

# *Westalgie* and the Legacies of the Bonn Republic

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## Abstract

Nostalgia has become a much-discussed phenomenon in recent times. Whether it be its prevalence in popular culture mediums such as film or music, or its effects on political and social developments in Western societies, nostalgia is seemingly present in most aspects of everyday life. Does this, therefore, relate to modern-day German society? This thesis will examine a specific type of nostalgia associated with the ‘old’ Federal Republic, the democratic country founded after the Second World War that ultimately changed once its political institutions extended eastwards. Otherwise known as, *Westalgie*, the concept can be considered a general term indicating nostalgia for features of everyday life in the FRG such as economic stability under Rhenish capitalism, political reticence in terms of foreign policy, and compounded with symbols of West German accomplishment such as the Deutschmark or the Volkswagen Beetle. This thesis will seek to explain how such a phenomenon has occurred in recent times, while also examining its impact on certain issues in the Federal Republic of Germany. Furthermore, it will compare and contrast *Westalgie* with the more widely acknowledged East German nostalgia, commonly referred to as *Ostalgie*. Academic literature concerning *Westalgie* is both lacking and underdeveloped, meaning this thesis will be one of the first studies to scrutinise an important and complex form of nostalgia in German society. Yet this specific type of nostalgia warrants greater investigation to help contextualise perceptions, both past and present, of the political, economic, and social developments in the Federal Republic.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

- AfD – Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland*)  
CDU – Christian Democratic Union (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*)  
DA – Democratic Awakening (*Demokratischer Aufbruch*)  
DSU – German Social Union (*Deutsche Soziale Union*)  
FRG – Federal Republic of Germany  
GDR – German Democratic Republic  
PDS – Party of Democratic Socialism (*Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus*)  
SED – Socialist Unity Party of Germany (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*)  
SPD – Social Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*)

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## **1. Introduction: The Legacies of the Bonn Republic**

Since the reunification of Germany in 1990, nostalgia for both former German countries - the West German Federal Republic and the East German Democratic Republic - has been contentious and controversial for German citizens, politicians, and outside observers. Indeed, considering the success of the current Federal Republic in terms of political and economic achievements ever since the reunification of Germany, such tendencies to critique modern-day developments warrants some investigation. This thesis will examine a specific type of nostalgia associated with the 'old' Federal Republic, the democratic country founded after the Second World War that ultimately changed once its political institutions extended eastwards. Undoubtedly, recent interest in West Germany's past and present suggests a sense of nostalgia that is more commonly referred to as *Westalgie* – formed by the German words *Nostalgie* and *West*, meaning 'nostalgia' and 'west' respectively. It can be considered a general term indicating nostalgia for features of everyday life in West Germany such as economic stability under Rhenish capitalism, political reticence in terms of foreign policy, and compounded with symbols of West German accomplishment such as the Deutschmark or the Volkswagen Beetle.

Interest in the legacies of 'old' Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), both public and academic, has increased steadily during the past few years. So much so that it seemingly parallels attention given to the German Democratic Republic (GDR), especially regarding the complex and convoluted concept of nostalgia. Yet as a relatively new phenomenon within public and academic discourses, research concerning *Westalgie* is unsurprisingly lacking. Moreover, academic study focussing on the Eastern counterpart to West German nostalgia is far more developed, covering a wider range of historiographical debates.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Eastern counterpart to West German nostalgia is more commonly known as *Ostalgie*, a combination of the German words *Nostalgie* and *Ost*, meaning East. It, too, can refer to features

Therefore, this thesis will discuss a concept that has yet to be given much academic scrutiny, helping to explain its emergence as well as its relationship with politics and economics. More generally, the concept of nostalgia has become much more prevalent in Western societies than ever before. Academic interest in the phenomenon has unsurprisingly increased, with interest focussing on an extensive array of subjects such as its place in cinema, its prevalence in social media, as well as its impact on political developments. For example, the decision by the British public to leave the European Union arguably unearthed certain notions of nostalgia, with key figures of the Vote Leave campaign stressing Britain's past as a leading figure on the world stage. Consequently, now more than ever it seems essential to analyse how nostalgia has had an impact on developments in modern-day society. Is a sense of nostalgia influencing perceptions of developments in the Berlin Republic? Or are there more pragmatic reasons as to why political, economic, and social changes are being scrutinised. Consequently, this thesis will examine post reunification issues in the Federal Republic, while also using the history of West Germany to compare and contrast how different the Berlin Republic is to the Bonn Republic.

### **From Bonn to Berlin: Changes and Consequences of Reunification**

Nostalgia can help to express displacement in a new environment whilst yearning for facets of the past that have changed. The reunification of Germany represents a change that altered the lives of German citizens in the FRG and GDR, helping to create a potential sense of nostalgia developing in the minds of East and West Germans. Germany after 1990 was different not just for East Germans, who had to adjust to a different way of life not akin to their socialist upbringing, but for West Germans as well. True, as the 'old' Federal Republic would eventually encompass the East German country, the idea of wistful sentimentality for West Germany may seem questionable and paradoxical. Since the changes in the FRG after the fall of the Wall were by far not as fundamental as in the GDR, it is easy to question the validity of *Westalgie*, or at the very least consider it as a reverse form of *Ostalgie*.<sup>2</sup>

Although the Federal Republic had appeared to best its Communist counterpart, and although the institutions of the West were largely imposed on the East, the Berlin Republic that emerged following reunification was ultimately of a different nature to both the GDR and the 'old' FRG. Obviously,

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of everyday life from the past but under the German Democratic Republic instead of the Bonn Republic.

<sup>2</sup> Dorothea Otto, "Westalgie" in Leander Haußmann's *Herr Lehmann*, *Senses of Cinema*, No. 60, (October, 2011), [http://sensesofcinema.com/2011/feature-articles/"westalgie"-in-leander-hausmann's-herr-lehmann/](http://sensesofcinema.com/2011/feature-articles/), accessed 4th March 2018.



West Germans were less directly affected by the radical restructuring in several aspects of life, from employment and housing, education and welfare services, which faced the easterners making the leap from communism to capitalism.<sup>3</sup> Yet that is not to say that the impact reunification had on West Germans was non-existent. As Ruth Wittlinger notes, West Germans also had to become accustomed to a different Federal Republic. For one, the Federal Republic has become much larger, faced new challenges such as high unemployment, budget deficits, and a more active German foreign policy, a stark contrast to what West Germans grew accustomed to between 1949-1990.<sup>4</sup> Not only that, but the Federal Republic has also had to contend with a wide variety of identities trying to assimilate within a German culture. East Germans have found it difficult to integrate within a dominant West German society, migrants continue to seek citizenship after decades of post-war immigration initiatives, and asylum seekers have arrived to pursue a better life in the Federal Republic. Multiculturalism is therefore challenging old conceptualisations of what it means to be 'German' and thus coming into conflict with a 'West German' identity in the process.

Economic factors, too, have affected the overall development of the Federal Republic in more ways than one. Solidarity taxes, introduced by the German government to help finance the process of reunification, are sometimes criticised by Westerners believing they are bearing the brunt of East Germany's entry into the Federal Republic. A regional German court in Hannover even saw it fit to label the solidarity taxes as unconstitutional.<sup>5</sup> The Deutschmark, a symbol and expression of West Germany's post-war identity, gave way to the Euro early in the new millennium. From the challenging circumstances under which the currency was born, to its overall performance concerning low inflation, the Deutschmark was a source of national pride for both East and West Germans. In the East it had a mythical status in line with its performance during the *Wirtschaftswunder*. In the West the Deutschmark characterised a perceived sense of identity in the form of 'hard work' and 'diligence.'<sup>6</sup> It became a key factor in helping West Germany recover from the Second World War both economically and psychologically.

Reunification caused severe socioeconomic dislocation in certain parts of the Federal Republic. From the perspective of West Germans, who were familiarised to a certain way of living under the FRG government, reunification also had broad political, economic, and social consequences. With confidence

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<sup>3</sup> Mary Fulbrook, *A History of Germany 1918-2008: The Divided Nation*, (Chichester, 2009), pp. 293-294.

<sup>4</sup> Ruth Wittlinger, *German National Identity in the Twenty-First Century: A Different Republic After All?*, (New York, 2010), p. 66.

<sup>5</sup> 'Paying for German Reunification: Court Rules 'Solidarity' Tax is Unconstitutional' *Der Spiegel International*, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009, accessed 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Matthias Kaelberer, 'Deutschmark Nationalism and Europeanised Identity: Exploring Identity Aspects of Germany's Adoption of the Euro', *German Politics*, Vol. 14, No. 3, (2005), p. 292.

created by the boom years of the late 1980s, as well as the experience of the ‘economic miracle’ early in the Federal Republic’s history, the reunified government believed East Germany’s economic integration would be a smooth transition. However, the overall growth of Germany’s gross national product fell from 3.7 percent in 1991, to -1.1 percent in 1993. Growing deficits in their account balance, as well as an increase in unemployment, were more negative reactions to merging the East German economy with the West.<sup>7</sup>

In 2004, one opinion poll found that 24 percent of West Germans believed it would be better if the Berlin Wall were still up.<sup>8</sup> Whilst clearly in the minority, such viewpoints requires examination in light of *Westalgie*’s more recent appearance in the public sphere. The most basic accomplishment of the ‘old’ FRG was a return of order after the Second World War, a recovery of normalcy that made it possible to resume a regular life.<sup>9</sup> Reunification invariably caused issues of four decades of separation to come to the fore rather quickly, leaving one former minister of Saxony to argue ‘We might be the first country which has, by unifying, created two peoples.’<sup>10</sup> For West Germans the processes of 1990, whilst not having the same impact on East Germans, clearly created some tensions in reunified Germany. Because of such uncertainties, *Westalgie* has found a place in film, literature, and even popular culture. Germans can even tour the major sights of West Berlin in a Volkswagen Beetle, an obvious symbol of West German heritage.<sup>11</sup> However, the broader effects of such nostalgia have yet to be given serious academic scrutiny. This thesis, therefore, will aim to shed greater light on the phenomenon of *Westalgie*, in the hope of contributing to academic discussions on nostalgia and its impact on modern-day German society.

### **Nostalgia: Problems and Perspectives**

As this thesis will discuss *Westalgie* extensively there is a need to recognise the fundamental basics of nostalgia and its overall effect on individuals and society. Certainly, this means understanding why people experience nostalgia, why it

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<sup>7</sup> See Christopher Flockton, ‘The German Economy since 1989/1990: Problems and Prospects’, in Klaus Larres, *Germany Since Unification*, (2001, London), pp. 63-87.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Getting Back Together is so Hard’, *The Economist*, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2004, <http://www.economist.com/node/3204021>, accessed 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, ‘The Federal Republic at Sixty: Popular Myths, Actual Accomplishments, and Competing Interpretations’, in Jeffery J. Anderson and Eric Langenbacher, (eds.), *From the Bonn to the Berlin Republic: Germany at the twentieth anniversary of Unification*, (New York, 2010), p. 19.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Getting Back Together is so Hard’.

<sup>11</sup> One tourist company, for example, offers such an experience and has dubbed it as: ‘Westalgie on Four Wheels’. See, <http://www.berlin.de/tourismus/insidertipps/3037483-2339440-vw-kaefer-tour-durch-berlin-westalgie-au.html>, accessed 11<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

poses potential issues in the present day developments, and why the concept is important in relation to contemporary Germany. Nostalgia is defined as ‘A sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past.’ It is, according to Atia and Davies, a bittersweet side effect of modernity as well as a potential cause of hostility to the changes that modernity brings.<sup>12</sup> Prior to its acceptance as a cultural phenomenon in the nineteenth century, nostalgia was deemed a medical condition attributed to people experiencing symptoms such as persistent thoughts about home, melancholy, insomnia, anorexia, anxiety, lack of breath, and palpitations of the heart.<sup>13</sup> The term usually applied to those who had migrated from one location to another such as immigrants, soldiers, exiles, and general travellers. After all, the word itself is actually a compound of two Greek words: *nostos*, meaning ‘return home’, and *algia* meaning ‘longing.’<sup>14</sup> If one were to abide strictly by its definition, nostalgia is in essence an extreme form of homesickness that can be experienced universally. Drawing on his own experiences, Roderick Peters links nostalgia and homesickness strongly, suggesting geography acts as a key determinant to an individual’s ability to reminisce, with the aftereffects ranging from a fleeting sadness to an overwhelming craving that interferes with an individual’s attempts to cope with their present circumstances.<sup>15</sup>

Yet in the case of modern day Germany, a change in geography has not necessarily been the primal cause for the onset of nostalgia in present times. True, the diminishment of borders between East and West Germany highlights a physical change to geographical boundaries. However, the reunification of Germany did not involve any literal migration of citizens but rather a change in social, economic, cultural, and political thinking for both sides of the border. As such, nostalgia has come to encompass more than its literal meaning, emphasising the fact that it has become both a cultural phenomenon and a personally subjective one.<sup>16</sup> In contrast to Peters’ use of geography as a fundamental rationale for one’s nostalgic tendencies, Davis uses the transition of ageing from childhood to pubescence, from adolescent dependency to adult independence, as a suitable explanation for the potential onset of nostalgia.<sup>17</sup> In truth, Peters’ and Davis’ examples are suitable justifications for nostalgia as they both refer to a dramatic change in one’s life to construct distinctive memories in an individual. It is the differentiation between the past and present that allows one to look back nostalgically; otherwise there would be no need to

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<sup>12</sup> Nadia Atia and Jeremy Davies, ‘Nostalgia and the Shapes of History’, *Memory Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, (July, 2010), p. 181.

<sup>13</sup> Janelle L. Wilson, *Nostalgia: Sanctuary of Meaning*, (Lewisburg, 2005), p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> Timothy Barney, ‘When We Was Red: *Goodbye Lenin!* and Nostalgia for the “Everyday GDR”’, *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, (June, 2009), p. 135.

<sup>15</sup> Roderick Peters, ‘Reflections on the Origin and Aim of Nostalgia’, *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, Vol. 30, No. 2, (April, 1985), p. 135.

<sup>16</sup> Wilson, *Nostalgia*, p. 30.

<sup>17</sup> Fred Davis, *Yearning For Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia*, (New York, 1979), p. 49.

compare today's realities against preceding recollections. Carrying the notion of change into the context of modern day Germany, reunification at the start of the nineties brought forth this difference that would spur on nostalgia from both sides of Germany. For the 'old' Federal Republic, change meant the extension of their political, economic, and social ideals eastwards to an identity shaped after forty years of communism

At the same time, critiques of nostalgia are certainly well documented amongst academics, novelists and psychoanalysts, with the common objection being nostalgia's risk of creating false recollections of the past, as well as its potential to overlook and underplay important historical evidence. Doris Lessing, for example, described nostalgia as a 'poisoned itch', with its sense of pleasure when scratching it eventually making matters worse for the recipient.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, coupled with such criticisms of the concept is the fear that prolonged or overbearing nostalgia could potentially constrict one's ability to act in the present.<sup>19</sup> In his analysis of nostalgia and the certain issues that emanate from it, David Lowenthal highlights three specific critiques: firstly, the commercialisation of nostalgia and the inauthenticity felt to accompany it. Second is nostalgia's sense of unreality that pervades truths about the past. And lastly, its reactionary slant that glosses over the past's iniquities and indignities.<sup>20</sup> By this logic, nostalgia's virtues are exaggerated and are instead overshadowed by complicated problems emanating from remembering the past too fondly; this, too, is especially pertinent when the past includes controversial historical evidence.

It should be noted, however, that recent literature concerning nostalgia, in particular *Ostalgie*, has developed to consider a wider array of issues. In fact, the terms 'nostalgia' and 'identity' are often used in conjunction with one another to explain one's tendencies to recollect past memories. According to Fred Davis, nostalgia is one of the means we employ in the never-ending work of constructing, maintaining, and reconstructing our identities.<sup>21</sup> Russian citizens, for example, experienced a nostalgic wave concerning the Soviet era but in a manner to restore a collective sense of belonging and to re-establish cultural connections with the past that would be neither horrifying nor humiliating.<sup>22</sup> It can be, therefore, useful to help develop and foster identities amongst individuals who feel displaced in their current surroundings. Of course, this can only apply if such memories share a commonality amongst individuals, even if said commonality can be considered arbitrary or tangential. In the context of West Germans who may experience forms of *Westalgie*, such

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<sup>18</sup> Doris Lessing, *The Memoirs of a Survivor*, (London, 1976), p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Atia and Davies, 'Nostalgia', p. 181.

<sup>20</sup> David Lowenthal, 'Nostalgia Tells it like it Wasn't', in Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase, (eds.), *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*, (Manchester, 1989), pp. 21-22.

<sup>21</sup> Fred, *Yearning*, p. 31.

<sup>22</sup> See Sergei Alex Oushakine, "'We're Nostalgic But We're Not Crazy': Retrofitting the past in Russia, *The Russian Review*, 66 (July, 2007), pp. 451-482.

decisions to reminisce can be construed as a form of identity building in a new and different environment, especially considering Germany's complicated history regarding German national identity. In short, nostalgia is a complex concept that is either praised for its ability to form identities amongst individuals or criticised for its lack of forward thinking.

Nostalgia is largely an expression of displacement in contemporary times, indicating strong affection for past memories. *Westalgie* is very much explained by changing circumstances that, in the eyes of West Germans, have not been positive. Though not a universal representation of how all West Germans view their current situation in the contemporary Federal Republic, one commentator notes, 'We West Germans had the better land. We had a country that was better than the GDR before reunification, and we had a country that was better than the one in which we live today.'<sup>23</sup> In a similar fashion, another West German citizen stated that *Ossies* were different and strange compared to Westerners.<sup>24</sup> Such appraisal for the FRG and its citizens, as well as criticisms of the current German political and social landscape, highlights a notable difference between the Bonn and Berlin Republic.

### Literature Review

Unlike academic literature pertaining to *Ostalgie*, where critiques and discussions about its place in modern day Germany are widely available, there lacks a similar amount of the engagement regarding *Westalgie*. Little has been written about how widely circulated *Westalgie* has spread since the fall of the Wall, nor has there been much discussion on whether such nostalgia has damaged – or is still damaging – the processes of inner German unity. Yet although scholarly research regarding *Westalgie* is comparatively lacking compared to *Ostalgie*, there exists a solid foundation of literature to analyse and critique. For instance, works detailing depictions of *Westalgie* in mediums such as literature and film are indeed available. Andrew Plowman cites works such as Dorothea Dieckmann's *Damen & Herren* (2002), Jess Jochimsen's *Das Dosenmilch-Trauma. Bekenntnisse eines 68er-Kindes* (2000), as clear evidence that some form of nostalgia is inherent in West German literature, particularly in popular literary discourses since the mid-nineties.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, in regards to

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<sup>23</sup> Christoph Schröder, 'Mein Land ist weg!', *Die Zeit*, 28<sup>th</sup> October 2014, <http://www.zeit.de/kultur/2014-10/brd-wiedervereinigung-polemik>, accessed 27<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

<sup>24</sup> 'West Berlin Recalls 'Island of Freedom' that Vanished with Wall', *Reuter*, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/11/08/us-germany-wall-westberlin-idUSKBN0IR1EX20141108>, accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Plowman, 'Westalgie? Nostalgia for the 'Old' Federal Republic in Recent German Prose', *A Journal of Germanic Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 3, (2004), pp. 249-261.

cinema commentators have noted that, much like *Ostalgie's* emergence in German films such as *Sonnenallee* and *Goodbye Lenin!*, West German nostalgia makes an appearance in Oskar Roehler's *Die Unberührbare* or Leander Haußmann's *Herr Lehmann*.<sup>26</sup>

It is, in fact, critical evaluations of *Westalgie* that are lacking in academic discourses, from its effect on developments in recent times, to rationalisations as to why it has appeared less palpably than *Ostalgie*. There are, however, useful examples of criticisms towards nostalgia for the Federal Republic, particularly more so at the start of the millennium than in contemporary times. In line with earlier criticisms that have often been associated with academic literature concerning nostalgia, Tobias Dürr attaches negative connotations to *Westalgie*. By doing so, he links nostalgia with a West German mentality, stubborn and lacking the ability to look forward instead of backwards. According to Dürr, because the West German Bonn Republic was undoubtedly a successful model in the years between 1949-1989/1990, there is an almost irresistible temptation for the majority of West Germans to imagine the present and the future as an almost seamless sequel to a well-persevered past.<sup>27</sup> *Westalgie* is therefore a 'West German' problem, creating a mentality devoid of self-criticism and leading to a dominant West German consciousness that is blocking timely changes in politics, economics, and society for Germany as a whole. Above all, Dürr contends that it is this form of nostalgia that has prevented East Germans to successfully acclimate alongside West Germans in the Berlin Republic.

Nevertheless, there are a few facts to take into account. Firstly, as previously mentioned, recent literature has developed beyond criticisms of nostalgia, with *Ostalgie* in particular coming under less scrutiny compared to when it first emerged in the East German consciousness.<sup>28</sup> From an academic perspective, the perception that nostalgia restricts one's ability in forward thinking has changed significantly. More recent studies have, in an attempt to challenge the hegemonic view that nostalgia is inherently bad for the individual, sought to seek alternative uses for nostalgia. From identity building, providing existential meaning, and offering overall general comfort, nostalgia's virtues are more often than not highlighted with a greater degree of optimism than before. Moreover, Germans have always had a long-standing preoccupation with social integration. Not only did Germany absorb those ethnic Germans expelled from the East after World War Two, but since reunification, also *Spätaussiedler* (late

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<sup>26</sup> Otto, "Westalgie".

<sup>27</sup> Tobias Dürr, "On 'Westalgia': Why West German Mentalities and Habits Persist in the Berlin Republic", in Dieter Dettke, (ed.), *The Spirit of the Berlin Republic*, (New York, 2003), p. 41.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Claire Hyland, 'Ostalgie Doesn't Fit!: Individual Interpretations of and Interaction with *Ostalgie*', in Anna Saunders and Debbie Pinfold, (eds.), *Remembering and Rethinking the GDR: Multiple Perspectives and Plural Authenticities*. (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 101-115; see also Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, (New York, 2002).

resettlers) who had been trapped in socialist countries. Former guest workers, immigrants, and refugees must also be considered when discussing social integration in a German context.<sup>29</sup> Criticisms levelled at West Germans by Dürr are primarily focussed on the interaction between East and West Germans whilst not including historical outside groups such as immigrants and former guest workers that may or may not have become recently naturalised German citizens. The progression of social integration is largely a two-way process, requiring reciprocal levels of understanding from all parties involved. Indeed, Dürr chooses to not apply similar critiques to *Ostalgie*, but rather suggests that East Germans are victims of West Germany's own identity of successful economic and political heritage.

Yet research conducted by Anja Vogel analysing communicative practises of inter-generational and cross-German (East and West) interactions during classes of contemporary German History in Berlin high schools, addressed the question of national identity formation among Berlin youth. The research concluded that it was in fact older East Germans that formalised their own eastern identities through the uses of pronouns such as 'we' and 'they'.<sup>30</sup> Vogel concludes that mentalities preoccupied with pre-reunification sentiment were more likely to be associated with East Germans as opposed to West Germans due to the great ruptures in the personal and professional lives of Easterners. The use of pronouns, though subtle and partially subconscious, suggests a stronger sense of identity amongst East Germans as opposed to West Germans and even those that chose to identify strongly with the Berlin Republic. Vogel concludes that West German teachers, having gone through fewer and rather minimal social, political, and economic changes over the last twenty years, are not faced with the same dilemma and are more inclined to not reinforce identities through the use of language. It should be noted that young students, however, did not automatically adopt their teacher's stance on national identity. The post-unification-born students of this study exhibited a growing disinterest in personalising and identifying with a divided German past – East or West. Their primary focus and identification was increasingly with a unified German nation.

These findings suggest that both *Ostalgie* and *Westalgie* are a generational phenomenon, having an obviously greater impact on those that lived during Germany's four decades of separation. Of course, this does not suggest that such forms of nostalgia have to be overcome by the older generations of East and West Germans. Instead, both Roger Cook and Elena Pourtova suggest that nostalgia may be a necessary transitional step towards a united German nation, with Cook arguing it may help to allay the latent

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<sup>29</sup> Hilary Silver, 'The Social Integration of Germany since Unification', in *From the Bonn to the Berlin Republic*, p. 183.

<sup>30</sup> See Anja Vogel, 'Negotiating German Identities in Classroom Interaction – An Analysis of Pronoun Use', in Donald Backman and Aida Sakalauskaite, (eds.), *Ossi Wessi*, (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2008), pp. 143-171.

insecurities that have kept Germany locked into pre-reunification modes of fragmented identity.<sup>31</sup> Using nostalgia for the Soviet Union amongst Russian citizens as a case study, Pourtova notes that nostalgia can help as a tool for retrospection as opposed to simple wistful sentimentality. In other words, nostalgia is the comprehension of one's own past in order to better understand the present.<sup>32</sup> The process of nostalgia, according to Pourtova, is an act of maturity in so far as it will allow the individual to come to terms with the past, allowing new identities to foster in the process.<sup>33</sup> Much like an immigrant can lament the loss of one's past heritage when moving to a new environment, nostalgia helps to bridge the gap between past sentimentalities and present day circumstances. True, such processes are by no means universal; every individual can potentially react to nostalgia differently, thereby making the process of a collective post-wall identity amongst older Germans problematic. Yet for the generations of Germans that lived in a divided country, one of nostalgia's key factors may help to create a greater sense of identity since Germany reunified.

Plowman, on the other hand, suggests that *Westalgie* was used early on to emphasise the differences between the West German government and the Berlin Republic following 1990.<sup>34</sup> The continuity between the two republics has become more contested considering the social and political realities of the post-reunification era. As such, nostalgia has existed – more specifically in literature according to Plowman – as a form of social analysis to distinguish the differences between the Bonn and Berlin Republic. *Westalgie* is complex in the sense that it can vary from person to person. It is clear that nostalgia for the 'old' Federal Republic serves a multitude of functions. It validates a former way of life, reaffirms personal and communal identity, and provides amusement and distraction from contemporary life.<sup>35</sup> In this thesis, focus will be given to rationalising the more recent interest in West Germany's heritage. It, too, will seek to answer why West Germany is viewed more nostalgically more recently and why, in comparison to *Ostalgie*, did this not occur quickly after reunification. To what extent is the former West Germany viewed nostalgically?; and what can this tell us about the processes of inner German unity?

Additionally, though nostalgia for both West and East Germany do share similar traits, such as its perceived detachment from the current Federal Republic, *Westalgie* is its own unique phenomenon. For example, an argument against *Ostalgie* suggests that it encourages detachment from democratic

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<sup>31</sup> Roger F. Cook, 'Recharting the Skies Above Berlin: Nostalgia East and West', *German Politics and Society*, Vol. 23, No. 1, (Spring, 2005), p. 55.

<sup>32</sup> Elena Pourtova, 'Nostalgia and Lost Identity', *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, Vol. 58, No. 1, (February, 2013), p. 38.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, p. 48.

<sup>34</sup> Plowman, '*Westalgie?*', p. 251.

<sup>35</sup> Mary Elizabeth O'Brien, *Post-Wall German Cinema and National Identity: Utopianism and Dissent*, (New York, 2012), p. 29.



institutions in favour of a return to a totalitarian dictatorship. As the FRG's political principles were kept once the transition of reunification occurred, there is by no means any political rejection of democratic values associated with *Westalgie*. Consequently, there is a need to treat both sets of nostalgic occurrences differently in spite of certain similarities between the two.

### Structure

The introduction to this thesis has been used to contextualise the concept of *Westalgie* in modern times. As stated, the intention of this thesis will seek to explain the recent emergence of nostalgia for the Bonn Republic and how it has impacted political, economic and social developments over time. It also seeks to demonstrate its existence in not only the political and economic sphere, but in wider mediums such as film and literature. In order to rationalise such developments, this thesis will need to engage with several facets of West Germany's history, namely its economic and political history, providing greater context to how and why *Westalgie's* appearance has become more acknowledged over the last few years.

Even though this thesis will discuss *Westalgie* extensively, it is still important and necessary to analyse *Ostalgie* and its place in modern day Germany. It, too, is necessary to compare the two phenomenon together, as they both can function as a way for East and West Germans to assimilate a sense of identity in reunified Germany. Therefore, the first chapter will be dedicated to nostalgia for the GDR, discussing how it emerged, why such a phenomenon occurred so soon after Germany reunified, as well as its relevance in today's time politically and socially/ Indeed, as scholarly research concerning *Ostalgie* is much more pervasive, this chapter will mainly analyse the debates surrounding its appearance in contemporary Germany, from fears concerning its ability to undermine democratic institutions, to doubts about how authentic the commodification of *Ostalgie* has become. It is important not to assume that both forms of nostalgia for its respective countries are the same. *Ostalgie* emerged largely because of issues created by German reunification. *Westalgie*, on the other hand, is a much more recent issue, related more to economic and political developments later in the history of the Federal Republic.

Following on from this, the next chapter will detail the political history of the Bonn Republic, detailing the transition from West Germany to the inclusion of the Eastern states after 1990. Not only will this chapter provide historical context to the history of the FRG, but also it will critically assess whether *Westalgie* can be explained by political changes since the reunification of Germany. In light of changes to German foreign policy, such as aiding the War on Terror, assessing the public's reactions to governmental policies through the use of opinion polls can help to assess any link between nostalgia

and political actions. Understanding West German nostalgia's relationship with politics, too, requires examination into election results of the Federal Republic, both on a local and Federal level. Considering changes to Germany's political culture since reunification, such as the move from Bonn to Berlin, analysing how the German political system has changed since reunification will help create a wider understanding as to whether *Westalgie* is linked with politics or not.

The next chapter will focus on *Westalgie* from an economic viewpoint such as West Germany's relationship with the Euro. Due to the symbolic nature of the Deutschmark, as an image of Germany's post-war economic recovery and overall stability, it seems necessary to discuss the country's preoccupation with its former currency as well as the Common Currency. Plenty of opinion polls suggest that the Deutschmark is viewed in higher regard than the Euro, especially since the country fell into recession between 2008 and 2013. Indeed, such appraisal for the Deutschmark, along with its circulation around Germany even a decade after its replacement with the Euro, suggests some linkage with the German populace and *Westalgie*.<sup>36</sup> Matthias Kaelberer suggests that money serves as a tool for governments to solidify feelings of national belonging and identity among citizens of a country.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, Germany's relationship with the Deutschmark will be closely scrutinised, creating a broader sense of whether *Westalgie* is intimately connected to the economic success of the 'old' Federal Republic. Using Empirical data such as opinion polls, and collecting data from focus groups in Germany, this thesis can help to gain a greater understanding of how the Deutschmark is viewed in modern times. This, above all, will reveal if nostalgia for West Germany can be rationalised by economic heritage.

Following on from economics, the next chapter will analyse whether nostalgia for the 'old' West Germany has had an impact on German multiculturalism. Indeed, more recent criticisms of multiculturalism may suggest some form of nostalgia for a time where discussions on immigrant integration and assimilation were far less complex and underdeveloped. However, it can be argued that West Germany was always a multicultural society, meaning that West German nostalgic criticisms of the Federal Republic's immigration policies are either incorrect or are presented in a rose-tinted fashion. Indeed, as German multiculturalism has been criticised more and more, especially, since the early 2010s, it is necessary to understand if nostalgia

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<sup>36</sup> It has been reported that around thirteen billion Deutschmarks are still in circulation within Germany, with many traders still willingly accepting Deutschmarks instead of the Euro. For more, see 'Die Mark ist nicht totzukriegen', *Stern*, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2012, <http://www.stern.de/wirtschaft/news/10-jahre-dm-aus-die-mark-ist-nicht-totzukriegen-1792861.html>, accessed 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

<sup>37</sup> Kaelberer, 'Deutschmark Nationalism and Europeanised Identity', p. 283.

for West Germany has had an impact on critical discourses against immigration as well as the integration of foreigners.

The final chapter will focus more specifically on the city of West Berlin and how nostalgia has affected its inhabitants. As some examples of West Berlin nostalgia have been considered examples of *Westalgie*, it seems essential to analyse if that is truly the case. After all, West Berlin was unique in the sense that it was considered a part of West Germany but not actually geographically located within its borders. It is therefore likely that West Berliners developed their own sense of identity that while linked with West Germany was fundamentally different overall. This notably frames nostalgia for West Berlin in a different context to *Westalgie* as both sets of phenomenon refer to two different and distinct areas. Consequently, it is more probable that West Berlin nostalgia is separate from nostalgia for West Germany, highlighting a complex feature of *Westalgie*.

Yet the complexity of nostalgia for the 'old' West Germany is not just found when discussing the city of West Berlin. Overall, *Westalgie* is a multifaceted concept that is far more nuanced on closer inspection. Criticisms of developments that have occurred in the Berlin Republic's history can in certain instances, be explained by some notions of nostalgia for West Germany, but also for pragmatic concerns as well. After all, if one were assume that nostalgia helps to critique modern-day issues while referencing the past, then one must also assume that a large number of people are also nostalgic for the 'old' West Germany. This, of course, is problematic, as criticisms of contemporary issues are not always influenced by nostalgic tendencies. It is this point that outlines the difficulty in examining *Westalgie*. It is not simply a Western counterpart to *Ostalgie* as some may assume, but rather its own separate concept. The complexities of nostalgia for the 'old' West German will therefore be noted heavily within this thesis, as it is clear that *Westalgie* needs far more academic research to discuss its impact on contemporary German society.

