

Veröffentlichungen der Abteilung *Sozialstruktur und Sozialberichterstattung* des
Forschungsschwerpunktes *Sozialer Wandel, Institutionen und Vermittlungsprozesse* des
Wissenschaftszentrums Berlin für Sozialforschung

ISSN 1615 - 7540

FS III 00 - 404

How to evaluate German unification?

Wolfgang Zapf

September 2000

Abteilung „Sozialstruktur und
Sozialberichterstattung“
im Forschungsschwerpunkt III

Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB)
• Reichpietschufer 50 • D - 10785 Berlin
Telefon 030 - 25 491 - 0

Summary

The title of this contribution is a question with a double meaning: On the one hand it refers to the method, on the other hand it refers to the results of German unification. After a preview of recent evaluations we discuss comparisons of the Federal Republic and the GDR from the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s. Five asymmetries between the two German states are delineated: Size and population, economic strength, migration, travel and mass-communication, mass-exit and mass protest. Next we resume our theses of a stabilizing transformation, East German counter arguments and the most recent research results on living-conditions, political culture, convergences and divergences.

Contents

1	Evaluations of German Unification	3
2	Comparisons of East and West Germany in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s	4
3	Asymmetries between the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic	6
4	“The stabilizing transformation?”	8
5	East German disagreements	9
6	German Welfare Survey 1998	10
7	Political culture research	12
8	Evaluations 1999: “The trend is right”	13
	Footnotes	15
	Bibliography	16

1 Evaluations of German Unification

The question of “How to evaluate German unification?” has a double meaning. On the one hand it refers to methods, on the other hand to results. At first sight the methodological question seems to be simple: it concerns the comparison of goals and results, gains and losses, assets and liabilities. But who defines the goals, which goals succeeded, and who evaluates the results in what context, that is as controversial as the basic theoretical positions in the social sciences engaged in the “unification discourse”. The comparisons also differ in their time and space perspectives. One can evaluate the unification from today, from 1989, i.e. the breakdown of communism, but also in a longer historical perspective. One can concentrate on the comparison East Germany versus West Germany, or on a broader international comparison, either on the post-communist transformation societies or including other cases of transformation, too. I shall focus on the comparison East Germany - West Germany, but I shall start with two longer-term comparisons GDR - Federal Republic. International comparisons are referred to only in passing.

Meanwhile, there have been published several reviews of transformation research. Let me emphasize two studies on the German discussion: Thomas Bulmahn (1996, 1997) and Rolf Reißig (1998). Bulmahn identifies eight “theses” which lean toward systems theories and six “theses” which lean toward action theories. Let me order both sets on a scale from negative to positive. The theses are oriented at system theory: new East-West cleavage, failed transfer of institutions, need of an own East German course, need of a “double modernization”, obstinate life-world. The second series of action theories: colonization and expropriation, missed reforms, voluntary simplification, unintended economic consequences of political action, uncontrollable process, but also a privileged special case. Most of these approaches result in a critical or negative evaluation of German unification. Bulmahn explains this by the ideological differences of the discussion and the restriction to the German case only. My own interpretation is that the basic achievements of German unification are underestimated: freedom, democracy, welfare development, and that losses and missed second-order goals (e.g. a new constitution, e.g. reforms of West German institutions and organizations) exaggerate the negative aspects of the evaluation.

From an East German perspective Reißig presents a different conclusion. He finds a majority of analyses preferring modernization theory which come to a positive evaluation and emphasize “transfer-, adaptation- and equalization processes”. Against this he demands an evolutionary, open, actor-oriented position which should be better suited to explain divergences from the predicted course and unexpected resistance.

Also controversial are evaluations from international comparisons. First, the “ready made state” thesis (Rose et al. 1995) declared the German transformation as a privileged special case. Meanwhile, we more often hear the opinion that a transformation path would have been better which first bought the load and later on the gains and which developed endogenous potentials instead of transferred institutions and personnel (Wiesenthal 1997, Diewald 1999). I don’t believe that in the German case we ever have had such a choice.

