the present. Conditioned more substantially by GDR policies and practices than anyone had thought possible, east Germans have responded differently to the system

and its mixture of gains and losses. Far from bringing the east in line with the west, unification encouraged the east to articulate its sense of difference, and added a new diversity to the meaning of Germany. Rooted in a sense of past and present injustice perpetrated in the east and imposed on its allegedly luckless residents, eastern distinctiveness has tended to doubt the ubiquitous supremacy of the democratic model and looked to the GDR as a corrective. Unification relocated east/west division from the state level of borders, governments and national symbols to the societal level of living conditions and expectations. After the first flush of system change, eastern needs and misgivings about the validity of the western model proliferate.

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