The Day of German Unity 1990 – 2005:
Redefining the Past, Present and Future

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Abstract

This is an original study analysing the staging of the German national holiday – the Day of German Unity – commemorating the accession of the German Democratic Republic to the Federal Republic of Germany on 3rd October 1990. By examining the mise-en-scène and rhetoric of the unity commemorations, it highlights the way in which political actors attempted to redefine ideas about united Germany’s past, present and future from 1990 to 2005. Adopting the innovative approach of the cultural history of politics – which understands representations such as national holidays as key mechanisms that not only reflect but also have the potential to influence agendas and discourses – the thesis is based on extensive research of German, French and British newspaper articles, televised reporting, speeches, organisational documents, Bundestag debates and structured interviews with Day of Unity organisers. The study concludes that the Day of Unity functioned as a stage on which political actors attempted to present a specific image of Germany, to redefine Germany’s ‘official’ interpretation of the National Socialist and German Democratic Republic pasts and to improve intra-German relations. Furthermore, it contends that the German national holiday was staged to some extent as a postnational event: on the one hand, through emphasis at the unity celebrations on sub-national (regional) aspects; on the other hand, through manifestations of supra-national aspects visible in the ‘EU-isation’ of the event, that is to say, through an emphasis on the European Union in the staging and in the prioritisation of bilateral relations. The thesis relates to a number of theoretical debates including Benedict Anderson’s understanding of nations as ‘imagined communities’, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger’s study of the ‘invention of tradition’, Rogers Brubaker’s work on civic and ethnic nationalism, Maurice Halbwachs concept of ‘collective memory’, Jan and Aleida Assmann’s concepts of ‘cultural memory’ and ‘communicative memory’ and Edgar Wolfrum’s work on Geschichtspolitik. The research also contributes to the debate about the resilience and transformation of the nation-state in a phase of Europeanisation and globalisation.
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Declaration

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.
Abbreviations

ARD  Consortium of public-law broadcasting institutions of
the Federal Republic of Germany
CDU  Christian Democratic Union
CEE states  Central and Eastern European states
DSU  German Social Union
ECSC  European Coal and Steel Community
EMU  Economic and Monetary Union of the European Union
EU  European Union
FDP  Free Democratic Party
FPÖ  Freedom Party of Austria
GARIOA  Government and Relief in Occupied Areas
GDR  German Democratic Republic
GMF  German Marshall Fund of the United States
KPD  Communist Party of Germany
MDR  Central German Broadcasting
NATO  North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDR  North German Broadcasting
NSDAP  National Socialist German Workers’ Party
OSCE  Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
ÖVP  Austrian People’s Party
PDS  Party of Democratic Socialism
PHARE  Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their
Economies
RAF  Red Army Faction
RBB  Berlin-Brandenburg Broadcasting
RTL  Radio Television Luxembourg
SED  Socialist Unity Party of Germany
SPD  Social Democratic Party of Germany
SWR  Southwest Broadcasting
TACIS  Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent
States
TCE  Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe
TEU  Treaty of the European Union
UN  United Nations
UNESCO  United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
Organisation
US  United States of America
WDR  Western German Broadcasting Cologne
ZDF  Second German Television
A note on terminology

Throughout the thesis, in line with the prevailing discourse in Germany, I refer to German 'unification' rather than 'reunification' to stress the coming together of an entity that had not previously existed in precisely that form. I refer to 'unity' as the post-1990 process of Germans from the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Federal Republic growing together politically, socially, economically and psychologically. I describe the states of 'East Germans' and 'West Germans' from 1949 to 1990 as the 'GDR' or 'East Germany' and the 'Federal Republic' and 'West Germany' respectively (and not 'FRG' as used in the GDR's official language). For the period after 1990, I refer to 'eastern Germany' and 'western Germany' and to 'eastern' and 'western Germans'. I also use the 'Federal Republic' and 'united Germany' interchangeably to describe post-unification Germany. To avoid confusion, I refer to both the European Community (EC) and the European Union (EU) as the 'EU', even though the EU only came into existence with the Maastricht Treaty on 1st November 1993. Unless otherwise stated, all translations from German or French are mine. Specific concepts that possess particular significance in their own language remain in their original.
Acknowledgements

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Dissemination

Presentations

‘Die Inszenierung des Tages der Deutschen Einheit auf regionaler, nationaler und internationaler Ebene (1990-2005)’  
*Institut für Europäische Geschichte*, Mainz, December 2006

‘Die Inszenierung des Tages der Deutschen Einheit 1990-2005’  
*Berliner Kolleg für Vergleichende Geschichte Europas*, Berlin, February 2006

‘Der Tag der Deutschen Einheit 1990-2005: Geschichtspolitik und politische Inszenierung’  
*Humboldt University (Colloquium Professor Herbst)*, Berlin, January 2006

‘Der Tag der Deutschen Einheit: Ein geschichtspolitisches und identitätsstiftendes Instrument?’  
*Centre Marc Bloch*, Berlin, January 2006

‘Der Tag der Deutschen Einheit 1990-2004: Kollektives Gedächtnis, Politische Kultur und Nationale Identität’  
*University of Essen (Colloquium Professor Loth)*, Essen, June 2005

‘The Day of German Unity 1990-2004: Political Culture, Historical Memory and National Identity’  
*Centre for European and International Studies Research*, Portsmouth, May 2005

Poster

*Institut für Europäische Geschichte*, Mainz, June 2007
Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Joachim Kazenwadel, a dear friend who died in February 2008 and who is sorely missed.
Introduction

Project outline

On 3rd October 1990, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) acceded to the Federal Republic of Germany after more than forty years of division. 3rd October subsequently became the national holiday of united Germany – the 'Day of (German) Unity' (Tag der Deutschen Einheit). 3rd October has since been described as 'a meaningless and empty date'.¹ This thesis does not deny that the German population eschewed their national holiday in its first fifteen years. It will demonstrate, however, that from 1990 to 2005, political actors used the Day of Unity commemorations – yearly ‘snapshots’ of united Germany – as platforms from which to address key questions facing united Germany: how should a unified Germany deal with the National Socialist past? How was the GDR past to be remembered? How could eastern and western Germans be integrated with one another? How could extremism be countered? How could enthusiasm and awareness be raised for federalism and regionalism? How could commitment to the European Union (EU) be expressed? Where did Germany's international diplomatic interests lie in a post-Cold War world? What was Germany's interpretation of the nation-state, its character and its role in an era of Europeanisation and globalisation? This thesis will show that the political actors tackled these questions in a number of ways on the Day of Unity: by staging united Germany as an extension and continuation of the Federal Republic, presenting specific interpretations of Germany’s past, attempting to improve intra-German relations, promoting to some extent postnational – specifically sub-national (regional) and supra-national (EU) – allegiance and attempting to influence the strategic diplomatic interests of united Germany.

The work focuses on the staging of the Day of Unity, specifically the mise-en-scène of the aesthetic elements of the unity celebrations and the rhetoric of the various actors. The actors of particular interest to the work include the regional organisers of the unity events, the Minister-Presidents of the host Länder, the German

Chancellors, German Federal Presidents, the Bundestag Presidents, other German politicians and political leaders involved in the organisation or speeches of the Day of Unity, foreign heads of states, foreign politicians, both in and out of office, and where relevant also prominent writers and poets involved in the Day of Unity celebrations from 1990 to 2005. The main official, central celebrations form the core of the research, (supplemented where relevant with brief references to the privately-funded Berlin celebrations), as these events, organised and attended by key political actors, served as the most significant platform for the analysis of the intentions of actors in 'staging Germany'.

The research addresses a number of key questions: What was the role of post-war commemorations in the GDR and Federal Republic? How can the core institutional elements of the Day of Unity be explained? How did the nature of the staging limit the effectiveness of the Day of Unity? What were the motivations and objectives of the political actors in selecting 3rd October as the Day of Unity? Which actors advocated 9th November as a more suitable date for celebrating German unification, and why? Did the Day of Unity serve as a site of party politics or was there widespread consensus on the main topics? Were the celebrations dominated by West German structures and views? If so, why? Were there demonstrations on the Day of Unity? What were the main themes of the protests? How did German political actors present the National Socialist and GDR pasts? Did this correspond to the depiction of the German past by the international actors? Did the interpretations of the past change over the time period of analysis? How did political actors on the Day of Unity attempt to construct a sense of Wir-Gefühl (sense of belonging together) among eastern and western Germans? What role did sub-national (regional) elements play in the mise-en-scène of the Day of Unity celebrations? What was the role of supra-national (EU) elements? Which bilateral relations were prioritised on the Day of Unity? What do the unity celebrations tell us about nationalism and memory in Germany? What do the commemorations indicate about the resilience of the nation-state in a phase of Europeanisation and globalisation?

The thesis explores eight main assumptions about 3rd October. Firstly, the Day of Unity served as a tool for political actors in the process of constructing and redefining ideas on the German past, present and future to convey a specific image of united
Germany to Germans and the international community. Secondly, there were shifts and changes in the presentation of key ideas on 3rd October in the period from 1990 to 2005, which reflected the changing concerns of the German and international political actors. Thirdly, on the German national holiday, German political actors from across the mainstream political spectrum presented a largely consensual interpretation and portrayal of fundamental guiding ideas and topics. Fourthly, the German and international actors used the Day of Unity to construct, and influence attitudes about, Germany's past. Fifthly, the Day of Unity was used to improve relations between eastern and western Germans. Sixthly, the German national holiday served as a mechanism for what I will be describing in the thesis as 'cultural synchronisation' by extending West German value systems and frameworks to eastern Germans through the promotion of specific (West German) versions of the past, present and future. 'Cultural synchronisation' can be understood as the convergence and uniformity of fundamental beliefs and value systems across eastern and western Germany. Second, the Day of Unity was presented to some extent as a postnational national holiday, however oxymoronic this may initially sound, as a result of some degree of denationalisation of the Day of Unity celebrations through sub-national (regional) and supra-national (EU) elements. Unlike 'nationalism' — a concept that stresses the centrality of nation, be it in terms of territorial, cultural or ethnic identification and interests — 'postnationalism' is a concept that moves beyond the notion that the nation-state must be the dominant point of reference. In this thesis, postnational elements are thus understood as those that do not place the nation at the centre but instead overcome the national and nation-state focus through an emphasis on elements below (sub-national) and above (supra-national) the nation. 'Denationalisation' refers to the process

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2 The term 'cultural synchronisation' was adapted in the early 1980s as an alternative to 'cultural imperialism' within the context of globalising communication structures. See Hamelink, C.J. (1983). Cultural autonomy in global communications: planning national information policy. New York: Longman. I have adapted the idea in terms that better address the nature of the cultural 'relationships' between eastern and western Germans and eastern and western Germany.

3 The terms 'sub-national' and 'supra-national' are not used in this thesis as elaborated concepts but rather as pragmatic means of highlighting the aspects of the national holiday that focus not on the nation but rather 'below' or 'above' the nation-state level. I have also selected these terms to avoid the, in this case unintended, connotations of terms such as regionalism, with all its multifarious associations, particularly in the German context.
by which attention and emphasis is removed from national aspects. Eighthly, the Day of Unity was used by German political actors to influence bilateral relations.

The thesis comprises five chapters. Chapter One provides the historical, institutional and political context of the Day of Unity. The chapter consists of three main sections. Section one situates the Day of Unity in its historical context by briefly examining the post-war history of German commemorative days, particularly 17th June (the former Day of Unity, *Tag der deutschen Einheit*, and 'national' holiday of the Federal Republic) and 7th October (the Day of the Republic, *Tag der Republik* and 'national' holiday of the GDR). Section two considers the institutional context of the Day of Unity: it critically examines, firstly, the organisation of 3rd October anniversaries; secondly, the western German dominated nature of the commemorations; and thirdly, the limits to the effectiveness of the unity celebrations as a consequence of the staging. Section three sheds light on the political context of the Day of Unity in three sub-sections: firstly, by examining the origins and motivations of the choice of date of 3rd October in contrast to 9th November, the date of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989; secondly, it explores the relation between party politics and the Day of Unity; finally, it examines the way in which the Day of Unity served as a site of protest for left and right-wing extremists. The conclusion to the chapter places the findings in the context of theoretical debates on nationalism.

Chapters Two and Three, which focus predominantly on the rhetoric of the unity commemorations, explore how the Day of Unity served as a platform for redefining ideas about national topics. Chapter Two focuses in two sections on the redefinition of the national past, specifically the National Socialist and GDR pasts. It explores the way in which the Day of Unity was used to present specific versions of the past both to influence attitudes in the international community and to encourage cultural synchronisation of the historical consciousness of eastern and western Germans. 'Historical consciousness' can be understood in this context as the 'entirety of the forms and content of thinking with which a group of people classes itself in time, relates to the past and orientates itself in the present with regard to the
future'. Section one firstly examines in detail the shifts and changes in the official interpretations of the National Socialist past in the process of Vergangenheitsbewältigung (coming to terms with the past) by the German political actors from 1990 to 2005 and examines the extent of the trend towards 'normalisation'. 'Normalisation', expressed either in terms of a reduction of rhetoric about the National Socialist past or through emphasis on other aspects of German history, describes the promotion of Germany as a 'normal state' – a state in which the legacy of the Nazi past is not considered the defining feature of the country's self-understanding but rather a chapter in its history. Secondly, it briefly sketches the way in which international guest speakers framed the National Socialist past differently to the German actors. Section two highlights the way in which the GDR past was renegotiated by emphasising the extent to which negative aspects of the Socialist Unity Party (SED)-led state stood at the fore of the depiction of the GDR. The conclusion to the chapter examines the findings in relation to the Historikerstreit (historians' dispute) of the 1980s. It also relates the work to key theoretical debates on memory.

Chapter Three examines, in three sections, the various ways in which political actors sought to improve intra-German relations on the Day of Unity to foster ties between eastern and western Germans. Section one explores the way in which political actors attempted to redefine attitudes about unification and the unity process. Section two examines the legal, moral, social and economic arguments used by the political actors on the Day of Unity to improve the image of eastern Germans and eastern Germany among western Germans. Section three sketches the way in which, on the one hand, actors stressed the elements that united Germans, yet on the other hand paradoxically also presented differences as positive. The chapter concludes by commenting on the political actors' understanding of nationhood in united Germany.

Chapters Four and Five, which focus principally on the mise-en-scène of the unity celebrations, explore the postnational elements of the staging to highlight signs of denationalisation of the German national holiday. Chapter Four discusses the sub-

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national, regional aspects of the celebrations to explore the way in which political actors sought to stress the importance of federalism, that is to say a decentralised (political) system that encourages unity in diversity, in united Germany's self-understanding. The first of five sections examines the degree to which the Day of Unity can be described as a sub-national national holiday. The sections that follow offer explanations for this. Section two examines the way in which actors fostered sub-national pride by promoting 'regional identity', understood in this context as a form of self-identification with a specific Land. Section three unearths the motives of regional actors in maintaining the decentralised character of the unity celebrations while section four examines the financial benefits of the sub-national arrangement for the Länder. Section five explores the way in which the commemorations served as a platform for attempting to encourage the cultural synchronisation of western German liberal democracy and federalism. The conclusion to the chapter explores certain tensions on the Day of Unity and situates the work in the broader public debate about nationalism in the press at the time of unification.

Chapter Five examines, in two sections, the supra-national, EU elements of the staging to highlight examples of denationalisation of 3rd October anniversaries through 'EU-isation'. To avoid the ambiguity of 'Europeanisation', replete with geographic and ideological complexities, that is to say concerning what and where 'Europe' is, I use the term EU-isation, which refers to a concrete entity and territory: it can be understood here specifically as the process by which agendas, rhetoric and other aspects of the staging related to the EU replaced national elements on the Day of Unity. Section one explores the way in which political actors used the Day of Unity as an arena within which to stress united Germany's continued commitment to the EU to overcome international fears of German hegemony and to maintain German public support for, and interest in, the EU: firstly, by emphasising continuity with the Federal Republic's main foreign policy tenets; secondly, by promoting the EU in

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times of 'Euro-scepticism' and thirdly, by endorsing eastern enlargement of the EU and presenting German unity as a contribution to European unity. Section two examines the hierarchy of diplomatic interests presented by the German political actors. It explores the way in which the Day of Unity served as a forum for strategically fostering specific bilateral, predominantly EU, relations important in terms of history, trade and security: firstly, it examines relations between Germany and the United States of America (US); secondly relations with EU states, particularly France and the Central and Eastern European (CEE) states of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland; finally, it briefly explores relations that received less attention at the unity celebrations. The chapter concludes by placing the findings in the contested debate about postnationalism.

The conclusion of the thesis summarises the main findings of the project and highlights crucial further research that the project has identified.

**Context**

*Conceptual approach*

The project design is informed by a number of conceptual approaches. The research draws, first and foremost, on recent publications on the cultural history of politics, particularly Thomas Mergel's article in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* and Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger's recent edited volume. Originally, the concept of political culture was developed by the political scientists Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba in their pioneering work in cross-national survey research of the degree of participatory democratic culture in five countries published in 1963. Their work, which explored the political interests, values and views that influenced politics, has largely fallen into disrepute among social scientists not least because of its normative presuppositions on liberal democracy. In historical research on political culture as in this project, however, the aim is not to quantify attitudes to democracy or to use 'civic

propensities' to explain the stability of governments, but rather to examine representational forms of political engagements.

A number of different conceptual approaches exist, which explore these representations. This project rejects the concept of Murray Edelman\textsuperscript{10} of political culture as symbolic representations that are detached from the 'real' politics of decision-making by elites. Instead, it adopts the cultural history of politics approach that can be traced back to the work of Roger Chartier\textsuperscript{11} in the late 1980s and that has more recently been developed and expanded by Mergel and Stollberg-Rilinger. This approach takes representations, such as commemorations, seriously as political instruments used to influence agendas and discourses (formal, extended expressions of thoughts or ideas on a subject). In this analytical perspective, politics are conceived of as communicative action broadly in line with the approach of the German social theorist Niklas Luhmann.\textsuperscript{12} Interests, power and conflicts are thus understood as communicatively produced and symbolically represented phenomena. In what social scientists would call a 'constructivist' understanding, information is exchanged via a set of symbols and cultural representations that are used as strategic devices for influencing contested issues, establishing political hegemony for particular guiding ideas and transforming the polity. In this way, this 'new political history' moves away from the interpretation of history as guided solely by the decisions of 'great men' or underlying socio-economic structures and interests. The focus is rather on the dynamic and ever-changing processes by which politics are constructed.

In addition to this the research draws on Benedict Anderson's understanding of nations as 'imagined communities'.\textsuperscript{13} In Anderson's work, nations are not understood as natural entities but rather as 'cultural artefacts'. By exploring the changes in, and the decline of, the religious and dynastic communities, the alterations in the conception of temporality and space, the interaction between capitalism and

print and the development of ‘languages-of-state’, Anderson has demonstrated that
countries are constructed through various processes. Furthermore, he has illustrated
that the model of nationalism — originating in the Americas — could be appropriated
or ‘pirated’ to other contexts. Following Anderson, this work thus conceives of the
country as an imagined community: it is imagined in the sense that most members of
the community will never meet or know each other but nevertheless feel a sense of
cohesion and solidarity with one another. Crucially, this imagined community is
limited in the sense that it has finite boundaries.

Alongside this, the research adopts Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger’s
concept of the ‘invention of tradition’. Like Anderson, Hobsbawm and Ranger,
who understand nations as products of social engineering, have similarly stressed that
nations are constructed or ‘invented’. In their edited volume of case studies ranging
from eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain to colonial Africa and India, they have
shown how ‘traditions’ were invented for various political and social purposes. They
have illustrated that many ‘traditions’ were in fact deliberately fabricated or were at
least more recent than they appeared. Above and beyond this, Hobsbawm and
Ranger have demonstrated that invented traditions have the potential to create or
symbolise social cohesion, to establish or legitimise institutions and to encourage
socialisation and the promotion of beliefs and value-systems. In one example
pertinent to this work’s concerns, Hobsbawm has shown, for instance, how invented
traditions — most notably primary education, public ceremonies and public
monuments — contributed to the process of maintaining the legitimacy of, and social
cohesion within, the Third Republic in France.

Alongside this, the research is also informed by Rogers Brubaker’s work on
idioms of nationhood. Brubaker’s analysis of citizenship and nationhood in France
and Germany has shown how specific ‘cultural idioms’, that is to say ways of
thinking and talking about nationhood — whether based on understandings of the

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nation as an ethnic (blood) or civic (state-centred) community – influence the way in which citizenship of a nation is defined. According to Brubaker, for whom the modern state is not merely a territorial organisation but rather also a membership organisation, particular definitions of citizenship are thus moulded by certain understandings of nationhood. Brubaker rejects purely instrumentalist arguments – that particular idioms of nationhood derive directly from specific agendas of political actors – and solely cultural explanations. However, he acknowledges that specific idioms of nationhood are triggered and strengthened in certain historical, institutional and political contexts. Elite idioms, as Brubaker argues, cannot be taken as representative of popular idioms. However, at the very least, analysing elite understandings of nationhood provides insights into how specific definitions of citizenry are constructed and maintained. In this vein, how political actors frame nationhood on the Day of Unity both reflects and has the potential to influence the way in which citizenship is defined in united Germany. Put simply, the German political actors contribute to the process of defining what it means to be German.

The work also relates to Edgar Wolfrum’s concept of ‘Geschichtspolitik’.17 According to Wolfrum, in plural societies, political actors – who contribute to defining the norms and values of a political system – present specific images of the past that serve particular political interests at a given time. Wolfrum has explored at length the Geschichtspolitik of the commemorations in the post-war Federal Republic of the uprising of 17th June 1953. In his work, he highlighted the way in which the former Day of Unity commemorations served as indicators of the self-understanding of the post-war Federal Republic – particularly regarding the German Question. In this way, he underlined that the role of political actors in presenting particular versions of the past deserves attention since it highlights how history can be used as a political tool to influence the masses and to achieve cultural hegemony. He has demonstrated, for instance, that history can be politicised to create a sense of cohesion among diverse groups as well as to foster political legitimacy.

In addition to this, the work critically relates to the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs’ concept of ‘collective memory’. Halbwachs has argued that memory cannot not be considered solely with reference to an individual in isolation but rather is socially constructed. By exploring the collective memories of families, religious groups and the nobility, he has reasoned that remembering takes places within collective frameworks: individual memory relies on collective memory. For Halbwachs, memory is moulded by the concerns of the present. Through his empirical analysis of sacred sites in the Holy Land, for example, he demonstrated that the perceived location of key events associated with the origins of Christianity, altered according to the needs of the contemporaries. Pilgrims who sought to draw links between the Old and the New Testament, for instance, perceived Old Testament sites as having also been holy Christian sites. Halbwachs thereby highlighted that collective memory is also highly selective. What is more, according to Halbwachs, since one relies on others to remember, through commemoration a past is evoked that might otherwise be forgotten.

The research is complemented, finally, by the work of Jan and Aleida Assmann on ‘cultural memory’ and ‘communicative memory’. The Assmanns have responded to Halbwachs’ notion of collective memory by differentiating between cultural and communicative memory. For them, cultural memory, constructed by experts, does not fade away with time but rather is intended to remain as part of a society’s heritage and to stabilise a country’s self-image. Cultural memory comprises objectified culture: monuments, texts, buildings or rites, constructed to recall specific events, are key organisational forms of cultural memory. Communicative memory, by contrast, represents everyday communications of the past. It takes place in the context of an individual’s biography; it is expressed in everyday speech and is therefore accessible to all. It is thus inherently disorganised, unstable and non-specialised. Importantly, communicative memory is generational and spans at most

19 Ibid., 193-235.
one hundred years: it is therefore, by definition, shaped for the most part by contemporaries of the respective event.

Utilising and relating where appropriate to these conceptual approaches, the research will explore the Day of Unity as a political instrument that has been used by political actors to attempt to influence agendas and discourses and to construct and propagate particular versions of Germany's past, present and future. To highlight the relevance of the research, the review of literature that follows deals specifically with key texts on the various functions of representations in redefining the nation, legitimising the state, sustaining democracy, highlighting shifts in the political culture, creating consensus, fostering a sense of belonging, shaping ideas on the past and influencing international relations, which further shaped the research questions of the project. Finally, the review highlights the deficiencies and gaps of the scarce existing literature on the Day of Unity.

Existing literature on the functions of representations

Many works have emphasised the significant role of 19th century commemorations in the nation-building process. Recent literature has indicated that in the 20th and 21st centuries, when the nation-state was largely taken for granted, contemporary national days have served by contrast as a platform on which a nation can redefine itself or replace existing notions of the nation-state. Sabine Behrenbeck and Alexander Nützenadel, for example, have highlighted the significance of the staging of commemorations, be it speeches or aesthetic elements, in the process of a nation continually reconstructing its own self-perception. As Beate Binder, Wolfgang

Kaschuba and Peter Niedermüller have shown, speeches, remembrance events and other elements of political culture thus serve as central mechanisms for ‘producing’ nations. Moreover, as Gabriella Elgenius has shown, and as will become clearer throughout this analysis of the Day of Unity, commemorations allow nations to project and advertise specific images of themselves not only to ‘insiders’ but also to ‘outsiders’.

In this way, commemorations also serve as instruments for reinforcing state legitimacy. As Jan Andres, Alexa Geisthövel and Matthias Schwengelbeck’s edited volume of examples from the 18th to 20th century has illustrated, representations have long been used as tools by states to demonstrate their power and legitimacy. Through their publication on 7th October, Matthias Kitsche, Monika Gibas, Rainer Gries, Barbara Jakoby and Doris Müller have observed that in the GDR commemorations were used by the ruling SED party as platforms for constructing the illusion of legitimacy of the Socialist state. In this context, adopting the terminology of Herfried Münkler, Birgit Sauer has maintained that political events not only in the GDR but also those in western democracies, serve as forums that bring together ‘visible’ and ‘invisible’ manifestations of power. Modern-day political events, such as the Day of Unity, thus also stand as a resource for the state to demonstrate its authority and legitimacy. In this way, as Sabine R. Arnold, Christian Fuhrmeister


and Dietmar Schiller\textsuperscript{30} have persuasively argued, political *Inszenierung* plays an important role in representative democracies as it has the ability to reinforce or undermine the power of specific actors, groups, governments or states. Indeed, although the thesis will show that the Day of Unity served on the whole as a platform for reinforcing specific ideas and values, as briefly explored in Chapter One, the way in which some actors staged protests provides some indication of the dialectic character of any such staging. Put simply, political staging can serve as a resource for reinforcing legitimacy but can also open the door to inadvertent political demands, influences and consequences.

Consequently, as Ajume H. Wingo\textsuperscript{31} has recognised, in modern states, representations such as political symbols, rituals, mythologies and traditions, have the power to help sustain liberal democracies. As will be explored further in Chapter Four of this project in particular, these elements, which Wingo terms 'veil politics', can serve as mechanisms to highlight core liberal democratic values and impress these on the people. Given this function of contemporary representations, it is not surprising then, that commemorations can also be examined to highlight transformations in the political culture, as George Mosse stressed in his in-depth exploration of the emergence of a 'new politics' of mass ceremonial used to organise the masses for fascism.\textsuperscript{32} Indeed, as Dieter Düding, Peter Friedemann and Paul Münch's edited volume on commemorations in Germany from the Enlightenment to World War I and Fritz Schellack's assessment of national days in Germany from 1871 to 1945\textsuperscript{33} have illustrated, the nature of the staging of national holidays transforms with the changing concerns and priorities of its contemporaries. For this

\textsuperscript{30} Arnold, S.R., Fuhrmeister, C., & Schiller, D. (Eds.). (1998). *Politische Inszenierung im 20. Jahrhundert: Zur Sinnlichkeit der Macht*. Cologne: Böhlau. To see how political careers can be made or destroyed by commemorations see, for example, how Bundestag President Philipp Jenninger's controversial speech on the fiftieth anniversary of the anti-Jewish pogrom of 9\textsuperscript{th} November 1938 led to his resignation in Domansky, E. (1992). 'Kristallnacht', the Holocaust and German unity: the meaning of November 9 as an anniversary in Germany. *History & Memory*, 4\textsuperscript{4}, 60-94.


\textsuperscript{32} Mosse, G. (1975). *The nationalization of the masses: political symbolism and mass movements in Germany from the Napoleonic wars through the Third Reich*. New York: Howard Fertig.

reason, as epitomised by Martin Krämer’s detailed study of 17th June, it is important to study commemorations within their historical, institutional and political context – the task of Chapter One.

Furthermore, Schiller has advanced the idea, briefly explored in the context of the Day of Unity celebrations in Chapter One, that since they necessitate a reduction and narrowing of key ideas across the political spectrum, commemorations also serve as a medium through which political consensus can be created. Consequently, as illustrated by John R. Gillis' edited book on various forms of commemorations and as explored with regard to intra-German relations in Chapter Three, representations can, on the one hand, encourage the members of groups, societies or nations to identify with one another and develop a sense that they belong together. On the other hand, as a wealth of literature has shown, and as explored with reference to the Day of Unity throughout Chapter Two, commemorative events can be used to redefine ideas about the past. Karl-Ernst Jeismann and Annette Leo respectively have asserted that Geschichtsbilder (conceptions of history) and historical consciousness shape ‘memory culture’ and influence ideas about the present and future. In line with Halbwachs and Wolfrum, Ute Frevert has pointed out that the elements of the past that are disputed alter with the current needs and views of contemporaries.

In this context, Jan-Werner Müller’s study of intellectuals demonstrated that in post-unification Germany particular interpretations of the past were presented to

38 Leo, 2003, Keine gemeinsame Erinnerung.
renegotiate the perception of Germany in the present. Müller's more recent edited volume, focusing on memory and power in post-war Europe,\textsuperscript{42} served to illustrate that the specific construal of the past could thus influence not only domestic but also international politics. Pierre Nora's book on France,\textsuperscript{43} reaffirmed by Etienne François and Hagen Schulze's project on Germany,\textsuperscript{44} demonstrated more specifically the way in which \textit{lieux de mémoire} (sites of memory), such as commemorations, contributed to this process of redefining the past by crystallising memory in the 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Timothy Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper's international case studies of the agents and arenas of commemorations,\textsuperscript{45} together with Aleida Assmann's exploration of museums and the media in 21\textsuperscript{st} century Germany\textsuperscript{46} and Wolfrum's publications on 17\textsuperscript{th} June\textsuperscript{47} have emphasised that contemporary representations also serve as important forums of \textit{'inszenierte Geschichte'} (staged history) (Assmann).\textsuperscript{48}

Alongside their function as platforms for redefining and transmitting specific interpretations of the past, recent studies have also underlined a more future-oriented role of commemorations. Johannes Paulmann's edited volume on German cultural diplomacy,\textsuperscript{49} for example, recently demonstrated that elements as diverse as state visits, receptions at cultural institutes and sporting events served as mechanisms in the process of conveying a specific image of the Federal Republic and the GDR to the

\textsuperscript{43} Nora, 1984-1992, Les lieux de mémoire.
\textsuperscript{44} François & Schulze, 2001, Deutsche Erinnerungsorte.
\textsuperscript{47} See, in particular, Wolfrum, 1998a, Geschichtspolitik und deutsche Frage; Wolfrum, 1998b, Geschichtspolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland; Wolfrum, 1999, Geschichtspolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.
international community in the 1960s and 1970s. Furthermore, works by scholars such as Wolfrum, Wolfgang Kraushaar, and Manfred Wilke have focused specifically on the role of contemporary national holidays in this process of influencing and shaping international relations. They highlighted, for instance, the way in which the commemoration of an event that essentially condemned the SED, 17th June, became problematic during a period of improved relations with the GDR in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These works underscored the way in which the staging of the 17th June anniversaries in that period were carefully orchestrated so as not to jeopardise further improvements in German-German and West German-Soviet relations. United Germany faces a very different geo-strategic environment to the Federal Republic yet the function of its national holiday as a tool for improving bilateral relations is no less significant, as Chapter Five will demonstrate.

The existing literature on representations has highlighted the important role of commemorations in redefining the image of the nation, legitimising the state, promoting democracy, highlighting transformations in the political culture, fostering a sense of belonging, creating consensus, shaping ideas on the past and influencing international relations. Given the significance of commemorations, it is thus not surprising that a vast number of works have explored the post-war German commemorations of 7th October and particularly 17th June. What is striking, however, is that, to date, analysis of the new Day of Unity has been largely neglected.

50 Wolfrum, 1998a, Geschichtspolitik in der Bundesrepublik; Wolfrum, 1998b, Geschichtspolitik und deutsche Frage; Wolfrum, 1999a, Geschichtspolitik in der Bundesrepublik; Wolfrum, 1999b, Geschichtspolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.
Existing literature on 3rd October

Existing literature on 3rd October has been almost exclusively limited to brief journal articles – and there, only in German – offering solely normative analyses on one aspect of the Day of Unity, namely the suitability of 3rd October as the date for commemorating the Day of Unity. While Rolf Gröschner, for example, used legal arguments to challenge the appropriateness of the Day of Unity, a small number of historians have used specific interpretations of the German past to criticise 3rd October or to promote 9th November as a more suitable alternative. Equally normative was Gunnar Peter’s recent journal article, which sketched in brief some elements of the process by which the Day of Unity was selected as the German national holiday, in an attempt to defend 3rd October as the holiday date. Three scholars, on the other hand, have approached the topic of 3rd October less normatively. However, as we shall now see, their treatments are both superficial and insufficient.

Firstly, using a discourse analysis approach, Ruth Geier has briefly examined Day of Unity speeches in a chapter of an edited volume on the German language since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Instead of focusing on the content of the speeches, as in this study, however, Geier predominantly commented on the style of the


language, such as the use of personal pronouns, and limited her examination to a very small sample of just ten speeches, which she analysed in isolation, removed from their historical context. Consequently, Geier was unable to identify shifts and changes in the selection of topics for the speeches over time or comment in any way on the staging of the unity celebrations. Furthermore, as Geier discussed at length the numerous possible techniques for examining rhetoric, little appeared in the article about the Day of Unity speeches themselves.

Secondly, a number of works have also provided cursory closing remarks on the Day of Unity in volumes dedicated to other commemorative days but never in the detail or for the time-period explored in this project. The most thorough of these was to be found in Frank König’s monograph on political commemorations in the Federal Republic, in which the author dedicated one small chapter to the analysis of the Day of Unity. König’s sources include only a small number of speeches, newspaper articles and surveys, not directly relating to the Day of Unity celebrations, however, and his examination is limited to just two years, 1990 and 2000. The present project, on the other hand, offers an examination of a full fifteen years of the commemorations, covering a period of time long enough to identify and explain important developments over time. Above and beyond this clear limitation, König’s work does not comment at all on the role of the Day of Unity in redefining ideas about the past or about intra-German relations or on the sub-national or supranational elements of the staging. Instead, it attempts, unsuccessfully, to trace the nebulous link between the Day of Unity and ‘the German national identity’ – a concept now largely discredited for its failure to acknowledge that multiple identities of individuals, groups and societies exist and overlap.

