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On the road to Weimar? The political economy of popular satisfaction with government and regime performance in Germany

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**On the Road to Weimar?
The Political Economy of Popular
Satisfaction with Government and
Regime Performance in Germany**

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Abstract

The focus of this paper is on citizens' satisfaction with the German democratic political system. This paper presents an argument to the effect that the performance records of both the economy and the government in power have substantial impacts on the levels of popular satisfaction with the regime. This theoretical stance contradicts the cultural vision of democratic stability and its thesis that political culture, with its inertial qualities, provides stable moorings for a political system. The results presented here suggest that Reunification has taken its toll on the German political system. In the New Federal States satisfaction with the Federal Republic's political system remains very low and this dissatisfaction has spread into West Germany. Public satisfaction with the system in the West has sunk to its lowest level since data have been collected on this phenomenon. The sources of this are to be seen in both economic developments and government performance. Contrary to the culturalist vision of the Federal Republic's democracy, satisfaction with the political system in Western Germany is not a given; citizens modify their views on the system in light of both the government's and the economy's successes and failures. The dynamic is similar in the East. The economic strains of Reunification and the perception that the federal government is not making sufficient efforts to bring East German living standards up to those of the West have kept the population there from committing themselves to the system. While most East Germans now admit that it was not a mistake to have merged with the Federal Republic and accept its political model, little enthusiasm exists for that model or for the economic system linked to it.

Zusammenfassung

Im Mittelpunkt dieses discussion papers steht die Zufriedenheit der Bundesbürger mit dem bestehenden deutschen demokratischen System. Die Argumentation zielt darauf ab, daß sowohl die Leistungsfähigkeit der Wirtschaft wie der Regierung das Ausmaß der Zufriedenheit der Bevölkerung mit dem politischen System bestimmen. Dieser theoretische Ansatz widerspricht der These von der kulturellen Fundierung demokratischer Stabilität und der daraus abgeleiteten Behauptung, daß die politische Kultur mit ihren sich nur allmählich wandelnden Eigenschaften zur stabilen Verankerung des politischen Systems beiträgt. Die hier präsentierten Ergebnisse machen deutlich, welchen Preis das politische System für die Wiedervereinigung zahlen mußte. In den neuen Bundesländern ist die Zufriedenheit mit dem politischen System der Bundesrepublik noch immer sehr gering - und diese Unzufriedenheit macht sich auch in Westdeutschland breit. Die Zufriedenheit der Bürger im Westen mit dem politischen System ist auf den niedrigsten Stand, seitdem Daten über dieses Phänomen erhoben worden sind, gesunken. Ursachen sind die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung und die Regierungspolitik. Entgegen der kulturellen These über demokratische Stabilität ist die

Zufriedenheit mit dem politischen System in Westdeutschland demzufolge nicht einfach nur gegeben: Bürger verändern ihre Einstellungen zum System aufgrund der Erfolge und Mißerfolge der Regierung und der Wirtschaft. Im Osten verhält es sich ähnlich. Die wirtschaftlichen Anstrengungen der Wiedervereinigung wie auch der Eindruck, die Bundesregierung unternehme nicht genügend, um den Lebensstandard der Ostdeutschen dem der Westdeutschen anzugleichen, hielt die Bevölkerung davon ab, sich zu dem System zu bekennen. Obwohl die meisten Ostdeutschen der Vereinigung mit der ehemaligen Bundesrepublik mittlerweile zustimmen und das bestehende politische Modell akzeptieren, ist indessen die Begeisterung dafür nur mäßig, ebenso wie für das damit verbundene Wirtschaftssystem.

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Introduction¹

At the time of writing Germany has been unified for a little over six years. A large number of reports have described the complexities and problems involved in this major undertaking. In this paper a problem is addressed which, while it has not been overlooked, has yet to receive much systematic treatment. The focus is on the domestic political repercussions of this experience and, in particular, the question of whether the pains and trials of these years have taken a toll on citizens' satisfaction with the German democratic political system. Is the German political system once again confronting a crisis, or is it managing to overcome the challenges that confront it during a period when it is engaged in attempting to foster internal unity while simultaneously preparing itself for further integration with the European Union?²

This paper presents an argument to the effect that the performance records of both the economy and the government in power have substantial impacts on the levels of popular satisfaction with the regime. This theoretical stance contradicts the cultural vision of democratic stability and its thesis that political culture, with its inertial qualities, provides stable moorings for a political system. Nevertheless, it needs to be emphasized at the outset that this paper does not contain the argument that the German political system is collapsing or is on the verge of collapse. A large number of conditions would have to be in place for a collapse to occur.³ But it should be kept in mind that one of the many conditions that endanger the legitimacy of a regime is widespread popular dissatisfaction with its performance. This condition is the focus of the paper.

1. My thanks to Wolf-Dieter Eberwein, Bob Hancké, Britta Heinrich, Bruce Kogut, Ken Newton, David Soskice, and Anne Wren for their helpful comments and suggestions on this paper. Thanks also to Dieter Fuchs, Max Kaase, Hans-Dieter Klingemann, Regine Sühring, and the Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung in Cologne for providing access to some of the data sources used.

2. On Germany's current problems and allusions to their similarity with the early 1930s, see, e.g., Helmut Schmidt's open letter to Bundesbankpräsident Hans Tietmeyer in *Die Zeit* (Nov. 8, 1996), *The Economist's* survey of Germany (Nov. 9, 1996), E. J. Dionne's op.ed. piece in the *International Herald Tribune* (Feb. 11, 1997), and Assheuer and Mießgang's interview with Karl Heinz Bohrer in *Die Zeit* (Mar. 7, 1997).

3. See Lepsius (1978) on the factors and events surrounding the collapse of the Weimar Republic and Rogowski (1974) on the more general question of the factors that undermine any rational citizen's belief in the legitimacy of the current regime.

The most important results of the paper can be summarized briefly here. The process of Reunification has taken its toll on the German political system. Not only has East German satisfaction with the Federal Republic's political system remained very low, but this dissatisfaction has spread into West Germany. Public satisfaction with the system in the West has sunk to its lowest level since data have been collected on this phenomenon. The sources of this are to be seen in both economic developments and government performance. Contrary to the culturalist vision of the Federal Republic's democracy, satisfaction with the political system in Western Germany is not a given; citizens modify their views on the system in light of both the government's and the economy's successes and failures. The dynamic is similar in the East. The economic strains of Reunification and the perception that the federal government is not making sufficient efforts to bring East German living standards up to those of the West have kept the population there from committing themselves to the system. While most East Germans now admit that it was not a mistake to have merged with the Federal Republic and accept its political model, little enthusiasm exists for that model or for the economic system linked to it.

The next section provides some background. It focuses primarily on the public's mood in both East and West and developments in the economy since the "Wende" (revolutionary turn). An effort is made to systematically portray the ways in which public opinion has reacted to various developments during this time and to sketch a number of important macroeconomic trends. It then goes on to describe trends in popular attitudes toward the government and the political system as a whole. In the succeeding section attention turns to the determinants of levels of citizen satisfaction with the German political system. A model of the dynamics of satisfaction with the political system among West German citizens during the period from 1977 through 1995 is presented and empirical evidence provided that demonstrates the importance of economic conditions and governmental performance in these dynamics. A more modest

effort is then undertaken to show how perceptions of government's efforts in the East as well as expectations about economic developments there have influenced satisfaction with federal government and, in turn, the overall political system. The last section discusses the implications of these results in light of expectations regarding both future government policy and macroeconomic developments within both regions of Germany.

Background

While the idea of a unified Germany was of great importance to West German citizens during the 1950s and 1960s, its significance had receded dramatically by the early 1970s (see Figure 1).⁴ In part as a response to the Ostpolitik of the new government under Chancellor Brandt as well as to the Berlin Agreements, the issue never again was seen as an important problem until the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the SED regime in the German Democratic Republic. Correspondingly, the desirability of Reunification as well as its possibility declined in public sentiment in the Federal Republic. While approximately 80 percent held it to be desirable in the 1950s, sentiment in support of Reunification declined to approximately 60 percent in the 1970s and early 1980s. Approximately 40 percent saw it as an impossibility in the 1950s. This had risen to approximately 70 percent in the 1970s (Best, 1990, pp. 11-13).

After the Fall of the Berlin Wall in November of 1989 and the Volkskammer Elections in March of 1990, the issue of Reunification was clearly on the table. However, in the minds of the people it did not have a high priority. Certainly in both East and West large parts of the populaces saw it as an important issue. Approximately 51 percent in the East and 28 percent in the West held it to be very important. Nevertheless,

4. Note that all tables and figures are placed in the Appendix (pp. 53-101) to this paper.

in comparison with other goals and problems, this issue was accorded relatively low ranking in terms of the priorities held by both populations. The May/June 1990 IPOS surveys in both Republics registered this goal as well behind many others that concerned people (see Table 1). Law and order, economic conditions, the environment and even the reduction of bureaucracy ranked higher in their estimations. Reunification was important to both peoples, but little more so than the goal of European Unification.

Support for Reunification was widespread in both regions but the hope was that it be delayed and not rushed. During May and June of 1990 widespread support was registered for such an undertaking in both populaces. In the East, about 94 percent supported Reunification while three percent were opposed and approximately the same small number were indifferent to it. Support was less widespread in the West, but, nevertheless, about 76 registered their approval of Reunification, and about 15 percent opposed, while 9 percent were indifferent. However, when one takes into account attitudes toward the speed at which Reunification should occur, a somewhat more equivocal image of popular support for Reunification emerges (see Table 2). Thus, only 39 percent of the East German population at the time of the signing of the Reunification Treaty actually advocated a quick or immediate merger of the two states. A much larger group, 55 percent, while in favor of Reunification, felt the it should not occur quickly. A similar picture is to be found in Western popular sentiment. Only about 25 percent of the populace in the West supported a rapid Reunification. A majority, over 51 percent, felt that it should occur slowly.⁵

5. As Kuechler (1993) notes, the pattern of general support but extensive reservations along with a desire to take a "go-slow" approach to the Reunification project was widespread within both populations. In conjunction with the events of this time, especially the diplomatic success of Chancellor Kohl in winning support for Reunification from both the Soviets and the western allies and the CDU's electoral success in the Volkskammer elections of March, a picture emerges that suggests the leaders rather than the masses were more important in shaping the outcome.

Hesitancy also characterized West German opinion about whether their system of government be retained or altered with the inclusion of 16 million new citizens. Questioned in February of 1990 about what form of government should follow Reunification, the West German population was very divided. While 44 percent favored the entry of the New States with a continuation of the Federal Republic's Grundgesetz (Basic Law or constitution), 38 percent felt that unification of the two Republics should be accompanied by a new constitution, and 18 percent were undecided (Noelle-Neuman and Köcher, 1993). However, the March Politbarometer Survey of the West in that same year saw a far greater percentage in support of retaining the Basic Law (60 percent for retention; 35 percent for new constitution, and 5 percent undecided). Furthermore, in this same survey, 79 percent of West Germans held the opinion that it was necessary that a plebiscite/referendum of the population be held in order to decide whether Reunification should occur.

The two populations had very different expectations about the implications of Reunification in the late spring of 1990. In the East, a large majority expected that the results of unification for the East would be mainly advantageous (see Table 3). About 63 percent held this opinion, while only about 6 percent expected the results to be principally disadvantageous, and about 31 percent anticipated mixed results. In the West, however, expectations were markedly less sanguine; only 28 percent expected that Reunification in the main would bring advantages with it, while a nearly equal number, i.e., 24 percent, saw disadvantages in Reunification, and 47 percent expected that the results would be mixed.

A major attraction in Reunification for the citizens of the GDR was the hope that with it would come the higher living standards prevalent in the Federal Republic. Still, when asked in late spring of 1990 most (i.e., 68 percent) citizens in the GDR were unsure how long it would take for Eastern living standards to be brought up to those found in the West (see Table 4). Of those willing to express an opinion, most saw this

achievement of parity coming before the end of the century (25.9 percent) and very few expected it to take longer. In the West, there was far greater willingness to express an opinion and indeed most seem to have had an optimistic outlook with respect to achieving this goal. Thus, 30 percent of the Westerners believed parity in living standards would come about within 5 years. More than three quarters believed it would occur by the end of the century.

Within two years, however, the picture had changed dramatically. Thus, in 1992 most Easterners had formulated expectations about the time it would take to achieve parity, and they foresaw that its attainment would extend beyond the end of the century (nearly 69 percent anticipating it would not occur before the century was out). Similarly in the West, expectations were lowered, with about 66 percent expecting the achievement of parity to occur after the century was out and only 32 percent expecting it to occur sooner. Three years later, i.e., in 1995, Eastern sentiment was even more pessimistic. Very few believed it had already occurred or would occur before the end of the century. The overwhelming majority (83 percent) thought it would occur after 2000, and, indeed, 33 percent believed it would take place after the year 2006. Sentiment in the West had meanwhile become more optimistic. Indeed, in the 1994 Politbarometer survey, about 29 percent suggested parity had already been achieved. Less than 20 percent anticipated in 1995 that this condition would not come about before 2006.

Macroeconomic Developments

Many consider West German macroeconomic performance in the post-World War II era to have been one of the best in the industrialized world. Clearly its achievements

attracted the admiration of many of the citizens of the GDR.⁶ Among the 16 largest OECD economies it had the fourth highest growth in productivity per worker between 1950 and 1988 (Cusack, 1995). Its remarkable achievement, however, was not unmarred by downturns nor was it able to avoid the general growth slow-down common to the industrialized countries throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, while average annual growth in real GDP per capita was 3.5 percent in the 1960s, it slowed to 2.9 percent in the 1970s, and slumped further to 1.6 percent through the 1980s (see Figure 2).

While West Germany managed to avoid the recession other EC countries were falling into at the end of the 1980s, the boost from Reunification was short-lived. Indeed, the average annual growth rate in income per capita since 1990 has been a post-war period low of 1.4 percent. Figure 3 traces out the development of income per capita in both the East and West since immediately prior to Reunification. Note that as the Berlin Wall fell East Germany reputedly had an income per capita level equal to 48 percent of that in the West. Eastern gross domestic income levels dropped dramatically in 1990 and 1991 (14 and 20 percent respectively) so that by the end of Germany's first full year as a unified state, the Eastern region's income levels were slightly less than 32 percent of those to be found in the West. The next four years brought significant growth in the East and relative stagnation in the West. By 1995, real income levels in the West were 9 percent higher than those in 1989 while those in the East were 7 percent lower

6. Claus Offe (1996) has pointed out that the sources of collapse of the GDR regime and the attraction of Reunification were dominantly economic. And, indeed, the transformation program being carried out since Reunification defines success predominantly in economic terms.

than that year.⁷

Unemployment has proven to be very problematic in both regions since Reunification. The Federal Republic official unemployment rates since 1950 are plotted in Figure 4. The boom years of the 1950s saw a significant reduction in unemployment so that by the 1960s unemployment was often hovering at an extraordinary low rate of 1 percent. The first Oil Crisis dramatically pushed this up and the 1980s saw an even more dramatic rise in unemployment with it peaking at slightly more than 9 percent. Unemployment in the West had inched down to slightly less than 7 percent by 1989. However, shortly after Reunification unemployment was once again on the rise and by the first half of 1996 it had managed to go to the 10 percent level -- the highest rate of unemployment since 1950. Developments in the East were far worse. Official unemployment sky-rocketed and has been hovering at or above the 15 percent level since 1992.

An even more dismal picture of the East German labor market is revealed when a closer examination is undertaken. Figure 5 presents the labor market positions of the working age population in the region from before the time of the *Wende* until late 1994. In the first half of 1989, i.e., before the collapse of the SED regime, the East had one of the world's highest official labor force participation rates (nearly 92 percent). By the 2nd half of 1990, i.e., around the time of Reunification, this had dropped to about 76 percent. 13 percent of the working age population had been shifted into one or another "labor market scheme" (viz., early retirement, "short-hours work," "work

7. As pointed out below, the significant flow of transfers by the governmental sector to the East has played a major role in helping the region of the former GDR to avoid an even more catastrophic decline in economic well-being. Indeed, in the absence of net public transfers from West to East, the real GDP per capita levels in 1995 stood at only 49 percent of the level of 1989, as opposed to 93 percent.

Note as well that 1996 saw significant declines in real GDP growth rates in both regions. In the West, the annual growth rate dropped from 1.6 percent in 1995 to 1.3 percent through 1996. In the East the corresponding figures were 5.3 and 2.0 (Statistisches Bundesamt, Mitteilung für die Presse, January 9, 1997).

creation" projects, training programs), 6 percent were officially unemployed and about 5 percent were outside of the labor market. Only 60 percent were in regular employment two years later, 16 percent were in labor market schemes, over 11 percent were officially unemployed, and nearly 13 percent were out of the labor market. By the last half of 1994 (the last period for which complete data are available), the employment rate had remained relatively stable (61 percent), over 11 percent were in labor market schemes, nearly 10 percent were officially unemployed, and the category of those outside the labor market had ballooned to 18 percent of the working age population.

Despite these developments in the labor market and the overall economy, the situation in terms of the living standards for the populations in both regions, particularly in the East, has not been what one need necessarily characterize as dismal. Table 5 provides some information on disposable household income in both regions. Regardless of what measure one might care to use, there has been appreciable progress in improving the absolute and relative standards of living in the East. Using one set of estimates (employing a measure of equivalent income), disposable household income in the East has risen from 46 percent of the level of the West in 1991 to 73 percent in 1994. However, there has been a modest increase in inequality in income distribution in the East but it still has not reached the levels prevalent during the 1990s in the West.