2 Comparisons of East and West Germany in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s

During the Cold War only few comparisons in social science literature have existed between the Federal Republic and the GDR if one neglects the Communist propaganda between 1968 and 1974 produced by Western Marxists (e.g. Jung et al. 1971).

From the 1960s I want to remind of Ralf Dahrendorf’s two final chapters in his book “Society and Democracy in Germany” (1965) where he presents a comparison between the two German states and where he is measuring both with his criteria of a liberal democracy.

Dahrendorf criticized the Federal Republic of the early 1960s because of her “authoritarianism of passivity”. He however agreed with her general development. He gave the GDR several points for modernity but regarded the Communist system as non-sustainable. The GDR had continued the destruction of pre-modern authoritarian traditions in many areas of life, a politics of equality was enforced, and lots of public discussions were organized from above. In this respect, the GDR is a modern society, but a “modern form with totalitarian content”. In the Federal Republic, on the contrary, some of the traditional structures were restored which the Nazi regime had oppressed. The big breakthrough, however, was the market rationality of an expansive economy. For the first time it brought for many people mobility and the dynamics of a modern society, even if concentrated on private wealth.

It is the charm of Dahrendorf’s chapters that he, in 1965, not only addressed the problem of German unification but that he also predicted some of its preconditions. He was convinced that a reunification could come from “within”, e.g. could not be enforced by the East Germans or West Germans. It can come about only by basic changes in the international system. But when it came, the totalitarian apparatus of the GDR would disappear. However, the established rationality of planning would not quickly pass away and would prove to be

different to the rationality of market and to the new privatism of the Federal Republic. The separation between West and East could be revoked but perhaps only in the long run, in a time span which equalled the time span of separation.

In my estimation this prediction is quite astonishing and refuses the assertions that sociologists had been unsuspecting concerning developments in East-West relations. It proved to be correct that the decisive forces towards unification came from changes of the international context. But East Germans, by mass exit, mass escape and mass protests, nevertheless have made an original contribution to the breakdown of the GDR regime. Extremely clairvoyant was the prediction that the approximation of the two German states would need a long time, perhaps as long as the separation, and that the accustomed rationality of planning will be resistant to Western market rationality for a longer period.

From the 1970s the “Materialien zum Bericht der Lage der Nation” (Data on the State of the Nation) of 1971, 1972 and 1974 were important politically as well as scientifically - as early German contributions to social reporting. The first three volumes, directed by Peter Ch. Ludz, were independent professional analyses although they supported the New Eastern Politics of the Social-Liberal Government. They draw on a meanwhile established concept in social reporting, namely on comparisons of areas of life, and are based on three principles: “Both German economic and societal systems are achievement-oriented; both economic systems are oriented at growth and modernization; both economic and societal systems are characterized by increasing importance of science, research, education and training” (1971: 34). The 1971 and 1972 reports try hard to be very neutral and not “to wipe away the deep political differences and political contradictions of the two German states” (1971: 35). They try to interpret “societal structures according to the relevant self-interpretations of the Federal Republic and the GDR.” “All analyses follow... the principle of immanent interpretations” (1971: 37). But one finds two pages on which the principle of immanence is suspended, namely on a list of comparative indicators on the pages 227/228. In 1968, the population of the GDR in relation to the Federal Republic is 28 to 100, completed housing is 15 to 100, expenditures for the social security are 16 to 100. In per capita data we find a labor productivity of 68 %, a net income of 64 %, a net income of pensioners of 44 %. Private cars are available 8 to 100, telephones 13 to 100. That means that the economic and social distance between the two German states in principle was acknowledged already in 1971, at the height of the New Eastern Politics. The volume of 1974 then abandoned the political reluctance: “The analysis comparing the two German societies in the volume of 1974 has emphasized more clearly as the former volumes the contrasts in the basic principles of the constitutional and economic order and the differences in the priorities in social policy of the Federal Republic of Germany and the GDR” (p. XXX).