Finally, Jochem Schäfer has dedicated two books to 3rd October, entitled ‘Der Peterzug: Dem Nationalfeiertag besonders Verbunden. Der 3. Oktober als Tag der Deutschen Einheit’ and ‘Der 3. Oktober: ein weltweites Symbol für den friedlichen

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Dialog'. Although the titles suggest that these works deal with the Day of Unity, they are in fact bizarre texts completely removed from the actual 3rd October celebrations. They read as political manifestos that frame the Day of Unity as a symbol for world peace and link it with other events that (coincidentally) also took place on 3rd October from the thirteenth century to the present day.

This scarcity of contemporary historical works can be explained in part by the reluctance of many historians, not only in Germany, to engage with Gegenwartsgeschichte (history of the present), or very recent history. At the same time, the increasingly theoretical and qualitative turn of (German) political science and the current unpopularity of research on political culture in the social sciences more generally help to explain why these disciplines have also contributed little to a better understanding of the role of 3rd October for united Germany.

Thus the existing literature has highlighted the relevance and significance of conducting original research into contemporary national holidays. What has been missing so far is a comprehensive and contextualised historical, empirical analysis of the staging of the Day of Unity from 1990 to 2005 from the perspective of the cultural history of politics. This study is an attempt to fill this gap. The work will thereby shed light on an entirely new area and make a number of contributions to our understanding of the cultural history of politics generally and to our understanding of post-unification Germany more specifically. Firstly, by highlighting the functions that the Day of Unity attempts to fulfil, the work will contribute to the history of the role of national holidays in contemporary liberal democracies. Secondly, the research will identify and analyse those elements which German and international political actors considered the key issues, as showcased in the staging of each Day of Unity anniversary. In this way, it provides insight into the changing priorities and concerns of these actors from 1990 to 2005. The research will, thirdly, contribute to theoretical debates about the politics of memory in united Germany by exploring which ‘official’ versions of the past were selected for Germany’s national holiday in the first fifteen years after unification. Fourthly, by exploring how the Day of Unity was used to

improve intra-German relations, the research will contribute to debates about the politics of identity construction and understandings of nationhood in Germany. By exploring the sub-national and supra-national elements of the staging of the Day of Unity, the research will, fifthly, contribute to debates about nationalism and the role of the nation-state in Germany. Finally, analysis of the relative weight of particular bilateral relations on the Day of Unity will provide insights into the strategic diplomatic interests of post-unification Germany.

Methodology

In line with the conceptual framework of the cultural history of politics, which does not infer causal links between topics of study, I adopted a case study approach for the analysis of the Day of Unity. This approach was particularly appropriate for this project as its holistic focus encouraged detailed, intensive and contextualised research of a case in a specific arena (the capital of the Land holding the Presidency in the Bundesrat in any given year) and at a precise time (3rd October each year). Since there was no desire to statistically generalise from the findings of the research, this limitation of the method was not problematic.

There were a number of stages in the research process. Firstly, I reviewed the literature on representations to establish the various potential functions of commemorations in liberal democracies. Given that the literature had highlighted the central role of speeches in analysing festivities, secondly, I collected full transcripts of all speeches given by all speakers at the main unity ceremonies from 1990 to 2005. I supplemented this source base where relevant with the televised addresses of the Chancellor on the eve of or during the Day of Unity as well as with planned and impromptu speeches by German and international political actors at the citizens' festivals, the Federal President's reception or on other occasions at the central celebrations in the respective Land capital or at the celebrations in Berlin, albeit to a lesser extent as these sources were less readily available.

The German media often dismissed Day of Unity speeches as Sonntagsreden – that is to say, speeches that were humdrum and predictable. Indeed, to some degree the content of many speeches was unsurprising. However, the fact that the content of
the speeches could to some extent be foreseen made them no less worthy of analysis. On the contrary, the fact that the choice of topics and the specific discourses on those topics were so dominant that Germans could predict them in itself deserves attention, not least to examine how such a high level of consensus on the projected 'official' image of united Germany could be achieved. Indeed, the speeches on the Day of Unity celebrations can be understood as having contributed to the process of reproducing and disseminating certain forms of consensus. Moreover, in their largely standardised format, the speeches illuminated continuities and subtle changes in these dominant 'official' discourses from 1990 to 2005 to reveal the changing priorities and agendas of the speakers. In this context, the appearance of unexpected discourses, predominantly from international guest speakers, similarly justified closer analysis of the speeches.

As I sought to identify specific themes of the Day of Unity speeches and explore how these changed from 1990 to 2005, I opted to analyse the Day of Unity speeches using a qualitative content analysis approach. Such a method of systematically classifying codes and identifying themes, allowed examination of the Day of Unity speeches in their specific political, economic and social contexts. In this way, it permitted me to explore not only the manifest content (what the speaker explicitly said) but also the latent content (what the speaker implied). Thus I was able to explore both the formal aspects of the texts as well as their themes and main ideas in their specific contexts. In the third stage of the research, I therefore carried out a pilot study using qualitative content analysis. On a sample of ten speeches, I inductively developed codes from the speeches. I then applied the codes deductively to the analysis of a further ten speeches. Subsequently, in a fourth stage of the research process, I analysed the remaining speeches. Throughout my analysis of the speeches, I developed and redefined the codes in a cyclical process (for a full list of the final coding system see Appendix 1). Having established that the codes provided a well-informed reflection of the themes of the speeches, I developed tentative assumptions about the Day of Unity celebrations. I thus initially developed the main assumptions about the unity festivities from the review of existing literature on
representations and from my analysis of the speeches. As I went along, the material I gathered highlighted what further data I needed to collect.

I combined the analysis of the speeches with examination of a number of other sources. Such a strategy of using multiple sources of data (data triangulation) sought to enhance the rigour of the research. By using different types of data, I was able to further develop and refine the assumptions about the Day of Unity commemorations. Thus, I decided, in a fifth stage of the research, to analyse newspaper coverage of the unity events. This was particularly important in light of the fact that through examination of the speeches alone, I would have been unable to comment on details of the wider celebrations. I collected and analysed articles from five different German domestic newspapers to provide a sample of newspapers with different political tendencies and to allow reliability checks between the data of different newspapers. I selected: the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung and the Frankfurter Rundschau (the most popular national broadsheets), the Bild-Zeitung (a tabloid owned by the Springer group with a very wide readership), and Neues Deutschland (the newspaper of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), which presented an extreme left-wing former GDR perspective on the unity celebrations). Where possible, I supplemented this sample with articles from a range of regional newspapers. The articles from the German print press allowed me to comment on specific details of the staging of the unity events including their location, details of speakers, guests and demonstrations and also provided information about the political climate and context in which the unity events took place. In addition to the German domestic newspapers, I also conducted a selective study of international reporting of the Day of Unity celebrations, namely The Times and The Guardian (two of the most popular British broadsheets) and Le Figaro and Le Monde (leading French broadsheets). I selected this sample of reporting as Britain and France stand out as two former great power adversaries and as principal partners of Germany in the EU. The newspaper articles of the international press complemented those of the German press by offering an external perspective on the unity events as well as strikingly different material on elements of the commemorations and on the broad political context of the events. I systematically collected and analysed articles from
all the selected newspapers from 1st to 5th October of each year from 1990 to 2005, that is to say two days before and two days after each Day of Unity celebration. This time frame of analysis provided information regarding what was planned to take place on the Day of Unity, which was particularly important for the analysis of the intentions of the key political actors that forms the focus of this research. It also allowed any discrepancy to be highlighted between the planned events and what actually did take place.

Having analysed the newspapers, it was clear that they provided insufficient visual images of the unity celebrations to allow me to comment on the aesthetic elements of the Day of Unity. For this reason, in a sixth stage of the research process, I collected a broad range of televised reporting from various broadcasters. From RTL (Radio Television Luxembourg), a leading German private channel, I extensively analysed coverage from the special Day of Unity programmes (Sondersendungen), where produced, as well as news coverage from RTL Aktuell and RTL Nachjournal, which predominantly provided images of the ceremony and demonstrations of the central celebrations. For an overview of the Berlin celebrations, by contrast, I analysed footage from various unity programmes from ZDF (Second German Television), one of the two German domestic public channels. I collected and analysed data from these broadcasters from every second year from 1990 to 2005 as this offered a representative selection of Left/Right and East/West organised events that took place in Schwerin (1992), Bremen (1994), Munich (1996), Hanover (1998), Dresden (2000), Berlin (2002) and Erfurt (2004). Besides the RTL and ZDF coverage, reporting of the Day of Unity citizens' festival was traditionally carried out on a regional level by broadcasters under the umbrella of ARD (Consortium of public-law broadcasting institutions of the Federal Republic of Germany). For this reason it was also necessary for me to collect and analyse all available Day of Unity summary programmes for each of the 3rd October anniversaries; these were the main sources of data for my analysis of the festivities organised for the general public. They included programmes produced by NDR (North German Broadcasting), Saarländischer Rundfunk, Radio Bremen, Bayerischer Rundfunk, SWR (Southwest Broadcasting), RBB (Berlin-Brandenburg Broadcasting) and WDR (Western German Broadcasting
Cologne). The televised coverage made it possible for me to examine the visual staging of the Day of Unity such as the use of flags and music at the ceremonies and citizens' festivals. It also allowed me to explore how different elements of the mise-en-scène were organised to examine the extent to which they supported, contradicted or commented on each other. In my analysis of the television coverage I took into consideration the associations of the specific elements of the mise-en-scène as well as the codes of meaning on which they drew. Through examination of the television coverage I was able to tighten and further develop assumptions about the Day of Unity.

Analysis of the speeches, newspapers and televised coverage had highlighted a number of key questions that remained unanswered regarding the staging of the unity celebrations and the intentions of those organising the events. In the seventh phase of the research, after being granted ethical approval of the research by the University of Portsmouth, I therefore conducted structured interviews, with open answers, with key organisers of the Day of Unity celebrations to provide a further valuable source of information (see Appendix 2 for questionnaire template). I selected for interview leading civil servants, predominantly from the protocol departments of the various State Chancelleries of those Länder, which had been directly involved in organising the main central unity celebrations (for a full list of interview partners see the Bibliography). In some instances, it was necessary to interview only one individual who had been responsible for managing the organisation of both the ceremony and citizens' festival; in other cases, however, it was necessary to interview one person for the ceremony and another for the citizens' festival where these two elements had been organised independently. After consenting to complete the questionnaire in awareness of the possible uses and dissemination of the information they provided, the interview partners completed the questionnaire themselves and returned the document electronically. In one case, I conducted the interview via telephone at the request of the State Chancellery, as the respective organiser wished to remain anonymous. I supplemented the questionnaires with follow-up emails and telephone calls where data supplied required further elucidation. I also liaised via telephone and email on a number of occasions with
various speech writers and, most notably, with the Manager of the Protocol Department of the Federal Ministry of the Interior (Christian König) to verify certain details of the events and state protocol. In contrast to semi-structured or structured face-to-face interviews, which would not have been possible with the time and financial resources available for this project, the structured interviews facilitated relatively low-cost, prompt and detailed data collection. Consequently, I was able to conduct numerous interviews, which provided a wealth of useful information about the intentions of the organisers and the respective regional actors in the staging of the event. The interviews played an important role in further refining assumptions about the Day of Unity celebrations.

To complement the structured interviews, I was able to retrieve a number of organisational and procedural documents concerning the unity celebrations from the various organisers. Several event managers provided a broad range of materials: guest lists for the ecumenical service and main ceremony, templates of invitations to the ecumenical service, ceremony, Federal President's receptions and other unity events such as the opening of exhibitions, samples of the programme for the ecumenical service and ceremony, security guidelines for the event, hand-outs for those involved in ensuring the protocol ran smoothly on the day, marketing material used to attract sponsors, plan layouts of the location of each aspect of the celebration within the host city and brochures with photos of the event produced by the respective State Chancelleries following the celebrations. This valuable primary material complemented the structured interviews by providing further insight into the intentions of the political actors involved in staging the unity celebrations.

The speeches, newspapers, televised coverage, interviews and organisational material had provided me with in-depth details of the staging of the unity events. It became clear, however, that it was necessary to place the Day of Unity in a broader context. To further enhance the rigour of the research, in the final stage of the research process I therefore gathered transcripts of numerous Bundestag debates from 1990 to 2005. I selected discussions relating to the economic or social impact of German unification, intra-German relations since unification and topics concerned with the actual Day of Unity celebrations. These debates highlighted shifts and
changes in political attitudes towards, and key challenges resulting from, unification. Moreover, they provided valuable material on key controversies regarding the Day of Unity.

**Methodological difficulties and limitations of the research**

As a number of historians have acknowledged, examining the reception of commemorations is notoriously challenging as it is difficult to state with certainty the effect of the festivities on participants.\(^{63}\) Often, the most that can be explored convincingly is the nature of messages that were sent out, how the event was staged and the intentions of the political actors that guided these. For a number of pragmatic reasons, this study therefore focuses exclusively on the mise-en-scène and rhetoric of the unity celebrations to provide insights into how political actors intended to make the Day of Unity work for them, their goals, and the images of Germany they sought to foster. The research therefore cannot comment in any detail on the way in which the staging and messages of the Day of Unity were received. It is possible that letters to the editor in the German print press and surveys would shed some light on the reception of the Day of Unity. However, very few such letters were published and to date only a very limited number of surveys offer any statistical information on attitudes toward 3rd October; moreover, existing surveys ask simply ‘if’ and not ‘why’ Germans like or dislike the Day of Unity. Given that the entire German nation would inevitably serve as the subject of an in-depth reception-based analysis, any self-conducted survey that would hope to be representative and credible would go beyond the time and budgetary scope of this project. Where relevant, however, I include brief references to the popularity (or lack thereof) of the celebrations in the form of attendance statistics of the unity events, retrieved from organisers and the media, to complement the analysis of the staging. Although I do not claim to be able to comment on the extent to which each possible factor contributed to the unpopularity of Day of Unity, in Chapter One, I also provide analysis of the possible

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limits to the effectiveness of the Day of Unity in terms of the scope and
transformation of the messages of the political actors resulting from specific
characteristics of the staging.

As Gegenwartsgeschichte, the research also encountered a number of
practical difficulties, most notably regarding the structured interviews and
organisational documents. Interview partners were occasionally unwilling to divulge
certain details of the organisation of the unity events due to the perceived political
sensitivity of the information. Similarly, with only a few exceptions, organisers were
reticent to provide confidential records of the actual negotiations for planning the
event. As a result of this it was difficult to track developments and changes in
intentions during this process. While in many respects it was the contemporary
nature of the topic that imposed limitations on the research, it was paradoxically also
the time period of analysis that produced a very different practical difficulty: a
number of individuals who had organised the events in the early 1990s were no
longer able to remember precise details of the staging preparations, had misplaced
documents or, in a few cases, had retired and were unavailable for interview. It was
therefore necessary to supplement the information provided by the organisers with
details from the newspaper articles and television coverage.
1. The Day of Unity in context

This chapter places the Day of Unity in its broad historical, institutional and political context. It traces the recent history of commemorative days in Germany, the institutional arrangement of 3rd October and the political scope of the German national holiday in arenas beyond its official celebrations. The chapter comprises three main sections. To explore the historical context, section one briefly examines the key commemorative days of post-war Germany. On the one hand, it analyses the functions of 17th June, commemorating the GDR workers' uprising of 1953. On the other, it explores 7th October, commemorating the founding of the GDR in 1949. Section two discusses the institutional context of the Day of Unity by analysing three key aspects: firstly, the nature of its core organisational elements; secondly, the western German dominance of the celebrations in the context of the legal framework of unification in 1990 and, thirdly, the way in which certain elements of the staging may have limited the effectiveness of the Day of Unity. Section three explores in three sub-sections the political context of the Day of Unity. By exploring the origins of 3rd October and suggestions for alternative dates, particularly 9th November, it highlights how date preferences for the German national holiday of certain actors corresponded to their contrasting visions for united Germany. Next, it demonstrates that while the Day of Unity celebrations themselves were largely removed from partisan politics and enjoyed a high degree of cross-party consensus on key issues, 3rd October as a symbol of unification was nevertheless utilised for political party purposes. This is explored with particular reference to use of the 10th anniversary of German unification by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). Finally, it examines the way in which the Day of Unity was instrumentalised as a site of protest by both right and left-wing extremists.

1.1 Historical Context

The origins of German Festkultur can be traced back to the French revolutionary celebrations of the late 18th and early 19th century when, through the conflict with
Napoleon, Germans, particularly Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, discovered the potential of the Volksfest and Nationalfest as political mechanisms. Although Jahn sought to distance himself from the French commemorative culture, the revolutionary celebrations nevertheless strongly influenced his conception of core elements of the Fest in Germany as outlined in his 1810 publication 'Deutsches Volkstum'. This French-inspired German format of celebration, first applied to festivals of male choir societies, sharpshooting societies and gymnasts organisations and to celebrate the Battle of Leipzig of 18th October 1813, became the model for national commemorations throughout the 19th century.

Owing to the ‘late’ formation of the German nation-state in 1871, commemorative and ‘national’ days in Germany in the 19th century were originally celebrated at the regional level of the German states (Bavaria, Saxony, Prussia etc.). Later, the newly created nation-state never officially declared a national holiday, though Sedantag on 2nd September, celebrating the decisive victory of the Prussian troops in the Franco-Prussian war in 1870, essentially served as such in the German Empire of 1871 to 1918. The Weimar Republic later selected 11th August as its national holiday, the date on which Reich President Friedrich Ebert signed the Weimar constitution, whereas the National Socialists, who created a number of highly politicised commemorations, selected 1st May, the so-called ‘Day of National Work’ as their national holiday.

In post-war Germany, remembrance days also found their place in the memory cultures of both German states. In the Federal Republic, largely because of the legacy of National Socialism, the search for commemorative days generated

64 Schneider, 1995, Politische Festkultur, 15.
65 Ibid., 16.
67 Schneider, 1995, Politische Festkultur, 16.
69 Schiller, 1993, Die inszenierte Erinnerung, 37.
considerable difficulties. Commemorations in the post-war West German state
served to mark state identity, as in the case of 23rd May, the day the constitution was
promulgated in 1949, or to commemorate the two World Wars and the Nazi
dictatorship or, as with 17th June, German division. 17th June, which
commemorated the workers’ uprising in the GDR in 1953, served as an important
public holiday from 1954 and as the ‘national’ holiday of the Federal Republic from
1963. In contrast, the GDR, which also staged a variety of commemorations
(including 8th May, commemorating the ‘Day of Liberation’ in 1945 and 1st May, the
‘Workers’ Day’), selected 7th October, as its ‘national’ holiday, commemorating the
foundation of the GDR in 1949.

To place 3rd October in its historical context, this section determines the
historical role of these contemporary ‘national’ days in Germany. 17th June differed
from 3rd October in three main ways, which influenced the nature of its
commemoration: firstly, it was a day of sadness, secondly, it remembered an event
not directly experienced by those commemorating it, and thirdly, with its goal of
unification, it was future-oriented. These differences notwithstanding, 17th June is
considered in more detail below than 7th October, both because the latter was a
commemoration of a party dictatorship with very different forms of representation
from a liberal democracy, and because 3rd October celebrations were to a large extent
used to delineate Germany from the GDR. Moreover, as the institutional predecessor
to unified Germany, the Federal Republic and its representations are more relevant to
analysis of the historical context of 3rd October.

17th June: the former Day of Unity

In response to the severe political and economic difficulties of the early post-war
years of the GDR, at its second party congress in July 1952, the SED announced the
‘planned construction of Socialism’. This declaration signified, among other
changes, a rise in work norms; put in simple terms, East Germans were expected to
work more for the same money or risk pay cuts. Angered by the threat of a reduced salary, on 16th June 1953 East Berlin construction workers carried out a protest march, which sparked a widespread uprising against the SED government the following day. On 17th June, tens of thousands of protestors in Berlin and perhaps as many as two million demonstrators across the GDR, called for free elections and for the government to stand down. In a symbolic act indicating a desire for German unity, demonstrators in Berlin sang the third verse of the West German national anthem while tearing down red flags from the Brandenburg Gate and replacing them with the West German flag. To put an end to the uprising, Soviet troops moved in, arrested, injured and killed hundreds of people.

Political actors in the GDR and the Federal Republic interpreted the protests very differently. In the GDR, where such an uprising of the people against the party was at variance with party ideology, the SED framed the events as a 'fascist putsch', that is to say, as a West German plot to destabilise the GDR. By contrast, in the Federal Republic, 17th June was propagated as a symbol of uprising against Communist oppression and of a desire for unification.

Immediately after the event, the CDU/CSU and SPD began thinking about how 17th June could best be remembered. In a discussion just before the 1953 general election, which brought unification into the debate as a key topic, the CDU rapidly suggested that 17th June should be a commemorative day. The SPD's more ambitious proposal, namely that it be remembered as a work-free holiday on which shops would close, subsequently achieved widespread consensus across the political spectrum, with the exception of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD). On 4th August 1953, 17th June thus became the legal holiday of West Germany according to article 82 of the Basic Law: 'unity and freedom' became the concept of the day, named the Tag

73 Fricke, 2003, Die nationale Dimension, 5.
75 Ibid., 661-662.
76 Although the exact number of victims remains unclear, the recent collection of data from as many as 700 different locations has highlighted that the number of victims was substantially higher than initially estimated. For an examination of the different estimates of the number of victims see Fricke, 2003, Die nationale Dimension, 6.
77 Ibid., 8-9.
78 See Krämer, 1996, Der Volksaufstand, 224.
der deutschen Einheit differing from its 3rd October successor of the same name only by the lack of capitalisation of the word ‘deutschen’. A decade later, Federal President Heinrich Lübke proclaimed the Tag der deutschen Einheit a ‘national commemoration day of the German people’ even though 17th June was never registered as a national holiday with the United Nations (UN).

17th June represented in many ways a moral demarcation of the Federal Republic from the GDR and thus served as a vehicle to legitimise the Federal Republic as the ‘better’ Germany and to undermine the ‘other’ Germany. The uprising thus not only became part of GDR history but also had an effect on, and an evolving meaning for, West Germany. In that vein, shifts and changes are discernible in the nature of commemoration of 17th June from 1954 to 1990. In many respects, the staging of the commemorations played an important political role and reflected the domestic political climate, political party aspects, generational divisions, international conditions and socio-economic changes in the Federal Republic. In the 1950s, for example, West German politicians and the West German public displayed considerable interest in the day, actively remembering victims of the uprising and politically discussing the possibility of re-establishing German unity. Over time, however, West Germans gradually participated less and less in festivities for 17th June so that by the 1960s, enthusiasm for the day had waned so much that Federal President Lübke felt it necessary to raise the profile of the day by declaring it a national holiday. Despite the Federal President’s efforts, by the 1970s the date had come for many to represent a Tag der Freizeit (a day of leisure) rather than a day for commemorating the victims of the 1953 uprising. The change in attitudes toward 17th June in the 1960s and 1970s can be attributed to a number of factors, most notably the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the mounting tensions between

79 Kraschaar, 2003, Die wechselvolle Geschichte, 158.
80 Wolfrum, 1998b, Geschichtspolitik und deutsche Frage, 403.
81 Krämer, 1996, Der Volksaufstand, 177-230.
82 Kraushaar, 2003, Die wechselvolle Geschichte, 156.
84 Wolfrum, 2003, Neue Erinnerungskultur, 36.
85 Krämer, 1996, Der Volksaufstand, 190.
86 Spittmann, 1992, Tag der deutschen Einheit, 666.
the two German states in the Cold War, as a result of which many West Germans, increasingly uninterested in the economic, political and social aspects of the GDR, considered unification less and less likely. At the same time, the Social-Liberal coalition governments of Willy Brandt (1969-1974) and Helmut Schmidt (1974-1982), reduced the emphasis on the goal of unification and introduced a phase of détente in German-German relations. Consequently, emphasis also shifted from calls for unity to a focus on the status quo among many political leaders of the Federal Republic. Given that the preamble to the Basic Law outlined a commitment to German unity, 17th June, as a symbol of that commitment could not be entirely neglected. Yet the date had become an unwelcome inheritance of a ‘colder’ period of the Cold War, which threatened to potentially damage relations with the GDR in the context of the Ostpolitik détente policies. The election of Helmut Kohl as Chancellor on 1 October 1982, however, signified a shift in the commemoration of 17th June in the 1980s. Countering numerous suggestions that first emerged in the spring of 1968 that 17th June be demoted to a remembrance day, the new Chancellor declared unequivocally in 1983 that it would remain a national holiday. During the 1980s, an increased interest in questions of national identity and self-awareness arose that reached its zenith during the Historikerstreit. In this era of a new discursive emphasis on unity by the Christian Democrat-led coalition government, words such as ‘nation’, ‘state’ and ‘fatherland’ as well as the concept of national identity also re-emerged in the context of 17th June. By the beginning of the decade that followed, the Berlin Wall had fallen and in 1990, for the first time, freely elected parliamentarians of the GDR’s Volkskammer spoke on 17th June, in the East Berlin Schauspielhaus.

88 Krämer, 1996, Der Volksaufstand, 227.
90 Spittmann, 1992, Tag der deutschen Einheit, 666.
91 Krämer, 1996, Der Volksaufstand, 214.
95 Krämer, 1996, Der Volksaufstand, 262.
When 3rd October replaced 17th June as the new national holiday of united Germany in 1990, the former Day of Unity was relegated to a remembrance day. On 17th June 1991, 17th June was demoted yet further when Minister of the Interior Wolfgang Schäuble declared that it would no longer be a public holiday. As with other important commemorative dates in Germany, however, flags would nevertheless be flown on that date. While 17th June experienced a European-wide remembrance boom for its 50th anniversary in 2003, a decade after it ceased to be a remembrance day, an Emnid survey nevertheless revealed that the majority of Germans no longer knew what the date represented. The former Day of Unity, no longer needed as an instrument with which to demarcate the Federal Republic from the GDR became a relic of divided Germany.

7th October: a Socialist holiday

17th June was clearly an unthinkable commemorative day for the GDR. Moreover, the GDR had already established its own official holiday. On 21st April 1950, at its fifteenth sitting, the Volkskammer passed a law to introduce 7th October as the official holiday of the GDR. This Tag der Republik, marking the creation of the GDR in 1949, became the ‘national’ holiday of the GDR in the mid-1970s. The change in status of 7th October did not result from a formal act but rather from the introduction of a new Sprachregelung on the 26th anniversary of the GDR. This prescribed terminology reflected the definition of the GDR as a Socialist nation, no longer part of the German nation, as outlined in the altered constitution implemented exactly one year earlier.

In stark contrast to commemorative days in the Federal Republic, 7th October was largely ritualised and used as a platform on which to maintain and reinforce the state and party rule: the SED used 7th October to cultivate the image of the GDR and to symbolically demonstrate its own power and control. Moreover, the Day of the Republic, as Martin Kitsche has demonstrated, was neither ideologically nor

96 Spittmann, 1992, Tag der deutschen Einheit, 666.
97 Krämer, 1996, Der Volksaufstand, 279.
aesthetically dramatically different from other commemorative days in the GDR. It sought to integrate and emotionally link its citizens to the East German state. For the SED, participation of GDR citizens in the 7th October celebrations, despite being largely compulsory, served as a yearly manifestation of public support for the regime and thus as a symbol of legitimacy.

As with 17th June, various different phases were discernible in the nature of the commemorations on the Day of the Republic, which reflected the changing function of the celebrations as well as the political and ideological developments in the SED and GDR. In the early 1950s, in an attempt to construct a GDR consciousness, 7th October anniversaries were ideologically-loaded. On 7th October 1953 more East Germans celebrated than on any previous anniversary: the re-election of President Wilhelm Pieck was strategically chosen to take place on the same day to deflect attention from the 17th June uprising months earlier. In the mid-1950s, celebrations became less driven by ideology and began to develop as a festival of and for the citizens. Under the influence of First Secretary of the SED Walter Ulbricht’s suggestion of a Confederation between the two German states, on 30th December 1956, subsequent 7th October anniversaries explicitly incorporated the GDR’s interpretation of the German Question. In the late 1950s, particularly on the tenth anniversary, the SED staged large-scale celebrations of the GDR state. In the 1960s, following the construction of the Berlin Wall, a return to the ideological form of celebrations characteristic of the early 1950s was the consequence of the SED’s attempt to propagate that, more than ever, the people supported their state and party. The transferral of SED leadership from Walter Ulbricht to Erich Honecker in 1971 marked a new phase in the history of the GDR, yet did not initially influence the form of the 7th October commemorations. A shift was first noticeable in the mid-

100 Ibid., 88.
104 For a detailed overview of the large scale events that traditionally took place on the round anniversaries of 7th October see Gibas et al., 1999, Wiedergeburten.
1970s following the declaration of 7th October as a ‘national holiday’. In this context, during the mid and late 1970s, the SED reverted to representative forms of self-portrayal of the GDR state. This trend of ritual self-projection intensified in the 1980s. The 40th anniversary in 1989 witnessed the last celebration of the creation of the GDR and demonstrated that even on its final anniversary 7th October operated as an instrument to symbolise an allegedly high degree of support and legitimacy for the failing SED regime and the crumbling GDR state. Just two days later, the Leipzig Monday Demonstrations commenced, signifying the beginning of the end of the GDR.

The creation of 3rd October as the Day of Unity as the national holiday of all Germans in 1990 marked an official conclusion to the celebration of 17th June and 7th October as ‘national’ holidays. Having explored the historical context of the Day of Unity, the chapter now shifts to examine its institutional framework.

1.2 Institutional context

Core organisational elements

The defining characteristics of the Day of Unity were: its rotational arrangement, its organisation by civil servants, an ecumenical religious service, a ceremony and a citizens’ festival.

While in both post-war German states, the main celebrations of the respective national days were hosted in Berlin, the Day of Unity festivities were organised regionally. ‘With a view to federalism’, this was decided between the heads of federal and state government to give each Land the ‘opportunity to arrange a national celebration from their perspective and under their auspices’. From 1990 to 2005, the official Day of Unity celebrations took place in the state capital of whichever Land held the rotating presidency in the Bundesrat at the time of the celebrations. As

105 Kitsche, 1990, Die Geschichte eines Staatsfeiertages, 94-139.
a result of the rotational arrangement, 3rd October anniversaries took place in a
different Land each year:

- 1990 *Official unification of the two German states, Berlin, Capital of Germany*
- 1991 in Hamburg, Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg
- 1992 in Schwerin, State Capital of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania
- 1993 in Saarbrücken, State Capital of Saarland
- 1994 in Bremen, State Capital of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen
- 1995 in Düsseldorf, State Capital of North Rhine-Westphalia
- 1996 in Munich, State Capital of Bavaria
- 1997 in Stuttgart, State Capital of Baden-Württemberg
- 1998 in Hanover, State Capital of Lower Saxony
- 1999 in Wiesbaden, State Capital of Hesse
- 2000 in Dresden, State Capital of Saxony
- 2001 in Mainz, State Capital of Rhineland-Palatinate
- 2002 in Berlin, Capital of Germany
- 2003 in Magdeburg, State Capital of Saxony-Anhalt
- 2004 in Erfurt, State Capital of Thuringia
- 2005 in Potsdam, State Capital of Brandenburg

Although no official protocol outlined the core elements of the central Day of Unity
celebrations,\(^{108}\) the organisers nevertheless adopted a similar approach for the
organisation of the unity events. As the organisers of the first Day of Unity
anniversary celebrations in Hamburg agree,\(^ {109}\) it would seem that the 1991
commemorations served as an archetype for the organisation of subsequent Day of
Unity events. Future organisers emulated the Hamburg celebrations, adopting the
basic structures and later adding specific elements, such as the civic delegation.
Similarly, in terms of the *mise-en-scène* of each aspect, no set protocol for
celebrations existed *per se*.\(^ {110}\) The host federal state was able to stage the ecumenical
service, ceremony and the citizens' festival as they saw appropriate,\(^ {111}\) thus affording
a large degree of autonomy to the regional actors. Although a strict seating protocol
existed for the ceremony, organisers, customarily with agreement from the relevant
state's Minister-President, were able to select what, if any, regional, national and

\(^{109}\) H. Böckermann, personal communication, November 14, 2006.
\(^{110}\) C. König, personal communication, October 25, 2006.
\(^{111}\) *Ibid.*
European symbols and flags were used to stage the venue. Organisers similarly had authority over choosing symbols and flags for the citizens’ festival. The organisation and staging of the celebrations were therefore not based on protocol but rather on guidelines that established themselves over the years. The organisers of the Day of Unity thus established invented traditions in the sense that numerous elements of the organisation and staging that were not mandatory continued as a result of ‘quasi-obligatory repetition’.

In post-war Germany, the parties responsible for the organisation of the state days were indicative of the respective functions of the commemorations. Reflecting the pluralist democracy of the Federal Republic, a number of organisations and institutions had organised 17th June commemorations in order to maintain an awareness of national unity throughout the Federal Republic. The most influential of these, Unteilbares Deutschland, a cross-party organisation comprised politicians, philosophers, historians and writers, initially selected by its founder Jakob Kaiser (CDU), Federal Minister for all-German questions. By contrast, in the GDR, to ensure that 7th October corresponded to party ideology and served as a ‘societal weapon’, the SED had involved itself directly in every stage of the Day of the Republic organisation. The organisers of the Day of Unity events similarly reflected one of the key functions of the national holiday of united Germany, namely the promotion of federalism: as regional actors, civil servants from the State Chancelleries of the respective host state were best placed to promote the regional dimension of the Day of Unity.

