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**PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS
IN THE GERMAN UNIFICATION**

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1 Introduction

The reunification of the former two states - German Democratic Republic (GDR) and Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) -, and their respective societies, is both: a single formal political event (October 3, 1990) and a unique **social and political process** which fascinates scientists of many disciplines.

I will deal with the process of the German unification mainly as a social and political psychologist being interested in socialization theory and research, particularly in the cognitive developmental approach in the tradition of Jean Piaget as it was elaborated by Lawrence **Kohlberg** (1976, 1984).

Working in a research institute² which (whenever possible) uses interdisciplinary approaches, I highly esteem perspectives and arguments of sociology and political science. My outlook on the psychological problems of the German Unification will thus certainly also reflect my experiences with other disciplines of the social sciences.

As to the broad scope of the problem, I consider the "Interdisciplinary bias" as an advantage, since it may help to take the social and political embedding of many psychological problems better into account than this would be possible by referring to a single discipline only.

The psychological and psycho-political dimension of the unification process is the focus of this paper. Expressed in terms of the general scientific tools and approaches of psychology, this means the reflections of this process in the mind and the behaviour of people, i.e. the attitudes, orientations, feelings and actions of individuals.

As psychologists and social scientists we are looking for explanations of reasoning and behaviour of individuals and groups, and we hope to be able to extend the restricted knowledge we may gain in our empirical research to the future, to other groups, to other societal situations. This always is difficult and risky, given the poor epistemological basis of inferences being based on the logic of induction. Being confronted with the difficulties of the generalization of findings, it is reasonable to avoid the rhetorical figure of "the population", i.e. to limit the scope of detailed empirical studies to a more precisely defined section of the population.

The section 1 consider most relevant with respect to the German unification are the young people. They represent the future of the German society and nation; they reproduce society (modification/innovation), and society reproduces itself in its young people (tradition/assimilation)³. Beyond their naturally present social and political relevance, the young represent the section of society which, so to speak, embody learn-

¹ I want to express my gratitude to Mr. Kaiser of the *Sprachendienst der WBV VI München* for the correction of my English text.

² German Armed Forces Institute for Social Research (*Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr, SOWI*).

³ See Heinz-Ulrich Kohr & Hans-Georg Räder (1983), *Reproduction of Society. Youth - Participation - Civic Education* (translated title), pp. 14-46.

ing and socialization. In the German case, a theoretically as well as practically fascinating question is the effect of socialization and education in two radically different social and political systems, namely in a Western democracy with a social market economy or in a system of "real existing socialism" with a totalitarian dominance of one party and an economy which was subjected to plan and command.

Since the psychological problems of the unification process evidently are tied to the dramatic social and political changes in Germany, which took place after the fall of the Berlin Wall (November 9, 1989), the paper begins with a compilation of events which had (and still have) a large influence on the orientations, feelings, and actions of my compatriots.

2 The unification as a promoter of social, political, and psychological changes in Germany

October 3, 1990 marks the date after which the new Germany again represents one nation with full sovereignty. This formal act, however, only is one element of a complex process reaching back into the past and extending into the future. The event of unification had its history, took place in, and was facilitated by a particular political setting⁴. It will go on for a substantial period of time.

While the **unification as an event** was formally confirmed with the legal integration of the five *new Bundesländer* (NBL) into the Federal Republic of the eleven old *Bundesländer* (OBL), the **process of unification** is on its way - and it is not a quick, safe, comfortable way. Moreover, the final destination is not yet clearly and consensually identified: terms like "integration", "national identity", "equality of living conditions" etc. are frequently used in political rhetoric, but the concrete meaning of these terms is rather vague.

Unification by accession

In order to understand many of the psychological consequences and problems of the unification, it is important to note that the new Federal Republic of Germany is the result of the **accession** of the NBL to the Federation (*Beitritt*) in accordance with the Constitution/Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) of the Federal Republic.

The negotiations between the representatives of the former two German states thus did not deal with a new, modified constitution, and there was no referendum on the unification⁵. The legal problems and regulations pragmatically were laid down in a voluminous unification agreement (*Einigungsvertrag*).

⁴ It would be very interesting to study the psychological and psycho-political history of the German unification.

Naturally one would have to take the broad political and historical context into account (e.g. the East-West confrontation; Glasnost and Perestroika in the former Soviet Union; the arms race and the economic collapse of the East; the cultural dominance of Western lifestyle and products; the German Ostpolitik etc.

⁵ A referendum was a matter of political debates, but since there is no explicit regulation of this kind elaborated in the *Grundgesetz* it finally was not implemented.

The psycho-social and psychological relevance of the early monetary union

The final agreement on the accession was reached only a few months after the conclusion of the treaty on the common social system, the economic union and institution of the Deutschmark in the GDR by July 1, 1990 (*Wirtschafts-, Währungs- und Sozialunion*). The latter, which was accompanied by the exchange of the GDR Mark for the Deutschmark at a rate of one to one⁶. This probably was the most effective single step towards the acceptance of the formal unification in October by the citizens of the GDR, since it took account of the needs and desires of the majority in East Germany. It represented the most important direct and noticeable reinforcement for those citizens who changed the slogan " We are the people!"⁷ of the early days of the demonstrations against the regime of the GDR into "We are *one* people!"⁸

The dominant motives and interests of the majority in the GDR were directed towards the rapid fulfilment of primary needs: the attraction of Western products, not least the cars as symbols of the new freedom⁹, which they were finally able to buy, was irresistible (cf. e.g. Hans-Joachim Maaz 1993, pp.101-122). As will be discussed later, this rapid and early reinforcement of economic expectations led to aspirations which could not be fulfilled.

Psychic effects of restructuring and of the reduction or loss of employment

Mainly the dramatic restructuring and the reduction/loss of employment (Abwicklung) in the sectors of production, education and administration led to a "reality shock" for many citizens of the former GDR who had no personal experience with unemployment. Frustrations, regression, apathy, depressions, but also aggression were the consequences of this shock for many citizens, particularly for those who lost their employment or who had to accept short-time work¹⁰.

⁶ Wages, rents, pensions etc. were exchanged 1:1, also most of the savings. For higher savings the ratio was 2:1.

⁷ "Wir sind das Volk!"

⁸ "Wir sind ein Volk!"

⁹ See the article with the (translated) title "Go, Trabi, Go. The new freedom is being tested in the streets" by **Kutscher & Brieler** who analyzes the psychological function of the availability of new and fast (thus also dangerous) cars for the East Germans.

¹⁰ The most bizarre terminological creation in this context is "short-time work zero" (Kurzarbeit Null) which designates employment on one hand but no working hours on the other.

Germany 1993: United but Depressed? Together but Mentally Separated?

Almost four years after the monetary union we observe a new Germany being in trouble deeply. The euphoria of the early days on the common path to the future has vanished. The costs of the union are enormous. They even surmount the financial capability of Germany, which surely is a rich country.

While the acknowledgement of the financial calamities contributed a good deal to the rather pessimistic basic orientation which has prevailed for many months in East and West - but initially clearly more severely in the East - the pessimistic outlooks are re-inforced by the current economic decline. Light at the end of the tunnel is not visible. Instead of economic growth a recession is being announced by the experts. The state suffers from money shortage, and the taxpayer is forced to "cooperate and contribute"¹¹.

