

Transition Democracies: The East/West German Model

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Introduction

Germany's division after 1945 and its unification in 1990 offer a fascinating opportunity to study the formation of political values: to what extent are citizens' democratic values affected by their authoritarian and democratic regime experience? The post-war context in Germany creates the quasi-laboratory conditions required to examine the influence of individuals' regime experience on democratic values. After Germany's division in 1945, eastern and western Germans were increasingly insulated from each other until 1989. The Berlin wall symbolizes the intra-German division: the former eastern Germany—the GDR—was governed by a socialist-authoritarian one-party state; western Germany established a liberal-representative system and a market-based economy. Citizens in the East and the West were therefore exposed to two fundamentally different systems. Is citizens' regime experience reflected in their views about democratic values?

The question of Germans' commitment to the democratic process is important, in part, because of Germany's undemocratic history. While the western state had become a mature democracy by the time the Berlin wall fell (Roth, 1976; Baker, Dalton, and Hildebrandt, 1981), eastern citizens' last opportunity to vote freely before the election in March 1990 occurred in January 1933 which led to Hitler's emergence as Germany's leader. This fact illustrates that many eastern Germans born and raised during the division are not accustomed to the rough-and-tumble practice of democratic competition. Once again, parts of Germany must become accustomed to a new democratic system.

The German case may also offer valuable lessons reaching beyond Germany. For Germany's unique quasi-laboratory conditions may be used to advance our theoretical understanding of the conditions under which representative democracies succeed in other post-socialist nations. Consider that one important debate in the transition literature is between those who maintain that a nascent liberal-democratic culture has formed in post-socialist countries (Gibson, Duch, and Tedin 1992; Veen 1997) and those who maintain that socialist values persist (Almond 1983; Eckstein 1998). Because it is difficult to insulate the net influence of regime

experience on democratic values in diverse national contexts, there is a great deal of uncertainty about the degree to which socialist regimes shaped citizens' democratic values. By using the quasi-laboratory conditions in Germany, we are able to shed light on this issue in a twofold way. First, we may examine the democratic views of eastern and western Germans shortly after Germany's unification in 1990. This provides a baseline of the long-term effects of the two different regimes on individuals' values.

Further, by analyzing how quickly eastern Germans' political views adapt to the new system, we use the development of eastern citizens' democratic values since unification to analyze whether the establishment of a new regime alters the political values of eastern Germans. If their ideological values adjusted to the democratic framework since unification, it would support the view that citizens' values adjust fairly quickly to a new set of institutions (for this view, see, for example, Rustow 1970; Di Palma 1990). If, however, the East-West divide over ideological values persists ten years after Germany's unification, then it is questionable whether individuals' values can be altered quickly after institutions change (Almond 1983; Eckstein 1988).

Let us clarify one central premise of this study. We assume that, all else being equal, a system's stability is increased where an ideological culture is congruent with the existing system. This means that the central ideological premises underlying an institutional framework are accepted by the majority of citizens (Almond and Verba 1963). Of course, democracies do not automatically collapse when a majority of citizens does not hold "congruent" ideological values. There are numerous other conditions affecting the viability of democratic structures, such as a nation's level of economic development (Lipset 1994; Inglehart 1997). But the odds for long-term stability are undoubtedly affected by citizens' willingness to accept democratic institutions, along with the core principles upon which democratic institutions are based (e.g., toleration of dissent, free speech, or liberal-democratic ideals).

To develop this argument and test it, this paper is structured into four sections. First, I will first discuss the logic of the institutional learning model. Then, I will present evidence based from a study of Berlin parliamentarians which documents the persistent value-divide between eastern and western German MPs at the time of unification. For reasons of space, I will focus the theoretical and empirical discussion on democratic ideals (i.e., how citizens define an ideal-typical democracy). This evidence also shows that MPs' democratic ideals are largely stable over a three-year time period (1992-1995). I will also show that comparable East-West differences persist at the level of mass publics ten years into Germany's unification. Finally, I will present evidence that these values influence how citizens evaluate existing institutions. The conclusion highlights the implications of this research.

Regime Experience and Ideological Values

Students of political cultures agree that the long-term stability of liberal-representative democracies is increased if citizens support the values upon which democracies are based (Almond and Verba 1963; Inglehart 1997). For example, the stability of liberal-representative institutions is enhanced if citizens support liberal-representative ideals and general democratic procedures (elections, free press, civil liberties generally), tolerate political opposition, and value pluralist competition (Dahl, 1989; Bahry, Boaz, and Gorden, 1997).

There is, however, uncertainty in the literature about the precise extent to which these democratic values are present in post-socialist democracies. Some studies document the strong support for basic civil liberties shortly after the collapse of socialist states (Weil 1993; Dalton 1994). This finding is frequently explained with a value-diffusion argument: citizens do not yearn for the return of the collapsed socialist system; and western democracies provide a viable alternative to the dreaded socialist reality (Klingemann 1999; Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfner 1997). Other analyses, in turn, point to the apparent persistence of socialist beliefs, intolerance, or low levels of religiosity (Miller, Heslie, and Reisinger 1997; Fuchs, Roller, and Weßels, 1997).

This pattern is consistent with the supposition that democratic values are difficult to develop and thus require time and practice to emerge (Almond 1983). It appears, that whether or not post-socialist citizens emerge as enthusiastic or reluctant democrats in academic analyses depends, in part, *which* values are analyzed.

There is no doubt that both empirical patterns describe an important aspect of post-socialist reality: citizens prefer a system that guarantees civil liberties *and*, simultaneously, continue to adhere to several tenets of the socialist system. However, these empirical patterns raise two central questions. First, what type of democratic values can be learned without experiencing a democratic system? and which values are only developed after exposure to democratic institutions? Secondly, how quickly, if at all, do democratic values develop after a democratic regime is established? In order to address these question, let us consider the institutional learning model.

Institutional Learning

The model begins by assuming that three core citizenship-qualities underlie most democratic and economic values: *restraint*, *self-reliance*, and corresponding *societal ideals* (Rohrschneider 1999: chapter 2).

Restraint essentially means two things: a willingness to accept losing competition (political as well as economic); and a readiness not to abuse a victorious position. Restraint thus represents a core idea of liberal-democratic competition: to accept political opposition, to engage in peaceful competition over ideas, and to accept that one's own views are likely to be opposed, no matter how despicable one may find opposing views. In the economic realm, it means to risk losing everything and still adhere to peaceful rules of economic competition. Self-reliance, in turn, means that one accepts pluralist competition, that one has to muster resources and act one one's own behalf, sometimes against overwhelming odds. Restraint and self-reliance, then, represent quint-essential requirements of the liberal-democratic process: restraint enables a

multitude of diverging interests being expressed in the public arena; self-reliance means that one is indeed ready to become active on behalf of one's own preferences.

In turn, societal ideals provide a justification for why one set of political and economic procedures is preferable to alternatives. For example, socialist systems are based on the notion of accomplishing social and political equality even at the cost of reducing civil liberties. Liberal-representative systems are based on the notion of maximizing one's political liberties even if this process leads to social inequality (Held 1987; Dahl 1989). Societal views are therefore closely related to a set of institutional procedures (Dahl 1989: 191).