116 See Wolfrum, 2003, Neue Erinnerungskultur, 36.
117 Wolfrum, 1998b, Geschichtspolitik und deutsche Frage, 397.
118 Kraushaar, 2003, Die wechselvolle Geschichte, 152.
Throughout the 19th century, national festivities included religious services to encourage the ‘religious consciousness of the community’.\textsuperscript{120} As an atheist state, it is unsurprising that the GDR did not create a place for religion in the staging of its ‘national’ day, yet religious services played a role, albeit minor, in the Festkultur of the Federal Republic. As Behrenbeck and Nützenadel have argued, this can be explained by the role of religion in the Federal Republic: while the state did not directly draw its legitimacy from a particular religious belief, the Basic Law was nevertheless indirectly based around Christianity and the Christian Churches enjoyed a privileged position.\textsuperscript{121} In this vein, as an extension of the traditions established in the Federal Republic, religious services also played a part in the representation of united Germany on the 3rd October anniversaries. Key actors from the local Catholic and Protestant churches, as representatives of the two most popular denominations in contemporary Germany, served as the main organisers of the ecumenical Christian service. These services, comprising speeches, prayers and choir music, normally took place around 10am on the morning of 3rd October in the largest Christian church of the respective host federal state.\textsuperscript{122} The Catholic and Protestant church organisers were permitted, without influence from the State Chancelleries, to select the topic for the sermons.\textsuperscript{123} From 1990 to 2005, the services were attended by between 1000 and 2000 guests each year, depending on the size of the respective host church. In general, if the selected church was Catholic, the organisers chose a Protestant speaker for the main address and vice versa.\textsuperscript{124}

The respective churches also possessed full discretionary powers over the execution of the staging within church,\textsuperscript{125} albeit church and federal protocol determined the invitation and seating order.\textsuperscript{126} and, as a televised event, the service

\textsuperscript{120} Mosse, 1975, \textit{The nationalization of the masses}, 77.
\textsuperscript{122} C. Schröter, personal communication, November 14, 2006; A. Buchhold, personal communication, November 28, 2006; M. Füger, personal communication, November 28, 2006.
\textsuperscript{124} M. Meinung, personal communication, November 27, 2006.
\textsuperscript{125} H. Müller, personal communication, February 2, 2006.
\textsuperscript{126} M. Meinung, personal communication, November 27, 2006; M. Füger, personal communication, November 28, 2006.
was limited to one hour. In an attempt to involve other denominations and religions, organisers customarily invited representatives of other Christian denominations as well as Jewish and Islamic leaders to attend the service alongside a selection of guests from the protocol list supplied by the federation and the host Land. The traditional guests from the respective protocol lists included individuals from the top five constitutional bodies, (the Federal President, the Federal Chancellor and the Presidents of the Bundestag, Bundesrat and Federal Constitutional Court), to confer political legitimacy to the proceedings, alongside national and regional VIPs, representatives of the 2+4 States (France, Britain, the US and Russia in place of the former Soviet Union), of the Visegrád States (Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia), and other foreign ambassadors. In order to promote and strengthen relations between Germans from the different Länder, the church authorities additionally invited a ‘civic delegation’ comprising fifteen citizens from each of the 16 Länder, selected for their academic, cultural, sporting or voluntary achievements.

Following the ecumenical service, traditionally at noon, all guests from the religious service attended a unity ceremony together with further guests from the protocol lists of the federation and the host Land if space permitted. Similar to the ecumenical service, federal and local protocol only influenced seating and invitations. As on 17th June and 7th October, speeches formed the core of the ceremony, allowing political actors to attempt to (re)define ideas about the past, present and future. Although the choice of speakers was not officially prescribed, the Minister-President of the respective federal state and incumbent President of the

133 Ibid.
Bundesrat, typically gave a speech together with the Federal President and either the Federal Chancellor or the President of the Bundestag. The State Chancelleries, in communication with their respective Minister-President, frequently also invited an international guest as main speaker or a writer or poet as an additional orator. National and international speakers were permitted to select the topic of their address even though some State Chancelleries discussed the content of the speeches with the writers of the German political actors' speeches before the celebrations. Alongside the speeches, orchestra and choir music accompanied the ceremony, which traditionally concluded with the national anthem. For pragmatic reasons, as the largest available venues, the ceremony tended to take place in the theatre, exhibition centre or stock exchange of the respective Land, which the host State Chancelleries decorated with regional, national and EU flags.

In addition to the unity events for the VIPs, to actively involve the general public in the celebration of German unification, the respective federal state also customarily hosted a 'citizens' festival' (Bürgerfest) on 2nd and 3rd of October. They had full jurisdiction over its staging. The notable absence of a citizens' festival in 1998 and its replacement by an Objektmeile, discussed in Chapter Four, underlined the degree to which the core elements of the Day of Unity were invented traditions and not based on protocol. Within the invented tradition of the citizens' festival, developed a further invented tradition: visible in its basic form from the first celebrations, the Ländermeile was immediately adopted as a defining 'traditional' element of the unity celebrations and was consequently emulated in later years, established further by the Baden-Württemberg organisers in 1997, and staged as the central attraction from 1999. While no criterion stipulated its inclusion, all organisers, with the exception of those in 1998, decided to adopt the Ländermeile

138 Ibid.
139 This was true of Munich (W. Meister, personal communication, November 29, 2006), Stuttgart (W. Schempp, personal communication, February 19, 2007), Hanover (C. Schröter, personal communication, November 14, 2006) and Dresden (H. Müller, personal communication, February 2, 2006).
140 C. König, personal communication, October 25, 2006.
format, acting independently in choosing to perpetuate what established itself as a ‘traditional’ aspect of the festivities. In this exhibition area of uniform white marquees, funded by the host state, each of the Länder presented themselves with cultural and culinary specialities alongside marquees of the Federal Government, the Bundesrat and the EU. Information stands, discussion rounds, activities for children, sporting events, fireworks, multimedia events, classical orchestras, multicultural bands and pop concerts traditionally complemented the Ländermeile. In some years unity organisers also staged carnival style parades, comedy shows and street dances.

In addition to the core elements of the official Day of Unity celebrations organised by the regional state Chancelleries, other actors organised additional events: the Federal President hosted a drinks and hors d’oeuvres reception for the guests of the ceremony, including the citizens’ delegation in the respective state capital’s most elegant venue and the House of Representatives, Bundesrat and representations of the Länder and mosques held open days for the general public. Furthermore, across Germany federal authorities flew the German flag at all buildings operated by them as well as at statutory corporations, institutions and foundations under their control.144

Alongside the official central celebrations, Berlin and the other Länder also staged unity celebrations. In Berlin, sponsors entirely organised and funded the unity event, staged at the Brandenburg Gate and entitled Deuschlands Fest until the late 1990s when its organisation was taken over by the Berlin event management company Wohltat Entertainment.145 A parade of 3000 to 4000 people through the Brandenburg gate, music concerts and kiosks of regional foods formed the core elements of this large-scale event that traditionally attracted between a quarter and half a million spectators. At the time of unification, other German states as well as towns along the former East-West German border also staged numerous unity celebrations with religious services, Volksfeste and fireworks;146 Bonn, Frankfurt and Koblenz, each with tens of thousands of revellers and Hamburg, with around 200,000

143 The host state provided each state with a pavilion and its necessary infrastructure: K-H. Petry, personal communication, December 13, 2006.
people, staged the largest celebrations. In the years that followed, however, the events organised in the Länder not hosting the central celebrations were very small and only the attendance of key political guests attracted large audiences.

Due to the different functions of commemorative days in post-war Germany numerous forms of representation central to the 17th June and 7th October anniversaries were excluded from the Day of Unity celebrations. Ceremonial fires, the renaming of streets and torchlight processions, for example, while important elements for the commemoration of victims of 17th June uprising in the Federal Republic, were not considered appropriate representative forms for the celebration of German unity. In the SED’s attempt to demonstrate its power, in the GDR, a military parade, introduced in 1977, was a major element of the 7th October celebrations. The Federal Republic, by contrast, forced to confront the Nazi legacy and deeply rooted in the West, avoided such demonstrations of martial force on 17th June. Conscious of united Germany’s international responsibility and eager to reassure an international community anxious about renewed German hegemony and military power, the political actors similarly avoided staging a military parade on the country’s new national holiday.

A western German event?

Although united Germany in many respects faced challenges different from those of the Federal Republic, the fundamental framework and guiding values of the post-war Federal Republic nevertheless dominated the staging of the Day of Unity anniversaries. Given that the GDR was an undemocratic, Socialist state with a planned economy it is hardly surprising that the value-codes, representations of constitutional structures, and ‘official’ notions of the past and present of the former

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150 Wolffram, 1998b, Geschichtspolitik und deutsche Frage, 399.
Federal Republic should dominate united Germany. Moreover, the Federal Republic possessed several resources at the time of unification that contributed to its cultural hegemony over the legacies of the GDR: it was closely integrated within Western Europe, which enhanced its legitimacy, and this, together with its ability to operate within the existing international framework, secured its substantial power over the political structures of the unified state and influence over its political culture after 1990. Above and beyond this, however, the western German dominance on the Day of Unity anniversaries can be explained by the legal form in which German unification took place. In 1990, two main legal options were discussed for the form of unification — unification through article 146 or through article 23 of West Germany's Basic Law of 1949. Unification through article 146, favoured by the SPD as the more democratic and legitimate option, would have necessitated a new constitution to be created for united Germany. Advocates of this approach, which would have entailed a lengthy process of negotiation, argued that it would allow elements from the GDR to be incorporated into united Germany, thereby allocating a greater place to the eastern Germans in united Germany's self-understanding. Instead, however, as favoured predominantly by the CDU/CSU, unification took place through article 23, an article originally developed to allow the Saarland to rejoin the Federal Republic.153 Put simply, through this dynamic approach to unification, adopted to facilitate an accelerated process of unification in a volatile international climate, the GDR acceded to the Federal Republic. Constitutionally, the GDR was thus incorporated into the existing structures of the Federal Republic so that united Germany essentially ended up as an enlarged or extended Federal Republic.

This western German dominance was made explicit and continually reinforced at the Day of Unity celebrations, beginning with Berlin Mayor Walter Momper's speech at the unification ceremony in 1990. He did not welcome all Germans to a united Germany but rather welcomed East Germans to West Germany.154 With only a few exceptions, most notably the celebrations in 1998,

153 Müller, 2000, Another country, 68.
strongly influenced by the newly elected Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, and Minister-President Matthias Platzeck’s speech in 2005, western German dominance of the celebrations was both comprehensive and unquestioned. Political actors spoke about the GDR only in the context of its dictatorial past and elements such as phrases, symbols, images and music from the GDR were for the most part entirely excluded from the Day of Unity celebrations. Political actors and citizens of the former GDR, at least initially, had few economic resources or moral arguments to counter or resist the cultural hegemony of the new Länder by western Germany. In any case, for the most part many welcomed the opportunity to take the ‘fast train’ to the West for which many of the other post-Communist states would have to wait several years.

Emphasis on the cultural hegemony of western Germany from 1990 to 2005 served two main functions on the Day of Unity. Firstly, it allowed political actors to use the national holiday to encourage the cultural synchronisation of eastern Germany with western Germany. Owing to the manner of unification, former GDR citizens did not unite with their Federal Republic compatriots as ‘equal partners’, but instead had to be socially integrated and assimilated into West Germany. West German political actors therefore faced a number of problems in 1990: how were East Germans with very different interpretations of the National Socialist and the GDR pasts, with little tradition of democracy, federalism or attachment to the EU – elements so central to the Federal Republic’s self-understanding – to be incorporated into united Germany?

The Day of Unity offered one solution to this: it could serve as a mechanism for extending West German value systems and frameworks to eastern Germans by promoting specific (West German) versions of the past, present and future. In this way, the German political actors attempted to encourage cultural synchronisation of united Germany on West German terms. In simple terms, they attempted to use the Day of Unity to ‘create’ democratically, regionally and EU-minded Germans who were aware of their past. Consequently, cultural synchronisation on the Day of Unity for the most part took one form – synchronisation of the East with the West. The Day of Unity thereby served as a tool in the broad, ongoing process of integration, convergence and cohesion of eastern and western Germans.
The western German dominance of the unity celebrations served, secondly, to ensure the status quo and to reinforce and perpetuate the western German hegemony that had been laid out in the manner of unification. Following the transformation of 1989 and the unification of 1990, it was important for German political actors from the West to demonstrate both stability and continuity with West German fundamental structures and values as well as to ensure western German hegemony in united Germany. The Day of Unity served to some degree to disguise the transformation of 1989/90 (in terms of the economy, society, territory and population size). It reinforced and reproduced the stability, continuity and preservation of the Federal Republic’s values and structures by underlining its legitimacy in a period of upheaval. Although the specific elements of the staging of the Day of Unity were not comparable with 17th June, as we have seen, they nevertheless corresponded to the values of the Federal Republic, particularly Christianity, liberal democracy, regionalism, federalism and attachment to the EU. For eastern German actors, adherence to the ‘traditional’ key elements of the celebrations demonstrated their ability to adapt to West German structures. Indeed, for the most part, eastern German political actors on the Day of Unity not only staged the unity events with the same core elements but also adopted the same rhetoric as their western German compatriots by, for example, condemning the GDR. It is probable that this served not only to reinforce the western German cultural hegemony and encourage the process of cultural synchronisation but also assisted their own entry and acceptance into the mainstream politics of united Germany. Moreover, the unity celebrations also served another function: they signalled stability and continuity of the values of the Federal Republic in united Germany to the international community. The very name of the German national holiday, almost identical to that of the national holiday of the Federal Republic, similarly served to stress the extent to which united Germany relied on its continuity with the Federal Republic for its self-definition. How effective this and other elements of the staging could be, however, requires analysis, as we will now see.
Limits to the effectiveness of 3rd October

The Day of Unity, widely regarded as little more than a day off from work, enjoyed little popular success among the broad general German public from 1990 to 2005. Whilst a representative Forsa survey of 1005 people in 2006 showed that 80% of those asked felt that the Day of Unity should remain a work-free day, merely 32% felt that the Day of Unity was actually a reason to celebrate. The civic participation in the celebrations themselves was also extremely limited, with attendance figures at the citizens' festivals, though varying in some years from around 150,000 (in Mainz three weeks after the 9/11 attacks) to just under a million (in the capital Berlin), reaching on average only 350,000 people. As The Times described, Germany even celebrated its tenth birthday 'with all the carnival spirit of a state funeral'. At least in part, this lack of popularity as exhibited in the modest turn-out can be explained by the way in which the Day of Unity was intrinsically linked with the social and economic difficulties of the unity process: as a symbol of unification it was to some extent also a symbol of the problems and challenges that emerged from that unification. The German national holiday was then perhaps fighting a losing battle from the start.

There can be little doubt however, that certain elements of the staging also played a role in hindering the effectiveness of the Day of Unity: on the one hand, by limiting the scope of the messages of the political actors; on the other hand, by inadvertently encouraging the messages to be transformed and distorted. As representations are produced and received within a social, political and historical context, any representation, such as a national holiday, has its own dynamic. (Political) messages do not exist in a vacuum. Instead, they are fragmented and transformed so that the influence of political actors is instantly limited as soon as they enter a political arena. In that respect all representations could be seen as 'failing' or

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156 Ibid.
157 Statistics calculated through figures supplied by the various Day of Unity organisers.
159 See, for example, Stollberg-Rilinger, 2005, Was heißt Kulturgeschichte des Politischen and Luhmann, 1995, Social systems.
ineffective' if understood as vehicles with which specific actors attempt to present specific images and promote specific ideas without hindrance. Political actors, unable to simply manipulate representations one-sidedly as political instruments with which to influence people without restraint, particularly in liberal democracies, are instead themselves merely agents of a dynamic cultural process. This was made clear on the Day of Unity by the way in which a number of elements contributed to a potential dichotomy between the messages as they were intended and transmitted and their reception by individuals or groups. Six main aspects of the staging limited the effectiveness of the Day of Unity.

First and foremost, the media provided the most striking manifestation of such subversion of the intended messages. The Day of Unity generally received only modest national and international media attention. Even on the main anniversaries of unification in 1995, 2000 and 2005, although the topic of unification and intra-German relations dominated much of the German media coverage, the Day of Unity itself attracted only marginally more comment than in other years. Moreover, reporting on the Day of Unity declined gradually from 1990 to 2005, a trend bucked only during the key anniversary years.\footnote{See, for example, the extra articles dedicated to the Day of Unity by the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung for the tenth anniversary of unification: Bei der Feier zur deutschen Einheit Bekenntnisse zur Einheit Europas. (2000, October 4). Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 1-2; Anschlag auf Synagoge. (2000, October 4). Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 2 and Hennis, W. (2000, October 6). Nutzen und Nachteil: Für einen mythosfähigen Feiertag. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, n. p.} The diminished interest in the Day of Unity celebrations manifested itself by the way in which less articles appeared about the events as time went on. Also, after the first few anniversaries, German newspaper articles about the celebrations for the most part failed to feature on the first page.\footnote{See, for example, Bremen feiert mit Andrzej Szczypiorski. (1994, September 13). Suddeutsche Zeitung, 2; Boeker, A. (1998, October 5). Würdig bis zum letzten Takt. Suddeutsche Zeitung, 4; Ein Festzug vielfältiger Stereotype. (1994, October 4). Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 2; Kauntz, E. (2001, October 4). Der 11. September überschattet den 3. Oktober. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 4; Hebel, S. (1994, October 4). Sponsoren statt Parolen zur Feier der Einheit in Berlin. Frankfurter Rundschau, 4; Krawalle bei Einheitsfeier Herzog reiste vorzeitig ab. (1994, October 4). Bild-Zeitung, 2; 'Die Deutschen sind ein wunderbares Volk'. (2002, October 5). Bild-Zeitung, 2.} English and French newspapers similarly relegated articles on the Day of Unity from the front pages for the most part after the early 1990s and traditionally dedicated, at
most, one brief article to the celebrations in any given year. In this way, the Day of Unity failed to receive a high profile in both the German and the international press, as a result of which the scope and impact of the political actors' messages were considerably limited.

Above and beyond this, the media transformed and fragmented messages further through their process of selection, influenced in particular by the political inclination of the press, readers' expectations and the extent to which the news would sell. Newspapers tended for the most part to focus on the rhetoric of the key political actors whereas the televised media favoured images from the unity celebrations. As a result of the selection criteria, the press also placed emphasis on specific actors and certain events. The Bild-Zeitung and RTL, for instance, in the main only reported on the speech given by the Federal President and occasionally also the Federal Chancellor. Consequently, readers remained entirely uninformed about the content of the speeches by actors such as the Minister-President of the host Land, the Bundestag President or the international speaker. The Bild-Zeitung in particular developed an overall theme for the Day of Unity from the Federal President's speech each year, normally the need to be grateful for unification, so that the complex staging of the unity celebrations was reduced to one simple message.

In contrast, the German broadsheets presented a more nuanced interpretation of the messages of the Day of Unity and did not contribute in the same way to the

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163 For an overview of the extent to which the media shaped the memory culture of the former Day of Unity see Wolfrum, 2003, Neue Erinnerungskultur, 33-39.


166 See, for example, Vier Jahre deutsche Einheit, 1994, 2.
dichotomy between the messages transmitted by the actors at the festivities and those covered in newspaper reporting. The Frankfurter Rundschau, Süddeutsche Zeitung and above all the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung tended to provide their readers with a brief summary of the speeches with direct quotes in context and occasionally also published unabridged one or two of the key speeches from the celebrations.\textsuperscript{167} However, what was striking about the German national broadsheet articles on the Day of Unity from 1990 to 2005 was the way in which they focused almost entirely on the speeches at the ceremony and almost completely neglected the citizens’ festivals. As a result of this, they presented the Day of Unity to the German public as a dry political event with no popular, Volksfest appeal. This can, at least in part, be accounted for by the low-scale nature of the citizens’ festivals of the central celebrations. As a consequence of this, a vicious circle took hold: the Day of Unity citizens’ festivals were not considered newsworthy and thus failed to attract media attention so that the little that was reported about the Day of Unity painted a picture of a dull event; as a result of this, the German public were less likely to attend future celebrations or consider the Day of Unity with enthusiasm. Even in years where large-scale events were staged at the citizens’ festivals in the mid-2000s, such as the multi-media event in Erfurt, the tendency of the German media to report solely on the speeches had become such an ingrained tradition that the other events failed to receive any mention.\textsuperscript{168} Moreover, those topics of the unity speeches that the German press did choose to report on, be it the National Socialist and GDR pasts, social and economic problems or the need for improved intra-German relations, were unlikely to rouse Germans from their armchairs. To reinforce the drab image of the Day of Unity to a further section of the population, the extreme-Left newspaper Neues Deutschland predictably provided solely mordacious, cheerless accounts of the Day of Unity proceedings.\textsuperscript{169} Furthermore, to complete the unflattering image of the Day of Unity presented by the German press, if photographs of the celebrations featured at all in the period from 1990 to 2005, then the images shown were not those of the

\textsuperscript{167} See, for example, Die Deutschen am Einheitstag gemahnt. (1992, October 5). Frankfurter Rundschau, 1; Boeker, 1998, Würdig bis zum letzten Takt, 4 and Bei der Feier, 2000, 1-2.


\textsuperscript{169} See, for example, Feiern – immer feste druff. (1992, October 5). Neues Deutschland, n.p.
citizens’ festival — not least because the large white tents of the citizens’ festival did not particularly lend themselves to newspaper-selling images — but rather images of the audience of political figures at the unity ceremony, an event which the German public could not attend. Such a visual portrayal could hardly arouse enthusiasm among Germans for attending the unity events open to them.170

It is evident that the modest staging of the celebrations contributed to a trend in the international press even more detrimental to the organisers’ intentions: the English and French newspapers, considering there to be little to report about the Day of Unity celebrations themselves, instead reported on right-wing extremism on and around 3rd October. This trend is most noticeable in The Times, where lurid reports of right-wing extremist attacks across Germany dominated reporting about the unity celebrations in the majority of years from 1990 to 2005.171 The Guardian also tended to devote more of its reporting to demonstrations and anti-Semitic attacks than to the unity celebrations themselves and rarely reported more than one or two comments from the unity speeches, if at all.172 In France, Le Monde and Le Figaro, similarly focused reporting on demonstrations, and although they often devoted articles on and around 3rd October to the social, economic and political issues Germany faced since unification, little was written about the celebrations themselves.173

German political actors sought to use the Day of Unity celebrations to reassure the international community that there would be no resurgence of German nationalism and that Germany was a democratic, united, federal country rooted in the EU. Ironically, however, it was the very lack of ostentation, born of these concerns, in the staging of the events — low scale, poorly attended, indeed occasionally vapid, in towns little known to the majority of the international public — which served to undermine its ability to catch the media’s attention. The Day of Unity could hardly

170 See, for example, the photograph accompanying Schmidt, T.E. (1997, October 4). Das vereinte Deutschland in einem vereinten Europa. Frankfurter Rundschau, 21.
172 See, for example, Gow, D. (1992, October 5). Kohl warns against the threat of racism. The Guardian, 8.
provide headline-gripping material and the international press evidently judged reporting on right-wing extremist demonstrations far more compelling. As a result, the message conveyed by the newspapers’ coverage to their readers was that the unity celebrations evoked nationalist sentiment and imparted the image of a nation plagued by Neo-Nazis and anti-Semitism — that is to say the complete opposite of the image the Day of Unity actors attempted to propagate. Reports of Neo-Nazi demonstrations and attacks dominated the articles in the international press to such an extent that the intended, carefully orchestrated, crafted and considered messages of the German and international actors on the Day of Unity were almost entirely lost.

Secondly, in addition to the subversion of the intended messages of the political actors by the media, the effectiveness of the Day of Unity was arguably also obstructed by the rotating organisation of the central celebrations in three main ways. Firstly, the regional organisation led to a competition for sponsors of the unity celebrations in the host Land and Berlin. Secondly, the regional organisation created a number of practical difficulties. Unlike Berlin — the eastern part of which had been rebuilt after 1949 as a stage for demonstrations of power and state representations — the other host cities of the central celebrations were not constructed for hosting national events. This affected not only the ecumenical services, the ceremonies and the Federal President’s receptions, where the largest venues in the city were frequently too small to house all invited guests, but also the citizens’ festivals. At the celebrations in Schwerin, for example, a city surrounded by lakes, organisers of the Mecklenburg-Western Pomeranian State Chancellery encountered serious organisational difficulties due to insufficient parking and traffic routes, which potentially limited the number of people able to attend the celebrations. Moreover, the fact that the small local police force of the host Land was responsible for the celebrations, rather than the larger Berlin police force, enabled demonstrators to more easily disrupt the proceedings, as was the case in Bremen, discussed below. Thirdly, the regional organisation limited the appeal of the Day of Unity celebrations and

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175 This was particularly true of the Schwerin and Magdeburg celebrations: Anonymous, personal communication, December 18, 2006; Zum Nationalfeiertag starke Sicherheitsvorkehrungen in Schwerin. (1992, October 2). Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 2.
176 Zum Nationalfeiertag starke Sicherheitsvorkehrungen, 1992, 2.
hence the scope and impact of the intended messages of the carefully staged citizens’ festivals. Berlin, as the capital and location largely associated with German unity, succeeded in attracting *Einheitstouristen* (unity tourists) from countries such as Japan and the US. Such success was, however, singular to the new capital; international travellers and the international press were far less likely to take the trip to attend festivities in cities like Schwerin. The same was true for Germans from other regions. Whereas the festivities in Berlin could pull upon the city’s draw as a modern metropolis – for Germans and non-Germans alike – towns like Magdeburg or Mainz enjoyed no such appeal.

Thirdly, in addition to the subversion of messages by the media and the regional organisation, the *lingua franca* of the events also played a role. German and international actors on the Day of Unity attempted to frame the Day of Unity as an EU-event. However, the staging did little to encourage members of the international community to be actively involved in the celebration of German unity. The unity events were uninviting not only because of their location, but also because everything at the citizens’ festival was in German. With the exception of the citizens’ festival in Saarbrücken, which provided some material in French, all aspects of the citizens’ festivals, from the signposts to the programme and the literature available at the Bundestag tents, was available in German only. A non-German speaking visitor would therefore have been largely excluded from many aspects of the citizens’ festival. As a result, the Day of Unity could hardly be described as an event for citizens of the EU.

Fourthly, advertising subverted the messages of the actors and served as a potential additional obstacle to the popularity of the Day of Unity. The scale of the Day of Unity advertising was surprisingly limited from 1990 to 2005; the host Land produced leaflets and publicised the citizens’ festivals in the local press yet advertising on a national or international level was virtually non-existent. The German broadsheets occasionally dedicated one very small paragraph to the Day of

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Unity celebrations the day before the event, stating in which town they would take place, but failed to mention details of the programme of events or to give details of where one might find such information. It could not be taken for granted that Germans knew in advance where the unity celebrations were to take place. The reason for the rotation of the celebration through the different states was by no means widely known. If they did know, however, an internet site of the host Land provided the full programme of events. This was of little use to the non-German speaking international community though, since, once more, everything was in German only.

Fifthly, the lack of symbols on the Day of Unity may have contributed to Germans’ lack of identification with their national holiday. The founder of the national festival in Germany, Jahn, emphasised in the 19th century that no festival could be successful without symbols. The Day of Unity, however, lacked a motto (such as the French 14th July’s revolutionary slogan liberté, égalité, fraternité), and, until 2000, a symbol of its own. Moreover, though a national holiday, national symbols were to some extent excluded from the unity celebrations and replaced by regional and EU elements to avoid any expressions of what could have been construed as resurgent German nationalism.

As a ‘verspätete Nation’, Germany’s historically complex relationship to the nation-state has been reflected in difficulties in constructing representations of the German nation. Germany’s rapport with its national symbols is one key example of this. The interminable debate about the appropriate national symbols in the Weimar Republic, for example, led to a lack of symbols later exploited by Adolf Hitler. The politicised use of national and party symbols during the National Socialist era meant that few national symbols survived untainted. While the GDR

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179 Mosse, 1975, The nationalization of the masses, 92.
182 See in particular François & Schulze, 2001, Deutsche Erinnerungsorte.
184 Reichel, P. (2005). Schwarz-Rot-Gold: Kleine Geschichte deutscher Nationalsymbole. Munich: C.H. Beck, 10. For further examples of how the connotations of symbols, specifically the swastika,
adopted numerous state symbols for its self-representation,\textsuperscript{185} the Federal Republic, deeply rooted in the western international community, struggled with national symbols;\textsuperscript{186} the negative legacy of National Socialism led to a suspicion of national symbols in post-war West Germany as well as of expressions of nationalism more generally.

In 2000, aware of the deficiency of symbols on the Day of Unity, Dresden organisers developed a symbol comprising small black, gold and yellow blocks around the text 'Tag der Deutschen Einheit', which subsequent organisers adopted in the true style of invented traditions on the Day of Unity. The lack of symbols on the Day of Unity in the first decade after unification can partly be explained by the fact that 3\textsuperscript{rd} October 1990 itself lacked symbols. Unlike 9\textsuperscript{th} November, associated with jubilant scenes, such as those of people standing on the Berlin Wall and tapping the roofs of Trabants,\textsuperscript{187} which established the Berlin Wall and the Brandenburg Gate as icons of the peaceful revolution,\textsuperscript{188} the sombre 3\textsuperscript{rd} October celebrations in front of the Reichstag offered no such easily transportable visual symbols. Indeed, the German televised media, struggling to find emotive images for their reporting of the unity celebrations frequently used archive footage of the fall of the Berlin Wall at the Brandenburg gate rather than the Reichstag celebration of 1990 or the unity commemorations.\textsuperscript{189} Even the unity organisers borrowed the Brandenburg Gate as a symbol for the 3\textsuperscript{rd} October celebrations in Berlin in 2002 by inviting Former US President Bill Clinton to give his address alongside the Brandenburg Gate; following

\textsuperscript{185} Reichel, 2005, Schwarz-Rot-Gold, 11.


\textsuperscript{187} Interestingly, an Allensbach survey conducted in 1990 suggested that the events of 1989 remained in the memory of eastern Germans more so than 3rd October; when asked what event in the history of the GDR they remembered most positively 35% selected the opening of the Wall, while only 3% named unification. Noelle-Neumann, E., & Kocher, R. (Eds.). (1993). Allensbacher Jahrbuch der Demoskopie, 1984-1992. Munich: K.G. Saur.

\textsuperscript{188} Peter Reichel has gone so far as to describe the Brandenburg Gate as a 'Logo Deutschlands', see Reichel, 2005, Schwarz-Rot-Gold, 100. For an interesting overview of the changing meaning of the Brandenburg gate since its erection in 1789 see, in particular, ibid., 99-110.

\textsuperscript{189} See, for example, Schubmann & Hofmann, 2000, Feierlichkeiten, RTL.
the speech, school children presented him with a miniature version of the monument.\textsuperscript{190}

Finally, the actual choice of date of the unity celebrations may paradoxically have limited the effectiveness of the Day of Unity due to four main factors. Firstly, the date itself, commemorating the accession of the GDR to the Federal Republic merely supported the status quo. As Mosse has demonstrated, historically, festivals based on 'unfulfilled longings' for unity or 'concrete impetus for action' against 'the Establishment', such as the Wartburg Festival of 18\textsuperscript{th} October 1817 or the Hambach Festival of 1832, were able to rouse considerably more popular support and interest than festivals such as Sedan\textit{tag}, which celebrated existing traditions.\textsuperscript{191} Secondly, by commemorating something so recent, namely the unification of Germany in 1990, the Day of Unity could not be mythologised but rather remained in the memories of the German population and, on account of this, was in many respects overshadowed by ongoing problems resulting from the event. These negative associations served to undermine the potential of political mythologisation. Thus the Day of Unity, like Constitution Day in the Weimar Republic,\textsuperscript{192} was marked by pessimism, sapping its popularity. Thirdly, unlike many national holidays in other EU states, which took place in the warmer summer months, the occasionally rainy, autumnal weather of 3\textsuperscript{rd} October arguably contributed to the poor attendance at the celebrations in some years. Finally, and most paradoxically, it could be argued that the date for the German national holiday was to some degree actually chosen to avoid pathos or mass excitement. Like Sedan\textit{tag}, which sought to foster order and prevent mass movements,\textsuperscript{193} the sobriety and lack of enthusiasm and emotion that 3\textsuperscript{rd} October produced among the German population suited the desires of mainstream political actors of united Germany, particularly those on the Right, suspicious of revolutionary-type popular movements on account of the powerful role of extremist left and right-wing ideas in German history. It is to the choice of date for the Day of

\textsuperscript{191} Mosse, 1975, \textit{The nationalization of the masses}, 89-96.
\textsuperscript{192} See \textit{Ibid.}, 124.
\textsuperscript{193} \textit{Ibid.}, 93.
Unity that the chapter now turns in this final section, which explores the political context of the Day of Unity in arenas beyond the official celebrations.

1.3 Political context

1.3.1 Why 3rd October?

3rd October: a constitutional date

In a special session on 23rd August 1990, following a complicated process of negotiation, the East German Volkskammer selected 3rd October 1990 as the date for German unification for largely pragmatic reasons. Various actors initially favoured a number of different dates. In order to avoid an undemocratic interval without government or parliament in the GDR, the Bonn government, like GDR Prime Minister Lothar de Maizière, had originally favoured unification on 14th October, the date of the Land elections in the new Länder. De Maizière and Chancellor Kohl had also agreed verbally that the national, all-German elections would take place on that date, though this was later moved to 1st December. However, eager to select their own date for unification independent of the will of the Bonn government, with the exception of de Maizière, virtually no-one within the Volkskammer coalition of SPD, CDU, FDP (Free Democratic Party) and DSU (German Social Union), a partner of the CSU, supported the date proposed by their West German counterparts. As the earliest possible date following the signing of the 2+4 treaty of 12th September (in which it was agreed that Germany renounce its right to atomic, biological and chemical weapons and would reduce its army to

195 Ibíd.
197 Schröder, 2000, Zeitverschobene Vernunft, 5.
198 Ibíd.
370,000 troops, that Soviet troops would leave German soil and that Germany would regain full sovereignty including the prerogative to enter into alliances), West German SPD Chancellor Candidate Oskar Lafontaine had favoured 15th September. This was a suggestion that the SPD on the whole largely rejected for fear that in the coming elections voters, excited by unification, would be inclined to vote for the CDU. Since the Allied residual rights remained in force until 1st October, Lafontaine’s proposal would in any case not have been practicable. Furthermore, when the SPD left the Grand Coalition in the GDR, they were excluded from the negotiations about the date for unification. At the same time, the East German CDU and the DSU, eager for rapid unification, promoted the earliest possible date while the citizens’ initiative Alliance 90 sought to completely defer unification. Other parties, largely undecided, favoured a date after 14th October.

The question then arose of what to do with 7th October. It was widely agreed that a 41st anniversary of the GDR must be avoided at all costs; unification thus had to take place before 7th October. In the early hours of the special session in the Volkskammer, FDP politician Conrad-Michael Lehment telephoned Bonn's Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher to corroborate dates for the international preparations for German unity. Genscher confirmed that the 2+4 conference would take place on 12th September. The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) states would not meet to be informed of the results of the 2+4 talks until 14th October in New York however. Lehment consequently called out ‘3rd October at the earliest’ to a fatigued Volkskammer, since, with the time difference, this was the earliest possible date allowing Genscher to return from New York. Within minutes, at three o’clock in the morning, the Grand Coalition, with 249 for, 62 against and 7 abstentions, agreed to 3rd October as the date for German

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200 Schröder, 2000, Zeitverschobene Vernunft, 5.
201 Ibid.
203 Ibid.
204 Schröder, 2000, Zeitverschobene Vernunft, 5.
205 Peters, 2005, Vom Beitrittstermin, 51.
unification; a date before 7th October and far enough from 15th September and the Bonn government’s wish of 14th October.206

Just over a week later, on 31st August, the one thousand page Unification Treaty between the Federal Republic and the GDR stated not only that with effect from 3rd October, the GDR would accede to the Federal Republic,207 but also, in chapter one, article two, paragraph two,208 that ‘3rd October, as the Day of German Unity, is a legal holiday’.209 The same article stated that 3rd October thereby replaced 17th June as the national holiday of the Germans.210 On 23rd August, in East Germany, FDP Volkskammer MP Conrad-Michael Lehment had suggested the date of unification as the date for the national holiday; in West Germany on the same day, Chancellor Kohl had proposed the date during a meeting for negotiations of the Unification Treaty211 with the eleven Minister-Presidents of the Western Länder, who largely agreed with the West German Chancellor.212 Yet why did the date of unification, a date since criticised by many as simply bureaucratic, characterless and meaningless213 as well as unrooted in the ‘hearts and minds’ of the people,214 become the date for the national holiday of united Germany? East and West German political actors could easily have selected a national holiday quite separate from the date of unification. Contrary to Gunnar Peter’s supposition that the decision to make the date of unification the German national holiday was ‘obvious’,215 the reasons for the consensus on the date are more complex; they can perhaps best be understood by examining how 3rd October was able to unite the way in which CDU and SPD political actors envisaged united Germany.