But there are other important sources of feelings of insecurity. The crime rate, particularly in the East, is growing continuously. Other severe problems are housing, apartments, and rents. There is a shortage of apartments (and the available ones usually are far below the 'Western standard'). At the same time, the rents (which were extremely low in the GDR) have been increasing dramatically.

Investment in real estate generally still is difficult, mainly because the principle of restitution of property to the former owner(s) was given priority over the principle of monetary compensation (*Rückgabe statt Entschädigung*). Thus the construction of new apartment houses proceeds only slowly. The prices for the relatively few new apartments are very high, and the majority of East Germans cannot afford to rent or buy them.

Many citizens feel threatened by the drastically increased number of asylum seekers mainly coming from the countries of the former Warsaw - Pact States and from countries of the Third World. A large number of refugees come from the war regions of former Yugoslavia¹² countries.

For a substantial section of the public, particularly for those with a lower income and/or a right wing political orientation, the asylum seekers serve as a (pseudo-) cause of the economic and social problems. They are accused of being the reason for the increase of criminality, they are said to occupy the scarce number of apartments (or seem to receive them with priority over the requests of German families), they are suspected to waste the financial support they receive from the local government based on a federal law (*Bundessozialhilfegesetz*) for drinking and having a good time etc. A lot of polemics is around, dangerously reinforcing feelings of hostility towards strangers (*Ausländerfeindlichkeit*), and cleverly being instrumentalized by right-wing extremists.

¹¹ The creation of a "pact of solidarity" for East Germany (Solidarpakt) of the leading political forces was a complicated venture with troublesome negotiations.

¹² The most recent estimate of the number of foreigners to come this year is about 500.000, 438.000 came in 1992, 256.000 in 1991, while the number only was 20.000 ten years ago. The dramatic increase of the number of foreigners claiming asylum for the reason of political prosecution (which is the only legal basis of asylum in the German Grundgesetz, Artikel 16) led to a very controversial public political debate. At the end of this long debate a compromise was found, which intends to facilitate the refusal of "economic asylum seekers".

Movements on the right of the political spectrum (*Neonazis, Skins, Faschos*) attract the "losers of modernity", particularly young men. Hostility towards strangers, above all towards those who are "easily discernable" as foreigners by color of the skin or physiognomy, probably is the most vital orientation of the (young) extremists. Their horrible actions against asylum seekers (e.g. in *Rostock, Mölln, and in many other cities in East and West Germany*) shocked (and still deeply worry) the public. The recent mass movements against the riots showed their protest against hostility and hate by carrying candles, symbolically bringing light into the dark.

With this and other expressive acts (e.g. tv spots, advertisements in journals and magazines), the large majority finally reacted against the terror¹³. While these surely are important measures to stop the hostility towards strangers (seemingly with some success), it is by no means sufficient. The aggression still is there, and it may find as its target also other groups in our society.

Political insecurity and destabilization is increased by the positive trend for rightwing political parties. They find an enlarged basis of operation and sympathy, and even manage to enter local and regional parliaments.

The trust in the ability of the established political parties and their competence to solve the problems is drastically decreasing. As an expression of this, the number of those who refuse to vote is very high. In recent elections, the "party of non-voters" was the strongest. Almost half of the young refuse to vote. They do not trust politicians and parties. In recent years, many scandals, but also the hesitant reaction of politicians and authorities, the aggression against the asylum seekers, surely contributed to this process of democratic erosion. Another important factor for the negative image of politicians was the course of the German unification. The superficial treatment of the costs of the unification by the government, especially the promise chancellor Kohl "Nobody will be worse off than before...". An increase of taxes in order to finance the East of Germany was categorically excluded in the early days of the unification process. The sobering, frustrating effect of necessary tax corrections, termed and morally disqualified as the "tax lie" (*Steuerlüge*).¹⁴

Sarcastically speaking, this socio-political situation which emerged during the first years of the unification process currently seems to lead to a more balanced estimation of the general social and political situation in East and West. While the mood was clearly more negative and depressed in the East after the loss of the early euphoria and the penetration of realism (mainly economic, but also psychological realism), the mood became more negative than it was before in the West as well.

There still is less pessimism (or less realism?) in the West. However, as to a negative basic mood and feelings of insecurity, equality between the East and the West now seems to be within reach.

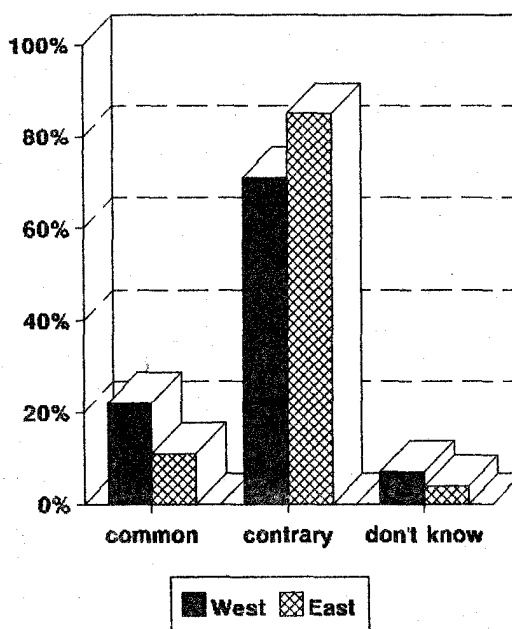
¹³ After Rostock and Moelln there was a public debate about the (late) reaction of the authorities (politicians, police, lawcourts) with the undertone of severe criticism. See e.g. the cover story of the weekly political magazine DER SPIEGEL entitled "Pressure from the Right. Failure of the Stae?", October 5, 1992, No. 41.

¹⁴ "*Keinem wird es schlechter gehen...*" suggested that the unification would not cause any financial sacrifice for the public. In the contrary, particularly in the East the aspiration was backed that the unification was no problem at all, and the expectation of a rapid positive change was realistic.

Nowadays the relations between East and West suffer from a kind of estrangement¹⁵. While the former physical border (the walls, the fences, the towers) vanished almost completely, a "psychic wall" is growing (cf. **Kohr** 1991 for mutual perceptions and prejudices). It separates the people in the old and the new Länder, it leads to feelings of discomfort and distrust.

Polemics is around, mostly in the disguised versions of jokes, irony or sarcasm. Bitter statements refer to the Stasi past etc. on the side of the Wessis, the Ossis¹⁶ accuse their counterparts in the West of notoriously knowing everything, and everything better (*Besserwessis*), and the like. A change of attitudes in the direction of a mutual estrangement took place, and the mental separation of the interests of West and East Germans (cf. Chart 1, data by **Noelle-Neumann** 1993) is indeed substantial.

Chart 1: Common Solidarity as
Germans - or West- and East Germans with
contrary interests?



Source: Allensbacher Monatsbericht.
Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, FAZ.
19. Mai 1993 (115), P. 5

3 Psychological problems of the unification process: Theoretical concepts

¹⁵ This process started relatively early after the "reality shock". Picking up this public mentality, the weedy political magazine "DER SPIEGEL" entitled its number 34. of August 17, 1992 as: "Germans against Germans. The new Separation" (*Deutsche gegen Deutsche. Die neue Teilung*).