Only after a long intermission, Data on the State of the Nation were again published in 1987. They demonstrate that the East-West relation in Germany had not basically changed: “Ever more clearly the different economic systems prove to be decisive for the development

of the economic and social standards and the gaps of achievement between the Federal Republic and the GDR. It is not the lower personal achievement of our compatriots in the GDR which makes for this gap. But on the other hand the achievement of the social market economy of the Federal Republic cannot be taken as an isolated phenomenon. It has to be said instead that the degree of freedom in all areas of politics and society is a reason also for economic achievement" (1987: p. XXII). "The backwardness in productivity in the GDR for 1971 now can be estimated as 50 of 100; since then it has not decreased. The real backwardness in income at present is also 50 of 100" (p. 243).¹

From the GDR I do not know empirical East-West comparisons. On the contrary, in the inevitable entries "Federal Republic" in East German encyclopaedias the comparisons were in funny ways hidden. Example: "The BRD was (1973) in the production of private cars on third place, of trucks on sixth place within the capitalist world; around 47 % have been exported. Therefore, this branch is very much crises-proned (Meyer Neues Lexikon, 2. Auflage, Leipzig 1977, S. 173). Overall, this kind of literature is a mixture of ideological condemnation and selective information. At first, the condemnation was triumphalistic, 1988 eventually obstinately apologetic.

In my memory of regular trips to the GDR the information of GDR citizens about the Federal Republic was highly dissonant: on the one hand the official propaganda and the GDR media, on the other hand the Western media, the numerous visits to West Germany by pensioners and many visits from West German relatives. The citizens of the GDR were split according to their information about the West, and it is very improbable that this had no consequences for the unification process.

3 Asymmetries between the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic

There are at least five important asymmetries (i.e. serious long-term inequalities) between the Federal Republic and the GDR; they have seriously influenced the process of unification and, thereby, also the process of transformation and the recent evaluations.

The first asymmetry is that the population of the old Federal Republic was four times larger than the population of the GDR, i.e. the proportion of the East German population is only 20 %. There is a famous chapter by Peter Blau, "Size and Number", which emphasizes such elementary facts for social structural analyses: "All minority groups, singly or in

combination, are more involved in intergroup relations with the group constituting a majority than the majority group is with them” (Blau 1977: p. 22). That is a basic social structural reason for the negligence perceived today by East Germans. During the Cold War and still during the Two-plus-four negotiations in 1990 these orders of magnitude did not play an important role, and the two German states seemed to be equal and occasionally also acted like equals.

The second asymmetry is that the economic potential of the Federal Republic was ten times bigger and per capita twice as big as that of the GDR. These facts were known at least since the 1971 report but the authors of the reports entangled themselves in contradictions. So we read in the 1974 volume: “The Federal Republic and the GDR belong to the circle of the ten most developed industrial countries of the world. They have top positions in their respective economic blocks” (p. 75). Seen from today this proposition is only right in its second part and it explains the influence which the GDR had in the Communist world.

The third asymmetry is that East-West migration since 1945 was by far higher than West-East migration. Until the building of the wall in 1961 the exit of mostly well-educated GDR citizens was overall three millions approximately. What we did not recognize similarly clearly was that even during the period of the wall, from 1961-89, another 400 thousand GDR citizens left the country. This emigration in 1990 was given even as a reason for reparation claims because it was regarded as “brain drain”. It is, however, unknown what part of the restitution claims for land and buildings is raised just from this segment of the population.

The fourth asymmetry can also be delineated from the “Blau theorem”. The attention of East Germans for West Germany was much higher than the reverse. Five million trips to West Germany in 1987 nearly equal one third of the GDR population; in comparison the percentage of West Germans which travelled to the GDR was only 10 % approximately. 32 % of West Germans but 84 % of East Germans report that they have relatives or friends in the other part of Germany (Noelle-Neumann/Köcher: 411). In 1992 only 38 % of West Germans but 71 % of East Germans have been longer than one week in the other part of the country. Quite evident also is the asymmetry in mass media consumption. West Germans nearly never did use television or radio of the GDR, whereas since the 1970s West German television was part of the GDR lifestyle.