For both CDU and SPD politicians, as well as Germans from across the mainstream political spectrum, selecting the German national holiday as the date of

207 Krämer, 1996, Der Volksaufstand, 275.
211 Krämer, 1996, Der Volksaufstand, 281.
212 Peters, 2005, Vom Beitrittstermin, 52.
213 See for example the negative remarks of Arnulf Baring, representative of critics of 3rd October, as quoted by Chancellor Schröder in his 1999 Day of Unity address: Schröder, 1999, Rede, 637.
unification was appealing. 3rd October represented a date that rooted Germany into Europe: it commemorated the unification of Germany, which had been supported by the whole international community. Furthermore, 3rd October signified not only the end of the GDR but also the end of a century-long problem, the German Question, as well as the end of the border disputes with Poland through the formal recognition of the Oder-Neisse border and the realisation of a hope dating from 1848 — ‘unity in freedom’. For the CDU, particularly for Chancellor Kohl, the association of the date for unification with the date for the German national holiday presented a yearly platform for praise and self-promotion of the so-called Chancellor of Unity. 3rd October also virtually coincided with the date on which Kohl’s chancellorship commenced, on 14th October 1982. As a result of this, as on the 10th anniversary of his chancellorship in 1992, which attracted considerable national and international media attention, this timely ‘coincidence’ allowed the CDU to celebrate the unification achievements of its Chancellor just two days before the official Day of Unity commemorations.

Most importantly, however, both the CDU and SPD could see the advantage of creating a national holiday that placed at its core the constitution; as a day commemorating the legal integration of the GDR into the Federal Republic, 3rd October located the German constitution at the centre of united Germany’s self-understanding. As Peter Häberle has demonstrated in his work on public holidays within the context of the constitutional state, holidays not only form ‘cultural constitutional law’ but are also an exhibit for ‘constitution as culture’. In this vein, the SPD, proponents of ‘constitutional patriotism’ and nervous of a ‘renewed’ nation-state, could see the advantages of 3rd October. Constitutional patriotism (Verfassungspatriotismus), a concept initially introduced by political scientist Dolf

\[\text{\textsuperscript{217}}\text{ Heinrich August Vinkler zum Feiertagsdebatte.} (2006). Retrieved February 27, 2006, from http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,326468,00.html. See also how Chancellor Schröder linked 3rd October with the revolution of 1848 in his Day of Unity address in 1999: Schröder, 1999, Rede, 637.}\
\[\text{\textsuperscript{218}}\text{ To see the various ways in which Kohl was praised see, for example, Gow, 1992, Political claws, 8.}\

Sternberger in 1958\textsuperscript{220} and later popularised by sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas,\textsuperscript{221} ‘pointed beyond itself to...more abstract, inclusive and increasingly universalist forms of political belonging’.\textsuperscript{222} Although a sense of constitutional patriotism remained somewhat of an elite rather than a widespread notion, the selection of 3\textsuperscript{rd} October can nevertheless be understood in this context. In this way, like the core organisational elements of the Day of Unity, the very date of the Day of Unity served a function and propagated a specific form of identification among Germans, namely identification with the legal and constitutional framework of united Germany. A very different Germany was proposed by advocates of 9\textsuperscript{th} November.

9\textsuperscript{th} November: an alternative date for an alternative Germany?

As long as national festivals have existed in Europe, the choice of the correct date for the celebrations has provoked contestation on account of the political meaning and connotations attached to specific dates.\textsuperscript{223} As early as the 19\textsuperscript{th} century in Germany, political opponents of a Prussian-dominated Reich attempted to promote alternative commemorative dates as a form of political dissent.\textsuperscript{224} Selection of the German national holiday also provoked heated debate in the Weimar Republic\textsuperscript{225} whilst in the Federal Republic, the changing role of 17\textsuperscript{th} June resulted in numerous discussions of alternative dates,\textsuperscript{226} particularly 23\textsuperscript{rd} May (\textit{Verfassungstag}) and 18\textsuperscript{th} March (beginning of the \textit{Märzrevolution} of 1848).\textsuperscript{227} In united Germany, contestation of the choice of date for the national holiday can be explained as politically motivated: the respective dates proposed reflected the kind of Germany specific political actors and parties wished to promote. While the CDU and SPD propagated a very specific image of Germany through 3\textsuperscript{rd} October - a constitutional Germany - advocates of other dates for the German national holiday in 1990 promoted an ‘alternative

\textsuperscript{220}Müller, 2000, \textit{Another country}, 93.
\textsuperscript{222}Müller, 2000, \textit{Another country}, 94.
\textsuperscript{224}Behrenbeck & Nützenadel, 2000, Politische Feiern, 22.
\textsuperscript{226}Krämer, 1996, \textit{Der Volksaufstand}, 212.
\textsuperscript{227}Gallus, 1993, Der 17. Juni, 12.
Germany’. 23rd May, the date of the signing of the Basic Law in West Germany, was suggested as an alternative date for the former Day of Unity in the late 1960s and again in 1990.228 Like advocates of 3rd October, supporters of 23rd May as the national holiday of united Germany also proposed a representation of Germany with the constitution at its core, yet, by selecting a date completely removed from East Germany, they further emphasised the representation of united Germany as merely a continuation of the Federal Republic. In contrast, Leipzig MPs promoted 9th October,229 the day of the first dramatic Montagsdemo in Leipzig in 1989, to place the achievements of East Germans at the centre of united Germany’s self-understanding. At the same time, those who supported the continued commemoration of the national holiday on 17th June,230 sought to place the years of division at the heart of the representation of united Germany; those supportive of 8th May, the end of World War II, meanwhile were keen to frame the remembrance of the National Socialist era as the defining feature of united Germany.

9th November was initially dismissed as a potential national holiday in 1990 not only because it may have allowed a 41st celebration of the GDR but also because of the ambiguity of the date231 which, it was feared, could cause embarrassment and scandals.232 Revolutionary Robert Blum’s execution on 9th November 1848 marked the beginning of 9th November’s history-laden fate. Seventy years later, 9th November 1918 marked the abdication of the Kaiser and the declaration of the Weimar Republic by Social Democrat Philipp Scheidemann in Berlin.233 However, as Peter Steinbach explains, the failure of the first German democracy discredited 9th November in many respects,234 not least because of the ‘Beer Hall Putsch’ on the same date five years later. On 9th November 1923, in an attempted coup d’état, Hitler, the NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers’ Party) and followers of

228 Kraushaar, 2003, Die wechselvolle Geschichte, 156.
229 See Krämer, 1996, Der Volksaufstand, 281.
General Erich Ludendorff marched to commemorate the Kaiser and seize power in Munich. Though the march failed, the Nazis honoured those killed as martyrs. Fifteen years later, the pogrom of 9th November 1938, during which Nazis destroyed and plundered synagogues, shops and flats of Jews, killed hundreds of people and removed around 30,000 Jews to concentration camps, came to symbolise Nazi persecution. 9th November of the following year nearly marked a very different course of German history when cabinetmaker Johann Georg Elsner attempted a bomb attack on Hitler in the Munich Bürgerbräukeller. 9th November did not emerge again as a key date in German history, however, until 1989 when the Berlin Wall fell.

Following unification, particularly around the tenth anniversary of German unification, 9th November became the centre of an attempt to propagate a different image of united Germany. Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, the main advocate of 9th November, used both the media, particularly a controversial interview with Die Zeit, and the Ostkongress of the Greens in Berlin to spark a debate about the suitability of 9th November as the German national holiday just days before the 10th unity anniversary. Alliance 90/The Greens had proposed 9th November as the national holiday even before unification and following unification some SPD politicians as well as a number of academics and journalists, such as political scientist Wilhelm Hennis, historian Lucien Hölscher and Le Figaro Berlin correspondent Jean-Paul Picaper, supported the idea. Former GDR civil rights campaigner and Alliance 90/The Greens speaker, Werner Schulz, who had promoted

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235 Reichel, 2005, Schwarz-Rot-Gold, 95
237 Ibid., 9.
239 Brendthauer, 2000, Höhen und Tiefen, 1444.
241 For Hennis’ interpretation see Hennis, 2000, Nutzen und Nachteil, n.p.
243 For Picaper’s ironic reasoning for why 9th November would be appropriate as the German national holiday see Picaper, J-P. (2000, November 9). Feiertag der deutschen Doppelseele. Die Welt, 10.
9th November in the media a year before Fischer, continued the debate in 2004 by
drawing it into a Bundestag discussion on 12th November.

Advocates of 9th November, on the one hand, promoted a Germany that was
ever aware of the complexities of its past. Arguing that the date could act not only as
a commemoration for German unity but also as a remembrance day of the German
past, particularly National Socialism, advocates of 9th November presented the date as
the ‘Schicksalstag’ (day of fate) of the German nation to place Germany’s chequered
history at the centre of the country’s self-representation. They contended that the date
could reflect both the positive and negative aspects of German history in an ‘all-
purpose holiday’. The remembrance of different events on this day would, they
argued, facilitate the commemoration of the early hopes of 1918, the disgrace of 1923
and 1938 and the joy of an ‘unexpected happy ending’ in 1989. They thereby
sought to make a new national holiday a platform for addressing the past in order to
place an awareness of German history at the centre of united Germany’s self-
understanding.

On the other hand, and to a lesser extent, like supporters of 9th October,
advocates of 9th November stressed the centrality of the actions of East German
citizens and their contribution to unification. By focusing on 9th November rather
than 3rd October, advocates emphasised that it was predominantly the actions of
former civil rights campaigners that had paved the way for unification, even though
many of the latter were in fact actively opposed to the unification process, at least in
the form it took in 1990. It is thus perhaps not surprising that former East German
dissidents were the main advocates of 9th November. Their motives lay partly in the
desire to emphasise their own contribution to German unification, rather than that of
the West German political actors: commemoration of 9th November would have
symbolised a celebration of the achievements of civil rights campaigners in bringing
down the Wall. In this context Fischer’s support for 9th November, given the Green
politician’s own biography as a West German political activist in the late 1960s and

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246 Brendthauer, 2000, Höhen und Tiefen, 1445.
1970s, can be understood in the context of his identification with such ‘alternative’ social movements and their role in promoting direct citizen engagement in politics. 9th November laid emphasis on popular movements, rather than focusing on the constitutional elements of united Germany inherent in 3rd October. The promotion of 9th November as an alternative date for the German national holiday can therefore be understood as an attempt to redefine ideas about the past in an attempt to influence the present. It is to a further example of the latter that we now turn.

1.3.2 German unity: a political weapon?

As Stollberg-Rilinger has argued, one of the most important functions of political representations is to suppress differences in positions and interests behind a ‘façade of consensus’.\(^{248}\) Indeed, a high degree of consensus in the presentation of key issues from the German speakers across the mainstream political spectrum, from the moderate Left to the moderate Right, shaped the Day of Unity anniversaries. Moreover, as we have seen, the western German dominance of the celebrations extended the West German elite consensus to eastern Germany so that a high degree of consensus also existed among both eastern and western German actors. In many respects 3rd October could thus be termed, to borrow David Cannadine’s terminology, a ‘celebration of consensus’\(^{249}\). In that sense, although the Day of Unity served as a convenient platform for the self-preservation of German political parties either seeking to be elected (1994) or having recently been elected (1998, 2002) in the Bundestag election years, the official Day of Unity celebrations were on the whole immune to moderate partisan politics throughout the period from 1990 to 2005. The general agreement regarding the values and understandings of the past, present and future in many ways simplified the process of cultural synchronisation with the Federal Republic’s model by presenting a homogenous value system to export to or import into eastern Germany. Owing to the high degree of consensus, combined with


the sense of stability and continuity accorded to the unity celebrations through the invented traditions, core (West German) values and messages of the Day of Unity were simplified and reinforced. This provided the potential for a higher degree of cultural synchronisation of fundamental structures and values than would likely have been possible if issues were presented as more complex, fragmented and contested by the German political actors. Although messages changed in the time period from 1990 to 2005, reflecting shifts and changes in the political climate, the Day of Unity developed a somewhat didactic character as regards the main messages of the German political actors. The broad consensus also served to present an image to Germans and the international community of a Germany that was not ambiguous and struggling to define itself, but rather was assertive, grounded, deeply rooted and secure in its democratic and constitutional values, responsibility for its history, federal structure and commitment to the EU.

Although the central unity celebrations could therefore hardly be described as partisan events, beyond the official staging of 3rd October, the Day of Unity, as a symbol of German unification, served as an important device for inter-party point-scoring in other arenas. This was best exemplified by the strategic political dispute between the CDU and the SPD around the 10th anniversary of German unity. In the media, at their party congress and in the Bundestag, the CDU and SPD used a debate about the 'ownership' of unification to present an interpretation of the past politically beneficial to the respective parties.

CDU: we were there, where was the SPD?

In 1989 and 1990, unlike the majority of CDU members, many in the SPD did not advocate German unification. Such opponents were, as Müller notes, 'inspired by certain despair about the supposedly final loss of a socialist utopia and, more significantly, melancholy about the loss of a Federal Republic which had seemed to be safely on the path to a genuinely postnational and postmaterialistic society'.
Many Social Democrats, sceptical of a ‘return to “nation-state normality”’, even publicly renounced the aim of unification in favour of a European peace structure with two German states. At its party congress on 1st October 2000, two days before the 10th anniversary of German unity, representatives of the CDU drew attention to the ‘anti-unity’ stance of the SPD and of many of its leading figures. Former Chancellor Kohl, the main critic at the provocatively named ‘10 Years: One CDU for One Germany’ congress, echoed remarks he had made in numerous television interviews in the preceding weeks. Using emotive language, he argued that the SPD, which had been prepared to ‘piteously abandon...their countrymen in the GDR’, had ‘not wanted unity right up until the very end’. Referring to the stated goal of unification in the preamble of the 1949 Basic Law, the ex-Chancellor asserted that many on the Left had given up on the ‘constitutional obligation of German unity in freedom’; he described the SPD’s position towards unity, unchanged despite the demonstrations in the GDR in 1989, as a ‘betrayal of humanity’. In this way, he sought to imply that Social Democrats had not only been unsupportive of unification but had in fact betrayed the goal of unification and by association, the German people. Indeed, the former Chancellor explicitly stated, ‘What the Social Democrats did amounted to treachery – I say quite explicitly, treachery.’

In an attempt to humiliate not only the SPD as a whole but also specific individual SPD leaders, numerous representatives of the CDU quoted remarks made by their opponents shortly before unification. While former Minister-President of Saarland and Chancellor-candidate in 1990, Lafontaine, received criticism for having opposed the Economic, Monetary and Social Union, the majority of criticism targeted Chancellor Schröder, Minister-President of Lower Saxony at the time of unification. CDU leader Angela Merkel sought to discredit Schröder, stating that,

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252 Ibid., 121.
253 In Zwietracht vereint. (2000, October 2). Die Welt, 3.
255 Schröder: Kohl will die Geschichte falschen. (2000, October 2). Die Welt, 1.
257 Boyes, 2000, Hard work, 18.
258 CSU Leader Stoiber was also particularly critical of Lafontaine at the CSU unity celebrations in Mödlareuth: ‘Schröder wollte die Einheit nicht’. (2000, October 4). Die Welt, 2.
like Lafontaine, he had been against the Economic, Monetary and Social Union; she also explicitly attempted to use the past as a mechanism with which to undermine Schröder’s legitimacy in the present, arguing that ‘from a historical point of view it does matter who is Chancellor in the present’. Correspondingly, like many other CDU members, CDU parliamentary party leader Friedrich Merz called for Schröder to admit his mistakes during the unification phase. Kohl meanwhile, in a further attempt to undermine the moral integrity of the Chancellor, quoted Schröder as saying a decade earlier, ‘after forty years of the Federal Republic a new generation in Germany should not lie to itself about the chances of unification. There aren’t any.’

CDU accusations of ‘treachery’ of the SPD and its leaders re-emerged four years later when, on 3rd November 2004, Finance Minister Hans Eichel of the SPD proposed moving the celebration of the Day of Unity to the first Sunday in October. Chancellor Schröder, who had endorsed Eichel’s suggestion of shifting the unity celebrations to a non-working day in order to accelerate economic growth, once more became the main target of attack. The initiative, which attracted substantial media attention, received considerable criticism from many across the political spectrum, from the general public and even from Federal President Horst Köhler. Although the suggestion was withdrawn just one day after being announced, the CDU nevertheless strategically continued the debate in the Bundestag sitting of 12th November. For the CDU, this highly unpopular, highly publicised topic served as an instrument with which to further discredit the SPD and Schröder and to dredge up the SPD’s former ‘unpatriotic’ anti-unity stance. The CDU emotively spoke of the SPD wanting to ‘get rid of’ the Day of Unity. Arnold

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261 Ibid.
262 In Zwietracht vereint, 2000, 3.
266 Peters, 2005, Vom Beitrittstermin, 47.
Vaatz, who, before joining the CDU in February 1990 had been part of the civic movement in the GDR in the autumn of 1989, quoted embarrassing anti-unification statements from Schröder and Eichel, Oberbürgermeister of Kassel during unification. He argued that the motivation for the SPD wanting to scrap the Day of Unity lay in its desire to free the party from a yearly reminder of its ‘collective...failure’.

While Reinhard Grindel ironically remarked that if the Day of Unity were moved to a Sunday it would occasionally fall on 7th October, the former Day of the Republic, Eckhard von Klaeden went so far as to implicitly compare the SPD government with the SED, which had scrapped the celebration of Whit Monday and Ascension Day as holidays in the GDR. The SPD responded by drawing attention to the similarity of CSU leader Edmund Stoiber’s suggestion to the Bundestag in February 1994 to move the Day of Unity to a Sunday as a solution for financing long-term care insurance.

By emphasising the SPD’s ‘treachery’, the CDU sought to question the integrity and legitimacy of both the party and the Chancellor. To juxtapose the position of the SPD and CDU, the latter also used the debate to frame itself as the ‘party of unity’. In a climate where the majority of Germans across the political spectrum had no longer considered unification a realistic possibility, from the beginning of his chancellorship on 1st October 1982, Kohl had stressed his desire for German unification. Before the fall of the Berlin Wall, Kohl’s steps towards unity focused on rhetoric rather than policy: on the one hand, he extended personal contacts between East and West Germany, on the other, he fostered relations with the Soviet

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Union by presenting the Federal Republic as a potential economic partner rather than a threat. 271

Following the fall of the Wall, Kohl’s contribution to unification shifted from rhetoric to policies: on 28th November 1989 he presented his ten-point plan for unification to the Bundestag; 272 on 11th February 1990, he held decisive talks with Gorbachev; five months later, on 1st July, the Economic, Monetary and Social Union treaty that he had initiated came into being and on 3rd October the Unification Treaty came into force. 273 In this context, at the 1st October 2000 party congress, the CDU heavily stressed its role in the unification process in order to increase its popularity. Merkel traced a path of unification from Adenauer to Kohl 274 while the latter, presenting himself as the ‘Chancellor of unity’ and the CDU as the ‘party of unity’, stressed that ‘the Union never stopped working for unity’. 275 Despite a fleeting reference by Kohl to SPD Chancellor Brandt’s contribution to convincing Gorbachev to feel less threatened in the crucial phase after opening the Berlin Wall, 276 the CDU made very little reference to the contribution of any other party or person in the unification process. The only outsider praised, Brandt, had been dead for eight years.

The SPD responded to these CDU accusations in the media, in the Bundestag debate of 29th September 2000 and at the SPD party congress in Stuttgart on 1st October 2000.

SPD: CDU Geschichtsfälschung to hide party failures

In a ZDF interview on 16th December 1999, Kohl admitted receiving between 1.5 and 2 million deutschmarks of donations between 1993 and 1998, from a donor he

275 Schröder: Kohl will die Geschichte falschen, 2000, 1.
refused to name, without declaring it in the CDU’s accounts. With reference to this donations scandal, SPD Secretary General Franz Müntefering, in a remark representative of the SPD response to the CDU’s accusations, told Reuters television on 1st October 2000 that the CDU was hiding behind its achievements during unification in order to play down the failures of the party and of ex-Chancellor Kohl. What he described as the ‘halo’ of German unity did not, he argued, justify or explain Kohl’s failure in the donations scandal. At the SPD party congress on the same day, Schröder echoed his fellow Social Democrat’s remark and accused Kohl of attempting to draw attention away from the scandal. Meanwhile, to imply that personal glory, rather than the German people, had motivated Kohl, Lafontaine argued that Kohl’s aim was to go down in history as the Chancellor of unification.

As a result of the donations scandal, a debate developed between the SPD and CDU and even within the CDU itself about whether or not Kohl should be permitted to speak at the 10th unity anniversary. The majority of SPD politicians argued that it would not be appropriate for Kohl to give a speech at the unity events since, by breaking party finance laws, he had put into question his integrity. A Dimap opinion poll revealed that 54% of Germans, 63% of those from eastern Germany, nevertheless wanted Kohl to speak on 3rd October. However, to the delight of the SPD, due to an intra-CDU vendetta, it was announced in July 2000 that Kohl was not invited to deliver a speech on 3rd October 2000. As host of the central celebrations, Minister-President of Saxony, Kurt Biedenkopf exploited his authority to select the unity speakers to avenge himself upon Kohl, who in 1977 as leader of the CDU had

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278 Bei der Feier, 2000, 2.
280 Schröder: Kohl will die Geschichte falschen, 2000, 1.
284 Ibid.
removed Biedenkopf as the party's Secretary General.\textsuperscript{285} Denied status as a guest speaker, Kohl refused to attend the 10\textsuperscript{th} unity anniversaries. Ironically, despite his absence, Kohl was nevertheless at the heart of the Day of Unity celebrations where all unity speakers emphasised the former Chancellor's achievements in the unification process. Commendation of Kohl also spread to the national and international press attracted by the irony of, as The Guardian described it, 'a case of Hamlet without the prince'.\textsuperscript{286} In 1998 as Chancellor-Elect, Schröder had thanked his predecessor for his role in unification on the Day of Unity, stating that he was certain 'the people in Germany will not forget it'.\textsuperscript{287} By the time of the SPD party congress in 2000, however, Schröder was instead stressing his own party's involvement in unification.

Accusing Kohl of falsifying history,\textsuperscript{288} the SPD was keen to emphasise that Kohl's contribution to unification had only been made possible through that of the SPD's, namely the détente policies of Brandt and Schmidt. During his chancellorship from 1969 to 1974, Brandt undertook numerous practical steps towards détente with the 'other' Germany. In a climate of virtual stagnation from the mid-1950s following the establishment of the Hallstein Doctrine, he agreed to negotiate with the GDR leadership in an attempt to ease tensions in Europe. For the first time since 1948, dialogue consequently resumed between the top politicians of East and West Germany when, in a symbolic reopening of lines of communication, Brandt met East German Prime Minister Willi Stoph in Erfurt and Kassel. Subsequently, through his Ostpolitik, Brandt secured the signing of treaties with the Soviet Union (August 1970), Poland (December 1970) and Czechoslovakia (June 1973) as well as the Quadripartite Agreement of Berlin (September 1971) and the Basic Treaty (Grundlagenvertrag) with the GDR. The latter was considered by the Brandt government as an 'opportunity for rescuing the idea of a single German nation within the framework of two states, of puncturing the Iron Curtain while recognising that it

\textsuperscript{285} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{286} Hooper, J. (2000, October 4). Open gate: Kohl stays away as Germany celebrates 10th anniversary of unification he masterminded. The Guardian, 15.
\textsuperscript{288} Schröder: Kohl will die Geschichte falschen, 2000, 1.
could not be removed in its entirety'. The treaty could thus be understood as having contributed to keeping open the German Question on a psychological, political and legal level. Brandt’s successor, Schmidt, who served as Chancellor from 1974 to 1982, continued working towards détente with the East. Most notable was the SPD Chancellor’s work towards the signing of the Final Act: Schmidt met with SED Secretary General Erich Honecker in Helsinki on 1st August 1975 at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in the context of the signing of a détente treaty that became a key instrument for furthering human rights and freedoms in Eastern Europe. During the debate around the 10th anniversary of unification, the SPD sought to emphasise the contribution of their post-war chancellors to challenge the interpretation of the past presented by their opponents, namely of unification as solely a CDU achievement.

The debate between the CDU and SPD about who ‘owned’ unification, which importantly was not a united German, but rather a West German debate, received considerable domestic and international criticism. While numerous SPD members, the main targets of the debate, were unsurprisingly critical, Bundestag President Rita Süßmuth (CDU) and Federal President Johannes Rau (SPD) also argued that the petty and embarrassing dispute was undignified for an event as important as the 10th anniversary of German unity. Moreover, in the national and international press, the debate of ‘the power and publicity seeking egomaniacs’ was criticised as untimely.

1.3.3 A site of protest?

As mentioned above, the ‘correct’ date for commemorative days has been contested since the 19th century. Likewise, since the 19th century, commemorative days have

291 Chancellor Schröder, SPD Chairman, Bundestag President and eastern German Thierse and Brandenburg SPD leader Platzeck were particularly critical of the debate. See ‘Kohl: Die SPD hat in der Schicksalsfrage der Nation versagt’; Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 1; Bundestag Plenarprotokoll; Gerhard Schröder, SPD (14/122). (2000, September 29). Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag, 11701; ‘Kohls Abrechnungen sind kleinlich’, www.spiegel.de.
served as platforms for demonstrations. While in the 19th century commemorations provided a venue for the protests of groups from across the political spectrum, on the Day of Unity demonstrations have been the domain of left and right-wing extremists, excluded from the official ceremonies of the mainstream political parties. The Day of Unity therefore served on the one hand as an inclusive mechanism, by projecting consensus among the mainstream political actors in an effort to encourage cultural synchronisation between East and West, yet on the other hand, also acted as a mechanism of exclusion, by relegating other actors (and their concerns) to the margins. The demonstrations on the Day of Unity thus also highlighted the divisions, tensions and conflicts of other actors in united Germany. As Dieter Rucht has shown, demonstrations in liberal Western democracies are rarely spontaneous but rather timed and planned for maximum attention, resonance and agreement among the general public. In light of the social and economic problems following unification, the Day of Unity, the official commemoration of unification, was a particularly fitting arena for the extreme Left to publicise and propagate their criticisms about unification. For right-wing extremists, the German national holiday also served in many regards as an effective site of protest since even small demonstrations and isolated attacks on and around the anniversaries frequently received considerable national and, as we have seen above, international media attention. Even the speakers at the celebrations regularly alluded to extremist behaviour around the time of the unity anniversaries. Although the media

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294 Schneider, 1995, Politische Festkultur, 346.
295 Ibid.
criticised the extremist behaviour and the mainstream political actors used the Day of Unity to deliver didactic messages on the topic, the demonstrations and attacks nevertheless threatened to overshadow the specific representation of Germany the unity organisers sought to project on 3rd October. In this way, the Day of Unity served as a powerful platform for extremists to attempt to propagate their 'vision' for Germany both at home and abroad.

**Right-wing extremists: a Germany without foreigners**

Right-wing extremists exploited what they interpreted as a celebration of an enlarged, more powerful, nation-state on 3rd October. Neo-Nazis used the anniversaries as a yearly occasion on which to propagate a neo-fascist image of a united Germany, from which foreigners and Jews would be excluded. Interpreting unification of the 'two Germanies' as a sign of desirable German expansionism, they commemorated unification with various demonstrations and attacks in 1990. While in Schwerin hundreds of extremists shouted the National Socialist phrase 'Sieg Heil', police were forced to intervene against a number of neo-Nazi activities in Hamburg, Bonn and Leipzig. In Aachen and Magdeburg, jubilant skinheads attacked passers-by with baseball bats; others accosted foreigners in Bielefeld.

In the years that followed, the majority of right-wing extremist activities around the Day of Unity took place in eastern Germany, reflecting a greater degree of xenophobia, or at least less hesitation in showing it, in the former GDR. The Landtag elections in Saxony on 19th September 2004 and in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania on 17th September two years later, in which the neo-Nazi NPD won 9.2% and 7.3% of the vote, respectively, demonstrated the extent of extreme right-wing attitudes in eastern Germany. A Forsa survey of 2003 showed that while 16% of western Germans had right-wing extremist attitudes, among eastern Germans the figure was

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301 Der Jubel über die Einheit, 1990, 2.


as high as 23%. However, this was a case of 'xenophobia without foreigners'. compared to 10.3% in western Germany, foreigners represented merely 2.3% of the population in the eastern Länder, a discrepancy largely due to the restrictive GDR immigration policy, which only allowed temporary worker migration from other Communist countries such as Vietnam. In western Germany, too, where xenophobia had largely ceased to be a major problem before unification, a high rate of asylum seekers, high unemployment and major social problems resulting at least in part from unification contributed to a rise in right-wing extremism. Estimates of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution placed the number of violent right-wing extremists across Germany at around 10,400 people in 2006.  

During 1991 and 1992 extremists carried out major violent attacks on foreigners and asylum seekers in Hoyerswerda, Wismar and Rostock, in response to which Germans from across the political spectrum demonstrated in their thousands on the first and second Day of Unity anniversaries. More so than in the years that followed, the first and second anniversaries of unification saw a plethora of racially motivated attacks across the country, reflecting the extent of xenophobic sentiments in these early post-unification years. On 3rd October 1991, in Luckenwald in eastern Germany, for example, neo-Nazis raided a hostel from which 32 Ghanaians had already been evacuated. In western Germany there were also a number of attacks: among at least a dozen other incidents, at Hunxe near Düsseldorf, two Lebanese

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304 Stöss, Rechtsextremismus, 2005, 66.
children were severely burnt when bombs were thrown into their hostel bedroom, while in Kassel, a group of two dozen neo-Nazis armed with iron bars destroyed a hostel for immigrants. In 1992, following the arson attack at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp on 26th September, which provoked a counter-protest by 7,000 people including politicians and pop stars a week later, on the Day of Unity, neo-Nazis used the unification anniversary as a forum to further demonstrate their rejection of a multi-cultural united Germany. Right-wing extremists attacked at least a dozen refugee hostels with petrol bombs, predominantly in eastern Germany and desecrated Jewish graves in Dortmund and Stuttgart. In Halle, Arnstadt and Dresden they also gathered on the streets in hundreds shouting, ‘Foreign pigs out, out, out!’ and displaying the Hitler salute; meanwhile in the village of Massen near Finsterwalde in Brandenburg thousands of neo-Nazis congregated for a concert of extreme right-wing music groups. Although extreme right-wing demonstrations and attacks on the Day of Unity continued throughout the period from 1992 to 2005, the attacks peaked on the tenth anniversary. Right-wing extremists exploited the important round anniversary of German unity to propagate anti-Semitic views: on the eve of 3rd October neo-Nazis attacked a Jewish couple in Schwerin, carried out an arson attack on a synagogue in Düsseldorf, and graffitied the Buchenwald concentration camp.

314 Lieven, 1992, Fear of history, 6
315 Ibid.
316 Gow, 1992, Kohl warns against the threat, 8.
318 Ibid.
322 Anschlag auf Synagoge, 2000, 2.
Left-wing extremists and civil rights campaigners: ‘Hurra Deutschland – nein danke’

Particularly in the early years after unification, numerous clashes took place between left and right-wing extremists during their attempts to transmit opposing ideas about Germany on the Day of Unity. In stark contrast to right-wing extremists, left-wing activists and extremists used the Day of Unity celebrations to frame unification and unity as negative as well as to attempt to influence political reforms. For many left-wing extremists, of which an estimated 25,000 existed in Germany in 2006, unification symbolised a return to an undesired, powerful nation-state. In this context, they staged events on the German national holiday under mottos such as ‘Hurra Deutschland – nein danke’ (Hooray Germany – no thanks) and ‘Halt’s Maul Deutschland’ (Shut your face, Germany).

In 1990, they protested in Berlin in their tens of thousands against a unification that signified for them ‘expansive German imperialism’, and the beginning of a ‘Fourth Reich’. The demonstration mottos of the following years reflected an unabated cynicism towards unification. In 1991, for example, having refused their invitation to the official central celebration, the PDS – the former SED party – organised a rally in Berlin under the motto ‘Protest statt Fest’ (protest instead of celebration) while in 1993, left-wing extremists protested in Berlin against

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327 Gow, 1990, Germany united, 11.
the ‘annexation of the GDR’ under the slogan ‘Es gibt nichts zu jubeln’ (there’s nothing to cheer about). As the former capital of the GDR and capital of united Germany, left-wing extremists often chose Berlin as their main arena for attempting to redefine ideas on the Day of Unity. In 1994, however, at an event less than two weeks before the Bundestag elections of 16th October, protestors violently demonstrated at the central unity celebrations in Bremen, thereby directly impacting upon the official staging of the central unity event more than in any other year from 1990 to 2005. The ecumenical service, for example, could not be held in the cathedral due to security concerns, while Federal President Roman Herzog was forced to leave the celebrations early for fear of attack. In an attempt to publicly demonstrate disapproval over the continued social and economic problems resulting from unification and the unfulfilled promise of equal living standards in eastern Germany by 1994, extremists and left-wing organisations staged a variety of anti-unification events. The Bremen Council for Cultural Affairs (Kulturrat), an amalgam of independent and public cultural institutions and the main organiser of the counter-events, staged discussion rounds, music and theatre to present unification as synonymous with ‘unemployment, xenophobia and the decay of social democratic rights’. Meanwhile, 1,000 demonstrators took to the street, of whom police had arrested by the end of the day. To prevent further disturbances, municipal authorities, who had engaged 2,500 extra police from neighbouring Länder, had banned a planned ‘unity divides’ demonstration of the Bremen-based ‘Alliance Against the Celebration of the Day of Unity’, a group of what The Guardian

331 La morosité a dominé, 1993, 6.
334 Krawalle bei Einheitsfeier, 1994, 2.
335 Bremen feiert, 1994, 2.
336 Ramm, 1994, Fest(ungs)stadt Bremen, 2.
339 Ramm, 1994, Fest(ungs)stadt, 2.
described as ‘Communists, anarchists and professionally disaffected’. Demonstrations continued throughout the years that followed, predominantly in Berlin, where in 2000, critical of a decade of social and economic difficulties resulting from unification, the PDS marked the 10th anniversary of German unification with a counter-demonstration of 10,000 people on the Alexanderplatz.