## 2. Ostalgie: East German Nostalgia and Identity

If there were no ‘good old days’ as one scholar puts it, then why long for them?<sup>38</sup> Indeed, such a phrase is perhaps misleading as it suggests life in the German Democratic Republic was incessantly dreadful. In certain respects this was in fact true; life expectancy in the GDR, for example, lagged behind West German figures particularly amongst men.<sup>39</sup> Yet the very fact that nostalgia for East Germany exists suggests that there were some positive aspects that both East and West Germans can acknowledge. *Ostalgie* has developed varying definitions since its arrival so soon after reunification. For some, it represents a GDR past that never was, or at the very least a selective past that ignores certain aspects. For others, it represents a marketing ploy aimed at tourists or nostalgic East Germans; many have profited from *Ostalgie*'s appearances in mainstream mediums such as film and cinema. Yet an ideal way to define East German nostalgia is to link it with the process of identity formation amongst Easterners after reunification. After the events of 1989/1990, the lives of East Germans changed drastically. A reunification process, largely led by West Germans, removed facets of the East German regime quickly. In the midst of such loss, nostalgia helped to cultivate an Eastern presence within the Berlin Republic. Therefore, the Trabant, once derided for being substandard compared to

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<sup>38</sup> Barney, ‘When We Was Red’, p. 135.

<sup>39</sup> Tobias Vogt calculates that without reunification, East German men on average would have died 6 years earlier whilst woman would have lived 4 years fewer. See, Tobias Vogt, ‘How Many Years of Life did the Berlin Wall Add?: A Projection of East German Life Expectancy’, *Gerontology*, Vol. 59, No. 3, (February, 2013), pp. 276-82.

Western innovation, became a symbol of pride for many East Germans; television programmes concerning the GDR came to prominence, and a resurgence in East German products, from clothes to board games, helped to establish an East German consumer culture.

This chapter will analyse the more widely documented phenomenon known as *Ostalgie*. It seeks to clarify the various rationalisations for *Ostalgie*'s appearance, but ultimately suggests reunification as a primary facilitator overall. Moreover, scholars have attempted to explain *Ostalgie* as a way to conceptualise an 'eastern identity' in reaction to their heritage and past being overlooked.<sup>40</sup> Can the same be said of *Westalgie* to appropriate a 'Western identity' in a similar fashion? Following on, the next section will detail depictions of *Ostalgie* in the form of various mediums since its emergence in the early nineties. The chapter will then conclude with how *Ostalgie* relates to politics in the Federal Republic. Much like East Germans felt after reunification, West Germans had to mourn a life that changed by various different factors. Nostalgia for the Federal Republic, one can argue, occurred because the Berlin Republic contrasted heavily with the Bonn Republic. In this respect *Ostalgie* shares a common trait with its West German counterpart. At its most fundamental level, nostalgia for East Germany can help to remember facets of the GDR in a positive light. The notion that *Ostalgie* helps to create an 'East German identity' is also significant when analysing its effect on East Germans. This Eastern nostalgia therefore developed an identity that was unique compared to the West but also highlighted the positive aspects of East Germany's heritage. Concerning *Westalgie*, the process of identity formation is somewhat parallel to *Ostalgie*. Both rely upon shared experiences to shape a distinctive sense of self and both required the consequences of change to rationalise the desire to do so. More contemporary examples of West Berlin nostalgia such as the recent museum exhibition entitled 'West: Berlin – an Island Looking for the Mainland' can be rationalised as a reactive psychological process to foster a West Berlin identity. Social networking websites, too, suggest the convergence of citizens drawing upon their own experiences to share among likeminded groupings.

However, *Ostalgie* has sometimes been interpreted as a backward looking reaction to modernity, especially in the early years following reunification. It is also criticised for trivialising the controversial GDR past in favour of kitschy fads and financial initiatives whilst ignoring the government's infringement on human rights or the role of the Stasi in everyday life. In defence of *Ostalgie*, certain scholars have argued that such nostalgia simply refers to features of everyday life in the GDR, rather than its most controversial

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<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Claire Hyland, 'The Era Has Passed, But it's Nice to Remember: Eastern Identifications with the GDR Past and Unified Germany', in David Clarke & Ute Wölfel, (eds.), *Remembering the German Democratic Republic: Divided Memory in a United Germany*, (New York, 2011), pp. 144-156; Daphne Berdahl, '(N)Ostalgie for the Present: Memory, Longing, and East German Things', *Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 64, No. 2, (1999), pp. 192-211.

facets. For example, Dominic Boyer acknowledges that East Germans have been fixated on the past but resists the urge to codify such actions under the term *Ostalgie*. Instead, he attributes examples of GDR nostalgia as remembrance of an individual's youth, or the grief amongst older generations of East Germans at the foreclosure of the utopian and humanitarian fantasy of socialism. In essence, he argues that a longing for the GDR is by no means a desire to return to the social, political, and economic policies of the past.<sup>41</sup> It is, therefore, more likely that *Ostalgie* can be considered a form of introspection to the GDR past, thus helping to cultivate an East German identity in the process. *Ostalgic* tendencies therefore highlight a sense of meaning for Easterners, especially in regard to how the reunification of Germany changed and altered the lives of East Germans.

### **The Immediate Origins of *Ostalgie***

Even one year on from reunification talk of nostalgia for the German Democratic Republic was noticeable.<sup>42</sup> The reunification of Germany had a deep impact on groups of East Germans accustomed to a certain way of life. Not only were their core political and economic beliefs eroded along with the fall of the Berlin Wall, but East Germans soon faced the startling reality that reunification would have prolonged after-effects. What was initially believed to be the reframing together of a single ethnocultural community, and the reclassification of East Germans as citizens of the Federal Republic, became something different and unique.<sup>43</sup> As noticeable cultural differences between Eastern and Western Germans re-emerged, the euphoria caused by reunification and the meaning of '*Ein Volk*' became challenged in public discourses. The immediate origins of *Ostalgie* can therefore be traced to the changing circumstances of Easterners following the events of 1989/1990. Differences ranging from economic difficulties, fragmented identities, and integrating into a Western society helped to create and develop a feeling of nostalgia amongst

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<sup>41</sup> See Dominic Boyer, '*Ostalgie* and the Politics of the Future in Eastern Germany', *Public Culture*, Vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 361-381.

<sup>42</sup> An article from *Der Spiegel*, for example, highlights how quickly East Germans became disillusioned from living in the 'new' Federal Republic, arguing that a type of GDR nostalgia could "break out". For more, see Rolf Schneider, 'Von linker Melancholie', *Der Spiegel*, 19<sup>th</sup> August 1991, <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13489018.html>, accessed 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

<sup>43</sup> Elaine Kelly, 'Reflective Nostalgia and Diasporic Memory: Composing East Germany after 1989', in Anna Saunders and Debbie Pinfold, (eds.), *Remembering and Rethinking the GDR: Multiple Perspectives and Plural Authenticities*, (New York, 2013), p. 116.

former East German citizens. Though nostalgia for the German Democratic Republic can be expressed through material goods, it also alludes to a loss of community associated with GDR socialisation. As such, *Ostalgie* is both a material and cultural phenomenon, touching upon wider questions of the process of growing unity of Germans, the prospects of a common national identity, and the development of a common political culture in the Federal Republic.<sup>44</sup>

Labelled by Daphne Berdahl as a ‘Symbolic resistance to Western hegemony,’<sup>45</sup> *Ostalgie* is ultimately a product of German reunification. The term became part of the East German public’s lexicon rather quickly owing to a series of changes brought on by the fall of the Berlin Wall. For the ‘old’ Federal Republic, change meant the extension of their political, economic, and social ideals eastwards to an identity shaped by forty years of communism. In the East, however, this sense of change was much more pronounced with the aforementioned extension of the FRG’s principles, as well as the complete dismissal of everyday GDR products. The remarkable pace of Germany’s reunification quickly overturned the GDR’s heritage in favour of West Germany’s free market system coupled with stylish and modern consumer products.

One important differentiation between the GDR and the post-reunified Germany refers to the economic situation of the Federal Republic after 1990, arguably the most immediate issue that helped foster nostalgia for East Germany. From an economic viewpoint, reunification had a great amount of expectations coming from former GDR citizens. As West Germans began to enjoy the profits of the post-war economic miracle, and the ever-increasing range of consumer goods, Easterners looked on fully aware that their government could not keep up with the West economically.<sup>46</sup> As such, it was assumed that unification, at least economically, would be a quick process for East Germans. Yet soon after reunification, the East German *Länder* had to accept a monetary and banking system regulated by the *Bundesbank* as well as the break-up and privatisation of state monopolies by the *Treuhandanstalt*.<sup>47</sup> One of the consequences of the transition from a planned to a market economy was a large decline in production in the east particularly in agriculture and industry. Unemployment rose rapidly during 1990-1995 from 2.7 percent to 14 percent; the number of job creation schemes increased from 5,000 to 419,000;

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<sup>44</sup> Carsten Zelle, ‘Ostalgie? National and Regional Identifications in Germany after Unification’, *IGS Discussion Papers Series Number 97/10*, (September, 1997), p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Daphne Berdahl, *On the Social Life of Postsocialism: Memory, Consumption, Germany*, (Bloomington, 2010), p. 51.

<sup>46</sup> Paul Cooke, *Representing East Germany Since Unification: From Colonisation to Nostalgia*, (Oxford, 2005), p. 146.

<sup>47</sup> David G. Williamson, *Germany Since 1815: A Nation Forged and Renewed*, (Basingstoke, 2005), p. 372.

and a greater amount of East Germans decided to retire early after 1990.<sup>48</sup> Unemployment figures in the East also contrasted with the West. For example, unemployment in 1994 stood at 15 percent in the Eastern states compared to 7.4 percent in the West.<sup>49</sup> Women were particularly hit harder by the changing economic system as they usually worked in industries impacted more by reunification. Subsequently, unemployment among East German women in 1994 reached an annual average of 21.5 percent, almost twice as high as the rate among men.<sup>50</sup> To help finance the overall cost of reunification, the Kohl government introduced ‘temporary’ solidarity taxes to each individual’s tax bill that was to be paid by both East and West Germans.

Change, as emphasised by Peters and Davies, is a key determinant for nostalgia. The variation in an individual’s life can be either positive or negative; but it must be significant enough for one to clearly differentiate between the past and the present. East Germans experienced a startling change economically, stressing the point that the Federal Republic was indeed different to the former GDR. The economic legacy of reunification is presented as a painful experience for both East and West Germans. Yet for East Germans the process was made much harder due to such a dynamic shift in everyday life not solely limited to economics. While in the past the FRG has been seen in the East as an attractive model, reality after reunification could not keep up with the supposed image of Western superiority against dormant and monotonous socialism. As Lowenthal notes, ‘A perpetual staple of nostalgic yearning is the search for a simple and stable past as a refuge from the turbulent chaotic present.’ In this regard, *Ostalgie* can provide a sense of psychological comfort in times of great distress – and in this specific case, economic distress.

At the same time, nostalgia for the former GDR also tackles more complex issues of identity in reunified Germany. Nostalgia is readily employed by individuals to construct and form their identities.<sup>51</sup> It can provide a sense of social connectedness upon a collective group of people who experience nostalgia, thereby providing more positive associations with the past.<sup>52</sup> Without a sense of identity, a person’s history and past experiences can be left redundant. Such fears quickly resonated strongly with the East German populace, with many aspects of the GDR vanishing after reunification. The pace of unification, in which the implementation of the West German social,

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<sup>48</sup> Gerhard A. Ritter, *The Price of German Unity: Reunification and the Crisis of the Welfare State*, (Oxford, 2011), pp. 83-85.

<sup>49</sup> Alexander Neubacher and Michael Sauga, ‘Germany’s Disappointing Reunification: How the East was Lost’, *Der Spiegel International*, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/germany-s-disappointing-reunification-how-the-east-was-lost-a-703802.html>, accessed 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

<sup>50</sup> Ritter, *The Price of German Unity*, p. 84.

<sup>51</sup> Davis, *Yearning For Yesterday*, p. 31.

<sup>52</sup> See Jacob Juhl, et al., ‘Fighting the Future with the Past: Nostalgia Buffers Existential Threat’, *Journal of Research in Personality*, Vol. 44, Issues 3, pp. 309-314.



economic, and political system took all but ten months, left very little trace of the socialist GDR.<sup>53</sup> In line with the fast reunification process had on the ‘new’ Federal Republic, East German products vanished almost instantly, leading one East German to comment, ‘It wasn’t just that we all only wanted to have the nice western products. Rather there were no eastern products to buy.’ In this sense, such deliberate removal of GDR products rendered the entire eastern experience obsolete.<sup>54</sup>

The ‘turbulent chaotic present’ that Lowenthal mentions can refer to the experiences of East Germans after reunification. With such a rupture in the lives of East German citizens, the aforementioned speed of German reunification quickly reduced the heritage of the GDR as a totalitarian state with little to remember about. The consequences of reunification also meant a total shift in everyday life for East Germans. Generous maternity leave, funds for expectant mothers, and state-provided childcare gave way after reunification, removing normative socialist values that had remained constant since the establishment of the German Democratic Republic.<sup>55</sup> Such changes to the lives of GDR citizens were perceived as negating their heritage and identity in a post-reunification setting. In the GDR, the workplace was not only a centre of everyday sociality; it was also a symbolic space of community and national belonging. For example, factory-sponsored field trips often provided the only opportunities for families to travel away from home. Also, many East German factories housed a day-care centre, a general store, and even a doctor’s office on factory grounds.<sup>56</sup> The centrality of the workplace as a social hub helped to create an identity even in the face of oppression against the East German government. Yet as soon as the GDR fell, very little remained socially, politically, or economically.

Such change is naturally attributed to reunification; more specifically, a West German led reunification process. It was, indeed, a one-sided progression that formulated a sense of difference between East and West Germans. Yet one also infers a sense of arrogance amongst not just West German citizens, but West German politicians, for simply opting to maintain the more successful of the two systems out of the FRG and the GDR. Instead of the drafting of a new constitution for both East and West Germany, reunified Germany decided to keep its West German Basic Laws intact. From a purely technical point of view there was no need to create a new constitution for united Germany because the political leaders of the post-GDR had decided to join the Federal Republic by ascension.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, the decision to follow the path of

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<sup>53</sup> Claire Hyland, ‘*Ostalgie* Doesn’t Fit!’, p. 103.

<sup>54</sup> Berdahl, *Social Life of Postsocialism*, p. 50.

<sup>55</sup> Paul Kubicek, ‘The Diminishing Relevance of *Ostalgie* 20 Years after Reunification’, in Katharina Gerstenberger and Jana Evans Braziel, (eds.), *After the Berlin wall: Germany and Beyond*, (New York, 2011), p. 89.

<sup>56</sup> Berdahl, *Social Life of Postsocialism*, p. 49.

<sup>57</sup> Ulrich K. Preuß, ‘German Unification: Expectations and Outcomes’, *Hertie School of Governance – Working Papers*, No. 48, (November 2009), p. 4.

article 23 – allowing accession to the Basic Law – helped to avoid delays and uncertainties that would have been involved in drafting a new constitution.<sup>58</sup> As a consequence, none of the elements of the socialist system or the eastern German lifestyle were incorporated into the new Federal Republic, and therefore ill feelings and negative judgements about West Germans easily prevailed in the East.<sup>59</sup> For many East Germans, such dismissal of GDR facets, ranging from political and social policies to East German products, created the impression of a lost identity in a post-reunified setting. A recent publication by the *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung* reports that, even two decades after unification, eastern identity continues to be depicted as an ‘alterity’. It is represented as a divergence from the contemporary German norm, which is almost always presented as being synonymous with the West German system.<sup>60</sup>

With reunification came the assumption of a better life for East Germans. However, the dominant narrative amongst West Germans placed East Germany as an anachronism, comparatively substandard, and on the periphery of modernised matters.<sup>61</sup> In essence, East Germans had to adjust themselves socially within a different culture that did not view the GDR’s heritage in the same light. The pressure to assimilate quickly amongst West Germans conflicted with the desire to retain parts of an East German identity. Consequently, nostalgic yearnings for the GDR can be attributed to a Western hubris and pressure to reduce the East German past.

Martin Blum, too, offers a unique perspective as to why nostalgia for old GDR products existed after reunification. Advertising in East Germany had political connotations. When the East German market eventually became sealed off from the West, packaging became subject to new socialist requirements, although these requirements did not necessarily focus on a product’s design aesthetics. Accordingly, socialist advertising gradually eroded any attempt to innovate product design and advertising. This, in essence, forced consumers to get to know their products and brands very well.<sup>62</sup> Without the allure of advertising creating a primal connection between products and consumers, knowing the individual characteristics of each product on the shelf helped forge connections and identities with Eastern products. Westerners could rely on a product’s quality through branded identity. Easterners, on the other hand, had to develop these identities overtime and largely by their own experiences, thereby

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<sup>58</sup> Ritter, *Price of German Unity*, p. 54.

<sup>59</sup> Zelle, ‘Ostalgie?’ p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> Claire Hyland, ‘Ostalgie Doesn’t Fit!’ p. 104.

<sup>61</sup> Joseph F. Jozwiak and Elisabeth Mermann, “‘The Wall in Our Minds?’: Colonisation, Integration, and Nostalgia’, *The Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 39, No. 5, (2006), p. 782.

<sup>62</sup> Rainer Gries, too, shares such views regarding how people define important aspects of their daily routines and lives by their identifications with consumer products, particularly in the context of East Germans and their relationships with Western products. For more, see Rainer Gries, *Produkte als Medien. Kulturge-schichte der Produktkommunikation in der Bundesrepublik und der DDR*, (Leipzig, 2003).

creating their own unique biographies for products in a planned economy.<sup>63</sup> This, coupled with a lack of changes to product design throughout the history of the GDR, constituted a firm distinctiveness in East German memory.<sup>64</sup>

The immediate origins of *Ostalgie* are therefore varied and unique. However, it is abundantly clear that the reunification of Germany provided enough change to the lives of East Germans to trigger such nostalgia. It is also important to stress that nostalgia for East Germany developed rather quickly in the nineties, mostly because of the fast pace of German reunification. The consequences of the events of 1989/90 were so sudden and drastic for East Germans that it was easy to notice how different life was once the West German system extended eastwards. Therefore, *Ostalgie* exists as a reactive counterculture to life post-reunification. Although it may not strictly desire for a full return to life under the GDR, it strongly questions various aspects of Western culture and capitalism, not to mention the entire process of reunification as a whole.

### **From *Goodbye Lenin!* to the *Ampelmännchen*: Depicting *Ostalgie***

Since the emergence of *Ostalgie* in public discourses, scholars have quickly identified a wide range of mediums representing such nostalgia. This section discusses the more materialistic aspects of *Ostalgie*, from its appearance in film, television, literature, and even household objects. For certain people, nostalgia for East Germany became a marketing strategy and a fashion statement. It was taken upon by eager entrepreneurs readily able to appeal to an individual's nostalgic tendencies. For example, the Berlin Tourism Bureau offered an *Ostalgie*-Tour, on foot or in the form of a 'Trabi-Safari.' Numerous second-hand shops in East Berlin enabled young professionals to outfit their apartments in a similar style to GDR households. Former East German rock musicians such as Dirk Michaelis, IC, Dirk Zöllner, and Die Puhdys made comeback tours. More symbolically, Trabant cars - mocked for their inferiority compared to West Germany's own Volkswagen Beetle – became highly regarded vintage vehicles.<sup>65</sup>

Unsurprisingly then, *Ostalgie* has managed to find a place within popular culture; it can be seen in the commodification of East German products

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<sup>63</sup> Martin Blum, 'Remaking the East German Past: *Ostalgie*, Identity, and Material Culture', *The Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 34, No. 3, (Winter, 2000), pp. 240-245.

<sup>64</sup> Berdahl, *Social Life of Postsocialism*, p. 49.

<sup>65</sup> Mattias Frey, *Postwall German Cinema: History, Film History, and Cinephilia*, (New York, 2013), p. 109.

and childhood characters, such as the *Sandmann*, and in TV shows, including ZDF's *Ostalgie Show*, MDR's *Ein Kessel DDR (A Pot of the GDR)* and RTL's *DDR Show*.<sup>66</sup> Certainly, such vast appearances in the public sphere of Germany hark back to Lowenthal's earlier critique that nostalgia can be determined by commercialisation and therefore be inauthentic in its outlook on the past. Critics could label such nostalgic tendencies to be kitschy, due to the fact that the commercialisation of *Ostalgie* can be interpreted as a trivialisation of the GDR past. Indeed, there are a few points to consider; firstly, early in the new millennium much of the increased interest in Eastern consumer culture actually came from the West. One of the major distributors of East German products found that around 85 percent of its cliental was based in the West.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, symbols of the GDR – most notably the *Ampelmännchen* – have been taken upon by Western entrepreneurs to appeal to a wide variety of audiences. Today one can find shops selling *Ampelmännchen* memorabilia in the form of key chains, confectionary, and even pasta. This is perhaps one example of how *Ostalgie* can be exploited. Not simply to elicit an emotional response from nostalgic Easterners, but for financial gain as well. Prominent *Ostalgie* entrepreneur, Markus Heckhausen, explained the West German interest with East German symbols as 'Something new that they did not know before.'<sup>68</sup> In this sense, *Ostalgie* for tourists and West Germans highlights the kitschy side to such a phenomenon. It presents a selective past of the East German regime to those who did not live under the East German government. Personal memories and biographies with GDR products are not associated with such cliental. Rather, *Ostalgic* products highlight the broad appeal in contemporary German consumer culture. Nevertheless, the lure of this nostalgia can potentially be advantageous toward driving tourism in East Germany thereby allowing tourists, German youth, and West Germans to 'experience' *Ostalgie* to a limited extent.<sup>69</sup>

However, for East Germans *Ostalgie* can resonate with them differently. As the main group of Germans to experience life during Germany's four decades of separation, there is a personal element to such nostalgia that typically refers to an Eastern presence within the 'new' Federal Republic. Identity and nostalgia are linked together strongly in academic literature. Nostalgia typically refers to an individual's displacement in the present, causing

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<sup>66</sup> Hyland, 'Ostalgie Doesn't Fit!', p. 103.

<sup>67</sup> Michael Bartsch, "'Kost the Ost" zahlt sich nicht aus' *Taz*, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2003, <http://www.taz.de/1/archiv/print-archiv/printressorts/digi-artikel/?ressort=wu&dig=2003%2F11%2F06%2Fa0102&cHash=59c0abd5d4/>, accessed 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

<sup>68</sup> 'Ostalgie: Longing for the GDR?' *The Berlin Project*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukdDsqrLX5g> accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2016.

<sup>69</sup> Nicole Crowder, 'Coming of Age: East Berlin Today, 25 Years after the Fall of the Berlin Wall', *The Washington Post*, 28<sup>th</sup> October 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/insight/wp/2014/10/28/2944/>, accessed 28<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

one's own identity to be questioned by present changes. As previously stated, *Ostalgie* developed as a form of counter culture to combat the Western lead reunification process. The consequences of reunification helped to develop a sense of loss in terms of political and cultural identity, thereby creating a sense of isolation between East and West Germans. East German nostalgia, therefore, can be found in various mediums to associate East Germans with various parts of their pre-existing identity. Analysing the everyday history of normal GDR citizens, as opposed to oversimplifying *Ostalgie* as a trivialisation of East German history, helps to create a greater understanding of nostalgia's many virtues in contemporary Eastern Germany.<sup>70</sup>

Academic literature concerning *Ostalgie* has evolved since the early nineties. Recent discussions have strayed from critiques labelling *Ostalgie* as a commercial fad and instead sought to outline and discuss more pragmatic issues related to nostalgia for the GDR. Research into musical lyricism highlights the fact that *Ostalgie's* presence has the potential to be widespread, though only in the form of collating and conveying a sense of cultural heritage.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, *Ostalgie* can represent the more positive aspects of East Germany's past, helping to conceptualise an identity suitable for post-reunified life.<sup>72</sup> East German nostalgia, therefore, conveys a sense of coping and adapting to life after the Wall. Its appearances in various outlets suggest that one of *Ostalgie's* biggest virtues is its ability to present itself so vividly in large aspects of everyday life. Nostalgia for East Germany engages with the realities of GDR life, not through naïve delight, but through introspection and cultivating a distinctive East German culture. Using Pourtova 's analysis of nostalgia as a process of retrospection as opposed to simple wistful sentimentality, one can argue that *Ostalgie* can help create a better understanding of the present by analysing the past.<sup>73</sup> In this sense, nostalgia can help an individual adopt a more tangible understanding of identity amongst East Germans.<sup>74</sup> Much like an immigrant laments the loss of one's past heritage when moving to a new environment, nostalgia helps to bridge the gap between past sentimentalities and present day circumstances.

Such examples of introspection are abundantly clear in the various forms of *Ostalgie* already existing. Take, for instance, the critically acclaimed motion picture *Goodbye Lenin!*, where one character tries amusingly hard to

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<sup>70</sup> Friederike Eigler argued that early scholarship concerning *Ostalgie* focused too much on the authoritarian structures of the GDR, with little room for discussing the everyday histories of East Germans and the relationship between Easterners and Westerners. For more, see Friederike Eigler, 'Jenseits von Ostalgie: Phantastische Züge in "DDR-Romanen" der neunziger Jahre', *A Journal of Germanic Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 3, (September, 2004), pp. 191-206.

<sup>71</sup> See, for example, John T. Littlejohn and Michael T. Putnam, 'Rammstein and *Ostalgie*: Longing for Yesteryear', *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 33, No. 1, (February, 2010), pp. 35-44.

<sup>72</sup> Claire Hyland, 'The Era Has Passed, But it's Nice to Remember', pp. 144-156.

<sup>73</sup> Elena Pourtova, 'Nostalgia and Lost Identity', p. 38.

<sup>74</sup> Claire Hyland, 'The Era Has Passed', p. 153.

avoid his GDR-fanatic mother from realising the end of East Germany is soon upon them. Or even literature published by authors such as Ingo Schulze, whose narratives certainly highlight the more disappointed effects of reunification. For example, one of his fictional characters, Renee Meurer, seemingly has high expectations of capitalism and its features, going as far as believing that simply being in a Western civilisation would change natural facets of everyday life such as eating, drinking, and even walking. Naturally, even such changes in the lives of East Germans were not as pronounced, leaving said character to argue, 'I found it even harder to believe I was in Italy,' noting how similar natural human interactions in East Germany were to other European countries on one of his first trips outside of the GDR.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, such disappointment alludes to a lack of change – rather than an overbearing sense – reunification had on East Germans alike. This is because the changes reunification had on East Germany were not that visceral. Instinctive and habitual human interactions could hardly be altered by the events of 1990. Instead, one could argue that Meurer's statement reflects the emergence of disillusionment towards capitalism and Westernisation as a whole. Small quips such as those from Meurer undermine the virtues of reunification and call into question the high expectations of Westernisation from East Germans.

As for who may experience nostalgic tendencies for the GDR, it can reasonably be assumed that those effected most by the consequences of reunification – people forced into early retirement, unemployed men and women in industries that collapsed because of reunification, and older East Germans acclimated to life in the GDR – are the main group of people experiencing *Ostalgie*. Using data conducted by German General Social Survey, Paul Kubicek argued that East Germans who identify more the GDR are more likely to experience *Ostalgie*, citing the fact that identity, or rather a loss of identity, is a strong determinant for nostalgia's appearance. Unsurprisingly, East Germans who identified more with the GDR were typically older and were therefore more likely to have experienced reunification negatively. In fact, East Germans who were between the age of 18-29 showed little support for the GDR in comparison. What is surprising is that the level of identification with the East German government remained the same amongst men and women.<sup>76</sup> As stated previously, women were greatly affected by the socio-economic consequences of reunification, suggesting that they were more likely to have experienced *Ostalgie*.

Today, one can see *Ostalgie's* presence in a number of different varieties. It is quite simple to suggest an over-commodification of East German symbols and brands indicates inauthenticity. True, such ventures appear profitable from a financial viewpoint. Yet nostalgia's effect on the individual, in terms of social commentary and cultural identity forming, highlights a deeper

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<sup>75</sup> Ingo Schulze, *Simple Stories*, (1999, New York), p. 5.

<sup>76</sup> Kubicek, 'Diminishing Relevance of *Ostalgie*' p. 85.

sense of functionality than originally thought in the nineties. East German nostalgia is often linked in television, film, and literature to cultural artefacts and sensory experiences, particularly those involving childhood and innocence. In this sense, *Ostalgie* works to recall a simpler, more peaceful period, and is therefore more about time and place, not ideology, politics, or economic circumstances.<sup>77</sup> Statements by certain East Germans such as, ‘The *Ampelmännchen* is actually a symbol that some things from the GDR should have simply stayed and everything shouldn’t have been made the same,’<sup>78</sup> reflect a growing sense of loss of one’s heritage in the face of Westernisation. Experiencing nostalgia for the GDR can be a complex and oversimplified concept, especially to those that did not live under the GDR government. However, East Germans are not incurable sentimentalists that are afraid to face the truth of the past.<sup>79</sup> Rather, they seek to clarify their heritage and presence whilst coming to terms with the ‘new’ Federal Republic.

*Westalgie*, too, requires the individual to come to terms with a different environment. However, with *Ostalgie*, identity formation amongst East Germans stands as a principal explanation for why such a phenomenon can take place. In this sense, West Germans can subconsciously apply their sense of discomfort caused by reunification to compare and contrast life between the two republics of Germany. Even though West Germans did not need to adjust to a new political and economic system to the same extent as East Germans, and although they did not share a common past under an oppressive regime, they still faced concerns regarding their own heritage.<sup>80</sup> There are, however, a couple of points to consider. East Germans could draw upon a collective identity as they shared a common past unlike West Germans. They purchased the same consumer goods and took part in the same state organised activities. West Germans, on the other hand, could not claim the same sense of shared identities. Therefore, *Westalgie* can be experienced by conflicting generations of West Germans. From the West German student movement in 1968, to a new generation of Germans in 1989, plenty of sub-identities exist within a ‘West German’ identity.

### **Nostalgia and Western Democracy**

One noticeable difference between *Ostalgie* and *Westalgie* is the subject to which they refer to. Nostalgia for West Germany, of course, suggests a preoccupation with the past that is uniquely West German. *Ostalgie*, however,

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, p. 89.

<sup>78</sup> Hyland, ‘The Era Has Passed’, p. 152.

<sup>79</sup> Christopher Lasch, ‘The Politics of Nostalgia’, *Harper’s*, (November, 1984), pp. 65-70. cited in Lowenthal, ‘Nostalgia Tells it like it Wasn’t’, p. 20.

<sup>80</sup> Otto, “‘Westalgie’”.

refers to features of everyday life under Communist rule. It consciously compares and contrasts facets of both the GDR and the current Federal Republic. It is because of such differentiation that scholars have identified an added dimension of East German nostalgia, namely its effect on democratic institutions that replaced former Communist states. Whilst *Westalgie* harks back to a different period notably without East Germans, reunification did not fundamentally change the dominant economic system for West Germans. Instead, the events of 1989/90 altered everyday life for East Germans in a dramatic and prompt fashion. So much so that fears of a revival of East German communism became linked with the emergence of *Ostalgie* in public discourses. In essence, with nostalgia for the former GDR came the assumption that it would constitute a threat to the consolidation of democracy in the Eastern *Länder*.

Empirical data highlighted by Ekman and Linde revealed that approval of a return to communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe had varied between former Eastern bloc countries, with Slovakia showcasing the strongest case to retreat to the days of the past.<sup>81</sup> Federal election results in the Eastern states reveal sustained support amongst Easterners for the successor party of the Socialist Unity Party (SED), the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS). For example, elections results in the 1998 Federal elections highlight that support for the PDS within the five Eastern *Länder* and Berlin averaged at 40.3 percent of the East German electorate. Results in the next two Federal Election show similar findings whilst average support for the PDS fell to 35.2 percent in the 2005 elections. More recently, in the 2013 Federal elections support for the left-wing parties, the PDS and Die Linke, within East Germany was still relatively high at an average of 44 percent of the Eastern electorate.<sup>82</sup> After reunification the PDS found support in the East by valuing East Germany's heritage and past. For example, the PDS widely supported the diffusion of consumer products from East Germany, staged campaigns to save street names named after communist heroes and to preserve GDR historical buildings such as the *Volkskammer* in East Berlin.<sup>83</sup>

Yet are these findings indicative of nostalgia for East Germany? Indeed, they highlight a sizeable amount of support for the left, but one can rationalise such gains in other ways. The most obvious is to suggest that support for left-wing parties in the East is likely due to the fact that East Germans spent over four decades – albeit undemocratically – under socialism. Support for the

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<sup>81</sup> New Europe Barometer (2001), cited in Joakim Ekman and Jonas Linde, 'Communist Nostalgia and the Consolidation of Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe', *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 21, No. 3, (September, 2005), p. 359.

<sup>82</sup> For a detailed examination of all the Federal Republic's election results for the Bundestag (including before reunification), see <http://www.electionresources.org/de/>.

<sup>83</sup> Joanna McKay, 'The PDS Tests the West: the Party of Democratic Socialism's Campaign to Become a Pan-German socialist Party' *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 2, no. 2, (2004), p. 62.



PDS can therefore be considered a natural continuation of overall support for the left amongst the East German electorate. One can also argue that these electoral gains can be considered more in line with generalised protests for more representation in the East, alluding to a previous statement that *Ostalgie* is more about time and place rather than ideology. Moreover, with former Eastern European countries being integrated within the European Union, such forms of nostalgia may typically decline, as generations of citizen's personal histories become less connected to socialisation under communism.<sup>84</sup>

After all, empirical data suggests that, in spite of the harrowing economic hardships and general difficulties associated with reunification, East Germans experienced the transition of 1989-1990 as well as its aftereffects more positively. For example, in 1995 when asked, 'How are you personally today compared to your time in the GDR on the whole?', fifty percent of applicants felt their lives were comparatively better, twenty-seven percent felt their personal circumstances had remained similar after reunification, and twenty-three percent noted that their lives had been made worse after West Germany encompassed the East.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, even if the 'new' Federal Republic experienced economic difficulties early on, fear of job losses and unemployment amongst Easterners declined as the country became more acclimated to its reunified status. Though it should be noted that such fears and anxieties concerning employment were still more pertinent in the East compared to the West.<sup>86</sup>

Moreover, around the turn of the millennium, a vast majority of people were convinced that unifying Germany was still the right thing to do, more so in the East than in the West.<sup>87</sup> In 2009, almost two decades after Germany officially reunified, similar results were found amongst former residents of the German Democratic Republic. In an opinion poll conducted by the Pew Research Centre, over eighty percent of the East German applicants responded positively when asked about German reunification retrospectively; just sixteen percent felt negative about the events of 1989/1990. Similarly, in the same study over sixty percent of East Germans believed their lives were better off because Germany reunified compared to the sixteen percent of whom felt the opposite. It should also be noted that those asked were over the age of twenty-nine and

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<sup>84</sup> Jonas Linde, *Doubting Democrats? A Comparative Analysis of Support for Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe*, (Örebro, 2004), pp. 257-258.