These citizenship-qualities are difficult to develop because the idea upon which they are based are "complex, rooted in traditions of human history and political theory which are themselves difficult to grasp" (Sniderman 1975: 181). Consequently, restraint, self-reliance, and corresponding ideals are developed primarily when citizens are given an opportunity to practice them. The institutional learning model assumes that the rough-and-tumble of democratic politics and market-based competition provide opportunities for individuals to develop these qualities. Exposure to diversity, challenges to one's views, and market competition in the long run enhances the odds that, for instance, one tolerates challenges to one's own preferences. And one may experience the benefits of relying on one's own resourcefulness and creativity. Because restraint and self-reliance are closely linked to a particular vision of society, one also develops the corresponding ideals upon which institutions are based.

The central prediction of the institutional learning model, thus, is that democratic values containing a significant component of restraint and self-reliance must be practiced before they are internalized. One would therefore expect, for example, that tolerance and pluralist values are in short supply where citizens experienced an authoritarian regime. And one would predict that a range of liberal-representative ideals are endorsed primarily by a citizenry that experienced a system embodying those procedures that manifest liberal-representative ideals. The institutional

learning model thus provides a conceptual baseline which creates the expectation that most democratic values need to be practiced before they are internalized.

Under what conditions may democratic values develop even when citizens are not exposed to democratic institutions? Table 1 suggests that democratic values may develop in non-democratic environments if two conditions are present. The first expectation flows directly from the institutional learning model: when a value requires restraint and self-reliance, the odds for value diffusion from democratic to non-democratic systems are reduced. A second criterion stipulates that the greater the amount of belief systems revision needed to adopt a new value, the less likely it is that a value is adopted (Fiske and Taylor 1991). Free market capitalism, for instance, requires that one reject central socialist-economic principles, such as a planned market or social equality. One cannot simultaneously be an ardent socialist *and* free market supporter (Ward 1979).

--table 1 about here--

Perusing the table suggests that several values fall into the non-diffusible cell: they require a significant amount of restraint and they are incompatible with central socialist tenets. Tolerance, for example, is notoriously difficult to develop (Sniderman 1975; Sullivan et al., 1982). Likewise, pluralist competition is difficult to develop as it requires a considerable amount of restraint and self-reliance. And the basic rules of market competition are extraordinarily difficult to internalize: one must accept personal bankruptcy as a possible consequence of economic activity. Only abstract liberal-democratic rights fall into the cell of diffusible values: when formulated at a general level, it is easy to support the idea of free elections. And they are to a considerable extent compatible with important strands in socialist theory (Held 1987).

In sum, the institutional learning perspective suggests that core democratic citizenship-qualities are developed primarily when citizens have an opportunity to practice restraint, self-reliance, and internalize the ideals underlying democratic institutions. Absent such experience, it is less likely that a range of democratic values, that are based upon these qualities, develop. The

primary reason for why support for general democratic rights is strong in post-socialist nations is because it is relatively easy to endorse them when they do not present a challenge of one's own preferences.

Ideological Values and their Institutional Consequences

The study of ideological values is important because they have consequences for how citizens evaluate democratic regimes. Figure 1 summarizes the central causal mechanisms. Consider that ideological values may affect how supportive individuals are of new democracies. Usually, economic perceptions constitute an important influence on citizens' evaluations of the overall functioning of the new system (Easton 1965; Clarke, Dutt, and Kornberg 1993). Further, in the context of democratic transitions, public perceptions of how well human rights are respected shape individuals' satisfaction with new democracies (Evans and Whitefield 1995; Hofferbert and Klingemann 1998). Finally, for a transitional period, negative memories about the rejected socialist system helped to build support for new democracies (Mishler and Rose 1997).

--figure 1 about here--

We agree that positive economic conditions (and other factors reflecting a system's performance) are central in generating support for newly established institutions. However, we also suggest that ideological values may have direct consequences for how institutions are viewed by mass publics. This expectation is based on the congruence argument: ideological values define individual preferences for a specific set of institutions (Almond and Verba 1963). When a liberal democracy is established and citizens' ideals—such as socialist ideals—do not match the premise of new institutions, publics are less likely to support such a system. This argument leads to the prediction that socialist ideals have direct consequences of how supportive citizens are of new systems.

In sum, the general argument is straightforward: individuals' regime experience shapes their ideological values which, in turn, influences how one evaluates the existing institutional framework. To test several of these expectations is the main objective of the next section.

Research Design

This research uses Germany's quasi-laboratory in order to examine the extent to which eastern and western Germans' different regime exposure affects their ideological values. Germany's division in 1945 and the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 offer the unique quasi-laboratory conditions needed to examine the institutional learning model. Germany was divided into two parts in 1945. As a result, citizens were exposed to two different systems for about 40 years, after which the two parts were formally merged again in 1990. Thus, a range of background factors that usually vary across nations (political culture, historical events, etc.) are largely kept constant. The major variation across the Berlin wall concerns the existence of two different political and economic regimes. One may thus with due caution attribute any difference over East-West values to the different institutional learning processes in eastern and western Germany.

A comprehensive test of the institutional learning model requires that several democratic values are examined in order to determine which values developed in eastern Germany and which ones did not (Rohrschneider 1999). For reasons of space, I focus here on the development of citizens' democratic ideals since 1989: how supportive are eastern and western Germans of socialist ideals? And what are the consequences of any value-based differences for institutions?

Democratic Ideals among East and West Berlin Parliamentarians

I begin by examining the democratic ideals of eastern and western Berlin parliamentarians (called MPs from hereon). Parliamentarians are an especially useful group to study the emergence of democratic values for two key reasons. First, elites constitute an important group in democratic transition processes (Dahl 1971; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). It is thus vital to know to what

degree their democratic ideals are affected by their prior regime experience. By measuring MPs' democratic values shortly after unification, we establish a baseline concerning the affect of their different institutional learning on democratic ideals. Second, eastern and western MPs are exposed to the institutional learning process on a nearly daily basis. If ideological values adjust to a new regime in short order, as many analysts of regime transitions suggest (Rustow 1970; Di Palma 1990; Higley and Gunther 1992), one would expect to find evidence of this value convergence among MPs. In contrast, if adjustments of democratic values occur over longer time periods, as students of political cultures suggests (Almond and Verba 1963; Kaase 1983; Eckstein 1988), then one would expect MPs' ideals to remain fairly stable since Germany's unification. The post-unification context thus offers two opportunities to test the institutional learning model.

In 1991-1992, MPs were first asked to define their ideal democracy in their own words. MPs' responses reveal similarities as well as considerable East-West differences shortly after Germany's unification. Most MPs began this discussion by listing various civil liberties, such as the right to vote, the necessity of having a free press, or the existence of multiple parties: 64.6 percent among eastern MPs mention at least one civil liberty; and 80 percent of western MPs mention a civil liberty (figure 2). The consensus over civil liberties across the East-West divide is consistent with other analyses: citizens in post-socialist nations do prefer a system that guarantees basic human rights (Fuchs 1999; Klingemann 1999).

--figure 2 about here--

But many eastern MPs, unlike their western counterparts, also mention a number of social-egalitarian components. Some of them explicitly link the term democracy to the existence of social goods, such as the following respondent: "A democratic system requires that everybody has a basic right to a job. Everybody should also be guaranteed the provision of basic material needs." (R26). Another respondents maintains that: "the political system that exists now [in Germany] is not a real democracy. Parties pretend to represent the people, but they are actually controlled by big capital." (R138).

Among eastern MPs, a substantial number link such sentiments to an “ideal-typical” democracy. Nearly half (46.2 percent) mention at least one social-egalitarian component and the proportion is even greater among MPs born after 1945 (53.3 percent). In stark contrast, only 7.9 percent of western MPs mention a social-egalitarian component. Evidently, many eastern MPs envision an ideal-typical system that secures civil liberties as well as social equality.