Nominal real wage levels for the average worker in both regions have increased, particularly in the East.⁸ However, if one takes into account the appreciable growth in the taxation rates (in both regions), wage performance differs dramatically across the

8. Data on gross and net wages come from various volumes of the Statistisches Bundesamt, *Volkswirtschaftliche Gesamtrechnungen, Kontent und Standardtabellen: Hauptbericht*. Fachserie 18, Reihe 1.3. Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt. Data on consumer prices come from various volumes of the Statistisches Bundesamt, *Preise: Preisindizes für die Lebenshaltung*. Fachserie 17, Reihe 7. Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt.

two regions. There has been significant growth in real take-home pay in the East (see Figure 6) since 1991, the first year for which data are available. On the other hand, wage developments in the West have been anything but rosy (see Figure 7). Real take-home pay of the average worker has declined significantly since 1990, when it peaked as a consequence of the tax reforms introduced that year. Since then, it has declined almost every year, and, indeed, the 1995 average real net wage had returned to near the level where it stood in 1979. While real gross wages have increased, the burden of taxation increases, imposed mainly to help cover the costs of Reunification, have sent net wages plummeting. These different trajectories, growth in the East, decline in the West, have helped to eliminate a significant proportion of the net wage gap between East and West. In the first quarter of 1991, net real wages in the East were approximately 49 percent of those in the West. By the last quarter of 1995, they stood at approximately 68 percent -- despite the much higher rates of inflation in the East.⁹

Governmental transfers from the West to the East have been used to soften the transition in the latter region. Table 6 provides an overview of the net budgetary transfers since 1991. While not an overwhelming drain on the West German economy (they have risen from 4 percent to 4.9 percent of that region's GDP), they account for an extraordinarily large share of the income going to the residents of the East (over 51 percent of Eastern GDP in 1991 and nearly 40 percent in 1995). On a per capita basis, they represent a significant subsidy to the citizens of the region. Not accounted for in these sums are various off-budget programs which were involved in the restructuring of the East German economy, including the Treuhandanstalt, the Unity Fund and the Inherited Debt Fund. In the restructuring of governmental accounts in 1995 the vast debts built up by these programs were brought into the accounts. Together with some

9. Consumer price levels in the West during the fourth quarter of 1995 were 13.6 percent higher relative to the first quarter of 1991. In the East they were 34.5 percent higher.

other changes in the public sector ledgers, they helped to greatly expand the total government deficit in 1995 (see Figure 8), and thereby sharply increased the overall debt burden (see Figure 9).

The equalization of living standards across the two regions of Germany has been one of the principal goals of the government's program since Reunification. Such convergence serves a useful political function and, indeed, is broadly mandated by the Basic Law of the Federal Republic. While convergence has not been achieved, progress in equalizing living conditions has occurred. However, the way in which this partial convergence has come about can not be characterized as optimal. In the West, the economy has stagnated, unemployment has surged, and real take-home pay has declined. In the East, income levels have risen but the pace of growth is slackening. No self-sustaining development is occurring and an excessively large share of East German income represents public transfers into the region. How long such open-handed generosity can be sustained is an open question, both politically and economically. At the same time a third of the East's potential labor force has been banished from employment and the prospects for most of these people ever returning to a job are, at best, limited.

Popular Evaluations of Economic and Other Developments

Objectively speaking one could conclude that West German efforts at easing the transition to a market economy for the citizens of the former GDR embody a major undertaking. However, since the outset the sentiment in the East has been one that regards this effort as insufficient (see Table 7). Until the beginning of 1995, an overwhelming majority expressed the opinion that the Bonn government was not making a sufficient effort to improve living standards and thereby establish parity with the West. Only toward the end of 1995 did this level of criticism dip markedly, but even then a

majority of Easterners still clung to this opinion. On the other hand, the West Germans increasingly diverged from this view. At the beginning of 1991, 42 percent were critical of the government's efforts in that they held them to be insufficient. By the last half of 1995, only 15 percent felt that too little was being done. Table 8 provides information on the Easterners' attitudes toward the entire effort at equalizing living standards. A picture somewhat similar to that with respect to the government's efforts alone is evident -- with massive dissatisfaction being registered through much of the period but declining appreciably in more recent times. Simultaneously, the table also shows that the citizens in the West increasingly rejected the idea that the Easterners' complaints are justified.

Paralleling these developments are the trends in support for the goal of bringing about equality in living standards between the two regions. While this goal still retains overwhelming support in the East, nevertheless there has been a decline in backing for the goal within the region so that starting at a level of 83 percent in 1991, support fell to about 72 percent by 1995 (see Table 9). Even immediately after Reunification there was not much support for this policy goal in the West. Only about 35 percent saw this as an important objective. Support has eroded in this region as well with only 25 percent still holding this to be an important objective in 1995.

Prior to Reunification, there were generally high hopes with respect to how the general situation would evolve. This was particularly the case in the East. However, since that time many Easterners and Westerners report that the process has developed in ways worse than they anticipated (See Table 10). Indeed, in the East, after only a few months (that is, in the first quarter of 1991) 64 percent indicated that developments were worse than expected. This disappointment on the Easterners' part diminished somewhat but then rose again by the middle of 1993 where in the second quarter of that year nearly 59 percent reported that developments were worse than expected.

This too was the time when the Westerners saw developments in their darkest terms. Since then and through the end of 1995, both populations have become less disappointed in developments.

In terms of their own personal situation, however, Easterners report far less disappointment in terms of the expectations they had about what Reunification would bring them (Table 11). Indeed, though subject to significant swings over the first five years, a very large share of the Easterners (in the last quarter of 1995: 79 percent) have come to see their expectations as having been fulfilled.

On the economic side, the Easterners' evaluation of both the overall situation and their own personal situation mirror their reports on the fulfilment of their expectations about Reunification. Very few have judged the overall economic situation to be good, but the share of the population characterizing it as bad has diminished, particularly through 1994 and 1995 (see Table 12). While few have expected the economic situation in the short term future (i.e., one year) to get worse, the largest percentage have generally expected overall conditions to remain the same as opposed to improving (see Table 13). In terms of assessments of their own economic situation, there has been a fair amount of improvement over the years, but this receded significantly in the first half of 1996 (see Table 14). And again, in terms of their expectations about how their own economic situation would develop over the immediate short term, the tendency to see little change therein quickly became and remained relatively widespread throughout the population (Table 15). Tables 16 through 19 provide comparable data for West Germany during the periods both before and after Reunification.

While economic issues are paramount, there are other concerns as well. Table 20 broadens the picture with respect to how citizens in the region of the former GDR evaluate their situation. Here information on their views with respect to a number of social conditions and whether things have improved, stayed the same, or deteriorated

since before the *Wende* are presented. Questions were asked on these matters toward the end of each year from 1992 through 1995 in the *Politbarometer* surveys. In terms of individuals' overall personal situations, the trend has been toward judging the situation as being better than before the collapse of the SED regime. Thus, around 49 percent indicated that their general situation had improved in 1992 and this rose to about 71 percent in late 1995. While around a quarter of the population (in 1992) believed that their personal situation had deteriorated with Reunification, this shrank to about 10 percent in 1995. Still, at this late date nearly 30 percent of the population claimed that their lives had not improved. Assessments of their own economic situations parallel these trends. The most marked improvement appears to be in how Easterners assess the situation with respect to personal freedom. Very few suggest that this has worsened and the overwhelming majority (about 81 percent in 1995) indicate that there have been improvements in this regard. However, two areas stand out in terms of the negative assessments Easterners provide with regard to developments since before the fall of the SED regime. Thus, the area of social security is seen by a large majority (61 percent in both 1992 and 1995) as having deteriorated. Parallel to this, ever larger numbers (including a majority in 1994 and 1995) report that inter-personal relations have deteriorated.

IPOS has surveyed both Easterners and Westerners on their satisfaction with a menu of social conditions in every year since 1990. In Table 21 one can see further evidence of distinctly different climates of opinion as well as the signs of deterioration in the East. The gaps between both populations in terms of their satisfaction with all eight areas (including education, equal rights, opportunities for advancement, social security, the expectation of being treated justly, the economic situation, protection from crime, and opportunities to acquire a job) are large and in some cases they have widened significantly. Three areas stand out in terms of the collapse of morale in the East. These include, first, equal rights, where in mid-1990, i.e., before Reunification,

Easterners were even more likely than Westerners to believe that they had equal rights (79 percent to 71 percent). While 73 percent of the Westerners still claimed to be satisfied in this area in 1995, only 44 percent of the Easterners claimed such satisfaction. The second area is protection from crime. In both regions there has been a drop in satisfaction on this issue. But in the West it has been a much more moderate decline, going from 63 percent in 1990 to 41 percent in 1995. In the East, however, while 58 percent expressed satisfaction in terms of protection from crime in mid-1990, only 14 percent indicated such satisfaction by 1995. There is not widespread satisfaction in either population on the question of being able to obtain a job, but the pessimism in the East is far more widespread than in the West. Only 9 percent of the Easterners in 1995 indicated satisfaction about this condition, while 38 percent did so in the West.

The broad discontent manifest in the East springs from a variety of sources. Clearly, the hope for radical improvement in one's own living standards, which has been met for only part of the population, has contributed. Further, the widespread belief that the entire Eastern economy has deteriorated and shows little sign of convergence to Western levels has added to the pessimism. And some other social conditions that were previously taken for granted, e.g., socio-economic equality, security from crime, and employment, are widely seen as having vanished and thereby prompted a high level of negativism. In such an atmosphere, there is often a tendency to seek out a scapegoat. This is reflected in the frequent allusion to the idea that the East has been "colonized" by the West (see Table 22).

The theme of colonization arose early in the Reunification process. Thus, in November of 1990, only a month after Reunification, among those who indicated that they had heard this term in public discussion, there were more people in the East (i.e., 46%) who found it more appropriate than inappropriate (40%). The opposite was the case in the West, where only 33% agreed with this characterization and 53% disagreed. About a year later, sentiment in the East was even more emphatically in agreement

with this portrayal. 53% found it appropriate while only 30% found it inappropriate. Sentiment in the West had meanwhile moved in the opposite direction with 61% rejecting this characterization and only 27% percent seeing it as accurate. Indeed, in other and later surveys, Easterners tended overwhelmingly (approximately two-thirds in 1992, 1993, and 1994) to hold this view, while a much smaller number (approximately one-third) ascribed to this characterization in the West (Bauer-Kaase and Kaase, 1996). Reviewing an extensive set of questions on views with respect to responsibility for the problems that have arisen in the Reunification process, Bauer-Kaase and Kaase (1996, pp. 5-11) have demonstrated that East Germans overwhelmingly tend to see their Western colleagues as having dealt poorly with the tasks of Reunification and with the citizens of the East. At the same time, the Easterners strongly rejected negative characterizations of their own roles and responsibilities in the process. Simultaneously, Westerners seem to spread the blame -- holding both Easterners and themselves as responsible for the problems.

Have East Germans given up hope and gone into a state of despair? What about their fellow-citizens in the West, who seem less and less tolerant of the dissatisfaction being expressed by the citizens in the New Federal States? Table 23 presents an annual time series from a survey question asked every year since 1949 by Allensbach that deals with the sentiments of populations in terms of their expectations about the coming year. As can be seen in the column providing data on West Germany, the share of the population looking forward with optimism to the coming year frequently went up and down over the forty years prior to the Fall of the Wall. Indeed, this measure of popular mood has generally moved in line with economic developments and major political events. While optimism in the West certainly declined after Reunification, going from 68 percent in 1989 to 34 percent in 1992, it moved up again and peaked at 57 percent in 1994 before dropping once more in 1995 and again in late 1996. East

Germans have gone through the same swings but it is interesting to note here is that the levels of optimism there have been somewhat higher than in the West ever since 1991 -- at least by this index.

Nevertheless, there is at least one sign of social malaise that suggests significant problems for the German political system. As Putnam (1993) argues, one of the bases for a stable and successful democratic system is a strong civic community. One of the principal traits of such communities is a high level of social trust within the population. He suggests that the major decline in this characteristic has helped bring about so many of the political problems that have arisen within the American political system over the last decades (Putnam, 1995) and the enduring problems in Southern Italy (Putnam, 1993). Table 24 reproduces results from Allensbach surveys that ask the question scholars traditionally have used to measure social trust within populations. Despite the low levels of civic community that, for example, Almond and Verba (1963) suggested marked West German society, the tendency has been for this to rise over time. Indeed, while still not high in comparison with a large number of other countries (see Table 25), the long term trend prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall was upward with greater signs of trusting on the part of the population. While these levels in the West have waxed and waned since Reunification, the signs in the East are not very encouraging. Easterners seem to have appreciably lower levels of trust than their Western colleagues and there are few signs that significant improvement is in the offing.

One of the consequences of the discontent in the East is to be seen in the relatively large numbers of people there which hold the view that the acceptance of the West German model in 1990 was a mistake. Since 1992, IPOS and Politbarometer have queried citizens in the region as to whether the decision implicit in the voting patterns of the last Volkskammer election to accept the political order of the Federal Republic was correct or not (see Table 26). Consistently, from 1992 through the first quarter of

1995, over a quarter of the population held the view that the decision was a mistake. However, in the latter half of that year the percentage of the population holding this view dropped below 20 percent.

Even early on, i.e., in November of 1990, and continuing through 1993, a large segment of the East German population expressed regret that a "third way" was not taken and instead the Federal Republic's "social market" (*Soziale Marktwirtschaft*)-democratic system was implanted (Table 27). By 1993, 46 percent indicated that such a third way would have been preferable, 21 percent were undecided, and only 33 percent expressed satisfaction that the West German model was accepted. Comparison with attitudes in the West at this date is instructive. Recall that in the spring of 1990 there was a fair amount of sentiment supportive of an effort to create a new form of governance. Nevertheless, three years later 70 percent of the Westerners expressed satisfaction that the Federal Republic's model had been retained in the unified Germany, and only 10 percent expressed disappointment that another model had not been adopted.

Intimately connected to the German political system is its economic system based on "social-market" principles. As of 1994, most West Germans seemed satisfied with this, at least when the option offered was an economic system organized on socialist principles (see Table 28). East Germans can at best be described as ambivalent toward market principles. In this same year, 1994, only 39 percent favored a market economy, 17 percent preferred a socialist system, and 44 percent could not decide which was better. This ambivalence is a sharp reversal of earlier East German preferences. Prior to experiencing the workings of a market system, i.e., in the Spring of 1990, an overwhelming majority (i.e. 72 percent) had a favorable opinion of it. Three years later, i.e., in the Fall/Winter of 1993, only 35 percent held such a good opinion of the market

system. By late 1996 only 24 percent of East Germans had a favorable opinion of the German economic system. It is clear that recently a large number of West Germans have lost confidence in their economic system as well.

Government and the Political System

One can take from the description above that the Reunification process, which has occupied the German people and government over these last six years, has not been an unmitigated success in the eyes of the populations of either region. But then it would be hard to claim that it has been a complete failure either. Still, while expectations have been scaled back, and while more East Germans describe their own economic situations as good, a large degree of pessimism abounds in both parts of Germany. The federal government and, indeed, the entire political regime of the Federal Republic have played a major role in helping to shape these developments. Have both suffered as a consequence? More precisely stated, have German citizens lost confidence in the federal government and has this in turn had an impact on the legitimacy of the democratic political system?

Tables 29 and 30 provide quarterly data on popular feelings toward the coalitions that have governed in Bonn since 1977 in the West and 1990 in the East. Turning first to the West, one can see that satisfaction has cycled throughout the entire period. And while these cycles have continued during the period since Reunification, it is clear that approval of government performance has generally been lower than before. Indeed, it is only in this period where quarterly measures register a majority of the population expressing dissatisfaction with the Bonn government.

It is interesting to note that there is little if any difference in the way Westerners and Easterners have evaluated the Bonn government's performance in the period since Reunification. Not only are the absolute levels of satisfaction approximately the same

(the average over the entire period in the West is 44.0 while that in the East is 43.1), but the dynamics in both regions have been the same as well-- the over-time correlation between the two regional series is .93.

Based on Eurobarometer surveys from 1976 through 1991, West Germany had, on average, the second highest level of citizen satisfaction with the way its democratic system worked when compared with thirteen other West European countries (Fuchs, Guidorossi, and Svensson, 1995). And the satisfaction levels registered by the Eurobarometer were relatively stable. Nevertheless, developments since Reunification represent a significant departure from this auspicious situation. Tables 31 and 32 provide data on a number of regularly measured indicators of satisfaction with the German political system. The Eurobarometer surveys (see Table 31) indicate that in the West there was a sharp drop in satisfaction with democratic performance beginning in 1991 and only slightly rising by 1994, the last year for which data are available from this source. The IPOS survey, which annually poses a slightly different question, registers a similar time profile.

A more extensive picture can be provided with a series that was constructed using data from the Politbarometer surveys (see Table 32). The table details quarterly measures from the second quarter of 1977 through the last quarter of 1996 on a question dealing with satisfaction with the entire system of democracy in Germany. In the West, shortly after Reunification, i.e., by the first quarter of 1991, satisfaction with the democratic system in Germany began to drop. Going from approximately 81 percent in the last quarter of 1990, the quarter in which Reunification occurred, it declined fairly steadily until the third quarter of 1993, by which time only a slightly majority of the population, i.e., 53 percent, indicated satisfaction. Since that quarter it moved generally upwards but plummeted again in 1996 and indeed in the November of that year reached the lowest level recorded in the series, i.e., 51.6 percent.

In the East, the picture is much worse. In all three surveys satisfaction levels have been appreciably lower than in the West. For example, using the Politbarometer indicator, even at the outset, i.e., the last quarter of 1990, satisfaction levels were only about 57 percent (i.e., 24 percent lower than in the West). This was the only quarter in which a majority reported satisfaction. Indeed, at about the same time that satisfaction levels had reached their nadir in the West, viz., in the latter part of 1993, they had plummeted to an extraordinary low in the East, i.e., approximately 29 percent. A general improvement was registered in the latter region during 1994 and 1995 but again, in late 1996, as in the West, it dropped significantly (this time to about 34 percent). Satisfaction levels in both the East and the West have thus moved along similar trajectories since Reunification (the correlation between the two series for the period from 1990.4 to 1996.2 is .76), but a very large gap in the levels of satisfaction with the regime persists.

In the West, then, we have seen a major reduction in what previously was, by international standards, a high level of citizen satisfaction with the way the political system works. In the East, there has been and continues to be great dissatisfaction and only a minority basis of support for German democracy. The next section of this paper deals with an attempt to explain why these patterns have come about.