¹⁶ The terms Ossis (those from East Germany) and Wessis (those from West Germany) appeared relatively early after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Although many politicians tried to abolish these terms, they were soon adopted in everyday language. Nowadays a new creation, the Wossi, is around. This denotes (somewhat ironically) a person coming from the West but working in the East, e.g. as a representative of a bank or an insurance company a civil servant who helps to install the Western administrative structures and procedures in the East.

After having outlined the main political, economic, and social aspects of the unification in a rough and condensed manner, we shall now look at theoretical concepts which may serve to describe, understand, and hopefully even to explain the involved psychological problems to some degree.

Given the complexity of the process, and the fact that no single theoretical concept - neither of psychology nor of any other social science - is sufficiently wide and elaborated to adequately comprise the macro level of conflict and change going on in this process of unification, as well as its reflections in the consciousness of individuals, the approach taken here is rather eclectic, i.e. concepts of political science, of sociology, and of (social) psychology will be applied.

Value change in the "modern" Western societies

Considering the radical change in the "modern" western industrial and "post-industrial" societies, the most significant change on the level of psychological dimensions was the change of basic values. New value priorities have developed (cf. e.g. **Inglehart 1977, 1989; Klages & Kmiecik 1979; Klages 1984**). Inglehart coined the meanwhile well known (and frequently criticized) terms "materialism" and "post-materialism". Klages uses the terms "values of acceptance and obligation" (*Pflicht- und Akzeptanzwerte*) and contrasts these to "values of self-realization" (*Selbstentfaltungswerte*).

It is not possible to discuss the different approaches to the study of values and their problems here. The important result of all the studies that is relevant in our context is the commonly accepted observation of a fundamental change of values. We regard this change primarily as an epiphenomenon of concrete changes in the Western societies (e.g. expansion of the educational system and higher education for large segments of the young generation; more opportunities and options for women; rationalization and automatization of the industrial production; new media, their mass distribution and reception; new information and data processing technologies, to name only some of the major changes).

Related to this change, new problems have arisen (e.g. nuclear energy; destruction of the atmosphere), and old problems are perceived in a new context (e.g. the exploitation of the Third World and the destruction of the ecological balance in the Western societies).

Risk society

But also the understanding of central terms such as "security" and "risk" has changed especially during the past twenty years (cf. **Räder 1993**). In 1986, Ulrich Beck introduced the term "risk society" for the "old" Federal Republic of Germany. Among other things, this society (like others with a similar degree and diversification, of industrialization) is characterized by new, basically irreversible risks, such as the degradation of the environment, changes in the climate and civil and military nuclear potentials.

Individualization

The highly industrialized, complex and differentiated Western democratic and market orientated societies also promote a process termed individualization. Briefly summarizing, this means the creation of structures and situations in which no standard way of successful coping can be described in advance.

Concrete examples of the individualization effects are the "modern" biographies, privately and careerwise. Class and religion determine social contacts much less than in traditional societies. Lifestyles and behaviour, even sexual behaviour, to a large extent are optional.

The forms of living together are very complex nowadays. Couples may live together without being married, even male couples are tolerated. Groups of people live together, even without being friends or relatives etc.¹⁷ Marriage is just one of many options, and it is no longer a lifelong concept automatically. Male and female singles are respected in society, children of a non-married couple, or with a mother or father only, as well.

As to the world of career, the complexity is growing also. There are many types of schools. It is possible to obtain a school degree at an advanced age. The income is still correlated to the investment in traditional "linear" education, but the relationship is continuously weakening. Women enter the labor market and compete with men more and more successfully etc.

A last example of individualization is particularly important for the social situation in the East. In many aspects, everyday life and planning was much less complicated in East Germany: e.g. the health and medical care system was collectively organized, pensions were provided by the collectivity, insurance companies like in the West were not present, losing a job was not possible. With the take-over of the East by the West all these problems were suddenly present for our new compatriots in the East: individualization contributed to the modernization shock. In this sense, individualization also provides one of the basic risks of "modern" Western societies like the Federal Republic.

Change of political paradigms: physical security and profit economy versus social security and ecology

Being conscious of the risks on the side of the individual also leads to changes of social and political priorities, and these changes contribute to the shift of values. In the context of this change of values and the new understanding of political tasks and priorities, Raschke (1980a,b) is talking about a "change of political paradigms". The currently prevailing paradigm which stresses the social market economy and physical security would gradually be superseded by a new paradigm¹⁸ in which ecological and

¹⁷ For a social scientist doing public opinion polls e.g. in Germany, the provision of fully sufficient answers to the question "With whom do you live together?" has become quite difficult.

¹⁸ Also see Lester W. **Milbrath** 1984 "Environmentalism. Vanguard for a New Society".

social priorities would prevail over economic priorities and the focal point of which would be the way how people live¹⁹.

The empirical studies which we have carried out since 1981 to verify this thesis of a change of paradigms have shown that a change of consciousness and orientation in terms of a change of paradigms can be identified particularly for adolescents with a high level of formal education, and this could not only be shown for the old Federal Republic of Germany but - as our research cooperation with France and particularly with Italy has shown - plausibly also applies to other western societies (cf. Kohr & Räder 1990; Kohr, Nuciari, Räder & Sertorio 1992). Table 1 summarizes the concepts, values, and preferences which are theoretically and empirically associated with the "traditional" and the "innovative" paradigm.

Table 1: Concepts, Orientations, Values, and Preferences Associated with the "Traditional" and the "Innovative" Paradigm	
<i>"TRADITIONAL"</i>	<i>"INNOVATIVE"</i>
A. Theoretical Concepts with similar (empirical) Relations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Materialism: INGLEHART - Acceptance and Obligation Values: KLAGES - Pre-Conventional and Conventional Sociomoral Reasoning: KOHLBERG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post-Materialism: INGLEHART - Self-Realization Values: KLAGES - Post-Conventional Sociomoral Reasoning: KOHLBERG - Risk Society: BECK
B. Socio-Political and Psychological Aspects	

¹⁹ Table 1 shows crucial elements of the "traditional" and the "innovative" paradigm (dominance of physical security and market/profit economy versus ecology orientation and priority of social security). The two patterns represent abstractions. In empirical studies we were able to show that the respondents tend to combine the positive/attractive elements of both paradigms, and that the relative preference for the "innovative" paradigm was growing in Germany, particularly amongst well educated, young people.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - economic growth; profit; stable prices; stable economy - fight against crime maintenance of order; - priority of economic and physical security; - conservative-traditional political orientation - authority; order; achievement; - political participation is primarily seen as instrumental action; - information; discussion; communication; - linear thinking; causality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - dominance of ecological consideration; self-realization; individualism - more say on job and community; - priority of quality of life; hedonism; eventual renouncement of economic growth; - unconventional (new left) political orientation - participation, creativity; - political participation is instrumental, but also seen as expressive social interaction - dialogue; discourse; - systemic, thinking; synergy.
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Conflicting political paradigms and values in the process of unification

The German unification in all its complexity and difficulty is an enormous task which will be on the agenda of political priorities for a long period of time - probably for a whole generation. Filling the "gap of modernity" between the East and the West will absorb huge economic and substantial manpower resources.