The decisive asymmetry, finally, was the mass exit and the mass protest in fall of 1989. Albert Hirschman (1992) with great theoretical sensitivity has conceded that his theorem of exit and voice during this stage has been revised by real life itself. Namely, it has been proven that there is not only one alternative of protest: exit or voice, but also the multiplication of both processes which produce an enormous pressure for change. In my opinion this was the most important reason for the breakdown of the GDR.

4 “The stabilizing transformation?”

Our own evaluation² of the unification five years after the breakdown of the Communist system was the proposition of “the stabilizing transformation” (Zapf/Habich 1995). Compared to the long-prepared changes in Poland, Hungary or Czechoslovakia, the economic breakdown in East Germany was quite a shock. From 1990 until 1992 roughly one third of all jobs got lost (three million out of nine million), large parts of industry and former trade connections broke down. At the same time East Germans in their private lives reacted with a dramatic decline of marriages and births. It was a decline by more than 50 % which historically is without precedent. These experienced changes have been so drastic that it is an explanation problem of its own why there had been no more unrest and protests than the 20-25 % votes for the Post-Communist Party (PDS). The question is how a society can manage such huge changes in such a short time?

Regarding social structure, the GDR was credited, compared to the Federal Republic, with more equality for women and perhaps better basic education. As necessary adaptations after unification had been predicted “the removal of income levelling which impeded achievement, decentralization of political power, depolitization of status and qualification ascription, restauration of vertical mobility, more jobs in the service sector and reduction of overstaffing, reconstruction of a potent middle class and the end of the pressure of emigration” (Geißler 1992: 21). From the point of view of 1995, we could see that the rapid migration had stopped and stabilized on a lower level, that the shock-like reduction of jobs had ended and the employment structure had approximated West German patterns, but that all other processes developed more slowly than expected. The unforeseen demographic breakdowns had stopped, however, and there was even a slight turn in trend.

In 1995 we explained the coping with these big shocks in East Germany by several factors. Beside the breakdowns there were rapid processes to overcome the poverty economy: clear improvements in incomes for employees as well as for pensioners; big waves of catch-up consumption; clear improvements in infrastructure; clear improvements in social security, especially clearly increased pensions. The demographic breakdowns were only in part symptoms of crisis; they also were the expression of a freer life-course. The decline of jobs couldn't be stopped by economic policy, but it could be levelled by social policy measures (public work, further education, early retirement). At the level of private households we had adjustment processes in the way that the formerly large proportion of households with two full-time employees had decreased, but in 1995 it was still clearly higher than in West Germany. Households with two unemployed adults were the very exception. With our indicators of objective living conditions and subjective well-being we could demonstrate, overall, a clear improvement although the gap in comparison with West

Germany could still be observed. A list of critical life-events can demonstrate how much higher the speed of change was in East Germany than in West Germany, but also that East Germans in interviews reported more positive than negative life-events.

5 East German disagreements

Our thesis of the stabilizing transformation was met with disagreement especially by East German social scientists. Overall, the contributions of East German observers more and more claim that the problems of unification no longer stem from the conditions of the GDR but from the mode of unification itself.

Michael Thomas (1998) explicitly argues against the proposition that the transformation is basically completed: “The East German case of transformation today is rather at its beginning than at its end” (p. 115). The West German belief that the East German transformation should be especially favourable because of joining the Federal Republic and the high transfer payments is called unsuccessful because the seemingly ideal mode of transformation resulted in “an increasing social and cultural cleavage between East and West Germany” (p. 106). But also: “Beyond the German case, new openings and revitalization are developmental chances. They could be part of practical policies which would no longer follow the ideology of an ideal case but settle with realities” (ibid).

Michael Brie (1999: 229-232) concedes that the unification is more or less completed but he claims that the formation of an “East German split-society” would be structurally prevailing. Politics of a “self-sustained development of East German länder” and of cooperation of the imported elites with actors from the GDR in order to develop an “original East German elite” is becoming more important. The federal structure of the Federal Republic is a productive precondition for this and the actual three-party system in East Germany with a strong PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism) “is securing the new länder somewhat of a veto position...” (p. 231).