These results do not mean that western MPs reject the extensive welfare net—to the contrary. There is a widespread consensus in the East and the West over the desirability to supply basic good to those in need for them (e.g., Roller 1994; Rohrschneider 1996). What they do suggest, instead, is that western MPs can envision an ideal-typical democratic system *independently* of welfare services whereas eastern MPs consider social equality a condition without which personal liberties do not exist.

Many newly elected MPs from the eastern half of the city, then, espoused a vision which reflected their socialist regime experience. In part, however, this pattern may reflect lack of knowledge about the new parliament rather than a fundamental lack of democratic convictions. After all, the first wave of interviews (October 1991 and June 1992) took place shortly after Berlin MPs were elected (December 1990); In addition, several transitologists predict that a new system will “convert” new members of a polity in fairly short order as citizens are exposed to the operating procedures of a new institutional framework (e.g., Rustow 1970; O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Higley and Gunther 1992). These alternative explanations would predict that eastern MPs’ views would develop representative ideals as they are exposed to a parliamentary regime.

In order to test the conversion argument, I reinterviewed 65 of the original eastern Berlin sample (79 MPs) between October 1994 and April 1995. During this time, eastern MPs had been exposed to the logic of the parliamentary process on a daily basis for about 3 years. They became intimately familiar with the rules of the game, were involved in the policy-making process, and often held leadership positions where they experienced the tug-and-pull of constituencies with

diverging interests. They were, in short, exposed to pluralist competition which encourages the development of restraint, self-reliance, and democratic ideals. If value-adjustments occur relatively quickly, then one would surely expect eastern MPs to have adjusted their democratic values to the new institutions.

What we find, instead, is a high degree of stability of democratic values (figure 3). The middle bar represents a stable response (i.e., MPs' who mentioned or did not list a component at both time points). The other bars represent the proportion of MPs changing their response. It is immediately apparent that the responses remain stable over time. For the social equality component, 58.5 percent of those who either mentioned or did not mention this component give the same response three years later. In contrast, the proportion of MPs who change their response as predicted by the institutional conversion argument is small: only 15.4 percent of MPs move away from a social-egalitarian deal.

--figure 3 about here--

These patterns provide little support for a quick-conversion argument. After MPs' were intensely exposed to Germany's new parliamentary system for nearly three years, a majority has not converted to a liberal-democratic value system.

Evidence from the Mass Publics

How do ordinary citizens view democratic ideals? It is possible that MPs, who are intensely exposed to the institutional learning process, were more prone than mass publics to develop socialist ideals. Although the majority of Berlin MPs were not closely aligned with the collapsed regime, their education during the socialist system may have them disproportionately exposed to socialist doctrines. Higher education not only increases one's cognitive skills, but also exposes citizens to the values and norms upon which a regime is based (Lipset 1959). East-West

differences over democratic values may thus be especially pronounced at the elite-level and less distinct among ordinary citizens.¹

While we do not have identical indicators available in order to systematically compare mass and elite ideals, two survey questions asked regularly since Germany's unification tap how citizens view key socialist and liberal-democratic components. They permit us to analyze whether East-West differences emerge at the level of mass publics as well.

A first indicator, asked between April-May 1990 and May-June 1998, asks citizens to evaluate the following statement: "Socialism is a good ideal which was badly implemented." This statement divorces how socialism was practiced from the long-range objectives of socialism. Respondents evaluate socialist ideals without simultaneously considering how socialism was practiced during Germany's 40 year division. Did these ideals survive the collapse of the socialist state?

Among eastern Germans, the answer is yes (figure 4). Roughly two thirds of eastern Germans answer the question in the affirmative ("Yes"). In contrast, the proportion of western Germans hovers at about one third. In addition, these East-West differences are fairly stable, except for minor fluctuations. Socialism-as-an ideal has not lost its attractiveness among eastern Germans if socialism is separated from how it was actually implemented in the GDR.

--figure 4 about here--

One might be inclined to interpret such sentiment as a nostalgic attachment to a system that did protect citizens from the harsh realities of market competition and that agreement with the statement simply reflects the difficult economic situation in the East rather than a fundamental commitment to egalitarian principles. That is, they may value newly gained freedoms but also wish to be protected from economic hardship. The following question allows us to directly examine the relative priority citizens attach to egalitarianism and freedom:

¹ A discussion of how institutional learning may affect mass publics and elites differently can be found in ch. 2 of Learning Democracy (Rohrschneider 1999).

“Two people are talking about what is ultimately more important, freedom or as much equality as possible. Would you please read this and tell me which of the two comes closest to saying what you also think?”

A. I think that freedom and equality are equally important. But if I had to choose between the two, I would say personal freedom is more important; that is, for people to be able to live in freedom and not be restricted in their development.

B. Certainly both freedom and equality are equally important. But if I had to choose between the two, I would consider as much equality as possible to be more important; that is, for no one to be underprivileged and class differences not to be so strong.

Figure 5 suggests that eastern Germans increasingly value egalitarianism to the detriment of freedoms. By the last available time point (February/March 1999), a clear majority prefers social equality over personal freedoms. These findings corroborate the analyses from the open-ended elite questions: eastern Germans not only miss the safety net that the GDR provided them with but also espouse a core component of socialism—equality is more important than freedom.

--figure 5 about here--

Among the western publics, freedom is, on the whole, preferred by a substantial majority. At the time of Germany's unification, nearly two thirds prefer political freedoms, and about fifty percent continue to prefer freedoms over social equality by the end of the 1990s. There are signs—especially during 1997 and early 1998—that public support for political freedoms relative to social equality erodes. At one point, social equality is valued nearly as much as political freedom. By early 1999, a majority again prefers freedom over social equality.

Based on these aggregate data, it is difficult to discern whether the decline of prioritizing freedom in the West represents a temporary reaction to gloomy economic forecasts of that time period, normal sampling fluctuations, or a fundamental reversal toward a more egalitarian outlook among western citizens. Given that the longitudinal data return to the gap found in the early 1990s, we hesitate to interpret this short-term pattern as a fundamental development toward a

socialist model. At the same time, the developments in the West ought to be monitored in future surveys in order to examine whether dogged economic problems erode citizens' support for political freedoms.

Publics' Evaluations of Institutions

A key question for new democracies arises from these patterns: do value-based East-West differences affect how citizens evaluate the existing institutional framework?² In order to examine how citizens evaluate the existing democratic framework, mass publics in eastern and western Germany were asked the following question since 1990: "Do you believe that the democracy we have in the Federal Republic is the best form of government, or is there a better system?"

The responses to this question document the persistent rift between eastern and western Germans (figure 6). In the West, the proportions of citizens believing that the existing system always comprises a substantial majority, ranging from a low of 66 percent in the mid-1990s to a high of 81 percent. And those who believe that there is a better system hovers around the ten percent mark. There is a slight decline in preferring the existing system since Germany's unification. But this decline has apparently been halted and does not further erode the support for the existing system. Overall, the stability of support for the existing form of government is remarkable given the fundamental changes that occurred in Germany since 1990.