If the evaluations based on the mentioned theoretical concepts and on empirical findings are correct, there will be a pressure on the German society and its institutions towards the creation of material and physical security and the fulfilment of basic material needs. While we observed a tendency towards "post-material" values and priorities (e.g. self-realization; emancipation; hedonistic individualism; environmentalism) in the "old" Federal Republic in the 80ies, a reinforcement of the "material" values and priorities (like law and order; profit orientation; acceptance of authority and obligations etc.) currently is on its way.

This "change in the direction" of change of political paradigm's, back to the traditional paradigm, will cause problems and conflicts for those who already internalized the new values and priorities during their socialization.

Coping and defending as processes of self-environment organization

In her innovative and interesting book of 1977, Norma Haan describes ways to build a personal –social-psychology that should become "... a psychology of people within situations". She deals with the question "... how people make something out of what situations make of them" (p. ix). She tries to incorporate, adapt, and bridge central concepts of the Freudian and the Piagetian line of reasoning in a theory of personality for everyday life with conceptualizations that embrace both neurotic conflict and developmental disequilibrium.

Her views and perspectives on concepts like "personality" and "ego", which cannot be outlined in detail here²⁰, are particularly useful when dealing with effects of social and political change on the individual, i.e. on processes of coping²¹ and defending²².

Looking at it from an interdisciplinary orientation, a particular advantage of her approach is the affinity to the approaches of social constructivists (see Gergen 1990). However, I must admit that I have not yet had the chance (and the resources) to plan an empirical **study which follows** Haan's theoretical approach and uses the pertinent research instruments by Haan and her associates,

Nevertheless, "coping and defending" present background concepts of reference in the interpretation of (empirical) data on the psycho-social and psychological effects of the German unification.

4 Psychological and psycho-political aspect of the unification process: a comparison of orientations and feelings of (young) Germans in East and West

In recent years, many studies tried to analyse the reflections of the process of unification in the consciousness of the citizens in East and West Germany. Most of the studies, especially the large scale public opinion polls, were focussed on attitudes, orientations, and values of the young generation. Central questions of these studies were the "differential effects" of the unification process, i.e. the differences between East and West, between males and females, between groups with different formal education, between age groups, between groups with different basic political orientations etc.

Because the present paper has a rather broad scope, and intends to give an overview, it certainly is neither possible nor necessary to report the single results here. I rather focus the presentation on a comparison between East and West of psychologically and psycho-politically relevant and salient dimensions. The criterion of relevance has been outlined above, the criterion of salience simply is a large difference

²⁰ Haan follows the general idea of personality as a process processes and their organizations (as the singular core of personality"). In the preface to her book of 1977, Haan concisely summarizes the intentions of her theoretical formulation (p. x - xi). It "... (a) rescues the most useful Freudian insights, (b) outlines a personality psychology that Piaget probably would not reject, (c) directly represents people interacting and transacting within situations in the strong sense of these terms, (d) suggests the form of a developmental personality psychology that maintains proper respect and allegiance to the accepted knowledge of cognitive development, (e) makes it possible, and even necessary, to adopt a constructivist epistemology, (f) has something practical to say about the social nature of experimenters' transactions with subjects (and therapists' with patients), and finally (g) suggests a process formulation of valued ideal man as one who copes".

²¹ Coping entails a changed view on the 'successful' person. He/she is not primarily a 'winner', but merely an accurate, authentic negotiator with himself/herself, others, and life (cf. p. 4).

²² For Haan, "... a defense is a process that people use to preserve a sense of their own integrity despite the expense of attenuating their usual allegiance to intersubjective logic and the consensus of others. The action usefully serves their own intrasubjective logic and order, that is, they feel they need the defense to prevent chaos that could debilitate themselves and possibly even others. Consequently it follows that a person who evokes a defense is for the moment (or if he is chronically defensive, for a considerable span of time) not all he can be in both a personal and a social sense" (p. 6).

in the empirical data between East and West. This means that many single, part and partial aspects will not be addressed.

Since our study at the SOWI provides a large, very recent comparative set of data on attitudes and orientations of adolescents in East and West Germany, I will exemplarily present some results of this study²³.

Values and value change

One of the most interesting results is the similarity of basic values as well as the degree to which these values are shared by the young generation in East and West (cf. **Kohr** 1992a). On the rather abstract level of values, which are detached from the everyday reality, comparable structures²⁴ seem to have developed, despite the differences between the "socialist" and "capitalist" principles of education²⁵.

The young in the East adopted the basic values of the Western democratic and market oriented society, presumably as a consequence of their orientation towards the Western lifestyle and popular culture (music, fashion, advertisements, comics, movies, television, radio, literature, etc.). Although the GDR was a rigid, authoritarian, closed system, the young generation was granted (and took itself) some freedom. Due to the frequent contacts to the West mainly²⁶ via the media, above all via tv, the

²³ Representative poll of n = 833 male and female adolescents (aged 16 to 18 years). The average interview with the fully standardized questionnaire took about 45 minutes. The sample in the West comprises n = 432 respondents, the (disproportional) sample in The East n = 401. The sampling was done in November 1992.

²⁴ Expressed in the terminology of **Rokeach** (1973), there is a similarity of the "terminal values".

²⁵ Cf. e.g. **Gensicke** 1992; **Kühnel** 1992 (p. 90 -94); **Krebs** 1992 (p. 38).

²⁶ Many families had contacts to relatives in West Germany. While visits, particularly those of young GDR citizens in the West, were rare, many West Germans used to send parcels with gifts (mainly consumer goods which were not available in the GDR) at Christmas, at birthdays etc. Mail-order catalogs were requested sources of information.

regime anyway had no chance to perfectly exercise control of information diffusion.

Thus it is plausible that the similarity of values in East mainly and West Germany was a consequence of the broad reception presence of the Western media. At this point, it should, however, be stressed, that the acceptance of and orientation towards Western values ("assimilation") is not the same as the internalization of these values. The latter would mean a process of accommodation, an acquisition being based on concrete options, conflicts, and experiences. Evidently, this was possible only to a minor extent (if at all) during the existence of the old regime in the East.

The Dimension of Security/Insecurity

While values do not directly relate to the concrete circumstances of everyday life, to the self-evident, seemingly obvious facts and entities of the "life-world" (*Lebenswelt*, cf. **Schütz & Luckmann** 1979), feelings of security/insecurity more directly refer to,- and thus reflect, the social situation and psycho-social problems.

In our first study on attitudes and orientations of the young in the old and new Laender (OL and NL), which was carried out in December 1990²⁷, after the first all-German general elections had taken place, we first asked if the respondents now felt generally "more secure" or "more insecure" regarding their personal social and political situation. A second poll was carried out in summer 1991²⁸. In December 1990 as well as in summer 1991 the answers given by the young in the old Laender clearly differed from those given in the new Laender. While in the western part of Germany about two thirds of the respondents felt "more secure", in the eastern part of Germany an approximately equal number of young people replied that they felt "more insecure" (the change which occurred between December 1990 and summer 1991 is not substantial and can be neglected here).