Even more outspoken - and over time more polemic - this position is represented by the Sozialreports, produced by the Sozialwissenschaftliches Forschungszentrum Berlin-Brandenburg. The Sozialreports were created within the Institute of Sociology and Social Policy of the Academy of Sciences of the GDR (not the least after our own model) and they are perhaps the most important East German contribution to social reporting. After prototypes in 1988 and 1989, which could not be published, immediately in spring of 1990 the first

Social report was published, the next ones in 1992, 1995, 1997 and 1999. Correspondingly to international standards they are structured according to areas of life and are full of competent information. Their political program can be found in the introductory chapters. In 1997, the concept of “Eastern identity” was introduced. It is said that Eastern identity is developing which can only be fully evaluated by people originating from East Germany. “Acceptance of Eastern identity in its productive meaning, in its critical adaptation of Western life conditions, is a necessary precondition for progressive reforms in the Federal Republic. Among the disastrous developments since 1990 there is the disregard in West Germany of the differentiated, and at the same time, complex interpretation of life in East Germany in past and present” (p. 58). The most recent edition of 1999 argues that the increasing Eastern identity is necessary as an opposition and has its cause in rising problems of integration between East Germany and West Germany. They can be found in four areas: structural integration, cultural integration, social and political integration, and identification. In all four areas not only deficits but obvious repression or exploitation by West Germans are observed. For example: “East Germany was integrated into the market economy but excluded from employment and property”. “In Europe, East Germans meanwhile are that section of the population which possesses the smallest part of the land on which it is living” (p. 21).

Although I estimate the Sozialreports as a source of information and early warning, I regard the theory of “ethnization” of East Germans and their identity as unacceptable. According to our data the differences within the East German population are more important than its common identity.

6 German Welfare Survey 1998

Our own analyses and evaluations are orientated at the concepts of modernization, level of living, and welfare development.³ Welfare development we measure by indicators of objective living conditions and subjective well-being. In addition, we describe a dimension “quality of society” (livability) which has objective as well as subjective components. On the objective side, these are e.g. labour market conditions and public security, on the subjective side people’s values and their trust, i.e. their evaluations of the institutions of democracy and market economy. We agree with the “Tiryakian criterion” (Tiryakian 1993: 12): “Processes of modernization involve short-term costs and sacrifices, whether material or manpower costs or both. Some of these will involve hardships on segments of the population and not all will benefit equally, but a general criterion for judging the success

of modernization is that a greater number of actors have better life chances, better opportunities to cope with environmental demands during or in the aftermath of a process of modernization than prior to its inception.”

In what follows, I summarize some results of our most recent Welfare Survey 1998 (cf. Habich/Noll/Zapf 1999) which are reported in detail in Datenreport 1999.⁴ Overall, the welfare balance of East German citizens is positive. In answering the question: “Since 1990 did your life conditions have rather improved, rather deteriorated, or is there no big difference?”, in 1993 48 % of the East Germans reported that their living conditions had improved, in 1998 it was 59 % and had significantly increased. The part of the population which perceives a deterioration has decreased from 23 to 16 %, and one out of four doesn’t see any difference. The majority of the West Germans is regarding its living conditions in 1993 like in 1998 as stable. But the remarkably high proportion of 31 % which in 1993 reported a deterioration has decreased to 21 % in 1998, and the proportion of those reporting an improvement has risen from 10 to 20 %. West German respondents, recently, are evaluating their living conditions more friendly than 1993. We can combine the information about how satisfied respondents in East and West are with different aspects of their living conditions and their life overall into a portrait of subjective well-being in Germany. Differences in satisfaction between East and West Germans are visible in several areas of life still 1998, but they have decreased. This means that the trend has continued which was already observed in the early 1990s. On a scale from 0 (completely dissatisfied) to 10 (completely satisfied) East Germans classify themselves on average in a set of 17 areas in 1998 only 0,4 points lower than the West Germans. In 1993 this difference was still 0,8 points. Average differences in satisfaction have been cut in half in the last five years.