--figure 6 about here--

The support for the existing system is reassuring in light of the substantial skepticism prevailing among eastern Germans. At the time of Germany's unification, forty one percent of eastern Germans believed that the newly introduced constitution was the best system. This proportion declines over time, however, to reach a low of 23 percent by early 1997 and slightly recovered by September 1998 when 31 percent indicated their preference for the existing system

² At the level of Berlin MPs, the evidence also suggests that social-egalitarian values reduce MPs' trust in institutions independently of economic considerations (Rohrschneider 1999: ch. 9).

as the best available one. Also note that the proportion of undecided citizens (the omitted category) hovers at the 40 percent mark. This indicates the considerable skepticism of many eastern Germans toward the new system: they do not entirely reject the new order but neither are they ready to support it unequivocally.

In large part, the varying support for the existing system are based on different perceptions of how well the system functions in overall terms (figure 7). In the West, about two thirds of citizens are satisfied with the performance of the existing system. While this represents a decline from a high approaching the eighty percent mark in 1989, it never drops below the fifty percent threshold. In contrast, citizens' satisfaction level in the East are among the lowest in Western Europe, roughly paralleling levels found in Italy.

--figure 7 about here--

Modeling Popular Evaluations of Socialist Ideals and Institutional Support

We attributed the differences across the East-West divide over ideological values, in part, to the different institutional learning processes. We also suggested that the different democratic visions influence how satisfied citizens are with the existing institutional framework. But is our explanation supported when other sources of ideological values and evaluations of institutions are considered simultaneously, especially perceptions of economic conditions?

We use the 1998 Allbus survey in the multivariate analyses. The dependent variables are operationalized by means of the Socialism-as-an-Ideal indicator. Citizens' satisfaction with the existing framework is measured by their overall evaluations of its performance (the appendix contains details about the measurement).

The institutional learning model is operationalized with two variables. First, an East-West variable captures citizens' exposure to the different institutions. In addition, within the East, we would expect that age correlates with support for socialism because the younger cohorts were more intensely exposed to the socialist system than older ones (Eckstein 1988).

There are two alternate explanations which may also account for the observed East-West differences over socialist ideals and institutional evaluations. One explanation focuses on the desolate economic situation in eastern Germany: citizens in the East support socialist ideals because they experience economic hardship. In this view, citizens select the value-statement that best serves their economic interests.³

Perceptions of personal economic conditions are measured by two variables: respondents indicated how they perceived their contemporary economic conditions as well as their future personal conditions. Two other variable measure respondents assessment of the current national economy and their expectations for the economy in the near future. After initial analyses, we created two additive indices, one measuring personal economic circumstances; another represents the subjective evaluations of the national economy.

A third explanation focuses on the general sentiment that eastern Germans were disadvantaged by Germany's unification process. Especially the left party, the PDS, frequently uses the term "colonization" to describe the establishment of western political and economic institutions in eastern Germany. Journalistic accounts as well as academic analyses (e.g., Pollack 1997) maintain that a need for social recognition drives eastern Germans reluctance to endorse the new institutional framework unequivocally. One way of testing this argument is to assess whether perceptions that Eastern Germans are disadvantaged by Germany's unification increases citizens' support for socialist values and, ultimately, lowers their satisfaction with the existing system.

³ This argument seems plausible on the surface but it is somewhat problematic. For one, it contradicts the widely-accepted notion that ideological values represent stable heuristics that are somewhat impervious to short-term change (Klingemann 1979; Fiske and Taylor 1991). Further, this argument is in danger of being tautological: if individuals are pessimistic concerning the economy and thus support socialism, then why would citizens prefer a socialist strategy to remedy economic problems over a market-based strategy? There are multiple economic strategies available to deal with economic issues, ranging from free-market prescriptions to those relying heavily on government activism. To argue that citizens prefer the socialist solution over alternative market solutions *because of* economic conditions seems plausible only if one *assumes* that socialism is preferable over alternative strategies.

The “beneficiary”-argument is operationalized by a question asking whether Germany’s unification advantaged primarily western Germans.

Finally, although the focus is on institutional learning, economic perceptions, and the beneficiary-argument, we also consider whether postmaterial values (Inglehart 1977) influence citizens’ ideals. Western Germans are more postmaterial than eastern Germans (Fuchs and Rohrschneider 1998). Because postmaterialism is related to a fundamental shift in value priorities which may lower western citizens’ evaluations of liberal-representative institutions (Inglehart 1977), we control for this potential influence on citizens’ evaluations of socialist ideals. For the same reason, we include it in the analyses of citizens’ satisfaction with the performance of the current institutions.

Finally, because education may partially reflect one’s institutional learning (Lipset 1959), we control for it. And a gender-variable is included because some analysts maintain that women disproportionately bear the costs of unification. The first model, thus, is:

$$(1) \text{ Socialist Ideals} = \text{Constant} + \text{West German} + \text{Personal Economic Conceptions} + \text{National Economic conditions} + \text{Beneficiary} + \text{Postmaterialism} + \text{Age} + \text{Education} + \text{Gender} + e$$

The second model, in turn, considers whether socialist values have direct consequences for how satisfied citizens are, independently of their economic conditions and the other variables:

$$(2) \text{ Satisfaction with Democracy} = \text{Constant} + \text{West German} + \text{Socialist Ideals} + \text{Personal Economic Conceptions} + \text{National Economic Conditions} + \text{West Beneficiary} + \text{Postmaterialism} + \text{Age} + \text{Education} + \text{Gender} + e.$$

Results

Table 2 strongly suggests that the East-West differences over democratic ideals not merely result from economic conditions. The East-West variable, measured by a simple dichotomy, is highly significant. Further, the standardized coefficient is unusually large for survey research (beta=-

.28). Thus, several years into Germany's unification, eastern citizens continue to value socialism as an ideal independently of their perceptions of economic factors. Further, younger eastern citizens are more likely to adhere to socialist ideals than older ones ($\beta = -.08$), though the main institutional learning affect emerges among all eastern Germans. In contrast, the age variable is insignificant among western Germans. This parallels findings from the Berlin study where postwar MPs are more supportive of socialist ideals.

--table 2 about here--

Economic perceptions have a comparatively weak affect on evaluations of socialist ideals. Personal economic conditions have no effect on how socialist ideals are evaluated among mass publics: this variable is insignificant in the West and the East. In contrast, negative evaluations of the national economy increase mass support for socialist ideals among in the East ($\beta = -.19$) and, to a lesser extent, in the West ($\beta = -.10$). But this coefficient is substantially lower when compared to the magnitude of the East-West coefficient, especially in the pooled analyses. Likewise, perceptions that western Germany benefited more from the unification process is only weakly related to citizens' views about socialist ideals. On the whole, while economic conditions have some influence on how citizens evaluate socialist ideals, these results provide strong support for the argument that citizens' exposure to a nation's institutional frameworks—the procedures as well as their underlying ideals—affects ideological values.

Do ideological values have consequences for existing institutions? Table 3 suggests an affirmative answer. As expected, the strongest direct effect on how satisfied citizens are with the existing institutional framework is their perceptions of the national economy, both in the East ($\beta = .31$) and the West ($\beta = .21$). This pattern is consistent with a well-established literature which points to economic factors as a central source of how institutions are evaluated (Clarke, Dutt, and Kornberg 1993).

--table 3 about here--

In addition, however, socialist ideals exert a moderate influence on institutional performance evaluations. Both, in the East ($\beta = -.14$) and the West ($\beta = -.10$), socialist ideals lower respondents' evaluations of the performance of Germany's democracy. This result is consistent with the finding that positive evaluations of the communist system—which in all likelihood are related to socialist values—reduce trust in new democracies (Mishler and Rose 1999: p. 91). In addition, given that we measure socialist ideals with one simple question, whereas economic conditions are captured by two additive indices, this finding represents a conservative estimate of the influence of socialist values on institutional support.