The results of this study (cf. Kohr 1992), which cannot be reported in detail here, were certainly alarming. They reflect the numerous problems which adolescents and young adults in the former GDR were faced with, and still are - probably even more severely. The drastic difference between the assessments made in the old and in the new Laender should, however, not mislead the evaluation of the observer despite a material basis of existence which, compared to the East, is definitely more positive, about one third of the young in the West seem to perceive problems and risks as well. After the question addressing the general feeling of socio-political security/insecurity, the respondents were asked to evaluate a list of factors which may either contribute to a personal feeling of security, provoke a feeling of insecurity, or have nothing to do with this dimension. The respondents were asked to make this evaluation according to their personal feeling for each of the 15 factors named in the list²⁹.

²⁷ Representativity was approximated by quota samples of male and female adolescents/young adults (OL, n=493; NL, n=387).

²⁸ OL, n=394, NL, n=274).

²⁹ The list consistet of factors which were frequently named in interviews, e.g. "social free market economy", "the Deutschmark", "the reunification of Germany", "my standard of living: things I can afford", "pollution of our environment", "the German Armed Forces (*Bundeswehr*)", "violence and riots in the streets", "my personal career", "my partner" etc.

The results of cluster analyses showed a distinct structure. From the adolescents/young adults' point of view, pollution/destruction of the environment, terrorism, crime and criminality are dominant factors of insecurity in both the old and the new Laender. Another important problem are rents and apartments, particularly in the new Laender. The factors of insecurity generally are more pronounced in the East.

A closer look at the factors which are psychologically related to security by the young shows that they, no matter if in the West or the East, in the first place refer to their personal vocational career, to personal health, and to the relation with their partner. Disarmament was also indicated by the majority in East and West which contributes to the feeling of security.

Most interesting are those factors which are evaluated differently by the young in East and West. Considering the material basis of security, a small minority of the respondents regarded the "strength of the Deutschmark" as a common positive symbol of economic power.

As to the assessment of the current economic conditions there were, however, large differences between East and West. While approximately two thirds of the young in the West associate security with "social market economy", this symbol of West Germany was related to security by about one third of the young in the East only.

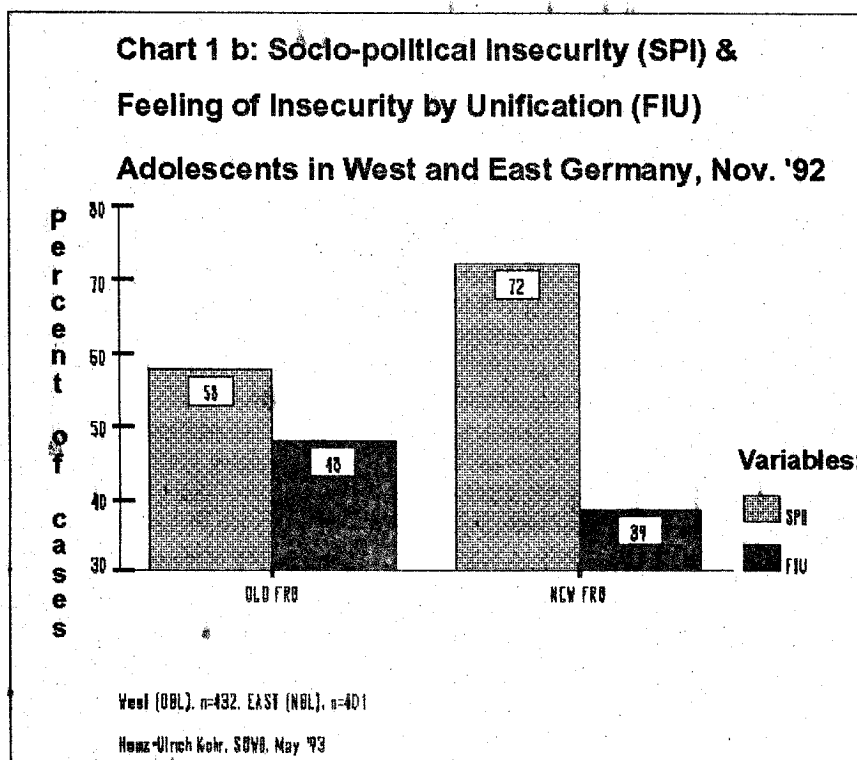
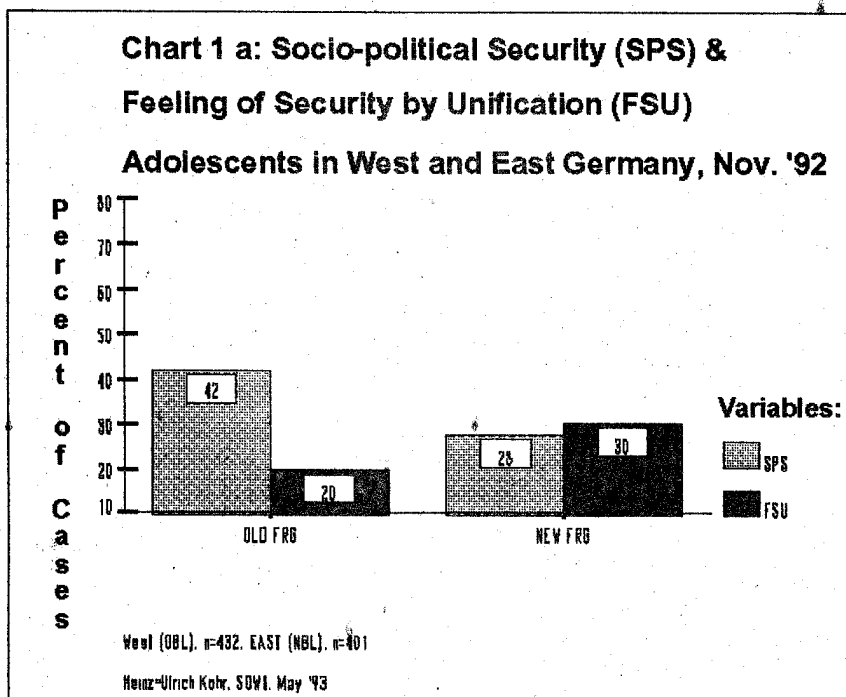
Reflecting the life-world for a large section of the population in the former GDR, the personal standard of living in December 1990 is considerably less frequently associated with feelings of security (difference about 20%) in the East and more frequently related to insecurity.

In the context of the psychological processes going on during the early days of the political unification, the adolescents' evaluation regarding the unification and the security-insecurity" dimension obviously is of particular interest. Concerning this dimension, there were very controversial assessments in December 1990. At that time, the relative majority (almost 50%) of the young living in the eastern part of Germany associated "insecurity" with the German unification (West: one third), while the relative majority of the young living in the West indicated that the unification had nothing to do with security or insecurity.

The analyses of the data on the same question gathered in summer 1991 show a larger diversification of the answers. A relative majority in East and West (about 40%) associated "insecurity" with the unification, about one third thought that the unification has nothing to do with security/insecurity, and only roughly one quarter of the adolescents/young adults in East and West mentally connected the term "security" with the German unification.