<sup>85</sup> 'Stolz aufs eigene leben', *Der Spiegel*, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1995, p. 46.

<sup>86</sup> Florian Schramm, 'Arbeitslosigkeit in Ostdeutschland: Wie betroffen sind die Nichtbetroffenen?' in Hildegard Maria Nickel and Jürgen Kühl, (eds.), *Erwerbsarbeit im Umbruch*, (Berlin, 1994), p. 60.

<sup>87</sup> Manuela Glaab, 'Viewing 'the Other': how East sees West and West sees East', in Jonathan Grix and Paul Cooke, (eds.), *East German Distinctiveness in a Unified Germany*, (Birmingham, 2002), p. 81.

could therefore judge the position of contemporary Germany against their own experiences in East Germany.<sup>88</sup>

Indeed, these statistics do not explicitly refer to *Ostalgie* in the public sphere. They do, however, showcase that politics and nostalgia are not mutually exclusive. Stefan Berger argues that the emergence of East German nostalgia in the public sphere meant it was a sure sign that many East Germans had yet to arrive in the reunified country.<sup>89</sup> Coupled with this, a general critique of nostalgia for the GDR was the assumption that people's political attitudes can be shaped by the memories fostered in families or peer groups.<sup>90</sup> Yet, as empirical data has shown, this is only true to a limited extent. Political opinions are malleable and subject to change over the course of one's own life. *Ostalgie* exists as a critique of the German political, economic, and social system after reunification. This, however, does not mean it offers any viable or pragmatic alternatives to reshaping and redressing problems produced by reunification.<sup>91</sup> Unsurprisingly, there is by no means an East German movement to bring back the GDR; empirical data continues to show that, whilst contemporary Germany is by no means clear of its own 'wall in the head', returning back to the social conditions of the GDR past is a remote option for Easterners.

### Concluding Remarks

One can detect similarities between *Ostalgie* and *Westalgie*. For one, they both relied on great social, political, and economic changes to help bring upon uncertainty between the two sets of Germans. However, *Ostalgie* appears much more relevant to the notion of a loss of identity than it does West Germans. The integration of East Germans, as Thomas Ahbe puts it, did not happen in a way of a 'historic honeymoon period'.<sup>92</sup> To complicate matters further, plenty of identities exist within modern Germany now; since the 1950s the Federal Republic – both 'new' and 'old' – has had to accept and integrate new identities in the form of immigrants, asylum seekers, and guest workers. With the

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<sup>88</sup> PewResearch Global Attitudes Project, 'Chapter 5: Views of German Reunification', 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2009, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2009/11/02/chapter-5-views-of-german-reunification/>, accessed 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>89</sup> Stefan Berger, *Inventing the Nation: Germany*, (New York, 2004), p. 250.

<sup>90</sup> Silke Arnold-de Simine, *Mediating Memory in the Museum*, (New York 2013), p. 160.

<sup>91</sup> Kubicek, 'Diminishing Relevance of *Ostalgie*' p. 99.

<sup>92</sup> Thomas Ahbe, *Ostalgie: Zum Umgang mit der DDR-Vergangenheit in den 1990er Jahren*, (Erfurt, 2005), p. 64.

reunification of Germany, and the subsequent issues that followed from it, an Eastern identity has developed that sits beside a German identity. In this sense, by accepting pluralist identities the country may come closer to a more inclusive idea of Germaness.<sup>93</sup> East German nostalgia, therefore, is not strictly associated with GDR fanatics or even those who chose to live outside the present. In comparatively analysing *Ostalgie* and *Westalgie* one should note that change is in fact the major reason that facilitates one to experience nostalgia. This specific change primarily rests with the overall processes of reunification, as well as the speed of these developments.

As such, *Ostalgie* is a reaction to reunification, as well as a reaction against Western hegemony to define and dictate how East Germans should remember their own pasts. It can also clarify an Eastern presence within the Berlin Republic through the presence of *Ostalgic* films and literature, and the commodification of Eastern products. Moreover, whilst one should be cautious about examining personal memories, especially those that have lived in historically contentious eras, they are still useful in understanding how East Germans build their identity in a setting that overtook large parts of their heritage. A simple way to view *Ostalgie's* virtues can be summed up quite poignantly by Roger Rosenblatt's statement: 'we want to relive those thrilling days of yesteryear, but only because we are absolutely assured that those days are out of reach.'<sup>94</sup> To conclude, the commodification of *Ostalgie* may well mean that East German products, movies and television programmes concerning life under the GDR, as well as literature will continue to be produced for quite some time. Yet as new generations of Germans born in the Berlin Republic dictate what constitutes German national identity, the concept of *Ostalgie* – and even *Westalgie* – may be left redundant as time passes.

### **3. West German Political Nostalgia in the Berlin Republic**

The development of nostalgia ultimately suggests the lack of utopia in contemporary society. For East Germans, such absence can easily be found within varying aspects of everyday life. East German brands vanished, unemployment became a realistic prospect, and the politics of the GDR gave way to the more dominant West German political system. This, too, can be explained quite comfortably by the quick pace German Reunification had on East Germans post 1990. Understanding a rationale for the emergence of *Ostalgie* is therefore straightforward. For West Germany, however, this is more complex. *Westalgie* as a phenomenon is much more case specific, and this is certainly true when considering the political changes the Federal Republic experienced in the years following 1990. While it can be argued that West

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<sup>93</sup> See, Hyland, 'The Era Has Passed', pp. 144-156.

<sup>94</sup> Roger Rosenblatt, 'Lack Back in Sentiment', *New York Times*, 28<sup>th</sup> July 1973, p. 23.

Germans noticed the political changes caused by Reunification, can it be said that all West Germans felt the same about said changes? More importantly, did they react in such a way that would suggest a sense of nostalgia concerning pre-1990 German politics?

This chapter will assess the political element of *Westalgie*. It will do so by looking at how the Federal Republic's domestic and foreign policies have evolved since the reunification of Germany. For example, German foreign policy has changed significantly compared to West German foreign policy, becoming much more assertive on the world stage. This was also generally unthinkable for West Germans during the Cold War. Therefore it is fair to ask: 'are the political changes the Federal Republic experienced after reunification a credible rationale for *Westalgie's* emergence?' If one were to compare *Ostalgie's* emergence with West German nostalgia, it is clear that it developed because there was a clear sense of change between the past and the present. As highlighted in the previous chapter, reunification brought an unprecedented level of social, political, and economic change to East Germans. This, however, is not easily comparable to *Westalgie*. While it can be argued that West Germans did experience a set of changes after the events of 1989 and 1990, the impact of said changes were not as hard-hitting or readily obvious straight away.

Consequently, West German nostalgia is a far harder phenomenon to characterise or define. Of course, one can easily suggest that it is a West German reaction to the changes reunification brought. Yet this is an oversimplified view that does not take into account whether this has affected every West German or when the phenomenon developed in the first place. Analysing the political differences between the 'old' and 'new' FRG is a good starting point to address these issues as there are clear moments of change that are discernible to the viewer. What is noticeable, however, is that a lot of political differences between the past and present occurred later in the nineties and the new millennium onwards. This, at the very least, helps to highlight that *Westalgie* developed later than *Ostalgie*. West German nostalgia was therefore not a direct consequence of reunification like its Eastern counterpart, but rather a response to later issues in the history of reunified Germany. Another issue worth addressing is that critiques of certain policies are by no means an example of nostalgia's onset. There are, after all, other practical reasons to criticise German foreign policy rather than blaming nostalgia. This, too, proves an issue for *Westalgie*.

Nevertheless, the chapter will highlight specific changes West Germans have experienced on a political level. At the very least, one could argue that such changes are a contribution to *Westalgie's* emergence in the public sphere, even if there are other facets that may have had more of an important role in its development such as economic changes, or German multiculturalism.

## **Domestic Concerns: German Politics after 1990**

Two weeks after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 West German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, had surprised the public with a ten-point plan for unification with a slowly democratising GDR. The Federal Republic, according to Kohl, would continue to cooperate with East Germany in all areas that directly benefitted both sides, and offer an extensive and unprecedented level of assistance and cooperation to the transformation of the East German economic and political system.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, liberal reforms introduced by other Communist governments such as the Soviet Union, Poland, and Hungary, helped to encourage a path for East and West Germany to end forty years of separation.

Indeed, the events of 1989 and 1990 presented a major opportunity for East and West Germany to reunify. The first and only free elections to be held in East Germany proved a success for Kohl. The conservative Alliance for Germany, led by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) backed by West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and also comprising of the German Social Union (DSU) and the Democratic Awakening (DA) advocated a fast unification pace, with monetary unions followed shortly thereafter by political mergers, as well as a market economy. Its slogan was: ‘no more socialist experiments’. On the other hand, purely East German groups such as the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) – the former ruling communist party – and the left wing, Alliance 90, called for retention of particular GDR characteristics, underlining in particular the state-provided comprehensive social protection.<sup>96</sup> Yet in light of the growing opportunity to officially unite with the West, East Germans seemingly favoured a rapid unity in order to improve the economy and offer greater prosperity. The Alliance for Germany had won 48% of the popular vote and 192 seats, in comparison to the PDS’s 16% and 66 seats.<sup>97</sup> This, in itself, marked a blow for the East German system. The electorate had chosen the conservative East German CDU in favour of a customary left-wing political party. This, too, presented a sign that East Germans were willing to accept a Western orientated political system, to help speed up the practical processes of reunification, and perhaps to demonstrate a sense of inner unity with West Germans.

The two German economies would also merge, culminating in the ‘Treaty Establishing a Monetary, Economic and Social Union between the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany’ in May of

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<sup>95</sup> See, Helmut Kohls Zehn-Punkte-Plan für die deutsche Einheit (28. November 1989), *German History in Documents and Images*, [http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=223&language=german](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=223&language=german), accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2018.

<sup>96</sup> German Democratic Republic Election Results 1990, [http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2121bis\\_90.htm](http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2121bis_90.htm), accessed 17<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

1990. The most notable consequence of this being the introduction of the West German Deutschmark as the official East German currency. Notably, the Deutschmark had a very high reputation amongst East Germans, as it was a symbol of the economic success West Germany had experienced from its inception up to 1990. This again highlighted the fact that East Germans were initially accepting of the West German system. True, the East German economy suffered after reunification, with rising unemployment rates, and the privatisation of state monopolies. Yet the perception of reunification at the time was largely positive. East German's mostly supported a fast track to reunification, which created the assumption amongst West Germans that the East would be cooperative with a Western led reunification process.

There were, however, notable left leaning West German critics of reunification. The novelist Günter Grass, for example, worried about whether a reunified Germany would resume a role as a belligerent nation-state. Germany, Grass argued, should have remained separated as a consequence of not only the Second World War, but also the Holocaust. His views were largely produced by the on-going issue of how Germany could come to terms with its past, as well as conservative attempts to reassess German guilt in the so-called *Historikerstreit* (Historian's conflict) during the late 1980s.<sup>98</sup> The German sociologist, Jürgen Habermas, focussed on the fast pace of reunification and what he perceived to be the annexation of East Germany. According to Habermas, the citizens of the East Germany were practically obliged to agree to unification by their disastrous economic situation and by the hope of improving it quickly and substantially by being absorbed into the wealthy West Germany. Consequently, national identity, which will be the basis of the new country, will not be a republican identity, created on the basis of a notable choice of liberty, democracy, and co-operation among countries. Instead, it will be a national identity of the traditional type, based on an idea of the nation as an ethnic, cultural and collective community. Thus, there would be no chance of breaking the continuity of a tradition that went back to Bismarckian national unification and that had always seen German national identity assert itself powerfully against western liberal democratic traditions.<sup>99</sup>

Both Grass' and Habermas' critiques of reunification refer more to issues of aggressive nationalism and how to best deal with the past. Indeed, while both clearly reference the past, they do so in a way that acknowledges its burdens as opposed to its merits. As previously mentioned, certain critics of nostalgia note how it enables one to view the past with rose-tinted glasses. This, however, does not appear to be the case for both Grass and Habermas. Their criticisms were not primarily influenced by a positive sense of the past, as

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<sup>98</sup> Robert M. Berdahl, 'German Reunification in Historical Perspective', *Berkeley Journal of International Law*, Vol. 23, No. 2, (2005), p. 500.

<sup>99</sup> Jürgen Habermas, 'Der DM-Nationalismus', *Die Zeit*, 30<sup>th</sup> March 1990, <https://www.zeit.de/1990/14/der-dm-nationalismus>, accessed 27<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

nostalgia would imply, but rather a fear of resurgence in German nationalism. True, Grass and Habermas seemingly valued the Bonn Republic's political merits, highlighting the fact that they may have felt some form of nostalgia for West Germany. Yet their focus on Germany's Nazi past shaped their negative perceptions of reunification, even if the greater German public did not wholly share such views. Criticisms of the events of 1989 and 1990 were largely overshadowed by the euphoria amongst East and West Germans.

Nevertheless, reunification created the hope that East and West Germany would be unified on a number of issues; be it social, economic and political. The reality, however, is far more complex and nuanced when considering the political divisions within the 'new' Federal Republic. East Germans, as already stated, have found it difficult to integrate within a dominant West German society, while West Germans have struggled to come to terms with their association with East Germans. Differences in western and eastern voting behaviour have their roots in the noticeable identities that developed in the two parts of the country during the 40 years of separate historical and political development. More than two decades after unification, these identity differences continue to persist. East German political identity was shaped by a complete reliance on the state during the 40 years of the GDR. Consequently, Easterners still favour a more active role for the state.<sup>100</sup> East Germans also had to cope with the breakdown of the associational framework the GDR provided and the resulting shock of social isolation.<sup>101</sup>

West Germans, however, faced their own unique challenges; namely the aforementioned difficulty in assimilating an East German populace that was, for the most part, different in most aspects of everyday life. Assuming that the East and West party systems each possessed distinctive qualities and characteristics at the time of unification, there are two possible paths forward in terms of political system preferences. First, as the two Germanys become more integrated over time and a sense of shared identity develops, the voting behaviour in the two regions will become similar, and the German party systems will become less distinctive. Alternatively, if the integration process does not lead to increasing sense of incorporation but rather to the conservation or consolidation of separate identities, it should be expected that differences between the party systems to persist or even increase.<sup>102</sup> Data provided by Amir Abedi highlights that the later has occurred in the Berlin Republic, at least in the context of the Federal elections held since reunification. To put this into context, Abedi analyses how East and West Germans have voted in Federal elections since the reunification of Germany. More specifically, the difference

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<sup>100</sup> David P. Conrads, 'The Civic Culture and Unified Germany: An Overview', *German Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 3, (2015), p. 254.

<sup>101</sup> Patricia Hogwood, 'After the GDR: Reconstructing identity in post-communist Germany', *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 4, (2000), p. 50.

<sup>102</sup> Amir Abedi, 'We are not in Bonn Anymore: The Impact of German Unification on Party Systems at the Federal and Land Levels', *German Politics*, Vol. 26, No. 4, (2017), p. 462.

between votes amongst the two sets of German voters. Using the index of dissimilarity – a demographic measure of the consistency between two groups that are distributed across component geographic areas – Abedi highlights an interesting issue that concerns German voter patterns after the reunification of Germany.

1). Dissimilarity Between Bundestag Election Results in the Former East and West Germany <sup>103</sup>

<b>Year</b>	<b>Dissimilarity Index Value</b>
1990	14.5
1994	18.9
1998	23.8
2002	18.4
2005	22.7
2009	20.6
2013	19.8

Bundestag Election Results Dissimilarity Index, cited in Amir Abedi, ‘We are not in Bonn Anymore: The Impact of German Unification on Party Systems at the Federal and Land Levels, *German Politics*, Vol, 26, No. 4, (2017), p. 464.

What is curious is the fact that electoral differences between East and West were actually lower in the first reunified Bundestag election than in subsequent ones. Both Sets of Germans were more likely to vote in similar patterns early in the life of the ‘new’ Federal Republic than any other time. This, of course, can be explained by the largely elated response to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the events that gradually led to the reunification of Germany. As stated previously, East Germans seemed accepting of the West German model as it was comparably more successful than its East German counterpart in almost every aspect. Yet the fast pace of reunification and the negative effects it had on East and West Germans contributed to a separating electorate based on geographical locations. Moreover, this suggests that West Germans were more critical of the Federal Republic later than East Germans.

A significant rise in dissimilarity after 1990, and through 1994, was followed by consistently high levels of difference. The highest scores were recorded in the 1998 and 2005 elections. Although there has been a steady if small decrease in the scores since 2005, the numbers highlight that they have



yet to return to the earlier results after reunification. While lower than in 2005, the index scores for 2009 and 2013 still exceed the scores for the 1990 and 1994 Bundestag elections. This, in essence, suggests that voting trends are not converging in the 'new' Federal Republic. What could be taken from this then is that nostalgia may well indeed influence the voting patterns of both East and West Germans.

Indeed, it is far easier to understand why East German voters have contributed to such dissimilar voting trends. The onset of mass unemployment after unification and the elimination of the GDR welfare system and its replacement with the western Bismarckian model had a profound effect on people in the former GDR who were used to a paternalistic socialist system in which the state took on the role of provider of far-reaching welfare programmes for all its citizens. Employment was not only guaranteed but also considered a constitutional right and a duty. Moreover, being a worker was crucial to a person's standing in the political community.

It is perhaps easier to find links between nostalgia and electoral results when discussing East Germany as East Germans grew up under a socialist system in place. Support for Left-wing parties is therefore more likely to occur in the East as opposed to the West as their political viewpoints were linked with the past. Such is not the case for West Germans. As West Germany developed after the Second World War, coalition governments made up of varying political parties had largely governed the 'old' Federal Republic. Moreover, the West German political and economic system was successful against the East German socialist model, leading the West to incorporate their ideologies on the new Eastern *Länder*. On a regional level, there are certain instances where one can see how the Federal Republic's change has affected electoral votes. For example, the year 2016 had shown increasing levels of support for the right-wing Eurosceptic political party, *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD). In fact, as of very recently the AfD have gained representation in ten of the sixteen German state parliaments, even finding representation in Merkel's constituency of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, with her Christian Democratic Union coming third behind the Social Democrats (SPD) and the AfD.<sup>104</sup>

In the context of *Westalgie*, however, the later levels of dissimilarity in the federal elections suggest that political differences developed later in the Berlin Republic's lifetime. The electorate in the west of Germany for years was clearly grouped according to the division of society into the conservative and left-wing groups. Workers traditionally voted for the Social Democrats, while representatives of the middle class voted for the Christian Democrats. The party identifications throughout the 1950s and the 1960s had been the result of an increasingly structured electorate; the vast majority developed strong partisan

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<sup>104</sup> For regional election results in the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern constituency, see [http://service.mvnet.de/wahlen/2016\\_land/showHtmlContent.php?folder=2016\\_land&datei=L\\_WK99.htm](http://service.mvnet.de/wahlen/2016_land/showHtmlContent.php?folder=2016_land&datei=L_WK99.htm), accessed 9<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

attachments based on social strata along the lines of class and religion.<sup>105</sup> It can be argued therefore that Nostalgia for West Germany settled at a later time than *Ostalgie* as the changes East Germans felt after reunification were sudden and drastic. For West Germans, however, this was not the case.

For example, as East Germans gradually began to react to the negative effects of reunification, Left-wing parties were able to win continuous representation in the Bundestag. Die Linke, the successor party of the PDS, were able to promote the image of an Eastern German interest party with a solid base of voters.<sup>106</sup> This, in turn, represented a shift in political perceptions. The 1990 East German elections highlighted how Easterners were willing to accept a West German system by voting a conservative alliance linked with Helmut Kohl's CDU. However, by the end of the 1990s and into the new millennium, East Germans had seemingly shown political preference to left-wing groups. As stated previously, support for left-wing parties is much greater in the East of Germany compared to the West. This, too, contributed to a change in political party preferences in the 'new' Federal Republic. Identifying with a political party is not as black and white as it was prior to reunification, a clear difference between the past and the present in relation to the Federal Republic's domestic politics.

Indeed, there is clearly some acknowledgment that domestic politics in the Federal Republic have changed since East Germans were integrated with the West. In a similar way to *Ostalgie*, nostalgia for West Germany highlights such changes between the past and the present, but in a far less direct manner. After all, it is easier for East Germans to collectively find a specific point in time for when change really affected them. Citizens of the former West Germany may struggle to do so as a unit because the changes they experienced were not so sudden and experienced mutually. Voting trends, however, highlight that East and West Germans began to diverge from each other politically in the new millennium. This, at the very least, suggests that nostalgia for West Germany developed much later than *Ostalgie*. East German nostalgia was a quick response to the changes reunification gave to Easterners. For West Germans, this took a far slower response and has contributed to its lack of relative acknowledgment in the public mainstream.

### **The Changing Nature of German Foreign Policy**

In 2013, President Joachim Gauck referred to German foreign policy in a speech, calling upon the country to share a greater amount of international responsibilities:

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<sup>105</sup> Abedi, 'We are not in Bonn Anymore', p. 460.

<sup>106</sup> Marc Debus, 'Analysing Party Politics in Germany with New Approaches for Estimating Policy Preferences of Political Actors', *German Politics*, Vol. 18, No. 3, (2009), p. 283.

‘Germany has long since demonstrated that it acts in an internationally responsible way. But it could build on its experience in safeguarding human rights and the rule of law—take more resolute steps to pre-serve and help shape the order based on the European Union, NATO, and the United Nations. At the same time, Germany must also be ready to do more to guarantee the security that others have provided it with for decades. Germany should make a more substantial contribution, and it should make it earlier and more decisively if it is to be a good partner.’<sup>107</sup>

Indeed, while Gauck’s statement refers to a more assertive, but responsible, foreign policy, his views are seemingly out of odds with what West Germans were accustomed to during the Bonn Republic’s lifetime. As William Paterson states, ‘the creators of the Federal Republic were aware that both the Imperial and Nazi regimes had collapsed because of foreign policy failures which had united overwhelming forces against them.’<sup>108</sup> It was therefore a priority for West Germany to not only provide security for itself, but also remain a compliant power on the world stage. After the Second World War, West Germany needed to build trust with its Western counterparts, especially in the context of the developing Cold War. This, in itself, represented a challenge for the ‘old’ Federal Republic, attempting to distance itself from its Nazi past and yet still become a welcoming ally to the West.

The first ever chancellor of the Federal Republic, Konrad Adenauer, felt his main objective as far as foreign policy was to maintain peaceful relations with the major powers after the Second World War. The aggressive foreign policies of Imperial Germany and the Third Reich had brought Europe and the World to wars of shocking effect. Notably, he felt that ‘both our descent and our convictions root us in the West European world,’<sup>109</sup> highlighting straight away how West Germany should conduct its foreign affairs; namely in line with the West. Early West German foreign policy was therefore significantly limited and largely determined by Allied intervention, contributing to what would become a central feature of West German foreign policy. The newly created Federal Republic had to retain the good graces of the West in order to move away from its past, restricting West German foreign policy to a great extent.

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<sup>107</sup> President Joachim Gauck, ‘Speech to Open the 50<sup>th</sup> Munich Security Conference’, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014,

<http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/EN/JoachimGauck/Reden/2014/140131-Munich-Security-Conference.html>, accessed 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

<sup>108</sup> William E. Patterson, ‘Foreign and Security Policy’, in Gordon Smith, William E. Paterson, and Peter H. Merkl, *Developments in West German Politics*, (Basingstoke, 1989), p. 192.

<sup>109</sup> ‘Statement by Chacellor Adenauer at the German Bundestag, 20<sup>th</sup> September 1949, Stenographic Reports, p. 1, cited in Helga Haftendorn, *Coming of Age: German Foreign Policy Since 1945*, (Oxford, 2006), p. 17.

European integration marked an important step for the 'old' Federal Republic to help integrate itself on the world stage. For the FRG, there was no real choice about the Europeanisation of West German politics as its Western allies actively pursued it. Yet Germany's role in the Cold War, too, helped necessitate such a need. The division of Europe resulted in a significant disruption of pre-existing patterns of trade, resulting in the need to find new markets elsewhere. France, for example, accommodated such needs with the Schuman Plan (1950), highlighting in some ways international acceptance of the West German political system.<sup>110</sup> Yet it would take decades for the FRG to assume an 'ordinary' role in world affairs. For example, *Détente* at the start of the 1970s brought important developments for West German's European policies. It offered the normalisation of relations between the FRG, Eastern Europe and, of course, the GDR. Chancellor Brandt's *Ostpolitik* allowed West Germany to no longer rely on its allies to act as intermediaries in relations with certain Eastern European states. More important, however, was the fact that West Germany's influence within Europe was growing.<sup>111</sup>

The post-war FRG is often cited as quintessential example of the 'trading state'. As Harald Müller states, 'the country had derived its political identity from its success as a trading state. German export philosophy regarded exports as a right of business; all state interventions needed specific and explicit authority.'<sup>112</sup> This, in essence, defines the situation of West German foreign policy after the Second World War. The image has become grounded in historical memory, leading to a strong characterisation of West German identity.<sup>113</sup> They were not an aggressive force, but rather a state using its trading opportunities to benefit the West German system. Their reticence when it came to foreign affairs shaped the identity of West German citizens, trying to distance themselves from the Nazi past and put forward a successful model of rehabilitation. Yet once the reunification of Germany occurred, the West German foreign policy model was allowed to alter and determine a new path for the 'new' Federal Republic.

Notably, debates centred on the question of how the increase in power experienced by Germany after the Cold War and during Reunification would affect German foreign policy behaviour. Would post-reunification Germany remain a predictable and reliable partner of the Western states? Or would it break with the foreign policy traditions of the West German state and maybe even fall back into the foreign policy behaviour of the Third Reich, or set itself

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<sup>110</sup> Simon Bulmer, "The European Dimension", in Smith, Paterson, and Merkl, *Developments in West German Politics*, pp. 211-212.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, pp. 217-218.

<sup>112</sup> Harald Müller, Matthias Dembinski, Alexander Krelle, and Anette Schaper, *From Black Sheep to White Angel? The New German Export Control Policy*, Frankfurt: Peace Research Institute, Report, No. 32, (1994), p. 3.

<sup>113</sup> Beverly Crawford, *Power and German Foreign Policy: Embedded Hegemony in Europe*, (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 29.

up as a world power in an entirely new way? For outside observers, this was a real worry, but internally there were rational debates on how the Federal Republic should operate on the world stage after 1990.

For example, academic debate concerning German foreign policy after reunification at the time highlighted a divisive discourse, unable to agree completely on how the Federal Republic should manage its foreign affairs. Supporters of a more insistent foreign policy note how the changing nature of the geopolitical spectrum after the Cold War fundamentally altered how foreign policy could be conducted. The end of the Soviet Union, along with the conclusion of bipolar policymaking, meant that Germany operated within a multipolar world, with country's interests no longer vested in a dual ideological conflict. Germany's power, however, had been significantly restricted after World War II and West Germans had grown accustomed to viewing their state as small in comparison to other leading nations.<sup>114</sup> Yet for Germany, this change in the geopolitical realm implied a way for the Federal Republic to become a strong world power once again.<sup>115</sup> Arnulf Baring argued that Germany's position after the Cold War had changed so significantly that it resembled the geopolitical situation held by the German Reich after 1871, with Europe a continent of nation states at war with each other for their own interests.<sup>116</sup>

The Federal Republic's geographical position was also a key point for those advocating a stronger German foreign policy. The fact that it shares borders with nine countries, more than any other European country, made its security particularly vulnerable in military terms.<sup>117</sup> However, it could also be argued that Germany's unique geography could act as a bridge between the East and West, especially since they were separated from each other owing to the Cold War. It's numerous proficiencies, such as a large population, economic success, as well as its cultural influence; add to its significance for European and world politics.<sup>118</sup> Therefore, a more assertive foreign policy need not rely on geographical insecurities, but rather a greater sense of what Germany had achieved since the end of the Second World War.

Due to its defeat in World War II, Germany had lost its foreign policy autonomy and, as a divided state essentially on the border of the Cold War conflict, the Federal Republic depended on the backing of other states to guarantee its security. As Dirk Peters argues, multilateralism was the key

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<sup>114</sup> Dirk Peters, 'The Debate about a New German Foreign Policy after Unification', in Volker Rittberger (ed.), *German Foreign Policy Since Unification*, (Manchester, 2001), p. 13.

<sup>115</sup> Hans-Peter Schwarz, 'Das deutsche Dilemma', In Karl Kaiser and Hanns W. Maull, (eds.), *Deutschlands neue Außenpolitik, Vol. 1*, (Munich, 1994), pp. 81-97.

<sup>116</sup> Arnulf Baring, "'Germany, What Now?'"', in Arnulf Baring, (ed.), *Germany's New Position in Europe*, (Oxford, 1994), p. 10.

<sup>117</sup> Günther Gillensen, 'Germany's New Position in the Centre of Europe: The Significance of Germany's Position and Misunderstandings about German Interests', in Arnulf Baring, (ed.), *Germany's New Position in Europe*, (Oxford, 1994), p. 25.

<sup>118</sup> See Gregor Schöllgen, *Angst vor der Macht. Die Deutschen und ihre Außenpolitik*, (Berlin, 1993), pp. 26-31.

strategy under these specific circumstances. Through its integration in Western institutions, most notably the EU and NATO, West Germany gradually regained autonomy in foreign affairs and were assured of assistance from Western powers in safeguarding its survival. The Western allies, in turn, were willing to provide this protection in order to secure their own needs during the Cold War.<sup>119</sup> This, however, changed by 1990. The need to safeguard Germany's security was no longer as much of a priority for Western powers, allowing the 'new' Federal Republic the chance to alter, or at the very least, view its Foreign policy differently.

Yet critics of such a change argued that the geopolitical situation post 1990 was unique in its own right and not comparable to 1871, owing to the establishment of Western institutions. Furthermore, the influence the United States had within Europe at the later end of the twentieth century far surpassed the previous century. This, in turn, made a more docile environment for European countries to operate in and fostered a sense of interdependence overall. It was, in essence, a sense of continuity for German foreign policy that shaped the views of those critical of a shift in external affairs. Moreover, from a military perspective, Michael Kreile noted that Germany's power still remained limited in comparison to other leading nations, especially since they lacked any weapons of mass destruction and had a limited armed forces in terms of numbers.<sup>120</sup> The integration of East Germany with the West also did little to change the economic position of the Federal Republic.<sup>121</sup> Unemployment increased for both East and West Germans after 1990, leading to internal resentment amongst both sets of Germans. This, too, marked an issue for certain critics; outwardly Germany seemed powerful to its European neighbours and the United States, but on closer inspection was not the case.<sup>122</sup>

More importantly, it was argued that Germany was reliant on other leading powers to secure its geopolitical position. This did not mean that the country could attain its goals by itself, but rather it had to cooperate within the boundaries that it found itself in after the Cold War. Due to its economic linkages and the multilateral institutions it was integrated in, the 'new' Federal Republic, it was argued, was firmly embedded in the Western world and should cooperate accordingly.<sup>123</sup> The German government therefore had to continue pursuing its foreign policies within the framework of the EU and NATO, otherwise self-interest could destabilise the geopolitical spectrum.

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<sup>119</sup> Peters, 'The Debate about a New German Foreign Policy', pp. 16-17.

<sup>120</sup> Michael Kreile, 'Übernimmt Deutschland eine Führungsrolle in der Europäischen Gemeinschaft?', in Werner Weidenfeld, (ed.), *Was ändert die Einheit? Deutschlands Standort in Europa*, (Gütersloh, 1993), p. 49.

<sup>121</sup> See, Karl Kaiser, *Deutschlands Vereinigung: Die internationalen Aspekte*, (Bergisch Gladbach, 1991), p. 124.

<sup>122</sup> Peters, 'The Debate about a New German Foreign Policy', p. 21.

<sup>123</sup> Walter Bühl, 'Gesellschaftliche Grundlagen der deutschen Außenpolitik', in Kaiser and Maull, *Deutschlands neue Außenpolitik*, p. 176.

Interestingly, those advocating for the Federal Republic to either continue, or at the very least show restraint, regarding its foreign policy lack a sense of nostalgia for the 'old' Federal Republic in their rhetoric. Their concerns are focussed more on specific issues Germany faced at the time of unification. Granted, early scholarly debate concerning German foreign policy after reunification would not have had the luxury of fore fought when considering the potential impact any changes would have had on West German nostalgia. Nevertheless, it is curious that such debates were limited to more pragmatic concerns of Germany's geopolitical position after the Cold War, rather than how any changes would ultimately affect the mind-set of East and West Germans. This, in essence, neither demonstrates nor denies the existence of *Westalgie* and its political impact, but instead highlights the scholarly perspective at the time. Prior to reunification the Federal Republic's foreign policy was severely restricted, essentially becoming a part of its identity over forty years. It is therefore interesting how academic discourses focussed on practical issues, rather than any changes in West German identity after 1990.