The Dynamics of System Satisfaction: A Political-Economy Approach

Theorists and analysts traditionally have employed the distinction between attitudes toward a democratic political system or regime, at one level, and government or the authorities, at a lower level (Easton, 1975). Kaase and Newton (1995, p. 132) suggest that this reflects the "central logic of democratic politics" which institutionalizes the contest for governmental power at the level of authorities while restraining this competition through the means of "non-partisan procedures and rules on the regime level." Where this distinction is disputed, the controversy is based almost invariably

on the way in which these terms have been operationalized and much less frequently with respect to the conceptual difference being postulated (cf., Fuchs, 1992; Kuechler, 1991). There are certain widely-accepted ideas about these two variables (Easton, 1975). First, well-established and long legitimated regimes are less likely to be subject to unbridled or sharp variations in the levels of support for and satisfaction with the regime; at the same time, support for and satisfaction with a government is much more volatile. Second, in newly established regimes, the *willingness and ability* of citizens to differentiate between the two levels is generally less developed. This last point entails that both variables are tightly linked, if not effectively fused, and the kind of volatility one often sees in citizens' assessments of government and authorities will be mirrored in the volatility of their evaluations of and support for the system itself.

All this leaves open the question of what one should expect about the relationship between the two levels in well-established and long legitimated regimes. Does satisfaction with government performance feed into satisfaction with system performance at all, or are these two completely decoupled? While the nearly one-to-one knock-on effect between the two levels that one expects to find in recently established systems should not hold in more established or "consolidated" systems, does this mean that regardless of either sterling or miserable performance by incumbent governments, no effect on system performance evaluations should be expected?

Related to the debate on the linkage between government performance and regime performance is another controversy: can citizen satisfaction with political system performance be undermined or buttressed by economic developments, or is the system, particularly a more established and highly legitimate one, buffered from the winds and tides of the economy? Few dispute that, at the lower level, governments are held by the citizenry to be accountable to some extent for economic performance (Lewis-Beck, 1988). There is fairly wide agreement, but certainly no consensus, that economic developments and satisfaction with political system performance are linked in newly

established systems (Fuchs and Roller, 1994). However, some argue that with the passage of time and good economic performance the political system becomes anchored in the loyalties of citizens and the influence of the economy disappears or at least is greatly diminished. Others, however, contend that no such decoupling occurs in "consolidated" political systems and that economic performance retains an important role in shaping citizens' levels of satisfaction with the overall political system.

There are a variety of solutions that theorists have proposed with respect to these issues. Two of the most divergent have been put forward by Weil (1989) and Fuchs and Roller (1994). Figures 10 and 11 provide graphic portrayals of the two arguments. Note the starkly different views on the two issues that have just been discussed. For Weil, neither government performance nor economic performance plays a role in citizens' evaluations of the regime. While economic performance does have an impact on evaluations of government in this model, it is neither directly nor indirectly connected to the regime level. Simultaneously, government performance is completely detached from regime performance. For Fuchs and Roller, completely opposite expectations hold. Economic performance influences citizens' evaluations of the democratic regime; concurrently, evaluations of government performance feed into evaluations of the democratic regime.

The Government-Regime Linkage

The government-regime linkage has not received an extensive amount of empirical study despite its theoretical centrality. One interesting study, and particularly relevant because the West German case was included, is that conducted by Finkel, Muller and Seligson (1989). Although they found that changes in government performance evaluation fed into changes in evaluations of regimes, they concluded that their results

implied that the macro-level consequences for the regime were minimal. Poor performance, even during an economic crisis, does not seem to have much of a "spill-over" effect from the government to the regime level.

On the other hand, a number of scholars have been able to adduce strong evidence in favor of a linkage between the two levels, in both consolidated and non-consolidated democracies. Extensive time-series analyses of political-economic models of regime satisfaction by Clarke, Dutt, and Kornberg (1993), Kornberg and Clarke (1992), and Widmaier (1989) have demonstrated an important link between the two with government performance positively influencing evaluations of the regime. Fuchs and Roller (1994) provide extensive documentation of the linkage in a number of the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe.¹⁰

A brief statistical exercise might shed some light on the question, at least with respect to the situations in the two regions of Germany. For simplicity's sake, let us entertain the hypothesis that there is an important link between satisfaction with government performance (*GSAT*) and satisfaction with regime performance (*DSAT*), and that this can be illuminated even in the absence of specifying other factors that shape satisfaction with regime performance.¹¹ This can be done by estimating the following regression equation with data on both East and West Germany:

$$DSAT_t = \alpha + \beta GSAT_t + \varepsilon_t$$

One would expect a number of important things to emerge from this simple exercise: (1) there would be statistically significant and positive coefficients (the β 's)

10. Bauer-Kaase and Kaase (1996) report that in West Germany there is evidence of an increasingly tighter coupling between the two levels which implies an erosion of "some of the independent support for the political regime."

11. The data series used here are from Forschungsgruppe Wahlen and are reported in Tables 29 and 30 as well as Table 32 of this paper.

on the government satisfaction terms in the equations for both regions; (2) the coefficient (β) for East Germany would approach 1 while that for West Germany would be appreciably smaller; and (3) the constants (the α 's) in the two equations would be positive but the East German figure would be much smaller than the West German figure. The expectations regarding the size of parameter estimates for government satisfaction follow directly from the hypothesis that citizens in non-consolidated systems will not distinguish very much between the government and regime levels while those in consolidated systems will do so. The expectations regarding the size the constant terms follows directly from the idea that in non-consolidated systems there will be a very low reservoir of tolerance for a regime while that level in a consolidated system would be much higher.

The estimation results using quarterly data for this simple equation are reported below. First, the results for East Germany since Reunification are provided. Then, three sets of results for West Germany are reported. The first of these three provides information on the lengthiest continuous period for which the estimation can carried out in light of available data. This period extends from the second quarter of 1982 through the second quarter of 1996. The other two sets of estimates for West Germany relate to the period up until Reunification and then to the post-Reunification period, i.e., the same time frame as that used for the East German estimation.

East

1990.4-1996.2

Averages: *DSAT*: 40.8, *GSAT*: 43.1

$$DSAT_t = 5.99 + .81 GSAT_t$$

(2.75)** (16.23)**

$$\bar{R}^2 = .92, \rho = .03, OLS$$

** = *t stat sig. at .05*; * = *t stat sig. at .10*.

West:

1982.2-1996.2, n=53

Averages: *DSAT*: 68.0, *GSAT*: 49.5

$$DSAT_t = 41.04 + .54 GSAT_t$$

(17.89)** (11.98)**

$$\bar{R}^2 = .72, \rho = .23, OLS$$

1982.2- 1990.3

Averages: *DSAT*: 70.9, *GSAT*: 53.7

$$DSAT_t = 46.33 + .46 GSAT_t$$

(8.73)** (4.67)**

$$\bar{R}^2 = .42, \rho = .16, OLS$$

1990.4-1996.2

Averages: *DSAT*: 64.1, *GSAT*: 44.0

$$DSAT_t = 41.53 + .51 GSAT_t$$

(17.77)** (9.93)**

$$\bar{R}^2 = .82, \rho = .17, OLS$$

The results are illuminating and conform to the expectations outlined above. First, note that in East Germany the apparent reservoir level of satisfaction with the regime is quite small, approximately 6 percent; in contrast, the results for West Germany suggest that a quite large reservoir exists -- over 40 percent of the population would still be satisfied with the performance of the regime even if the whole population was dissatisfied with the performance of the incumbent government. Second, while the linkage between government performance and regime performance evaluations is quite sizable in both regions of Germany, the implications of the parameter estimates are such as to suggest that the knock-on effect in the East is close to one-to-one while that in the West is only half that size. The sensitivity of regime performance evaluations to government performance is thus appreciably greater in the Eastern region.

The Economics-Politics Linkage

The economics-politics linkage is an important problem, and particularly in the German context this is an weighty issue. Those who take a culturalist perspective have the fundamental expectation that regime performance support and satisfaction levels are very sticky due to their dependence on political cultural traits that themselves evolve at a very slow pace. This implies, for example, that the economic miseries that characterize both regions of present-day Germany should have very little or no impact on satisfaction with the political system. While willing to admit that in the West German case the consolidation of support and satisfaction with the system was greatly aided by the "Wirtschaftswunder" in the early decades of the Republic, they contend that the economic system's performance has decreased significantly in its role as one of the foundations of regime support (Baker, Dalton, and Hildebrandt, 1981; Conradt, 1980).

This rejection of a political-economic linkage is rather wide-spread in the literature on regime satisfaction and support. A leading example of this way of thinking is to be seen in Weil's aforementioned model (1989) of the development of political support in democratic systems which explicitly rejects the notion that economic performance affects the support for democracy in either a direct or indirect fashion. Having examined data on six Western democracies in the post-World War II era, he claims to have found strong empirical evidence in favor of this rejectionist position.

In studies focused on Germany, similar claims are to be found. Gabriel (1989), for example, while admitting that citizens' evaluations of the performance of the economy do have an influence on their satisfaction with the political system, greatly qualifies this by arguing that this linkage has become very attenuated through the passage of time. More recently, both Noelle-Neumann (1994) and Weil (1996) have rejected such a linkage in the development of citizen satisfaction with democracy in the

New Federal States of Germany. While Noelle-Neumann states that the prospects for popular acceptance of democracy in East Germany are "bleak," she concludes that "[t]he economic factor does not explain the problems encountered in the transition towards democracy" there. Weil's (1996) analysis leads him to the same conclusion.¹² However, at least one analyst, Conradt (1980, p. 263), has been willing to admit that this rejectionist position hinges on a critical assumption: viz., that both poor economic performance is short-lived and that there is considerable turnover among those most affected by it.¹³

Clarke, Dutt, and Kornberg (1993) provide a good example of the contemporary advocates of the position that there exists in modern democracies a close and important linkage between economic performance and citizens' satisfaction with and acceptance of the political regime.¹⁴ They reject the hypothesis that political culture supplies "sturdy

12. A more differentiated argument focused on the transition to democracy in East Germany is made by Schmidt (1992). While he agrees that economic developments there have been bleak, and, therefore, this economic decline should have led to a political crisis such as Germany experienced in the Weimar Republic, he argues that two conditions have cut the link. First, the institutional framework of the German welfare state, which has been transferred completely to the East, has shielded citizens there from the negative effects of economic decline. Indeed, he argues that the financial transfers to the East have actually increased the standard of living in the region. Furthermore, he suggests that the pessimism regarding the future economic situation in the Weimar era contrasts sharply with the guarded optimism about the long term economic benefits held by the Easterners today. To be fair to Schmidt, he was writing in 1992. But certainly the data reported earlier in this paper would seem to suggest that this guarded optimism has turned somewhat sour. Second, the party system of the Federal Republic as well as its interest associations have successfully integrated Eastern citizens into a political system with far greater equilibrating capacities than that which prevailed in the Weimar era.

13. Neither assumption seems to fit the German case. Long term unemployment in the West has significantly increased from the early 1970s to the early 1990s. In 1970, less than one percent of the labor force was unemployed and of this small group, about 9 percent had been unemployed for 12 months or more; in 1992, 6.6 percent of the labor force was unemployed and a third of this group had been in that situation for a year or more (OECD Employment Outlook, 1983 and 1994) and the economy has been relatively stagnant. In the East the condemnation of large numbers of people to a place outside the labor market which appears to amount to permanent exile is a salient consequence of the introduction of the West German economic system to this region.

14. For a general statement of the position see Merkl (1988). In terms of the East German situation, see Minkenberg (1993).

moorings" for political systems and simultaneously dispute the claim that satisfaction with the political system has a "lethargic" velocity. They argue that public sentiment, not only for government, but also for the political system as a whole, is intimately linked to evaluations of economic performance and government effectiveness. In addition, given that economic performance in modern societies is often erratic, they expect that satisfaction levels with the regime will reflect this instability. Their comparative study of eight EC countries during the years between the late 1970s and late 1980s finds support for this position. Similar evidence was found in the Kornberg and Clarke (1992) study dealing mainly with Canada but also to a limited degree with the EC countries.¹⁵ Others have developed empirical evidence that are consistent with this position for both consolidated (Lockerbie, 1993; Anderson and Guillory, 1997; Kuechler, 1991; Bauer-Kaase and Kaase, 1996) and new democracies (Fuchs and Roller, 1994).

The Dynamics of System Satisfaction over the Long Term in the West

The model used to explain the long term dynamics of system satisfaction is embodied in two basic equations. These equations are linked in a recursive way. The first equation deals with government performance as measured by citizen satisfaction with the performance of the governing coalition in the federal government. Government performance is, in turn, a determinant of system performance as evaluated by citizens. This is captured in the second equation where, in addition to a number of other factors, satisfaction with government performance determines the level of regime or system support as measured by satisfaction with the entire political system. A graphic representation of the model is provided in Figure 12.

15. It should be noted that the authors are somewhat inconsistent in the characterization of their results. In the 1992 study they claim that the impact of economic performance (inflation and unemployment) is "substantial;" while in the 1993 study they are much more moderate concluding that the impacts are "small."

Satisfaction with government on the part of the population responds to economic conditions, but, importantly, there are other factors that shape it. Included here are the electoral calendar, extraordinary events, and the policies a government adopts and maintains.

The long research tradition on government popularity and vote functions holds that economic performance in industrialized democracies plays a significant role in the support governments have among voters. While the instruments available to governments to fine tune an economy's performance are notoriously blunt (Lewis-Beck, 1988; Keech, 1995), and, depending one's view, have always been ineffective, or are increasingly ineffective under conditions of globalization, nevertheless, citizens are seen as willing to assign both blame and credit to government in light of the prevailing or anticipated economic performance (Anderson, 1995). Numerous research studies on the thesis, while not uniform in the results they report, are generally supportive of the underlying argument. Included in the specification of the forces shaping satisfaction with government performance is a term for economic growth, the most general indicator of economic performance.

Timing matters in politics. Indeed, one of the more widely accepted stylized facts in the study of government popularity is the idea that there is a persistent rhythm to be found in the public's approval of a government through the election cycle (Anderson, 1995). There is a tendency for this approval to decline following entry into office and then for this decline to be reversed as the next election approaches. Still, for some, this cycle is engineered by government's fine tuning of the economy. Predicated on the notion that voters see government as responsible for economic outcomes and also recall only the most recent success or failure, the constraints confronting government then lead it to first slow the economy down and then to accelerate it in time for the next election (Tufte, 1978). This most certainly overstates the adroitness and capacities of government. At a minimum, though, one can appeal to a logic which suggests that

government popularity will naturally be high after a successful election, enjoying both the support of its constituents who have just elected it to office and the less solid but nevertheless generally high level of tolerance many other voters are willing to grant it at the outset. The effects of this honeymoon period necessarily diminish as the outlines of government's policy as well as its competence are revealed. All of this will tend to undermine satisfaction and support. With the approach of an election, however, a government needs to pay more attention to its popular support and this in turn will generate greater efforts on its part to win over alienated voters (Frey, 1978). The government may also benefit from the increasing salience of the election to the voters as they come to examine more critically the opposition, its programs and apparent competence. This focusing helps enhance its, the government's, popularity.

Idiosyncratic events often have the effect of enhancing or diminishing government popularity. While it is difficult to develop a systematic list of such events, we have included two terms in the equation for government popularity whose impact should have been profound. The first is meant to capture the euphoria that surrounded the events associated with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the SED regime. This takes on a value of "1" during that period and a "0" during all others. The second is meant to capture the onset of anxiety and uncertainty that came with the beginning of unification shortly after the first all-German Bundestag elections. This takes on a value of "1" in the period immediately following these elections and a "0" otherwise.

The policies of government are posited as having an effect on its popularity. Policies that diminish the well-being of citizens should lower popularity while those that enhance their well-being should increase popularity. One of the major, but clearly not the only, government policy with high salience in the public is taxation. High tax rates on the average citizen generally are not welcome. Reductions in these tax rates generally are met with approval. A measure of government's tax policy (direct tax rate on the average worker) is included in the model and its impact on government popularity

is expected to be negative. This is not to deny that voters can have a reasonable or even sophisticated appreciation of the connection between public spending and taxation (cf., Peters, 1991; Confalonieri and Newton, 1995). Higher taxes, other things being equal, translate into higher public services and income transfers. Two aspects of taxation, one theoretical and the other empirical, warrant the inclusion of this variable in the equation along with the expectation that its effects will be negative on satisfaction levels. First, as Downs pointed out long ago (1960), taxes, and particularly direct taxes, have far greater salience for the average citizen than the benefits that derive directly to her or him. This would imply that a higher tax burden represents a decline in utility which in turn should lower satisfaction with the agent imposing this loss. This is the shadow side of the "fiscal illusion" effect often associated with indirect taxation. Second, the inclusion of the tax variable in a equation during this period of time seems particularly appropriate in light of the relatively slow growth that generally marked the period from the late 1970s through the mid 1990s and both the salience and personal negative utility that rising tax rates would have in such a context.

The approach taken with respect to system satisfaction posits that economic developments are important and that the popularity of government itself contributes as well. Poor governments undermine system satisfaction and support. Good governments buttress them. In addition, the effect of replacing a incumbent government through democratic means should help sustain both system satisfaction and support.

Two economic terms, dealing with inflation and unemployment, are included in the specification of the factors shaping system satisfaction. Inflation and unemployment are core concerns to the populace as well as to the political and economic elites of the Federal Republic. This is historically rooted and the institutional set-up of the Federal Republic's political economy has been designed or, perhaps more accurately, has evolved to prevent these problems from arising and thereby undermining the legitimacy of the Republic and its political regime.

The great inflation in the Weimar years (as well as that prior to the currency reform in the late 1940's) represents a core taboo in political culture the Federal Republic (Hall and Franzese, 1996). Further, with the extensive independence and powers of the Bundesbank (Kennedy, 1991; Cukierman, 1992), it is hard to blame a government when the institution responsible for controlling inflation is extensively shielded from its influence. But, still, the dangers of inflation are widely recognized, if not exaggerated, and its presence saps confidence in the system and thereby weakens the legitimacy of the political system.

Similarly, the problem of unemployment is critical to the foundations of the Federal Republic. The German economic model (*Soziale Marktwirtschaft*) and its associated elements of corporatism with the focus on consensus and the absence of class-warfare was constructed and maintained in the post-World War period in order to help coordinate the functioning of the labor market with the aim of assuring that the kind of mass unemployment that helped sap the foundations of the Weimar Republic would not arise.¹⁶ Government has had a limited role to play here, serving mainly as a moderator between the "social partners" (Paqué, 1993). Nevertheless, high unemployment is not politically neutral. It represents a failure of a tightly coordinated system based on a complex series of shared understandings and compromises.¹⁷ Failures in the labor market represent failures of the overall system and correspondingly weaken satisfaction with and support for the political regime.