Conclusion

Germans recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall, but the extent to which they are still divided is reflected in their views about socialist ideals and their evaluations of existing institutions. From a practical perspective, these results continue to document that eastern Germans are reluctant *liberal*-democrats: they prefer a system that guarantees civil liberties but they also prefer a system that maintains several features of a socialist safety-net.

The endurance of socialist ideals has practical and theoretical implications. Practically, the continued success of the socialist party in eastern Germany—the PDS—is undoubtedly generated, in part, by short-term economic factors as well as longer-lasting values. Theoretically, the results are consistent with the institutional learning argument. Citizens evidently develop restraint and self-reliance only under specific circumstances: they must be exposed to institutions that encourage the development of these citizenship-qualities. They also internalize those ideals that underlie a set of institutions: socialist-egalitarian in the East; liberal-representative in the West.

The basic patterns across the East-West divide are consistent with a growing body of evidence from post-socialist countries. Citizens in East-Central Europe tend to link an ideal-typical democracy to egalitarian outcomes of political and economic competition (Finifter and

Mieckawicz 1992; Simon 1998). At the same time, large majorities of citizens in post-socialist contexts *also* prefer a system that secures civil liberties (Fuchs and Roller 1998). Comparable patterns also emerge at the level of political elites (Miller and Checcio 1996). And support for civil liberties tends to be higher among political elites than mass publics (Rohrschneider 1999).

Socialism's legacy has consequences for existing institutions. In part, socialist ideals tend to lower support for new democracies. Naturally, evaluations of existing institutions depend in no small measure on how well the economy performs. Given the collapse of industries in Eastern Germany and other post-socialist nations, it is not surprising that these factors lower mass acceptance of new institutions. At the same time, ideological values also contribute directly to the skepticism among many citizens in post-socialist countries. This holds for eastern Germany as well as other East-Central European countries (Mishler and Rose 1999).

This raises the issue of how institutions can endure when based on a skeptical citizenry. This issue directs our attention to the role supra-national institutions may play, in particular, the European Union. It may provide the resources needed to improve economic conditions. And it may provide institutional structures within which democratizing elites are exposed to democratic institutional learning—assuming that the EU functions according to democratic principles. How the EU may help to stabilize new democracies is a subject that social scientists may find worthwhile to explore.

Overall, this research points to the centrality of democratic values as one important source of institutional legitimacy. New institutions will not necessarily collapse if they face a skeptical citizenry. But neither can one safely assume that they will remain stable when majorities of publics are equivocal in their support for liberal democracies. The evidence amassed here and produced by those engaged in taking the publics' ideological pulse in new democracies cautions one not to take democratic stability for granted. To monitor the link between ideological values, institutional performance, and institutional support thus remains a central task for social scientists.

Appendix

Age: Respondents' age

Democratic Ideals among Parliamentarians: MPs' were asked: "What seem to you personally the essentials of a democracy?" The responses were coded based on a detailed coding scheme (Rohrschneider 1999: p. 250-251). Percentages in figure are based on respondents who mention at least one civil liberty or one social-egalitarian component. Multiple responses were allowed.

Democratic Institutions in Germany: The question wording is presented in figure 6. Response categories are: the existing system; there is a better system; undecided. Undecided respondents are omitted from the figure.

Future Economic Conditions: "And what do you expect economic conditions to be one year from now?" "And what about your personal economic situation in one year?" 1. Much better 2. Better 3. The same 4. Worse 5. Much worse.

Present Economic Conditions: "How would you evaluate the present economic conditions?" "And how do you evaluate your personal economic conditions" 1. Very good 2. Good. 3. Mixed 4. Bad. 5. Very bad.

Satisfaction with democracy: "How satisfied are you with the way the democratic system function in Germany?" Allbus 1998: 1. Very satisfied 2. Satisfied 3. Somewhat satisfied 4. Somewhat dissatisfied 5. Dissatisfied 6. Very dissatisfied." Eurobarometer surveys used in figure 7: 1. Very satisfied; 2. Fairly satisfied 3. Not very satisfied 4. Not satisfied at all. The figure presents percentages of those very or fairly satisfied.

Socialist Ideals: The question wording is presented in figure 4. Response categories in figure are "Yes" and "No". In the Allbus 1998 survey, the response categories are: 1. Agree very much 2. Agree somewhat; 3. Disagree somewhat; 4. Disagree very much.

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Figure 1: The Consequences of Institutional Learning

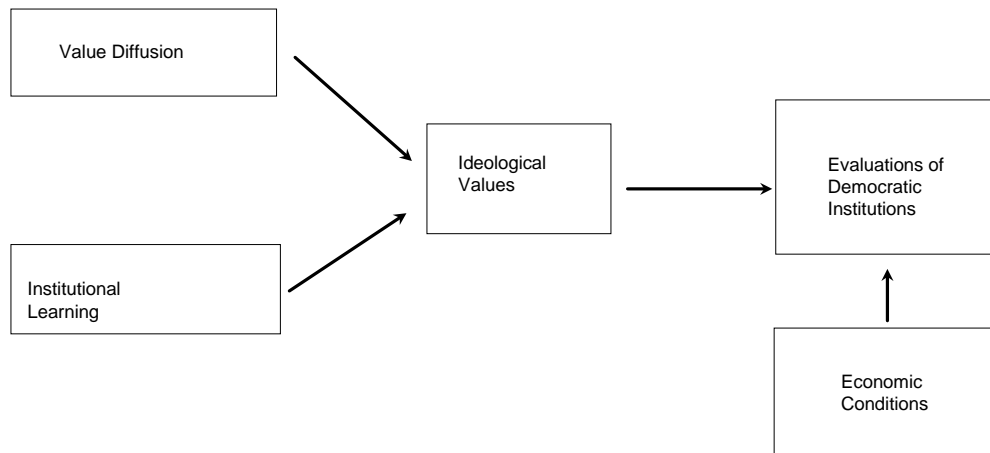
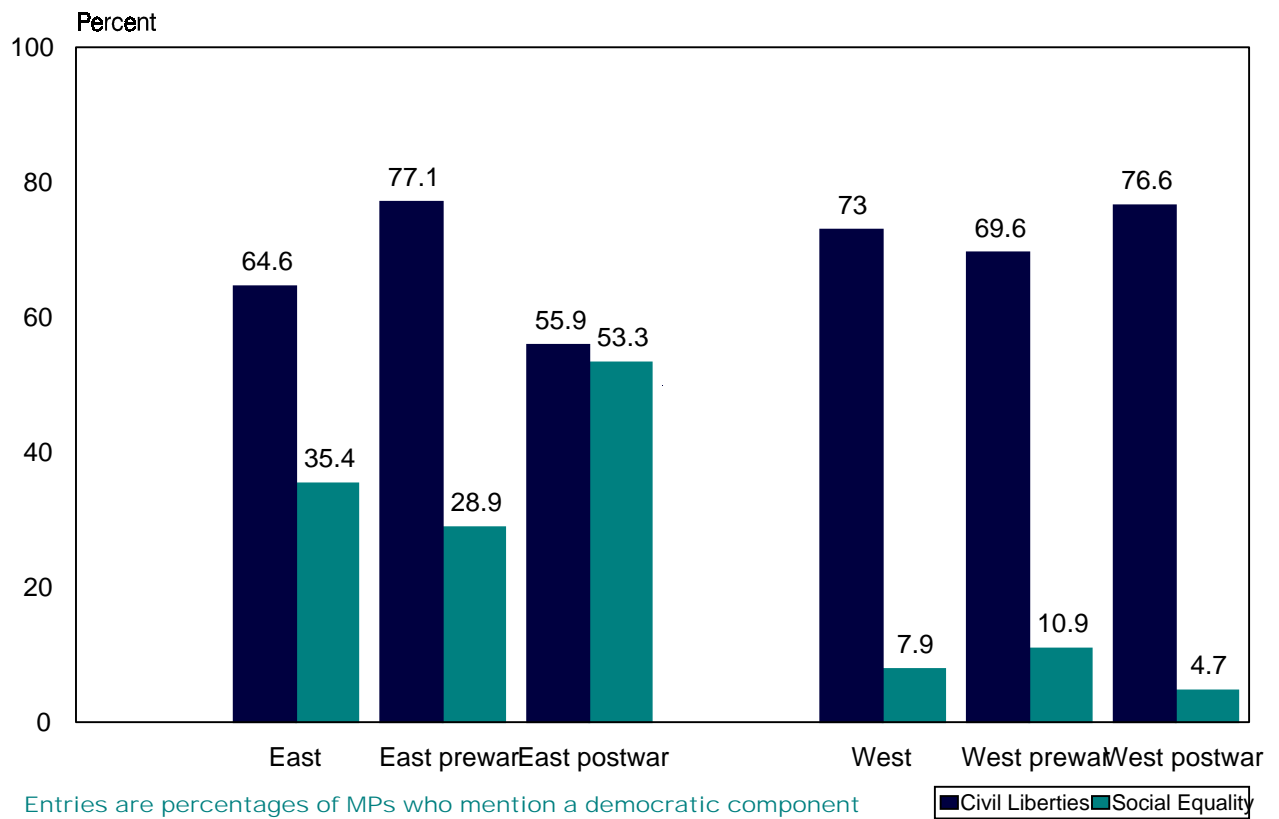