This, too, stresses an important argument. *Ostalgie*, an East German phenomenon that developed very early in the life of the 'new' Federal Republic, highlighted how quickly life had changed for East Germans post reunification. The sudden and drastic political, economic, and social changes contributed to its quick emergence and developed over time as a critique of reunification. *Westalgie*, on the other hand, developed at a much slower pace and refers to more case specific issues. There lacks a clear starting point to its existence as either people were unaware of its development, or were focussed on issues that did not relate specifically to nostalgia for the 'old' West Germany. Indeed, since 1990 German foreign policy has evolved from its West German past and is by no means an exact replica. More recent events such as the British referendum result to leave the European Union has sparked a debate about its implications for European foreign and security policy. Among the key contested issues is the role Germany as the EU's largest economy can and should play in compensating for a less prominent British role in this issue area. For long, Germany has been perceived as a net consumer of security in Europe and beyond, and other EU member states and the US increasingly called upon the Federal Republic to increase its defence spending and foreign deployment in, for example, EU military missions. On 28 June 2016, five days after the Brexit vote, the German Parliament's Commissioner for the Armed Forces, Hans-Peter Bartels, contended that 'Germany now has even more responsibility' as it would likely have to fill parts of the gap left by the exit of one of Europe's security heavy weights and main troop suppliers, which would redirect its military cooperation even stronger toward the United States.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> *Die Zeit*, Eine Truppe weniger für Europa, 28<sup>th</sup> June 2016, accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018, <https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2016-06/brexit-hans-peter-bartels-militaereinsaeetze>.

Certainly, such calls suggest the Federal Republic is more willing to take greater responsibility in foreign affairs, an obvious difference between the past and the present. As previously stated, West German foreign policy strategies had been marked by a peculiar sense of discretion. Dirk Peters states, ‘Germany had been oblivious of its power’.<sup>125</sup> However, with the end of the Cold War, and the subsequent geopolitical alterations brought on by such an end, German foreign policy changed. So soon after reunification the German government had to succeed in removing concerns about an overly powerful Germany again. In Britain and the United States, issues were voiced that the German national character and mislead ambitions might lead the country to aspire to a dominant position in Europe. Margaret Thatcher, for example, opposed the pace of German unity, discouraging the idea of a strong unified Germany again<sup>126</sup> Nevertheless, the government reacted to reunification by emphasising political continuity in an effort to convince the sceptics that not much had changed, that the Federal Republic remained a reliable democratic country, and that it would continue to lead a responsible foreign policy.<sup>127</sup>

Yet changes in German foreign policy were noticeable during the 1990s and extended into the new millennium as well. For example, a clear indication that German foreign policy had shifted came very early on. The Federal government deployed German troops in the Gulf theatre through the winter months of 1990-1991, deployed naval vessels and aircraft for the Western European monitoring mission in the Adriatic, and committed aircraft and general support in Kosovo.<sup>128</sup> Scholars agree that the general public opinions concerning such changes in foreign policy were met with a negative response. In fact, as outlined below most Germans who were polled did not agree with Kohl’s argument that the Basic Law should be changed to allow for the deployment of German troops for United Nations activities.

2). Public opinion on the change of Basic Law to allow for German troops in UN operations (October 1990 - February 1991)

	<b>October 1990,</b>	<b>October 1990,</b>		<b>February 1991,</b>	<b>February 1991,</b>
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<sup>125</sup> Dirk Peters, ‘The Debate about a New German Foreign Policy, p. 14.

<sup>126</sup> ‘Thatcher’s Fight Against German Unity’, *BBC News*, (11<sup>th</sup> September 2009), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/8251211.stm>, accessed 9<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

<sup>127</sup> Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, pp. 352-353.

<sup>128</sup> Jeffery S. Lantis, *Strategic Dilemmas and the Evolution of German Foreign Policy Since Unification*, (Connecticut, 2002), pp. 175-178.



	<b>Old Länder</b>	<b>New Länder</b>		<b>Old Länder</b>	<b>New Länder</b>
<b>I agree</b>	24%	19%		36%	16%
<b>I disagree</b>	55%	53%		53%	66%
<b>Do not Know</b>	21%	28%		28%	18%

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann and Renate Köcher (eds.), *Allensbacher Jahrbuch der Demoskopie 1984-1992*, (Munich 1993), p. 962, cited in Douglas Webber, *New Europe, New Germany, Old Foreign Policy?: German Foreign Policy Since Unification*, (London, 2001), p. 70.

It is the reticence of the German populace concerning foreign policy that emphasises a strong notion of West German identity. Over 50% of people disagreed with the notion of deploying German troops for UN operations so soon after the reunification of Germany. In spite of calls from politicians for Germany to have an increased presence on the world stage, most of the populace seemingly dismissed the notion of a more active German foreign policy.

More examples of change can be seen with the Federal Republic's stance in the Kosovo War, the first time since the Second World War that German soldiers had taken part in a combat mission. This was not a support mission like in the Gulf Theatre; German soldiers were taking an active part in a NATO-led military operation with a military goal: the withdrawal of Serb troops from Kosovo.<sup>129</sup> Yet paradoxically, support for this specific conflict remained relatively positive amongst the German populace, highlighting a distinctive difference between perceptions of foreign intervention in the past and present. In fact, in a Bundestag debate, Germany's foreign policy was supported by the chairmen of all of the political party groups except the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the former East German communists, who argued that the air strikes violated international law.<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, research conducted by the Congressional Research Service found that there was an East-West divide in terms of support for Germany's involvement in the Kosovo War, with 56% of Eastern Germans opposing such participation.<sup>131</sup> East Germans, therefore, felt at greater odds against the Kosovo War than West Germans, which can imply a sense of *Westalgie* amongst Easterners for a time where the

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<sup>129</sup> Wolfgang-Uwe Freidrich, 'The Legacy of Kosovo: German Politics and Policies in the Balkans', *American Institute for Contemporary German Studies*, German Issues, No. 22, p. 48.

<sup>130</sup> Karen Donfried, Kosovo: International Relations to NATO Airstrikes, *CRS Report for Congress*, (21<sup>st</sup> April 1999), p. 3.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, p.3.

Federal Republic did not engage in foreign conflicts as much as it was doing in 1999. Yet their opposition could feasibly be an example of anti-US sentiment, as the United States were, too, providing military aid much like the Federal Republic.

The example of the Kosovo War certainly presents a challenge in addressing foreign policy changes as a rationale for *Westalgie's* existence. Yet as stated previously, West German nostalgia is a much more fluid and complex phenomenon in comparison to East German nostalgia. More importantly, other examples have shown that German government has opposed other foreign conflicts, namely the Iraq war. In spite showing solidarity with the United States after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York, the German government had expressed its reservations about an intervention in Iraq very early. Indeed, Helga Haftendorn notes that support for the governing coalition at the time remained low, altering the coalition's ability to show support in a war that lacked a strong UN mandate.<sup>132</sup>

3). Do you consider that it would be justified or not that our country participates in a military intervention in Iraq without a preliminary decision by the United Nations?

	<b>Absolutely Justified</b>	<b>Rather Justified</b>	<b>Rather Unjustified</b>	<b>Absolutely Unjustified</b>
<b>German Population</b>	4%	6%	29%	61%

EOS–Gallup Poll of Europe, January 2003.

As shown in the table above, a majority of German citizens reacted very differently to the Iraq War, largely because they felt any conflict needed to be justified with a mandate from the United Nations. What is important is that the German population emphasised as strong sense of responsibility regarding the Federal Republic's ability to intervene in foreign affairs. Therefore, it is important to note that not every specific incident involving German foreign policy relates to *Westalgie*. Perceptions of such events are, too, shaped by pragmatic concerns that are not always relevant to the onset of nostalgia. It is, however, clear that a reticent foreign policy was a hallmark of a West German identity. Moreover, as shown below, the general population of the Federal Republic do not regard an increase in national defence spending in the same manner as other European countries.

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<sup>132</sup> Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, pp. 383-385.

4). Do you think we should increase our spending on national defence, keep it about the same, or decrease it?

	<b>Increase</b>	<b>Keep the same</b>	<b>Decrease</b>
<b>Poland</b>	52%	37%	3%
<b>Netherlands</b>	49%	38%	9%
<b>Sweden</b>	47%	45%	7%
<b>United Kingdom</b>	43%	41%	14%
<b>Germany</b>	34%	47%	17%
<b>France</b>	32%	52%	14%

‘Europeans Face the World Divided’, Pew Research Center, (13<sup>th</sup> June 2016), <http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/06/13/europeans-face-the-world-divided/>, accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

In comparison to other European powers, Germany’s response to an increase in national defence spending is considerably lower than Poland’s, the Netherlands’, Sweden’s, and the United Kingdom’s. Indeed, these figures do not necessarily highlight an overt sense of nostalgia for the Federal Republic. After all, one can argue that foreign policy issues should take a back step behind domestic policies, especially regarding issues such as the financial crisis of 2007-08 or the refugee crisis of recent years. Furthermore, the population’s disposition concerning issues of foreign intervention may still be loosely connected to the history of the Third Reich. Yet what public opinion shows is that discretion concerning foreign policy, an important subject for West Germany prior to reunification, has largely remained unchanged in spite of any actual foreign policy developments in recent times.

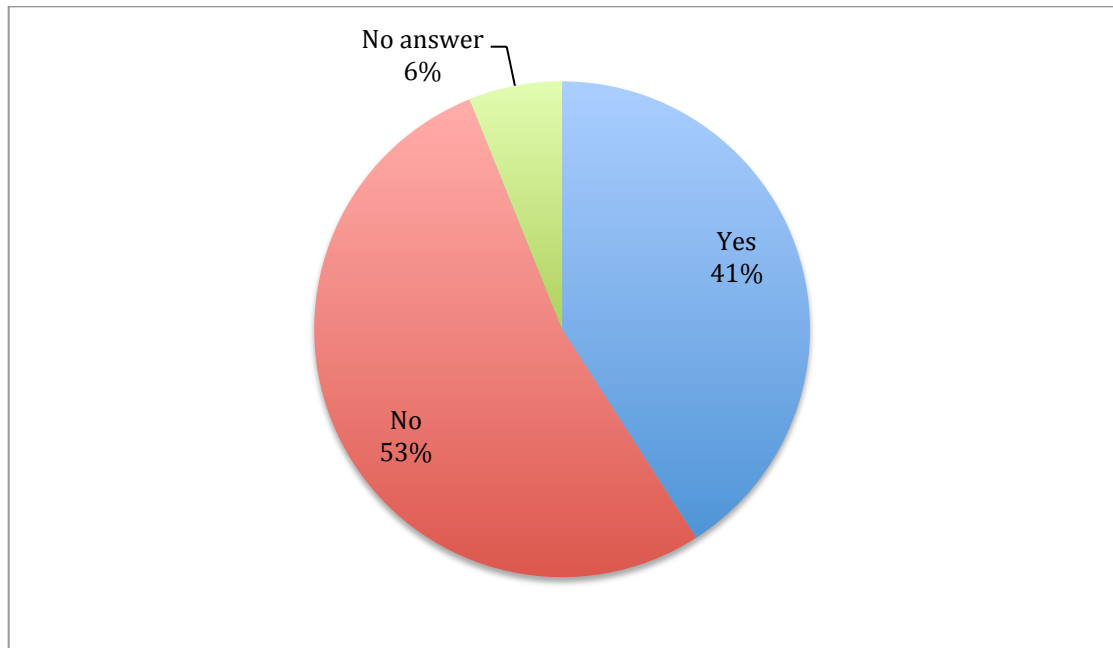
In 2013 the World Values Survey also found that a greater number of people would not fight for their country if there were to be an outbreak of war. These findings have largely remained constant since the reunification of Germany. In a similar poll conducted by the World Values Survey in 1997, West Germans were asked the same question, with over 43% stating that they would not be willing to fight for Germany.<sup>133</sup> Such findings highlight the perception of foreign policy amongst the German populace. Whilst the Federal

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<sup>133</sup> World Values Survey, 1995-1998 results, West Germany (1997), p. 31.

Republic has taken a more active foreign policy since reunification, most opinion polls show that the German populace does not wholly support this

5). If there were to be another war, would you fight for your country?



World Values Survey, 2010-2014 Results, p. 29.

Indeed, the issue of German foreign policy highlights another facet of change experienced by the Federal Republic after the reunification of Germany. Today, German foreign policy is now confronted with an array of challenges, which have demanded a response from the country's foreign policy-makers. Whereas the immediate post-Cold War period was dominated by the need to stabilise Europe, the challenges facing contemporary Germany are increasingly more global in character.<sup>134</sup> It is therefore a challenge to link German foreign policy with a sense of nostalgia for the 'old' Federal Republic. True, Germany has demonstrated a sense of difference between the past and present when it comes to its foreign affairs. Yet criticisms levelled at such changes can be suggestive of more practical issues when dealing with foreign policy. Support for the Iraq War in Germany is but one example of such pragmatism, even if there is

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<sup>134</sup> Alister Miskimmon, 'Foreign and Security Policy' in Stephen Padgett, William E. Patterson, and Reimut Zohlnhöfer, (eds.), *Developments in German Politics Four*, (New York, 2014), p. 211.

certainly a clear sense that German foreign policy has changed since the reunification of Germany.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Reunification brought with it a not so subtle change to the German political system creating a need to integrate a new set of people with their own political and social views. This had a profound effect on both the domestic and foreign affairs of the Federal Republic. The traditional party preferences of West Germany gave way with the introduction of a new electorate, and foreign policy became uniquely different in its own right. After examination of the political changes – both domestic and externally - the Federal Republic has experienced, it is clear that there is, at the very least some examples of nostalgia for the ‘old’ Federal Republic. There are, however, issues that must be addressed. For one, changes in domestic politics suggest that any notion of nostalgia would have developed later in the history of the ‘new’ Federal Republic. As the dissimilarity index highlighted, East and West German voting trends drifted more so after the turn of the millennium. As such, nostalgia for West Germany is unlike *Ostalgie* when referring to its onset. Reunification and its immediate consequences did more to affect East Germans than it did West Germans.

Furthermore, while nostalgia is a phenomenon that critiques modernity and the changes that it brings, there are other genuine reasons to be critical of certain issues without feeling nostalgic. The early scholarly debate concerning German foreign policy after reunification emphasises this point, with academics discussing the Federal Republic’s geopolitical positioning at the time, rather than in the past. Pragmatism, one could argue, may have a more important role in developing criticisms and discourses rather than nostalgia when it comes to the political spectrum. This, too, was highlighted in the German populace’s views on the Iraq War, who felt that German foreign policy in this specific context relied upon responsible uses of UN mandates. It is therefore hard to suggest that nostalgia for West Germany is completely linked with political developments in the Berlin Republic. Yes, there are certain examples of specific changes between the Federal Republic’s political past and present. But these examples do little to demonstrate how widespread and acknowledged such a phenomenon has become in contemporary times.

That is not to say that *Westalgie* is not useful in understanding the past and the present when referencing West German politics, economics, or society. For example, an element of *Ostalgie* is its use in developing an East German identity that had become lost after the swift changes reunification brought. Without a sense of identity, a person’s history and past experiences can be left redundant. Such fears were notably brought up with the East German populace,

with almost all aspects of everyday life gone for them. This can also be applied to West Germans, albeit on a smaller scale in comparison to East Germans. They felt a sense of loss once there was a clear recognition that the Bonn Republic had given way to the Berlin Republic. Granted, this is perhaps more relevant to West Berliners rather than West Germans due to the special geographical position of West Berlin, the unique subcultures it developed during the Cold War, and the representation of the city in numerous works of fiction. The political element of *Westalgie* therefore acknowledges the changes West Germans felt after 1990 and more so after 2000, but is in many ways very case specific and only refers to certain events, rather than the whole picture.

#### **4. Westalgie and Economics**

The Previous chapter highlighted that politically; *Westalgie* can refer to specific instances of change the Federal Republic experienced after the year 2000. West German nostalgia developed in a later period compared to *Ostalgie*, largely owing to how changes affected East Germans so quickly after reunification. In regards to economics, this is fairly similar trend. The early years following reunification highlighted a quick and sudden development of economic issues that faced East Germans. Indeed, West Germans were also affected by the integration of the Eastern economy into their own, yet the problems they faced were not essentially comparable and were largely overlooked by the eastern experience. More significant for West Germans was a change in currency from the popular and stable Deutschmark to the Euro, a currency that more recently has faced challenging moments. This, in essence, helps to establish a potential example of *Westalgie*, as the Deutschmark was arguably a strong symbol of West Germany. However, nostalgia for the Deutschmark does not necessarily represent a desire to revert to the currency, as opinion on the Euro has remained fairly positive in Germany. Overall, West Germany, superior than its Eastern counterpart when it came to having a successful economy, prided itself on being an economically stable post-war country. Part of its identity was formed by its economic success, with the *Wirtschaftswunder* and the Deutschmark contributing to its positive image both home and abroad. It is therefore reasonable to assume that economics would have some form of impact in developing nostalgia for West Germany.

The first section will provide an understanding of how West Germany's economic success became a source of national pride for West Germans. This, in essence, would lay the foundation for the development of *Westalgie* from an economic perspective as one can find a clear discernible difference between the past and present. The next section will outline the various economic issues East and West Germans faced after reunification, highlighting that such issues were primarily a problem for East Germans in comparison to West Germans. Lastly, due to the symbolic importance of the Deutschmark, its eventual replacement with the Euro will be analysed to not only demonstrate a sense of nostalgia for a part of West German history, but also highlight how European integration has caused specific consequences for the Federal Republic.

#### **From Ruin to Miracle: Salvaging an Identity**

To understand how West Germans were able to build a strong sense of identity, it is important to view its formative years from an economic perspective. In the view of the large scale and highly visible destruction at the end of the Second World War, pessimistic opinions – both German and non-German – about Germany’s economic future were apparent. For example, a U.S. report to the President concerning Germany’s agricultural and food requirements found that 25 percent of German pre-war food production came from areas which were now taken by Poland and Russia. Similarly, coal production had halved due to the lack of availability of skilled workers, leading to the fear of Germany’s exports industry declining rapidly.<sup>135</sup> The extent of the destruction in German cities was also very apparent after the conflict. For example, the American and British occupation zones had amassed to a total of 23.3 percent of housing destroyed.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, Hamburg’s harbour, the largest in Germany, was paralysed by the extent of destruction caused by the war. 2,900 wrecks blocked the passage of harbour traffic and over two-thirds of the harbour railway tracks had been destroyed. Damage to German cities and landscapes had also been self-inflicted by retreating German forces or by Nazi forces following Hitler’s instructions to leave behind only ‘scorched earth’ to the advancing enemy. Consequently, everything essential to the maintenance of everyday life such as farmhouses, water and electricity works, and stocks of food were damaged or otherwise destroyed.<sup>137</sup>

In the midst of such devastation in Germany, the heads of the provincial and national authorities in the British occupational zone assessed the German economic situation as being ‘almost thrown back to the early days of industrialisation.’<sup>138</sup> Contemporary newspaper articles reinforce such pessimism; one article in particular refers to a general decline in public morale in relation to the outcome of the war and its economic consequences.<sup>139</sup> However, in stark contrast to the negativity that accompanied West Germany’s economic situation immediately after the war, what followed in the subsequent years was a revival of the economy. The sudden recovery in the 1950s, otherwise known as the *Wirtschaftswunder*, and supported by West Germany’s social market economy, helped to sustain the image of West German economic stability for the next four decades. The implementation of a new currency, the

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<sup>135</sup> Herbert Hoover, ‘The President’s Economic Mission to Germany and Austria’, Report No. 1 – German Agriculture and Food Requirements, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1947, Truman Library Digital Archive, [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/marshall/large/documents/pdfs/5166.pdf#zoom=10](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/marshall/large/documents/pdfs/5166.pdf#zoom=10), accessed 20<sup>th</sup> August 2018. pp. 3-5.

<sup>136</sup> S. Schraut, *Flüchtlingsaufnahme in Württemberg-Baden 1945-1949: Amerikanische Besatzungsziele und demokratischer Wiederaufbau im Konflikt*, (Munich, 1995), p. 229. cited in Ian Connor, *Refugees and Expellees in Post-war Germany*, (Manchester, 2007), p. 31.

<sup>137</sup> Alan Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945-1955*, (Oxford, 1991), pp. 14-17.

<sup>138</sup> Wolfgang Malnowski, ‘Die Gnade der künstlichen Geburt’, *Der Spiegel*, 1<sup>st</sup> May 1989, p. 144.

<sup>139</sup> ‘Probleme der Arbeit’, *Die Zeit*, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1946, p. 14.



Deutschmark, also helped to reduce the risk of inflation. With the currency reform, the old Reichmarks was to be exchanged for the new Deutschmark on a one-to-one basis. More importantly, however, the currency reform discouraged retailers to hoard their goods from fear that they would accumulate worthless marks. It, too, destroyed the black market, where American cigarettes were the currency of choice. People were once again given an incentive to work for wages instead of resorting to bartering on the black market.<sup>140</sup>

Yet additional prerequisites enabled the West German economy to improve dramatically after the war. Importantly, the Allied repairs to Germany's badly damaged transport infrastructure achieved quick results: by June 1946, 93 percent of the railway lines in the British zone were open again, and 800 bridges had been repaired. In the American zone 78 percent of the railway lines were already operational by the end of the war. Yet only after a year had repairs ensured that 97 percent of lines were working again. Therefore, in spite of an initially harsh winter between the years 1946-47, the transportation of essential commodities aided a quick economic recovery.<sup>141</sup> Consequently, West Germany's shift to a social market economy helped recover from the Second World War with what is known as the West German economic miracle. Retrospectively, one article noted, 'no one will be able to deny that the German government has pursued a successful economic policy.' This in spite of the German economy being 'in the midst of the most severe crisis of the post-war period. State finances were shattered and the number of unemployed rose ever higher.'<sup>142</sup>

Because of such success, it is therefore important to analyse why these factors are important when referencing nostalgia for West Germany. This is largely explained by the concept of West German identity at the time. In comparison to other leading countries such as France, the United States, or the United Kingdom, The Federal Republic lacked a political 'founding' myth. This, of course, was because of the notable position West Germany was in after the Second World War. As Grünbacher points out, the FRG was to a large extent an allied creation and seen by many Germans only as a temporary arrangement prior to the eventual reunification of Germany.<sup>143</sup> The consequences of the Holocaust, too, meant that the Federal Republic's immediate beginnings would be problematic. Any sense of national pride would therefore not come in the form of specific political moments as the Allies largely controlled early West German domestic policies, and the Nazi past

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<sup>140</sup> Mark Spicka, *Selling the Economic Miracle: Economic Reconstruction and Politics in West Germany, 1949-1957*, (New York, 2007), pp. 39-40.

<sup>141</sup> Kramer, *West German Economy*, p. 100.

<sup>142</sup> 'Das Kommandierte Wirtschaftswunder', *Die Zeit*, 8<sup>th</sup> September 1967, <http://www.zeit.de/1967/36/das-kommandierte-wirtschaftswunder>, accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

<sup>143</sup> Armin Grünbacher, *The Making of German Democracy: West Germany during the Adenauer Era, 1945-65*, (Manchester, 2010), p. 73.

would make FRG patriotism difficult. This was also pertinent to the Weimar Republic, a failed democracy that allowed the establishment of Nazism, and Imperial Germany, whose aggressive foreign policies were considered a starting point for the First World War. How then could the Federal Republic recover its image outwardly and, more importantly, inwardly?

Instead of a political ‘founding’ myth, the Federal Republic had to look elsewhere; namely with the economic successes that would soon occur after the Second World War. Werner Abelshauser argues that this myth could be found via the early economic performances of the FRG. It is, however, misconceptions of said performances that allowed the development of an economic ‘founding’ myth. Where previous conceptions discussed a unique *Wirtschaftswunder*, he identified similar economic performance in other European nations of the time. He also attributed West Germany’s fantastic growth to pre-1945 trends. The ‘economic miracle’ was consequently less than miraculous, but rather a series of medium-term business cycles within an upward trend.<sup>144</sup>

Grünbacher also notes that terms that have become synonymous with West Germany’s post-war economic position such as the economic miracle have been misinterpreted, contributing to the creation of an economic myth that helped to create the Federal Republic. For example, he rejects the term miracle as it implies that the early economic success of the FRG was caused by divine intervention. Instead rationale explanations are presented such as the German work ethic. Hard work and diligence, according to Grünbacher, was a distinctive distraction from the Nazi past, allowing West Germans the ability to demonstrate to the world that decent people like themselves could not have been involved in Nazi atrocities.<sup>145</sup> Indeed, much like Abelshauser, Grünbacher notes that although the economic miracle could be explained via reasonable factors, the sudden success of West Germany’s economy contributed to the ‘founding’ myth of the FRG and would act as a starting point for West Germans to appropriate into their identity. Mark Spicka highlights that the narrative of West Germany’s economic history was even encouraged in Erhard’s publications, helping to offer a sense of national redemption for Germans and become a source of legitimisation for the West Germany.<sup>146</sup>

Stefan Berger, too, shares similar views but looks at the issue in the context of overcoming a troubled national past and the embracement of democratic values. According to Berger, Allied attempts to represent West Germans as victims of Hitler’s regime, along with the desire to eradicate racism as opposed to nationalism, helped to uplift West Germans at a similar time as the economic miracle. The repressions of any signs of neo-Nazism combined

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<sup>144</sup> See, for example, Werner Abelshauser and Dietmar Petzina, *Deutsche Wirtschaftsgeschichte im Industriezeitalter: Konjunktur, Krise, Wachstum*, (Düsseldorf, 1990).

<sup>145</sup> Grünbacher, *The Making of German Democracy*, p. 74.

<sup>146</sup> Spicka, *Selling the Economic Miracle*, p. 28.

with economic successes were the prime conditions under which the ‘old’ FRG could be successful. Former Nazis were smoothly integrated into the democratic nation as long as they showed themselves to be willing converts to the new nation and its liberal-democratic ideals. This highlighted how the economic success of the FRG strengthened traditionally strong economic identities and helped along democratic learning processes.<sup>147</sup> Economic success was therefore intimately linked with the effort to overcome the past through democratic values and ideals.

Consequently, it is the economic performance of West Germany in its early years that helped shape a distinctive identity for West Germans. While they could not look to the past to help shape a positive sense of identity, they could view the economic miracle and the social market economy as signs of encouraging growth internally and externally. Indeed, though some scholars have challenged the term ‘miracle’ in characterising West Germany’s early economic performances, they are in agreement that the narrative of the *Wirtschaftswunder* had taken hold in the national consciousness of West Germans. After a slow economic start, West Germany transformed itself seemingly overnight from an economic cripple to powerhouse and enjoyed prodigious levels of growth in the 1950s, which would continue on into the 1960s. As nostalgia and identity are closely interconnected, it is suitable to view the West German economy as an important element of *Westalgie*. Understanding how the economy has performed in recent times is therefore important in demonstrating why such nostalgia developed in the first place.

Even the effects of the economic miracle were noticed outside of Germany and, more importantly, much later in the life of the ‘old’ FRG. President Ronald Reagan, speaking at the Brandenburg Gate, stated:

‘Where four decades ago there was rubble, today in West Berlin there is the greatest industrial output of any city in Germany--busy office blocks, fine homes and apartments, proud avenues, and the spreading lawns of parkland. Where a city's culture seemed to have been destroyed, today there are two great universities, orchestras and an opera, countless theatres, and museums. Where there was want, today there's abundance--food, clothing, automobiles--the wonderful goods of the Ku'damm.’<sup>148</sup>

Reagan’s speech highlighted a few important issues concerning the *Wirtschaftswunder*. Firstly, he stresses the close relationship between the ‘old’ Federal Republic and the United States in an era of geopolitical instability. More importantly, however, is the pride West Germans could feel in regard to how far the country had come from complete ruin after the Second World War.

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<sup>147</sup> Stefan Berger, *Germany*, p. 264.

<sup>148</sup> President Ronald Reagan, Speech at the Brandenburg Gate, West Berlin, Germany, 12<sup>th</sup> June 1987, [http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/speeches/reagan\\_berlin.htm](http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/speeches/reagan_berlin.htm), accessed 15<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

It was, after all, the economic success of the West German system that helped to create such perceived prosperity. West German Politicians, too, shared similar sentiments, highlighting a positive history that West German's built upon after 1945. In 1995, in his speech on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war, then President, Roman Herzog, pointed out West Germany's positive achievements. After acknowledging the victims of the Germans and the role that Hitler as well as many Germans played in the Holocaust, Herzog focused on the positive issues that followed 1945; namely, Western integration, reconstruction, the economic miracle, the integration of refugees, and the adoption of Western democracy and human rights.<sup>149</sup> In his inaugural speech on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2004, President Horst Köhler emphasised similar sentiments, stating:

'I myself am a member of a generation that experienced the Federal Republic as a unique success story, from the reconciliation with our neighbours, to the economic miracle, and ultimately reunification. These are all great historic achievements and good reasons to have confidence in ourselves.'<sup>150</sup>

These examples provide a sense of how West Germans perceived themselves during forty years of separation. The *Wirtschaftswunder*, was a success story that laid the basis for a semblance of national pride, with military strength giving way to economic success – especially given the context of the Federal Republic's fortunes after 1945. In this sense, as well, we see a number of high profile figures referring to West Germany in a nostalgic sense. The examples provided refer to a successful West Germany, which developed from ruin to a successfully sustaining country, in a positive viewpoint. Yet rather than point out the trials and tribulations involved in reuniting East and West Germany together, the 'old' Federal Republic is viewed as a beacon of hope for Germans that are displaced in modern times. Positive sentiments highlight the need to look to the past to help rectify issues in the present day.

Indeed, the success of the West Germany's social market economy made it easy for West Germans to grow fond of their new state. As the material situation improved for more and more sections of society, support for their system changed from an initial pragmatic and conditional support to a principled and stronger system support.<sup>151</sup> Lifestyle magazines offered tips to manage one's diet and nutrition, as the benefits of the economic miracle apparently led to issues of weight gain among the German population.

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<sup>149</sup> Roman Herzog, 'Ansprache beim Staatsakt aus Anlaß des 50. Jahrestages des Endes des Zweiten Weltkrieges', 8<sup>th</sup> May 1995, [http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/DE/Roman-Herzog/Reden/1995/05/19950508\\_Rede.html](http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/DE/Roman-Herzog/Reden/1995/05/19950508_Rede.html), accessed 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

<sup>150</sup> Horst Köhler, 'Wir können in Deutschland vieles möglich machen', 1<sup>st</sup> July 2004, [http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/DE/Horst-Koehler/Reden/2004/07/20040701\\_Rede.html](http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/DE/Horst-Koehler/Reden/2004/07/20040701_Rede.html), accessed 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

<sup>151</sup> Wittlinger, *German National Identity in the Twenty-First Century*, p. 73.

*Ratgeber*, for example, stated ‘we have gone a little overboard in our joy over the good things that have returned,’ and ‘One thing is certain: lately we have been eating too much.’<sup>152</sup> Statistical evidence on the matter is difficult to attain yet the fact that magazines are even discussing such issues suggests how widespread the effects of the *Wirtschaftswunder* were perceived at the time.

West Germany was also an important beneficiary in the early years of the Cold War. In the context of the United States’ strategic efforts to contain Communism after the Truman Doctrine, economic stability was intimately connected to political stability. Consequently, the Federal Republic’s economy benefitted from the initiation of financial aid from the U.S. such as the Marshall Plan. West Germany, therefore, profited from the unstable international rivalry that emerged quickly after the Second World War. Added economic stimulation came from an increase in demand in German products as a result of the Korean War, again a by-product of the Cold War. Overall, West German production output leapt upward at an average annual rate of 8.2 percent in the years of 1950-54 and 7.1 percent in the years 1955-58.<sup>153</sup>

The West German economy, too, benefitted from employing external labour from varying European countries. Policies were shaped on the view that migrant workers were temporary labour units, which could be recruited, utilised, and sent away again as employers required.<sup>154</sup> In principle, the guest worker policies introduced in the Federal Republic were designed to benefit both the West German economy, and the foreigners who would return to their respective nations as skilled labourers. Very quickly, West Germany began taking in workers from countries such as Spain, Greece, Turkey, Portugal, and Yugoslavia. Subsequently, the Federal Republic experienced a rapid increase in foreigners entering under formal guest worker programmes. Waves of *Gastarbeiter* came from the less developed and rural regions of their respective countries of origin. Guest workers in essence filled the gaps caused by the complete reduction of East German workforces and therefore allowed West Germany’s economy to further progress, in spite of an emerging domestic hostility towards foreign labour towards the 1970s.

West Germany therefore had a strong history of economic success during forty years of division. As a direct counterpart to East German’s socialist economy, West Germans could, at the very least, point to their economic way of life as a source of national pride. In the context of where the West German economy was after the Second World War, it is apparent that West Germans aligned themselves with the Federal Republic after the success of its economy. It is, therefore, understandable that the West German economy may in some

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<sup>152</sup> *Ratgeber*, 1950, no. 9, 257, cited in [http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=4597](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=4597), accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

<sup>153</sup> Henry Ashby Turner, Jr., *Germany from Partition to Reunification*, (London, 1992), p. 110.

<sup>154</sup> Stephen Castles, ‘The Guest-Worker Question in Western Europe – An Obituary’, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Special Issue: Temporary Worker Programs: Mechanisms, Conditions, Consequences, (Winter, 1986), p. 769.

way be linked with *Westalgie*. After all, changes brought on by the reunification of Germany had an impact on the German economy, a point that helped nostalgia develop like it did in East Germany.

### **Reunification: Problems from an Economic Perspective**

Faced with the task of integrating a region with decrepit infrastructure, outdated technology and no capitalist experience, the West German government confronted a number of important decisions in 1990. These included: the exchange rate at which to effect monetary union, how to privatise eastern firms, how to spend money in the east, and whether to raise the money through taxes or debt. Considering that reunification acted as the starting point for the emergence of *Ostalgie*, it is prudent to assess the economic impact the same event had on West Germans economically. Indeed, as previously stated, the political differences between the 'old' and 'new' Federal Republic were noticeable. Yet these typically occurred later in the Federal Republics history. While East Germans were quick to notice the pace of reunification from a political and economic viewpoint, West Germans were far more likely to critique these changes later on.