Welfare development in West Germany is considerably different. In 1998, in most areas of life we observe a stagnation or decrease in satisfaction compared to 1993. This trend had been observed already in 1993 and it continues. The equalization of levels of satisfaction between East and West Germany, therefore, is brought about not only by positive developments in East Germany but also by the continued, even if slight, decrease of subjective well-being in West Germany.

Instructive is also how respondents from East and West Germany evaluate living conditions in the other part of the country, respectively, and in comparison with selected European countries. Obviously, East Germans idealize the level of living in West Germany which still is the reference for their own conditions - with an average of 8,2 on a scale from 0 to 10 whereas West Germans rank themselves at 7,7; that discrepancy is no longer as strong as in 1993. At the same time West Germans - differently from 1993 - evaluate East German living conditions with 6,1 points somewhat better than the East Germans themselves with 5,9. That means for East and West Germans alike that conditions of the “others” seem to be better than their own.

East and West German respondents, however, agree completely - with 7,8 points - on what level of living they “fairly” could demand. The gap between demand and reality in East Germany is with 1,1 points significantly bigger than in West Germany with 0,5 points. This is one reason for the still lower level of subjective well-being in East Germany although the differences have decreased.

7 Political culture research

In political sciences it is political culture research which is measuring quality of society to indicators with the acceptance of democracy. Fuchs et al. (1997) have operationalized that by the three dimensions “attitudes towards democracy”, “attitudes towards the welfare state”, and “attitudes towards institutions of interest mediation”. In the first two dimensions the evaluations of East Germans are much more negative than those of West Germans. In their explanation the authors rely more on the socialization hypothesis (values from the GDR area) than on the situation hypothesis (present deficits of integration), and their result is that the “inner unity” in Germany has not been realized. The reason is not that East Germans on principle are against democracy but that they have strong reservations against its present institutional setting, i.e. the democracy as realized in the Federal Republic.

In an outstanding chapter on “inner unity” Max Kaase (1999) first reminds us of the fact that in the old Federal Republic it has taken 20 years to establish democracy. Next he, too, refers to the asymmetry of unification and the different political cultures in East and West Germany, i.e. in the East a more egalitarian and plebiscitarian understanding of democracy. Finally, he is measuring “inner unity” by the perception of one self and the other ones. The perceptions of East Germans by West Germans have not changed very much between 1991 and 1996, but the perceptions of West Germans by East Germans have become significantly more negative. “In the area of general characterizations East Germans have significantly distanced themselves from West Germans ... even in 1999 the Federal Republic by far has not reached inner unity” (pp. 460, 465).

8 Evaluations 1999: "The trend is right"

What does remain then of our thesis of "the stabilizing transformation", confronted by East German blames of colonization and West German diagnoses of deficits of inner unity? As already said in the beginning, we regard modernization and welfare development as the most important dimensions for an evaluation of unification. In evaluating welfare development we recently have given more importance to the quality of society than five years after the breakdown of Communism, because questions of identity, of trust in democracy and of mutual acceptance earlier played a minor role compared to material living conditions and personal well-being. In general, our conclusion is: "The difference in objective living conditions is nearly eliminated; with regard to the subjective well-being the positive trend cannot be disputed although there are clear gaps; the perception and evaluation of the common society, however, is quite divergent" (Habich 1999: 7). For an explanation of the discrepancy between individual welfare and evaluation of society as well as for the prediction of further development we propose the following arguments.

The remaining differences in objective living conditions are decreasing significantly more slowly than in the first years after 1989. "Rising expectations" relatively reduce the achievements and produce new aspirations (e.g. after the equalization of income now the aspiration towards the equalization of property as it was accumulated in West Germany over 50 years). According to the "Tocqueville-Paradox", sensitivity for remaining inequalities is rising just during a period of reduction of differences. Roland Habich (*ibid.*) who makes these points is regarding this paradox as operating in the long term but not as a principal challenge to integration.