Alongside their criticism of unification and its consequences, left-wing extremists also used the Day of Unity as a medium to attempt to influence political reforms. The proposed change to the asylum law in 1992 and, to a lesser degree, Schröder’s reforms of the social security system in 2004 provoked considerable demonstrations. In light of the 438,191 people who had applied for asylum in Germany by the end of 1992, a discussion emerged around the time of the second anniversary of German unity about restricting the asylum law as outlined in article 16, paragraph 2, sentence 2 of the Basic Law. The proposed change, implemented on 1st July 1993 following a compromise solution between the CDU, CSU, SPD and FDP on 6th December 1992, aimed to continue to offer protection and refuge for the genuinely politically persecuted, but to prevent unjustified appeals. Nevertheless, many on the Left, particularly extremists, interpreted the proposed alteration as a sign of a political shift to the Right. Left-wing extremists, together with members of the Green party, trade unions, citizens’ initiatives and students consequently protested in their tens of thousands across the country on 3rd October 1992 as part of their attempt to prevent this policy change. Similarly, in 2004, in response to Social Democratic Schröder’s ‘Hartz IV’ proposals to reduce unemployment benefits, 45,000 civil rights campaigners, left-wing activists and extremists, demonstrated in

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Berlin. The Day of Unity thus served for left and right-wing extremists and activists alike as a platform for promoting alternative visions of Germany.

Conclusion

Anderson's concept of nations as imagined communities and Hobsbawm and Ranger's work on invented traditions seem particularly pertinent to the findings of this chapter. Exploration of the historical, institutional and political context of the Day of Unity has supported the idea that nations are not natural entities but rather are imagined communities constructed through various processes. In line with Mergel's and Stollberg-Rilinger's understanding of the potential of representations such as national holidays to not only reflect but also shape the nation and the polity, it is striking that the Day of Unity has contributed to the broad, ongoing process of nation-building in Germany: by seeking to influence how the nation was imagined by its citizens and the rest of the world, the 3rd October anniversaries can be understood as part of an attempt to construct and maintain an imagined community.

The Day of Unity served to connect all Germans in an imagined community by, to borrow from Anderson, facilitating a 'consciousness of connectedness'. Furthermore, as a somewhat didactic platform for presenting an idealised image of Germany, the German national holiday also had the potential to serve as a mechanism for influencing the nature of the imagined community in the future. What is more, the western German dominance of the unity anniversaries encouraged the process of transferring the model of the Federal Republic to the imagined united German community. In this way, the Day of Unity political actors imagined unified Germany — different not least in terms of territory and population size from the pre-1990 Federal Republic — not as a novel community but rather as one dating from 1949. The constitutional manner of unification had indeed imagined united Germany in this way by simply extending the Federal Republic to include the GDR.

Above and beyond this, the very staging of the Day of Unity celebrations contributed to the process of defining the domain of the imagined community. In the

349 See Anderson, 2006, Imagined communities, 56.
same way that the construction of censuses and maps influenced the way in which European empires imagined their territories in Southeast Asia in the 19th century, the rotating nature of the unity anniversaries has meant that, by going around Germany, the celebrations have defined Germany and its borders. The itinerant celebrations have thus reinforced the country's bounded territorial space, thereby imagining the nation as limited.

3rd October can also be considered as a mechanism for contributing to the process of nation-building through invented tradition. In itself the Day of Unity can be understood as pure invented tradition. It was a new ceremony invented and added to the calendar of the Federal Republic. By means of their discourse and the staging of the unity events, the German political actors used the German national holiday to attempt to influence the construction and maintenance of the united German nation-state. Although free from restraints of set protocol for the celebrations, the regional actors in any given year nevertheless adopted similar core elements for the festivities. These aspects were taken on by later organisers as 'traditional' and used in the service of reinforcing particular images of the German nation. Hobsbawm has shown that invented traditions 'seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition' and that they 'attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past'. Indeed, on the Day of Unity, the political actors sought to shape the development of the German nation through ritual repetition in order to construct a nation that was constitutional, democratic, aware of its past, united, federal and rooted in Europe. The political actors thereby further established the unified German nation in the format of the Federal Republic – they expressed continuity in terms of value systems – such as federalism and democracy – as well as in interpretations of the past and diplomatic priorities. In this way, the Day of Unity served to construct historic continuity between the pre-1990 and post-1990 Federal Republic. The novelty of the united German nation-state was thereby concealed and it was legitimised by association with the smaller post-war Federal Republic. The Day of Unity thus gave, to use Hobsbawm's terminology, 'rapid and recognisable symbolic

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350 Ibid., 163-186.
form' to the structures and value systems of the Federal Republic and sought to strengthen the authority of the political actors and the political system they represented. Symbolically representing the subordination of the GDR, the unity festivities thus served to demonstrate and reinforce the superiority of West Germany over East Germany. Consequently, the 'traditions' of the Federal Republic were fostered at the expense of the 'traditions' of the GDR.

This research has also underlined the role of bureaucrats in inventing tradition. Bernhard Cohn has shown how, in Victorian India, officials were able to alter the nature and meaning of the celebrations by changing the form and staging of them. He highlighted that, by creating and developing traditions – from durbars to the introduction of banners of the coats of arms of Indian princes and chiefs – it was bureaucrats who constructed and maintained invented traditions. Similarly, Cannadine has demonstrated in his analysis of British coronations that organisers of festivities exercise a considerable degree of power in the construction of invented traditions. Ranger too has explored, in his analysis of invented tradition in colonial Africa, how bureaucrats have the potential to mould and influence how a nation is viewed. He showed, for example, how an administrative officer in Uganda, Edward Twining (later governor of Tanganyika) invented nearly every aspect of the festivities for the coronation of 1937 – from King George’s radio broadcast to the costumes of the boys’ parades. He also demonstrated that it was colonial administrators who, for example, told the Prince of Wales before his visit to southern and eastern Africa in 1925 that ‘if he did not appear in full scarlet before the assembled African masses it would be better for him not to appear at all’.

This chapter has shown that the regional organisers of the Day of Unity events similarly

353 For further examples of how invented traditions were used to reinforce superiority of one group over another, specifically of the British rulers over Africans and Indians, see ibid. and Cohn, B.S. (2006). Representing authority in Victorian India. In E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (Eds.), The invention of tradition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 165-211, particularly 172-175.
354 Cohn, 2006, Representing authority, 165-211.
355 Durbars were meetings at which gifts were awarded to selected Indian individuals by British rulers.
358 Ibid., 233-334.
359 Ibid., 232
had control over how their nation was represented. They were afforded considerable autonomy to stage the national holiday, and thus to shape the meaning of the rituals, as they wished. In this way, by inventing traditions they contributed to the construction of the united German nation. Hobsbawm has argued that traditions can be invented both 'officially and unofficially'. It is clear that the elements of the unity celebrations which established themselves as ‘traditional’ were officially created by political actors seeking to shape and maintain the image of the German nation and to propagate this image to others.

As Hobsbawm and Ranger have argued, the past of a nation is invented for the purpose of nation-building. It is invented in the sense that history is not ‘what has actually been preserved in popular memory’ but rather ‘what has been selected, written, popularised and institutionalised by those whose function it is to do so’. In a modern-day liberal democracy with a pluralistic media such as united Germany it is clearly more difficult to distort, falsify and fabricate ideas of the past than, for example, in 18th and 19th century Scotland or Wales. However, it is clear that the Day of Unity actors selected and focused on specific aspects of German history on the Day of Unity in order to promote certain interpretations of the past in the service of creating social cohesion among eastern and western Germans, legitimising democratic institutions and encouraging the socialisation of eastern Germans. It is to the analysis of the versions of the past presented by the political actors on the German national holiday that we now turn.

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360 Hobsbawm, 2006, Mass-producing traditions, 263
362 Hugh Trevor-Roper has shown how Scottish historians – through their 'discovery' of the, in fact, fabricated works of Ossian (‘the Celtic Homer’) and by undermining the idea that Irish-speaking Celts had colonised the Highlands – fabricated the myth that Ireland was culturally dependent on Scotland rather than vice versa. See Trevor-Roper, H. (2006). The invention of traditions: the Highland tradition of Scotland. In E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (Eds.), The invention of tradition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 15-42.
363 For analysis of how Welsh scholars and patriots in many respects invented a past that had not existed see Morgan, P. (2006). From a death to a view: the hunt for the Welsh past in the Romantic period. In E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (Eds.), The invention of tradition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 43-100.
2. Redefining the national past

"He who controls the past, controls the future; and he who controls the present, controls the past."

(George Orwell, 1903-1950)

In Germany, the power of the past in framing the present was recognised as early as the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century by German idealists like Schelling and Hegel. Following the atrocities of the National Socialist era, in the twentieth century, preoccupation with the past played an even more important role for German political actors. Vergangenheitsbewältigung contributed to the processes of catharsis, demonstrating responsibility for the past to victims and overcoming international fears and prejudices. Unification in 1990 raised fresh challenges for Germany’s political actors: how could the international community be reassured that Germany would remain committed to taking responsibility for its past despite having reversed the ‘punishment’ of division? How could a shared historical consciousness be developed among East and West Germans, divided for more than forty years? How should the history of the GDR, Germany’s second dictatorship – experienced by part of the population and completely removed from the experience of other Germans – be framed? In what way could a critical examination of the tribulations in the GDR facilitate the integration of East Germans into the Federal Republic? For the international actors a different issue was at stake: how could they express their concerns, or lack thereof, about Germany’s past in the post-Cold War climate? This chapter explores how the Day of Unity served as a platform on which German and international actors sought to address these questions by constructing, redefining and propagating specific ‘official’ interpretations of the German past. The first section

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365 For an analysis of the ways in which the German past was staged in other arenas, such as the media, architecture and exhibitions, see Assmann, 2007, Geschicht im Gedächtnis. For a general overview of the changes in memory culture across Europe after 1989 see Faulenbach, B., & Jelich, F-J. (Eds). (2006). 'Transformationen' der Erinnerungskulturen in Europa nach 1989. Essen: Klartext Verlag.
concentrates on the depiction of the National Socialist past and begins by examining in detail the different trends and phases in the construction of the National Socialist past by the German actors on the Day of Unity from 1990 to 2005. It then briefly sketches the alternative staging of the past by the international guest speakers. The shorter second section concentrates on the redefinition of the GDR past by analysing the interpretation of the GDR past presented on 3rd October from 1990 to 2005.

2.1 Redefining the National Socialist past

Recent controversies surrounding the memorials of the National Socialist past provide us with examples of how united Germany has struggled to frame itself in relation to its troubled past. The debates can be explained in part by the fact that, unlike other parts of German history such as that of the Weimar Republic or the Kaiserreich, the history of National Socialism has become a topic of interest not only for the historian but also for politicians, journalists, writers and the broader general public in Germany and abroad. In this context, the Day of German Unity served as an arena in which political actors redefined united Germany's interpretation of the National Socialist era in an attempt to influence attitudes on this period of German history both at home and abroad.

Phases of Vergangenheitsbewältigung

Political actors of the GDR and the Federal Republic had interpreted the National Socialist past in strikingly different ways. The GDR claimed that, having dealt with the National Socialist past during a complete system change from capitalism to...
Communism,\textsuperscript{369} the East German 'anti-fascist' state was disassociated from the crimes of National Socialist Germany.\textsuperscript{370} The \textit{Gründungsmythos} of anti-fascism\textsuperscript{371} allowed the GDR to 'universalise'\textsuperscript{372} the National Socialist past and, in turn, both legitimise the GDR and its Communism and discredit the 'capitalist' Federal Republic.\textsuperscript{373} Conversely, the Federal Republic, due to pressure both within and outside Germany,\textsuperscript{374} could neither 'universalise' nor 'externalise' the past convincingly and was thus forced to some extent to 'internalise' it, that is to say to turn it into an essential part of its self-understanding.\textsuperscript{375} In this context, following Rüsens and Jaeger, the memory culture of the Federal Republic saw three main phases of confrontation with the National Socialist past.\textsuperscript{376} After World War II, despite an official admission of the responsibility for the Holocaust, agreement to pay reparations to Jewish survivors and recognition of the state of Israel,\textsuperscript{377} the National Socialist past was largely ignored\textsuperscript{378} through what Fulbrook has termed 'collective amnesia'.\textsuperscript{379} Later, however, the second generation after the war, the so-called '68-ers', advocates of the purposeful use of politicised memory to influence domestic and international policy, sought to moralise their parents' involvement in National Socialism and its crimes.\textsuperscript{380} The 1980s saw considerable debate about the significant influence of the past over the present triggered in part by US President Ronald Reagan's 1985 visit to the soldiers' graveyard in Bitburg, where SS soldiers had also

\textsuperscript{370} For an example of an attempt by united Germany to deconstruct GDR anti-fascism, through altering the presentation of the 'Buchenwald Child', see Niven, B. (2007). \textit{The Buchenwald child: truth, fiction and propaganda}. New York: Camden House.
\textsuperscript{372} Reichel, 1995, \textit{Politik mit der Erinnerung}, 35.
\textsuperscript{373} Weigl & Colschen, 2001, Politik und Geschichte, 60.
\textsuperscript{376} Rüsens & Jaeger, 2001, Erinnerungskultur.
\textsuperscript{377} Lebow, 2006, \textit{The memory of politics}, 31.
\textsuperscript{378} Rüsens & Jaeger, 2001, Erinnerungskultur, 416.
\textsuperscript{379} Fulbrook, M. (2002). \textit{History of Germany 1918-2000} (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell, 245. At this time, however, individual episodes disrupted the tranquillity of this arrangement as witnessed by the Fischer controversy, which had raised questions and criticised convention regarding the aims of Germany in World War I.
been buried, and culminating in the *Historikerstreit*. In the years that followed, subsequent generations of Germans in the main preferred to historicise the National Socialist past, that is to say, although they accepted responsibility for the past, they did not believe it should influence policy decisions.

Despite the striking extent to which former Nazis were integrated into positions of power in the Federal Republic, through the perpetual renegotiation of the interpretation of the National Socialist past, the West German state could credibly consider itself as having dealt with the past much more extensively than the GDR. However, political actors of West Germany had to some extent also instrumentalised memory, albeit very differently. As Harold Marcuse has argued, the Federal Republic in many respects based its interpretation of the past on a number of myths: the myths of victimisation, ignorance and resistance. As a result of this, Germans in the Federal Republic were able to consider themselves victims of Hitler and of having had to endure Allied occupation, accusations of collective guilt and demands for compensation, and could also claim to have been actively involved in resistance and blissfully unaware of Nazi atrocities. Above all, however, by framing the Communist regime of the GDR as a dictatorship and clearly defining the Federal Republic as ‘anti-Communist’, the West German state could demonise the GDR and to some extent exonerate itself as the ‘better’ Germany. Thus, only with the end of the East-West conflict did the political actors of the Federal Republic begin in earnest to be self-critical about their own way of mastering the past. Moreover, unification

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marked the first opportunity for Germany as a whole to take responsibility for the Nazi era.

Unification consequently marked not a decline but rather an increase in concern with the National Socialist past. However, in their attempt to renegotiate and redefine ideas about the National past in united Germany's political arenas, German political actors immediately faced a major obstacle: different interpretations of the past had divided not only generations, perpetrators and victims, fathers and sons, those who profited and those who were punished, rich and poor, but also East and West Germans. The contrasting 'official' interpretations of the past that had informed the respective memories of the GDR and Federal Republic had led to dramatic differences in the historical consciousness of East and West Germans. An Allensbach survey carried out at the beginning of 1990 asking Germans how the history of their country differed from that of other countries showed, for example, that whereas 52% of West Germans considered the Nazi past the main distinguishing feature, this was true of only 4% of East Germans.

As Federal President Rau argued, at the Day of Unity celebrations in 2002, 'little has such a divisive effect as different conceptions of history'. Belief in a 'common legacy' and a 'sense of common fate and destiny' can, however, potentially create a sense of belonging among groups of people. As mentioned in the last chapter, political actors have consequently used national festivities to foster historical consciousness in Germany since the 19th century. In this context, the Day of Unity was suited from its inception as a platform for constructing a shared historical consciousness among all Germans by extending the dominant interpretation

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387 See Niven, 2001, Facing the Nazi past, 2.
of the National Socialist past to include the former citizens of the GDR. The interpretation of the National Socialist past in the GDR, largely discredited with the collapse of the SED state, had provided no viable alternative basis for the official memory of united Germany. The political actors thereby encouraged the cultural synchronisation of the historical consciousness and ‘Wir-Gefühl’ of eastern and western Germans by staging a shared foundation for a shared future. In this way, the Day of Unity served as an arena in which German political actors sought to overcome the ‘divided past’ and competing conceptions of history in the process of Vergangenheitsbewältigung.

The interpretation of the past that the German political actors promoted on the Day of Unity changed considerably from 1990 to 2005 due to both internal and external factors. The shifts and changes highlighted the way in which the German actors used the Day of Unity, within a changing context, as a platform from which to influence shifting ideas concerning the place for the National Socialist past in united Germany’s self-understanding.

At the unity celebrations in the early 1990s, German political actors staged the acceptance of the National Socialist past as a defining feature in united Germany’s self-portrayal. The 3rd October anniversaries were characterised by a complete acceptance of the past, by an emphasis that all Germans were equally accountable for addressing the past as well as by repetition that ‘never again’ should right-wing extremist ideas be allowed to dominate Germany. In the very first speech of the unification ceremony in 1990, for example, former Volkskammer President Sabine Bergmann-Pohl stated that although there was every reason to celebrate German unification, there was also a need to recognise the ‘dreadfulness of German history’ for which Auschwitz would remain an ‘everlasting warning’. With reference to the ‘commonality of Germans...in their historical responsibility’, Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker, who had famously spoken to the Bundestag in 1985 about accepting responsibility for the past, reinforced Bergmann-Pohl’s comments. He

393 Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.
394 See President von Weizsäcker’s speech in ibid.
emphasised that because the National Socialist dictatorship had caused 'immeasurable injustice and suffering', Germans would 'always remain mindful of the victims'.

The references, in 1990, to the National Socialist past can be understood in both a national and international context. Domestically, the rhetoric was designed not only to foster a shared historical consciousness among eastern and western Germans but also to assuage left-wing West German fears of a nationalist resurgence in the wake of unification. Beyond the German context, it sought to lessen the fears of the international community. The international responses to unification had demonstrated that German unification raised new concerns, not only with regard to Germany's size and strength but also with regard to its interpretation of the past. Many in the international community, particularly Germany's neighbours and those who had directly suffered under the Nazi regime, were concerned that questions concerning the GDR dictatorship would overshadow those about Nazi atrocities.

Members of the international community had made it clear in their congratulatory messages to Germany during unification, for example, that the latter should not signify an opportunity for Germany to break from its responsibility of addressing its past, but rather that the opposite was true: an enlarged Germany had an even greater responsibility to address and not suppress its National Socialist past. Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers of the Netherlands, for example, stated, 'We have since the war invested a lot in democracy in Europe. It must be possible to prevent history from repeating itself.' Similarly, President Wojciech Jaruzelski of Poland hoped that German unification would mark a 'new era...free from aspects of the past, which had brought Europe misfortune and tragedies'. In this context, in a style reminiscent of the Adenauer government in post-war Germany, acceptance of guilt for the 'Third

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396 Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.
Reich’ by German political actors on Germany’s national holiday arguably served to attain legitimacy and approval for united Germany and further facilitate the country’s acceptance into the international community. 400

The following year, German political actors once more placed acceptance of the National Socialist past at the centre of Germany’s self-understanding by staging 3rd October to some extent as a day for remembrance. This was epitomised by the symbolic gesture to commemorate victims of the Holocaust: on the morning of 3rd October 1991, representatives of the Bundestag, the Bundesrat, and the federal and regional governments visited the Neuengamme concentration camp to lay wreaths. 401 That those involved in the service were members of the government and other members from the lower and upper chambers of parliament suggested a cross-party consensus on the recognition of responsibility for Nazi atrocities. This served not only to reaffirm the ‘official’ interpretation of the National Socialist past to the German population but also, once more, showed the international community that united Germany accepted responsibility for its past on its first birthday. The emphasis on the National Socialist past at the first anniversary in 1991 can also be understood in the context of the numerous racial attacks that had taken place in the days preceding the unity celebrations. In light of these attacks, Mayor of Hamburg Henning Voscherau drew parallels in his speech between the National Socialist past and the present day in the course of his appeal to Germans to vigorously oppose any ill treatment of foreigners. 402

The calls for ‘never again’ were characteristically central to the speeches of the German actors on the second and third anniversaries of unification. In 1992, for example, von Weizsäcker, again in the context of contemporary racial attacks in Germany, called for citizens to support the police in their attempts to deal with racism by having the courage to stand up for their own beliefs, lest ‘it once more be the case

that we look away, or even look on, whilst helpless people are pursued’. In 1993, a year that saw the opening of the national memorial of united Germany, the Neue Wache in Berlin, criticised by many as a ‘catch-all’ for all victims of former German crimes in World War I and World War II, Süssmuth was among those who spoke of Vergangenheitsbewältigung by saying that, because Germany’s history ‘differs from that of other nations’, Germans must completely embrace the past. The Bundestag President linked the past with the present and the future by saying that Germans can ‘never again look away’ when ‘people – foreigners or Germans, Jews, Christians or Muslims – have their dignity trampled upon’. Whereas von Weizsäcker had suggested in 1991 that Germans had ‘stood by and watched’, Süssmuth’s avoidance of such references perhaps provides the first sign of a slightly less punitive rhetoric.

While the staging of the National Socialist past by the political actors in the early years after unification was characterised by the calls for ‘never again’, in the mid-1990s the interpretation of the past was instead heavily influenced by the anniversaries of key historical events. 1994 marked the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising, when the Polish Home Army attempted to liberate Warsaw from German occupation. This anniversary consequently received a great deal of attention in the speeches of the German political actors and also influenced the choice of international guest speaker, Polish writer Andrzej Szczypiorski, who had taken part in the Warsaw Uprising and was subsequently held captive at Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Szczypiorski, whose works focused mainly on people in totalitarian regimes, was a symbolic guest speaker for the Day of Unity since, despite the negative experiences he suffered as a result of German actions, he was a major advocate of German-Polish reconciliation. In fact, he later received the Bundesverdienskreuz (German Federal Cross of Merit). In his Day of Unity

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403 Von Weizsäcker, 1992, Ansprache, 1003.
406 Ibid.
address, Szczypiorski stated that the erosion of Communist power and its subsequent collapse in Poland, which opened the path to unification of the German people, was not a paradox of the German-Polish past but rather 'completely self-evident'.

Mayor of Bremen Klaus Wedemeier also sought to reframe attitudes about the German-Polish past by stating that the German-Polish border treaty, ratified on 14th November 1990, represented a ‘novelty’ in German history since it confirmed the borders of the Federal Republic with both internal and external agreement. For Wedemeier, the treaty was ‘protection against a relapse into the disastrous mistakes of [German] history and another form of Sonderweg’.

Wedemeier made an explicit reference to the German atrocities in Poland stating that ‘over five million Poles – Jews and Christians – were killed through war and annihilation’. He also spoke of how Polish President Lech Wałęsa, who was a guest at the Day of Unity celebrations that year, had, by inviting Chancellor Kohl to the commemoration of the Warsaw Uprising on 1st August, ‘stretched out a hand of reconciliation’. Wedemeier interpreted Wałęsa’s words on the anniversary of the Uprising as having ‘ended what Brandt started when he fell to his knees at the Warsaw Ghetto’, referring to Brandt’s symbolic gesture on the day of the signing of the Warsaw Treaty of 7th December 1970 in front of a cenotaph of the Jewish ghetto. Wedemeier thereby used the Day of Unity as a means to deepen German-Polish relations by underlining that the border with Poland was eternally fixed, that Germany was aware of, and took responsibility for, the past atrocities against Poles and that Germany and Poland could now go ‘hand in hand into a shared European future’.

Although the discourse about the German-Polish past was by no means developed enough to lay to rest the complex and contested issue of the expulsion of German refugees from Poland, Wedemeier’s rhetoric implied a certain level of ‘normalisation’ in relation to the German-Polish past: in simplified terms, Poland and Germany had ‘dealt with the past’ and were ready to look to a joint future. This was, in part at least, reflected in Germany’s pledge to aid Poland’s path to entry into the

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EU as well as by a mutual desire for an improvement in German-Polish relations among the political actors of these countries to foster bilateral trade and security.

Unlike Wedemeier and Szczypiorski, Federal President Herzog, albeit still focusing on the National Socialist past, did not refer to the Warsaw Uprising in 1994. Looking ahead, he sought to influence views on how Germany should consider the coming year, in which the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II would be commemorated. He said that the anniversary would give Germans,

'...the opportunity to agree about the responsibility for history and to keep learning for the future: war on German ground nevermore. Violence, restrictions of freedom and persecution of those who think differently — or look different — on German ground nevermore. That is the motto under which we were unified and under which we...want to live — western Germans and eastern Germans.'

Herzog’s speech exemplifies how the discourse of the political actors on the Day of Unity not only sought to frame recent and current events — the event of unification, xenophobia in contemporary Germany or recent German-Polish relations — but also to project an interpretation, even proactively, of the ways in which Germans should use the National Socialist past in the future grounding of united Germany’s self-understanding. Herzog’s rhetoric thus reaffirmed the centrality of this issue for unified Germany.

At the unity celebrations in 1995, a year described at the very beginning of his Day of Unity address as a ‘year of commemoration and remembrance' and which also saw the publication of Victor Klemperer’s diaries with their insider’s account of Nazi victimisation, Federal President Rau presented unification as a recompense for having dealt with the National Socialist past. At the same time, however, he made it clear that the process of Vergangenheitsbewältigung must continue. At the beginning of his speech he mentioned key remembrance dates: 27th January, the date on which Auschwitz was liberated, and 8th May, the end of World War II in Germany. Rau used these dates as examples of failure in German history. He went on to emphasise the benefits of dealing with the past by saying that on 3rd October 1990 Germans

413 The following references are drawn from ibid.
discovered that history can also be a success: Germans received the opportunity ‘to start anew together’, because they had ‘learnt from [their] history’. Rau also suggested that the nature of commemoration on the German national holiday was tied with the past. He stated that Germans had learnt that ‘only democracy...can protect the dignity of each individual...and is a prerequisite for good neighbourly relations’. The 3rd October celebrations to date, according to Rau, showed this: on that day we encounter a Germany, ‘which has become much larger, a country that soberly, dispassionately and without false pathos is certain of itself, its weaknesses and its merits’. Rau thereby demonstrated that the manner of commemoration on the Day of Unity was linked to the lessons that Germany had drawn from its past. The deliberate discussion of Germany’s image in the world, as typified here in Rau’s words, indicates how considerations of the international community influenced not only the interpretation of the past but also the nature of celebration on the Day of Unity.

Whilst 1996 was dominated by rhetoric about who was responsible for the National Socialist past, as discussed in the following section, 1997 was marked by anticipation of another anniversary, namely the 150th anniversary of the revolution of 1848/49. This marked the first major shift toward a ‘normalisation’ of the National Socialist past on the German national holiday in the sense that it was relegated to a chapter in German history alongside other, much more positive eras. Although it remained to some extent controversial to talk about ‘normality’ in Germany, in the years after unification not only those on the Right but also left-wing politicians, such as Schröder, and left-leaning academics, began to promote some form of ‘normalisation’, arguing that post-unified Germany needed ‘a public culture of memory that [balanced] the commemoration of crimes with a sense of shared accomplishment’.416 In this context, rhetoric on the Day of Unity anniversary in 1997

shifted away from the National Socialist past and allowed the focus instead to settle on a positive event in German history, which represented the struggle of the German people for democracy through calls for freedom of the press and the desire for a national parliament.

Rhetoric about the revolution of 1848/49 almost entirely replaced discourse about the National Socialist past and served to contrast the potentials of the former with the realities of the latter. Minister-President of Baden-Württemberg Erwin Teufel, for example, spoke of how instead of two World Wars, genocide and suppression, the 20th century 'could have', in the words of French-Jewish philosopher Raymond Aron, 'been Germany’s century'. Teufel called for Germans to be aware of not only the negative but also the positive parts of German history, arguing that 'joy about the positive parts of [German] history [could] be used as a productive force for overcoming the enormous problems that [Germans] face due to domestic and international challenges'. In this context, Teufel framed the Day of Unity as a 'historic date for Germany and Europe' by contending that 3rd October represented the final realisation of the goal of the 1848 revolution, namely 'unity in freedom'. In this way, Teufel emphasised to Germans and the international community that the German past was not entirely negative but had actually made constructive contributions to the history of Europe. The fact that Teufel, a Christian Democrat, focused on the 1848 revolution, a centre-piece of the Left’s tradition, serves to demonstrate the extent of transformation and convergence of the centre Right and the broad based consensus regarding democratic norms and ideas in the post-war period. More importantly, it provides a further example of the high degree to which the interpretation of the German national past on the Day of Unity was borne on and further propagated by a set of now cross-party traditions and self-understanding.

Just over a week after the Day of Unity celebrations in 1998, the idea of drawing a line under the National Socialist past became a major topic of debate in Germany and illustrated that not only anniversaries but also cultural and political events could influence the interpretation of the past staged on the Day of Unity by the

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418 Ibid.
419 Ibid, 936.
German political actors. On 11th October, at his award ceremony for the Peace Prize of the German Publishers and Booksellers' Association at the Frankfurt Book Fair, Martin Walser argued that Auschwitz should not be instrumentalised and that there should not be a continual presentation of German disgrace. The German playwright and novelist's suggestion that Germany had apologised enough for the crimes of the 'Third Reich' over five decades, enraged the Chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany Ignatz Bubis, who left the auditorium. A subsequent battle in the press ensued between Walser and Bubis and, although they eventually reconciled their differences, the debate brought the politics of the past into the public sphere once more.

Consequently, the following year the rhetoric of the national political actors at the Day of Unity mirrored the debate about whether or not a line should be drawn under the National Socialist past. This was epitomised by the way in which CDU Minister-President of Hesse Roland Koch and SPD Chancellor Schröder presented contrasting portrayals of the past, as a result of which the traditionally consensual presentation of the past on the Day of Unity was barely visible. Schröder, striving to quell the concerns of the international community and of those within his party fearful that there would be no place for the memory of the National Socialist era in the Chancellor's so-called Berlin Republic, explicitly rejected any suggestion of 'normalisation'. He used emotive language to describe how the 'crimes of Auschwitz are forever burned in the memory of our people:' for Schröder there could be 'no suppression, no forgetting and no line drawn under the past in any way whatsoever'. He used an international argument to support his interpretation of the past, namely that Germany's neighbours were 'considerably less anxious' when Germany was 'conscious of its past'. In contrast to this, Koch, in somewhat ambiguous terms, implied that moving on from the National Socialist past was acceptable. He referred to Joachim Gauck's distinction between consciously and unconsciously forgetting: the latter, which was acceptable when failure and guilt had

422 Schröder, 1999, Rede, 636.
423 Ibid.
been fully accepted, provided a sense of ‘wonderful alleviation’. Koch indirectly called for a ‘normalisation’ of attitudes towards the ‘Third Reich’ by saying that although Gauck’s words referred to the GDR past, they could be seen as ‘valid in general’. Although Koch seemed to retract from the possible implication of these words by ambiguously saying that Germans ‘must not forget’ the ‘dictatorship that Germany experienced’, (one notes here the use of the passive voice), he juxtaposed this with positive aspects of the German past, focusing on the significant achievement of key political actors in the post-war period.

In the years that followed, the debate about the correct way in which to deal with the National Socialist past remained a topic of debate for political actors outside the official celebration venues, as exemplified by FDP politician Klaus Kinkel’s address to the Bundestag in September 2000. In his speech on the status of German unity he argued that, on the Day of Unity, it must not be forgotten or suppressed that Germans ‘have two unjust regimes...to deal with’. The opening of the controversial Exhibition on the Crimes of the German Army (Wehrmachttausstellung), which showed widespread involvement of non-SS soldiers in Nazi crimes but initially also had clear scientific weaknesses (such as non-authentic photographs etc.), and the David Irving-Deborah Lipstadt libel case in which the latter successfully defended having described the avid British Holocaust denier as a ‘discredited historian’, also kept the topic of the interpretation of the National Socialist past alive among the general public. Nevertheless, a survey from the Institut für praxisorientierte Sozialforschung showed that, by the end of the 20th century, 56% of Germans favoured drawing a line under the National Socialist past. In line with this, at the turn of the century German political actors, once more in unison, continued to advocate a ‘normalisation’ in attitudes toward the

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425 Ibid., 635.
426 Ibid.
National Socialist past. This manifested itself at both the CDU-dominated Day of Unity celebrations in 2000, organised under the supervision of CDU member Biedenkopf and with speeches by him and former CDU member de Maizièrè, and at the SPD-dominated 2001 celebrations (both German speakers, Wolfgang Thierse and Kurt Beck, were from the SPD, the latter as then Bundesrat President was also responsible for overseeing the staging of the celebrations), by an almost complete avoidance of the topic of the National Socialist past by the German political speakers.

Events at the beginning of 2002 showed that the politics of the past still played an important role in European politics. At the beginning of February, for example, Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban had contended that EU membership be withheld from Slovakia and the Czech Republic until they revoked the Beneš decrees of 1945 that had removed citizenship rights from all Germans and Hungarians, with the exception of recognised (Communist) resistance fighters, due to their alleged collective support for Nazi Germany.\footnote{Lebow, 2006, The memory of politics, 2.} A week later, Czech Prime Minister Miloš Zeman's description of ethnic Germans expelled at the end of World War II as 'Hitler's fifth column' resulted in Chancellor Schröder, who may have supported such a view in 1968, cancelling his visit to Prague on 28th February.\footnote{Ibid.} Germany's Western partners such as France and the UK had, since 1945, seen Germany take responsibility for crimes committed during the National Socialist era. By contrast, from behind the Iron Curtain, Central and Eastern European countries had had no opportunity until the collapse of Communism to call Germany to task for the crimes committed against the citizens of their nations. Despite the counterindications that the Central and Eastern European countries were not ready for any line to be drawn under the National Socialist past, the SPD-dominated celebrations in Berlin in 2002 nevertheless saw the trend towards a promotion of 'normalisation' continue. For example, echoing the words of the Mayor of Berlin in 1990, Momper of the SPD, that Berlin mirrored both the high and low points of German history,\footnote{Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.} Mayor of Berlin Klaus Wowereit, also of the SPD, framed Berlin as a city where one
was confronted not only with two dictatorships but also with unity and freedom. The combination of the focus on both the positive and negative elements of history, rather than simply on the negative epitomised the growing support of 'normalisation' in the portrayal of the German past. This was also visible in the address by Federal President Rau in which he warned against forgetting the past but, in this context, immediately went on to differentiate between nationalism and patriotism and to suggest that loving one's country was positive. In this way, the German political actors no longer construed the National Socialist era as a defining characteristic of united Germany's self-understanding as in the early 1990s. Instead, it would seem that the political actors, having accepted guilt for the crimes of the 'Third Reich' since 1945 and having stressed this once again in the first few years after unification, thought that sufficient time had passed and the moment had arrived to reframe attitudes toward the National Socialist past on the Day of Unity – despite the indications that this was against the will of Germany's immediate neighbours to the East.