The crucial point to address is that by the start of the nineties, the East German economic structures already had no chance to surviving. As such, it was only a matter of time as to how quickly it would collapse and be replaced by something entirely new. This therefore allowed the West German government the ability to integrate the East German economy in any way it saw fit. One of the first steps towards economic reunification occurred in 1990 with a monetary union between the two German countries. East Germans would adopt the Deutschmark, a literal representation of the successful West German economic model, replacing the East German mark. The legal framework for the economic community between the two states and for the transformation of East Germany's economic order involved nearly a complete adoption of the FRG's economic laws and regulations by East Germany. These changes included the restoration of private property and competition in East Germany and the free movement of goods, services, labour and capital between East and West Germany. In addition, social welfare, pensions, unemployment and health insurance programs similar to those in West Germany were introduced into East Germany and any deficits in these new programs would be financed temporarily by the FRG. Pensions in East Germany were converted to Deutschmark values based on net East German incomes, meaning an East German worker could receive a maximum pension of 70 percent of his or her net income after 45 years of employment. The agreement also guaranteed that the Deutschmark

value of East German pensions could not fall below their former Mark equivalents.<sup>155</sup>

In essence, the economic strategy of the Federal Republic regarding its East German counterpart was one of replication. For Westerners, it was assumed that the East German economy would benefit straight away from its integration with the West. For Easterners, the mass protests of 1989 not only mirrored the popular outrage with regards to the constrictions of personal and political rights of freedom but also reflected the all-around dissatisfaction with the insufficient supply of goods and services in the East. However, much like the political unification of the two Germany countries, the economic consequences of reunification was not a simple process. This is significant as it helps one to understand a starting point for *Westalgie*. Of course, from an economic perspective, reunification had a greater economic impact on East Germans as opposed to West Germans. Not only were their core political and economic beliefs changed along with the fall of the Berlin Wall, but East Germans soon faced the startling reality that reunification would have prolonged after-effects. One important differentiation between the GDR and the Berlin Republic refers to the economic situation of Germany after 1990, arguably the most immediate issue that helped foster nostalgia for East Germany.

From an economic position, reunification had a great amount of expectations coming from former GDR citizens. As West Germans began to enjoy the profits of the post-war economic miracle, and the ever-increasing range of consumer goods, Easterners looked on fully aware that their government could not keep up with the West economically.<sup>156</sup> As previously mentioned, it was assumed that unification, at least economically, would be a quick process for East Germans.

Nevertheless, a feeling of resentment developed between East and West Germany because the euphoria of the years after the fall of the wall had been replaced with the hardships of everyday life. There, too, was a greater emphasis on integrating East Germans into the 'new' Federal Republic as opposed to West Germans. Focus on developing the Eastern infrastructure at the expense of the West meant the perception that reunification was hampered by merging the East with the West. Many East Germans spoke of the need for greater governmental investment in the east, with the Gesprächskreis Ost arguing that 'the economic rebuilding of the East must emphatically stand at the centre of

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<sup>155</sup> Peter Bofinger, 'The German Monetary Unification (GMU): Converting Marks to D-Marks', *Review: The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis*, Vol. 72, No. 4, (July/August 1990), p. 18.

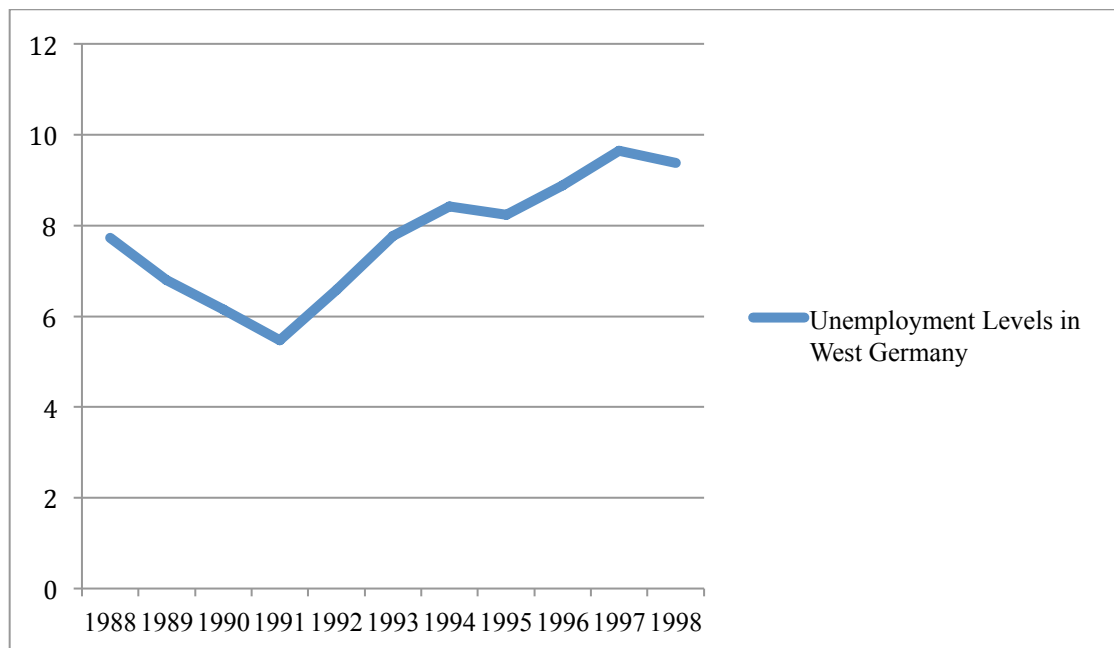
<sup>156</sup> Cooke, *Representing East Germany Since Unification*, p. 146.

political action.<sup>157</sup> Yet the experience of Westerners, one can argue, remained second behind East Germans.

Indeed, such findings suggest that changing economic circumstances mainly affected those in the East as opposed to the West. While this certainly appears to be the case, the perspective of Westerners is important to gauge any sense of economic nostalgia for West Germany. West Germans, of course, did not have to adjust to a new economic ideology, lose beloved brands, or face relatively high levels of unemployment. Yet they faced their own challenges in merging the East German economy with their own. Reunification caused some socioeconomic problems in the old parts of the Federal Republic. From the perspective of West Germans, who grew accustomed to a certain way of living under the FRG government, reunification also had broad economic consequences.

West German unemployment, while low compared to the East, still increased during the first years after reunification, leaving a somewhat negative impression of the events of 1989/90, especially considering the initial euphoria felt about merging East and West Germany together. The graph below highlights the change in West German employment levels both before and after reunification, with a general decline in unemployment levels by 1991, only to increase towards the end of the decade.

#### 6). West German Unemployment Rate before and after Reunification



<sup>157</sup> *Gesprächskreis Ost*, 'Course Correction in the Economic Buildup of the East', [http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=3109&language=english](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=3109&language=english), accessed 21<sup>st</sup> September 2018.



Germany Unemployment Rate,  
[http://www.indexmundi.com/germany/unemployment\\_rate.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/germany/unemployment_rate.html), accessed 19<sup>th</sup>  
June 2017.

It is in periods of personal decline where nostalgia can develop overtime. Take, for example, the introduction of *Ostalgie* so soon after 1990. The lives of East Germans were ruptured to the point where they reminisced certain elements of their past. While they did not want to go back to a communist dictatorship, facets of their upbringing were quickly changed, along with high levels of unemployment. This, in a sense, contributed to the feeling of difference between the Berlin and Bonn Republic. Taking on the challenge of integrating the East German economy had an adverse effect on West German citizens. Certainly, these somewhat negative experiences related to the reunification of Germany had an impact on the general perception of the events of 1989/90.

The high costs necessary to overcome the economic division between the East and West is an important factor in reminding West Germans of reunification because the huge subsidisation meant personal financial losses, as they had to pay a certain percentage of their wages through 'solidarity taxes'. The economic state of Germany and the effect it has had on the public has been a popular topic of debate for Germans. For many years West Germans had been accustomed to an Americanised way of life, and the strain on the economy due to transfer payments for the rebuilding of the East had seriously tested the West's dedication to reunification. Though the payments were considered temporary at the time, their negative effects, such as higher taxes and unemployment, have been widely felt. Indeed, when asked how their situation has changed since reunification, West Germans polled generally seem to have found life more trying.<sup>158</sup> Solidarity Taxes, once thought to be only temporary still remain in spite of certain opposition to it.

Although they did not have to adapt to change in the same manner as East Germans, it is clear that reunification altered the lives of West Germans from an economic perspective. From this position, reunification clearly affected East Germans more so than West Germans. This is important in helping to understand the complexities of *Westalgie*. It is, after all, a phenomenon that is case specific. The political element of nostalgia for West Germany highlighted this fact and the early economic troubles after reunification do the same. Indeed, the West German economy was resoundingly built on an economic 'founding'

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<sup>158</sup> Michael Adams, 'Reunification and Public Opinion in Germany', *The Continuing Challenges of German Reunification*, Paper 8,  
<http://preserve.lehigh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1007&context=perspectives-v16>,  
accessed August 4<sup>th</sup> 2019.

myth that was defined by hard work and meticulousness. The economic effects of reunification undoubtedly challenged this sense of West German identity. Therefore it is no surprise that some form of nostalgia would have developed after reunification for West Germans. However, as stated above, these immediate effects were felt greater in East Germany than in the West. This explains the sudden emergence of *Ostalgie*, but does little to do the same for *Westalgie*. As such, it is necessary to view a specific and significant economic change the Federal Republic did experience in the new millennium; namely the introduction of the Euro in favour of the symbolic Deutschmark.

### **From the Deutschmark to the Euro: Adopting the Common Currency**

The Deutschmark, a symbol and expression of West Germany's post-war identity, gave way to the Euro early in the new millennium. From the challenging circumstances from which the currency was born, to its overall performance concerning low inflation, the Deutschmark was a source of national pride for both East and West Germans. It was an important factor in helping West Germans recover from the Second World War both economically and psychologically. As such, when the Deutschmark was eventually replaced by the Euro in January 2002, debate concerning the loss of a West German symbol materialised.

The Deutschmark was a strong example of West Germany's international financial and economic success and also contributed to it. Since reunification, it had become even more important as a symbol as well as an instrument of Germany's new central role in Europe. As stated previously, the implementation of the Deutschmark contributed in some way to help West Germany's economy thrive so soon after the Second World War. It is, therefore, no surprise to consider how important the relationship may be between West Germany's inhabitants and their former currency. The change from the Deutschmark to the euro marked a change between the Bonn and Berlin Republic, especially considering the symbolic nature of the Deutschmark. Sacrificing the currency meant both the loss of a powerful national symbol and the loss of a unilateral policy-making power. Matthias Kaelberer notes that unlike other European currencies at the time such as the French Franc or the Italian Lira, the German Deutschmark was a symbol of national pride due to sustained economic success during its lifespan.<sup>159</sup> Moreover, due to West Germany's complex history with national symbols owing to its Nazi past, the Deutschmark stood out as a positive symbol for West Germans to adopt in the post-war years. Although German citizenship laws and definitions of being 'German' continued to be based largely on blood ties, the Nazi period had made it impossible for Germans to be very proud of ethnicity as a source of national

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<sup>159</sup> *ibid* p. 286.

identity. This opened a space for new forms of identity building, namely a strong feeling of economic pride.

It is significant in this context that the images of Deutschmark banknotes and euro notes visibly highlight the desire of Germany to integrate with the West. Post- World War II German banknotes stressed German discontinuities by depicting portraits of pre-Bismarckian scientists and cultural figures. The difficult circumstances under which the currency was born supplied another incentive for the development of Deutschmark patriotism. Moreover, the fact that each individual German started out with the same amount of the new Deutschmarks on the day of the currency reform added to its potential of identity creation.<sup>160</sup> As Klaus Müller notes, this helped to symbolise a common starting point for a new life and laid the ground for the social mythology of a society beyond classes and social strata.<sup>161</sup> Altering the currency therefore, would arguably have had an effect on perceptions between the Bonn and Berlin Republic. Economically speaking, adopting the Euro represented a stark contrast between the two republics, with the loss of a national currency symbol highlighting change in a tangible way. Taking this into account, why did the Federal Republic replace its fruitful currency and place faith in a different one? Importantly, this was not a simple endeavour.

On a purely pragmatic level the single currency was viewed as the logical follow-up to the European single market allowing for the free movement of goods, capital, labour and services. The Euro would also stop excessive currency fluctuations and protectionist pressures that could jeopardize the single market. Moreover, only an elaborate institutional framework such as European Monetary Union could have provided the exchange-rate stability necessary to provide economic stability in a globalising economy. The single currency would have also eliminated transaction costs and potentially lead to increased investment. In sum, the Euro was supposed to be the answer to the increased economic interdependence among the EU member-states and to challenge the consequences of globalisation.<sup>162</sup>

Indeed, while the points mentioned above were important for the German federal government, the continuation of integration with Europe was also significant. The federal government pressed for a deeper European integration and was willing to use monetary integration as a method to achieve this. German industry was also keen to create stable export markets in Europe and thus supported any efforts to economically integrate with Europe.<sup>163</sup> Yet

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid, p. 292.

<sup>161</sup> Klaus Müller, 'Nationalist Undercurrents in German Economic Liberalism', in Eric Helleiner and Andreas Pickel, (eds.), *Economic Nationalism in a Globalising World*, (Ithaca, 2005), p. 145.

<sup>162</sup> Thomas Risse, et. al., 'To Euro or Not to Euro? The EMU and Identity Politics in the European Union', *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 2, No. 5, (1999), p. 150.

<sup>163</sup> Andreas Busch, 'Germany and the Euro', in Stephen Padgett, William E. Patterson, and Reimut Zohlnhöfer, (eds.), *Developments in German Politics Four*, (New York, 2014), p. 191.

there were notable examples of opposition to the introduction of the common currency. For example, the country's powerful central bank, the Bundesbank, was afraid that its influence may be lost if the currency that it produced and regulated were to dissolve into a common European currency. This, however, should be of no surprise. The Bundesbank had been the sole monetary policy agent in the Federal Republic since its inception. Any loss of economic sovereignty would have been met with criticisms regardless.

Opinions, both public and political, on the matter were a source of contention. One commentator noted that 'Europe offered a substitute identity for those who were no longer proud of being German,' suggesting that in the aftermath of West Germany's post-war situation, European and Western integration helped to provide a sense of distinctiveness for West Germans. Yet after the success of West Germany's economy, along with the dissolution of East Germany, national pride could now be sourced elsewhere. German's need no longer look at European integration to help define them as the West German political system facilitated such pride.<sup>164</sup> A sticking point for West Germans therefore was the Deutschmark as a national symbol. Greater European integration meant the loss of West German heritage, yet for East Germans such sentiments were also expressed. For example, an East German baker saw the introduction of the Euro in a pragmatic sense, highlighting the difficulty in yet another conversion change, with preparation for new conversion tables, programming new cash registers, and making new price tags for each individual store.<sup>165</sup>

From a political perspective, prior to the eventual adoption of the Euro the Kohl government supported the introduction of the single currency for reasons of both economic and foreign policy. It was intent on sending a clear message that Germany was committed to European integration after reunification. This, too, was shared by the major parties of the Bundestag later on. The SPD-green coalition, for example, favoured European integration as a means of providing security for both the continent and the Federal Republic.<sup>166</sup> Integration with Europe therefore marked an important aspect as to why Germany replaced its currency; rational economic issues defined such a move and were supported on the basis that interdependence was the new foreign policy norm. German perceptions of the Euro have, however, shifted since its adoption. Of course, an obvious explanation would be the fact that it replaced a popular currency that demonstrated the success of the West German economic system. On closer inspection one can highlight a tangible link between the

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<sup>164</sup> 'The Euro: Now What? The Drama of Brussels and the Future of the Euro', [http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=3743](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=3743), accessed 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

<sup>165</sup> 'With the Euro, We're All the Same', [http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=374](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=374), accessed 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

<sup>166</sup> Christiane Lemke, 'Germany's EU Policy: The Domestic Discourse', *German Studies Review*, Vol. 33, No. 3, (October 2010), p. 509.

economic changes the Federal Republic experienced after reunification and the development of *Westalgie*. The Deutschmark was a success story for West Germany that could be appropriated by its people to help forge a sense of identity at a time where there was little to celebrate. The timing of the Euro's adoption is also important when discussing the development of nostalgia for West Germany. Like the political changes the Federal Republic experienced after reunification, economic changes – namely the switch to a single currency – occurred later in the life of 'new' Federal Republic. Reunification did not decide the fate of the Deutschmark, but rather the desire to integrate with Europe on a large scale. This was also a process that had been a priority for the West German federal government and the Allies since the end of the Second World War.

A lot of developments that can be connected to *Westalgie's* onset refer more to a symbolic shift from Bonn to Berlin. Although the West German system was arguably more successful than its Eastern counterpart, the eventual changes Germany faced in the new millennium were key examples of difference between the past and present. Party political preferences changed, foreign policy was more assertive, the German economy struggled, and now the Deutschmark was gone. Indeed, specific criticisms of each individual case do suggest that there are practical reasons as to why one may feel aggrieved by any political or economic changes. Yet the political and economic changes Germany experienced, particularly after the year 2000, all contribute to the notion that West Germany has changed. These changes do not necessarily have to be perceived as positive or negative, but rather acknowledged in general.

The Euro therefore marked an appropriate point for West Germans to notice a sense of difference between the past and the present. Its economic performance, however, would ultimately shape public perception of it compared to the Deutschmark. In the years between 1999 and 2005, Germany's economy was plagued by high unemployment and its economic growth was consistently below that of other Eurozone countries. In fact, in the year after Germany adopted the Euro, economic growth stood at -0.2% compared to the 1.2% of combined Eurozone countries.<sup>167</sup> Because of this it is surprising to find that support for the Euro in the Federal Republic has largely been positive during the 2000s. Interestingly enough, opinion polls concerning the Euro have shown fluctuating levels of support amongst Germans.

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<sup>167</sup> Busch, 'Germany and the Euro', pp. 194-196.

7). Early support for the Euro in European Countries.

	<b>France</b>	<b>Germany</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>Spain</b>	<b>U.K.</b>
<b>1996</b>	59	40	78	62	34
<b>1997</b>	56	32	74	58	26
<b>1998</b>	68	51	83	72	34
<b>1999</b>	68	57	84	70	28
<b>2000</b>	67	50	81	75	22
<b>2001</b>	67	53	83	68	25
<b>2002</b>	67	67	87	80	31
<b>2003</b>	75	70	82	75	24
<b>2004</b>	68	58	69	74	26

Eurobarometer, Various Years.

Quantitative evidence suggests that early support for the Euro in the Federal Republic increased over time while there were variations elsewhere in the European Union. What then does growing support for the Euro mean for any connection between the Deutschmark and *Westalgie*? For one, nostalgia by its definition does not refer to changing the present to imitate the past but rather to fondly remember a part of time that is no longer attainable for an individual. Indeed, while support for the Deutschmark remained at a fairly constant state, this does not mean the majority of people are actively seeking to change their currencies. This once again stress a pragmatic approach most Germans have taken to the changes the Federal Republic experienced after 2000. While they may look back at the Deutschmark fondly, the early performance of the Euro took greater precedent than nostalgia as a whole.

Generational differences, too, help to explain such surprising findings. Generations of Germans born after the change in currency will never have an intimate relationship with the Deutschmark and would only theoretically know about it through historical significance. Evidence provided by Eurobarometer, too, suggests that support for the Euro varied from different age groups with over sixty-eight percent of people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four showing support for the Euro, compared to fifty-five percent of people over fifty. However, it should be noted that these particular findings included people from every member country of the European union as opposed to just the Federal Republic.<sup>168</sup>

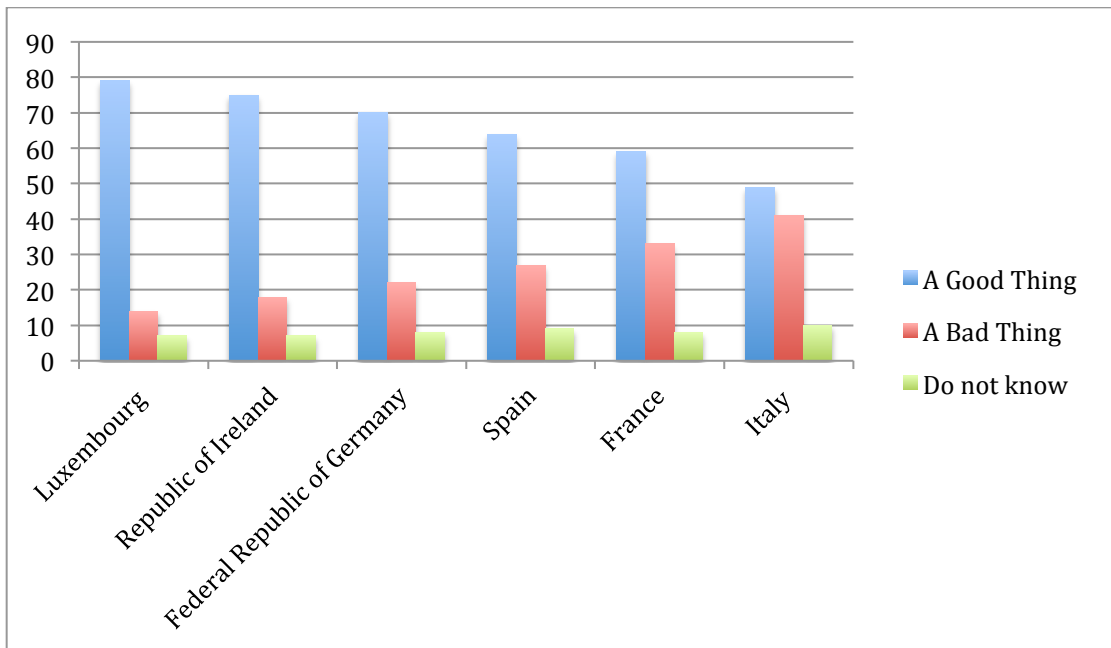
It was, however, the Euro crisis later in the new millennium that could have feasibly shaken the perception of the currency in the Federal Republic. Partly as a consequence of the financial markets crisis of 2007/08 and the ensuing recession, the Eurozone was plunged into grave problems in the years after 2010. Moreover, as Greece's national debt became substantial, a crisis in confidence grew over the currency union's future viability. As the biggest EU economy, Germany was a crucial player in discussions about the handling and resolution of the crisis. As the German economy improved once the early problems of the Euro were overcome, the Federal Republic eventually guaranteed more than €200 billion as loans to Greece, Ireland and Portugal.<sup>169</sup> It was therefore clear that the country would have to play a major role in the resolution of the Euro crisis. This, too, emphasised how German foreign policy had changed in the first decade of the new millennium. In its commitment to European integration, as well as being the economically strongest European country, the Federal Republic faced greater pressure to take on a more active responsible role when it came to the economy. Indeed, perceptions of the crisis, as well as Germany's greater role in helping threatened economies, may have altered how the Euro was viewed in not just the Federal Republic, but in Europe as well. However, polls conducted by the European Commission suggest that support for the Euro still remains relatively strong.

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<sup>168</sup> Flash Barometer 429, p. 9.

<sup>169</sup> Busch, 'Germany and the Euro', pp. 200-204.

8). Having the Euro is a Good or Bad Thing for your Country



Flash Barometer 429, p. 8.

As seen from the table above, in 2015 The Federal Republic was only behind Luxembourg and the Republic of Ireland when it came to general support for the Euro. In relation to other major European countries such as Spain and France, Germany stands out as one of the leading countries to support the currency. This, too, is surprising the early issues the Federal Republic's economy faced after the adoption of the common currency.



However, a major consequence of the Euro's issues early in 2010s was an increase in support for Eurosceptic parties. For example, the right-wing party, *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD), highlighted in their manifesto the need to hold a national referendum on the whether Germany should remain in the Euro monetary union. Referring to the adoption of the Euro as an 'experiment,' the AfD argued that the Euro jeopardises the peaceful co-existence of European nations 'forced into sharing a common destiny by the Eurocracy.'<sup>170</sup> Indeed, as a staunch Euro-sceptic party recent electoral successes calls into question the Federal Republic's relationship with the European Union and as such the Euro itself.<sup>171</sup> Yet their successes can also be attributed to wider issues concerning the integration of immigrants into German society and multiculturalism in general. For example, *Der Spiegel* in one article noted that the consequential issues of the AfD's election in the Bundestag would have an impact on refugees and immigrants in the Federal Republic.<sup>172</sup> Commentators outside of Germany also pointed to a fragmented electoral system between East and West Germans, highlighting differing perceptions between the two sets of voters.<sup>173</sup> As such, recent electoral successes achieved by the AfD did not entirely mean a rejection of the Euro, but rather a set of issues regarding Eastern voters as well as multiculturalism in general.

Nevertheless, the introduction of the Euro in the Federal Republic was an extremely important moment for Germany. In favour of European integration, the federal government had replaced its prevalent currency, one that had a rich history for West Germany and was a source of national pride for West Germans. Moreover, the Euro represented change on an economic level. True, the fact that the Federal Republic continued to be a leading European power after the adoption of the common currency highlights that perceptions of such issues – either positive or negative – do little to help develop the onset of

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<sup>170</sup> Programm Für Deutschland. Das Grundsatzprogramm der Alternative für Deutschland, pp. 16-17, [https://www.afd.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/111/2017/01/2016-06-27\\_afd-grundsatzprogramm\\_web-version.pdf](https://www.afd.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/111/2017/01/2016-06-27_afd-grundsatzprogramm_web-version.pdf), accessed 6th<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

<sup>171</sup> For example, the AfD was the third most successful party in the 2017 Bundestag election, winning 94 seats. The Christian Democratic Union and the Social Democratic Party of Germany, the Federal Republic's two biggest political parties, lost 55 seats and 40 respectively. For a detailed breakdown of the 2017 Bundestag election, see Bundestag Election 2017, <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/bundestagswahlen/2017/ergebnisse/bund-99.html>, accessed 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

<sup>172</sup> Matthias Kaufmann, 'AfD im Bundestag: "Es werden nun schwere Zeiten auf uns zukommen"', *Der Spiegel*, 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017, <http://www.spiegel.de/panorama/gesellschaft/afd-im-bundestag-so-reagiert-ein-fluechtlingshelfer-a-1169953.html>, accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

<sup>173</sup> For example, see 'Is Germany's Election Result the 'Revenge of the East'', *The Guardian*, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/28/is-germanys-election-result-the-revenge-of-the-east>, accessed 22<sup>th</sup> September 2018, and 'East Germany's 'Left Behind' Voters Propel AfD to Electoral Gains', *Financial Times*, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017, <https://www.ft.com/content/4eb3aff0-a29a-11e7-b797-b61809486fe2>, accessed 22<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

nostalgia; fundamental differences between the past and present do more to achieve that. Yet the change in currencies had consequences beyond superficial differences. For one, a part of West Germany's identity was gone. The symbol of the Deutschmark was replaced by a desire to help progress European integration. This, however, helped develop criticisms of said integration and brought forward broader issues of Germany's integration methods with other cultures.

### **Concluding Remarks**

When viewing the relationship between Economics and *Westalgie*, one can see a clear resemblance with the political element of the phenomenon. Examples of nostalgia for West Germany developed more so in reaction to changes made in the Federal Republic after the year 2000. The economic consequences of reunification, while challenging the notion of a strong West German economy, did more to affect East Germans at the time. They had to adapt to a new economic system, and accept a Western led economic unification. Of course, West German unemployment increased and the economy largely struggled prior to the end of the century. Yet these economic issues mostly exacerbated tensions between East and West Germans, rather than a sense of nostalgia for West Germany.

It is the Deutschmark and its eventual replacement that highlights how case specific *Westalgie* is. In trying to integrate more with Europe, the Federal Republic lost an important symbol of West Germany that, therefore, shows a clear difference between the past and the present. Indeed, the general support for the Euro indicates that while the Deutschmark is still held in high regard by both East and West Germans, the desire for the currency to return is not necessarily there. Support for the Euro is also not necessarily based on a sense of nostalgia for the Deutschmark, but by its overall performance in modern times. More importantly, the adoption of the Euro was not a consequence of reunification, but rather a continuing effort by the Federal government to integrate with Europe that had started long before 1990.

*Westalgie's* development is therefore linked more with events that succeed the reunification of Germany. It is, however, challenging to link *Westalgie* with economic developments in the Berlin Republic. True, an individual may feel a sense of nostalgia for a time when the economy was not affected by the effects of reunification, such as the integration of the East German economy, or the personal impact of solidarity taxes. Yet to say that these feelings are representative of the entire West German population is

problematic. Examples of *Westalgie* in an economic context are also not as obvious, especially in direct comparison to *Ostalgie*. For East Germans it is a lot easier to conceive why one might feel nostalgic as their lives were notably changed by the economic consequences of reunification. This again emphasises the fact West German nostalgia is a much more complex phenomenon on closer inspection, especially when analysing the concept in such broad terms.

## **5. German Multiculturalism Debates and Nostalgia**

Since the early 2000s across Europe, the rise and ubiquity of arguments challenging multiculturalism have become very apparent.<sup>174</sup> Indeed, modern day Germany is by no means an exception to discourses concerning the impact of ethnic diversity. Throughout the Federal Republic's history, debates concerning the integration of guest workers, xenophobic violence against foreigners, as well as the perception of Islam has persisted. These facts alone provide a justifiable reason to analyse how German multiculturalism and *Westalgie* are related. After all, criticisms of the Federal Republic's multicultural policies, both past and present, suggest a sense of change that can be perceived negatively, insinuating some form of nostalgia for a past that may or may not have existed. Previous chapters have noted that change, and the perceptions of its consequences, are the driving force for the development of nostalgia as a whole. It is therefore prudent to engage with the varying cultural and social shifts that occurred in the Federal Republic after the reunification of Germany.

Indeed, West Germany did experience a growing critical discourse concerning multiculturalism, albeit at a slow pace. It is therefore challenging to use reunification as a starting point for the changing social circumstances of West Germans and any potential nostalgia that followed. Certainly, changes to German citizenship laws for migrants at the turn of the millennium do highlight the difference between the Bonn and Berlin Republic in some sense. Yet discussions concerning migrants in the Federal Republic had long been established even before the reunification of Germany. This, at the very least, calls into question whether multiculturalism has had a profound effect on *Westalgie's* development.

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<sup>174</sup> Steven Vertovec and Susanne Wessendorf, 'Introduction: Assessing the Backlash against Multiculturalism in Europe', in Steven Vertovec and Susanne Wessendorf, (eds.), *The Multiculturalism Backlash: European Discourses, Policies, and Practises*, (Abingdon, 2010), p. 1.

Though there had been a very slow public discourse concerning immigration and its overall impact on society, politics, economics, and culture, contemporary Germany does face challenges to multiculturalism. This, too, is more apparent than ever considering the rise of far-right groups such as *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) and Pegida. Yet these criticisms are not simply a consequence of far-right radical thinking. For example, in October 2010, the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, made the bold statement that attempts to make a multicultural society in Germany had ‘utterly failed’. Furthermore, she added that the ‘*multikulti*’ concept - where people would ‘live side-by-side’ happily - did not work, and immigrants needed to do more to integrate in society.<sup>175</sup> Similarly, The German Finance Minister, Wolfgang Schäuble, stated in 2011 ‘we made a mistake in the early sixties when we decided to look for workers, not qualified workers but cheap workers from abroad,’ leading to a large group of migrants that had not integrated into the Federal Republic as desired.<sup>176</sup>

These criticisms from all sides of the political spectrum highlight how diverse the dialogue of multiculturalism in Germany has become. In this sense, it is not necessarily an issue of nostalgia, but rather an issue of integration and cohabitation with migrants that have spurred on critical discourses. Much like linking political and economic developments with *Westalgie*, one can find pragmatic and practical reasoning behind condemnations of German multiculturalism. It is therefore too simplistic to view multicultural discourses in modern times as a product of nostalgia. While nostalgia suggests the changes modernity brings are negative in comparison to past developments, it is important to understand the context of certain criticisms German multiculturalism has faced. For example, the topic of ethnic diversity in the Berlin Republic is by no means new, carrying over from earlier issues regarding the integration of foreign labourers that were expected to remain in West Germany as guests for a short period of time. This also highlights once again how complex *Westalgie* is as a phenomenon as discussions on German multiculturalism highlight concerns that are not entirely related to the concept of nostalgia.

It is, too, important to note that the historiography concerning German multiculturalism is both varied and extensive. For all the large numbers of immigrants entering Germany after the 1960s and working on a ‘temporary’ basis, scholars agree that critiques of guest workers and immigration as a whole came later in the Federal Republic’s history.<sup>177</sup> Herbert and Hunn argue that the

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<sup>175</sup> “Merkel says German multicultural society has failed”, BBC News, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11559451>, accessed 21<sup>st</sup> October 2018.

<sup>176</sup> ‘German Finance Minister Says too Many Gastarbeiter were Allowed in’, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/18/german-finance-minister-guest-workers-row>, accessed 8<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>177</sup> Chin, for example, acknowledges the recession of 1973 as a turning point for West Germany’s disposition towards migrant guest workers. Stephen Castles also stresses the late

lack of critical dialogue surrounding the ‘guest worker question’ arose from the earlier Nazi utilisation of forced labourers. With the employment of foreign workforces just sixteen years after the Nationalist Socialist system of enforced labour had ended, there was no public mention whatsoever in the Federal Republic of this dark historical backdrop in the public discourse. This facilitated the fiction that there was no relevant precedent for the new wave of foreign workers because after the war there was no recognition in West Germany that the deployment of foreign slave labourers under the Third Reich was among specific crimes perpetuated by the National Socialists.<sup>178</sup> This, according to Herbert and Hunn, explains why people did not come to grips with questions on integrating contemporary foreign labourers. Yet this explanation is debatable considering that there have always been long standing traditions of foreign workers entering the country either voluntarily or involuntarily.