16. See Frey and Weck (1981) for an interesting study demonstrating the strong link between unemployment and rise in the support for the anti-regime National Socialist party during the Weimar era.

17. It should be pointed out that this tightly coordinated system extends to embracing the Bundesbank and its passionate concern for inflation. For more extensive discussion of the complexities of the German national economic institutional framework, see Soskice (1990) and Hall and Franzese (1996).

The government is an integral component of a political regime. It is usually the most powerful and salient political institution within that regime - especially in a democracy. Obviously, then, its performance should be firmly coupled to regime satisfaction levels amongst citizens in a democracy. As demonstrated earlier, the scope of this coupling will vary to the extent to which the system itself is consolidated. Experiencing good government encourages citizens to attach loyalty to the regime that has produced it. Exposure to poorly performing governments alienates citizens from the regime. Persistently well performing governments solidify the legitimacy basis of a regime, while long and continuous exposure to bad governments undermines legitimacy and creates one of the conditions that enhances the likelihood that challenges to the regime come about.

Change in governments, particularly in democratic regimes, may or may not lend legitimacy to the system. In the event where a popular government coalition must surrender office to another party or coalition there is likely to be a loss of system legitimacy in a democratic regime. Replacing an unpopular government should have the opposite effect, particularly if this is done within accepted rules and practices. During the period of time under study (1977 through 1995) there was only one governing coalition change and this took place in the early 1980's when internal coalition squabbling (in the context of decreasing voter support for the government) led to the fall of the SPD-dominated government. Following a "affirmative" vote of "no confidence," whereby the CDU candidate for Chancellor won a majority in the Bundestag, a CDU-FDP coalition was formed and a new election confirming that parliamentary action took place shortly thereafter. A dummy variable has been introduced to capture the effect of this set of events on system satisfaction with the expectation that its impact will be positive.

The processes underlying the dynamics of both government and system satisfaction are modelled as error-correction mechanisms. The general idea of such a representation is that there is a dynamic equilibrium between a set of independent

variables and the dependent variable, and because this equilibrium is in flux, and while public opinion is not likely to adjust completely and immediately to exogenous changes, the change in the dependent variable will not come about fully in a single period. In addition, short term changes are a function not only of an adjustment to any disequilibrium, and partially to recent changes in those variables that define the equilibrium, but are also influenced by exogenous shocks. The general set-up of an error-correction model is as follows:

$$Y_{t-1} = \alpha_i + B_i X_{t-1} + e_{i,t-1} \quad (1)$$

$$DISEQUIL_{t-1} = Y_{t-1} - (\alpha_i + B_i X_{t-1}) = e_{i,t-1} \quad (2)$$

$$\Delta Y_t = \alpha_j + B_j \Delta X_t + \lambda DISEQUIL_{t-1} + B_k S_t + e_{j,t} \quad (3)$$

or

$$\Delta Y_t = \alpha_k + B_j \Delta X_t + \lambda (Y_{t-1} - B_i X_{t-1}) + B_k S_t + e_{j,t} \quad (4)$$

The first equation defines the long-term coupling between the dependent variable (Y) and the vector of independent variables (X). In the second equation, an identity, the disequilibrium between the two is defined. The third equation specifies the dynamics of the system with the first difference in the dependent variable responding both to contemporaneous changes in the independent variables of the equilibrium equation (the "short run effect" of those variables), exogenous shocks to system (the array S), and the gap between the actual and equilibrium values of the dependent variable in the last period ($DISEQUIL$) -- which captures the "feedback effect" of a system adjusting to disequilibrium. The fourth equation is a single equation representation of the entire system with the elements of equation 1 substituted into equation 3.¹⁸ It should be pointed out that regardless of the specified effects of the exogenous variables, the error correction model is built on the assumption that the adjustment parameter, λ , is restricted

18. Note that the constant, a_i , from equation 1 is effectively weighted by the adjustment parameter and included in a_k of the fourth equation.

to a range of values between -1 and 0. The size of the adjustment parameter specifies the speed with which the dependent variable moves to close a gap in its actual level and its moving equilibrium in a single period.

There is no consensus (cf., Beck, 1992, 1993; Durr, 1993; Smith, 1993) on whether a two-stage estimation procedure (estimation of equations 1 and 3) or a single equation estimation procedure (using equation 4 alone) is more appropriate (at least within the context of non-cointegration as in the present case). Under some conditions, it can be expected that the estimation results should be very similar. In light of this both sets of estimations have been carried out. Note that the time span for the analysis extends from the last half of 1977 through 1995. The temporal aggregation is semi-annual and the observations are restricted in geographic scope to the area of West Germany, i.e., the territory of the Federal Republic prior to Reunification.

Both the government satisfaction and system satisfaction equations are specified in detail below. Note that the variable acronyms are defined and the sources for the data are listed in Table 33. First, with respect to government satisfaction, the moving equilibrium is specified as a function of tax burden levels, economic growth, and an ordinal variable capturing the putative effects of the electoral cycle. Other than the adjustment to disequilibrium, short term influences include changes in the tax burden, changes in the economic growth rate, and the two single period shocks associated with Reunification. Second, the moving equilibrium of system satisfaction is specified as being a function of the level of government satisfaction as well as the levels of unemployment and inflation. Non-disequilibrium adjustment short term effects on system satisfaction include changes in those three variables plus the dummy variable capturing the change in government in the early 1980s.

Government Satisfaction:

$$GSAT_{t-1} = \alpha_1 + \beta_1 TAXBUR_{t-1} + \beta_2 GRO_{t-1} + \beta_3 ECYCLE_t + \varepsilon_{1,t-1} \quad (5)$$

$$GSATDIS_{t-1} = GSAT_{t-1} - \overline{GSAT}_{t-1} = \varepsilon_{1,t-1}, \text{ where } \overline{GSAT}_{t-1} \text{ is the predicated level of } GSAT_{t-1} \quad (6)$$

$$\Delta GSAT_t = \alpha_2 + \beta_4 \Delta TAXBUR_t + \beta_5 \Delta GRO_t + \beta_6 UNIFPLUS_t + \beta_7 UNIFMIN_t + \lambda_1 GSATDIS_{t-1} + \varepsilon_{2,t} \quad (7)$$

$$\Delta GSAT_t = \alpha_3 + \beta_4 \Delta TAXBUR_t + \beta_5 \Delta GRO_t + \beta_6 UNIFPLUS_t + \beta_7 UNIFMIN_t + \lambda_1 (GSAT_{t-1} - (\beta_1 TAXBUR_{t-1} + \beta_2 GRO_{t-1} + \beta_3 ECYCLE_t)) + \varepsilon_{2,t} \quad (8)$$

System Satisfaction:

$$DSAT_{t-1} = \alpha_4 + \beta_8 GSAT_{t-1} + \beta_9 UNEMP_{t-1} + \beta_{10} INFL_{t-1} + \varepsilon_{3,t-1} \quad (9)$$

$$DSATDIS_{t-1} = DSAT_{t-1} - \overline{DSAT}_{t-1} = \varepsilon_{3,t-1}, \text{ where } \overline{DSAT}_{t-1} \text{ is the predicated level of } DSAT_{t-1} \quad (10)$$

$$\Delta DSAT_t = \alpha_5 + \beta_{11} \Delta GSAT_t + \beta_{12} \Delta UNEMP_t + \beta_{13} \Delta INFL_t + \beta_{14} GOV\Delta_t + \lambda_2 DSATDIS_{t-1} + \varepsilon_{4,t} \quad (11)$$

$$\Delta DSAT_t = \alpha_6 + \beta_{11} \Delta GSAT_t + \beta_{12} \Delta UNEMP_t + \beta_{13} \Delta INFL_t + \beta_{14} GOV\Delta_t + \lambda_2 (DSAT_{t-1} - (\beta_8 GSAT_{t-1} + \beta_9 UNEMP_{t-1} + \beta_{10} INFL_{t-1})) + \varepsilon_{4,t} \quad (12)$$

As noted above, given the lack of consensus on the relative superiority of the two-equation or one equation estimation procedures for an error correction model, both have been estimated. The approach taken here in choosing from the results is on the more conservative side; that is, the risk of a "Type-I" error (rejecting the hypothesis as false when it is indeed true) is accepted in preference to a "Type-II" error (accepting the hypothesis as true when it is indeed false). This entails treating as the definitive estimation the one with the least successful results in terms of the parameter estimates relative to the predictions of the model.

An examination of the estimation results, which are presented below, reveals that in both instances the single equation procedure produces more disconfirming outcomes

and, therefore, is the least likely of the two procedures in the present case to lead to "Type-II" errors. Nevertheless, most of the predictions are born out in these "weaker" results. Attention is focused first on the government satisfaction estimates.¹⁹

Government Satisfaction -- Estimation Results:

$$GSAT_{t-1} = 63.35 - 3.38 TAXBUR_{t-1} + 2.38 GRO_{t-1} + 2.43 ECYCLE_t \quad (5')$$

(23.05)** (-6.82)** (3.94)** (2.81)**

$$\bar{R}^2 = .66, d = 1.29, \rho_1 = .28, n = 37$$

$$\Delta GSAT_t = .44 - 1.57 \Delta TAXBUR_t + .79 \Delta GRO_t + 5.13 UNIFPLUS_t \quad (7')$$

(0.42) (-4.47)** (2.68)** (2.08)**

$$- 9.33 UNIFMIN_t - .64 GSATDIS_{t-1}$$

(-3.93)** (-5.45)**

$$\bar{R}^2 = .73, d = 1.82, \rho_1 = -.11, n = 37$$

Note: results reported are estimated with C-O, 2nd order autoregressive error process

$$\Delta GSAT_t = 35.80 - 1.15 \Delta TAXBUR_t + .59 \Delta GRO_t + 4.83 UNIFPLUS_t - 9.65 UNIFMIN_t \quad (8')$$

(3.67)** (-2.39)** (1.43) (1.91)* (-3.84)**

$$- .55 GSAT_{t-1} - 1.41 TAXBUR_{t-1} + 1.14 GRO_{t-1} + 2.22 ECYCLE_t$$

(-3.53)** (-1.95)* (1.82)* (3.74)**

$$\bar{R}^2 = .73, d = 1.82, \rho_1 = -.03, n = 37$$

Note: results reported are estimated with C-O, 2nd order autoregressive error process

Note that the way in which equation 8' is estimated requires that a transformation based on the adjustment parameter, λ , needs to be made to the estimated parameters for the three levels variables. The actual parameter then for $TAXBUR_{(t-1)}$ is -2.56, that for $GRO_{(t-1)}$ is 2.07, and that for $ECYCLE_t$ is 4.04. λ , the adjustment parameter, is statistically significant and takes on the negative value predicted. The implications of the size of the estimated parameter is that the one-period adjustment to a gap between the level of government satisfaction and the moving equilibrium eliminates slightly more than half of the discrepancy. All three of the parameters for the variables that define

19. Unless otherwise noted, all equations were estimated with OLS. Only those equations where the estimation results indicated autocorrelation problems with the error terms were subject to further analyses. The Cochrane-Orcutt (C-O) method was employed in these instances.

the equilibrium are statistically significant, though that for the economic growth term is only weakly so (at the .10 level), and take on the predicted signs. Higher tax burdens lower the equilibrium government satisfaction level, higher growth increases the level, and the equilibrium follows a cyclical path between elections, first declining and then increasing. The immediate response to changes in the tax burden is such that an increase in this burden cuts satisfaction with government. The parameter for the change in the economic growth rate variable takes on the predicted positive sign; however, it is statistically insignificant. Finally, the two Reunification-related variables have the expected impact, initially increasing government satisfaction with the events of late 1989, and then even more substantially decreasing satisfaction with government once Reunification was brought about and the first all-German federal elections had taken place. The econometric results dealing with system satisfaction are dealt with next.

System Satisfaction - Estimation Results:

$$DSAT_{t-1} = 60.76 + .44 GSAT_{t-1} - 1.23 UNEMP_{t-1} - 1.85 INFL_{t-1} \quad (9')$$

(8.25)** (6.36)** (-2.60)** (-3.90)**

$$\bar{R}^2 = .76, d = 1.43, \rho_1 = .25, n = 37$$

$$\Delta DSAT_t = -.36 + .50 \Delta GSAT_t - 2.27 \Delta UNEMP_t - 1.77 \Delta INFL_t \quad (11')$$

(-0.78) (6.21)** (-3.35)** (-2.67)**

$$+ 11.94 GOV\Delta_t - .60 DSATDIS_{t-1}$$

(4.09)** (-4.28)**

$$\bar{R}^2 = .76, d = 2.18, \rho_1 = -.09, n = 37$$

$$\Delta DSAT_t = 37.37 + .49 \Delta GSAT_t - 2.34 \Delta UNEMP_t - 1.69 \Delta INFL_t + 11.98 GOV\Delta_t \quad (12')$$

(3.48)** (5.45)** (-2.90)** (-2.07)** (3.68)**

$$- .60 DSAT_{t-1} + .24 GSAT_{t-1} - .74 UNEMP_{t-1} - 1.12 INFL_{t-1}$$

(-4.03)** (2.59)** (-1.60) (-2.10)**

$$\bar{R}^2 = .76, d = 2.23, \rho_1 = -.11, n = 37$$

Again, the single equation estimation results (12') for the three exogenous levels variables need to be converted in light of the adjustment parameter. This means that

the actual parameter on $GSAT_{t-1}$ is .40, that on $UNEMP_{t-1}$ is -1.23, and that for $INFL_{t-1}$ is -1.86. Unlike what was found in the government satisfaction estimation results, the values of all of the parameters that derive from the two different techniques are very similar, though in the case of the single equation estimation, one of the parameter estimates (that related to the levels of the lagged value of unemployment) loses the statistical significance it had in the two-equation estimation procedure.²⁰ The size of the estimated adjustment parameter implies that approximately 60 percent of the discrepancy between the prevailing level of system satisfaction and the moving equilibrium is eliminated in one period -- only marginally faster than the adjustment rate found in the government satisfaction equation. The parameters of the three levels variables that define the equilibrium value of system satisfaction all take on the predicted signs, but only two of the three, those for government satisfaction and for inflation, are statistically significant. Implied by these two statistically significant parameters is the following: each percent of consumer price inflation lowers the system satisfaction equilibrium level by nearly 2 percent; for every percent level of government satisfaction, the system satisfaction equilibrium level is increased by a quarter of a percent. In the short-term, however, it is clear that system satisfaction responds very sensitively to unemployment. Each percentage increase in unemployment entails about a 2.3 percent decrease in system satisfaction within a period. Short term responses to changes in inflation and satisfaction with government are also powerful. Each percent increase in the rate of inflation lowers system satisfaction levels by about 1.7 percent. For every percent increase in satisfaction with government, the short term response in system satisfaction is to increase by about a half a percentage point. Note as well that the change in the governing coalition in the early 1980s had a powerful impact on system satisfaction -- increasing it by approximately 12 percentage points.

20. This similarity in parameter estimates derives from the lack of autocorrelation problems associated with the error terms in these sets of estimates.

This analysis of the West German experience over the last twenty years suggests some important features of this system that need to be recognized in light of its continuing economic and political difficulties. First, while the general performance of the economy, major shocks to the system, and the electoral cycle all influence satisfaction with government performance, the policies of government itself are also critical in shaping citizens' evaluations of its performance. In particular, the increasingly heavy tax burden that the government has imposed on the average worker has greatly undermined satisfaction with its performance. Second, popular satisfaction with the performance of authorities and the system are linked. Nearly a half century old, the system has served its citizenry well. Nevertheless, dissatisfaction with an incumbent government can work to undermine satisfaction with the regime itself. However, even while poor governmental performance can undermine satisfaction with the overall system, the latter can be regenerated through the replacement of an unpopular government. Third, even in a well-established, highly-legitimated political system, economic conditions influence the levels of satisfaction with the overall system and prolonged economic misery will seriously undermine the levels of satisfaction and may thereby bring about a situation where it might be rational to call its legitimacy into question.²¹

East Germany Since Reunification

An analysis of the East German case requires a different research strategy. This latter entails employing a relatively simple formulation that attempts to account for the movement in satisfaction with government performance on the basis of citizens' subjective evaluations of economic conditions and the government's efforts to facilitate

21. The concept of rational legitimacy was developed by Rogowski (1974). It holds that not only are utilities and disutilities associated with the prevailing regime structure determinant of rationally based acceptance or rejection of its legitimacy, but that the belief that an alternative and workable regime might be put into its place also needs to be incorporated within the calculus.

a higher standard of living within the region. This strategy is dictated by practical and substantive considerations. First, in the case of East Germany the relatively short period of time since Reunification greatly restricts the degrees of freedom available, and problems with the reliability of data (e.g., the unemployment rate which masks a large amount of hidden unemployment) prohibit one from employing the same model used to account for the dynamics of government and system satisfaction within the West. Second, as demonstrated earlier, the willingness and/or ability of the population in this region to distinguish between authorities and regime is very minimal. Movements in the one series correspond very closely to movements in the other series and therefore an explanation of the dynamics of one effectively constitutes an explanation of the dynamics of the other.

A number of analysts have been prone to dismiss the importance of economically based explanations for the levels of dissatisfaction with the political system that prevail in the East (cf., Weil, 1993; Nolle-Neumann, 1994; Wiesenthal, 1996). However, the analysis of the West German experience reported above certainly sustains the basic position that economic performance is an important source of both government and regime satisfaction in that region. Why then should this not be the case for citizens in the East? Here there was no deep-rooted commitment to that system. Rather, the affluence of the West was a major attraction to the citizens of the GDR as their system collapsed and the fundamental question at issue was whether to join the Federal Republic or seek a "third way." East Germans expected living conditions to improve significantly by joining the West. That they have suffered significant economic problems that they had not anticipated is now widely recognized. Furthermore, while system satisfaction levels have moved up and down in both East and West, there has been a consistently large gap between the two regions on this dimension. . On average, since unification, the Eastern level of satisfaction with system performance have been about two-thirds the level found in the West. Correspondingly, the standard of living, wages,

and many other measures of economic performance in the East approximate two-thirds the levels of those in the West. There is no denying the importance of socialization and the values that have been imparted through that process. Nevertheless, if people make a decision clearly based on economic conditions to opt for one system over another and then come to be disappointed with the economic consequences of that decision, it seems somewhat misguided to seek elsewhere for an explanation of their dissatisfaction with that system.