The Most recent data (November 1992) on pertinent attitudes and orientations of the young show very interesting things in common, but also some important changes. As to the general evaluation of socio-political security/insecurity (variables SPS and SPI in Charts 1a and 1 b), the percentage of the young feeling insecure now dominates in the East (72%) and in the West (58%). While the percentage did not change substantially since 1990 for adolescents/young adults in East Germany, the majority of

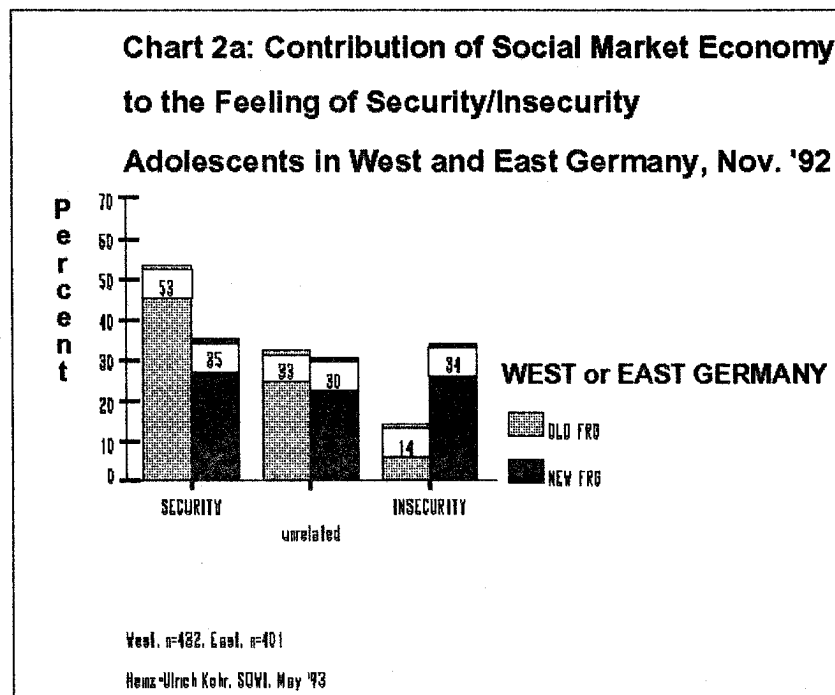
the adolescents (58%) currently feel insecure too (the relative frequency was close to 40% in December'90 and in summer '91).

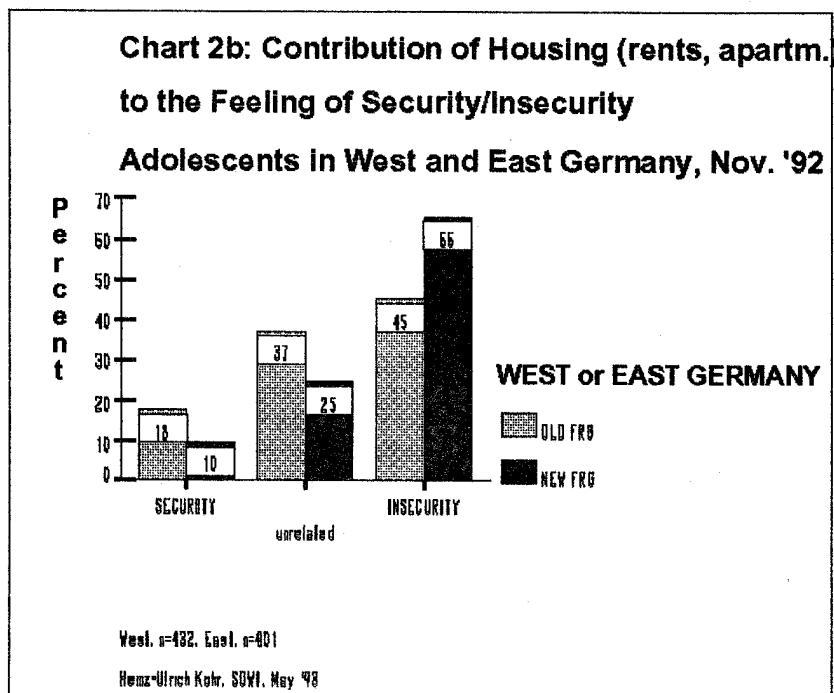


Neither in the West nor in the East the majority of the young perceives a contribution of the unification to their feeling of security (20%; 30%; cf. FSU and FIU in Charts 1a and 1 b) - rather the contrary tends to be the case, particularly in the West (48%; 39%).

Compared to the early period after the unification, especially the young in the West changed their perspective towards the more frequent association of feelings of insecurity. The difference between the Young in West and East is not very large (48% to 39%), but it is nevertheless substantial.

Looking at the other single factors which relate to the feeling of security/insecurity, the factors in which the young in East and West differ the most clearly relate to the economic dimension (see Charts 2a and b). This mainly seems to be a reflection of the disappointment and frustration provided by the export of the "social market economy" to the East. An important factor of disillusion also is the apparent inability of the new governments to solve the problems of housing (rapidly increasing rents; scarcity of apartments with a western standard etc.).



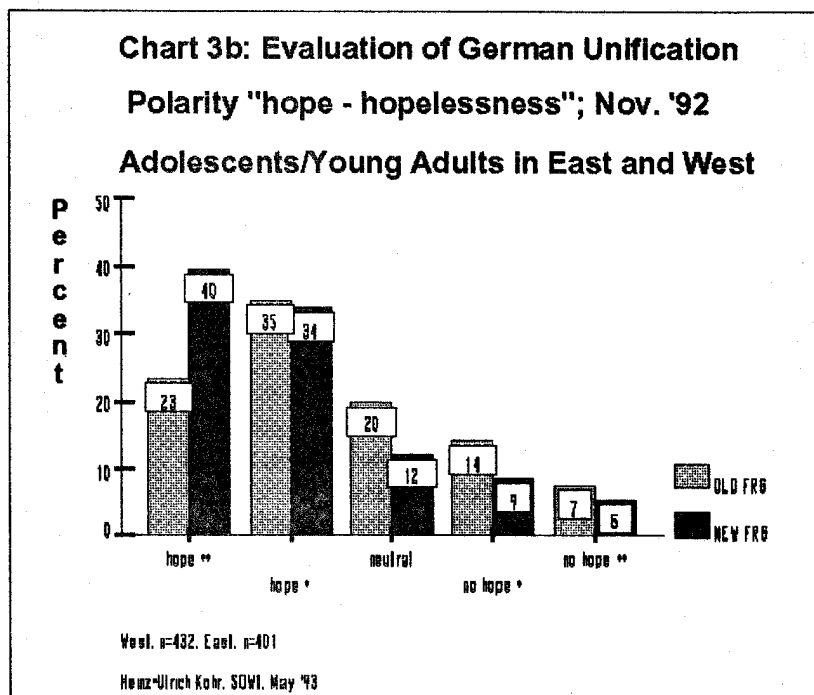
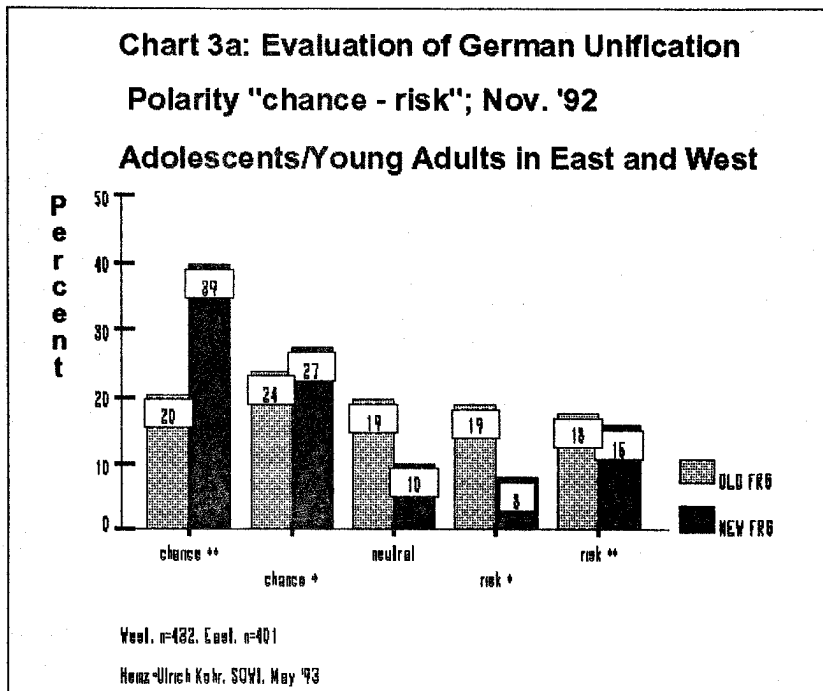