Freedom, security and justice are basic dimensions of a livable society but not the only ones. The high level of welfare, e.g., has a compensating effect. Accordingly, also the majority of East German respondents holds: "In a country like Germany, all in all, one can live very well."⁵ At the same time, they report significant deficits in security and justice. Thomas Bulmahn (1999), on the one hand, argues against scandalization of those problems, on the other hand against underestimation, and he recommends to take into account explicitly experiences and expectations (disappointments of expectations) beside factors of socialization and situation.

These findings are confirmed and differentiated by an analysis of determinants of satisfaction with standard of living, democracy and distributive justice (Delhey/Böhnke 1999). In none of these three problem areas the East-West-variable (East Germans) has significant explanatory power. But because the significant variables (welfare positions, perceived difference of living conditions in East and West, perceived conflicts between East and West, party preference) have very different values in East Germany and West Germany,

even with a further equalization of material living conditions the expectation of identical satisfaction and evaluation is unrealistic. This does not mean, however, that the “ideal of nearly equal living conditions” (p. 36) is queried.

My personal evaluation of German reunification is, in analogy to Winston Churchill’s famous dictum on democracy: “Among the many uncertain possibilities of the unification process the achieved result is the least negative one.” Therefore I have emphasized, beside the discussion of recent opinion research, the long-term retrospective. In addition, I want to refer for my judgement to a central actor and contemporary witness of the unification process, namely the first and last freely-elected Prime Minister of the GDR, Lothar de Maizière. In a book of 1995, “Advocate of unification”, de Maizière has regarded unification as a success, not with standing several critical objections. In a lecture in fall of 1999, he also confirms an overall positive balance. He argues that the complicated treaties have enabled a “soft transition” compared, e.g., to the partly illegal and chaotic conditions in Eastern Europe, especially in Russia. Two big mistakes are heavy burdens still today: on the one hand the underestimation of the necessary achievements of education and learning, on the other hand the overestimation of the coping capacities of people. Overall, however, unification is better than its reported reputation. The trend is right. Most important should be the search and will for a common future.

Footnotes

- 1 The book which could be reviewed next, "Federal Republic - GDR", was edited by W. Weidenfeld and H. Zimmermann (1989) at the fortieth birthday of the both German states. For central topics and areas of life it presents separate analyses of the Federal Republic and the GDR. All West German authors who have written those chapters are very informative, also in the chapters on the GDR, but no one had any idea of the events in fall of 1989, myself included.
- 2 The plural refers to publications of the unit "Social structure and social reporting" at the Science Center of Berlin; especially to Zapf/Habich 1995; Zapf/Habich (eds.) 1996; Habich 1999a; and to the most recent contributions, mentioned in section 8: Habich 1999b; Bulmahn 1999, Delhey/Böhnke 1999.
- 3 The same perspective is taken in publications of the Social Indicators section and the Social Inequality section of the German Sociological Association, e.g. Glatzer 1996, Hauser 1996, Hradil 1996, Geißler 1992, 1996. Pretentious programs of longitudinal analyses are carried on by the research group Socio-economic Panel (G. Wagner, P. Krause, J. Schupp) at the Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, and by the group Life-course analyses at the Max-Planck-Institute in Berlin (K. U. Mayer, M. Diewald, H. Solga).
- 4 The Welfare Surveys were fielded 1978, 1980, 1984 and 1988 at Mannheim University, and afterwards at the Science Center Berlin in co-operation with the Survey Research Center, Mannheim: 1990 (only in East Germany), 1993 and 1998. These are representative surveys of the population over 18, 2000 to 3000 cases. For details cf. Habich/Zapf 1994. Datenreport was created 1983 by the German Statistical Office as kind of a popular biannual edition of the Statistical Yearbook. From 1985 through 1999 social scientists have contributed part II: "Objective living conditions and Subjective well-being", in recent years under the direction of R. Habich and H.-H. Noll.
- 5 The complete question reads: "And how much do you agree with this statement: Overall, one can live very well in a country like Germany. Do you agree with this statement fully, rather, rather not, not at all, don't know".

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Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Zapf (Leiter)
Dr. Roland Habich (Koordinator)

Petra Böhnke, Diplomsoziologin
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