The equation used to account for the dynamics of satisfaction with government performance in the East since Reunification is relatively simple and focuses on government efforts in the economic area and the performance of the economy in the region. Both variables are based on public opinion data. The first variable ($BONN_t$) deals with people's assessments of the efforts of the Federal government to raise Eastern living standards to those of the West. As incorporated in the regression equation (13) it measures the percentage share of the population in the East that believes the Bonn government was not doing enough to equalize living standards and the expectation is that this is negatively related to satisfaction with overall government performance. The second variable ($ECON_t$) is a sociotropic measure of prospective economic conditions. It is based on people's expectations regarding the economic situation in the East in the next year and includes the percentage share of the population that expects the Eastern economy would improve. This variable should be positively related to satisfaction with government performance in equation 13.

$$GSAT_t = \alpha_7 + \beta_{15}BONN_t + \beta_{16}ECON_t + e_{5,t} \quad (13)$$

Based on quarterly data for the period from 1991.1 through 1995.4 (n=20), the regressions estimate for this equation is provided below.

$$GSAT_t = 46.79 - .37 BONN_t + .70 ECON_t \quad (13')$$

(4.62)**
(-3.07)**
(7.28)**

$$\bar{R}^2 = .80, d = 1.61, \rho = .18, \text{ OLS.}$$

The fit of this equation to the data is quite good and the expectations regarding the effects of the independent variables on satisfaction with government performance are supported. Thus, satisfaction levels drop as the public perceives that the government in Bonn is not doing enough to equalize living standards (a one percent increase in the independent variable leading to about a .4 percent decrease in satisfaction). Simultaneously, as optimism with respect to prospective economic performance in the region increases, so too does satisfaction with government performance, with each percent increase in the former leading to a .7 percent increase in the latter. These results (plus those reported earlier) strongly support the position that in East Germany, as in the West, economic conditions and government policies strongly influence satisfaction with government performance and the latter, even more firmly than in the West, has a strong impact on satisfaction with the Federal Republic's political regime.

Conclusion

Reunification has come at a cost to the German political system. East Germans continue to be disappointed in its performance. In the West, once high levels of satisfaction with its performance have disappeared and disappointment has grown. In both regions the combination of poor economic performance and disappointment with the government in power have fuelled this loss in confidence.

What of the future? In terms of both economic prospects and government policy, it appears to be rather bleak. Caught in a web of its own making, the commitment to meeting the criteria for the EMU, the German economic system is floundering. Restrictive monetary policy combined with a very stringent fiscal policy will continue to

dampen the prospects for significant growth and a reduction in a ballooning unemployment rate (Carlin and Soskice, 1997). Slow growth in the overall economy is expected to continue and there are strong reasons to believe that the process of convergence between East and West has halted.²² Simultaneously, the effects of the government's plans to change the tax system, should they be implemented, are most likely to undermine citizens' evaluations of both its and the political system's performance. Targeted mainly at relieving the tax burdens of the well-to-do, and prone to increase the tax burdens of average workers, the reforms will help to further erode satisfaction with the political system.

Is Germany on the road to Weimar? There are few trustworthy maps and compasses that aid one in plotting the course of a political system. But certainly the low levels of popular confidence in this system do not bode well for its future. In the East, little progress in solidifying confidence for the Federal Republic's political system has been made. Simultaneously, the costs of Germany's two major projects, Reunification and the deepening of ties with the European Union, have eroded confidence in the West. Clearly the road to Weimar is a long one where a number of other conditions will have to be met before a similar collapse could come about. Still, it is probably not an exaggeration to say that the system is confronting a major challenge and formidable change is needed. No system will collapse from the loss of confidence alone. A viable alternative needs to be in sight (Rogowski, 1974). At least in West Germany the overwhelming majority still prefer their political system over all others and thereby see no viable alternative.²³ But this does not prevent one or another political

22. These forecasts are contained in the spring report of the six leading German economic research institutes as described in *The Financial Times*, April 23, 1997, p.2.

23. Note that in 1994 74 percent of West Germans held the view that the Federal Republic's system of democracy was the best form of government available, 15 percent were undecided, and 9 percent thought there was a better form. In the East only 31 percent thought the present form was the best, 41 percent were undecided and 28 percent held that there was a better form. These figures are drawn from Noell-Neumann (1994).

entrepreneur from emerging with an attractive but anti-democratic vision of an alternative system. Such an entrepreneur might easily gather support from the many who are disenchanted with the performance of the present system.

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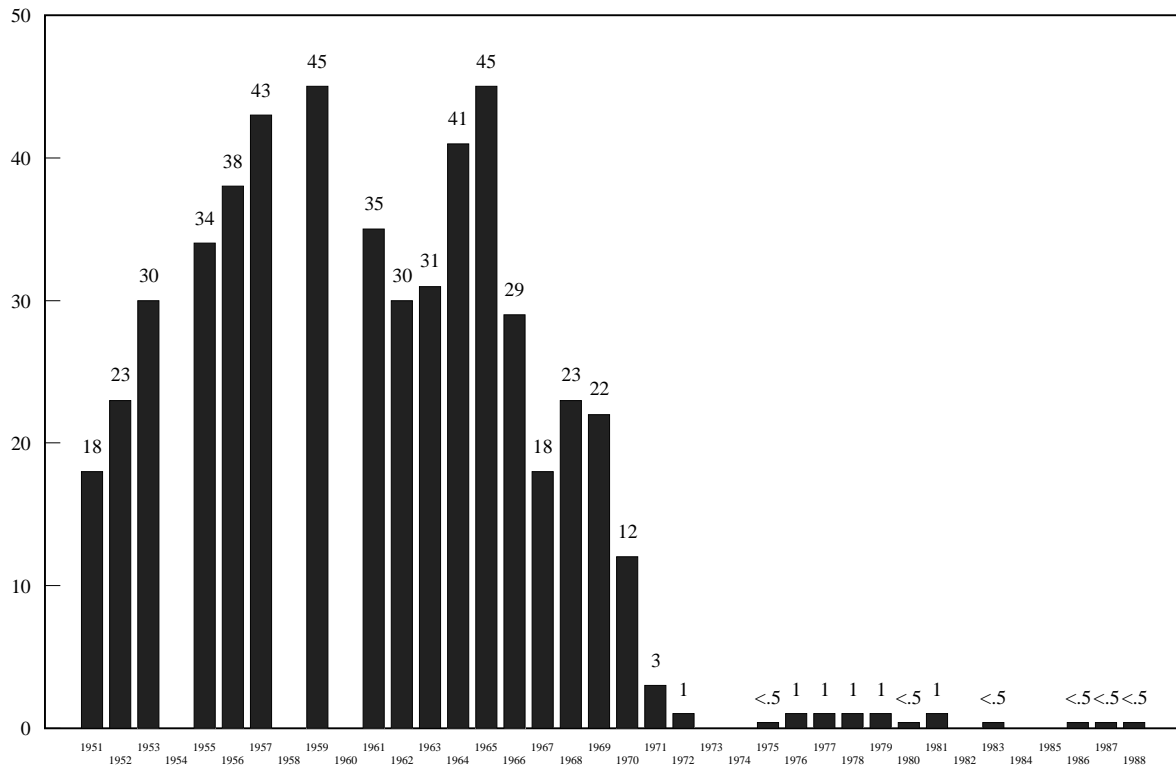
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**Appendix: Tables and Figures for
On the Road to Weimar?**

Figure 1

The Importance of Reunification to the West German Population, 1951-1988

% Indicating Reunification the Most Important Problem Confronting the Fed. Rep.



Source: Allensbach data provided in Herdegen (1992)

"Was halten Sie für die wichtigste Frage, mit der man sich in der Bundesrepublik heute allgemein beschäftigen sollte?"

Table 1
East and West German Citizens' Ranking of Important
Problems and Goals at Around the Time of the
Reunification Treaty Signing (May-June, 1990)

East Rank	% Saying Very Important	West Rank	% Saying Very Important
1	82.4	1	76.7
2	81.9	2	74.2
3	81.4	3	69.0
4	78.7	4	68.5
5	76.7	5	63.2
6	68.3	6	62.8
7	59.4	7	57.9
8	54.1	8	33.9
9	50.9	9	32.1
10	37.0	10	28.4
11	36.9	11	26.5
			51.9
			18.8

Sources:

IPOS, East, 1990; IPOS, West, 1990.

Here is a list of tasks and goals that are discussed in [the Federal Republic of Germany / the German Democratic Republic]. Please tell us which of these you personally see as very important, important, not so important and completely unimportant.

Table 2
 Popular Opinion on Reunification in May of 1990
 in the Two German States

	East	West
For unification	94.2	76.3
Against Unification	3.2	9.1
Indifferent	2.7	14.6

Popular Opinion on Reunification and Its Timing in May of 1990
 in the Two German States

	Opposed	Indifferent	Supported, but not immediately	Supported and for immediate or quick unification
East	3.2	2.6	55.1	39.4
West	9.1	14.6	51.5	24.8

Are you personally for the Unification of both German states (1), are you against the Unification (2) , or are you indifferent to Unification (3)?

In the case where the respondent is for unification of both states: Should it occur quickly or should one take time?

	East (of the 94.2 %)	West (of the 76.3%)
Quickly	41.8	32.5
Take one's time	58.5	67.5

Sources:
 IPOS, East, 1990; IPOS, West, 1990.

Table 3
Popular Expectations About the Advantages
and Disadvantages of Reunification

	East	West
Reunification would bring:		
Mainly advantages	63.5	28.3
Mainly disadvantages	5.9	24.1
Advantages and disadvantages that would cancel each other out.	30.6	47.3

Sources:

IPOS, East, 1990; IPOS, West, 1990.

East: In the long run do you believe that the Unification of both German states will bring the people of the [German Democratic Republic / Federal Republic of Germany] mainly advantages (1), mainly disadvantages (2), or that the advantages and disadvantages would cancel each other out (3)?

Table 4
Expectations About When Parity in Living Standards Would Occur

	Expected Year:				
	Don't know	Until 1995	From 1996 to 2000	From 2001 to 2005	2006 or later
East:					
In 1990	68.2	--	25.9	4.1	1.8
In 1992	1.0	2.1	29.6	46.6	22.2
In 1995	0.8	--**	15.9	50.3	33.0
West:					
In 1990	1.0	30.3	46.2	12.4	10.1
In 1992	2.3	3.4*	28.8	45.5	20.1
In 1995	3.3	--**	38.2	39.8	18.7

Values have been calculated on the basis of the year of the survey and the number of years it was expected that parity would be reached.

* - In this year approximately .2% of the sample in the West stated that they believed it had already occurred (these are included in the category "Until 1995").

** - An unspecified percentage of the sample apparently stated that they believed it had already occurred (these are included in the category "Until 2000").

Data on the following come from the the IPOS studies in 1990, and three Politbarometer surveys in 1992 and 1995. The values given for 1992 are the averages from two surveys, one in June and the other in November. The 1995 survey took place in May.

	Parity Achieved?	
	East	West
Already achieved	9.3	28.9
Not achieved	90.7	71.1

Source: 1994 Politbarometer (February)

And how is it with equalization of living standards between the East and the West: is it to a great extent already achieved or is it not yet achieved?

Figure 2

Annual Growth Rates in GDP Per Capita, West Germany

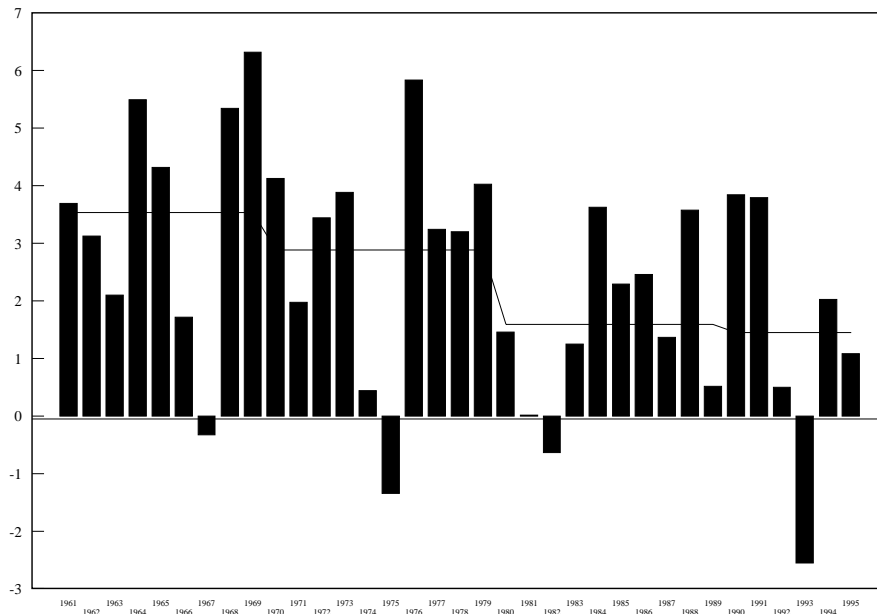
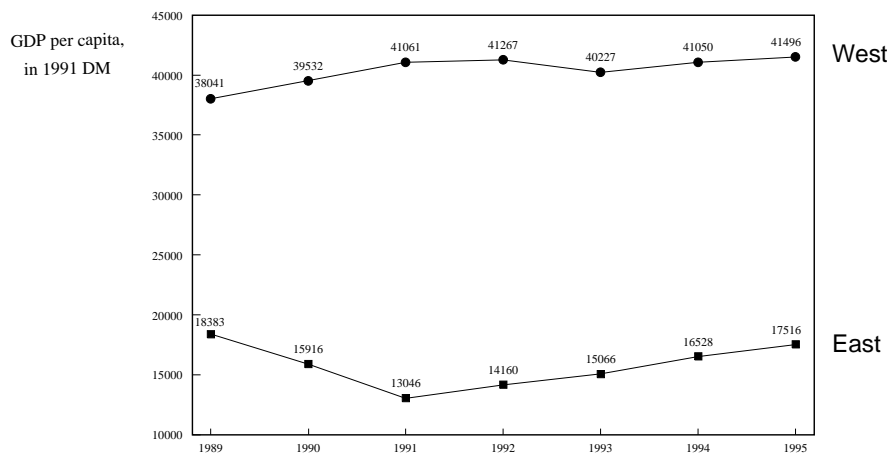


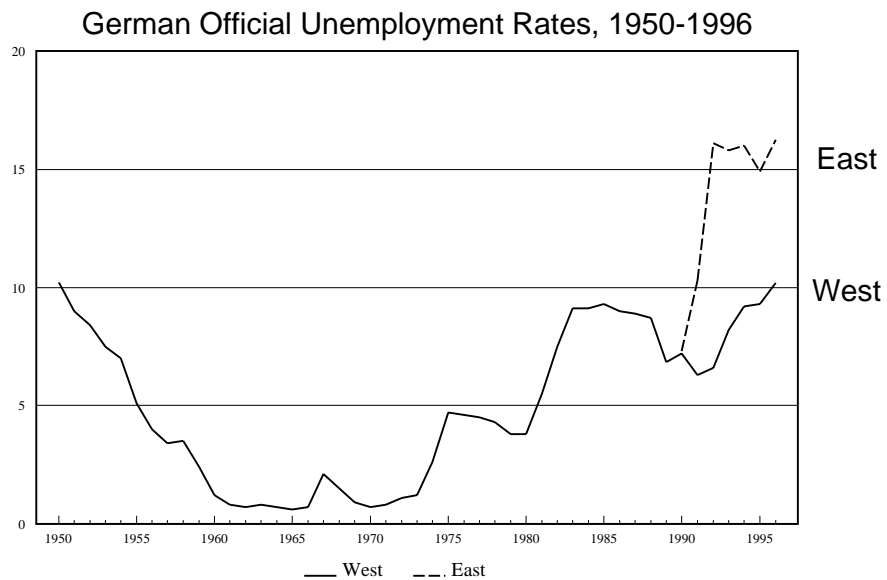
Figure 3

Economic Development within the Two Parts of Germany Since 1989



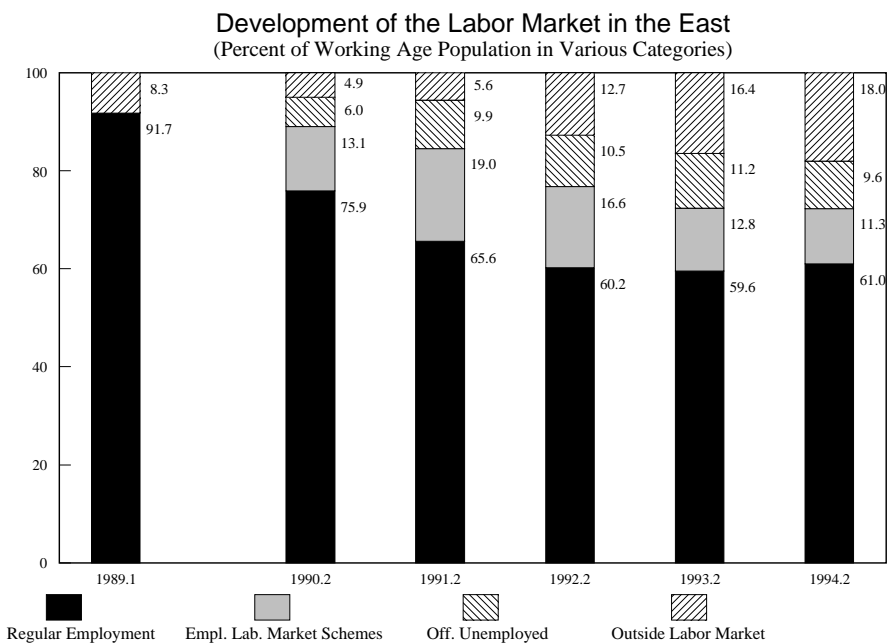
Sources: Based on data from C. Brinkman (1995) "Labor Market Policy in East Germany" Employment Observatory, No. 16/17, and Statistisches Bundesamt (1996) Tabellensammlung zur Wirtschaftlichen und Sozialen Lage in den neuen Bundesländer, Ausgabe 3/96.