Direct evaluation of the process of unification by adolescents

These results lead to the important question, how the young currently react when directly evaluating the German unification. Do they perceive it as a chance or rather as a risk? Do they evaluate it as a fair or unfair process? Do they associate hope or rather hopelessness with it?

Charts 3a and b show the results for the young in East and West with respect to these two aspects. In the study, other aspects have been addressed in the format of a polarity profile³⁰.

³⁰ "Now think about Germany's reunification, and your personal views and feelings about this. In the following list you find pairs of terms indicating and expressing feeling. Please tell me now, how you personally feel about that. If both feelings somehow apply, please just refer to the feeling being stronger". In the study of November 1992, 7 polarities were included and presented with a "scale" ranging from 1 to 5, i.e. from "strong" to "weak" for the one, and from, "weak" to "strong" for the other polarity; "neither/nor" was introduced as a "neutral point".



In summary, the (relative) majority of respondents in the West and in the East (first and second percentage)³¹ perceives the process of unification as follows:

- as a chance (44%, 66%);
- associates worries with the process (54%, 50%);
- feels an inequality (44%, 57%);
- sees an unfair course of events (45%, 55%);
- the relative majority of the young in the West associates partnership with the unification (40%), while the relative majority in the East selects the other polarity (43%), i.e. rather perceives a "solo" of the West;
- while powerlessness is associated by 43% of the young in the West, the young in the East are divided: 45% perceive participation, and 45% powerlessness;
- "hope - hopelessness", the last polarity, evoked a clear majority of positive expectations: "hope" was associated with the process of unification by 59% of the young in the West and by 74% of the young in the East.

These results indicate that the young in both parts of the country seem to be sceptic and realistic, and at the same time quite optimistic. Especially the young in the East are affected emotionally (and, of course, in reality) more than those in the West. They may feel the hardships more frequently, but also the chances provided by the unification.

Expectations of the future

The results reported above already informed indirectly about the aspirations and expectations of the young with respect to their own personal future, and the future of society.

These aspects were addressed directly in two questions³². The results are comparable for the adolescents from East and West. Gloomy perspectives towards their own, private future are infrequent (7%, 8%). Confidence in the private future is only marginally higher in the West than in the East (51 % to 46%). The mixed, probably most realistic perspectives almost show the same frequencies (41 %, 48%).

Remarkably different from this relatively optimistic outlook to the personal future is the perspective toward the future of our society. A slight majority in West and East sees a rather gloomy societal future (57%, 55%) - the confident outlooks are somewhat less frequent (43%, 45%).

These data are in line with the findings of other studies: usually the positive perspective towards the own personal future is more frequent (and higher) than positive perspectives towards the future of society. However, the optimistic perspective towards

³¹ In order to reduce complexity, the non-neutral evaluation ("strong" and "weak") were added.

³² "You can tend to view your own future, the future course of your own life, rather gloomy or rather bright. How do you see it?" Answers: "rather gloomy", "rather bright", "mixed- so/so".
You can view the future, how life will go on in our society, rather gloomy or rather bright. How do you see this?". Answers: "rather gloomy", "rather bright".

the future is markedly less frequent (difference of almost 20%) in this study than e.g. in the recent Shell Youth Survey³³ (cf. Zinnecker & Fischer 1992, p. 213). It is thus reasonable to assume that the decline of optimism is a reflection of the current political and economic crisis in our society.

Young Germans in East and West: Systemic, national, or transnational ties?

As to psychological effects of the German unification, the question of emotional ties to the abstract psycho-political entity of the state, respectively the nation, is relevant - not the least for political reasons.

Moreover, the trends of a rebirth of nationalism on one hand, and pressures towards internationalization on the other (the European Community; the assignment of military power to the United Nations etc.) may influence the identification of the young. A change is probable because the "German identity" after 1945 until recently was very vague, if it existed at all.

...With the new full sovereignty, the economic and the military potential of the unified nation, new emotional national ties are probable to develop over time. Two basically antagonistic trends are plausible concerning national/transnational attachments of the young: the construction of (1) an "open" consciousness of national affiliation/attachment (see **Kohr & Wakenhut** 1993) or the construction of (2) a "closed" nationalistic - regressive attachment.

The **open attachment** is linked to learning and the integration/accommodation of experience of those who are able to cope with the complexity and the high demands on flexibility which modernity imposes on the individual.

Coping with these demands to a large extent depends on prior learning conditions, i.e. on the conditions of general and political socialization, on education, flexibility, physical and intellectual capacity.

Apparently the young, particularly the well educated and trained, have the best opportunities to cope with the stress of modernity, and to become "the winners of modernity".

As a side effect, the development respectively the attainment of a transsystemic, non-nationalistic attachment is probable, not the least because of its instrumentality in the context of the demands of the highly complex sectors of economy, services, production, trade, and information technology.

The **closed attachments** are probable to be overrepresented within segments of the populations which might be called the losers of modernity". They may be characterized grossly by a social, psychological and economic environment providing little opportunities for complex learning, social experiences and education .

As a mechanism of defending the self against a frustrating social environment of this type, aggression and regression, in particular the displacement of aggression to-

³³ The polling for this study was done in spring 1991.