Figure 2

Civil Liberties and Social Equality among Berlin Parliamentarians



Source: 1992 Berlin parliament surveys

Figure 3

The Stability of Democratic Ideals among MPs, 1992-1995

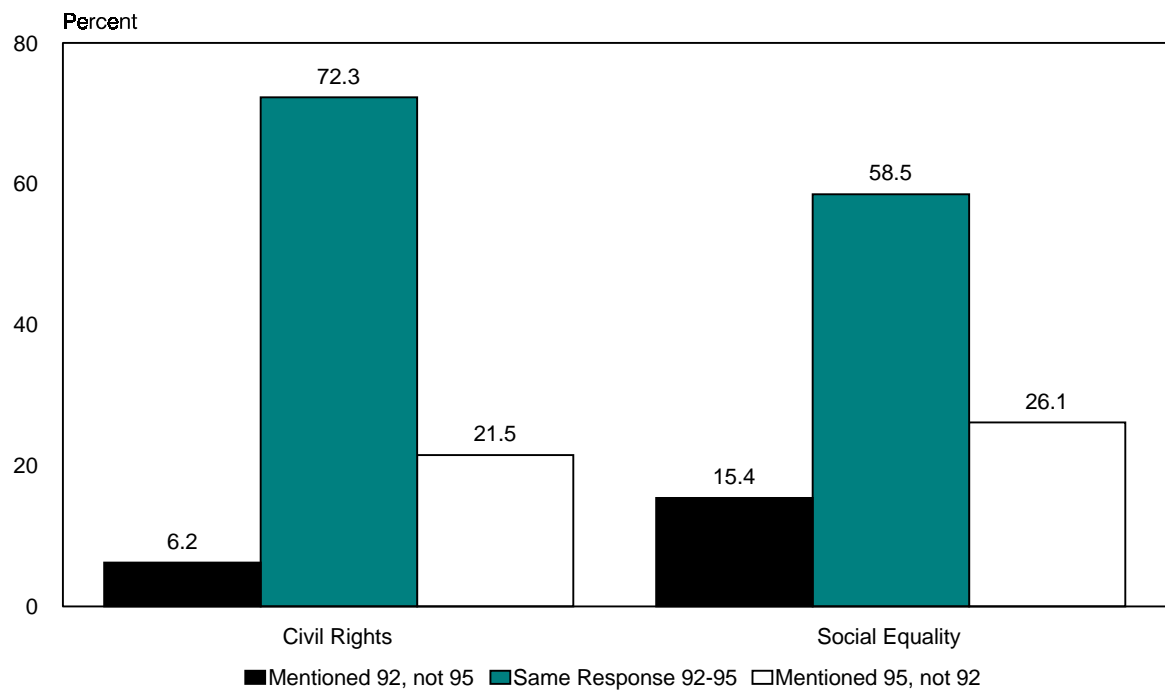
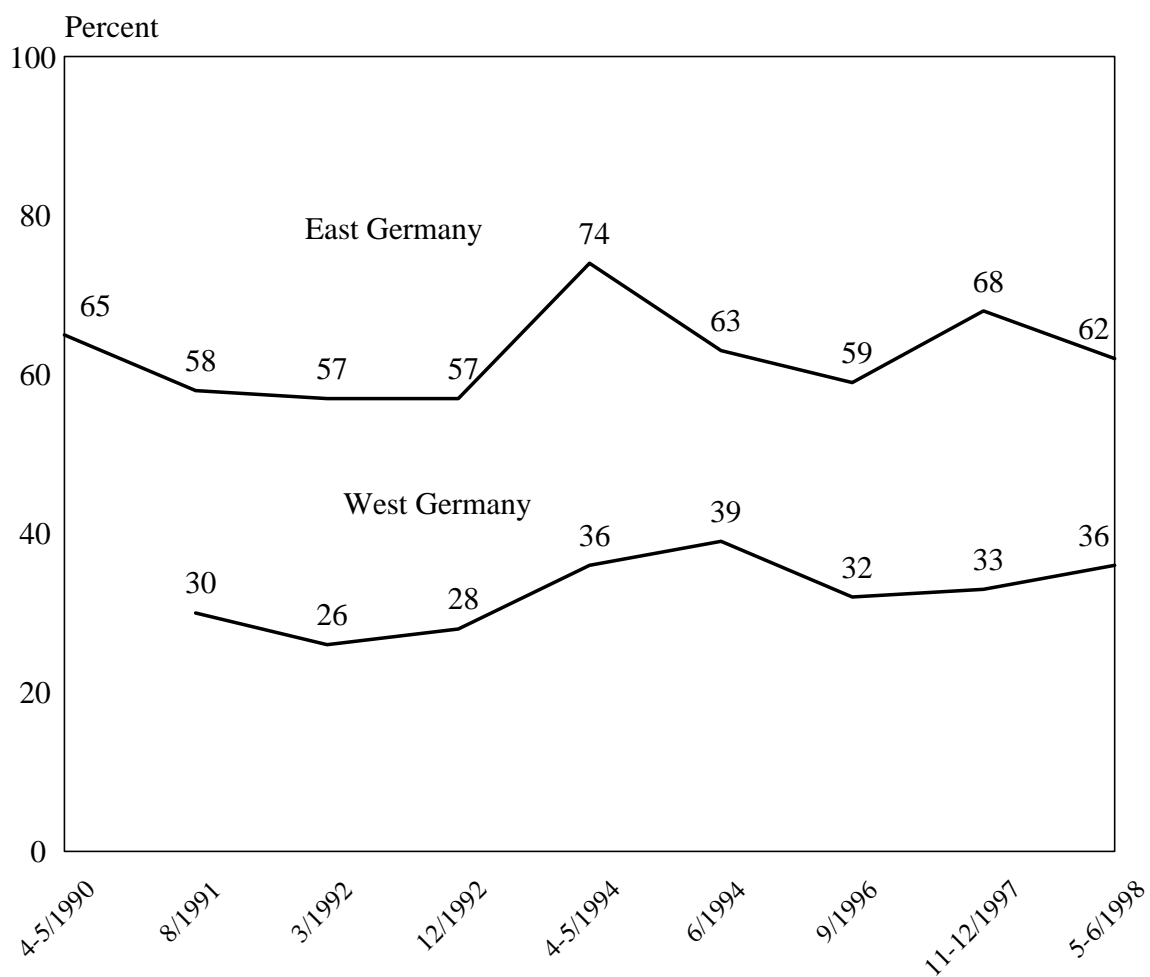