Figure 4



Sources: OECD Labor Force Statistics and Statistisches Bundesamt
 Note that 1996 figures are averages from first seven months of the year.

Figure 5



Data drawn from Employment Observatory: East Germany. No. 16/17, Nov. 1995, Eur

Table 5
Developments in Disposable Income per Household
Within the Two Regions of Germany

Nominal:			
	East	West	East as % of West
1990	1765	3626	49
1991	2173	3700	59
1992	2529	3924	64
1993	2957	4033	73
1994	3216	4190	77

Equivalent Income (nominal):			
	East	West	East as % of West
1990	727	1580	46
1991	872	1632	53
1992	1066	1715	62
1993	1250	1805	69
1994	1376	1888	73

Income Distribution: Gini index			
	East	West	
1990	0.184	0.264	
1991	0.192	0.259	
1992	0.195	0.261	
1993	0.208	0.270	
1994	0.217	---	

Source: DIW (1994) "Die Einkommen in Ostdeutschland steigen weiter - auch die Einkommensarmut nimmt wieder zu," DIW Wochenbericht 51-52: p. 868. Based on SOEP.

Figure 6

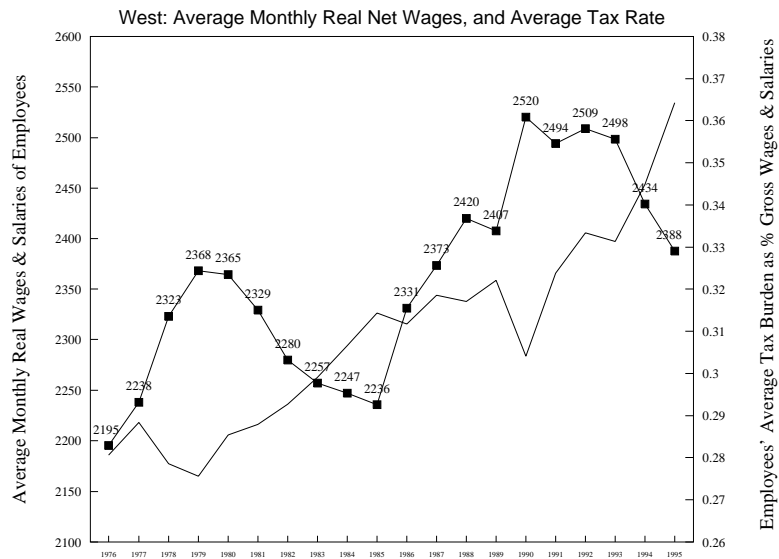


Figure 7

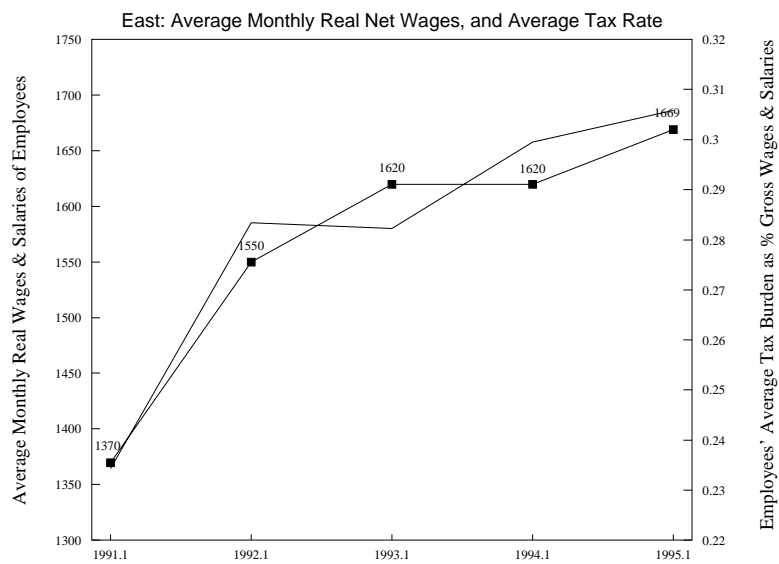


Table 6
Public Sector Financial Transfers from West to East Germany
(Net Transfers = Gross Transfers - Receipts)

	1. Total Net Transfers (Bills. DM, Nominal)	2. Total Net Transfers (Bills. DM, 91 Prices)	3. Total Net Transfers Per Capita (DM, 91 Prices)	4. col. (3) as Share of Total German GDP (%)	5. col. (3) as Share of West German GDP (%)	6. (3) as Share of East German GDP (%)
1991	106	106	6713	3.7	4.0	51.5
1992	115	109	6949	3.7	4.1	43.8
1993	129	118	7559	4.1	4.5	41.8
1994	126	113	7296	3.8	4.2	36.3
1995	150	131	8456	4.3	4.9	39.9

Sources: Transfer data: OECD Economic Survey, Germany, 1995;

Population and GDP data from Tabellensammlung; Price data from Stat. Bundesamt.

Figure 8

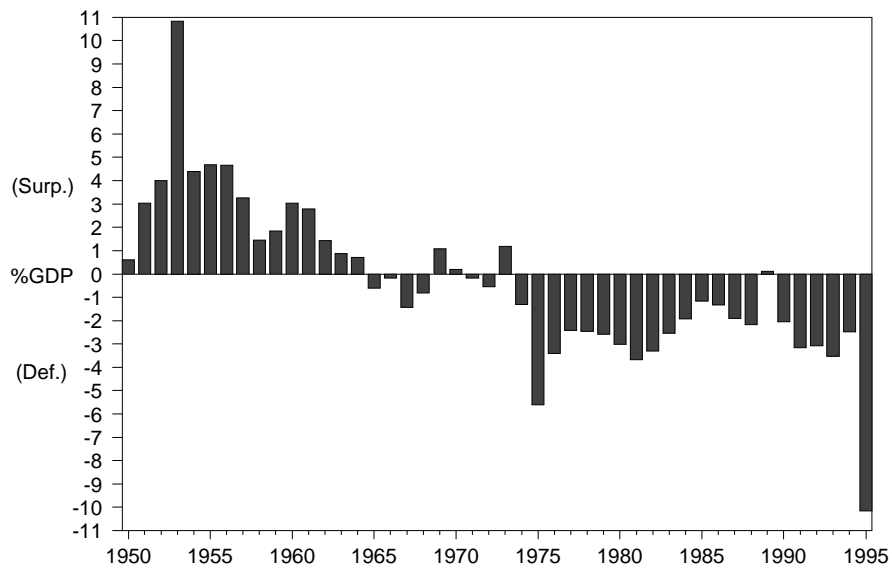
German Public Sector Surpluses/Deficits

Figure 9

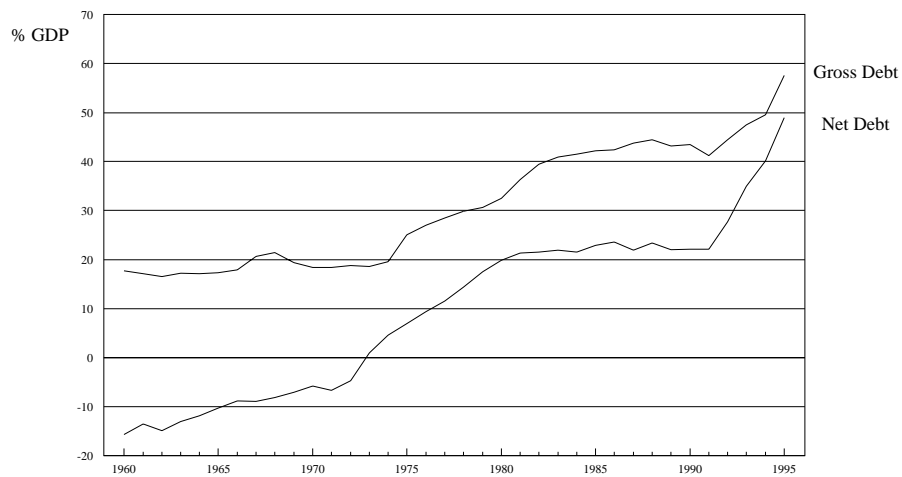
German General Government Sector Debt

Table 7
Dissatisfaction with Bonn Government's Efforts at
Improving Living Standards in the East

	Percent Saying too little or not enough in:	
	East	West
1991.1	85.2	42.3
1991.2	78.9	31.8
1991.3	79.0	25.3
1991.4	78.6	24.2
1992.1	80.1	27.0
1992.2	83.3	28.3
1992.3	82.8	31.7
1992.4	82.5	30.6
1993.1	83.8	31.5
1993.2	81.6	29.5
1993.3	79.0	27.5
1993.4	76.5	28.2
1994.1	74.1	28.2
1994.2	78.3	22.5
1994.3	74.3	20.8
1994.4	74.9	20.0
1995.1	75.2	18.5
1995.2	72.2	14.6
1995.3	63.1	14.7
1995.4	55.5	14.3

Is the Federal Government in Bonn making sufficient effort to bring Eastern living standards up to the level of the West?

Source: Politbarometer: Quarterly Averages of those saying effort insufficient.

Data based on responses to two similar questions:

What is your opinion: does the Federal Government in Bonn do (1) too much, (2) too little, or (3) just the right amount to bring Eastern living standards up to those of the West?

Do you think that the Federal Government does (1) enough or (2) not enough to bring Eastern living standards up to those of the West?

Percentages based on valid answers (1-3 and 1-2, respectively) only; missing values excluded from calculation.

Table 8
 Easterners' Dissatisfaction with What Is Being Done to Bring
 Eastern Living Standards Up to the West and Westerners' Belief
 that the Dissatisfaction is Warranted
 Quarterly averages

	East Percent Expressing Dissatisfaction	West Percent Seeing Dissatisfaction as Justified
1991.1	79.4	41.4
1991.2	72.6	34.1
1991.3	71.0	31.3
1991.4	70.7	28.4
1992.1	71.8	32.6
1992.2	74.5	33.6
1992.3	71.2	33.2
1992.4	73.9	32.1
1993.1	72.5	33.6
1993.2	70.1	33.2
1993.3	70.0	33.5
1993.4	67.8	34.0
1994.1	64.5	35.5
1994.2	65.8	31.0
1994.3	61.5	29.8
1994.4	64.0	29.7
1995.1	65.8	26.0
1995.2	63.8	24.9
1995.3	54.0	23.9
1995.4	34.0	21.0

Source: Politbarometer

The question posed in the East was "Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with what has been done to bring living standards up to those of the West."

The question posed in the West was "Many East Germans are unsatisfied with what has been done to improve their living standards. Is that justified or not justified?"

Note that percentages based on valid responses (1-2) only; missing data excluded from calculation.

Table 9
A Comparison of Easterners' and Westerners' Views
on the Importance of Achieving Equality in Living Standards

	East	West
1991	83.2	34.8
1992	79.3	31.6
1993	75.4	29.1
1995	71.7	24.9

Source: IPOS

Percent Saying this is a very important goal.

Table 10
A Comparison of Easterners' and Westerners' Views
on How Well Reunification is Going

	East			West		
	1. Better	2. Worse	3. As Expected	1. Better	2. Worse	3. As Expected
1990.3	21.4	44.8	34.2	19.9	43.4	36.6
1990.4	31.5	26.6	41.9	37.5	20.6	42.0
1991.1	8.7	64.1	27.1	---	---	---
1991.2	11.8	47.2	41.0	6.7	44.3	49.0
1991.3	14.7	44.0	41.4	11.5	43.7	45.0
1991.4	14.8	40.5	44.7	13.6	38.3	48.1
1992.1	16.8	43.8	39.5	11.9	43.0	45.1
1992.2	12.3	49.6	38.2	8.0	49.4	42.6
1992.3	12.3	51.6	36.2	6.6	50.3	43.2
1992.4	11.6	52.4	36.0	6.6	52.6	40.8
1993.1	9.5	54.3	36.3	5.6	53.9	40.5
1993.2	12.0	58.9	29.1	7.6	55.6	36.8
1993.3	11.4	53.4	35.2	5.7	53.3	41.1
1993.4	11.7	51.1	37.2	8.9	51.7	39.5
1994.1	10.6	54.8	34.5	10.7	47.6	41.7
1994.2	12.0	49.4	38.6	14.5	41.6	43.9
1994.3	16.2	46.4	37.4	17.6	40.8	41.6
1994.4	16.6	45.6	37.9	19.0	42.7	38.3
1995.1	17.8	48.1	34.1	15.9	43.3	40.9
1995.2	16.3	47.2	36.4	22.1	40.7	37.1
1995.3	25.3	38.5	36.2	19.9	39.7	40.4
1995.4	21.9	36.9	41.2	17.8	43.0	39.2

Quarterly Averages

Source: Politbarometer

All in all, the Unification of Germany is going:

1. Mainly better than I thought it would
2. Mainly worse than I thought it would
3. About as expected
9. No answer

percentages based on valid answers (1-3) only; NA excluded

Table 11
 Easterners' Expectations about Reunification's
 Effect on Their Personal Situations: Fulfilled
 or Not Fulfilled

East	Fulfilled	Not Fulfilled
1991.1	37.1	62.9
1991.2	46.8	53.2
1991.3	49.6	33.6
1991.4	52.6	47.4
1992.1	51.9	48.1
1992.2	50.3	49.7
1992.3	47.7	52.4
1992.4	47.3	52.7
1993.1	45.8	54.3
1993.2	46.7	53.3
1993.3	51.2	48.8
1993.4	50.0	50.0
1994.1	37.9	62.1
1994.2	51.4	48.6
1994.3	53.2	46.8
1994.4	50.1	49.9
1995.1	---	---
1995.2	---	---
1995.3	69.2	30.8
1995.4	68.8	31.2

Source: Politbarometer

Quarterly Averages

If you think about your personal situation, have your expectations about Unification to this point (1) mainly been fulfilled, or mainly not been fulfilled?

1. Mainly fulfilled

2. Mainly not fulfilled

9. No answer

percentages based only on 1 and 2 (9:NA ignored)

Table 12
 Easterners' Judgements about the Present
 Economic Situation in East Germany*

East Year/ Quarter	Good	Mixed	Bad
1990.3	2.5	21.8	76.7
1990.4	2.2	26.4	71.4
1991.1	1.6	23.4	75.0
1991.2	2.0	25.6	72.4
1991.3	2.8	39.9	57.4
1991.4	3.1	41.6	55.3
1992.1	2.5	40.4	57.0
1992.2	2.3	38.5	59.1
1992.3	2.4	33.5	64.1
1992.4	2.3	34.7	63.1
1993.1	1.8	35.9	62.3
1993.2	1.8	37.6	60.6
1993.3	2.1	37.2	60.8
1993.4	2.2	38.5	59.2
1994.1	2.6	43.3	54.1
1994.2	3.9	48.9	47.2
1994.3	5.1	55.4	39.6
1994.4	5.6	59.6	34.8
1995.1	5.9	58.6	35.5
1995.2	5.9	59.2	34.9
1995.3	9.4	56.9	33.7
1995.4	12.6	53.0	33.8
1996.1*	9.2	53.1	37.6
1996.2*	9.3	54.8	35.9
1996.3*	---	---	---
1996.4*	9.3	54.0	37.2

Source: Politbarometer

Quarterly Averages

How would you judge the present economic situation in East Germany (i.e., the [former] GDR) to be? Is it (1) good, (2) partly good and partly bad (mixed) , or (3) bad (9=NA). percentages based only on 1,2, and 3 (9:NA ignored)

* -- Note: Data for 1996 deal with a question where the reference is not to East Germany but to Germany (as a whole).

Table 13
 Easterners' Judgements about the Next Year's
 Economic Situation in East Germany*

East	Better	Same	Worse
1990.3	58.4	27.2	14.4
1990.4	56.3	30.8	12.8
1991.1	44.7	36.5	18.8
1991.2	45.3	39.8	14.9
1991.3	52.6	35.8	11.7
1991.4	48.8	41.3	9.9
1992.1	42.1	46.0	11.8
1992.2	32.4	51.3	16.2
1992.3	27.8	51.5	20.7
1992.4	25.0	55.3	19.8
1993.1	20.0	56.2	23.7
1993.2	24.4	54.4	21.3
1993.3	21.8	54.7	23.7
1993.4	23.0	52.0	25.0
1994.1	26.4	53.6	20.0
1994.2	30.9	55.6	13.5
1994.3	36.9	53.0	10.2
1994.4	36.5	53.7	9.8
1995.1	33.3	55.3	11.4
1995.2	31.2	56.5	12.2
1995.3	35.4	48.3	16.2
1995.4	38.6	42.7	17.4
1996.1*	22.8	37.7	38.4
1996.2*	28.0	38.6	33.5
1996.3*	---	---	---
1996.4*	18.6	38.9	42.5

Source: Politbarometer

Quarterly Averages

And what do you think the general economic situation in East Germany will be in a year's time. Do you expect that it will be (1) better, (2) the same as now, (3) or worse (9=NA).

Percentages based only on 1,2, and 3 (9:NA ignored).

* -- Note: Data for 1996 deal with a question where the reference is not to East Germany but to Germany (as a whole).

Table 14
 Easterners' Judgements about Their
 Own Personal Economic Situation at Present

East	Good	Mixed	Bad
1991.1	25.0	54.7	20.3
1991.2	27.3	56.4	16.3
1991.3	28.8	55.7	15.6
1991.4	30.5	55.2	14.3
1992.1	34.5	54.3	11.1
1992.2	31.8	53.2	15.0
1992.3	33.4	53.5	13.2
1992.4	35.0	52.8	12.3
1993.1	32.1	53.7	14.1
1993.2	37.3	50.0	12.6
1993.3	37.0	50.0	13.1
1993.4	37.6	50.2	12.2
1994.1	37.4	48.6	14.0
1994.2	37.5	48.7	13.8
1994.3	40.7	46.8	12.6
1994.4	39.7	49.5	10.8
1995.1	39.1	47.9	13.0
1995.2	38.2	49.3	12.6
1995.3	48.0	42.2	9.7
1995.4	54.5	35.9	9.2
1996.1	42.0	44.9	12.7
1996.2	45.1	43.1	11.1
1996.3	---	---	---
1996.4	43.5	44.6	11.9

Source: Politbarometer

Quarterly Averages

How would you judge your present economic situation to be? Is it (1) good, (2) partly good and partly bad (mixed), or (3) bad (9=NA).