In 2003 National Socialism was again barely mentioned in the speeches of the German speakers at the central celebrations. This is particularly surprising in light of the fact that the international guest speaker was Jewish-Hungarian novelist Imre Kertész who, having suffered under both the National Socialist and Communist regimes, had made the Holocaust the central theme of his works. It appears that, in stark contrast to 1994, when the presence of Szczypiorski had contributed to a concentration of rhetoric on the National Socialist past, in 2003 the attendance of a former victim was in itself considered sufficient reference to the negative aspects of German history.

That same year, at the unity celebrations in the village of Neuhof in Hesse, however, the level of so-called 'normalisation' of the National Socialist past proposed by CDU politician Martin Hohmann caused public outrage. In his speech – largely interpreted as anti-Semitic, for instance in his suggestion that the atrocities carried out...
by Communists in Russia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe were somehow essentially Jewish acts or in his instrumentalisation of the quite openly anti-Semitic rants of Henry Ford - Hohmann rejected the claim that Germany was a 'nation of perpetrators' during the National Socialist era and also suggested that Germany stop paying compensation to Nazi victims to ease the economic problems of post-unification Germany. Hohmann's speech, out of touch with the prevailing discourse at the time - both in terms of its utter rejection of any serious continued engagement by contemporary Germans of the question of responsibility or guilt for the acts of National Socialist Germany and in terms of its twisted portrayal of Jews in Communist atrocities - resulted in the dismissal of the Hessian politician from parliament and later from his party. Bundestag President Philipp Jenninger's resignation following his arguably controversial speech on the 50th anniversary of the Jewish pogrom in 1988 had shown the importance attached to the 'official' portrayal of the National Socialist past at commemorative events in the Federal Republic. Although naturally the content of the speech by Hohmann could hardly be compared to that of Jenninger, it nevertheless epitomised the continued sensitivity and poignancy of the nature of the past promoted by political actors on the Day of Unity. It also highlighted the way in which the particular version of the past presented by political speakers on the German national holiday could have damaging consequences for their political careers if not considered 'politically correct' or in line with the dominant discourse of the time.

Although in 2004 there were further signs of resistance to 'normalisation' from abroad, as illustrated in Poland in September of that year by the unanimous passing of a resolution demanding reparations from Germany, a 'normalisation' in rhetoric about the 'Third Reich' was once again perceptible on the Day of Unity. German writer and GDR dissident Reiner Kunze, for example, who was invited to speak at the fourteenth anniversary, referring to Brandt's symbolic gesture, spoke of how 'none of his Slavic or Jewish colleagues' would expect any nation to 'live on its

437 For an interesting analysis of this speech and its reception see Domansky, 1992, 'Kristallnacht'.
knees’. He argued that although a nation that has ‘sinned against other nations’ must kneel down, ‘staying on its knees’ prevents it from being able to look backwards or forwards. Federal President Köhler went yet further with lengthy descriptions focusing solely on the positive parts of German history citing numerous examples, particularly cultural achievements, such as the quality of German universities in the 19th century. Further emphasising the extent of western German dominance of the unity celebrations and the degree to which the political actors sought to stage united Germany as merely an extension of the Federal Republic, Köhler, as in former years, once more stressed the great success achieved by Germans in the post-World War II period – which could clearly be applied to the Federal Republic but was removed from the experience of East Germans – as a reason for pride. ‘Normalisation’ was also noticeable in the way in which, for the first time by a German political actor on the Day of Unity, the idea of Germans as victims in World War II was mentioned, albeit fleetingly. Reflecting the emerging trend of popularised depiction of the suffering of Germans in World War II at this time in the media and in publications such as Jörg Friedrich’s 2003 book Brandstätten (filled with macabre photographs of Allied bombing victims in Germany), Köhler – referring to the 12 to 14 million Germans who fled the Soviet army or were expelled from Eastern Europe – spoke of how the ‘integration of refugees and expellees’ after World War II, counted among the achievements of German history. It is too early to know whether Köhler’s rhetoric represented a new enduring emphasis on the notion of Germans as victims in the interpretation of the past presented by the German political actors on the Day of

442 See Niven, 2006, German victimhood, 3.
The topic of Germans as victims was certainly still a delicate political topic at this time and, as the Hohmann affair showed, such sensitive topics could have devastating political consequences if staged in the wrong manner in an arena such as that of the German national holiday celebrations. This may help to explain in part the lack of any real attempt to address this topic by the Day of Unity speakers despite the growing interest among the German public at that time.

However, the broader trend of ‘normalisation’ in the staging of the past continued to shape the unity celebrations in the year that followed. In the same year that saw the erection of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in the country’s capital, ‘normalisation’ was visible on the German national holiday not through the emphasis on both the positive and negative parts of history, through the portrayal of Germans as victims or through the suggestion that a preoccupation with the past was restrictive but simply, as in earlier years, by an almost complete absence of rhetoric about the ‘Third Reich’.

**International actors: staging a different past**

As we have seen, throughout the period from 1990 to 2005, a high degree of consensus existed among the various German political actors regarding the ‘official’ representation of the National Socialist past. However, international actors for the most part offered a very different interpretation of the past on the Day of Unity anniversaries. In 1998, for example, President of the Czech Republic Václav Havel’s depiction of the past stood in stark contrast to that of the German speakers. Havel, who had been supportive of German unification, had been asked to speak at the Hanover celebrations by Minister-President of Lower Saxony Schröder, since the two politicians had met frequently in the period before the Day of Unity celebrations.\(^{445}\) Havel’s rhetoric differed from that of the German speakers in two main regards.


Before the collapse of the GDR, a large proportion of West Germans had become accustomed to the *status quo* of division\(^{446}\) and many Leftist Germans had even adopted the discourse of philosopher Karl Jaspers that German division was a punishment for German crimes in World War II.\(^{447}\) German political actors on the Day of Unity reflected these views and while presenting the time of division as ‘bitter years’,\(^{448}\) nevertheless framed division as a ‘necessary’ consequence of World War II. At the unification ceremony in 1990, for example, Federal President von Weizsäcker had stated that ‘without the war, which was started by Germany under Hitler, there never would have been division’.\(^{449}\) In the years that followed, many German political actors went so far as to frame the social and economic problems resulting from unification as the consequences of division.\(^{450}\) Havel, however, unequivocally presented division as positive in his Day of Unity address by saying that the separation of Germany was ‘good for the whole world’ since ‘it is good for the whole world when something falls apart that was born from evil’.\(^{451}\) ‘This’, he continued, ‘is twice as true as far as Germany is concerned, since evil in Germany means evil in the whole world’\(^{452}\) — a remark met with silence by the audience.\(^{453}\)

Havel’s discourse also differed from that of the German speakers concerning who had been responsible for World War II in Europe. German political actors consistently and unanimously presented the National Socialist past as the collective responsibility of all Germans, which inevitably influenced the interpretation of the past with regard to advocacy of ‘normalisation’. In 1998, for example, Federal President Herzog stated that ‘all those who knew of the existence of Adolf Hitler’s intentions...carry the moral responsibility. Far from, therefore, solely the part of the nation that he fanaticised’.\(^{454}\) In stark contrast to this, however, instead of framing all Germans as responsible for the ‘Third Reich’, Havel focused on the centrality of

\[^{446}\text{Augstein, 2005, Nationalsozialismus, 245.}\]
\[^{449}\text{Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.}\]
\[^{450}\text{See, for example, Herzog, 1994, Ansprache, 843.}\]
\[^{452}\text{Ibid.}\]
Stalin's role in post-war politics. For Havel, Germany was divided 'because a certain former enemy of Hitler, then his friend, then later his enemy again - his name was Dschugaschwili - decided, after dozens of millions of his fellow citizens had fallen in the war, that it would be good to leave an impression on those that were left'.

Havel was not the first international guest on the Day of Unity to focus on the centrality of key actors rather than everyday citizens in the crimes of World War II. In 1996, coincidentally just two months after Daniel Goldhagen had released his controversial book, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, essentially accusing all Germans of having been complicit in the Holocaust due to their so-called inherent anti-Semitism during Nazism, Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Horn implied that Germans should not have been associated with the guilt of the 'Third Reich' since they themselves were the victims of the dictators. Horn, invited to speak by Minister-President Stoiber as a gesture of thanks for opening the Hungarian border in 1989 stated, for example, that although Germans 'already suffered from two dictatorships...the international public consider them guilty. This belongs - so I hope - once and for all to the past'. Horn, who went on to stress that Germans have been 'thoroughly healed' through the events of the past, had, like Havel, been entirely free to select the topic for his Day of Unity address and the content of his speech was not discussed with the organisers of the event before the ceremony. Horn and Havel in many respects propagated a 'normalisation' of attitudes toward the National Socialist past that went further than the 'normalisation' proposed by the German political actors in the mid to late 1990s, or indeed, in the case of Havel, by the Czech government in later years.

In 2003, however, at a time when the German speakers were beginning to advocate 'normalisation' of the past more decisively, the role of the international speaker was reversed. The discourse of the international speaker continued to offer a contrasting interpretation of the past, not by promoting 'normalisation' but rather by criticising it. In his works, Nobel Prize winner Kertész had long promoted the idea that the legacy of the National Socialist genocide had fundamentally influenced, and should continue to influence, European society and civilisation.\(^{462}\) It was therefore evident to those involved in the invitation of Kertész as main speaker at the Day of Unity in 2003 that he would not support a 'normalisation' of the past on the thirteenth anniversary of German unity since, according to the author's belief, any attempt to draw a definitive line under the National Socialist past would have meant a rejection of this event in the German collective consciousness. In a speech containing numerous emotive words, such as 'immeasurable suffering', 'barbarism', 'millions of people being persecuted and killed' as well as explicit use of the word 'Holocaust', which German speakers had often euphemised, Kertész interpreted his presence at the Day of Unity not as a paradox, but as a symbol of 'working together' with the goal of 'catharsis' of a past that cannot be recompensed. Kertész, referring to the German taboos which were being broken 'one after another', criticised the way in which rhetoric about drawing a line under the past had emerged from the debate about Germans as victims.\(^{463}\) Kertész's stance against 'normalisation' in many respects played a very important role on the Day of Unity: it served to ensure that the German national holiday could not be exclusively seen domestically or abroad as a platform for the advocacy of 'normalisation'.

The large extent to which the rhetoric of the international speakers was at variance with that of the German actors' interpretation of the past regarding German division, the responsibility of everyday Germans in Nazi crimes and the appropriateness of 'normalisation' also served an additional function: the historical interpretation of the National Socialist past on the Day of Unity was to some extent


contested and fragmented. Although the German political actors presented a broadly consensual version of the past, the fact that international actors were invited to speak added a different dimension to the interpretation of the past. The invitation of the international actors allowed German political actors to present Germany as open to transnational communication and negotiation of the country’s history and self-understanding. The unity celebrations consequently served to underline the extent to which not only domestic but also external actors participated in the negotiation and construction of the memory of the German national past.464

2.2 Redefining the GDR past

Unification brought with it the end, and consequently the need to deal with, another German dictatorship. United Germany thus confronted, to use the phrase coined by Eberhard Jäckel in the early 1990s, a ‘doppelte Vergangenheitsbewältigung’, namely the challenge of dealing with both the National Socialist and Stalinist dictatorships. As a result of this ‘double past’, as François and Schulze have argued, Germany faced a special responsibility in Europe and the world to address its history.466 In this context, then, it is unsurprising that German political actors also used the Day of Unity as a platform to propagate specific interpretations of the GDR past.467 Through treatment of the East German past, they placed not only the history of National Socialism but also that of the former East German state at the core of Germany’s history on the Day of Unity.

464 For an analysis of the extent to which issues of remembering the National Socialist past, particularly the Holocaust, were being shaped by globalisation see, for example, Levy, D., & Sznaider, N. (2001). Erinnerung im globalen Zeitalter: der Holocaust. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.


466 François, E., & Schulze, H. (2001). Einleitung. In E. François & H. Schulze (Eds.), Deutsche Erinnerungsorte - I. Munich: C.H. Beck, 9-24, here 12. The extent to which the two dictatorships can be compared received considerable media and academic attention following unification, yet these discussions were largely ignored on the Day of Unity anniversaries. For an interesting recent study supporting the theory that the two dictatorships are comparable in numerous respects see Baberowski, J., & Doering-Manteuffel, A. (2006). Ordnung durch Terror: Gewaltexzesse und Vernichtung im nationalsozialistischen und im stalinistischen Imperium. Bonn: Dietz Verlag.

The specific interpretation of the GDR past promoted by German political actors at the Day of Unity anniversaries had potentially significant implications regarding not only practical issues of property and pension rights but also regarding the way in which eastern Germans considered themselves. After 1990, various public discourses emerged about the appropriate interpretation of the 'second dictatorship' including: a renewed application of the theory of totalitarianism developed by emigrants such as Hannah Arendt or Carl J. Friedrich's comparisons of the National Socialist and Stalinist regimes, the presentation of the GDR as an illegitimate state or as a 'giant prison camp', a more sympathetic view of the SED regime as a 'noble experiment' that had gone awry', a complex view of the GDR as having had both repressive elements and relative normality and a Diktaturvergleich understanding that established not only similarities but also differences in the ideological motivations, objectives and systems of repression of the two regimes.

At unity celebrations in the early 1990s, German speakers from across the political spectrum stressed that Germans must work through the GDR past. In stark contrast to the plethora of various public discourses about the GDR past, however, German political actors on the Day of Unity presented for the most part a highly consensual, simplified interpretation of the GDR. Unlike the depiction of the National Socialist past, this was not complemented by a contrasting discourse by the international speakers, who almost entirely avoided any direct reference to the GDR in their speeches. Although the political actors consistently stressed negative aspects of the GDR, the ways in which they chose to condemn the GDR were adapted to the changing concerns and attitudes of the German public in the period from 1990 to 2005.

In 1990, an Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach survey showed that 54% of East Germans agreed with the statement 'in the GDR we were all equal and we had work, therefore it was a good time'. Given that a slight majority of East Germans

considered the GDR positively, it is unsurprising that German political actors stressed at length the negative aspects of the GDR on the eve of unification and at the unification ceremony in order to promote the assimilation of East Germans into united Germany. In a televised address on 2\textsuperscript{nd} October, for instance, Minister-President of the GDR de Maizièrè heavily criticised the GDR, describing its distinguishing features as having included the ‘[Berlin] Wall and barbed wire, ruin of the economy and destruction of the environment, ideologically calculated spoon-feeding and instigated mistrust’.\textsuperscript{471} The speakers at the unification ceremony similarly emphasised the suppression, corruption and lack of democracy in the GDR.\textsuperscript{472} In a rare explicit reference to the Stasi files, Federal President von Weizsäcker went so far as to attempt to influence views on how the files should be dealt with, by saying that it would be ‘humanly unacceptable and constitutionally insupportable’ to forget the Stasi rule.\textsuperscript{473} The German political speakers thus used the Day of Unity from its inception as a forum for propagating the Federal Republic’s interpretation of the GDR past – an interpretation which served to further justify western German hegemony in united Germany. In this way, the political actors demonstrated that they saw no place for GDR features in united Germany’s self-portrayal.

The following year, rhetoric about the GDR remained equally negative and, in contrast to the anniversaries that followed, there was reference to the Berlin Wall shootings.\textsuperscript{474} The nature of the rhetoric of the first anniversary served to show that the negative portrayal of the SED past not only intended to discourage eastern Germans from reminiscing about their former state, but also to reinforce to western Germans the illegitimacy of the GDR, as a means of countering possible critique of the necessity of unification. Political speakers made the need for unification explicit and stressed over and again that ‘neither those in the West or the East’ wanted to

\textsuperscript{472} See, for example, Volkskammer President Bergmann-Pohl and President von Weizsäcker’s speeches: \textit{Tag der Deutschen Einheit}, 1990, ZDF.
\textsuperscript{473} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{474} Voscherau, 1991, Ansprache, 858.
return to how things were. Stüssmuth, for example, sought to illustrate the
importance of unity by citing the events of the Moscow Putsch six weeks earlier, in
which reactionary Communist members of the Soviet government, critical of the
extent of reforms, temporarily deposed President Mikhail Gorbachev and attempted
to take control of the country.

Reflecting the escalating social problems in eastern Germany at that time and
epitomising the extent to which current affairs influenced the construction of the past
on the Day of Unity, the juxtaposition of the security of the GDR with its
shortcomings characterised the staging of the GDR past from 1992 to 1994. In 1992,
for example, Minister-President of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Berndt Seite,
referring to the extensive social security in the GDR, stated that although ‘being taken
by hand from the cradle to the grave may sound tempting, simple and safe [it should
not be forgotten] that this was made possible through informers, Stasi and the
suppression of young people’. In 1994, Federal President Herzog went further to
describe the very questioning of the negative interpretation of the GDR past as futile.
In his speech he contended that ascertaining whether the GDR could have been
reformed, whether monetary union and the unification process took place too quickly
or whether the economic system in the West was more or less humane than that of the
GDR would be topics that ‘historians will argue about one day’, thus implying the
time was not appropriate for such academic debates.

As has been cogently argued, imposing the history of the ‘victors’, namely the
Federal Republic, onto the interpretation of the East German past, and ‘treating the
GDR as a footnote of world history, or as a dark background to the shining success of
the [Federal Republic]’ is problematic since it negates the memories of eastern
Germans. In this context, the discourse at the fifth anniversary of German unity
was slightly different from that of the preceding and following anniversaries.
Although, as in 1990, the Stasi files were mentioned and their opening justified and

476 Ibid.
477 Seite, 1992, Ansprache, 1006.
supported, orators recommended that Germans should not over-generalise the GDR experience. Contrary to the black and white portrayal of the GDR era at the early unity celebrations, Federal President Rau, for example, emphasised in 1995 that how a person lived was more important than the organisation to which he belonged. Süssmuth, who said as early as 1991 that eastern Germans needed a healthy sense of self-worth, and who acknowledged in 1993 that ‘people cannot delete their biographies’, went yet further than Rau, stating that even those who had been convinced of the benefits of the GDR system could find their place in united Germany. Four years earlier, NDR televised coverage of the Day of Unity celebrations in Hamburg in 1991 had made it clear, through an extensive interview with former East German television news reporter Angelika Unterlauf, that East Germans who had been supportive of the regime would face extreme difficulties being accepted in united Germany. That the German actors addressed this problem on the fifth Day of Unity would seem to suggest that they considered sufficient time had passed to allow those supportive of an unjust regime to be exonerated. This could perhaps be construed as a very early sign of support for a historicisation of the GDR past. At the very least, it demonstrated an acceptance by the political actors that former GDR citizens should not be ostracised but rather must feel accepted so that their assimilation into united Germany might be facilitated.

In the late 1990s, however, rhetoric about integrating those supportive of the GDR disappeared from the speeches on the Day of Unity and, instead, there was a shift back to an over-generalised negative portrayal of the East German dictatorship. This can best be understood in the context of growing nostalgia for the GDR among eastern Germans, or ‘Ostalgie’, at this time. The necessary sudden adjustment to capitalism combined with the ever-increasing social and economic difficulties of the late 1990s and early 2000s evoked disillusionment with unification among many eastern Germans, or ‘Ostalgie’, at this time. The necessary sudden adjustment to capitalism combined with the ever-increasing social and economic difficulties of the late 1990s and early 2000s evoked disillusionment with unification among many.

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eastern Germans. A Forsa survey of August 2003 showed, for example, that one in three eastern Germans regretted that so little remained of the GDR way of life.\textsuperscript{486} Indeed, the extent of nostalgia for the GDR was demonstrated by the renewed rise in support for the former SED party, the PDS. The PDS, which frequently secured 15 to 25 percent of votes in elections in eastern German Länder from 1990 to 2005, even gained 5.1% of the second vote in federal elections in 1998, thereby crossing the 5% hurdle necessary to enter the Bundestag.\textsuperscript{487} With this backdrop, the Day of Unity came to serve as a platform for offsetting \textit{Ostalgie}. In 1997, for example, Minister-President of Baden-Württemberg Teufel made reference to \textit{Ostalgie}, explicitly framing it as unacceptable by quoting sociologist Wolf Lepenies: ‘the GDR state is bygone. There is no reason for nostalgia. This state was a criminal state.’\textsuperscript{488} One notes a paradox here that is glossed over in the speeches: on the Day of Unity political actors presented eastern Germans both as victims of an unjust regime as well as citizens irrationally longing for their former state.

At the anniversaries that followed, there continued to be a great deal of highly disparaging discourse about the GDR and repetition of the motto that ‘no one could want the GDR back’,\textsuperscript{489} particularly in 2004. That year, when the percentage of eastern Germans who agreed that they had a ‘good time’ in the GDR peaked for the first time to the same level as 1990,\textsuperscript{490} criticism of the GDR dominated the staging of the GDR past on the Day of Unity. The choice of the guest speaker, GDR dissident and well-known eastern German poet Kunze, on the fourteenth Day of Unity anniversary can be seen in this context. Although the organisers of the Day of Unity

\textsuperscript{488} Teufel, 1997, Ansprache, 935.
\textsuperscript{490} According to an Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach survey that asked East Germans, ‘If someone said that in the GDR we were all equal and we had work, therefore it was a good time, would you agree or disagree?’ found 54% of East Germans in agreement compared to just 44% the previous year: Schröder, \textit{Die veränderte Republik}, 329.
did not give Kunze a specific topic for his speech, they invited him in an attempt to counteract the growing Ostalgie. Indeed, Kunze’s rhetoric predictably complemented the version of the past that the German political orators promoted regarding the GDR past. He gave lengthy detailed anecdotes, for example, which made evident the restrictions on personal liberty in the GDR. He also emphasised that whilst no one starved in the GDR, everyone was repressed, stressing that even the good elements of the GDR were tainted. He stated, for instance, that even the much-admired kindergartens were instruments of a dictatorship. That Minister-President of Thuringia Dieter Althaus invited a German rather than international guest speaker, suggests that, at this time, he considered national issues to be more immediately important than international affairs. In his speech, Althaus was himself also particularly critical of the GDR and called upon eastern Germans, for the sake of the future, to actively remember why they wanted to rid themselves of the SED. Althaus, having lived in the GDR, arguably added more legitimacy to his appeal than western German speakers could have offered.

At this time, however, not only eastern Germans but also western Germans, suffering from the effects of considerable fiscal transfers to eastern Germany after unification for Aufbau Ost – the economic reconstruction of eastern Germany – began to question whether the GDR could have continued as it was after all. In this context, the Day of Unity actors sought to make it explicit, not only to eastern Germans but also to western Germans, that the collapse of the GDR was inevitable and could not have been prevented. They stressed that the GDR economy failed by itself and not as a consequence of West German intervention. Althaus, for example, who, years earlier, in 1998, had described the GDR economy as having ‘ruined itself’ now stressed in 2004 the extent of the economic problems in more detail, stating that ‘the GDR was bankrupt, it was completely ruined in every respect’ and that the ‘whole infrastructure...the state of the hospitals, the retirement homes and many other social

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491 M. Meinung, personal communication, November 27, 2006.
492 M. Meinung, personal communication, August 13, 2007.
facilities were...in an appalling condition in 1989/90'. Althaus explicitly criticised the 'many people – in the West' who believed that the GDR economy could have functioned, which led to 'fatal misconceptions'. Indeed, Gorbachev’s Glasnost policy had revealed that the financial problems in the GDR were considerably worse than expected: with 20.6 million dollars of debt to other countries, the state was on the verge of bankruptcy. Althaus also attempted to reframe ideas about the GDR past by arguing that East Germans themselves had wanted its demise. Minister-President of Hesse Koch had attempted to highlight this as early as 1999 by stressing that East Germans had demonstrated against the SED regime despite the ‘genuine danger’ involved.

Similarly, in 2005, in an attempt to highlight the supposedly widespread wish for unification in the GDR, Thierse, who grew up in the GDR, also sought to call attention to the way in which GDR citizens had expressed their desire for the end of the SED state not only through demonstrations and mass exodus to the West but also through other legal and political processes. He spoke of how the free elections of the 10th Volkskammer gave the demonstrations of 1989 ‘their democratic legitimacy’ and gave the East German parliament ‘the clear task’ of achieving German unity. By emphasising both the inevitability of the economic collapse of the GDR as well as the desire of East German citizens for that collapse, he attempted to counteract emergent rhetoric among eastern and western Germans that unification was a West German political decision. Thierse also spoke specifically of the day-to-day hardship and restrictions in the GDR, such as the lack of freedom of speech, presumably to stress that all East Germans, and not simply dissidents, suffered under the SED regime.

Although Thierse’s highly critical rhetoric concerning the GDR was characteristic of the dominant discourse in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the

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499 Koch, 1999, 634.
fifteenth anniversary of German unity nevertheless saw a slight shift in the staging of the GDR past by another political actor. Minister-President of Brandenburg Platzeck, who himself lived in the GDR, framed the GDR in a predominantly positive light. Platzeck cited, for example, former Brandenburg SPD politician Regine Hildebrandt, who had been involved in the civic movement Demokratie jetzt in 1989, and declared that ‘no one wants to explain to me why we cannot combine the benefits of both systems...’ 501 One notes here, of course, the echoes of the SPD’s suggestion of 1990 that unification take place under article 146 of the constitution. Platzeck went on to outline in detail positive aspects of the GDR, such as the independence of women, the child-care system, the organisation of medical care and the polytechnic principle in school education. He stated that the political elite were starting to listen to these issues with ‘open ears’ in the current debate about the renewal of Germany. Unlike Day of Unity actors in the preceding years, in this way Platzeck implied that the GDR should be afforded a place in united Germany. The coming years will show whether Platzeck’s rhetoric was merely an exception to the established negative depiction of the SED-state or whether it represented a fundamental shift in the interpretation of the GDR past and a new role for at least certain aspects of the history of the GDR and its traditions in united Germany’s self-understanding. If the latter were true, it would likely be due to the fact that after ‘almost a generation’ 502 had passed since the collapse of the GDR, its past was starting to be historicised. Indeed, the following summer, the GDR Museum in Berlin opened its doors with a permanent exhibition of everyday life in the GDR. However, the fact that the Bundestag quashed the attempt by Alliance 90/The Greens and Die Linken to save the Palast der Republik, a symbol of the GDR in Berlin, just three months after Platzeck’s speech, suggests that the German political actors of united Germany still struggled to find a place for the former Communist state in the self-image of their country.

It is important to note, however, that although at the end of the 20th century 60% of Germans wanted to draw a line under the GDR past, only recently have memorials for the victims of the SED regime and the events of 1989 and unification begun to emerge. What is more, the erection of these monuments has provoked considerable debate, as epitomised by the Unity and Freedom Memorial proposed by the CDU/CSU and FDP to commemorate the events of 1989 and 1990. The proposal initially failed to win a majority vote in the Bundestag in 2001 since the SPD, with support from the PDS, argued that it was too early to erect such a memorial in light of the fact that the unity process was not yet complete. In May 2007, however, the Deutsche Gesellschaft, a political organisation for culture and education, repeated the CDU/FDP proposal for the erection of a Unity and Freedom memorial on the Berliner Schlossplatz in 2009. Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU), Bundestag Vice-President Thierse (SPD) and Chairman of Die Linke, the successor of the PDS party, Lafontaine, were among the trustees of this non-partisan organisation, created by, among others, former Federal President Rau (SPD). A clear majority of members of the Bundestag Committee for Culture and Media approved the proposal and representatives of all the parliamentary parties agreed on 9th November 2007 that the time had come to erect a memorial. This serves as a further indication that a cross-party consensus on the historicisation of the GDR past was beginning to emerge.


Conclusion

To date, debates about the GDR past have remained for the most part scholarly topics. This is perhaps not surprising given that less than twenty years have passed since the fall of the Iron Curtain. By contrast, debate about the National Socialist past has been pulled into the public arena – most notably in the famous Historikerstreit of the late 1980s. This controversial debate played out publicly in the serious press – predominantly in letters to the editors of Die Zeit and the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. On one side of this polarised debate stood more left-wing historians and intellectuals such as Habermas, Jürgen Kocka, Heinrich August Winkler, Hans Mommsen, Martin Broszat, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Wolfgang Mommsen and Eberhard Jäckel. Their opponents included Ernst Nolte, Andreas Hillgruber, Klaus Hildebrand, Joachim Fest, Michael Stürmer, Hagen Schulze and Rainer Zitelmann. The debate between Habermas and Nolte formed the core of the debate, which can be traced back to the publication of the latter's article Die Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will (The past that does not want to pass) in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung of 6th June 1986. Nolte, disputing the idea that the practice of mass (race) annihilation had originated from the Nazis, essentially argued that Auschwitz was a reaction to the (class) annihilation in Stalinist gulags. Habermas, in an article in Die Zeit, rejected Nolte's claim, arguing that it amounted to eine Art Schadenabwicklung of the Holocaust. At the same time, he criticised other right-wing historians, such as Stürmer (a political advisor to Chancellor Kohl) and Hillgruber, for attempting to whitewash the German past. Hillgruber – who had in fact not completely supported Nolte's argument – had indeed intensified the debate

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by comparing the Holocaust to the suffering of so-called Heimatvertriebene (German expellees from Czechoslovakia and Poland after World War II). 511

The debate addressed a number of key questions: were the crimes of the National Socialists a reaction to Soviet crimes under Stalin? Could Nazi crimes be compared to those committed in Stalin’s Soviet Union? Could the Holocaust be compared to genocide committed in other parts of the world such as Armenia or Cambodia? Did Germany follow a Sonderweg (special path) that inevitably led to National Socialism? Should future generations continue to bear the burden of guilt for crimes committed by their forefathers? Underlying all these questions arguably lay the issue of the extent to which the past should be ‘normalised’. Those on the Left are generally considered to have prevailed in the historians’ debate: following the dispute, a fragile consensus temporarily emerged regarding the key issue – that it was too early to historicise the National Socialist period and illegitimate to relativise Nazi crimes.

On the Day of Unity, the political actors did not explicitly address any of the topics raised in the Historikerstreit. They neither stressed, for example, that the crimes committed during the ‘Third Reich’ were unique nor did they seek to compare them. The idea of a Sonderweg was similarly entirely avoided by the political actors in their speeches. However, while they may not have directly touched on the specific issues of the debate, it is clear that they sought to influence attitudes regarding the larger issue of a ‘normalisation’ of the Nazi past. As we saw, in the early years after unification, the political actors echoed the outcome of the historians’ debate by stressing that a united German nation-state would continue to make responsibility for the National Socialist past a central aspect of the country’s self-understanding. However, following the ‘anniversary years’ of the mid-1990s, signs of a promotion of ‘normalisation’ in the interpretation of the National Socialist past emerged across the German political spectrum on the Day of Unity. This ‘normalisation’ manifested itself, on one hand, through the lack of rhetoric about the National Socialist past and, on the other, through the increased focus on the positive aspects of German history.

Thus, for the first time, the argument of those in the Historikerstreit that Germans needed to foster pride for their history began to shine through. It would seem, therefore, that we are in a period of change. The position of the National Socialist past in Germany's self-understanding appears to be shifting. Given that awareness of the National Socialist past serves to some extent as a restriction on the construction of German national pride this clearly has implications for the future of German patriotism or nationalism. Time will tell if Germany's political actors will further advocate a 'normalisation' of the Nazi past. Will the National Socialist era be relegated to just another chapter in Germany's history? If released from carrying a sense of responsibility for Nazi crimes is it possible that younger generations of Germans would advocate a resurgence of nationalism? What is clear is that this is an issue that deserves closer attention in the future. This chapter has shown that examination of representations, as crystallised snapshots of the views of political actors at any given time, can be examined to help highlight such changes in united Germany's relation to its past.

In this way, the research has underlined the value of analysing commemorations from the perspective of the cultural history of politics. In addition to this, the work has also highlighted the poignancy of a number of other theoretical tools. To begin, the research has demonstrated the relevance of Wolfrum's concept of Geschichtspolitik. As we have seen, the high level of consensus on fundamental issues that existed among the political actors meant that the Day of Unity was largely removed from party politics. Yet this does not mean that the versions of the past presented on the Day of Unity were not politicised. On the contrary: it seems clear that the Day of Unity actors, as a group (albeit one comprising individuals with different political leanings) promoted specific versions of the past for particular political ends. A number of different political agendas appear to have underwritten the presentation of the German past at the German national holiday celebrations. Firstly, it would seem that the political actors presented the history of the National Socialist past in the service of a specific international agenda. By repeatedly referring to the National Socialist past, the political actors were able to assure the international community that united Germany, like its predecessor, remained
committed to addressing that past. Implicitly at least, the political actors thereby also stressed the complete impossibility of that past repeating itself. The history of the 'Third Reich' was thus politicised for the needs of the contemporary political actors.

Secondly, the Day of Unity actors used history as a means of uniting Germans. Indeed, as Anderson has argued, reference to history has traditionally been used as means of imagining communities not least by facilitating the imagining of a shared past.\textsuperscript{512} By stressing, throughout the period from 1990 to 2005, the extent to which eastern and western Germans shared responsibility for National Socialist crimes, for example, the political actors framed Germans as united in an *Erinnerungsgemeinschaft* — a term that can be traced back to writer and politician Friedrich Karl von Moser in 1765.\textsuperscript{513} The way in which the political actors presented the GDR past can also be seen in this context. By demonising the GDR, rather than presenting a more nuanced interpretation of its history, the political actors encouraged East Germans to turn away from any attachment to their former state and to embrace their new identity as citizens of the Federal Republic. One notes here, also, a didactic dimension characteristic of Geschichtspolitik: the political actors' unambiguous criticism of both German dictatorships was expected to contribute to the process of legitimising the democratic political culture of united Germany.

Thirdly, the political actors played a role in defining and legitimising the norms and values of united Germany not only in their presentation of the past but also in the way in which they staged the key elements of the unity celebrations. In divided Germany, the commemoration and staging of 17\textsuperscript{th} June and 7\textsuperscript{th} October in many respects reflected the function of the respective states. While the commemoration of 17\textsuperscript{th} June adjusted to changes in the sensitive political climate and relations with the GDR, 7\textsuperscript{th} October served as an instrument for the SED to exhibit its power and demonstrate unity between party and people. For the political actors of united Germany, the nature of the staging of the Day of Unity encouraged Germans to identify with various key structures and democratic values of united Germany. The


ceremony and citizens’ festivals sought to stimulate Germans to relate to their past and to each other. The ceremony also provided a site of negotiation for redefining ideas in light of changes in the political climate while the citizens’ festival allowed the general public to be actively engaged in celebrating and identifying with unification. The itinerant 3rd October anniversaries and their organisation by regional civil servants served to stage Germany as a federal state and encouraged Germans to feel connected to their region and the federal structure of Germany. Meanwhile, the symbols and rhetoric relating to the EU sought to foster identification with the EU. In this way, the unity commemorations served as indicators of the self-understanding of the Federal Republic throughout the period from 1990 to 2005. It remains open whether the first fifteen years after unification will in the future be viewed as having represented a specific phase of Geschichtspolitik in united Germany.