Rita Chin, on the other hand, suggests a more pragmatic but simple reason for why such a slow public discourse concerning immigrant workers and their overall impact emerged. The title of ‘*Gastarbeiter*’ reinforced the impression amongst West Germans that the residency of foreign workers was temporary. As formulated by Erhard, the main principle behind the *Gastarbeiter* policies was namely the short-term employment of the foreign workforces entering the nation. Taking this rigid definition of the ‘guest worker’ into account, the Federal Republic insisted that the newcomers were just that: ‘guests’ and ‘workers’ who were expected to return when the job was done and once the contract had finished.<sup>179</sup> Furthermore, labelling foreign workers as ‘guest workers’ reduced their presence in West German society to an economic function, implying that their impact was only limited to the labour market as opposed to any societal influence. This meant that the public dialogue about guest workers in this early period could not engage in the broader effects of labour migration.<sup>180</sup> Instead, the public only viewed *Gastarbeiter* as a brief solution for West Germany’s improving economy. As long as the term ‘guest worker’ was used in the public, the belief that the type of work given to foreigners was temporary held firm in the public’s imagination of migrant labourers.

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reaction against the guest worker policies, again citing the economic downturn of the 1970s as the impetus for the social critiquing of the *Gastarbeiter*. For more, see Stephen Castles, ‘Migrants and minorities in post-Keynesian capitalism: the German Case’, in Malcom Cross, (ed.), *Ethnic Minorities and Industrial Change in Europe and North America*, (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 36-54.

<sup>178</sup> Ulrich Herbert and Karin Hunn, ‘Guest Workers and Policy on Guest Workers in the Federal Republic: From the Beginning of Recruitment in 1955 Until its Halt in 1973’, in Hanna Schissler, (ed.), *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968*, (Oxford, 2001), pp. 187-188.

<sup>179</sup> Christain Joppke, “Multiculturalism and Immigration: A Comparison of the United States, Germany, and Great Britain”, *Theory and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 4. (August, 1996), pp. 465-466.

<sup>180</sup> Rita Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany*, (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 47-8.

A stumbling block has been the federal government's apparent lack of urgency in introducing multicultural policies into the Federal Republic. Old-fashioned institutionalised notions of what it means to be a 'German' have also not helped the government and public's perceptions of multiculturalism. Schönwälder even suggests that Germany's late acceptance of itself as a 'land of immigration' has not been beneficial to multicultural developments. Multiculturalism, according to her, served as a symbolic counterweight to nationalism and ethnic based conceptions of native Germans. When the federal government and general public slowly realised the overall impact of immigration, they developed a defensive attitude against foreigners and their integration into society.<sup>181</sup>

At the same time, whilst there is a general acknowledgment that a backlash against multiculturalism exists in Europe, the word 'exaggeration' tends to be used by academics in conjunction with any hostilities facing ethnic diversity. That is not to say that any public or governmental discussions critiquing multiculturalism and its consequences are not serious. In the case of Germany, sporadic right-wing violence against immigrants has been apparent, particularly in the years following reunification.<sup>182</sup> Instead, scholars are currently attempting to rationalise current discourses of multiculturalism by analysing beyond sweeping statements referring to its failure, and focussing on the relationship between the public's disposition towards immigration and actual governmental policies.

However, whilst discussions have focussed on the slow acknowledgment of multiculturalism in the Federal Republic, scholars have yet to engage with the impact nostalgia may have in relation to any issues created via the integration of migrants. Indeed, such a viewpoint would only be relevant after the reunification of Germany; especially considering the 'old' Federal Republic was a multicultural society. Yet as previous chapters have already discussed, nostalgia for West Germany developed far later in the history of the Bonn Republic. Nostalgia for East Germany was established very quickly after the reunification, owing to the pace of change in the everyday life of East Germans. West Germans, however, only began to acknowledge a sense of nostalgia that occurred in the new millennium. For West Germans, a perceived cultural shift, particularly in relation to the impact of Islam on German society, is worth analysing to understand whether *Westalgie* has driven more recent

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<sup>181</sup> Karen Schönwälder, 'Migration, Refugees and Ethnic Plurality as Issues of Public and Political Debates in (West) Germany', in David Cesarani and Mary Fulbrook, (eds.), *Citizenship, Nationality and Migration in Europe*, (London, 1996), p. 163.

<sup>182</sup> *Der Spiegel International* offers an informative insight into both past and modern day examples of right-wing extremism in the Federal Republic. See, Charles Hawley and Daryl Lindsey, 'Twenty Years After Rostock: Racism and Xenophobia Still Prevalent in Germany', *Der Spiegel International*, 24<sup>th</sup> August 2012, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/xenophobia-still-prevalent-in-germany-20-years-after-neo-nazi-attacks-a-851972.html>, accessed 28<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

debates on multiculturalism. As such, the first subchapter will contextualise contemporary multicultural discourses by discussing the early implementation of guest worker initiatives. The second subchapter will analyse the violence migrants faced after the reunification of Germany, highlighting what caused a radical shift in critical discourses concerning multiculturalism. Lastly, the final subchapter will focus on more recent cultural debates in the 'new' Federal Republic, analysing whether any form of nostalgia has influenced such discussions.

### **Guest Worker Initiatives: The Introduction of Foreign Labour**

To understand how a critical discourse concerning multiculturalism developed, it is necessary to analyse the early onset of immigration in the Federal Republic after the Second World War and before the reunification of Germany. Of course, the Second World War had a drastic effect on the Federal Republic's workforce. Nazi Germany's wartime industrial production had been reliant on foreign civilian labourers and prisoners of war. When these workers returned to their respective native countries after the war ended, they were only partially replaced by the returning German soldiers. However, due to the number of able-bodied German males having been drastically reduced by the war, the German economy needed to compensate for such a decline in domestic workers.<sup>183</sup> The death rate of German soldiers was twice as high in the Second World War than the First. In fact, every third German male born between 1910 and 1925 did not survive the war.<sup>184</sup> To compensate women served as an additional pool for labour, with over two million taking up employment outside the household. Even so, Konrad Adenauer's government undertook campaigns to re-domesticate women by encouraging them to focus on the reproduction of future German workforces.<sup>185</sup>

Taking into account the relatively low workforces at their disposal, it was only natural to assume that if the economic boom continued, the Federal Republic would have to look externally for labourers. Accordingly, the first wave of foreign workers entered West Germany after the German-Italian agreement in 1955. The agreement itself outlined the terms and conditions that the labourers were expected to abide by whilst maintaining residency in the Federal Republic. Further significance, however, is found in the nature of habitation given to the Italian immigrants looking for work. In short, the

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<sup>183</sup> Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labour in Germany, 1880-1980: Seasoned Workers/ Forced Labourers/ Guest Workers*, (Ann Arbor, 1990), p.194.

<sup>184</sup> Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman, 'Germany is No More: Defeat, Occupation, and the Postwar Order', in Helmut Walser Smith, (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Germany*, (Oxford, 2011), p. 596.

<sup>185</sup> Chin, *Guest Worker Question*, p. 35.

employment offered to those entering West Germany under the German-Italian agreement was always temporary. In short, the employment offered to those entering West Germany under the German-Italian agreement was always temporary. Permanent residence for foreigners was not an established principle between the agreement, leading many entering the country for labour to be known as '*Gastarbeiter*', or 'guest workers'. Policies were shaped on the view that migrant workers were temporary labour units, which could be recruited, utilised, and sent away again as employers required.<sup>186</sup> In principle, the guest worker policies introduced in the Federal Republic were designed to benefit both the West German economy, and the foreigners who would return to their respective nations as skilled labourers.

By the early 1960s, however, the need for new supplies of labour became a more crucial issue for the Federal Republic. The construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 by the German Democratic Republic, which cut off East Berlin from the West, dramatically lowered the number of workers coming in from the East. At the same time, the period of relatively free movement along the border areas of East and West Germany ended abruptly. Prior to such changes in border relations, it had been possible to work in the West but reside in the East. Yet these revisions quickly changed the Federal Republic's disposition to the inevitability of hiring workforces abroad. Between 1960 and 1968, then, the West German government embarked on a drastic course of action designed to increase the supply of labour in the economy.<sup>187</sup>

By 1967, the amount of immigrants entering Germany had more than tripled its 1955 levels. Up until this point in the Federal Republic's attempts to bring in foreign labour, Italians had accounted for the majority of foreigners in the nation with over 413,000 presumably settled as guest workers. Yet by the start of the 1970s, immigrants from Turkey quickly overtook any other nation in terms of the country of origins of foreigners. By the end of the 1970s, the amount of Turks settled in West Germany had tripled the number of Italians.<sup>188</sup> It is important to note, however, that the practise of employing foreign labour in Germany was by no means a new policy produced by the Federal Republic. As previously stated, the Third Reich exploited the work of many foreigners to keep industrial production going during the Second World War. Likewise, during the First World War, the German Reich acquired a total of some 2.5 million prisoners of war; a majority of whom were subjected to forced labour in areas such as agriculture and industry.<sup>189</sup> Prior to the First World War, however,

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<sup>186</sup> Castles, 'The Guest-Worker Question in Western Europe – An Obituary', p. 769.

<sup>187</sup> Chin, *Guest Worker Question*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>188</sup> Udo Sautter, *Deutsche Geschichte seit 1815*, (Tübingen, 2004), p. 40. cited in 'Statistics on Foreigners in Germany (1950-2001)', German History in Documents and Images, [http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=861](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=861), accessed 20<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

<sup>189</sup> For a more detailed examination of Germany's implementation of forced labour during the First World War, see Herbert, *Foreign Labour*, pp. 87-119.



Germany took in voluntary workers from Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire to work in the eastern agricultural regions and coalmines of the Rhur valley.<sup>190</sup> Therefore, guest workers were not necessarily a new concept for the Federal Republic to introduce.

Despite the intention of successive governments in the Federal Republic, guest workers eventually turned into settlers. As the world economy moved into crisis in the mid-seventies, West Germany halted the recruitment of non-European Community workers. Furthermore, Castles notes that resentment to foreigners publicly escalated in conjunction with the economic downturn West Germany experienced during the seventies. Seemingly, unemployment amongst native Germans motivated a sudden shift in rhetoric against *Gastarbeiter*. Tensions were further aggravated by the sudden increase of asylum seekers between 1979 and 1981. Since its inception, the Federal Republic employed comparatively generous asylum laws in Western Europe. As such, many who felt politically persecuted within their native countries could have easily sought refuge in the Federal Republic. From 1953 to 1978, only a total of 178,000 people sought political refuge in West Germany. However, these numbers greatly increased when over 200,000 applied for asylum in the following three years.<sup>191</sup> Contemporary political emergencies elsewhere had some help in amplifying the number of applicants entering the Federal Republic for asylum. For example, Turkey had been experiencing a military coup in 1980, Poland had introduced martial, and many Vietnamese people fled their country by boats.<sup>192</sup> Consequently, even with the eventual cut off of guest worker programmes in the 1970s, foreigners still managed to find residency within West Germany, thereby perpetuating the social critique of migrants.<sup>193</sup>

Hostility to foreigners eventually manifested publicly through written expression. In November 1981, the right-wing newspaper *Deutsche Wochenzeitung* published a version of the so-called Heidelberg Manifesto, criticising West Germany's prior immigration policies and its consequences on society. Importantly, the manifesto raised concerns over 'the infiltration of the German *Volk* through an influx of millions of foreigners and their families, the

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<sup>190</sup> Chin, *Guest Worker Question*, p. 8.

<sup>191</sup> Rainer Münz and Ralf Ulrich, 'Changing Patterns of Immigration to Germany, 1945-1995: Ethnic Origins, Demographic Structure, Future Prospects', in Klaus J. Bade and Myron Weiner, (eds.), *Migration Past, Migration Future: Germany and the United States* (Providence, 1997), pp. 84-85.

<sup>192</sup> Chin, *Guest Worker Question*, p. 146.

<sup>193</sup> In regards to asylum seekers, hostility emerged over the validity of their claims of political persecution in their native countries. The phrase *Scheinasyllanten*, or bogus asylum seekers, eventually emerged in the public's lexicon in conjunction with the sharp increase of asylum applicants. An article from *Der Spiegel*, for example, openly criticised the Federal Republic's liberal laws concerning rights to asylum, arguing that it had led to an unnecessary influx of foreigners. Moreover, the article specifically singles out Turks who entered the country for 'economic reasons' as opposed to valid political persecution. For more, see 'Da sammelt sich ein ungeheurer Sprengstoff', *Der Spiegel*, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1980, p. 17.

infiltration of our language, our culture, and our national traditions by foreign influences.’ Furthermore, the document called for the government to ‘preserve the German *Volk* and its spiritual identity on the basis of our occidental Christian heritage.’<sup>194</sup> It is also significant to note that the authors of the manifesto were established academics, highlighting how the foreigner debate in West Germany was by no means relegated to the fringes of the extreme far right. For example, Professor Schmidt-Kahler, a member of the so-called Heidelberg Circle, was an astronomer from Bochum University and Professor Schröcke was a mineralogist from Munich University. Indeed, while the Heidelberg Manifesto was rejected for its perceived xenophobic rhetoric, it marked one of the first public denunciations of West Germany’s guest worker policies, allowing later critical dialogues concerning German multiculturalism to come to the fore.

In contrast to the earlier public and governmental discourse concerning immigration, critiques of the Federal Republic’s earlier policies developed at a much faster pace in the eighties. When Helmut Kohl came into power in 1982, he announced in his inaugural address that the government wanted to implement humane policies regarding foreigners.<sup>195</sup> From a governmental perspective, the emphasis was now placed on stopping immigration whilst encouraging repatriation. In doing so, the law to encourage foreigners to return home (*Gesetz zur Förderung der Rückkehrbereitschaft von Ausländern*) was passed by the Bundestag in November 1983. Its main stipulation was that migrant workers from non-European community countries, who became unemployed between 1983 and 1984, were offered premiums of DM 10,500 plus DM 1,500 per dependent child if they left the country instantly and finally. Even so, the scope of the main provisions was narrow for those eligible for such premiums. Only 16,833 workers, 14,459 of whom were Turks, applied and received premiums to facilitate their departure from Germany.<sup>196</sup> Yet this was hardly the policy of repatriation the Federal government led the public to expect. The foreign population fell ever so slightly between the years 1982 and 1984 from 4.6 million to 4.3 million respectively. The real impact of this specific law was not through any tangible differences in the number of immigrant inhabitants. Instead, the influence of this law was ideological; it led people to think that the

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<sup>194</sup> The Heidelberg Manifesto, 4<sup>th</sup> March 1982, German History in Documents and Images, [http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=857](http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=857), accessed 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018.

<sup>195</sup> “Koalition der Mitte: Für eine Politik der Erneuerung.” Regierungserklärung des Bundeskanzlers am 13<sup>th</sup> Oktober 1982 vor dem Deutschen Bundestag in Bonn”, in *Bulletin* (Press and Information Office of the Federal Government), no. 93, October 14, 1983, p. 853. cited in “Coalition of the Center (13<sup>th</sup> October 1982)”, German History in Documents and Images, [http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=1143&language=english](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1143&language=english), accessed, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

<sup>196</sup> SOPEMI 1984, *Continuous Reporting System on Migration, Report 1984*, Paris: OECD, cited in Castles, ‘Minorities’, p. 51.

government was actively doing something about the ‘foreigner problem’, whilst reinforcing the belief that there was indeed a problem in the first place.

Nevertheless, the intellectual, governmental, and public dialogue concerning immigration did little to reduce the physical number of foreigners in West Germany. On the contrary, the total foreign population in the Federal Republic was one million more at the start of the 1980s than in 1972. Moreover, the percentage of foreigners in the total population was 6.7; yet that same year, 17.3 percent of all births in the Federal Republic were children of foreign parents.<sup>197</sup> Cutting off the guest worker programmes whilst encouraging foreigner emigration through legislation failed to have the desired effect. Indeed, some political parties were slightly more ambivalent towards West Germany’s prior immigration policies. The Green Party, for example, encouraged the continuation of upholding the laws of asylum, largely as a way for Germany to atone for its past crimes. Nevertheless, the growing consensus was that the foreigner crisis had spiralled out of control by the start of the eighties. Whilst the 1970s developed a critical discourse concerning the Federal Republic’s immigration policies, the 1980s saw a greater consolidation of such criticisms in the public sphere. 39 percent of the native population had believed that guest workers should return home in 1979. Yet just three years later, over 60 percent had now felt a desire for guest workers and asylum seekers to leave. Moreover, the number of people endorsing active integration with immigrants fell dramatically from 42 percent in 1979, to 11 percent in 1982.<sup>198</sup>

### **Multiculturalism after Reunification 1990-2000**

Indeed, critical discourses concerning immigration developed at a slow pace owing to the definitions of guest workers and Germany’s Nazi past. Yet they developed, not necessarily as a reaction to change, but more as a result of integrating foreign labour into German society. In regards to German multiculturalism, the nineties exhibited key issues that add to the overall debates of immigration and integration. Consequently, it is important to examine and understand a complex part of the Federal Republic’s history, featuring violence, economic hardships, and significant changes in long established traditions of German citizenship. The changes that followed reunification have been used in previous chapters to highlight how East Germans could feasibly feel nostalgic for a time that had passed after the late eighties. Yet in the context of German multiculturalism and *Westalgie* one can see that this is not the case. True, there were changes to the Federal Republic’s citizenship laws that enabled migrants

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<sup>197</sup> Martin Frey, ‘Ausländer in der Bundesrepublik: Ein statistischer Überblick’, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B25 (1982), pp. 3-16, cited in Herbert and Hunn, ‘Guest Workers’, p. 211.

<sup>198</sup> Schönwälder, ‘Migration, Refugees and Ethnic Plurality’ pp. 165-166.

to become naturalised German citizens. Yet issues concerning multiculturalism and immigration were largely a continuation of what was already discussed before 1990.

After reunification the apparent 'foreigner crisis' did not simply die down. Following the collapse of the Iron Curtain, the immediate problem for the German government was the influx of more asylum-seekers from the chaotic political conditions of Eastern Europe. In the aftermath of the upheavals associated with the fall of communism and the break-up of Yugoslavia, hundreds of thousands entered the newly reunified Germany through the newly opened borders in the East. In fact, between 1989 and 1992, a total of around one million arrived in Germany seeking asylum.<sup>199</sup> Taking in even more asylum seekers than it did in the 1980s, the German government faced pressure from the public to adjust their laws regarding asylum. Importantly, whilst the physical number of foreigners in Germany had increased after reunification, little had changed in regards to their nationalities. The leading nationality amongst the foreigner population was still Turkish with over two million residing in Germany by 1999. Others included migrants still from countries like Yugoslavia, Italy, Greece, as well as Poland.<sup>200</sup>

Significantly, concessions were made to Germany's strict citizenship laws after 1990. One step toward easier access to naturalisation was made with changes in the foreigners law (*Ausländergesetz*) in 1993. Such alterations meant that foreigners between sixteen and twenty-three years of age with eight or more years of residency in Germany and foreigners above the age of twenty-three with a minimum of fifteen years of residency had a legal claim to naturalisation. On the surface at least these changes signified a conscious attempt to partially incorporate the principles of *Jus Soli* to determine citizenship. This, in turn, provided a significant change that was different to in how the 'new' Federal Republic defined its migrant population. Yet this only had a marginal effect. For example, nearly 75,000 foreigners were naturalised under the new changes brought in by the German government. However, these numbers only accounted for one percent of the total foreigner population in Germany. In fact, even by the end of the 1990s, the number of naturalised foreigners in Germany did not account for much in terms of the overall foreigner population. By the year 2000, a total of 186,700 immigrants had been naturalised; yet this amounted to just 2.5 percent of the total foreign population in Germany.<sup>201</sup>

These issues stress the fact that the critical discourse concerning immigration did not stop once Germany was reunified. Instead, it extended

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<sup>199</sup> Mary Fulbrook, 'Germany for the Germans? Citizenship and Nationality in a Divided Nation', in David Cesarani and Mary Fulbrook, (eds.), *Citizenship, Nationality and Migration in Europe*, (London, 1996), p. 101.

<sup>200</sup> Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für die Belange der Ausländer 2000, table 3. cited in Klopp, *German Multiculturalism*, p. 41.

<sup>201</sup> *Bericht* 1995; data from the Statistisches Bundesamt, cited in Münz and Ulrich, 'Changing Patterns', p. 101.

itself into actual governmental laws and, in some cases, manifested into violent expression against foreigners. The years 1991 and 1992 marked the first major wave of neo-Nazi activity when a spate of violent attacks occurred in the newly reunified country.<sup>202</sup> Examples of specific localised violence include attacks on buildings that housed asylum seekers in Hoyerswerda and Rostock. Rocks, bottles, and Molotov cocktails were repeatedly used as the primary weapons in such attacks against foreigners. Similarly, a Turkish house in Solingen was firebombed resulting in the death of three children and two women. A news article from *Die Zeit*, for example, detailed an interview with a member of the public who drew comparisons with the racist violence of the nineties and that experienced under the Third Reich.<sup>203</sup> One German scholar had even suggested that the early examples of violence were ‘a re-instatement of mono-culturalism,’ with an overall reversal of social progress.<sup>204</sup>

Indeed, the timing of such attacks, especially so soon after the reunification of Germany, stresses that the Federal Republic may have been changing at an uncontrollable pace. Yet linking the growth of right-wing violence with a sense of nostalgia is awkward when one considers more pragmatic reasons as to why violence occurred in the first place. Of course, a central issue behind the attacks was the lack of social integration between native Germans and foreigners throughout the Federal Republic’s history. The more immediate cause of racial violence, however, can be credited to the economic difficulties Germany experienced immediately after reunification. Certainly, much like the critical dialogue concerning immigration that grew out of the economic problems of the seventies and eighties, the racial violence of the nineties can be attributed to domestic economic hardships too. Developing this point further, Klaus Boehnke draws on the sociological effects of rapid social change that, in theory, weaken controls that otherwise would have kept deviant societal issues in check.<sup>205</sup> In this particular instance, Germany’s sudden change in economic fortunes altered the perceptions of immigrants in the wider German public.

Moreover, it should also be noted that xenophobic responses to immigration that turned into public violence were not necessarily associated with geography, even if the racial attacks were unfairly portrayed as an East German problem. In fact, according to the *New York Times*, a poll taken in the midst of the racial attacks found that 38 percent of West Germans felt sympathy

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<sup>202</sup> Lee McGowan, *The Radical Right in Germany: 1870 to the Present*, (London, 2002), p. 179.

<sup>203</sup> See Sabine Etzold, ‘Ich sehe keinen Hoffnungsschimmer’, *Die Zeit*, 11<sup>th</sup> September 1992, p. 38.

<sup>204</sup> Eva Kolinsky, ‘Conclusion’, in David Horrocks and Eva Kolinsky, (eds.), *Turkish Culture in German Society Today*, (Providence, 1996), p. 185.

<sup>205</sup> Klaus Boehnke, ‘On the Development of Xenophobia in Germany: The Adolescent Years’, *Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 54, No 3, 1998, pp. 585-587.

for ‘radical right tendencies’ as opposed to 21 percent of East Germans.<sup>206</sup> Indeed, both the Western and Eastern states of Germany experienced fluctuating forms of racial attacks against foreigners after reunification. For example, the number of racial attacks in 1991, which included homicide, arson, and assault, amounted to over 990 in West Germany as opposed to the 493 in the East. Carrying on into 1992, racial attacks reached 1719 in the Western states in contrast to over 865 from East Germany. What is obvious is the initial increase in racial violence between the years 1991 and 1992. What is also important is the noticeable difference in the levels of violence between the Eastern states of Germany and the West. Nevertheless, these statistics themselves do not take into account the differentiation of population sizes between the two states.<sup>207</sup>

Yet even with the prominent economic difficulties that immediately followed reunification, the question of citizenship and what defined a German citizen clearly helped to create a differing opinion on the question of what it meant to be ‘German’. As such, the racial violence that occurred can be viewed as a by-product of the multifaceted issues regarding German citizenship. In comparison to other European countries such as Britain and France, the legacy of empire allowed immigrants an easy route for basic political rights. Many immigrants entering either country were automatically qualified for citizenship or were otherwise allowed easier access to naturalisation. Even so, both countries still developed a critical disposition towards immigration in their own specific way.<sup>208</sup> In the case of Germany, however, the persistent maintenance of their own citizenship laws contributed greatly to discussions on immigration, integration, and incorporation. Between 1990 and 2000 the society for the German Language, which holds an annual competition for the ‘non-word’ of the year, chose three terms that in some way related to xenophobia. In 1991, the phrase ‘free of foreigners’ (*ausländerfrei*), which had been associated with the demands of the neo-Nazi youths, was chosen. In 1993, ‘domination by foreign influences’ (*Überfremdung*) was selected in conjunction with the growing criticisms of Germany’s liberal asylum laws. Lastly, in 2000, ‘nationally liberated zones’ (*national befreite Zonen*) was a term used by right-wing extremists to indicate areas where terror led to the removal of foreigners.<sup>209</sup> Certainly, if one were to take away the xenophobic attacks during the nineties, such terms used within the German public’s lexicon still show how potent the discourse of immigration was after reunification.

Even with the apparent violence against foreigners, the political landscape of reunified Germany lacked representation in the *Bundestag* from

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<sup>206</sup> Stephen Kinzer, ‘A Wave of Attacks On Foreigners Stirs Shock in Germany’, *New York Times*, 1<sup>st</sup> October 1991, <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/10/01/world/a-wave-of-attacks-on-foreigners-stirs-shock-in-germany.html>, accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018.

<sup>207</sup> BMI, 1992: 76; Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, cited in Panayi, ‘Racial Exclusionism’ p. 139.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid*, p. 266-269.

<sup>209</sup> Berger, *Inventing the Nation*, p. 234.

the nationalist right-wing parties of the time. In regards to political success, the extreme German right-wing parties found little to celebrate on a federal level during the nineties. Results in the German federal elections of 1990, 1994, and 1998 indicate that there was indeed no strong political representation for the far right. Parties such as the NDP, *Die Republikaner* (The Republicans), and the *Volksunion* failed to gain a single seat in the Bundestag, garnering only small percentages of the overall vote. With an average voter turnout of 79.7 percent during the 1990s, radical right-wing parties clearly failed to completely capture the public's imagination.<sup>210</sup> Moreover, the mainstream political parties still maintained their strong positions within the German Parliament, with the CDU and the SPD the main competitors for the population's votes.

The Nazi era, too, worked as a strong deterrent against right-wing extremism in post-war Germany. In the words of Dietrich Thränhardt, the memory of Nazism was a vaccination against racism reaching the majority of German citizens.<sup>211</sup> Strong counter-reactions from the German public had therefore stunted the political mobilisation of the extreme right. Taking into account this viewpoint, the mainstream political parties had consistently rejected any coalition politics with the extreme right and played a key role in the ostracism of certain parties.<sup>212</sup>

Given the longstanding settlement of *Gastarbeiter* and their descendants, it is no surprise that criticisms grew from foreigners about the ambiguity of what constituted the parameters of the term '*Volk*'. Soon after the reunification of Germany, demonstrations around Berlin's Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche to protest the violence against foreigners featured similar catchphrases from immigrants stating '*Wir sind auch das Volk*' (we are also the people). The twist on the slogan not only challenged the old notion of an ethnically homogenous German community, but also brought to light the question on how to legally integrate foreigners into society. For the many settled immigrants, the term '*das Volk*' no longer comprised of just the native German population, but rather the foreign-born guest workers and their descendants too.<sup>213</sup>

Importantly, the critical dialogue of immigration that started in West Germany remained in the 'new' Federal Republic and, in some instances, was made worse by the growing number of xenophobic attacks in specific parts of the country. However, a sense of *Westalgie* does not explain the growing

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<sup>210</sup> To view the results of Germany's Federal elections, as well as a detailed division of votes casted for different political parties, see 'Election Results to the German Bundestag', <http://www.electionresources.org/de/>, accessed 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2018.

<sup>211</sup> Dietrich Thränhardt, 'Germany - An Undeclared Immigration Country', in Dietrich Thränhardt, (ed.), *Europe - A New Immigration Continent: Policies and Politics in Comparative Perspective*, (Munster, 1996), p. 220.

<sup>212</sup> Uwe Backes and Cas Mudde, 'Germany: Extremism without Successful Parties', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 53, No. 3, (2000), pp. 466.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid*, p. 254.

difficulties associated with immigration in the first decade of the Federal Republic. The issues migrants faced after reunification were not born out of a sense of West German nostalgia, but rather out of a continuing debate that developed late in the Twentieth century. Marginal changes to German citizenship laws may have created a sense of difference between the Bonn and Berlin Republic. However, the issue remains that integrating immigrants was the prime force behind critical discourses concerning German multiculturalism. In essence, the problems were once again caused by a slow recognition in how multicultural reunified Germany really was.

### **Islam in Modern Germany: Multicultural Debates in the New Millennium**

Since the turn of the millennium, Islam has contributed heavily to multicultural debates within the 'new' Federal Republic. The 9/11 terrorists attacks intensified a growing discourse viewing Islam not only as culturally incompatible but also as an existential security threat to Germany and Western Europe. It is within these debates where multicultural discussions have become much more narrow and focussed, allowing political parties and prominent individuals to flex a strong counter argument against Islam, and by extension multiculturalism itself. These criticisms, however, focus heavily on the societal impact Islam has had on modern day Germany. While the past is certainly referenced within these debates, there are a number of pragmatic issues to consider when analysing critical discussions against Islam and multiculturalism. For example, how is a specific religion affecting German culture? More importantly, however, what types of German culture are critics referring to? The answers to these questions, of course, vary significantly depending on one's political disposition and tolerance towards immigration.

The AfD's party manifesto specifically states the commitment to German as the predominant culture which, according to the AfD, is derived from three sources: the religious traditions of Christianity, the scientific and humanistic heritage, whose roots were renewed during the age of enlightenment; and lastly, Roman law, upon which the very basis of a constitutional state is founded.<sup>214</sup> Indeed, such references to a 'German culture' hark back to a time long before the establishment of the Federal Republic. The AfD therefore do not consider West Germany the reference point for an ideal *Leitkultur*, as discourses concerning multiculturalism had already developed within its history. Other far-right political groups and movements also advocate this specific sense of German culture. Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West, otherwise known as Pegida, similarly highlight strong Christian values as a fundamental basis for German culture, calling for the

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<sup>214</sup> Programm Für Deutschland. Das Grundsatzprogramm der Alternative für Deutschland, p. 92.



respectful treatment of ‘our culture and language,’ especially in relation to Islam.<sup>215</sup>

It is this viewpoint of a leading German culture that muddles the argumentation of nostalgia as a key catalyst in multicultural debates in the Federal Republic. West Germany, as highlighted in the previous subchapters, developed a critical dialogue against multiculturalism, but at a slow pace due to the terminology of guest workers, and the discomfort with referring to Germany’s Nazi past. With the implementation of guest worker initiatives, coupled with a growing debate concerning what it means to be ‘German,’ West Germany was very much a multicultural society; even if there was a latent acknowledgment of the fact. Far-right political groups seemingly reject a sense of *Westalgie*, lacking much reference to the ‘old’ Federal Republic, most likely because the growth of multiculturalism stemmed from initiatives created in its history. That is not to say that there are no nostalgic elements linked with such debates, but rather West Germany is not the main reference point for a lot of critical debates concerning Islam and multiculturalism.

The recent success of the AfD, on a federal level, suggests as much considering their party program refers to the past in a critical light, but not a nostalgic one. As seen in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election, nostalgia contributed to the success of candidate Donald Trump’s campaign. Sweeping statements such as ‘Make America Great Again’, suggested a sense of difference between the past and the present that voters could engage with mentally. However, the language of the AfD party programme lacks the nostalgic framework that helped the Republicans succeed in 2016. Instead it showcases a practical approach to multiculturalism and Islam, viewing the religion as a danger to German society and values.<sup>216</sup>

Indeed, Germany’s contemporary election campaigns have typically avoided explicit nostalgic outpourings in favour of a more grounded and pragmatic methodology. In the 2017 elections, the campaign slogan employed by the Chancellor’s CDU party roughly translated as ‘For a Germany in which we live gladly and live well’. Much like the AfD party programme, the CDU avoided sentimentality, only looking to the future to set policy targets such as modest tax cuts and full employment by 2025.<sup>217</sup> Their main challengers, the Social Democratic Party (SPD), based their campaign around solidarity and social fairness, with the slogan ‘Time for more Justice’. Focussing on the future of German society, the SPD largely placed emphasis on future-orientated solutions to technological, economic, and social changes.<sup>218</sup> This understandably questions the impact of nostalgia on current debates concerning

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<sup>215</sup> Programm, Dresdner Thesen, <https://www.pegida.de>, accessed 20<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

<sup>216</sup> Programm Für Deutschland, pp. 95-96.

<sup>217</sup> CDU Manifesto, Für ein Deutschland, in dem wir gut und gerne leben, 2017, <https://www.cdu.de/artikel/fuer-ein-deutschland-dem-wir-gut-und-gerne-leben>, accessed April 24<sup>th</sup> 2018.

<sup>218</sup> SPD Manifesto, <https://www.spd.de/>, accessed 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

German multiculturalism as many political parties chose not to indulge in sentimentality to create a unique party platform in 2017.