Figure 4

"Socialism is a good Idea which was badly Implemented"

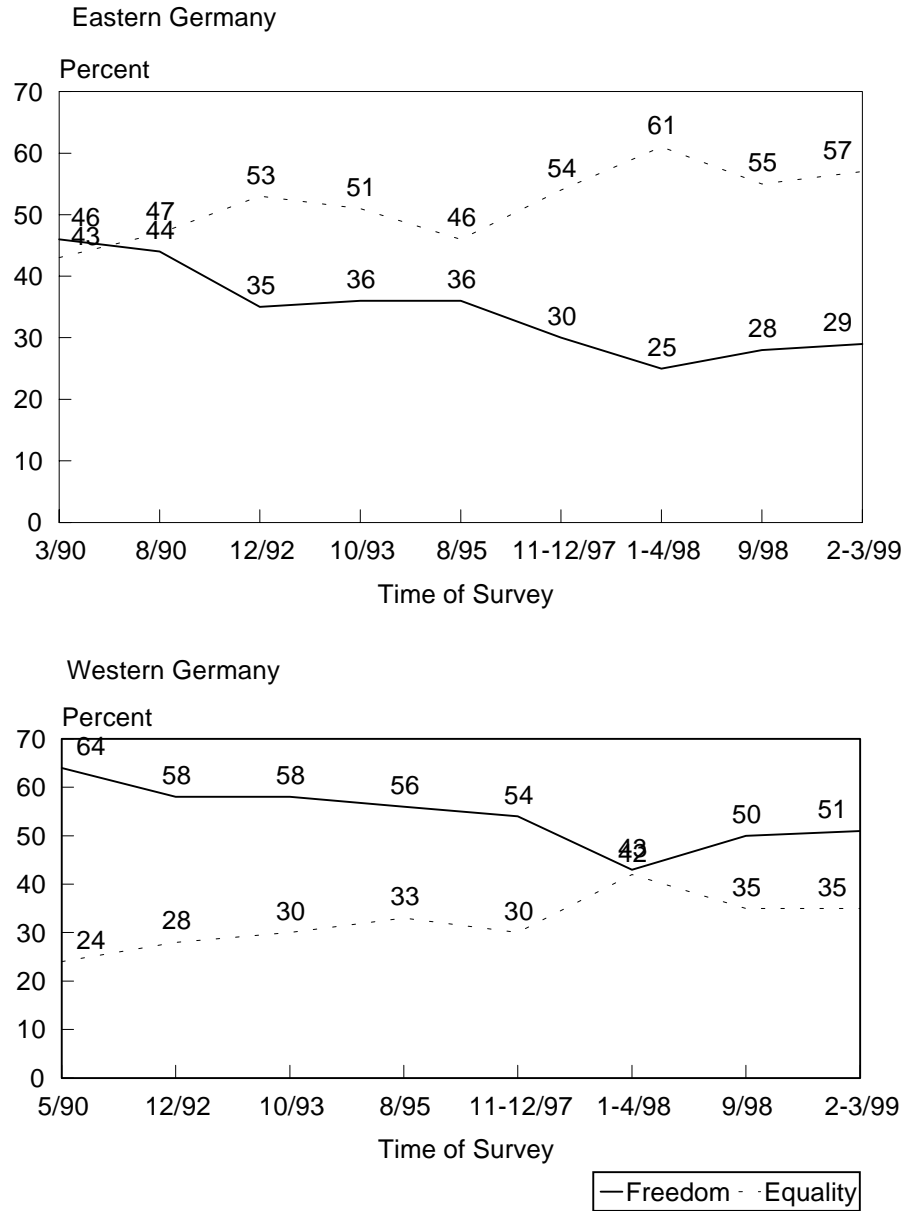


Note: Entries are percentages of respondents who agree with the statement.

Source: Allensbacher Institut für Demoskopie.

Figure 5

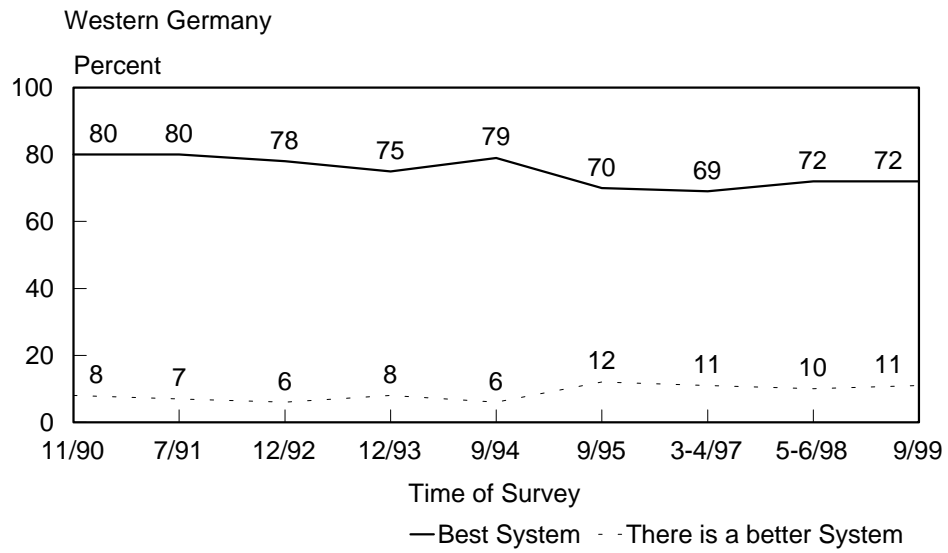
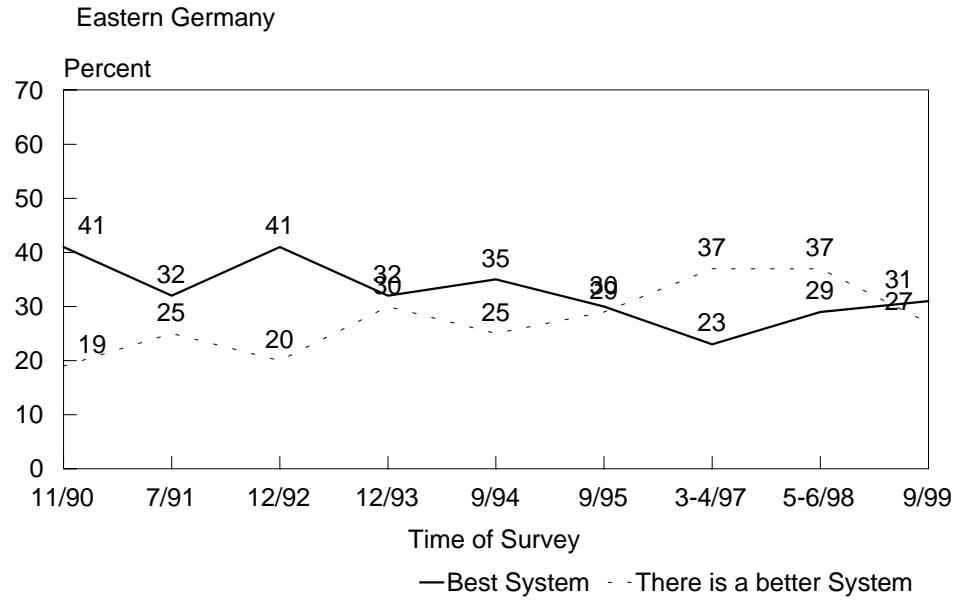
Freedom versus Equality among the Eastern and Western Public