Percentages based only on 1,2, and 3 (9: NA ignored)

Table 15
 Easterners' Judgements about Their
 Own Personal Economic Situation in the Coming Year

East	Better	Same	Worse
1990.2	51.6	33.8	14.7
1990.3	51.6	35.6	12.8
1990.4	---	---	---
1991.1	36.6	43.2	19.9
1991.2	39.9	45.3	14.8
1991.3	38.7	46.6	14.7
1991.4	41.0	49.2	9.8
1992.1	36.5	54.9	8.5
1992.2	30.8	57.0	12.2
1992.3	26.1	59.0	15.0
1992.4	24.4	62.4	13.1
1993.1	21.6	64.9	13.4
1993.2	24.1	64.6	11.3
1993.3	20.1	65.9	14.1
1993.4	18.9	66.4	14.7
1994.1	19.5	66.3	14.1
1994.2	20.4	67.5	12.1
1994.3	24.0	66.8	9.2
1994.4	22.2	67.4	10.4
1995.1	20.5	67.1	12.5
1995.2	20.5	67.8	11.7
1995.3	23.3	64.6	11.9
1995.4	27.9	57.8	11.6
1996.1	19.9	59.0	18.2
1996.2	23.1	60.9	16.0
1996.3	---	---	---
1996.4	20.7	60.0	15.4

Source: Politbarometer

Quarterly Averages

What do you think your economic situation will be in a year's time. Do you expect that it will be (1) better, (2) the same as now, (3) or worse (9=NA).

Percentages based only on 1,2, and 3 (9:NA ignored)

Table 16
West German Economic Situation at
Present; Westerners' Views: Annual and
Quarterly Averages*

Year/ Quarter	Good	Mixed	Bad
1977	27.8	56.2	16.0
1978	29.1	56.1	14.8
1979	53.8	40.6	5.7
1980	45.8	45.5	8.8
1981	19.9	52.4	27.8
1982	10.6	48.5	39.5
1983	14.3	54.4	31.5
1984	19.1	54.9	25.9
1985	22.7	53.9	23.4
1986	48.1	45.0	6.9
1987	35.6	51.1	13.3
1988	41.2	49.6	9.2
1989	54.5	39.2	6.3
1990	66.6	29.8	3.6
1991.1	74.1	22.3	3.7
1991.2	67.4	27.5	5.0
1991.3	51.3	38.2	10.5
1991.4	52.7	38.1	9.2
1992.1	40.9	47.2	11.9
1992.2	39.2	49.5	11.3
1992.3	33.3	52.0	14.7
1992.4	18.8	54.5	26.8
1993.1	14.6	57.8	27.5
1993.2	17.5	53.8	28.7
1993.3	8.2	56.4	35.4
1993.4	8.4	52.1	39.5
1994.1	10.0	55.8	34.2
1994.2	17.5	59.4	23.2
1994.3	19.4	63.7	16.9
1994.4	24.5	60.4	15.1
1995.1	23.4	63.4	13.2
1995.2	26.8	62.1	11.1
1995.3	24.9	60.9	14.2
1995.4	26.0	56.1	17.8
1996.1*	8.1	54.1	37.9
1996.2*	9.2	53.5	37.4
1996.3*	---	---	---
1996.4*	9.2	55.7	34.8

Source: Politbarometer

Missings (9) not included in base for percentages

* -- Note: Data for 1996 deal with a question where the reference is not to West Germany but to Germany (as a whole).

Table 17
West German Economic Situation in the
Next Year; Westerners' Views: Annual
and Quarterly Averages*

Year/ Quarter	Better	Same	Worse
1977	14.5	67.1	18.4
1978	21.6	58.9	19.6
1979	19.2	61.0	19.8
1980	12.6	58.1	29.3
1981	10.6	43.5	46.1
1982	16.9	46.2	37.0
1983	28.4	52.0	19.7
1984	24.4	54.4	21.2
1985	24.7	56.5	19.0
1986	28.5	63.4	8.1
1987	15.8	61.9	22.4
1988	13.3	59.2	27.5
1989	18.8	60.9	20.3
1990	22.2	43.9	34.0
1991.1	16.7	50.4	32.9
1991.2	18.3	51.1	30.6
1991.3	15.1	45.3	39.7
1991.4	13.7	47.0	39.2
1992.1	12.7	40.5	46.8
1992.2	14.3	44.1	41.6
1992.3	11.2	37.3	51.5
1992.4	12.7	31.7	55.6
1993.1	17.2	32.7	50.1
1993.2	22.2	36.8	41.0
1993.3	25.9	35.1	39.0
1993.4	28.3	38.1	33.6
1994.1	32.8	37.7	29.5
1994.2	42.7	37.0	20.5
1994.3	42.7	40.5	16.9
1994.4	42.0	40.7	17.2
1995.1	38.9	42.9	18.3
1995.2	28.6	48.3	23.0
1995.3	23.1	48.2	28.7
1995.4	15.9	46.6	37.5
1996.1*	15.6	37.3	47.1
1996.2*	20.2	40.3	39.5
1996.3*	---	---	---
1996.4*	18.6	36.3	43.1

Source: Politbarometer

Missings (9) not included in base for percentages

* -- Note: Data for 1996 deal with a question where the reference is not to West Germany but to Germany (as a whole).

Table 18
 Westerners' Judgements about their Own
 Personal Economic Situation at Present:
 Annual and Quarterly Averages

Year/ Quarter	Good	Mixed	Bad
1977	54.7	38.8	6.5
1978	---	---	---
1979	65.4	29.8	4.8
1980	---	---	---
1981	49.2	40.0	10.8
1982	43.6	43.9	12.5
1983	40.5	46.7	12.9
1984	44.0	43.7	12.3
1985	47.4	43.0	9.6
1986	53.0	38.8	8.4
1987	51.3	40.1	8.6
1988	60.7	32.7	6.7
1989	59.6	33.8	6.7
1990	64.4	30.2	5.4
1991.1	68.4	26.0	5.6
1991.2	63.1	31.4	5.5
1991.3	60.9	31.5	7.6
1991.4	58.4	34.2	7.4
1992.1	54.4	38.2	7.4
1992.2	55.6	35.7	8.7
1992.3	58.7	33.1	8.3
1992.4	58.5	33.7	7.9
1993.1	55.2	36.1	8.7
1993.2	56.7	36.6	6.7
1993.3	55.6	35.0	9.4
1993.4	55.1	35.9	9.0
1994.1	54.1	36.1	9.8
1994.2	55.5	35.8	8.7
1994.3	54.3	37.2	8.6
1994.4	57.0	34.3	8.8
1995.1	51.8	40.4	7.6
1995.2	56.2	35.1	8.7
1995.3	56.1	35.4	8.4
1995.4	51.1	37.8	11.0
1996.1	53.1	38.8	8.5
1996.2	52.3	38.6	9.1
1996.3	---	---	---
1996.4	50.6	39.1	9.9

Source: Politbarometer

Missings (9) not included in base for percentages

Table 19
 Westerners' Judgements about their Own
 Personal Economic Situation in the Next
 Year: Annual and Quarterly Averages

Year/ Quarter	Better	Same	Worse
1977	13.8	76.8	9.5
1978	---	---	---
1979	18.5	72.2	9.4
1980	---	---	---
1981	9.2	66.0	24.9
1982	10.3	66.3	23.6
1983	15.4	70.1	14.6
1984	14.3	72.3	13.4
1985	16.6	76.3	7.1
1986	17.1	76.7	6.2
1987	16.8	74.0	9.3
1988	20.4	65.1	14.5
1989	21.1	69.1	9.9
1990	21.4	63.9	14.7
1991.1	22.5	64.6	13.0
1991.2	20.0	61.5	18.5
1991.3	21.6	58.1	20.3
1991.4	20.4	62.8	16.8
1992.1	18.7	61.6	19.7
1992.2	18.3	62.0	19.7
1992.3	15.6	62.4	22.0
1992.4	14.8	61.2	24.0
1993.1	18.5	59.3	22.2
1993.2	19.4	66.0	14.6
1993.3	18.4	59.8	21.9
1993.4	17.2	63.4	19.8
1994.1	17.8	63.6	18.6
1994.2	22.7	62.4	15.0
1994.3	22.8	64.2	13.0
1994.4	22.8	62.3	14.9
1995.1	20.4	63.4	14.7
1995.2	19.3	65.0	15.7
1995.3	19.0	66.0	15.0
1995.4	16.6	58.7	24.7
1996.1	13.2	63.1	23.6
1996.2	16.3	64.6	19.0
1996.3	---	---	---
1996.4	16.2	58.3	24.1

Source: Politbarometer

Missings (9) not included in base for percentages

Table 20
 Easterners' Views on Present Situation
 In Comparison with Before the Wende

East	Present Situation is:	Oct. 92	Ave. 1993	Ave. 1994	Dec. 95
General	Better	48.9	49.5	55.4	70.9
	Same	25.2	28.3	18.4	18.9
	Worse	25.9	18.1	26.3	10.2
Own Economic Situation	Better	47.0	49.5	53.9	63.6
	Same	31.2	27.7	27.0	21.2
	Worse	21.8	22.8	19.1	15.2
General Economic Situation in East	Better	49.0	19.9	---	49.7
	Same	25.2	9.2	---	8.8
	Worse	25.9	71.0	---	41.5
Social Security	Better	15.7	14.4	20.7	18.4
	Same	23.8	18.8	19.2	20.9
	Worse	60.6	66.8	60.2	60.6
Personal Freedom	Better	76.2	69.7	72.1	80.8
	Same	19.9	23.8	21.7	16.5
	Worse	3.9	6.5	6.1	2.7
Relations with Other People	Better	4.9	4.5	5.7	5.7
	Same	51.3	47.1	37.6	40.0
	Worse	43.8	48.4	56.7	54.3

Source: Politbarometer

Table 21
An East-West Comparison of
Satisfaction with Different Societal Conditions

	Education		Equal Rights		Oppors. for Advance.		Social Security	
	East	West	East	West	East	West	East	West
1990	69	84	79	71	47	78	--	--
1991	60	89	60	69	53	81	--	--
1992	69	85	44	70	52	79	--	--
1993	63	81	43	67	47	72	23	60
1994	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1995	57	84	44	73	43	72	28	63

	To be Treated Justly		Economic Situation		Protection from Crime		Chance for a Job	
	East	West	East	West	East	West	East	West
1990	33	69	14	87	58	63	--	--
1991	44	69	21	82	15	59	--	--
1992	37	64	23	65	10	48	--	--
1993	31	63	17	43	10	44	10	41
1994	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1995	33	59	29	51	14	41	9	38

Source: M. Berger, M. Jung, and D. Roth (1995) *Einstellungen zu aktuellen Fragen der Innenpolitik 1995 in Deutschland*. Mannheim: Institut für Praxisorientierte Sozialforschung, p. 16.

Percent saying very or mainly satisfied to the question:

Please tell us how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with respect to the following social conditions in Germany. Are you very satisfied, mainly satisfied, mainly dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

Table 22
Colonization of East by West?

	East:		West:	
	Nov. 1990	Oct. 1991	Nov. 1990	Oct. 1991
Appropriate	46	53	33	27
Inappropriate	40	30	53	61
Not sure, Do not know	14	17	14	12

Source: Noelle-Neumann und Köcher, 1993,p.478.

Asked only of those who claimed that they had heard the term "colonization" in the context of entry of the GDR into the Federal Republic (in 1990: E:36%, W:29%; in 1991: E: 49%, W: 37%). Percent who found the characterization either appropriate or inappropriate:

Table 23
 Optimism, 1949-1996
 (Percent saying that it is with hopes that they enter the coming year)

	West	East
1949	48	--
1950	27	--
1951	45	--
1952	48	--
1953	60	--
1954	54	--
1955	61	--
1956	53	--
1957	58	--
1958	53	--
1959	65	--
1960	58	--
1961	44	--
1962	61	--
1963	62	--
1964	65	--
1965	49	--
1966	52	--
1967	56	--
1968	65	--
1969	63	--
1970	54	--
1971	44	--
1972	60	--
1973	30	--
1974	44	--
1975	52	--
1976	54	--
1977	55	--
1978	60	--
1979	51	--
1980	34	--
1981	32	--
1982	34	--
1983	45	--
1984	55	--
1985	61	--
1986	59	--
1987	57	--
1988	59	--
1989	68	--
1990	57	50
1991	55	58
1992	34	47
1993	39	50
1994	57	60
1995	47	52
1996	43	47

Allensbach

Hope data for the period from 1949 through 1989 for West Germany taken from Wolfgang Glatzer, et al., *RECENT SOCIAL TRENDS IN WEST GERMANY 1960-1990*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1992. Source for data is Allensbach.

Date for 90 through 95 from *Allensbacher Bericht*, 1995 / Nr. 29. Data for 96 from *Allensbacher Berichte*, 1996 / Nr. 26.

Question (and answer options):

"Is it with hopes or with fears that you enter the coming year?"

With hope

With misgivings

With skepticism

Undecided

Table 24
Social Trust, 1948-1994

	% Saying People Can be Trusted	
	West	East
1948	9	
1953	13	
1957	19	
1964	28	
1967	26	
1969	23	
1972	32	
1973	27	
1976	39	
1978	35	
1979	30	
1981	29	
1983	37	
1985	35	
1986	38	
1987	42	
1988	39	
1989	38	
1990	37	26
1991	35	24
1992	42	28
1993	45	29
1994	35	26

Source: Allensbach

"Do you think most people can be trusted?" from Noelle-Neuman, 1994, p.228 (data for 1973 and 79 from Noelle-Neumann and Piel, *Allensbacher Jahrbuch der Demoskopie*, 1978-1983). Note data for 1948 and 1959 reported in Conradt, 1980, p.254.

Table 25
Levels of Trust: A Cross-Country Comparison

	% Inter- personal Trust, 1981-91
1.0 Norway	60.0
2.0 Sweden	57.0
3.0 Denmark	52.5
4.0 Greece	50.0
5.0 Canada	49.0
6.0 Australia	48.5
7.0 Netherlands	45.0
8.0 Britain	43.0
9.0 Japan	42.5
10.0 Ireland	42.0
11.0 U.S.A.	41.0
12.0 Spain	35.0
13.0 Germany	32.0
Luxembourg	32.0
15.0 Belgium	29.0
16.0 Portugal	28.0
17.0 Italy	27.0
18.0 France	25.5

From: E. N. Muller and M. S. Seligson (1994) "Civic Culture and Democracy: The Question of Causal Relationships" *American Political Science Review* 88/3: 635-652.
Data taken from Table A-1, p.648

Table 26:
 Easterners' Views on Whether
 the Introduction of Western Model
 Was a Mistake

	Right	Wrong
May, 1992	69.6	30.4
Oct., 1992	67.8	32.2
Jan., 1993	73.3	26.7
Apr., 1993	71.4	28.6
May, 1993	68.8	32.2
Jun., 1993	67.7	32.3
Jul., 1993	72.9	27.5
Oct., 1993	74.5	25.5
Jan., 1994	72.2	27.8
Apr. 1994	72.8	27.2
Aug., 1994	73.2	26.8
Sep., 1994	71.6	28.4
Oct., 1994	76.2	23.4
Apr.-May, 1995	72.4	27.6
July, 1995	77.1	22.9
Oct., 1995	81.8	18.3

Sources: Politbarometer and IPOS

In the first free election in the DDR the citizens decided for the introduction of a political order based on the western model. Was this generally right or wrong?

Table 27
Better to Have Chosen a Third Way?

	East			West
	Nov. 1990	Oct. 1992	Dec. 1993	Dec. 1993
Would have liked a new form of government	39	47	46	10
Undecided, no response	20	20	21	21
Satisfied that the Federal Republic won out	41	33	33	69

From Noelle Neumann (1994, p. 220), Allensbach

"Recently somebody said to 'When reunification took place, a real chance was lost to create a new form of government that combines a market economy, human values and socialism.' Would you have like to see a new form of government too, or are you quite satisfied that the Federal Republic's form won out?"

Table 28
Evaluations of Economic Systems

Panel a:
Market or Socialist Economy?

	East	West
Market Economy	39	82
Undecided	44	5
Socialist Economy	17	13

Source: Allensbach (Noelle-Neumann, 1994, p. 218)

"In your opinion, where are people better off: in a market economy or under socialism?"

Panel b:
Decline in Favorable Opinion Regarding
Federal Republic's Economic System
(% with Good Opinion of Economic System)

	East	West
1990	72*	--
1991	54*	--
1992	44	--
1993	35	---
1994	38	57
1995	24	54
1996	24	45

* -- Averages from multiple surveys conducted during the year.