However, as one of the biggest critics of Islam, and multiculturalism in general, the AfD's rise to prominence needs addressing. After all, the AfD was the third most successful party in the 2017 Bundestag election, winning 94 seats.<sup>219</sup> If a sense of nostalgia amongst West Germans did little to trigger the advent of the AfD then what helped their growth? In early 2015, a number of factors, including heightened global conflicts, drought and civil wars, led to a dramatic surge in the number of refugee and migrant arrivals to Europe by boat from Muslim-majority countries, increasing critical discourses even further. Such hostile attitudes towards Islam, directly account for support of right-wing parties or movements. One 2016 study found that 85.9 percent of people supporting groups such as the AfD and Pegida said they felt like a stranger in their own country due to the high Muslim presence, with 80.3 percent of people wanting to restrict immigration from Muslim countries.<sup>220</sup> Moreover, support in the East of Germany arguably helped their rise, with the former Eastern states voting heavily for the AfD. In Saxony, for instance, support for the AfD narrowly overtook the CDU and in the four remaining Eastern states, the right-wing party was the second most popular political party.<sup>221</sup> Eastern support for the AfD can be viewed partially as a rejection of the implementation of a Western model that has failed to fully account for East German citizens since the reunification of Germany. For those in the East who had previously experienced certainty, a clear, fixed status and a less hierarchical economic model, the prospect of a Western capitalist market economy felt like a mirage.<sup>222</sup>

Indeed, such gains led by right-wing parties in recent German elections suggest a lack of effort by the Federal Republic to help integrate migrants into German society. Yet in a few instances, there had been marginal attempts to do so. For example, in 2000 the SPD led federal government founded the League for Democracy and Tolerance against Right-Wing Extremism and Violence. One year later, the federal government founded 'xenos' (foreigner), 'civitas' (city), and 'entimon' (dignity and respect) programmes, committing over \$30 million to the maintenance of said programmes. Through various courses, workshops, conferences, and theatre projects, the main purpose of these

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<sup>219</sup> Bundestag Election 2017,

<https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/bundestagswahlen/2017/ergebnisse/bund-99.html>, accessed 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

<sup>220</sup> Alexander Yendell, Oliver Decker & Elmar Brähler, 'Wer unterstützt Pegida und was erklärt die Zustimmung zu den Zielen der Bewegung' in Oliver Decker, Johannes Kiess & Elmar Brähler, *Die enthemmte Mitte, Die Leipziger Mitte Studie*, (Gießen, 2016), p. 150.

<sup>221</sup> For a detailed breakdown of the 2017 Federal Election, see Bundestag Election 2017, <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/bundestagswahlen/2017/ergebnisse/bund-99.html>, accessed 21<sup>st</sup> October 2018.

<sup>222</sup> Heinz Bude, *Die Ausgeschlossenen. Das Ende vom Traum einer gerechten Gesellschaft*, (Munich, 2008), p. 80.

initiatives is to specifically combat right-wing extremism in contemporary Germany.<sup>223</sup> Newspaper reports, however, highlighted a few issues with these initiatives. For one, the federal programs were principally directed at young people, with critics pointing out that right-wing ideas have long pervaded all ages and strata of society. Moreover, many groups associated with these federal programs found themselves overwhelmed and, even with federal funding, lacking adequate financial resources.<sup>224</sup>

However, even with these attempts to integrate foreigners into German society, the social and economic distance between immigrants and native Germans is still telling. Unemployment statistics amongst foreigners, for example, reveal a great disparity economically when linked to the same statistics of native Germans. In 2010, the Federal Employment Agency reported that the unemployment rate for foreigners was 15 percent compared to the 7 percent rate of natives.<sup>225</sup> Whilst not necessarily surprising, on average native Germans tend to earn more than foreigners in terms of hourly wages. Second-generation immigrants fare worse in comparison to the first generation, but female foreigners statistically earn far less than even their male counterparts. Whilst not necessarily surprising, on average native Germans tend to earn more than foreigners in terms of hourly wages. Second-generation immigrants fare worse in comparison to the first generation, but female foreigners statistically earn far less than even their male counterparts.<sup>226</sup> Education is at least partially responsible for the lack of economic and social integration of immigrants. Both first and second-generation immigrants tend to leave full-time education earlier than Germans, with the average age amongst immigrant men and women being around twenty. However, the average age specifically for Turks living in the Federal Republic that leave full-time education is much smaller at the age of eighteen.<sup>227</sup>

Certain critics of the Federal Republic's immigration policies both past and present contend that immigrants have refused to integrate to an acceptable level. In conjunction Merkel's statement that multiculturalism had failed, a notably staunch critic of German immigration, Thilo Sarrazin, contributed greatly to the overall public debate concerning multiculturalism in reunified Germany. His book, entitled *Deutschland schafft sich ab*, openly disapproved of

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<sup>223</sup> Braunthal, *Right-Wing Extremism*, p. 183.

<sup>224</sup> See, 'Aktionismus der Anständigen' *Der Spiegel*, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2006, p. 66; see also, 'Den Nazis trotzen', *Die Zeit*, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2006, <http://www.zeit.de/2006/23/Rechtsextremismus>, accessed 28<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

<sup>225</sup> Bundesagentur für Arbeit, *Analyse des Arbeitsmarktes für Ausländer März 2012*, Nürnberg, (2012), <http://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statischer-Content/Statistische-Analysen/Analytikereports/Zentrale-Analytikereports/Monatliche-Analytikereports/Generische-Publikationen/Analyse-Arbeitsmarkt-Auslaender/Analyse-Arbeitsmarkt-Auslaender-201203.pdf>, accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2018, p. 33.

<sup>226</sup> Yann Algan, et. al., 'The Economic Situation of First and Second-Generation Immigrants in France, Germany, and the United Kingdom', *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 120, No. 542, p. 10.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid*, p. F11.

the Federal Republic's immigration policies of the past, whilst also creating a public forum to discuss issues concerning multiculturalism and the integration of Islam into German society. As stated by Sarrazin:

‘Anyone with a legal residence status is welcome. But we expect you to learn the language, earn your livelihood with work, have educational ambitions for your children, adapt to the customs and customs of Germany, and become German over time - if not you, then at least your children. If you are of Muslim faith, you have the same rights and duties as Pagan, Protestant or Catholic Germans. But we do not want national minorities. Anyone who wants to remain a Turk or Arab and wants to do so for his children is better off in his country of origin. And those who are particularly interested in the blessings of the German welfare state are certainly not welcome here.’<sup>228</sup>

The integration of Muslims into German society is also set out by Sarrazin via the introduction of mandatory charitable work to be conducted by Muslims, strict focus on learning only German in nursery classes, tightening the linguistic requirements for German citizenship, and advocating extremely restrictive conditions for further immigration from Muslim countries.<sup>229</sup> Sarrazin's preoccupation with Islam relies heavily on its association with German heritage. Indeed, the views shared in his book are comparable to the rhetoric of far-right groups in recent times. Both share a pre-conceived notion of what it means to be ‘German’, suggesting a strong Christian foundation at the core of it all. Yet unlike the manifestos of leading German political parties, one can highlight notions of nostalgia that is present in Sarrazin's work. Interestingly enough, Sarrazin mentions the concept of nostalgia within his 2010 book, arguing:

‘As soon as anyone tries to reverse trends that seem unfavourable, he is in danger of thinking un-historically, falling into nostalgia, and misjudging the influence that should be afforded key moments. Like a river, the stream of history is constant and never returns to its old course. Still, nostalgia is tempting for all those who want to preserve the good and do not condone change for its own sake.’<sup>230</sup>

Moreover, Sarrazin noted that he did not want the land of his grandchildren and his great-grandchildren to be largely Muslim, stressing that a period of time has existed, where Islam did not influence a leading culture within Germany. This, in turn, suggests at the very least that nostalgia may have influenced one of the Federal Republic's biggest critics of German multiculturalism. The very title

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<sup>228</sup> Thilo Sarrazin, *Deutschland schafft sich ab: Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen*, (München, 2010), p. 326.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 327-329.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid*, p. 19.

implies the development of nostalgia with the idea that Germany is literally ‘abolishing itself’ in the present. There are, however, a few points to consider. Sarrazin’s views suggest a strong fixation with the genetics of migrants, and their socio-economic impact on German society. For instance, using the help of congenital research, Sarrazin argued that Turkish and Kurdish immigrants were more prone to disabilities and thus would affect a foreigners economic potential in the Federal Republic.<sup>231</sup> Sarrazin’s critics highlight his awkward approach in discussing integrating migrants but he is not accused of being a nostalgic, especially in regards to nostalgia for West Germany. The ‘old’ Federal Republic was, for the most part, accommodating of migrants during forty years of separation. As noted previously, the issues multiculturalism came from a lack of clarity in defining a migrant’s status in the ‘old’ Federal Republic. The perseveration of German culture lies at the forefront of both Sarrazin’s ideology and the policies of far-right parties and not necessarily looking back at West Germany in a nostalgic fashion.

According to one survey, 46 percent of Germans agree with Sarrazin’s views concerning the fear of foreign economic, social, and political domination in contemporary Germany.<sup>232</sup> Of course, such findings are by no means relevant to nostalgia for West Germany, but can stress a level of doubt regarding how effective the Federal Republic’s immigration policies are in helping to develop a German society. A previous mayor of Hamburg, Christoph Ahlhaus, spoke negatively of the Federal Republic’s past immigration laws, especially in regards to how ‘open’ these prior policies were for foreigners. However, the predominant theme of Ahlhaus’ statements is not suggestive of any sense of nostalgia, but of a desire to critique the failure to address the ‘immigrant question’ and to control immigration to a greater extent for the ‘legitimate national interests of this country.’<sup>233</sup> Even after decades of settlement, evidence suggests foreigners have been unable to integrate into society to an appropriate extent. This, in turn, has had a say in the social, political and economic representation of ethnic minorities. As such, *Westalgie’s* contribution to these debates is somewhat complex. Indeed, Sarrazin’s views do suggest some sense of nostalgia for a past that is viewed in a rose-tinted manner. But these are not representative of a nostalgia for West Germany, as it has been clearly established that West Germany was a land of immigration long before many began to view it as such. But recent criticisms of German multiculturalism, much like with the political and economic developments of the Berlin Republic, suggest pragmatic concerns that are not wholly related to nostalgia for West Germany.

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid, p. 261.

<sup>232</sup> “18 Prozent der Deutschen würden Sarrazin wählen” *Berliner Morgenpost*, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2014, <http://www.morgenpost.de/printarchiv/titelseite/article1390251/18-Prozent-der-Deutschen-wuerden-Sarrazin-waehlen.html>, accessed 9<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>233</sup> Christoph Ahlhaus, “Das Zuwanderungsrecht ist gescheitert”, *Die Zeit*, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2010, p. 34.

## Concluding Remarks

The integration of foreigners into German society is still an on-going process that requires both time and patience from immigrants, native Germans, and the federal government. Of course, it is difficult to predict how the German government and its native citizens will view facets of multiculturalism in the years to come. Future discourses concerning immigrants and their integration into society could be shaped very differently in the next decade. Nevertheless, the fundamental issue raised from this chapter is that linking *Westalgie* with criticisms of German multiculturalism is a far more complex and nuanced subject. Above all, nostalgia is a critique against change. As such, while Roderick Peters' example of homesickness as a rationale for nostalgia's onset,<sup>234</sup> or Davis' use of the transition of ageing as a suitable explanation for one to reminisce,<sup>235</sup> are indeed correct; the issue with German multiculturalism is not as simple. There are certainly plenty examples of change that are associated with the integration of migrants within German society. Yet there lacks a clear reference point for one to feel nostalgic about. As previously stated, governments before the Federal Republic used foreign labourers to help increase productivity and allowing foreigners to work within Germany was not a new concept.

Indeed, as Gary Freeman notes, 'no state possesses a truly coherent incorporation regime.'<sup>236</sup> Each country has had differing experiences regarding the social, political, and economic integration of its foreign inhabitants. This, too, makes it difficult to analyse how multiculturalism has had an effect on nostalgia in other countries. There is no doubt a strong public response to immigration in the Federal Republic, whether it is positive or negative. A major issue within the public discourse is, of course, the integration of foreigners into German society. In a separate survey conducted in 2000, Germans 'tended to agree' with the statement that 'it is a good thing for any society to be made up of people from different races, religions, and cultures.'<sup>237</sup> True, agreeing with the statement is by no means a validation of multicultural practices. Even if public opinion was fairly supportive towards the pluralisation of German society, the question of how to integrate different races and cultures is noticeably absent.

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<sup>234</sup> Peters, 'Reflections on the Origin and Aim of Nostalgia', p. 135.

<sup>235</sup> Davis, *Yearning For Yesterday*, p. 49.

<sup>236</sup> Gary P. Freeman, 'Immigrant Incorporation in Western Democracies', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 38, No. 3, (2004), p. 946.

<sup>237</sup> SORA (2001) *Attitudes towards Minority Groups in the European Union*. A special analysis of the Eurobarometer 2000 survey on behalf of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, Vienna, p. 55. cited in Schönwälder, 'Migration', p. 157.

Yet nostalgia, more specifically *Westalgie*, seemingly contributes little to the growing emergence of critical debates regarding multiculturalism. As stated previously, more pragmatic concerns about the future and heritage of German culture have shaped fierce criticisms of multicultural practises. Islam is criticised not because of nostalgia, but because there are real concerns about its impact on not just German society, but Western society as well. Indeed, the past is clearly referenced within such criticisms of the religion. Yet this predates the history of the ‘old’ Federal Republic, focussing on older notions of what it means to be a German and shaped by Christian virtues. Importantly, this stresses how case-specific *Westalgie* is as a phenomenon. Sarrazin’s views may have been influenced by a notion of a German past that has, as he puts it, been abolished by the policies of modern day Germany. However, they are not entirely characteristic of the wider debate concerning German multiculturalism. Recent debates lack a strong connection to *Westalgie*, instead focussing on perceived notions of German culture shaped by hundreds of years of history.

## **6. *Westalgie* or Localised Nostalgia for West Berlin?**

During the Cold War, many different terms were used to describe West Berlin’s unique geographical location and political situation. It was called an ‘outpost of freedom’, a ‘thorn in the flesh of communism’, and even an ‘island in a red sea.’ Berlin’s history, its symbolism as a site of the Cold War as well as of unification, and the unprecedented building boom of the 1990s turned the city into a workshop for a changing German identity.<sup>238</sup> The city itself, one can argue, represented divided Germany in microcosm during the Cold War. Literally divided into East and West Berlin, generations of Berliners grew accustomed to a certain way of life in the backdrop of an ideological conflict.

Preceding chapters in this thesis have attempted to analyse why nostalgia for the ‘old’ Federal Republic developed after Germany reunified in 1990. In doing so one can view *Westalgie* as a very multifaceted phenomenon. While there are examples of *Westalgie* when discussing German politics, economics, and multiculturalism, the phenomenon itself is rather case specific. Additionally, it is more of an expression of misgivings to the developments in

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<sup>238</sup> Katharina Gerstenberger, *Writing the New Berlin: The German Capital in Post-Wall Literature*, (New York, 2008), p. 1.

the Berlin Republic, and not a rejection of change like *Ostalgie* implies. This is important to note, as *Westalgie* is not entirely comparable to its East German counterpart. More importantly, there exists an extra element to *Westalgie* that will be discussed in this chapter: the legacy of West Berlin. It can be argued that in recent times a sense of localised nostalgia has developed for the city, with museum exhibitions, films, and even social media demonstrating how the process of change has affected the city and its inhabitants. However, can this localised nostalgia for West Berlin be considered an element of *Westalgie*? Or is it a separate phenomenon in its own right? After all, West Berlin was unique not simply because of its location within East Germany. At the very least nostalgia for West Berlin highlights how complex *Westalgie* really is, as it suggests a sense of nostalgia for two separate areas. This, too, is further exemplified by the fact that there is little mention of an East Berlin nostalgia in the public sphere. Films such as *Sonnenalle* or *Goodbye Lenin!*, while set in East Berlin, are considered examples of *Ostalgie* rather than localised nostalgia.

Analysing nostalgia in a post-communist world, Svetlana Boym argues that ‘Nostalgia inevitably reappears as a defence mechanism in a time of accelerated rhythms of life and historical upheavals.’ This nostalgic longing, according to Boym, has pervaded post-communist countries going through a turbulent transition and presents the past in an almost utopian fantasy.<sup>239</sup> Amy Sadaro comments further that if societies must come to terms with the negative past ‘in order to adhere to the international normative demands of today’, they can soften the shame of regret with a sense of nostalgic remembrance.<sup>240</sup> Yet in comparison to West Berlin, whose history is deemed less controversial, it is problematic to view nostalgia as a way of coping with a difficult past. Indeed, narratives concerning West Berlin portray the city in a positive light, with titles such as the ‘Island of Freedom’ highlighting a sense of positivity when referring to West Berlin. It is therefore prudent to view nostalgia for West Berlin, as simply a process of changing circumstances to the lives and identities of its inhabitants.

Commenting on urban nostalgia, novelist, Colson Whitehead, suggests a sense of identity forms when ‘what was before is more real and solid than what is here now.’<sup>241</sup> While one’s sense of urban belonging may register in many ways, through the familiarity of daily routines, through communities of work, and through the physical spaces in which people gather, one can acquire a truly urban identity at the moment people react to change by remembering a vanished city. Consequently, Whitehead’s views on nostalgia and its relationship with urban landscapes leave a somewhat negative impression on the reader. Yet perceptions on the concept of nostalgia do little to form the fundamental

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<sup>239</sup> Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. xiv.

<sup>240</sup> Amy Sadaro, ‘Memory, History, and Nostalgia in Berlin’s Jewish Museum’, *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, Vol. 26, No. 1, (March, 2013), p. 88.

<sup>241</sup> Colson Whitehead, *The Colossus of New York*, (New York, 2003), p. 1.



message in Whitehead's assertions. Rather, as Tamar Katz notes, it is the passage of time, and the physical and metaphorical change that accompanies it, that shape a person's relationship with their surroundings. Whitehead, too, focuses on the physical change of a city, without discussing the mentalities of its inhabitants. Indeed, transforming a city landscape is often not an obvious transition, which is why a person's reaction to physical change is paradoxically both slow and unexpected. However, as Katz argues, 'When we live in a city, we celebrate its novelty.'<sup>242</sup> Attitudes and presumptions amongst the population of a city shapes identity and are therefore not solely reliant on physical surroundings to shape a distinctive sense of character. As Gerald D. Suttles notes, 'Cities get to know what they are and what is distinctive about them from the unified observation of others', with the population, be it politicians, musicians, artists, helping to shape a unique setting.<sup>243</sup>

Undoubtedly, the city of Berlin has numerous physical landmarks that distinguish it against other European capitals. Yet in the context of Cold War the city of West Berlin, occupied by western allies but geographically situated in East Germany, arguably created a culture unique in Western Europe. Darryl Pinckney notes that 'West Berlin was a fine place in which to be a voluntarily displaced person. It was a small town with a big culture. All the music, film, and theatre you could sit through.'<sup>244</sup> Imagery of an 'island' within a communist setting evoke a sense of isolation that was made worse with the construction of the Berlin Wall. Yet West Berlin was already unique prior to its cut off from East Germany. It had retained a special political status until reunification and was considered a *de facto* part of West Germany. Moreover, under allied law, West Berliners were exempt from any military service, making the city an ideal haven to those wanting to avoid conscription. West Berlin, too, known for its energetic nightlife, developed a sense of alternative living for its inhabitants who listened to psychedelic music, engaged with punk movements, and faced no closing times in clubs.<sup>245</sup>

The city of West Berlin was therefore influenced not just by its physical surroundings, but also by its population's desire to seek experiences outside normative trends. Nostalgia for West Berlin, as opposed to *Westalgie*, does not simply refer to a time before East Germany became a part of the Federal Republic. Instead it refers to an urban centre that no longer exists in the

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<sup>242</sup> Tamar Katz, 'City Memory, City History: Urban Nostalgia, 'The Colossus of New York', and Late-Twentieth-Century Historical Fiction', *Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 51, No. 4, (Winter, 2010), p. 810-811.

<sup>243</sup> Gerald D. Suttles, 'The Cumulative Texture of Local Urban Culture', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 90, No. 2, (1984), p. 285.

<sup>244</sup> Darryl Pinckney, 'Tensions and Nostalgias: Berlin Days with Robert Wilson and Heiner Müller', *Salmagundi*, Vol. 144, No. 145, (Fall 2004 – Winter 2005), p. 145.

<sup>245</sup> 'Tracing West Berlin's 70s and 80s Subculture', Deutsche Welles, <http://www.dw.com/en/tracing-west-berlins-70s-and-80s-subculture/a-16615845>, accessed 21<sup>st</sup> September 2018.

consciousness of its population. This chapter will therefore analyse important issues regarding localised nostalgia for West Berlin. It first analyses how the Berlin-Bonn debate altered the 'new' Federal Republic, providing a sense of change that helped drive nostalgia for West Germany. The next section will analyse how nostalgia for West Berlin has been connected with landmarks important to the history of West Berlin such as Tempelhof Airport. Lastly, this chapter will examine West Berlin nostalgia in the context of popular culture, demonstrating how varying mediums refer to the city and its population.

### **The Berlin-Bonn Debate**

Capital cities can serve symbolic as well as practical purposes. Using this logic, it is both useful and important to analyse the Berlin-Bonn debate, especially in the context of nostalgia for West Germany and West Berlin. In terms of political differences between the 'old' and 'new' Federal Republic, the Berlin-Bonn debate arguably highlights the most significant change the country has faced since reunification. For Berlin, the question of Germany's capital after reunification stirred another debate about national identity and urban form. It, too, posed questions of integration with East Germany and West German heritage. Politics in the Bonn Republic were marked not only by negative memories of the Third Reich but of the failure of the Weimar Republic as well. The constitutional Basic Law was designed to make sure that Bonn would not be Weimar, but rather a unique governmental system in its own right.<sup>246</sup>

Bonn, the provisional capital of West Germany had created a strong reputation for West Germans. It represented a successful democracy, especially compared to the government of the GDR based in East Berlin. Bonn, too, highlighted Germany's integration into the West, through its membership in NATO and the European community. Bonn, as the capital of West Germany, symbolised such normalisation and in many ways helped foster a West German identity. Moving the Federal Republic's government eastwards undoubtedly constituted a major difference between the Bonn and Berlin Republic, stressing not only a significant change between the two governments but a clear justification for why *Westalgie* can develop.

The *Hauptstadt* controversy at the turn of the 1990s was long and acrimonious, culminating in a protracted debate in the Bundestag, after which it was voted by a slim margin to return the capital status to Berlin. Indeed, the closeness of the vote, 338 to 320, highlighted how important the city of Bonn had become as a symbol of West German heritage yet there were also other issues to consider. For example, there were practical worries concerning the

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<sup>246</sup> Lewis J. Edinger and Brigitte L. Nacos, 'From the Bonn to the Berlin Republic: Can a Stable Democracy Continue', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 113, No. 2, (1998), p. 180.

cost of moving a government from Bonn to Berlin. There, too, were also personal concerns with politicians who resided in Bonn and would likely see the value of their properties fall with a decision to move to Berlin.<sup>247</sup> On a wider issue, the decision to base the German government in a city associated with the political systems of Weimar and Nazism was in stark contrast to Bonn's federal nature and modest authority claimed by a liberal state.<sup>248</sup> Technically, the question of Germany's capital had long been settled. When the new West German government decided in 1949 to govern from Bonn, it underlined the provisional nature of the city and its seat of government by declaring Berlin would resume its position as the German capital if and when German reunified.

After forty years, however, many people and politicians no longer considered Bonn a provisional capital and saw little reason to move the government eastwards. Supporters of retaining Bonn as the capital of the Federal Republic presented their city as representative of a successful democracy, in contrast to Berlin, which had served as a capital of a monarchy, a failed democracy, and two dictatorships.<sup>249</sup> Yet the argument for integrating East Germans in the Federal Republic also countered such ideas of Berlin's history with previous governments. The move from Bonn to Berlin was therefore not only a practical measure, but a symbolic one as well. It represented a desire to include East Germans within the political culture of the Federal Republic, thereby creating a sense of unity between East and West Germans. Moreover, *The London Times* suggested Berlin was 'the one gift East Germans had been able to bring to their rich cousins in the West.'<sup>250</sup> The city was a symbol of German reunification and therefore, deserved to be reinstated as the capital of Germany.

Indeed, the debate concerning where to place the Federal Republic's government caused both ire and controversy. The then deputy mayor of Bonn argued, 'Bonn's small size symbolizes West Germany's federalism,' also noting 'one city does not control the whole country. Frankfurt is the capital city for business, Karlsruhe is the center for legal affairs, Munich is where many of West Germany's high-tech companies are based, and Berlin is the center of film, arts, and culture.'<sup>251</sup> During the tense debate, CDU politician, Norbert Blüm, a staunch defender of Bonn argued, 'It was a good thing for the post-war West Germany that parliamentary and governmental seats were at work in the Bonn workshop. Bonn's modest self-assurance has done well on the working day of

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<sup>247</sup> Gordon A. Craig, 'Berlin, the Hauptstadt: Back Where it Belongs', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 4, (July, 1998), p. 170.

<sup>248</sup> Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*, (Chicago, 1997), p. 225.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 224-225.

<sup>250</sup> *The London Times*, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1991, p. 10

<sup>251</sup> Mark M. Sheehan, 'Germans Have Second Thoughts about Berlin as a Capital', <http://www.csmonitor.com/1990/0321/ocap.html>, accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018.

Parliament and on government work. Why not our reunited Germany?’<sup>252</sup> Others, however, stressed the positive symbolic importance of Berlin as a German capital, as well as the symbolic inclusion of East Germans in the political system of the Federal Republic.

For example, Helmut Kohl, the then Chancellor of Germany focussed on Berlin as a symbol of German unity stating, ‘Berlin has always been the opportunity to overcome the division. Berlin was the focal point of German division and longing for the unity of Germany.’<sup>253</sup> Eberhard Diepgen, another CDU politician, contributed to the discussion by adding, ‘the city of Berlin is certainly full of opposites, full of tensions and contradictions. But precisely for this reason it is not the hoard of centralism, precisely because of its diversity it is not that.’<sup>254</sup> Indeed, the issues to base the government in either Bonn or Berlin were numerous. Not only were there personal preferences, but also symbolic questions concerning Berlin, Bonn’s geographical isolation in Germany, and also the lingering issue of inner German unity. For West Germans, however, the eventual decision to base the German government in Berlin instead of Bonn may have had negative repercussions in the long run.

Naturally, Berlin’s local press greeted the decision with great fervour. *Der Tagesspiegel*, for example, declared Berlin to be ‘a capital for all Germans’, highlighting Bonn’s role as the capital had become obsolete after the reunification of Germany.<sup>255</sup> Moreover, the *Berliner Morgenpost* referred to the date as ‘a historic day for our city’.<sup>256</sup> Reports concerning the decision to move the German government from Bonn to Berlin was front-page news for several days, especially with newspapers located in Berlin. Yet outside of Berlin, newspaper publications issued articles with gentle scepticism concerning the Berlin-Bonn Debate. One article in the conservative newspaper, *Die Welt*, located in Hamburg, suggested that Berlin still had a lot of work to do in terms of creating a sustainable post-wall German identity, noting ‘a global spirit must be felt, an atmosphere of high intellectual and cultural aspirations must prevail’, and ‘the capital of the Germans must be a clean, beautiful city characterized by a tolerant spirit.’<sup>257</sup> Outside of Germany, *The London Times* noted that the joy and exuberance in Berlin felt after the decision to move capitals was only matched by the opening of the Berlin Wall.<sup>258</sup>

Indeed, the choice to move capitals was decided by very slim margins, suggesting that Bonn had, in the mind of certain West Germans, lost its provisional status as capital of the Federal Republic. Nostalgia was first recognised as a psychological condition associated with travellers and soldiers

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<sup>252</sup> *Berliner Zeitung*, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1991, p. 3.

<sup>253</sup> *Die Welt*, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1991, p. 2.

<sup>254</sup> *Berliner Zeitung*, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1991, p. 3.

<sup>255</sup> *Der Tagesspiegel*, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1991, pp. 1-5.

<sup>256</sup> *Berliner Morgenpost*, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1991, p. 1.

<sup>257</sup> *Die Welt*, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1991, p. 2.

<sup>258</sup> *The London Times*, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1991, p. 10.

experiencing varying degrees of homesickness. Drawing on this very basic definition of nostalgia, one can see how such a stark political change may have created a sense of nostalgia for a West Germany. It is perhaps the symbolism of Bonn as a city of West German democracy and overall success that caused controversy once discussions took place concerning Berlin's status as the capital of Germany. Nostalgia is largely an expression of displacement in contemporary times, indicating strong affection for past memories. *Westalgie* is very much explained by changing circumstances, regardless of whether these changes are considered positive or negative.

Regarding West Berlin's special status during the Cold War, the move from Bonn to Berlin altered a city that was unique for its time. West Berlin was attractive for a number of reasons, be it tastes in music, a lack of conscription, as well as its geographical location. It was not a capital city but rather an enclave for its population to develop its own identity. By bringing the title of capital city to Berlin, along with the integration of East Berlin, West Berlin lost its unique setting, leaving behind an identity that has had to adapt to changing social and political events. For West Berliners, the change in capitals arguably altered not only the landscape of the city, but also the mentality of its inhabitants. The city was a symbol of an alternative and creative lifestyle cultivated by students, youths, and immigrants. This, too, was emphasised in the late sixties and early seventies, with the development of student movements against the rigid structures of post-war society. Critical attitudes against the Vietnam War and the United States stood in contrast to earlier perceptions of the U.S. as friends and protectors of the FRG. This observation of West Berlin as an unconventional culture contributed to its legacy. The city was unique to its inhabitants and outside observers and while it was legally recognised as a part of West Germany, it also retained its own distinctive heritage once the reunification of Germany occurred.

The complexities of *Westalgie* are therefore highlighted once more when discussing localised nostalgia. West Berlin had its own special status during the Cold War and was not a complete representation of the West German system. Consequently, nostalgia for West Berlin can be considered somewhat separate to *Westalgie* as it refers to an urban centre that was unlike any other West German city. A museum exhibition held between 2014 and 2015 entitled West Berlin: An Island in Search of its Mainland retrospectively examined the history of West Berlin, suggesting a growing sense of recognition for a city that no longer exists. The exhibition pamphlet implies a sense of great change by highlighting the twenty-fifth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the loss of West Berlin's special status and prestige.<sup>259</sup> Yet the curators of the exhibition argued that the exhibition was not a retrospective romanticism of

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<sup>259</sup> West Berlin: Eine Insel auf der Suche nach Festland, Official Flyer, [http://west.berlin/sites/default/files/WestBerlin\\_Flyer\\_download.pdf](http://west.berlin/sites/default/files/WestBerlin_Flyer_download.pdf), accessed 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

West Berlin, but rather an attempt to help people find the ‘spirit’ of the city.<sup>260</sup> It is, however, the very appearance of the exhibition that suggests a sense of difference between the past and present, a key implication of the development of nostalgia.

Even so, Bonn benefitted in some way from the change in circumstances. Fortified by federal aid worth almost \$2 billion, and by decisions to locate the headquarters of Germany’s privatised postal and telecommunications industries in Bonn, along with several United Nations agencies, Bonn has prospered. In 2011, *The New York Times* noted the population had risen from 310,000 in 1991 to 318,000; the number of jobs in the city and the surrounding region had also increased by 14.4 percent to 285,000.<sup>261</sup> This can partly be explained by the fact that not all government agencies moved to Berlin. Even when the Parliament and Chancellery moved to Berlin in 1999, six ministries, including Defense, retained substantial operations in Bonn, along with many other organizations. According to Paul Betts, the concept of nostalgia arrived fairly late in Germany compared to other European nation states.<sup>262</sup> As a result of Germany’s Nazi past, both East and West Germans lacked a viable remembrance culture. After reunification, however, changes that were political, economic, and cultural helped to cultivate strong senses of nostalgia West Berliners.

### **West Berlin Landmarks**

As highlighted by Hanno Hochmuth, the city of Berlin has changed noticeably since the reunification of Germany. So much so that photobooks detailing Berlin’s dynamic urban transformation are readily available to consumers.<sup>263</sup> Distinctive landmarks, in the words of Aimee Mollaghan, ‘carry a certain cultural significance, offering itself as a utopia or balms to the ills of modernity.’<sup>264</sup> Therefore, nostalgia seemingly affects various aspects of life including the landmarks one may find themselves visiting. Referring to Whitehead’s previous link between nostalgia and the physical features of a city, urban change can make a person confront the present in a very physical way as

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<sup>260</sup> West Berlin: Eine Insel auf der Suche nach Festland, Press Release, [https://www.stadtmuseum.de/sites/default/files/pm\\_westberlin\\_final\\_engl.pdf](https://www.stadtmuseum.de/sites/default/files/pm_westberlin_final_engl.pdf), accessed 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

<sup>261</sup> Alan Cowell, ‘In Germany’s Capitals: Cold War Memories and Imperial Ghosts’, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/24/world/europe/24berlin.html>, accessed 12<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

<sup>262</sup> See, Paul Betts, ‘Remembrance of Things Past: Nostalgia in West and East Germany, 1980-2000’, in Paul Betts and Greg Eghigian, (eds.), *Pain and Prosperity: Reconsidering Twentieth-Century History*, (Stanford, 2003), pp. 178-207.

<sup>263</sup> See Hanno Hochmuth, ‘Sehnsuchtsbilder: West-Berlin in neuen Fotobäden’, *Studies in Contemporary History*, Vol, 2, (2014), pp. 312-327.

<sup>264</sup> Aimee Mollaghan, “‘Too Much Quiet would Drive a Fellow Mad.’” Lanscape and Nostalgia in *Silence*, *Esudios Irlandses*, Vol. 8, (January, 2013), p. 223.

it guarantees that they see a city that is no longer there. Berlin, as a divided city, created landmarks for both East and West Berliners. For example, in East Berlin one can find a monument a Soviet War memorial within Treptower Park; and parts of the Berlin Wall are now adorned with art produced by various artists in the East Side Gallery. The West, too, built landmarks that created a history for West Berliners. Yet with the changing landscape of Berlin after the reunification, it is important to analyse whether nostalgia for West Berlin landmarks exists within Berlin.