Source: Allensbacher Institut fuer Demoskopie

Figure 6

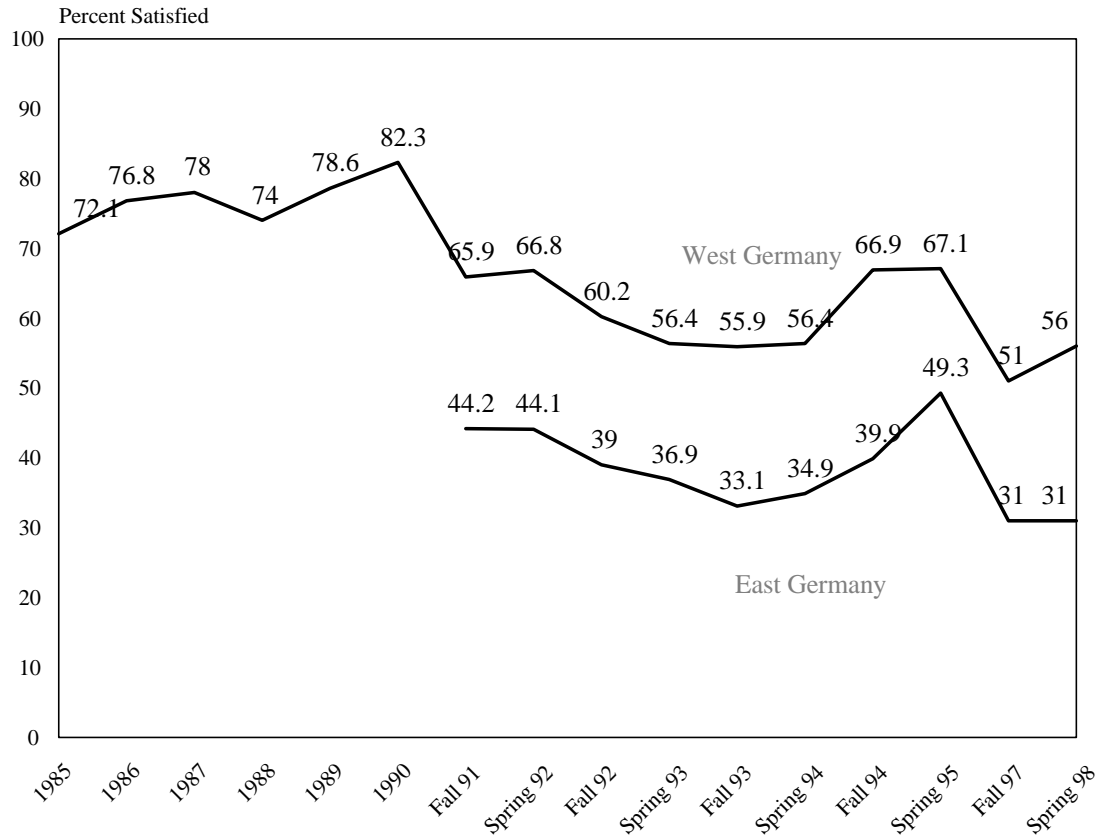
"Do you think that the existing system in Germany is the best system, or is there a better one?"



Source: Allensbacher Institut fuer Demoskopie

Figure 7

Satisfaction with Democracy, Mass Publics 1985-1998



Note: Entries are percentages of respondents who are very or pretty satisfied with how democracy works.

Source: Cumulative Eurobarometer file for western Germany before 1991 representing the annual averages. From onwards data are based on each Eurobarometer (36 through 49).

Table 2.1

The Contingent Effect of Institutional Learning and Value Diffusion on Ideological Values

		Democratic Restraint/Self-Reliance	
		Low	High
Democratic Values require:	Minor Revisions of Socialist Beliefs	<u>Diffusion Dominates</u> Liberal-Democratic Rights	<u>Institutional Learning Dominates</u>
	Major Revisions of Socialist Beliefs	<u>Institutional Learning Dominates</u>	<u>Institutional Learning Dominates</u> Democratic Ideals Political Tolerance Pluralism Economic Ideals

Table 2
Predicting Socialist Values

	East	West	Pooled
West	a	a	-.28**
			(-.86)
Positive Personal Economy	-.05	-.01	-.01
	(.05)	(.01)	(-.02)
Positive National Economy	-.19**	-.10**	-.12**
	(-.20)	(-.12)	(-.14)
West Benefits	.06*	.07*	.08**
	(.10)	(.08)	(.08)
Postmaterialism	.11**	.08**	.08**
	(.10)	(.07)	(.08)
Age	-.08*	.02	-.01
	(-.01)	(-.01)	(-.01)
Education	-.02	.02	.01
	(-.03)	(.02)	(.01)
Gender (Male)	-.05	-.03	-.31
	(-.13)	(.09)	(-.10)
Adjusted R-square	.06	.02	.13
N-of-Cases	954	1924	2878

Source: Allbus 1998.

Note: Entries are standardized regression coefficients; unstandardized coefficients appear in parentheses. One asterisk denotes significance at the .05 level; two denote significance at the .01 level. Non-German nationals are excluded from the analyses.

Table 3
Predicting Public's Satisfaction with Democracy

	East	West	Pooled
West	a	a	.20**
			(.21)
Socialist Ideals	-.14**	-.10**	-.12**
	(-.18)	(-.11)	(-.14)
Positive Personal Economy	.13**	.20**	.18**
	(.19)	(.28)	(.26)
Positive National Economy	.31**	.20**	.23**
	(.42)	(.25)	(.30)
West Benefits	-.09**	.09**	.04
	(-.11)	(.11)	(.04)
Postmaterialism	-.15**	-.05*	-.08**
	(-.16)	(-.05)	(-.09)
Age	.02	-.04	-.02
	(.01)	(-.01)	(-.01)
Education	.02	-.02	-.02
	(.03)	(-.04)	(-.02)
Gender (Male)	-.01	-.02	-.02
	(.03)	(.06)	(-.04)
Adjusted R-square	.23	.16	.22
N-of-Cases	(954)	(1924)	(2878)

Source: Allbus 1998.

Note: Entries are standardized regression coefficients; unstandardized coefficients appear underneath. One asterisk denotes significance at the .05 level; two denote significance at the .01 level. Non-German nationals are excluded from the analyses.