This chapter has also underlined the relevance of key aspects of Halbwachs’ work on collective memory. It is striking that the Day of Unity political actors sought to support and influence the nature and form of the collective memory of united Germany – particularly with regard to the National Socialist and GDR pasts. The unity celebrations kept alive specific memories of the past that might otherwise have been forgotten. The Day of Unity was a commemoration of German unity, not a remembrance day for the Nazi or GDR pasts. Yet, by the very act of talking about these dictatorships on the German national holiday, the 3rd October commemorations contributed to evoking these pasts in the collective memory of united Germany. What is more, on the Day of Unity, these socially constructed collective memories had the potential to link eastern and western Germans by encouraging Germans to identify with a common past. Crucially, this chapter has also supported Halbwachs’ argument that the interpretation of the past changes with the needs of the present. On the Day of Unity, this was epitomised in the shift in the interpretation of the National Socialist past in the period from 1990 to 2005: what the German political actors once described – particularly in the early 1990s – as the defining era of German history is slowly coming to be framed as one episode in that history. Thus the emerging desire for a more self-confident identity in the present shaped the social reconstruction of the past.
Finally, the research relates to cultural and communicative memory. The Day of Unity can be interpreted as an example of cultural memory. As objectified culture, the 3rd October commemorations recalled German unification: by its very presence, the Day of Unity stood as a yearly reminder of unification. In this way, the commemorations officially sanctioned unification as an important element of Germany’s heritage. As we have seen, the inclusion of reference to the National Socialist and GDR pasts equally guaranteed a prominent place for these chapters in the country’s memory. In this way, the Day of Unity commemorations served as platforms from which political actors sought to stabilise and convey united Germany self-image. In this vein, through ritual repetition, the unity celebrations contributed to constructing a sense of identity and coherence among Germans.

What is particularly fascinating, however, is the interaction between cultural memory and communicative memory in the period from 1990 to 2005. While the Day of Unity was a site of cultural memory, at the same time, German unity belonged to communicative memory. As an event that had recently been directly experienced by the majority of Germans, unification remained part of everyday communication. It was an ongoing topic – addressed by eyewitness non-specialists in disorganised ways. There is thus an overlap here: the Day of Unity was an example of cultural memory at a time when the event that it commemorated continued to be part of communicative memory. What is more, the Day of Unity actors themselves contributed to both cultural and communicative memory: they were involved in staging the official memory of unification while, concurrently, unification was part of their individual biographies. The interaction of cultural and communicative memory in the period from 1990 to 2005 was clear in the way in which the Day of Unity actors used the unity celebrations to redefine and influence changing ideas – both theirs and the general public’s – about unification and the unity process in their attempt to improve intra-German relations. It is to analysis of the latter that the thesis now turns.
3. Fostering intra-German relations

'German unity began with dance steps and if later these steps became a little harder, the beginning remains unforgettable forever.'

(Imre Kertész, 1929-) 

After more than forty years of division, East and West Germany stood in 1990 as two very different halves of a new whole. Soon after the unanticipated unification the extent of the vast differences not only in historical consciousness but also in the life experiences, mentalities, psychologies, habits and value systems of eastern and western Germans became apparent. It emerged that the fundamental differences, initially underestimated, were likely to take decades rather than years to overcome. The media and politicians increasingly discussed the idea of 'the Wall in the mind' (Mauer im Kopf), implying a psychological wall still dividing Germans of the old and new Länder. This chapter will illustrate in three sections the ways in which the political actors of united Germany used the Day of Unity as an instrument for improving intra-German relations to foster a sense of Wir-Gefühl among eastern and western Germans. Section one explores the way in which political actors tried to cultivate this socio-cultural process by attempting to influence attitudes about unification and the unity process. Section two examines the legal, moral, social and economic arguments used by the political actors on the Day of Unity to promote a specific image of eastern Germans and eastern Germany in order to improve their standing among western Germans. Section three sketches the way in which political actors paradoxically reframed differences among eastern and western Germans as both negative and positive.

\footnote{Cited from Kertész's Day of Unity speech in 2003. See Kertész, 2003, Wenn die Freudenfeuer verglimmen, 45.}

\footnote{Other attempts of the political actors to foster a sense of belonging among eastern and western Germans, such as through inclusion by personal encounters, direct exchange and inclusion through exclusion, are not the focus of this chapter.}
3.1 A new image for the unity process

The continued social and economic problems associated with unification inevitably influenced German public opinion toward unity. From the mid-1990s in particular, a kind of 'unity fatigue' became noticeable: the high costs of unification and its implications for higher taxation, high unemployment and the seemingly never-ending challenge of modernising eastern Germany are just a few factors that account for this. As a result of the struggles following unification, a certain level of mutual recrimination and resentment began to emerge among eastern and western Germans. In this context, political, predominantly German, actors on the Day of Unity anniversaries from 1990 to 2005 sought to influence attitudes about unification and the unity process to ease tensions between eastern and western Germans. Reflecting the high degree of cross-party consensus on the need to promote intra-German relations, Germans from across the mainstream political spectrum attempted to influence attitudes about unification and the unity process in three main ways.

Firstly, they attempted to reframe initial expectations of the unity process as unrealistic. Due to the fast pace of the unification process, there had been much ambiguity at the time of unification about the costs that would actually be incurred in merging East and West Germany. As a result, the costs were drastically underestimated. Initial anxieties about the financial outlay of unification were great: in February 1990, 75% of West Germans expected that unification would involve a rise in taxes. However, the rhetoric about the price of unification that took place in the run-up to the first all-German Bundestag elections in December 1990 contributed to a change in attitudes among West Germans that the costs of unification would not

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in fact be immense. During the election campaign, Kohl repeated his famous phrase from the day of unification that the eastern German Länder would turn into a ‘flourishing landscape’, and added that the latter would be achieved within four years. Moreover, whilst SPD Chancellor Candidate Lafontaine underlined that unification would necessitate a tax increase and result in considerable financial burden for West Germans, the governing CDU coalition, in what Uwe Andersen has described as the ‘tax lie’, stipulated that there was no need to raise taxes.

It was initially estimated that the funds for ‘German Unity’ (Fonds Deutsche Einheit) – established to prevent the five new Länder and their economic needs from upsetting the balance of the federal system of financial redistribution (where economically strong Länder essentially contribute to fund weaker Länder) – would only need to be paid from 1990 to 1994. On 13th March 1993, however, the first ‘Solidarity Agreement’ between the Federal Government and the Länder (Solidarpakt I), came into being which meant that, in addition to the 160 billion deutschmarks spent during the first four years after unification, for the period from 1995 to 2004 a further 210 billion deutschmarks was transferred to eastern Germany. By the end of the 1990s, it became clear that even the goal of the first Solidarity Agreement – namely to bring eastern Germany up to an economic standard comparable with western Germany – could not be realised within the intended timescale. A second Solidarity Agreement (Solidarpakt II), entailing a further 165 billion deutschmarks, was therefore negotiated in 2001, to provide financial support for the eastern German Länder until 2019.

It would thus be fair to say that Kohl’s evaluation proved exceedingly overly-optimistic. He himself admitted, in somewhat caged terms in his televised Day of

519 Kohl, 1990, Fernsehansprache, 1225.
521 Andersen, 1999, Finanzierung, 379. For the argument that the misleading comments and policy decisions of the Kohl government seriously damaged the German economy see Hefeker, C., & Wunner, N. (2003). Promises made, promises broken: a political economic perspective on German unification. German Politics, 12(1), 109-134.
Unity address of 3rd October 1992, that his prediction had been incorrect, declaring that the two years since unity had been a ‘learning process’ for him.\(^{524}\) Again in 1993, Kohl and Stüssmuth both spoke of how they had expected a faster unity process.\(^{525}\) Kohl referred to his miscalculation more explicitly in his speech five years later at the Day of Unity celebrations in 1997, where he attempted to encourage Germans to continue building up eastern Germany. He argued, for example, that though the tasks were harder and taking longer than he had expected, it was incredibly important for Germans to continue investing effort into building up the East, since the goal had ‘not yet been reached’.\(^{526}\) Throughout the early and mid-1990s, other speakers similarly spoke of ‘immense expectations’ that had ‘turned into disappointment’.\(^{527}\)

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the continued practical difficulties of unity and the fact that the economic reconstruction of eastern Germany was taking much longer than envisaged led to a great deal of dissatisfaction and frustration among the population. Against this backdrop of discontent, the various German Day of Unity actors stressed even more that the reason for disappointment was rooted in unrealistic expectations at the time of unification. By continually emphasising the ‘high’ expectations of 1990, the German political actors insinuated that the continued social and economic problems resulting from unification were not a sign that the unity process had failed. In 2000, for instance, Federal President Rau went to great lengths to make the nature of these expectations explicit.\(^{528}\) He identified three main forms of what he termed ‘self-deception:’ firstly, the misconception of East Germans that West Germany was full of desirable items free of cost; secondly, the misconception of West Germans that unity could be paid for out of petty cash; and thirdly, the supposition that the difficulties associated with division would be overcome simply

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\(^{527}\) Herzog, 1994, Ansprache, 841.

\(^{528}\) Rau, 2000, Rede, www.bundespraesident.de.
by East Germany adopting West German institutions. The Federal President drew attention here to the fact that it was not only the government that had misjudged how challenging unity would be but also the German people as a whole. He went on to convey respect for these unrealistic expectations by saying that they were rooted in good will and great hopes, yet he argued that this 'self-deception' should not be the measure for the balance sheet of ten years of unity.

Secondly, political actors sought to influence attitudes about unification and the unity process by increasingly focusing on, and attempting to evoke pride for, what had already been achieved. In Schwerin in 1991, for example, at the first celebrations in an eastern Land, where, as Minister-President Seite admitted, many Germans considered themselves to be the 'losers of unification', the concrete steps being taken to overcome the social and economic problems in Germany represented a major theme of the speeches. By the mid-1990s, western Germany was experiencing significant economic problems following the sharp post-unification boom stimulated by the fiscal transfers to eastern Germany (reflected in low private investment and rising unemployment). Unemployment for example, while by no means as dire as in the East (20.1%) nevertheless reached 9.3% in the western Länder. In the context of these economic woes, an ALBUS survey showed that 83.1% of western Germans considered themselves to have benefitted least from unification. Consequently, the political speakers on the Day of Unity began to lay even more emphasis on that which eastern and western Germans had 'achieved with [their] combined strength'.

This was a message mirrored by international guest speaker French President Jacques.

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529 For examples of how eastern Germans have not simply assimilated to western German society despite the adoption of West German institutions see Scheller, G. (2006). Die Transformation Ostdeutschlands: 'Verwestlichung' oder Abgrenzung? Deutschland Archiv, 39(5), 790-798.
531 See, for example, the speech by Seite: Dietmar & Sadyn, 1992, Festakt, NDR and Kohl’s televised address: Kohl, 1992, Fernsehansprache, 2008.
Chirac in 2000 who remarked that the whole world admired what had been achieved in Germany just a decade after unification.535

Thirdly, the political actors reframed the unity process as an ongoing challenge. Into the late 1990s and early 2000s, German political actors continued to accentuate the progress already made, both as praise for what had already been accomplished and as motivation for Germans to continue working to overcome the challenges of unification.536 In 1997 the government introduced the yearly Report of the Federal Government on the State of German Unity537 – outlining development in eastern Germany from modernisation of the infrastructure to the construction of competitive companies – to be presented and discussed in the Bundestag at the beginning of each October. From the mid-1990s, the political actors started to give detailed descriptions of the economic and social difficulties within Germany in their speeches on the Day of Unity, often mirroring the findings of the report. In this way, they attempted to show understanding on the Day of Unity for the problems that Germans were facing: ‘we have achieved a great deal but still have much to do’ became a mantra of the unity anniversaries.

In this context, from the inaugural unification ceremony right up to 2005, the German political actors promoted key values considered instrumental to the improvement of intra-German relations, such as mutual understanding, flexibility and courage.538 They also gave more focused advice to eastern and western Germans, addressing them separately; the specific content of these messages did not change significantly throughout this period. Eastern Germans were largely encouraged to be positive, not to despair and to persevere in their hard work. Eastern German political actors on the Day of Unity, who were arguably more likely than their western German counterparts to identify with, and be attended to by, other eastern Germans,

and of course were speaking, at least in part, in their own constituencies, tended to focus particularly on what the latter needed to do to progress economically as well as on how eastern German attitudes towards democracy should alter.\(^{539}\) Both eastern and western German political actors, however, predominantly directed their didactic messages concerning key values toward western Germans. This can perhaps be explained, on one hand, by the fact that western Germans made up the majority of the population of united Germany and, on the other hand, by the fact that the Day of Unity actors were themselves predominantly western Germans. In contrast to the praise and encouragement they gave to eastern Germans, many actors on the Day of Unity criticised western Germans for not being patient and for being condescending towards their eastern German compatriots.

At the inaugural unification ceremony in 1990, for example, von Weizsäcker criticised western Germans for believing that unification need not affect their lives. He stressed over and again that western Germans must 'learn to share'.\(^{540}\) It is interesting to note that even after more than a decade had passed since unification, a number of political actors continued to speak of eastern Germans and western Germans as two very distinct, mutually exclusive groups. Bundestag President Thierse, for one, stated in 2001 that eastern Germans ‘feel like trainees’ in keeping up with modernisation, as that was the way they were treated by western Germans.\(^{541}\) These generalisations are fairly characteristic of the Day of Unity political actors, who also neglected other social differences, such as gender or generation within united Germany. There was the notion on the Day of Unity that Germany comprised simply two distinct groups of people: eastern and western Germans, and that these two groups still necessitated a sense of belonging together as two parts of the whole. Paradoxically, this over-simplification and repetition of 'eastern Germans' and 'western Germans' as separate homogenous groups, on the German national holiday, had the potential to actually reaffirm the division. This differentiation between

\(^{539}\) See, for example, Althaus, 2004, Ansprache, www.thueringen.de.

\(^{540}\) See Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.

eastern and western Germans was also obvious in the attempts to reframe the image of eastern Germans and of eastern Germany.

### 3.2 A make-over for eastern Germans

On the eve of unification, Social Democratic politician Egon Bahr compared Germany to a young couple that had got married and were now getting to know each other. He pointed out that normally this would be the other way round: they normally would have gotten to know each other first. He underlined that it was important to remember, however, that the two Germanies could never split up. Continuing in Bahr’s metaphor, it would be fair to say that East Germany was not quite the bride that West Germany had expected. At the time of unification, the former Federal Republic was, by international comparison, a very prosperous state with high living standards. East Germany was, on the other hand, virtually bankrupt. There was consequently the perception among many western Germans that the economic costs and challenges of unification precipitated social and fiscal strains, in the form of taxation, increasing unemployment, structural changes—such as those in the pensions system—and falling income levels. A welfare survey of 1993 showed, for instance, that 31% of western Germans felt that their living conditions had actually deteriorated since unification, despite the fact that this was not empirically supported on the whole. 21% of western Germans still considered their living conditions to have deteriorated by 1998, at a time when more structural problems had become tangible in western German society. A report from the Federal Statistics Office of 2004, which was based on statistics from 2002 that were not affected by the potentially negative consequences of the health reform or the changes

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542 Tag der Deutschen Einheit - Sondersendung, 1990, RTL.
545 For numerous statistics on the living conditions of eastern and western Germans see Habich, 1991, Lebensbedingungen, 523-539.
546 Ibid., 537.
to the pension insurance, showed that the perception of a deterioration of living standards had continued.\textsuperscript{547} Although social challenges in western Germany were due only in part to unification, for many western Germans unification with their eastern compatriots became a scapegoat for the majority of social difficulties that had emerged since the GDR acceded to the Federal Republic.\textsuperscript{548} On top of this came the fact that many western Germans found it difficult to identify with eastern Germans who, having lived in a Socialist state for forty years, had very different values and life experiences.

Consequently, many western Germans began to feel some level of resentment toward eastern Germans. Indeed, as Thomas Abbe and Monika Gibas have shown, a culturally stigmatising discourse about eastern Germans started as early as 1990.\textsuperscript{549} Many western Germans saw 'Ossis', the (slightly derogatory) vernacular term for eastern Germans, as undemocratic, work-shy and provincial.\textsuperscript{550} A survey fifteen years after unification also showed signs that western Germans were essentially uninterested in the East: while 96\% of eastern Germans had travelled to the western Länder, only one in three western Germans had ever been to eastern Germany.\textsuperscript{551} Abbe and Gibas have shown that the discussion of the differences between eastern and western Germans in the media has been almost exclusively presented from a western German perspective.\textsuperscript{552} This trend was also visible in the western German dominated nature of the Day of Unity, in that the impulse to improve the image of

\textsuperscript{548} For an interesting recent overview of the so-called misconceptions associated with unification and the unity process see Schröder, R. (2007). Die wichtigsten Irrtümer über die deutsche Einheit. Freiburg: Herder.
\textsuperscript{552} Abbe & Gibbas, 2001, Der Osten, 19.
eastern Germans among their western German compatriots was not matched with a corresponding impulse in the other direction. In their attempts to offer a more attractive image of eastern Germans and of eastern Germany, political actors used a number of different arguments.

Legal-constitutional arguments were used by the German political actors on the Day of Unity to attempt to influence intra-German relations as early as 1990. Federal President von Weizsäcker, for example, through appeal to the western Germans' pride in the constitution and the democratic values of the Federal Republic, sought to frame the development of eastern Germany as a constitutional-legal effort. Referring to Article 72 of the Basic Law (Grundgesetz), he called his listeners' attention to the order of the constitution that all Germans must have comparable living conditions and equal opportunities. Until 1994, a very tightly formulated constitutional obligation existed in Germany to protect against regional inequalities between the Länder: Article 72 Paragraph 2 stated that the 'maintenance of uniform living standards' (Wahrung der Einheitlichkeit der Lebensverhältnisse) was a duty of federal policy. In light of the considerable differences in living conditions following unification, particularly between eastern and western Länder, von Weizsäcker had already warned, on the second Day of Unity anniversary, that the goal of harmonising living conditions in eastern and western Germany was 'too big a goal to realistically promise in the next five years'. A year later, the constitutional obligation of ensuring regional convergence of living standards remained the central topic of the Day of Unity ecumenical service.

In 1994, Article 72 was partially revised to prevent the potential interpretation that individual citizens could claim applicability of the entitlement to uniform living

553 In 1996, Minister-President of Bavaria Stoiber's Day of Unity speech epitomised the western German domination of the day: he specifically addressed only western Germans in parts of his speech. He asked, for example, 'How closely linked do we feel to the fate of the people in the new Länder?': Stoiber, E. (1996). Ansprache des Präsidenten des Bundesrates Edmund Stoiber. Bulletin, 78, 829-830, here 830. The German print press reporting on the Day of Unity also often described unity as a 'topic for eastern Germans'. See, for example, Tag der Abrechnung. (2000, October 5). Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 29.
554 See Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.
conditions on a personal level. The new task of the federal policy thus became the 'establishment of equivalent living standards' (Herstellung gleichwertiger Lebensverhältnisse).\textsuperscript{558} Following the 1994 change in the constitution, German political actors used the Day of Unity anniversaries to stress that despite the change, Germans should not simply resign themselves to the fact that there were still considerable differences in the material living conditions of eastern and western Germans.\textsuperscript{559} In 2002, for example, Mayor of Berlin Wowereit stated that the constitutional requirement of 'establishing equivalent living standards' for all Germans remained a 'permanent duty' of all Germans,\textsuperscript{560} echoing almost completely the words of Schröder in 1999.\textsuperscript{561} Wowereit thereby sought to improve relations between eastern and western Germans by reminding them of their constitutional obligation to one another. The 2006 Federal Government Report on the State of German Unity showed that this goal, of what could be referred to as 'economic synchronisation', remained far from being realised: although the average incomes in eastern and western Germany had converged to a great extent (with average eastern German incomes falling only 18% behind average incomes in western Germany), the opportunities for employment and vocational training remained considerably worse in the East.\textsuperscript{562}

Alongside these legal-constitutional arguments, both German and international actors also used moral arguments on the Day of Unity to remind western Germans of their moral responsibility to their German counterparts in the East. Hungarian Prime Minister Horn, for example, called in 1996 for understanding and tolerance towards the citizens of the former GDR in light of the fact that until 1989 East Germans had had little control over their fate. He argued that,

"it was not the East Germans who made the pact of the great powers. They were not asked if they wanted to live in the Soviet zone of occupation. They did not choose the system of arbitrariness. Their fate was decided for them over their heads."\textsuperscript{563}

\textsuperscript{560} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{561} See Schröder, 1999, Rede, 635-637.
\textsuperscript{563} Horn, 1996, Ansprache, 835.
In this manner, Horn distinguished eastern Germans from the SED regime by presenting them as victims of history. The following year, Teufel echoed the point that western Germans consequently had a moral obligation to aid eastern Germans.\textsuperscript{564} In the years that followed, other German actors repeated this message on the Day of Unity. In 2002, for example, Mayor of Berlin Wowereit, stressing that the burden of history was extremely unevenly distributed among Germans,\textsuperscript{565} remarked that the Germans in the West were, and remained, obliged to show solidarity with eastern Germans. Two years later, Federal President Köhler echoed Wowereit’s call and sought to portray eastern Germans as the victims of division by speaking of Germans in the East having ‘paid the higher price’ after the war for the ‘terrible crimes’ of the Germans.\textsuperscript{566}

Despite presenting them as victims, however, German political actors also used this moralising strategy of distinguishing GDR citizens from the SED regime in order to influence notions of how East Germans had dealt with the National Socialist past. To counter possible suggestions that eastern Germans, in contrast to western Germans, had not worked through the National Socialist past, political actors in 1990 were eager to present the divergence in views between the official discourse of the SED and the views on the past of GDR citizens. At the inaugural unification ceremony, von Weizsäcker, for instance, described the SED as having considered it ‘sufficient to define itself as a Socialist society of the future and thereby free itself from the burden of history’\textsuperscript{567}. He described GDR citizens, however, as having ‘experienced and interpreted’ the National Socialist past differently. According to von Weizsäcker, East Germans always felt ‘that the responsible remembrance of the past [was] an indispensable power of freedom for the future’.\textsuperscript{568} Through his rhetoric, the Federal President suggested that not only West Germans but also East Germans strove to address the National Socialist past in the post-war years. Although there is no evidence to support this alleged working through the past by East Germans and although opinion polls suggested the opposite was true, von Weizsäcker likely sought

\textsuperscript{564} Teufel, 1997, Ansprache, 935.
\textsuperscript{567} Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.
\textsuperscript{568} Ibid.
to propagate this view in order to present all Germans as having a shared 'starting point' from which to continue the remembrance of the National Socialist past. Contrary to discouraging realities, this artful presentation of alleged East German views on the National Socialist past permitted eastern Germans to consider themselves equal to western Germans as well as to feel emotionally connected to the past.

To further underline the moral obligation of western Germans, German actors on the Day of Unity stressed that East Germans suffered more than West Germans, not only in that they assumed the 'lion's share' of the burden of the past but also as a result of unification. From the early to late 1990s, various German political actors on the Day of Unity spoke a great deal about the everyday difficulties that eastern Germans faced. In 1992, Minister-President of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Seite, for example, spoke at length of the numerous problems with which eastern Germans were confronted, particularly that of high unemployment.\textsuperscript{569} The incapacity of the GDR industry to compete within a market economy had led to extremely high unemployment – a phenomenon essentially alien to those who had lived in a Socialist state. That Federal President von Weizsäcker also spoke in depth about this topic from the same stage as Minister-President Seite is unsurprising, given the fact that the central Day of Unity celebrations were held in Schwerin that year, the capital of the eastern German Land of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, whose citizens suffered particularly high unemployment after unification.\textsuperscript{570} As late as 2006, the Federal Government's \textit{Report on the State of German Unity} showed that, at 20.3%, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania continued to suffer from the highest unemployment rate (a dubious honour shared only with Saxony-Anhalt), of all German Länder.\textsuperscript{571}

Particularly from the tenth anniversary of unification, there was a shift in the rhetoric on the Day of Unity anniversaries. Speakers focused not so much on the day-to-day problems of eastern Germans but rather on the idea that the unification process itself had been more difficult for East Germans than for West Germans. Eastern German speakers, such as Prime Minister of the former GDR, de Maizièrè,
and Bundesrat President and Minister-President of Thuringia, Althaus, were among those who spoke at length on this topic. On the tenth unity anniversary, de Maizière framed 3\textsuperscript{rd} October 1990 as having marked the beginning of a ‘process of transformation’ in the eastern Länder.\textsuperscript{572} De Maizière strove to remind people that unification involved the introduction into East Germany of a new political, economic, legal, educational and value system virtually overnight. To highlight the extent to which these changes affected eastern Germans, de Maizière stated that only one in ten workers remained in the same job, in the same place, as in 1989. Similarly, on 3\textsuperscript{rd} October 2004 – a month after a Stern survey had revealed that a staggering one in five eastern Germans actually wanted the Berlin Wall back\textsuperscript{573} – Althaus, gave a further detailed description of the struggles of East Germans at the time of unification.\textsuperscript{574} He spoke, for example, of people who suddenly found themselves on the streets since the products they produced were no longer marketable. It is possible that de Maizière and Althaus felt that a decade after unification it was necessary to remind Germans of the difficulties East Germans had faced in 1990. In this way, Althaus and other political actors on the Day of Unity attempted not only to arouse sympathy and understanding from western Germans but also to show understanding for the problems and challenges eastern Germans faced following unification.

In addition to the moral arguments, German speakers on the Day of Unity also emphasised the social benefits brought to united Germany by eastern Germans – that is to say the latter’s contribution to German society as (hard-working and courageous) individuals. While the German political actors framed unification as a joint project and explicitly expressed thanks to all Germans for their hard work since unification, they placed particular emphasis on the role played solely by East Germans before unification. Before 3\textsuperscript{rd} October 1990, East Germans had expressed their discontent and to some extent also destabilised the SED regime through various forms of civic action. These included: emigrating via Hungary and Austria, presenting themselves


at western embassies and at those in Prague, Budapest and Warsaw, demonstrating in their tens of thousands (particularly in Leipzig but also in Berlin, Erfurt and Dresden), and flooding in masses through the Berlin Wall border crossing on and after 9th November 1989. East German political actors also opened the door for unification in a number of ways, most notably with the 'round tables' (informal committees created to bring together democratic groups and parties in preparation for the first free elections), by stripping the SED, on 1st December 1989, of its hegemonic role grounded in the GDR's constitution, and by arranging for the new Volkskammer elections to take place on 18th March 1990.575

Throughout the period from 1990 to 2005, all Federal Presidents, Chancellors and Bundesrat Presidents underscored on the Day of Unity the major role of East Germans, particularly the East German general public, in facilitating unification. With reference to the former GDR and other Eastern European states, such as Poland and Hungary, Bundesrat President and Mayor of Berlin, Momper, for example, described 'the people as the real heroes...' at the inaugural unification ceremony.576 The 'courageous men and women' in the GDR and other Eastern European states remained the 'heroes of [the] revolutions, without whom unification would not have taken place', for the Mayor of Berlin, Wowereit, twelve years later.577 Use of the evocative word 'hero' by the two Berlin mayors served to present East Germans in a very positive light.

In the early 2000s, the contribution of East Germans to unification was increasingly emphasised in elaborate terms. Federal President Rau went so far, at the tenth anniversary of unity, as to describe East German citizens as the ones who had made the 'most important contribution to German unity' in 1989 and 1990.578 Federal President Köhler echoed this by describing the people of the GDR as having 'written one of the nicest chapters in German history' and of having 'made a gift of it to all Germans'.579 One notes an implication in these speeches that all East Germans were demonstrators against the Communist regime in the late 1980s. In reality,  

576 Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.
although the majority of East Germans promoted a regime change, or at least were keen to transform the GDR from within, only a minority actively participated in the demonstrations even at the height of the protests: the total number of all protestors involved in all the main demonstrations in Berlin and Leipzig, as well as other protests elsewhere in the GDR in 1989, was estimated at just over a million (1,055,000). By inferring that it was the majority of East Germans that actively campaigned, the political actors sought to make it possible for all eastern Germans to consider themselves as having played a major role in bringing about the collapse of the GDR and thus in unification. The German speakers thus recast the history of the demise of the GDR to further facilitate the integration of eastern Germans into united Germany.

The oversimplification of ‘East Germans’ as a homogenous group was also visible in the underscoring of the positive aspects that East Germans brought with them to unification. Former President of the Volkskammer, Bergmann-Pohl, attempting to stress that unification was not one-sided, highlighted, at the beginning of the inaugural unification ceremony, that East Germans brought with them ‘humanity and a sense of family and neighbourliness’. Bergmann-Pohl thereby emphasised that, despite the many negative aspects of the GDR, the former citizens of the GDR themselves nevertheless possessed many positive qualities. Bergmann-Pohl’s endeavour to mould notions about eastern Germans thus focused on promoting their values. Federal President von Weizsäcker adopted a similar approach in the final speech of the ceremony by presenting the values of eastern and western Germans as complementary. He spoke of Germans now being able to merge the Verfassungspatriotismus of West Germans with the human solidarity of East Germans to create a puissant whole. At the celebrations two years later, Weizsäcker continued to attempt to influence attitudes in this way by criticising the claim that there were ‘teachers there’ (in western Germany) and ‘pupils here’ (in eastern

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581 Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.
582 Ibid.
Germany). He thereby strove to emphasise that western Germans also had much to learn from eastern Germans.

Into the late 1990s, speakers on the Day of Unity continued to make reference to what were characterised as typical values of East Germans. Now, however, rhetoric focused no longer on what East Germans had brought with them to unification. Instead, speakers praised the values and characteristics of eastern Germans in the struggle for overcoming the problems of unity. In 1998, for example, Federal President Herzog drew attention to how eastern Germans had mastered the drastic changes they had faced with ‘incredible energy and patience’ to emphasise that eastern Germans continued to make a contribution to Germany. Herzog, like previous speakers on the Day of Unity, thereby attempted to present a specific image of eastern Germans as hard-working people with many positive characteristics, to counteract the negative image of eastern Germans among many western Germans.

Finally, the Day of Unity actors used economic arguments to counter stereotypes about the eastern German economy. Forty years of a Socialist planned economy had left the GDR with a very poor economic infrastructure. At the Day of Unity celebrations in Munich, Minister-President of Saxony and former economics Professor Biedenkopf, who had grown up in West Germany, told Le Monde reporters that it would realistically take at least seventy years to overcome the economic discrepancies between eastern and western Germany. Notwithstanding the gloomy forecasts regarding the economic synchronisation of eastern and western Germany, German political actors across the spectrum started as early as 1994 to counteract the stereotype among western Germans of eastern Germany as drab and far behind western Germany. In an attempt to present eastern Germany as a ‘laboratory of the new’, they staged the new Länder as home to vibrant cities, modern infrastructure

583 Von Weizsäcker, 1992, Ansprache, 1004.
585 Le Monde reporters remarked, however, that this must be seen in the context of the conflict of the Brussels Commission on the topic of the attribution of subsidies to industry: Sixième anniversaire morose, 4.
and creativity.\textsuperscript{587} Federal President Herzog, for example, stressed the extent of progress made in building up the East since unification and suggested that eastern Germany was not only becoming equal to western Germany, but that it was actually beginning to surpass it in many respects. He claimed that, ‘in the foreseeable future, much in the East will be more modern and more competitive than in western Germany’.\textsuperscript{588} He reinforced this by saying that the most modern telecommunications network in the world was to be laid in eastern Germany. Indeed, in the first ten years after unification a total of 5.7 million modern telephone connections were installed.\textsuperscript{589} Despite considerable improvements such as this, however, the differences in the economic infrastructure of the old and new Länder remained considerably greater than the German speakers on the Day of Unity seemed willing to admit. Eastern employment figures and living conditions also continued to severely lag behind western German standards.\textsuperscript{590} The Report on the State of German Unity in 2006 showed, for example, that, at 18.7\%, the unemployment rate in the eastern Länder was twice as high as that of the western Länder.\textsuperscript{591}

German political actors continued to present eastern Germany as innovative throughout the years that followed. The tenth and fourteenth anniversaries offer especially poignant examples of the extent to which speakers on the Day of Unity attempted to reframe the realities of the state of the eastern German economy. In 2000, Federal President Rau framed the ‘renewed glory of the inner cities’ and ‘the modern infrastructure’\textsuperscript{592} as representative of the eastern German economy, whilst de Maizière spoke at length of the development of modern, high-tech industry.\textsuperscript{593} Similarly, Federal President Köhler dedicated much of his 2004 address to a detailed

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\item \textsuperscript{587} An early outlier to this discourse was Stüssmuth, who as early as 1993 had attempted to shape notions about the economy by arguing that the West German economy was actually facing problems even before unification. See Stüssmuth, 1993, Ansprache, 933.
\item \textsuperscript{588} Herzog, 1994, Ansprache, 842.
\item \textsuperscript{590} Habich, 1999, Lebensbedingungen, 523-539.
\item \textsuperscript{591} Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 2006, www.bpb.de.
\item \textsuperscript{592} Rau, 2000, Rede, www.bundespraesident.de.
\item \textsuperscript{593} De Maizière, 2000, Rede, www.sachsen.de.
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account of the transformation of Germany through Aufbau Ost, the core elements of which, he argued, were improving investment, infrastructure and innovation in the East.

In this context and in light of the fact that attitudes towards unification and unity were closely linked with the topic of the considerable costs involved in building up the former GDR, German speakers on the Day of Unity continually framed Aufbau Ost as a benefit for the whole of Germany. In this way, they sought to counter western German frustration over the heavy costs involved in the unity process by emphasising that they were not simply giving money away but were investing to some extent in their own future. At the inaugural unification ceremony in 1990, before the full costs of unity were known (or at least openly acknowledged), Federal President von Weizsäcker framed the building up of eastern Germany as a responsibility of all Germans. Von Weizsäcker focused on the likelihood of negative repercussions if the development of the East was not interpreted as a shared goal. He sought to stress that, if Aufbau Ost was not seen as a joint responsibility, the problems would ‘encumber Germans in the West as much as Germans in the East’. In 1992, when it had already become apparent that the costs involved would be greater than expected, Minister-President of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Seite, warned of the potential economic problems for future generations, were Germans not to see the economy as a joint one. Framed more positively, Chancellor Kohl emphasised, in a Bundestag declaration for the Day of Unity in 1994, that the expenditure for the new Länder was an ‘investment in the future of the whole of Germany’. The Chancellor-Elect Schröder reaffirmed the message of his predecessor in his 1998 Day of Unity speech by similarly emphasising the necessity

597 Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.
598 Dietmar & Sadyn, 1992, Festakt, NDR.
of building up the East for the whole of Germany. He stated that homogeneity in living standards across Germany would ensure stability in the economically strong regions. By the same token, at the tenth anniversary Federal President Rau presented Aufbau Ost not only as a shared struggle but also as a joint benefit for the whole country. In this vein, the Federal Government tent at the citizens' festival in 2001 was arranged around the theme ‘Renewing Germany’ and not simply renewing eastern Germany. The following year, Federal President Rau was keen to emphasise that not only western Germans but also eastern Germans paid the unification tax, to counter misconceptions and prejudices that western Germans were financing eastern Germans while the latter did nothing to help themselves. Indeed, the so-called ‘Solidarity Tax’ (Solidaritätszuschlag) was introduced in western Germany in 1991 and in the East in 1994. The German actors thus framed the continuous challenge of Aufbau Ost as both a joint task and a joint benefit to all Germans. In this vein, the German speakers also sought to emphasise those elements that connected all Germans.