One of the few Nazi landmarks in Berlin to survive after the Second World War, Tempelhof Airport, was at first representational of the success of Nazism, with its unique design shaped to be the wings of an eagle. However, the symbolism of Tempelhof Airport after the Second World War cannot be understated. Between 26<sup>th</sup> June and 6<sup>th</sup> October, airplanes flew over 270,000 missions carrying more than 2.1 million tonnes of freight to West Berlin. Food, coal, machinery, and everyday goods flew in to tackle land and sea trade restrictions placed by the Soviet Union. Even so soon after the Second World War, the majority of West Berliners were on the side of U.S. and British forces, changing the relationship with the occupying forces to an almost protective association. At the same time the boldness, and even adventurism, of the U.S. military authority in Germany proved warranted in the short-term faceoff with the USSR in central Europe. The airlift was able to get supplies into the city until the Soviets called off the blockade, and West Berlin came into existence, a bone in the throat of the Soviet Union and a beacon of freedom behind the Iron Curtain.<sup>265</sup>

The local population and the West Berlin media were very much aware of the benefits of a strong public commitment to the Western powers. On the first day of the blockade, the newspaper *Der Abend* reminded readers ‘the struggle for freedom and human rights had led the world to hold the city in high regard.’<sup>266</sup> This newly acquired reputation and international attention were considered to be of great importance; something West Berlin would be able to capitalise on politically. Moreover, the city of Berlin and the Airlift itself gave the United States the opportunity to celebrate its first victory in the struggle between two superpowers. Tempelhof’s reverence outside of Germany was even noted by foreign politicians decades later. Barack Obama, then a senator campaigning to be President of the United States, noted that relations between West Germany and the U.S. improved due to the efforts of the Berlin Airlift, arguing ‘Germans and Americans learned to work together and trust each other less than three years after facing each other on the field of battle’.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Daniel F. Harrington, *Berlin on the Brink: The Blockade, the Airlift, and the Early Cold War*, (Kentucky, 2012), p. 132.

<sup>266</sup> ‘Bange machen gilt nicht!’, *Der Abend*, June 24, 1948.

<sup>267</sup> ‘People of the World, look at Berlin!’, *Der Spiegel*, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2008, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/obamas-original-manuskript-people-of-the-world-look-at-berlin-a-567925.html>, accessed 2nd<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

Yet the decision to close Tempelhof in 2008 came met some resistance. After years of declining use, both for military affairs and public transportation, the airport ceased operation. Moreover, with Tegel Airport and Schönefeld Airport coming into the fold, Tempelhof soon became redundant to airliners and passengers. Speaking in 2004 about the state of Templehof, the then city Mayor, Klaus Wowereit, argued there was ‘no case for keeping the rundown airport alive at a time when libraries and swimming pools were being shut to stave off bankruptcy,’ before stating ‘Tempelhof has outlived itself.’<sup>268</sup> Indeed, the symbolic nature of the airport did not equate to adequate financial outlays for the city by the time it had closed. Use of the airport had even started to decline by the mid 1980s, with one commentator noting, ‘Today Tempelhof is silent. The only air traffic is the occasional American military plane from bases in West Germany and a flight a month from North Carolina to give American-based pilots experience of flying through the air corridors.’<sup>269</sup>

Protesters did little to stop the decision and were even described as ‘mourning nostalgics’ in an article by *Der Spiegel*.<sup>270</sup> Furthermore, as a symbol of West Berlin, and to some extent the ‘old’ Federal Republic, the decision to close an airport of historical significance stresses the difference between the past and the present from a Berlin landscape perspective. In spite of its inactivity Tempelhof represented a decisive part of West Berlin’s history and the decision to close the airport marked a definite change experienced by West Berliners. Yet such a decision did not change the structural integrity of Tempelhof. Now, one can freely enter the grounds of Tempelhof, including its runway for recreational purposes. A local referendum maintained its status as a public park, despite plans to open the grounds for construction. Visitors to the park can now freely gain access to a symbol of West Berlin, with signs providing information about Tempelhof’s history, and an airplane once used for training by fire services sits near the airport’s buildings.<sup>271</sup> Indeed, though Tempelhof no longer functions as an official airport, the fact that it has yet to be replaced by other forms of construction suggests a lingering connection with the landmark and the city’s inhabitants. Its role in the Berlin Airlift is symbolic as a Cold War symbol and a West Berlin one, too. Moreover, the fact that it now remains a public space for Berlin’s inhabitants suggests a growing preoccupation with the ‘old’ West Germany, with the chance to learn about its history in one of its most symbolic landmarks.

West Berlin’s link with western integration is further emphasised by landmarks visited by prominent American politicians. Standing in front of

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<sup>268</sup> *The London Times*, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2004, p. 22.

<sup>269</sup> *The London Times*, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1984, p. 5.

<sup>270</sup> ‘Keine Gnade für Templehof’, *Der Spiegel*, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2008, <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/dokument/d-62545698.html>, accessed 24<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

<sup>271</sup> “How Berliners refused to give Tempelhof Airport over to Developers”, *The Guardian*, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/mar/05/how-berliners-refused-to-give-tempelhof-airport-over-to-developers>, accessed 7<sup>th</sup> October 2018.



Rathaus Schönberg, the West Berlin city hall, US President John F. Kennedy declared in a speech that the now walled-in audience would be living on a ‘defended island of freedom’ and that Americans would ‘take the greatest pride’ in this shared struggle to uphold this symbol of democracy. ‘There are many people in the world who really don’t understand, or say they don’t, what is the great issue between the free world and the Communist world. Let them come to Berlin’, said Kennedy.<sup>272</sup> A few years later, speaking at the Siemens factory in West Berlin, President Nixon addressed workers, referring to West Berlin as ‘an island of freedom and prosperity, of courage and determination, in the centre of post-war Europe.’<sup>273</sup> Indeed, by framing West Berlin as a symbol to the rest of the world, American presidents were not just equating the city with the United States, but incorporating it into their own ‘imagined community.’<sup>274</sup> The Amerika-Gedenkbibliothek, too, highlights a strong connection with the west, with donations coming from the U.S. to build a public library for the West Berlin population. Even the Brandenburg gate, a monument built in the eighteenth century, shares a strong personal history with East and West Berlin. As Neil MacGregor notes, ‘There is no building or site that speaks so powerfully to Germans everywhere of the division and the reunification of their country.’<sup>275</sup> Again the links with the West were put on display when Ronald Reagan boldly stated to ‘Tear down this wall’. With the Berlin Wall situated right next to the Brandenburg gate, a symbol of division and unity grew in the consciousness of Berliners.

Aside from these Western links, photos of West Berlin landmarks continue to circulate both digital and print medias. Because of the implementation of digital photography it has become far easier to view life in West Berlin, highlighting how nostalgia can be a transferable phenomenon, easily shared amongst groups of people. It, too, is interesting not only as a way to document the past, but also as a contemporary expression of longing for West Berlin. Color photographs remind one of the ‘old’ West Berlin before the fall of the Berlin Wall, and even help in reproducing urban myths to drive tourism.<sup>276</sup> They document a part of Berlin’s postwar history, which has clearly become a thing of the past. The representation of a passive, secluded, utopian space the citizens in West Berlin created for themselves allows for an interpretation as nostalgia for escapism. Landmarks and areas highlight a city’s history for its

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<sup>272</sup> John F. Kennedy, Speech at Rathaus Schönberg, 26<sup>th</sup> June 1963, [https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/oEX2uqSQGEGIdTYgd\\_JL\\_Q.aspx](https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/oEX2uqSQGEGIdTYgd_JL_Q.aspx), accessed 15<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

<sup>273</sup> Richard Nixon, Speech at Siemens Factory, 27<sup>th</sup> February 1969, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=2427>, accessed 15<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

<sup>274</sup> Stefanie Eisenhuth and Scott H. Krause, ‘Inventing the “Outpost of Freedom”’: Transatlantic Narratives and Historical Actors Crafting West Berlin’s Postwar Political Culture’, *Studies in Contemporary History*, Vol, 2, (2014), p. 199.

<sup>275</sup> Neil MacGregor, *Germany: Memories of a Nation*, (London, 2014), p. 15.

<sup>276</sup> Hanno Hochmuth, ‘Sehnsuchtsbilder’, p. 326.

inhabitants and tourists, suggesting that nostalgia for attractions can feasibly exist. West Berlin, a city filled with history from the Cold War, undoubtedly changed after the reunification of Germany.

### **West Berlin Nostalgia in Popular Culture**

Of course, as a unique city in time and history, portrayals of West Berlin and the lives of its inhabitants in popular culture avenues such as film, literature, and even social media, are undoubtedly ubiquitous. In general nostalgia and popular culture are linked very closely, from Hollywood reboots of beloved franchises to modern pop music drawing influence from earlier examples. It is therefore necessary to analyse West Berlin nostalgia in popular culture, helping to understand how it has developed whilst also demonstrating its existence in the public sphere.

In modern times, the dissemination of nostalgic tendencies in popular culture has become readily available to consumers, be it through ownership of physical media, or the growth of social media in the past few years. By the turn of the millennium, the culture of home entertainment still centred on the ownership of physical media, video store rentals, and repetitions in television programming. Allowing consumers a connection with older films, these examples of access brought images of past places into private households for personal consumption.<sup>277</sup> Nevertheless, as the Internet and social-networking sites and apps have revolutionised a person's access to information there is now a new form of consuming nostalgia. Internet forums, for example, act as multifunctional memory archives that give people who are interested in a past that is not simply their own a sense of amusement and sociality. They also provide a strong understanding of how nostalgia has developed in recent times and has made it much easier to find a community of people to discuss the past nostalgically.

Most notably, films have played a prominent role in cultivating a sense of nostalgia in the Federal Republic. Referring to East Germany, *Goodbye Lenin!* and *Sonnenalle* were both viewed as nostalgic representations of the GDR, with both films presenting everyday life in the East. However, it is important to note that films even prior to the division of West Berlin highlight a Berlin that has come and gone with time. For example, Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin. Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* (Berlin: Symphony of a Great City), released in 1927 and a cinematic document of Weimar's golden years, presents Berlin as a modern, populous, and lively city. Brigitta B. Wagner notes that in the immediate post-wall era, Ruttmann's film offered a usable past for a new Berlin

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<sup>277</sup> Brigitta B. Wagner, *Berlin Replayed: Cinema and Urban Nostalgia in the Postwall Era*, (Minnesota, 2012), p. 12.

to be influenced by, especially in light of the cities' recent historical division and links to the Third Reich.<sup>278</sup> Indeed, whilst Ruttmann's film does not link nostalgia and West Berlin together, it does underline how media in the past influences people in the present, especially in terms of fragmented identities that were prevalent in West Berlin after reunification.

Taking this into account, Leander Haußmann's film, *Herr Lehmann*, offers the viewer a major example of nostalgia for West Berlin, as well as touching upon issues of identity in a changing city. The film tells the story of a young man seemingly out of touch with political events occurring around him, focusing more on the trials and tribulations of love and friendship. This film, however, is set before the fall of the Berlin Wall, and takes place in the former West Berlin district of Kreuzberg, geographically isolated from other parts of West Berlin as it was surrounded by Eastern sections of the city.<sup>279</sup> The film depicts the stagnant everyday life of a group of young West Germans, most of whom have moved to West Berlin from the FRG to evade being drafted for military service or to embrace the alternative lifestyle that was associated with the city. What is notable, however, is the lack of appreciation given to a key event in the Federal Republic's history, the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The film instead focuses on the personal life of its main character, Herr Lehmann, lessening the seriousness of the film's historical context. Nevertheless, during pivotal moments in Lehmann's personal life, he seems oblivious to the changing social and political changes unfolding in the GDR. When the Wall does fall, Lehmann, in a bar drinking, appears numb by the news, eventually waking his friend up to tell him of the events. When suggested by his friend to see the occasion in person, Lehmann responds, 'drink up first,' underplaying the significance of a pivotal moment in German history and making it seem like an insignificant moment in Lehmann's difficult personal life.

For Lehmann, the fall of the Berlin Wall symbolises the end of his carefree and alternative lifestyle, recognising that the past is truly gone. In this sense, the depiction of such an event as an anticlimactic and uncertain moment matches the post-reunification response of failing to meet people's lofty expectations, suggesting a deeper angst in the present. Yet the presentation of a comfortable bohemian lifestyle in blissful ignorance can be seen specifically as nostalgia for the old West Berlin with its special status and the chance of hiding from reality.<sup>280</sup> *Herr Lehmann*, as an example of nostalgic cinema, highlights how change can affect a person's sense of identity especially in the context of turbulent times such as the reunification of Germany. In comparison to Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin*, seen as a positive influence on urban landscapes, *Herr*

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<sup>278</sup> Ibid, p. 26.

<sup>279</sup> Anthony Enns, 'Post-Reunification Cinema: Horror, Nostalgia, Redemption', in Terri Ginsberg and Andrea Mensch, *A Companion to German Cinema*, (Oxford, 2012), p. 118.

<sup>280</sup> Otto, "'Westalgie' in Leander Haußmann's *Herr Lehmann*'.

*Lehmann* stresses the importance of interpersonal relationships, along with the anxieties faced by changing circumstances.

Another example of nostalgia for West Berlin within popular culture can be found in David Bowie's song, *Where Are We Now?*, released in 2013. Though the lyrics are simple and repetitive, they allude to an older person reminiscing about time spent in West Berlin, with references to key spots such as KaDeWe. Bowie, a former resident in West Berlin, demonstrates a sense of nostalgia driven to a lost time and place. The music video that accompanies the song, too, highlights areas of West Berlin and alludes to a sense of longing for a place that has changed dramatically. Its presence on YouTube, too, makes access to the song relatively easy. The website's increasing collection of video and data is a prime example of how one consumes information in the digital age, as well as how nostalgia can surface. When cultural data is dematerialised, our capacity to store, sort, and access it is vastly increased and enhanced. The compression of text, images, and audio means issues of physical space no longer deter us from keeping anything. Such advances in technology make it irresistibly quick and convenient to share information on a wide scale.

It is, therefore, unsurprising that social networks have helped the dissemination of nostalgia. Social media websites like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram arguably changed the structures, spaces and conditions of social communication, not just for a contemporary generation but also for preceding ones too. Internet forums with strong participative and interactive elements enable like-minded people to swap their stories and are, too, collecting points for nostalgia. True, as a lot of what is commented on social media is personal and therefore subjective, the validity of what is placed on such websites can be difficult to examine, especially in the search for authenticity of such nostalgia.

As mentioned previously, a common objection to nostalgia as a concept is the risk of creating false memories of the past, as well as its capacity to overlook and underplay important historical evidence, with Lessing's definition of nostalgia as 'poisoned itch' as a useful example. Yet authenticity and nostalgia is not always as important in understanding how and why nostalgia developed in the first place. Nostalgia can be viewed as a tension between the past and present. In the context of certain issues, *Westalgie* is a clear indication of this. The present is marked as an unsatisfactory place while the past is a place to be celebrated. It is precisely these positive values and sentiments that are associated with the past that are presumed to be lacking in the present.<sup>281</sup> Indeed, one of the first critiques of *Ostalgie* was its rose-tinted vision of the former GDR, seemingly forgetting the troubles most East Germans had to live with under the East German government.

Therefore, authenticity is not as important as previously believed by scholars studying nostalgia. This, in a sense, helps to analyse West Berlin

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<sup>281</sup> Andrew Higson, Nostalgia is not what it used to be: Heritage films, Nostalgia, Websites, and Contemporary Consumers', *Consumption Markets and Culture*, Vol. 17, No. 2, (2014), p. 124.

nostalgia in a social media context. Today, one can easily access internet forums to discuss the ‘old’ Federal Republic, mostly in a positive manner. Mike Featherstone points out in a post-modern consumer culture, one may lose his or her connection to the past, which then leads to nostalgia for the past.<sup>282</sup> Yet with the gradual increase in social media users the past decade, the potential for one to experience nostalgia has arguably increased. Indeed, it is much easier in today’s society to indulge in nostalgia, be it through sharing one’s past with likeminded people or accessing ‘vintage’ consumer goods online. The potential of nostalgia on social media is consequently important in analysing how and why *Westalgie* developed over time, not to mention it demonstrates its existence on a digital format.

One of the most prominent groups to discuss nostalgia for the ‘old’ Federal Republic is the Facebook group, the ‘West Berliner Mauerkinder’, where people can share stories, photos, and videos of a past that no longer exists.<sup>283</sup> The group’s creator, Jeanette Chong, argued ‘*Westalgie* reminds us of a world in which most was good and a little was bad.’<sup>284</sup> Regular updates in the group highlight how different the former West Berlin is compared to contemporary times. Much of what is written can be considered nostalgia, especially with posted links to websites that compare Berlin’s landscape between the past and present. Yet the group, too, consists of former East German citizens to allow them to see how West Berliners lived, according to Chong.<sup>285</sup> This, importantly, can help the two German identities coexist by being able to understand how East and West Germans lived whilst Germany was divided. Indeed, early in the new millennium much of the increased interest in Eastern consumer culture actually came from the West. One of the major distributors of East German products found that around 85 percent of its cliental was based in the West.<sup>286</sup> Moreover, symbols of the GDR – most notably the *Ampelmännchen* – have been taken upon by Western entrepreneurs to appeal to a wide variety of audiences. Today, one can find shops selling *Ampelmännchen* memorabilia in the form of key chains, confectionary, and even pasta. Moreover, West Germans can indulge in *Ostalgie* by drinking Vita Cola or

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<sup>282</sup> See Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, (London, 1994).

<sup>283</sup> Plenty of examples exist of photo’s detailing the ‘old’ Federal Republic. For example, see ‘So Sah das Leben in West-Berlin aus, als es von der Mauer eingeschlossen war’, [https://www.buzzfeed.com/philippjahner/leben-in-west-berlin?utm\\_term=.iugQGZlkp#.siQ79edB0](https://www.buzzfeed.com/philippjahner/leben-in-west-berlin?utm_term=.iugQGZlkp#.siQ79edB0), accessed 17<sup>th</sup> October 2016.

<sup>284</sup> Berlinische Leben – “Halber Mensch: Die Poesie des Unfertigen”, <https://marcuskluge.wordpress.com/tag/jeanette-chong/>, accessed 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

<sup>285</sup> ‘Wie sich die “Mauerkinder” an ihr West-Berlin erinnern’, *Berliner Morgenpost*, <https://www.morgenpost.de/berlin/berliner-mauer/article132994009/Wie-sich-die-Mauerkinder-an-ihr-West-Berlin-erinnern.html>, accessed 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

<sup>286</sup> Michael Bartsch, “‘Kost the Ost’ zahlt sich nicht aus’ *Taz*, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2003, <http://www.taz.de/1/archiv/print-archiv/printressorts/digi-artikel/?ressort=wu&dig=2003%2F11%2F06%2Fa0102&cHash=59c0abd5d4/>, accessed 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

eating traditional East German meals. Using this logic, East Germans themselves can experience some form of *Westalgie* without actually being considered an authentic West German.

Nostalgia for the West Berlin occurred because the ‘new’ Berlin contrasted heavily with its past roots. In this respect West Berlin nostalgia, shares a common trait with *Ostalgie*. At its most fundamental level, nostalgia for East Germany can help to remember facets of the GDR in a positive light. It can also be viewed as a way for East Germans conceptualise an ‘Eastern identity’ in reaction to their heritage being overlooked. This Eastern nostalgia therefore developed an identity that was unique compared to the West but also highlighted the positive aspects from East Germany’s heritage. Concerning West Berlin nostalgia, the process of identity formation is somewhat parallel to *Ostalgie*. Both rely upon shared experiences to shape a distinctive sense of self and both required the rupture of reunification to rationalise the desire to do so. More contemporary examples of West Berlin nostalgia such as the aforementioned museum exhibition can be a rationalised as a reactive psychological process to foster and showcase a West German identity. Social networking websites, too, suggest the convergence of West Germans drawing upon their own experiences to share within a distinctive Western culture.

Drawing upon Davis’ view on nostalgia, the concept is readily employed by individuals to construct and form their identities. It can also provide a sense of social connectedness upon a collective group of people who experience nostalgia, thereby providing more positive associations with the past.<sup>287</sup> Without a sense of identity, a person’s history and past experiences can be left redundant. Nostalgia for West Berlin, too, requires the individual to come to terms with a different environment. The city of West Berlin, only able to exist in the context of the Cold War, gave way once the Berlin Wall came down, and the capital of Germany was decided to be Berlin again. In a similar fashion to *Ostalgie*, identity formation amongst West Berliners stands as a principal explanation for why such a phenomenon can take place. In this sense, people from West Berlin can subconsciously apply their sense of discomfort caused by reunification to compare and contrast life between the two republics of Germany. Even though West Germans did not need to adjust to a new political and economic system to the same extent as East Germans, and although they did not share a common past under an oppressive regime, they still faced concerns regarding their own heritage and identities.<sup>288</sup>

### **Concluding Remarks**

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<sup>287</sup> See Jacob Juhl, et. al., ‘Fighting the Future with the Past: Nostalgia Buffers Existential Threat’, *Journal of Research in Personality*, Vol. 44, Issues 3, pp. 309-314.

<sup>288</sup> Otto, “‘Westalgie’”.

Nostalgia for West Berlin is unique in the sense that it is a form of localised nostalgia for a specific part of the 'old' Federal Republic. It is, too, distinctive in that it exists alongside *Westalgie*, although the two are not the same phenomenon. As previously stated, West Berlin throughout its lifetime retained a special status within Germany. Isolated, but also considered a legal extension of the FRG. Its inhabitants, credited with creating an alternative lifestyle that was attractive to certain outside observers, also contributed to the distinctive sense of identity amongst West Berliners. This is important to note, as nostalgia for West Berlin is seemingly different to *Westalgie* from a conceptual standpoint. For one, there are certainly clearer examples of nostalgia for West Berlin found in popular culture than with *Westalgie*. As such, it is far easier to demonstrate the existence of nostalgia for West Berlin as opposed to West Germany. Furthermore, these two sets of nostalgia are essentially different phenomenon. *Westalgie* indicates a negative reaction to developments in the Federal Republic. This could relate to changes in foreign policies or multicultural discourses to highlight a few examples. West Berlin nostalgia, however, is more comparable to *Ostalgie* in the sense that it refers to a distinctive environment that has changed significantly, and whose inhabitants have faced an identity crisis following the fall of the Berlin Wall. Such a relationship between the two phenomenon contributes to the complexities concerning *Westalgie*. Though the two refer to sense of nostalgia for the 'old' Federal Republic, due to the exceptional situation West Berlin was in during the forty years of separation, they largely diverge from each other.

As a city closely connected to the history of the Cold War, and by extension divided Germany, West Berlin developed an identity that evolved and changed after the reunification of Germany in 1990. In regards to any West German and West Berliner that may feel some form of nostalgic sentimentality for the 'old' Federal Republic, the reunification of Germany facilitated enough change in their lives to help nostalgia develop. The changing landscape of Berlin has, too, facilitated a sense of differentiation between the past and present. Because of such changes to their lives, generations of West Germans can detail their past stories to a broad number of people, either to share their histories with likeminded people or to show how one lived in the past. The digital era has arguably had an effect on the cultivation of nostalgia in the public sphere. Before, one found it difficult to note their nostalgic tendencies to people. Yet with the help of social media, it is now easy to share thoughts and feelings related to the past. West Berlin is clearly no exception to a nostalgia trend. Museum exhibitions highlight its history; landmarks celebrate the heritage of West Berlin; films detail the stories of the city's inhabitants; and social media has allowed generations of West Germans to discuss the past to a number of people. Not only does this demonstrate the existence of a West German nostalgia, but a localised nostalgia for a city that no longer exists.

## **7. Conclusion**

The 'old' Federal Republic was a success story, even if one ignores the direct comparisons between the FRG and the GDR. It recovered from the Second World War to become a responsible and leading world power, thus creating its own rich histories and legacies. Now that contemporary Germany is different to life under both East and West Germany such legacies are much more noticeable from both sets of Germans. Nostalgia among West Germans developed at a slower pace but also highlighted varying degrees of difference between the Bonn and Berlin Republic. This specific case of nostalgia seems fragmented in terms of what it refers to, but at least helps one to understand how change has



affected West Germans years after the reunification of Germany. Likewise, it is clear that the Berlin Republic is not a continuation of the West German model, but rather a variation of it. The effects of globalisation, the fear of terrorism, and European integration are but a few examples of the different challenges the Berlin Republic faces in the present day.

This thesis has attempted to examine a few issues in relation to the phenomenon of *Westalgie*. Firstly, it has highlighted that such a concept can exist within modern day Germany and therefore should be given attention to via scholarly research. Secondly, it has demonstrated that *Westalgie* is a broad idea, being able to be found within the political, economic, and social aspects of everyday life in the Federal Republic. Thirdly, while nostalgia for West Germany can be considered to exist in said aspects, it is not necessarily the driving force behind the criticisms of modern day developments. Indeed, in the case of German multiculturalism, there are clear examples of nostalgia being exhibited from the likes of Thilo Sarrazin and the AfD. Nevertheless, they both refer to a period that either did not exist (as nostalgia can sometimes suggest), or even a time that predated the ‘old’ Federal Republic. It is therefore challenging to assess the impact of *Westalgie* in broad terms. Criticisms of certain developments within modern day Germany are by no means solely related to nostalgia for a time that no longer exists. As previously stated throughout this thesis, pragmatic concerns can often be considered more relevant to explain why one could be against any social, political, or economic change in modern times.

Take, for example, the issue concerning the Federal Republic’s perception of the Euro since its introduction after the new millennium. Indeed, it can be said that the loss of a national symbol in the form of the Deutschmark may have unearthed some form of nostalgia for something that contributed to the legacy of the ‘old’ Federal Republic. Yet does this mean that West German’s would forgo the Euro, and by extension European integration, in favour of their previous currency? Ultimately, the performance of the Euro will have more of an impact on public perception for the currency rather than a nostalgic appreciation for the Deutschmark.

Throughout this thesis the complexities of *Westalgie* has been widely noted, highlighting the fact that it is a rather case specific phenomenon that is very much unlike its East German counterpart. *Ostalgie* is a much easier concept to grasp in spite of its far more detailed historiography. It was more so a reaction to the unprecedented pace of reunification that changed the lives of East Germans. The concept is, too, more readily apparent because of the fact that everyday life in the GDR was so fundamentally different to life in West Germany. Consumer goods that East Germans used were quickly replaced, the East German economy suffered, unemployment was a reality, and the allure of a Western capitalist model was found to be rather different than what was expected. East Germans could rightly feel nostalgic for a period of their life that was different before the reunification of Germany. *Ostalgie* also helped to allay

the processes of reunification by cultivating a sense of identity amongst East Germans. They could highlight the unique aspects of life in the GDR through the commercialisation of the phenomenon and by the stories told in film and literature. True, there has been some debate concerning whether such factors glorify a part of German history that in certain respects was controversial. Yet for East Germans, the concept of *Ostalgie* is not a desire to bring back the East German government, but to appreciate and acknowledge specific elements of the former GDR.

West Germans, on the other hand, did not face the same level of rupture that East Germans experienced. Indeed, they did experience the negative effects of reunification such as rising unemployment levels and increasing taxes. However, the changes that West Germans experienced were not related to reunification, but rather developments that occurred more so in the new millennium. Modern day Germany became more active on the world stage, changed its currency, changed its capital city, and therefore faced issues that could not have happened in the past. This stresses the point that *Westalgie* does not refer to the changes brought on by reunification, but more so by the developments of the Berlin Republic, an obvious difference to *Ostalgie*. Furthermore, the concept is not as noticeable as one would assume, explaining why academic discussions on *Westalgie* are both limited and underdeveloped.

When discussing what the concept of what *Westalgie* is, it seems pertinent to address the varying definitions of nostalgia that were mentioned in the introduction. Of course, as mentioned previously, Peter's argument that nostalgia is more so related to homesickness is redundant in the case of West Germans as it was the West German system that shifted eastwards, not the other way around. Yet Atia and Davie's view that nostalgia is the bittersweet side effect of modernity as well as a potential cause of hostility to the changes that modernity brings seems quite relevant in this case. *Westalgie* is undoubtedly a reaction to changes that were experienced in the new millennium for West Germans. However, as outlined in the preceding chapters, such hostilities to developments can also be down to more rational concerns like how the Federal Republic presents itself on the world stage. It is therefore not so crucial to view every criticism of the Federal Republic as an example of nostalgia for the 'old' Federal Republic. It is, too, important to stress that *Westalgie* is not so much a 'poisoned itch' as Lessing would suggest with her definition of nostalgia. As with the case for *Ostalgie*, both sets of nostalgia seemingly do not make matters worse for the recipient, but allow one to critically engage with present day developments. Moreover, *Westalgie* lacks the same level of commercialisation compared to *Ostalgie*, because Western brands were not afforded the same level of treatment compared to Eastern brands. West Germans did not lose their consumer goods, thereby making it difficult to develop an identity like East Germans could with their relationship with their consumer goods. This also negates Lowenthal's view that the commercialisation of nostalgia can lead to an inauthentic outlook on the past.

More importantly, this suggests that *Westalgie* is not so much about the creation of a Western identity but as previously stated, the development of critical discourses in contemporary times. West Berlin nostalgia, however, is different in that respect and should be considered separate from nostalgia for West Germany. Identity formation seems much more pronounced when examining West Berlin and the concept of nostalgia as it is clear that, much like East Germans, West Berliners faced change on a somewhat similar level. The unique aspect of the city was rendered obsolete once Germany was able to reunify. It was no longer an ‘island in the red sea’ once the GDR fell, and thus its distinctive feeling could easily give way in reunified Germany. Indeed, as a central part of West Germany’s history, it remains important to discuss the impact of nostalgia for West Berlin, simply because there exists a wide array of examples of such nostalgia that even seems to outnumber nostalgia for West Germany. Yet closer inspection reveals that it may have more in common with *Ostalgie* than it does *Westalgie*, adding to the complex discourse of *Westalgie* overall.

Where then should research concerning *Westalgie* progress? Of course, as one of the first studies on the concept in written English, this thesis has attempted to broadly examine various factors that have feasibly been affected by nostalgia for West Germany. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that more research can be given to each individual aspect outlined in this project, allowing for a more focussed and sophisticated analysis of the phenomenon. Furthermore, as the concept of nostalgia is becoming increasingly prevalent in modern Western societies, it seems appropriate to analyse how nostalgia is apparently affecting countries other than the Federal Republic politically. As previously mentioned, the process of Brexit can be considered to be influenced by nostalgic tendencies, as a narrative of the vote leave campaign was the notion of Britain returning to its former glory. Even the U.S. Presidential elections in 2016 highlighted a sense of nostalgia, with Donald Trump’s slogan to ‘Make America Great Again’, suggesting that America could return to the apex of world influence. Understanding how nostalgia has impacted political developments elsewhere will allow for a transnational approach that could shed greater light on *Westalgie*. This, too, would allow for comparative studies between differing countries that would help develop discourses concerning nostalgia and its potential political influence.

Nostalgia for West Berlin and its relationship with *Westalgie* can also be given more attention considering how vastly different the two sets of nostalgia appear to be. The fact that nostalgia for West Berlin can be considered separate from *Westalgie*, means one could analyse such nostalgia in a very narrow sense. Localised case studies on West Berlin and nostalgia are still underdeveloped and therefore the opportunity to analyse it in greater detail is apparent. Moreover, one could also investigate other prominent West German cities to see whether localised nostalgia exists in places other than West Berlin. Bonn, for example, would be a useful case study considering that it used to be the capital

of West Germany and developed a legacy of its own throughout the forty years of separation. Above all, this would help to emphasise how widespread *Westalgie* is or, as West Berlin nostalgia has highlighted, how separate localised nostalgia has developed over time in major West German cities.

Another issue not discussed due to the scope of this thesis is the legacy of the German student movement of 1968. The protests, developed in part by a reaction against the perceived authoritarianism of Western governments, were noticeable legacies of the Bonn Republic, as well as the city of West Berlin. Moreover, the protests arguably had an effect the 'old' West Germany as a certain strata of citizens challenged the U.S. war in Vietnam, the hypocrisy of the German government, as well as the apparent repressive educational system. Students, who were not alive during the Third Reich, disputed their accountability in the crimes committed by a generation before them. This critical spirit of the movement, above all, rebelled against the bourgeois morals of the political establishment. Now, fifty years later, one can see a similar sense of revolt against the modern-day establishments not just in the Federal Republic, but also in other Western countries. Trump's electoral success, was arguably down to the perception that he was 'anti-establishment', especially in direct comparison to his opponent, Hilary Clinton, who had ties with former presidents. Regarding, Britain's decision to leave the European Union, Michael Gove's statement that British people had 'had enough of experts' suggests a sense of anti-intellectualism and distrust in established institutions. Even the AfD in the 2017 Federal Elections highlighted their anti-establishment rhetoric and their electoral success suggests that some Germans may share similar thoughts. Obviously, these specific examples refer to right-wing political developments compared to the left-wing inspired protests in the sixties. Yet the underlying theme from these instances is a sense of displeasure in modern establishments. As such, one could ask whether these ideals of rebellion against the so-called establishment have resurfaced in recent times. Have they been influenced in part by the legacy of the 1968? If so, does this relate to a sense of nostalgia for West Germany? Comparatively analysing the methodologies, motivations, and strategies of the student movement and today's anti-establishment groups may shed a greater light on how contemporary developments have occurred.

To conclude, *Westalgie* is a far more complex phenomenon on closer inspection. To view it in the same manner as *Ostalgie* would ultimately suggest that the two are identical in their development and how they interact with those that feel nostalgically for the FRG or the GDR. This, of course, is incorrect as it is clear that nostalgia for East Germany predates the development of *Westalgie*. Added to this is the fact that examples of *Ostalgie* are far more widespread and obvious, from its commercial aspects to its ability to engage with East German identity. This contributes to the complexities of *Westalgie* and stresses how unique of a phenomenon it is. This specific form of nostalgia warrants greater investigation to help contextualise perceptions, both past and present, of the

political, economic, and social developments in the Federal Republic. Generations of East and West Germans will continue to occupy the vast number of identities within contemporary Germany for the foreseeable future. Understanding how nostalgia affects these sets of strata in German society is therefore necessary to recognise differing opinions that contribute to critical discourses in the present day.

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