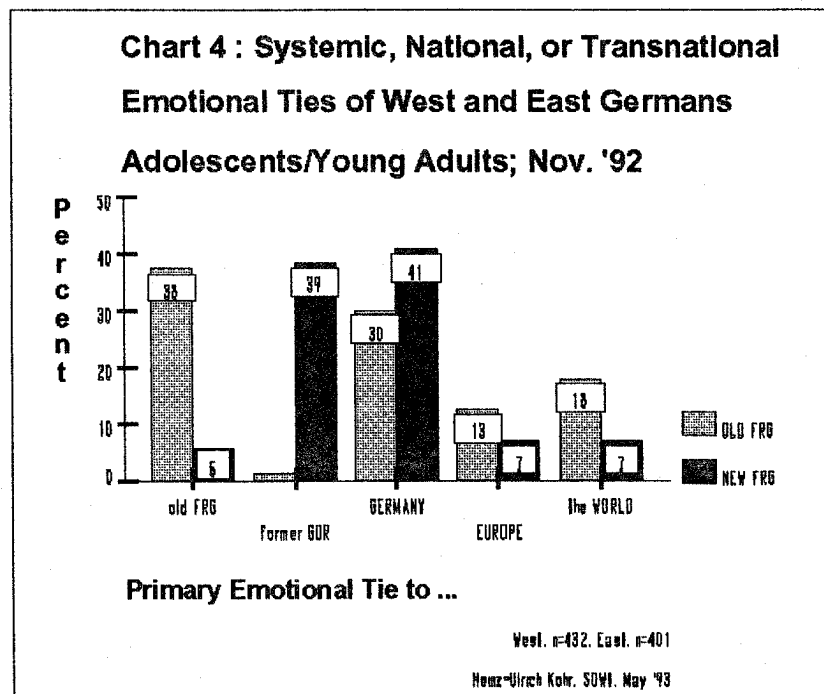
wards (psychological) objects of the social and physical environment is probable (i.e. phenomena like vandalism, aggression towards minority groups like foreigners, ethnocentricity, authoritarianism, the construction of enemy images, etc.).

These ways of defending, so to speak, serve the hurt, damaged ego as a kind of a scaffolding, thus contributing to prevent the breakdown of identity. Bizarre forms of behaviour, expressive styles of language, clothing, and music, construction of movie and video heroes etc. may contribute to the formation of a group identity which reinforces the support of an endangered individual identity.

We currently observe defending and closed attachments with the right extremists in Germany, who are definitely nationalistic, extremely ethnocentric and hostile against foreigners (cf. **Kohr** 1993).

On the background of the highly problematic socio-political situation in the former GDR, two different trends of the growth of emotional ties/attachments can be expected: a somewhat nostalgic re-orientation towards the lost old life-world with collectivistic solidarity in the East, and a closed-minded, defending national or nationalistic orientation.

In the most recent study of November 1992 it was not possible to include the elaborated indicators which are needed to obtain valid data on these hypotheses. We could only use simple indicators referring to the emotional ties/attachments of the adolescents in East and West Germany. Three results (cf. Chart 4) are most interesting:



(1) up to now there is no homogenous national attachment. The relative majorities of about 40% in East and West are either tied to the respective "old system" (West Germans to the old FRG, East Germans to the former GDR) or to Germany;

- (2) although the impulse as well as the economic and political power to perform the unification came from the West, the emotional identification with Germany is substantially higher in the East than in the West (41 % to 30%);
- (3) transnational ties are clearly more frequent amongst young West Germans (31 % to 14%).

These results, probably more impressive than many others, demonstrate a core problem of the German unification. It is not only the money but the general difference of potential and resources in East and West. As long as the differences of the everyday world are drastic, the walls in the mind will survive.

The feelings of inferiority which are articulated, sometimes in a self-ironic manner, have a real background. In a way the sarcastic statement "we are second class people", which is frequently voiced in the East, is true - of course not morally, but in the everyday reality. Thus, many in the East complain about the "colonial masters" or the "colonial manners". and sometimes the sentence "I work in the colonies" is used amongst friends in the West. Many of the young in the East recognize their problematic situation, identify their chances, and the best educated and trained tend to "go West".

5 Conclusions

The complex psychological effects and problems of the German unification process, which led to the abolition of the total society of the GDR - and will also lead to major changes of the old Federal Republic cannot be adequately represented in a single theoretical approach.

Theoretical concepts which address processes of change on a macro level are helpful. On this level, the idea of socio-political paradigms is useful. The paradigms in Germany East and Germany West were not only different but partially incompatible (e.g. "individualism" and "collectivism", "believe in/acceptance of the authority of the party versus criticism of political authorities etc.).

These differences led and will lead to many tensions on different levels of our society. Moreover, It will also contribute to a regression of the development in the old Federal Republic. While there was a tendency towards the innovative paradigm of social ecology, we now observe the shift back towards the traditional paradigm of economic profit orientation and physical security.

The empirical evidence of many sources, not only of scientific studies, leads to the conclusion that the disparity in East and West will go on for an indefinite but not too short time.

The process in its initial phase seemed to be a problem mainly in the East. People felt the change of their life-world immediately. Institutions and structures which were quasi naturally present, vanished over night.

Unemployment, particularly for women (see **Holst & Schupp** 1993), became a new frightening experience. People in the East had to learn quickly the rules of the market. They also had to understand that the value of work, of achievement, sometimes even of social relations is more or less directly expressed in terms of monetary units. Furthermore, they had to learn that initiative is very important for success in the West. And, not the least, they needed to acquire the knowledge how to organize all the "little things" of everyday life like banking, insurances, bureaucracy etc.

The former average life-world of the citizen of the GDR was "colonized"³⁴ by the rationality, the administrative, and the economic principles of the West.

The sum of the experiences, necessarily in most of the cases experiences of incompetence, coupled with a real existing deficit with respect to income and standard of living, resulted in a feeling of being second class citizens. A collective inferiority complex has emerged.

Defending as a psychological process serving the endangered self is frequent in its different facets in East and West, e.g. as violence and vandalism, aggression or apathy, hostility towards foreigners, self-aggression in the forms of drug or alcohol abuse etc.³⁵

A severe current problem, that may well extend into the future, is the lack of great social and political visions - not only in the German society, but generally in the West.

The cold war is wone, the great enemy is gone. But gradually many feel a kind of psychic emptiness and anomia. Our societies must no longer be better and more successful than the societies of the enemy. We can concentrate on the problems of our own societies. The problems are manifold: the migration from the Eastern countries, but also from other poor regions of the world; environmental pollution; the destruction of the atmosphere; the overaging of our society; criminality; the limits of resources of the welfare state - to name some of the major problems only.

Many of these problems are transnational or international. We, however, experience most of them now, and even more in the future, in the new Germany. While facing all the problems, the outlook cannot be very optimistic.

We will have to change our ways of thinking and producing. The old, prefabricated solutions will no longer be valid in this radically changed world after the breakdown of the East. New political and economic approaches have to be developed, that are based on a post-conventional social and political morality (see **Kohlberg 1984**).

The psychologists' contribution in this context could be the promotion of coping, not only by means of therapy but also in the fields of education and politics. The classic role of the therapist, so to speak, the conversion of defending into coping, will of course be a central reference of the profession, but psychologists should also engage more in measures of prevention, i.e. also think and act as political psychologists.

³⁴ See Jürgen Habermas (1981) on the concept of life-world and its "colonization" (*Kolonisierung der Lebenswelt*).

³⁵ See Maaz (1993), "violence in Germany - a psychological analysis".

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