(Sources: Allensbach as reported in Noelle-Neumann, 1994, p. 217 and Behres, 1997, p. 25)

Table 29
West: Satisfaction with Government Performance
Quarterly Averages, Politbarometer

Quarter	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
1977.1	53.1	13.6	33.4
1977.2	55.3	13.9	30.9
1977.3	55.1	14.4	30.6
1977.4	57.0	15.0	28.0
1978.1	61.4	10.5	28.1
1978.2	65.3	10.3	24.4
1978.3	67.0	10.9	22.2
1978.4	70.3	11.5	18.3
1979.1	71.8	9.8	18.5
1979.2	71.6	10.1	18.3
1979.3	74.0	9.3	16.8
1979.4	72.9	9.3	17.9
1980.1	74.5	8.6	16.8
1980.2	73.8	8.4	17.8
1980.3	73.3	9.2	17.6
1980.4	66.3	9.8	23.9
1981.1	61.8	10.1	28.0
1981.2	59.0	10.3	30.6
1981.3	53.2	10.9	36.0
1981.4	53.7	11.0	35.2
1982.1	53.1	10.2	36.7
1982.2	51.1	11.8	37.2
1982.3	43.9	10.9	45.5
1982.4	53.4	17.0	29.7
1983.1	54.9	13.9	31.2
1983.2	58.0	14.4	27.6
1983.3	58.1	12.3	29.7
1983.4	54.4	13.4	32.3
1984.1	55.5	13.1	31.5
1984.2	51.3	12.1	36.6
1984.3	54.9	11.3	33.9
1984.4	51.8	11.3	36.8
1985.1	52.9	12.0	35.0
1985.2	47.2	11.5	41.1
1985.3	47.1	11.8	41.1
1985.4	52.2	11.7	36.2
1986.1	53.9	10.5	35.6
1986.2	52.9	11.0	36.1
1986.3	57.8	11.1	31.1
1986.4	59.4	12.1	28.7
1987.1	60.1	9.5	30.3
1987.2	59.6	11.2	29.2
1987.3	53.6	13.0	33.6
1987.4	58.6	8.6	32.9
1988.1	50.7	11.0	38.2
1988.2	47.0	12.5	40.5
1988.3	42.9	13.3	43.9
1988.4	41.7	11.7	46.4
1989.1	39.2	13.5	47.4
1989.2	45.3	12.9	41.8
1989.3	52.2	14.3	33.5
1989.4	58.2	12.8	28.9
1990.1	64.6	11.1	24.4
1990.2	63.7	11.2	25.1
1990.3	66.3	11.2	22.6
1990.4	71.0	9.3	19.7
1991.1	56.6	11.4	32.0
1991.2	51.3	11.6	37.0
1991.3	48.3	13.0	38.7
1991.4	50.8	14.1	35.0
1992.1	50.8	12.3	36.7
1992.2	38.6	13.6	47.9
1992.3	34.7	12.6	52.9
1992.4	36.7	12.8	50.5
1993.1	28.1	10.6	61.3
1993.2	30.3	13.0	56.7
1993.3	30.2	12.3	57.4
1993.4	28.5	12.4	59.2
1994.1	33.5	12.5	54.2
1994.2	42.2	13.3	44.5
1994.3	50.2	13.7	36.3
1994.4	49.2	13.6	37.2
1995.1	45.6	14.8	39.7
1995.2	51.0	12.8	36.2

1995.3	51.9	13.6	34.6
1995.4	49.2	13.5	37.3
1996.1	40.9	13.1	46.0
1996.2	41.6	12.7	45.7
1996.3	---	---	---
1996.4	36.9	12.7	50.4

Source: Politbarometer

Table 30
 East: Satisfaction with Government Performance
 Quarterly Averages, Politbarometer

Quarter	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
1990.1	---	---	---
1990.2	---	---	---
1990.3	47.1	15.3	37.6
1990.4	64.6	13.1	22.2
1991.1	45.4	9.3	45.1
1991.2	48.4	10.9	40.8
1991.3	49.2	11.2	39.6
1991.4	52.6	11.0	36.3
1992.1	52.9	11.7	35.5
1992.2	41.3	10.6	48.3
1992.3	34.5	11.6	54.1
1992.4	39.4	10.5	50.2
1993.1	31.0	10.1	59.0
1993.2	32.1	10.3	57.6
1993.3	31.1	9.5	59.5
1993.4	31.7	10.0	58.4
1994.1	31.8	9.8	58.5
1994.2	37.4	10.9	51.8
1994.3	45.9	9.8	44.4
1994.4	47.7	11.5	40.7
1995.1	41.1	11.3	47.6
1995.2	43.3	12.3	44.3
1995.3	55.0	13.1	31.9
1995.4	50.6	15.3	34.1
1996.1	40.1	15.8	44.1
1996.2	44.6	13.9	41.6
1996.3	---	---	---
1996.4	36.6	11.5	51.9

Source: Politbarometer

Table 31
Satisfaction with Democracy, I

	Euro- barometer		IPOS	
	Percent Satisfied or Fairly Satisfied in:		Percent Very Satisfied or Satisfied in:	
	West	East	West	East
1976	80.1	---	---	---
1977	81.1	---	---	---
1978	80.6	---	---	---
1979	84.5	---	---	---
1980	77.6	---	---	---
1981	75.4	---	---	---
1982	71.2	---	---	---
1983	75.8	---	---	---
1984	74.4	---	72.7	---
1985	73.6	---	69.3	---
1986	77.9	---	71.4	---
1987	73.8	---	79.3	---
1988	73.4	---	72.5	---
1989	79.1	---	73.1	---
1990	83.1	---	84.3	---
1991	69.9	40.0	78.1	52.3
1992	63.7	41.5	65.3	48.0
1993	56.7	35.0	53.9	41.4
1994	61.1	38.2	---	---
1995	---	---	66.8	53.2

Eurobarometer, Satisfaction with Democracy in Germany

(On the whole, are you satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Germany?)

Data provided by Dieter Fuchs, WZB.

IPOS, Satisfaction with Democracy in Germany

(What in general would you say your to democracy in Germany, that is to our entire political system? Are you very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?)

Table 32
Satisfaction with Democracy, II

	East	West
1977.1	---	---
1977.2	---	76.4
1977.3	---	73.4
1977.4	---	78.1
1978.1	---	---
1978.2	---	76.3
1978.3	---	80.0
1978.4	---	79.1
1979.1	---	---
1979.2	---	79.9
1979.3	---	81.1
1979.4	---	84.0
1980.1	---	82.8
1980.2	---	77.6
1980.3	---	81.6
1980.4	---	79.6
1981.1	---	69.9
1981.2	---	64.3
1981.3	---	56.9
1981.4	---	54.1
1982.1	---	54.4
1982.2	---	62.6
1982.3	---	---
1982.4	---	71.7
1983.1	---	---
1983.2	---	73.9
1983.3	---	70.3
1983.4	---	68.3
1984.1	---	69.4
1984.2	---	65.0
1984.3	---	72.3
1984.4	---	65.6
1985.1	---	64.7
1985.2	---	67.4
1985.3	---	68.3
1985.4	---	69.5
1986.1	---	71.4
1986.2	---	66.5
1986.3	---	76.5
1986.4	---	74.0
1987.1	---	76.7
1987.2	---	73.7
1987.3	---	75.3
1987.4	---	73.7
1988.1	---	68.8
1988.2	---	67.3
1988.3	---	68.4
1988.4	---	76.7
1989.1	---	62.1
1989.2	---	64.4
1989.3	---	68.8
1989.4	---	77.9
1990.1	---	78.9
1990.2	---	76.9
1990.3	---	74.7
1990.4	56.7	80.7
1991.1	42.1	72.3
1991.2	46.0	70.2
1991.3	47.5	67.3
1991.4	48.5	66.8
1992.1	49.4	65.1
1992.2	40.3	59.3
1992.3	35.6	63.0
1992.4	34.6	62.8
1993.1	33.5	58.9
1993.2	31.4	57.9
1993.3	30.2	53.0
1993.4	28.7	58.9
1994.1	29.5	59.8
1994.2	33.7	62.1
1994.3	43.9	68.1
1994.4	43.2	68.6
1995.1	41.0	61.8
1995.2	40.6	65.8
1995.3	48.3	67.7
1995.4	47.7	65.6
1996.1	44.0	56.6
1996.2	38.9	62.6
1996.3	39.7	61.8
1996.4	33.9	51.6

Percent satisfied with the Federal Republic's democratic system. Based on the Politbarometer variable. Percent is based only on valid responses. Wording of question has changed slightly over time as has the format of the response possibilities. Variable here is a count of those answering with a 1 or a 2 during 1977 through 1988, and a 1 during 1989 through 1996. Question wording is as follows:

77-88: "What do you think about democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany, that is about our political parties and entire political system? Do you tend more to be (1) very satisfied, (2) satisfied, (3) unsatisfied or (4) very unsatisfied?"

89-92: "What do you think about democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany, that is about our entire political system? Do you tend more to be (1) satisfied or (2) dissatisfied?"

93-96: "What do you think about democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany? Do you tend more to be (1) satisfied or (2) dissatisfied?"

Quarterly averages

Figure 10

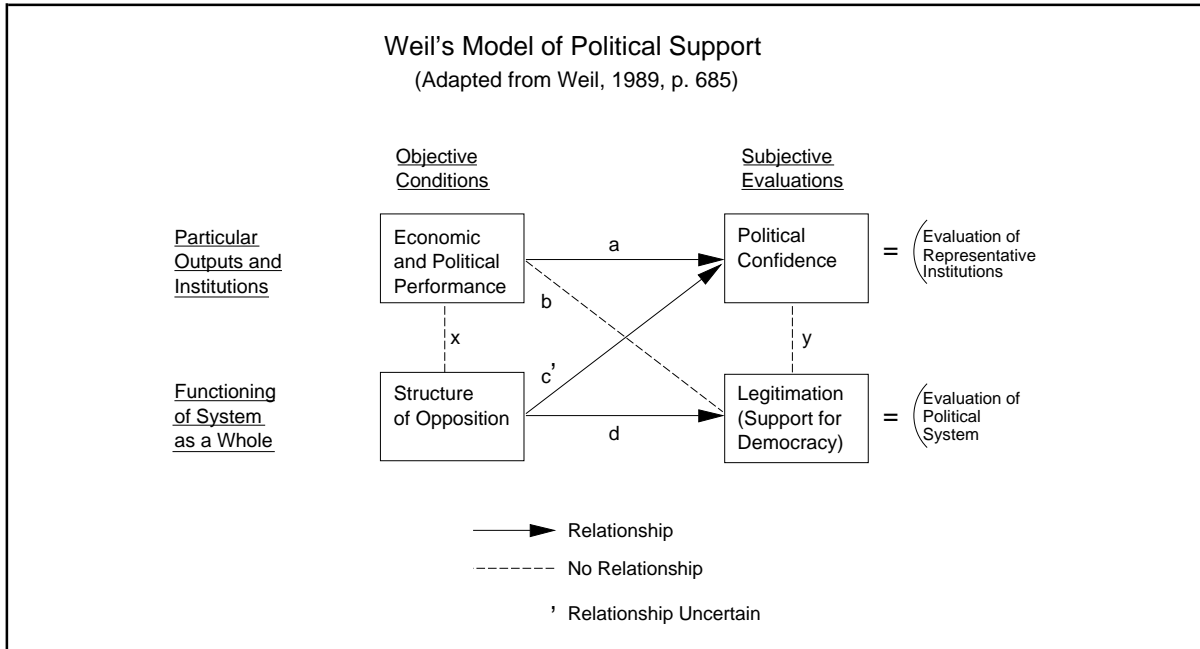


Figure 11

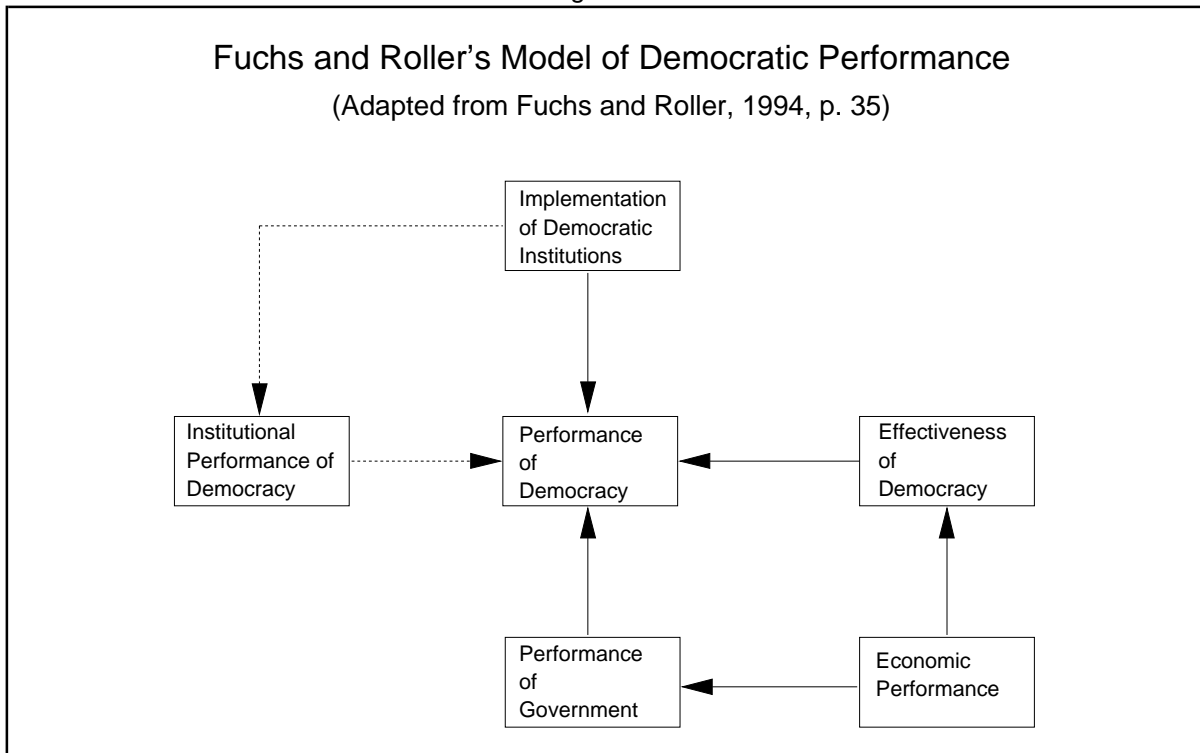


Figure 12

A Representation of the Factors Shaping Popular Satisfaction with Government and the Political System in West Germany

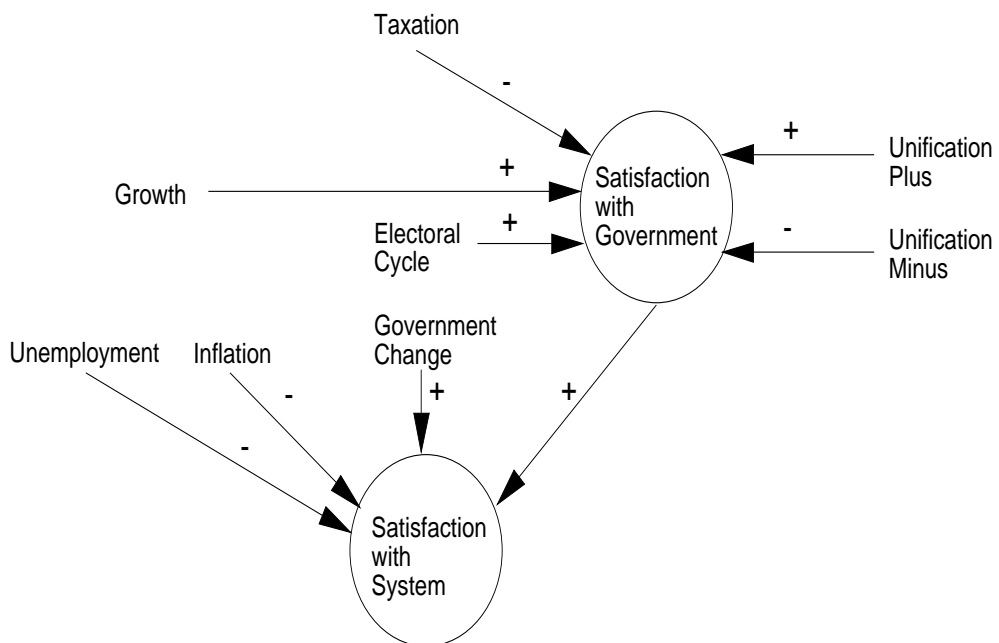


Table 33
Variables Included in the
Government and System Satisfaction Equations

Variables:

<i>GSAT</i>	Semi-annual average of percent satisfied with the performance of the governing coalition in the Federal Government. Based on the Politbarometer "Skalometer: Koalition," an eleven-point scale ranging from -5 (completely dissatisfied) to +5 (completely satisfied). Zero on the scale is treated as the neutral point (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied). Variable here is the percentage of valid responses coded from +1 through +5. Percent is based only on valid responses.
<i>DSAT</i>	Semi-annual average of percent satisfied with the Federal Republic's democratic system. Based on the Politbarometer variable. Percent is based only on valid responses. Wording of question has changed slightly over time as has the format of the response possibilities. Variable here is a percent count of those answering with a 1 or a 2 during 1977 through 1988, and a 1 during 1989 through 1996. Question wording is as follows: 77-88: "What do you think about democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany, that is about our political parties and entire political system? Do you tend more to be (1) very satisfied, (2) satisfied, (3) unsatisfied or (4) very unsatisfied?" 89-92: "What do you think about democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany, that is about our entire political system? Do you tend more to be (1) satisfied or (2) dissatisfied?" 93-96: "What do you think about democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany? Do you tend more to be (1) satisfied or (2) dissatisfied?"
<i>TAXBUR</i>	Taxation burden of the average employee. Based on the Statistisches Bundesamt's calculations regarding the average worker's gross and net wages and salaries. Taxation burden is initially calculated as the difference between the gross and net pay variables expressed as a percentage of the gross pay variable. Variable is then transformed by subtracting the average tax rate in 1977. Three points to note then: (1) this tax burden variable does not take into account indirect taxes (VAT, etc); (2) it does not take into account the taxation burden of self-employed or those whose income is solely or significantly based on interests and profits; (3) it needs to be seen as taking into account only the tax burden relative to 1977.
<i>GRO</i>	Economic growth. Percent rate of change in real GDP over the period one year prior.
<i>ECYCLE</i>	Electoral Cycle variable. A simple ordinal variable reflecting the tendency for government support to decline and then rise again between elections. Generally the series runs as follows, starting with the election period: 0,-1,-2,-3,-4,-3,-2,-1.
<i>UNIFPLUS</i>	Unification bonus: a dummy variable meant to capture the general euphoria surrounding the events in the GDR during 1989 (i.e., the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the SED Regime).
<i>UNIFMIN</i>	Unification hangover ("Vereinigungskater"): a dummy variable meant to represent the general loss of euphoria following Unification and the first all-German federal elections.
<i>UNEMP</i>	Unemployment rate (in percent terms) as provided by Bundesanstalt für Arbeit.
<i>INFL</i>	Inflation rate: rate of inflation (relative to the period one year prior) in the consumer price index from the Statistisches Bundesamt.

*GOV*Δ Government change variable. Coded 1 in the period where a new government is popularly elected, and zero otherwise. Note that this occurred only once in the period under study, i.e., in the early 1980s.

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