3.3 Staging unity and diversity

The calls for Germans to focus on reconciliation rather than on that which continued to divide them – that is, to ‘ask less what divides and more what unites’ – became a topic so often repeated in the speeches on the Day of Unity, particularly by Federal President Rau, that the German national newspaper the Süddeutsche Zeitung described this phenomenon as the ‘Johannes Rau Formula’. Throughout the period from 1990 to 2005, actors framed the unity process, not simply the economic aspects but also the psychological aspects, as a goal, motivating Germans to believe that it ‘will be achieved without doubt’ and that it ‘just needs more time’. The various

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605 See Herzog, 1994, Ansprache, 842.
political actors’ attempts to frame differences among Germans as negative on the Day of Unity focused on two main aspects.

Firstly, they drew attention to elements that already united Germans. This topic first emerged a decade after unification arguably because before this time there were less substantial elements linking Germans. Federal President Rau spoke on the tenth anniversary, in the context of Brandt’s famous dictum at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall, that ‘that which belongs together, is now growing together’. On the one hand, he described cultural achievements, namely the award of a Nobel Prize to two Germans in the previous year, 1999 – to Günter Grass for literature and to German-born American researcher Günter Blobel for medicine – as an element that had brought all Germans together. On the other hand, he used sport as an example of the ties that already existed between eastern and western Germans and pointed especially to the ‘nationwide joy and sorrow’ when the national football team played or when German athletes competed for international medals and cups. To see the poignancy of Rau’s words, one need only consider the way in which the Football World Cup a few years later, in 2006, helped to articulate a common sense of pride and joy among Germans.

Two years later after his references to the merits of sport as a uniting force, Rau turned to another venue in which Germans in East and West came together in common cause. In his 2004 Day of Unity speech, Rau, like the German print press, pointed to the efforts of both eastern and western Germans to contain the river Oder and stem flood damage. In August 2002, eastern Germany had seen some of the worst floods in central Europe for decades when the River Elbe split its banks. Working together along the banks, the tragedy also represented a unifying social experience for eastern and western Germans alike. Following these floods, many western Germans not only provided financial support in the form of donations, but also travelled to eastern Germany to put their own physical strength into the relief

efforts. Against this background, the gratitude bestowed upon the helpers during the flood catastrophe stood at the forefront of the Day of Unity citizens' festival that year. At the central ceremony, Rau referred to the physical and financial support given by western Germans as an especially powerful example of solidarity among Germans, of ‘one people’ who belong together and who can depend on one another – at a time when, according to a Forsa survey, a mere 11% of the population considered there to be no differences among eastern and western Germans\(^{612}\) and, according to an Emnid survey, only one in three Germans even believed ‘yes, we are one country’.\(^{613}\)

In addition to such emphasis on strong emotional ties among Germans, the actors praised and sought to promote joint initiatives between eastern and western Germans. On the eleventh anniversary of German unity, for example, President of the Bundestag, Thierse, argued that unity can, must and will succeed,\(^{614}\) something, however, for which more intra-German interaction was necessary in order to overcome differences. The following year, Rau in turn expressed his desire for more shared experiences among Germans and argued that it was unacceptable that, twelve years after unification, many people still referred to the other part of Germany as ‘over there’.\(^{615}\) He called for much more interaction, not only at large events but also on the day-to-day level – particularly among young people. He praised the numerous initiatives that did already exist, including one, ‘schuelerpartnerschaft.de’ based on the idea that school children should not just have contacts in other countries, but should also have partner schools and pupils within Germany itself, which he himself had helped to set up in 2001.\(^{616}\)

The extent to which actors prioritised and applauded the creation of joint eastern-western German initiatives was best illustrated by the introduction of the Unity Award (\textit{Einheitspreis}) in 2002. The Unity Award was instituted to honour civil commitment to Germany and to praise exemplary individuals, institutions, projects

\(^{616}\) Ibid.
and initiatives which had contributed to the growing together of Germany. The Unity Award was divided into three self-explanatory categories: firstly, ‘People — Actors of Unity’; secondly, ‘Project — Construction of Actual Unity’; and thirdly, ‘Media — Observations of Unity’. With a total prize sum of 40,000 Euros, the award was sponsored by the Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung (BPB) and was bestowed by a jury of personalities from politics, culture, sport and society. When the award was introduced, it received a great deal of media coverage from the Bild-Zeitung, which ran articles looking for the ‘heroes of unity’ over a period of several weeks.

In the years that followed, the award ceremony remained a key event at the Day of Unity central celebrations, where people who had created concrete intra-German projects, as well as those who had sought to appeal to the ‘hearts and minds’ of Germans, received their prizes and whose efforts were thereby highlighted for imitation. Prize winners included: the founder of an eastern German cabaret festival entitled ‘Laughing together brings one another closer’ (‘Gemeinsam lachen bringt einander näher’), creators of a German-German memory game (‘Das deutsch-deutsche Einheitsmemory’)— designed for children to match together and reflect on pairs of pictures representative of East and West Germany (such as the two different styles of traffic lights) — as well as organisers of a youth project involving tours focused on everyday life and tourist attractions in two eastern Berlin districts, Marzahn and Hellersdorf, aimed at removing the prejudices of western German school children of these areas as the ‘social terminus of the East’.

In addition to the Unity Award, numerous other initiatives used the Day of Unity celebrations as a platform to promote Germany and ‘German-ness’ in 2005. Representatives of associations such as ‘Wir für Deutschland’ (‘Us for Germany’), ‘Du bist Deutschland’ (‘You are Germany’) and ‘Deutschland: Land der Ideen’...
('Germany: Land of Ideas') were present at the citizens’ festivals, handing out leaflets and memorabilia to passers-by. The ‘Germany: Land of Ideas’ initiative particularly coloured the production of the citizens’ festival on the fifteenth Day of Unity, which was staged with a mass of black, red, and gold bunting to display the colours of the national flag — a symbol rarely seen on the Day of Unity anniversaries. The initiative was set up in preparation for the football World Cup of 2006, aimed to ‘show the world’ how, for centuries, ‘German poets, thinkers, researchers, inventors, artists and composers have made life more comfortable, safer and nicer’. The patrons of the initiative included Federal President Köhler, the federal government and companies represented by the Federation of German Industries and German Business. On 3rd October 2005, the Minister-President of Brandenburg Platzeck (SPD) attended the ‘Germany: Land of Ideas’ stand where queues of people were being encouraged to sign up to the ‘Fan Club Deutschland’, to become an ‘official fan of Germany’ and receive membership documents and the opportunity to have their views included in the campaign. This initiative was essentially created not only to promote Germany to the rest of the world but foremost to promote a sense of pride and self-esteem among Germans.

It would seem then that this project marked the first signs of an attempt to encourage Germans to feel proud about being German and openly display positive national sentiment. In this way, the initiative served to promote a sense of all Germans belonging together in a climate where, according to a representative Emnid survey one month earlier, only 53% of Germans thought eastern and western Germans had grown closer since unification and almost one in four even thought they had grown further apart. It is, as yet, too early to determine whether the overt exhibition of patriotism by many Germans during the World Cup in 2006 (as visible

through the sea of German flags), represents the beginning of a trend toward a certain change or 'normalisation' in attitudes toward the nation or whether this phenomenon is limited to sporting events.

Alongside the depiction of differences among eastern and western Germans as negative, however, Day of Unity actors, paradoxically, also suggested throughout the period from 1990 to 2005 that homogeneity in all attitudes and aspects was not always required or even desirable — a hidden contradiction that was somewhat glossed-over in the speeches. As early as the second anniversary of unification, attempts to frame differences between Germans as positive are discernible. Minister-President of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Seite in 1992, for example, framed regional differences as extremely important and criticised centralisation without a strong sense of region as providing the potential for dictatorship. 627 Similarly, Federal President Herzog called for the differences created by forty years of division not to be overstated. Like Seite, he went so far as to suggest that complete assimilation was not even desirable by stating that there had only been a centralised state between 1933 and 1945, which was the 'worst time of our entire history, for Germans as well as for others'. Herzog, from Bavaria, a region with a traditionally strong regional identity, referred to the National Socialist past to punctuate the importance of differences existing among Germans. To further emphasise that disparity was not necessarily negative, he went on in his speech to undermine the very concepts of 'inner unity' and 'national identity'. He declared, for instance, that he 'still had not found anyone who could explain to him what “national identity” actually is — this “national identity” that we are apparently missing and supposedly urgently need'. 628 The concepts of ‘inner unity’ and ‘national identity’, so over-used and misused by political actors, the press and the general public following unification had indeed acquired, he implied, not only multiple but also essentially trite and ambivalent meanings with reference to united Germany. ‘Inner unity’, for example, can be understood either in the context of cultural harmonisation or the merging of

627 Dietmar & Sady, 1992, Festakt, NDR.
628 Herzog, 1994, Ansprache, 842.
socio-economic structures after 1990 and is surrounded by confusion and ambiguity in its use by the media and political actors. 629

Four years later, on 3rd October 1998, Herzog once more presented East/West diversity as positive by framing differences as complementary. He contested the idea that the existence of different desires among eastern and western Germans, namely the preference for greater equality and social provision in the East, and the wish not to change the balance of freedom and equality in the West, were reasons to doubt the success of unity. 630 Moreover, the Federal President once again warned against too much assimilation and criticised the promotion of ‘Einheitsdeutsche’ (unitary Germans): a word chosen to echo the fear of an ‘Einheitsstaat’ (unitary state), the bane of many on the Left, as well as of intellectuals such as Günter Grass, before and during unification. Herzog stated, in summation, that the regional variations in Germany had never damaged but rather politically and culturally enriched the country. 631

By the late 1990s and early 2000s, it had become increasingly clear that the differences between Germans from East and West were much more fundamental than most German political actors or the German general public had acknowledged at the time of unification. In response to this general realisation, German actors on the Day of Unity increasingly focused on the differences between eastern and western Germans as being regional and traditional. At the tenth Day of Unity anniversary, for example, Bundesrat President Biedenkopf of Saxony, a region that calls itself a ‘Free State’ (Freistaat) and, like Bavaria (also a Freistaat), has a strong regional identity, suggested that the disparity between eastern and western Germans had in fact been largely overcome and that the remaining differences were regional. Biedenkopf focused on the traditional regional nature of Germany’s political and cultural

629 On problemising the notion of ‘inner unity’ see Kaase, Innere Einheit. See also Veen, H-J. (1997). ‘Inner unity’—back to the community myth? A plea for basic consensus. German Politics, 6(3), 1-15.
landscape, saying that the differences between the regions had always existed. Mayor of Berlin, Wowereit, and Federal President Rau both touched upon the important role of regional diversity in their 2002 speeches. Wowereit emphasised that Germany was a federal and not a centralised state and argued that Germans were proud of their regional differences. Rau, for his part, stated that the differences in ‘inner unity’ between those from Mecklenburg and those from the Rheinland would probably never be greater than the differences in ‘inner unity’ between Franconians and Westphalians. In this vein, he even went so far as to suggest that unity between eastern and western Germans was a never-ending process and stated that unity ‘will not just simply be completed sometime’.

A sceptic may think that, given the difficulty in achieving the so-called goal of unity, the shift by the political actors to framing differences as positive rather than negative could be seen as an example of simply ‘moving the goal posts’ by saying that the aim of eliminating differences was no longer desirable. However, the fact that the two discourses ran parallel to each other throughout the period from 1990 to 2005 suggests this was not the case. Taking a less cynical view, one could thus contend that the comparison of East-West differences with those that existed between Länder simply allowed the former to be viewed positively. Differences could be presented as variety: something that enriched the political and cultural landscape of Germany and should be celebrated à la ‘unity in diversity’ motto. One notes here the parallels with the guiding motto of the EU suggesting a further indication of EU-isation.

This valorisation of difference may be tied to the tradition of separate statehood in the German lands, discussed in more detail in the following chapter, or, at least, that an appeal to such tradition underwrote the political appeals. Moreover, it serves as a further example of the way in which a tradition rooted in the Federal Republic, namely federalism, was adapted for a new purpose: to eliminate or, at least, neutralise differences among eastern and western Germans in united Germany. By

framing differences – at least some of them – among Germans as regional, positive and traditional, the German actors on the Day of Unity thus sought to overcome the potentially divisive effect of the continued differences between eastern and western Germans.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the German political actors have struggled to find ways in which to unite eastern and western Germans. This raises the question of what understanding of nationhood the political actors sought to promote. Brubaker has argued that unlike French understandings of nationhood, which have traditionally been state-centred and assimilationist, the German idiom of nationhood has traditionally been entirely ethnocultural.\(^{635}\) This ethnocultural understanding was reflected in the fact that, until 2000, citizenship in Germany remained based on the citizenship law of 1913: founded exclusively on the principle of *jus sanguinis*, the Wilhelmine law defined citizenship restrictively as a community of descent. Consequently, although citizenship law was extremely open to ethnic Germans from outside Germany, neither birth in German territory nor prolonged residence affected the ascription of citizenship to non-German immigrants.\(^{636}\) Furthermore, naturalisation for non-Germans remained difficult – resulting in low naturalisation rates.\(^{637}\) This was evident in the way in which Germany initially welcomed with open arms those with German blood from the East after the fall of the Iron Curtain, while continuing to restrict the ascription and naturalisation of non-Germans.\(^{638}\)

On the Day of Unity anniversaries from 1990 to 2005, however, the elite idiom of nationhood was more complex. The ethnocultural understanding of nationhood remained visible in a number of different aspects. It was particularly pronounced, for example, in the initiatives such as 'You are Germany' and 'Us for Germany'. These initiatives, in their attempt to encourage both Germans and the wider international community to interpret Germans more positively, drew on the

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\(^{635}\) Brubaker, 1992, *Citizenship and nationhood*.

\(^{636}\) Ibid., 82.

\(^{637}\) Ibid., 114.

\(^{638}\) Ibid., 84.
idea that generation after generation of Germans have contributed to everything from poetry and literature to music and engineering. One notes an ethnocultural inflection here based on the understanding of the German citizenry as a community of descent. The promotion by the Day of Unity actors of German Nobel prize winners – that is to say those of German blood – as figures of whom all Germans could be proud, further underlines this ethnocultural idiom of nationhood on the Day of Unity. That even German-born American Günter Blobel was included among the list of German Nobel Prize winners by the Day of Unity actors epitomises this.

At the same time, however, there have been signs of a more civic, state-centred and assimilationist understanding of nationhood among the German political actors on the Day of Unity. This manifested itself both in the way they presented Germans as united through the economy as well as through shared experiences and common initiatives – such as the flooding in eastern Germany. Most of all, however, civic nationalism expressed itself in the promotion of all Germans as joined through their attachment to the constitution. Such constitutional patriotism is not restricted to those of German blood but rather is a form of belonging for all those willing to adhere to the German constitution. There are thus signs here of an expansive definition of citizenship traditionally more associated with the Republican values of France than with Germany.

The promotion of not only ethnic but also civic understandings of nationhood by the political actors on the Day of Unity anniversaries would seem to suggest that Brubaker’s understanding of Germany as a country of pure ethnic nationalism is becoming somewhat outdated. The German national holiday did not serve as platform from which to simply exclusively celebrate those of German blood and their past. Instead, the prevailing elite idiom of nationhood was much more inclusive – that is to say, the political actors sought to invite others into the imagined community. The reasons for this can perhaps best be explained by considering the historical, institutional and political context in which the change in the elite idiom of nationhood took place.

As Brubaker has argued, during the post-war division of Germany, the continued ethnocultural definition of citizenship – based on the Wilhelmine law of
1913 — meant that East Germans were considered German citizens.\footnote{Ibid., 169.} Indeed, it was the understanding of German citizenship as a community of descent that automatically granted passports to East Germans and entitled them to legally enter, work and reside in the Federal Republic. On the one hand, unification in some respects reinforced the need for an ethnocultural understanding of citizenship. Defining East and West Germans as united through blood served, as we have seen in the ethnocultural elements of the Day of Unity, as a way of constructing a sense of Wir-Gefühl among two groups of people who, through forty years of division, were no longer so closely united through history or culture. On the other hand, however, unification allowed changes to the understanding of nationhood in Germany. While the need to leave the door open for unification had hindered any major reforms before the collapse of Communism, on 9th July 1990 German political actors made a number of reforms to the law governing foreigners (Ausländergesetz). Above all, naturalisation procedures were simplified for immigrants aged between 16 and 23 and older immigrants who had lived in Germany for more than fifteen years.\footnote{Green, S. (2000). Beyond ethnoculturalism? German citizenship in the new millennium. German Politics, 9(3), 105-124, here 105.} The size of the immigrant population in Germany by this time — 5.3 million by the end of 1990\footnote{Ibid., 111.} — had indeed necessitated liberalisation of the definition of citizenship; there was a high level of cross-party consensus in Germany that the existence of a large, settled non-German population had to be addressed.\footnote{Brubaker, 1992, Citizenship and nationhood, 173.}

The challenges of finding a definition of nationhood that remained ethnic (in order to integrate East Germans) but at the same time assimilationist (in order to integrate the vast population of non-German immigrants) perhaps helps to explain the expressions of both ethnic and civic elite idioms of nationhood on the Day of Unity anniversaries throughout the period from 1990 to 2005. In addition to this, the advocacy of a postnational form of belonging explored in the following chapters took the political actors further away from a purely ethno-centric understanding of nationhood. Moreover, in a time of ever-increasing EU-integration, Germany sought to synchronise its definition of citizenship to bring its citizenship legislation in line
with the prevailing understanding of nationhood and citizenship of its European partners.\footnote{Green, 2000, Beyond ethnoculturalism, 120.}

The turn away from a purely ethnocultural understanding of nationhood was indeed institutionalised in the reformed citizenship law of 1\textsuperscript{st} January 2000. While the complete rejection of dual citizenship in the new law was widely perceived as a sign that Germany had not entirely broken with its ethnocultural self-understanding,\footnote{See Ibid., 118.} a number of elements demonstrated that Germany was moving into civic nationalism at the turn of the millennium. Most notably, the law introduced for the first time a form of \textit{jus soli}, liberalised the requirements for naturalisation and restricted the automatic inheritance of German citizenship for those outside of Germany.\footnote{See Ibid., 107-119.} The automatic inheritance of citizenship had indeed caused problems in the late 1980s and early 1990s when, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, a vast number of Russian immigrants took up the offer to relocate to Germany; they often spoke little or no German themselves, brought their (frequently, Russian) families with them and proved difficult to integrate.

More recently, Germany has stepped yet further towards civic nationalism: on 1\textsuperscript{st} September 2008, the country introduced a citizenship test for immigrants wishing to become German. This test, with questions ranging from ‘What was the ‘Third Reich’?’ to ‘What is the German constitution called?’ signifies a further dramatic shift in the understanding of what it is to be German.\footnote{See Moore, T. (2008). German citizenship is put to the test. Retrieved January 14, 2009, from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7597534.stm.} The very idea that those of non-German blood – having fulfilled certain other requirements such as sufficient mastery of the German language and financial independence – can become German by answering correctly a number of questions about Germany would previously have been unthinkable in Germany. Given that Britain (with its ‘Life in the UK’ test),\footnote{See Introduction of language and citizenship knowledge testing. (2008). Retrieved February 12, 2009, from http://ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2007/introduction of language testing. For more details about the test see Life in the UK test. (2008). Retrieved February 12, 2009, from http://www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk.} has recently introduced similar procedures and France (with its stringent interviews...
for citizenship), continues today in its tradition of demanding assimilation, the introduction of a citizenship test arguably brings Germany further in line with its EU partners. These changes underline the increasingly broad, inclusive nature of the prevailing idiom of nationhood in Germany today, which is far removed from the purely ethnic form of nationalism outlined by Brubaker in the early 1990s.

648 The recent case of ‘Faiza M’, for example — in which a young Moroccan woman (married to a Frenchman and with three children born in France) who entered her French citizenship interview wearing a burqa was refused citizenship on the grounds of her ‘failure to assimilate’ — epitomised that, not only historically in France, but also today, a person can become French but has to be assimilated. See Le Bars, S. (2008). Une marocaine en burqa se voit refuser la nationalité française. Retrieved March 3, 2008, from http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2008/07/11/une-marocaine-en-burqa-se-voit-refuser-la-nationalite-francaise_10724013224.html.

649 The degree to which there has been convergence in citizenship matters among the EU states to date is contested. See, for example, Joppke, C., & Morawska, E. (Eds.). (2003). Toward assimilation and citizenship. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. For an introduction to key issues relating to the citizenship tests in Europe see Wright, S. (2008). Citizenship tests in Europe — editorial introduction. International Journal on Multicultural Societies, 10(1), 1-9.
4. The German national holiday as a regional event: a sub-national national holiday?

The Day of Unity parades in Berlin traditionally commenced with sixteen young Germans, one from each of the Länder, passing through the Brandenburg gate with the Wendefahne. Running intermittently underneath the eight-by-four-metre flag, the youngsters alternately displayed the German national flag on one side of the flag, the sixteen flags of the federal states on the other. This symbolic opening to the unity celebrations in the country's capital epitomises the centrality of federalism in the staging of the national holiday. That these were not the main celebrations, which were instead hosted on a rotating basis in the Land holding the presidency in the Bundesrat, is perhaps the most striking manifestation of this.

Since the eighteenth century, when it was first used in the modern, political sense, federalism has been an explicit element of German national consciousness and a 'continuous sub-current of German history'. Unlike centralised unitary nation-states such as France, the 'national-federal state' became the 'specific German type of nation-state'. The formation of regions and regional states and identities has historically preceded national integration and state formation and, as Abigail Green and Siegfried Weichlein have recently shown, a dualism of nation and region has traditionally existed in Germany. Undermining the 'assumption that kleindeutsch German unification was inevitable' and questioning the strength of German nationalism at the time of the first unification, recent literature has shown that territorial loyalties and identities remained fundamental even in the period of relative centralisation in nation-state formation of the late 19th century.

652 Green, 2001, Fatherlands.
654 Green, 2001, Fatherlands, 15.
655 Ibid., 6.
In the early twentieth century, however, the Weimar Republic, a ‘decentralised unitary’ rather than federal state, weakened federal political structures, although not necessarily regional identities, and National Socialism replaced the federation with a highly centralised state. In post-war Germany, two divergent trends developed in the zones of occupation. In the Soviet zone, the GDR rapidly developed into a centralised one-party state and East Germany was stripped of any remaining federal character, when the Länder were abolished de facto in 1952 (and de jure in 1958). In contrast, the western Allies – especially the US and France – insisted that West Germany must be federal. This was also the preferred choice especially of the Christian Democrats under Konrad Adenauer in the Parlamentarischer Rat, the body which drafted Germany’s new constitution. West Germans thus did not interpret the introduction of federalism by the Allies as a ‘hostile plot to subdivide the nation’ but instead accepted it as an ‘authentic expression of German identities’, despite the fact that few of the new Länder resembled former states of the Old Empire or the Bismarckian Empire. Federalism consequently became a cornerstone of the German Basic Law of 1949.

Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Thuringia); united Germany soon also faced the difficulties of representing the interests of the Länder on a European stage. Despite these challenges, the federal nature of unification served to confirm the stability and legitimacy of German federalism and assuaged international fears of a possible re-emergence of a centralised German state.

The staging of the Day of Unity celebrations suggests that the traditional dualism of nation and region, which Green describes as 'perhaps the most distinctive aspect' of the 'new' 19th century German nation, has also become a defining characteristic of the new unified German nation. Attachment to federalism and to the EU has become the foundation of unified Germany's self-understanding. This chapter focuses on the aspect of federalism, arguing that the Day of Unity, a day created to commemorate unification, has served as a yearly platform on which to stage Germany as a federal system. This appeal especially to the constituent parts, the individual federal states of unified Germany, will be cast as sub-national. The chapter will demonstrate that this sub-national dimension to the staging of the unity celebrations can be explained through international, political and economic factors. It will illustrate the denationalisation of the commemorations through their federal staging, to highlight that to some extent German mainstream political actors presented the Day of Unity as a postnational national holiday.

The chapter comprises five sections. Section one draws attention to the sub-national elements of the Day of Unity by outlining its decentralised arrangement and the inclusion of regional elements in the mise-en-scène of the celebrations. Sections two to five offer different, but complementary explanations for the sub-national staging. Section two argues that the regional staging of the day provided a platform for constructing and fostering regional identities to encourage regional pride. Section three focuses on the political motivations of regional actors to argue that the regional staging of the Day of Unity can be understood in the context of particular political interests. Section four explores the economic interest in staging the Day of Unity.

665 Johnson, 1999, Territory and power, 38.
regionally and argues that the Day of Unity celebrations were used as an arena to economically promote the respective Länder, particularly in eastern Germany. The final section demonstrates that the Day of Unity was staged regionally in order to influence German political culture by promoting democratic values and federalism on a sub-national level.

4.1 A sub-national national holiday?

The national dimension of the celebrations in front of the Reichstag on the eve of unification should not be underestimated; a number of national flags were visible in the crowd and at the stroke of midnight a sixty-square-metre German flag was raised on the Platz der Republik. However, the hesitancy among the audience and the political actors to sing the national anthem implied an underlying apprehension of displaying nationalistic sentiment. The staging of the inaugural unification celebrations the following day suggests that at the time of unification, German political actors were eager not to allow national symbols, with their potential connotations of nationalism, to be dominant on the German national holiday. Consequently, solely the flags of each of the federal states adorned the stage.

A significant regional dimension contributed to the denationalisation of the Day of Unity anniversaries in the years that followed. Four core aspects indicate the way in which sub-national elements permeated the unity anniversary commemorations.

Firstly, the rotating, decentralised structure of the central celebrations ensured the German national holiday was organised at a sub-national level. This organisational form, interestingly, mirrors the European Capital of Culture competition, an EU initiative that enables winners to revamp their cultural legacy and receive considerable international attention and where the country from which the winning city is chosen changes on a rotating basis every year. This aspect represents the most obvious example of the sub-national dimension of the German national holiday.

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667 See Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.
670 See Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.
holiday. The decentralised arrangement led to regional differences in the staging of the event, further shaping the regional dimension of the unity celebrations. Due to the absence of set protocol for the staging of the Day of Unity celebrations, the regional actors in the host federal state enjoyed a high degree of autonomy to stage both the ceremony and the citizens' festival as they saw appropriate — in terms of everything from the core structures to the flags and symbols. As we have seen, despite their high level of discretionary power, unity organisers opted for the most part for a similar approach to the staging of the core elements, adopting newly invented traditions largely derived from the 1991 commemorations. The variation in the staging that did exist among the various Länder can only to a limited extent be accounted for by changes in the political climate, shifts in attitudes towards unity, political and world events, party politics and regionalism. To a greater extent, differences arose as a result of, on the one hand, unique geographical and cultural highlights in specific federal state capitals. Dresden, for example, situated on the River Elbe, was able to offer its Day of Unity visitors a cultural exhibition from all sixteen of the Länder on its historic *Weisse Flotte* paddle steamers. Berlin's unveiling of the Brandenburg Gate after a twenty-two month restoration period serves as a further example of an event not available to unity organisers in other Länder: amid lights, music and political VIPs, including former US President Bill Clinton and Chancellor Schröder, designer Willy Bogner abseiled down a twenty one metre long zip to reveal a symbol of German unity. On the other hand, differences in the celebrations arose in part from the date of the celebrations: 'round' anniversaries, namely those marking the fifth, tenth and fifteen anniversaries of unification, offered overall more extensive event programmes than most other years. At the fifth anniversary celebrations for example, *ARD* staged a televised gala, 'Germany's 5',

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attended by Minister-President Rau, political representatives and five hundred citizens pooled from all of the sixteen Länder.\textsuperscript{675} To fully comprehend the roots of the differences, one must, however, consider the respective wealth of the host federal states.

Differences in the wealth of the respective federal states led to eastern-western German variation in the staging of the unity events. A combination of funds from the federation (\textit{Bund}), the host Land and sponsors traditionally financed the central Day of Unity celebrations.\textsuperscript{676} The majority of Länder recouped a large proportion of the cost, at times as much as seventy percent,\textsuperscript{677} from sponsorship and leasing. Nevertheless, the fact that the host Land itself was obliged to take over a share of the expense for the celebrations that cost as much as a million Euros,\textsuperscript{678} meant that a correlation was discernible between the prosperity of the respective Land and the scale of events offered at the citizens' festival. An analysis of the forms and extent of the celebrations reveals that the less wealthy Länder, particularly those in the former GDR in the first decade after unification, tended to offer a more limited programme than more prosperous Länder. In 1992, the Land government of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, which hosted the second unity anniversary celebrations in Schwerin, for example, was careful to ensure that the costs for the celebrations remained low. In this vein, it chose to abandon plans for presentation stands of all the Länder and, as later in Dresden in 2000,\textsuperscript{679} a fireworks display was forsaken as a further money saving measure.\textsuperscript{680} Minister-President Seite justified the decision by stating that as Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania had, of all the Länder, suffered the most economic difficulties since unification, there would be little understanding for costly events.\textsuperscript{681}

\textsuperscript{675} \textit{Fünf Jahre Deutschland: Die Gala zum Tag der Deutschen Einheit }[Television coverage]. (1995, October 2). Cologne: WDR.
\textsuperscript{677} \textit{Bremen feiert}, 1994, 2.
\textsuperscript{678} A. Clausing, personal communication, November 6, 2006.
\textsuperscript{680} Zum Nationalfeiertag starke Sicherheitsvorkehrungen, 1992, 2.
\textsuperscript{681} \textit{Ibid.}
Economic improvement in the eastern Länder during the early 2000s manifested itself through larger scale staging of the unity events. In contrast to the modest celebrations in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony-Anhalt and to some extent Saxony, the celebrations in Thuringia in 2004 and Brandenburg in 2005 offered an impressive catalogue of events at both the ceremonies and citizens' festivals. At the ceremony in Erfurt, for example, the Big Band, conducted by Stanley Blume, performed the world premiere of the composition 'Reunion' by Zurich pianist Ralf Ruh. By inviting Peter Heppner to sing, accompanied by the Babelsberg Film Orchestra, Potsdam also offered a more notable musical highlight than was customary at the unity ceremonies. At its citizens' festival, Erfurt presented a wide-ranging programme including a parade involving hundreds of people, a multimedia show with lasers and music, a music concert with well-known bands and fireworks. Potsdam similarly offered one of the most extensive array of events and activities of all the previous citizens' festivals. The extensive programme of the Erfurt and Potsdam unity events suggests that, due to the economic improvement in the eastern Länder by the mid 2000s, more funds were available for staging large-scale unity celebrations than in the early years following unification. It perhaps also became more important to celebrate unity in a climate of Ostalgie. Although from 1990 to 2005 the disparity in scale and ambition in the staging was predominantly due to the respective means of the host Land, the decentralised sub-national arrangement nevertheless provided a driving force of the significant regional variation.

The sub-national features, secondly, were visible at the citizens' festival. Examples of federalism-related elements of the staging include Minister-Presidents cutting an Einheitstorte into Länder-sized pieces at the citizens' festival in 2005 and a giant 'memory game' based on the federal states. However, the Ländermeile, an exhibition of the culinary and cultural specialities of each of the

684 M. Meinung, personal communication, November 27, 2006.
685 Möller, 2005, Tag der Freude, 2.
Länder at the central celebrations, served as the most prominent example of sub-national elements at the unity citizens' festivals. One notes here, once more, parallels with the staging of EU events, specifically the Europe Day celebrations, again indicative of EU-isation. The Ländermeile formed the core of most unity citizens' festivals not least because the huge white marquees dominated the squares and streets of the host city. These Länderpavillons, traditionally adorned with flags and symbols from the respective Land,\(^{687}\) presented forcefully – visually, spatially and thematically – the image of a Germany consisting of many parts.\(^{688}\) In this way, the nation was represented as mediated through its Länder, in a form that avoided the explicit use of national symbols.\(^{689}\) National symbols, specifically flags and hymns (since neither memorials nor monuments were relevant in this context),\(^{690}\) barely featured at the citizens' festivals.\(^{691}\)

Thirdly, regional flags, music and cordons contributed a further sub-national dimension to the unity ceremonies, in addition to the sub-national focus of the citizens' festivals. Though unity organisers did employ national symbols in the staging of the central ceremonies, regional symbols, particularly in the form of flags, cordons and music, were inextricably linked in their use. Considering the use of flags, at the celebrations in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, for example, although a large German national flag served as the main backdrop to the stage, it was both literally and figuratively overshadowed by the sixteen coats of arms of the Länder, depicting the duality of region and nation. Moreover, at the Schwerin celebrations in 1992, a Mecklenburg-Western Pomeranian, a German and an EU flag stood on the central stage whilst both sides of the stage displayed large regional symbols, namely the coats of arms of each of the Länder.\(^{692}\)


\(^{688}\) Dietmar & Timpe, 1991, Sondersendung, NDR.

\(^{689}\) For an interesting examination of how political goals have been represented through symbols see Bausinger, H. (2003). Zwischen Passion und Spiel: Identifikation durch Symbole. In A. Dornhelm & S. Greiffenhagen (Eds.), Identität und politische Kultur. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 47-53.

\(^{690}\) Peter Reichel defines the key national symbols as flags, hymns, commemorative days, memorials and state erections. See Reichel, 2005, Schwarz-Rot-Gold.

\(^{691}\) A notable exception, the 2005 celebrations, can be understood in the context of the Deutschland Fan initiative discussed in Chapter Three.

\(^{692}\) See, for example, Dietmar & Sadyn, 1992, Festakt, NDR.
One could therefore argue that, at times, the regional dimension of the staging was more dominant than the national; this regional dimension in each case at least subverted any emphasis on the nation and directed attention instead to the constituent parts. This was certainly true of the ceremony in the Free Hanseatic city of Bremen, a Land with a long civic tradition of city government, where regional symbols entirely replaced national representations on the Day of Unity. For example, a large rectangle displaying the sixteen federal states’ flags formed the full backdrop to the stage. Moreover, aside from the traditional singing at the end of the ceremony of the national anthem, the only national symbol present that day, was a solitary national flag sandwiched between an EU and Bremen flag at the side of the stage.

The respective unity organisers also established a strong sub-national dimension in the staging of the music at the ceremonies on the Day of Unity. Regional factors frequently motivated the choice of musical composition and orchestra for the ceremony. For instance, alongside Day of Unity standards, such as Ludwig van Beethoven and Georg Friedrich Händel, Hamburg-born Johannes Brahms provided the musical arrangement for the 1991 celebrations in Hamburg.

In turn, Munich-born Richard Strauss’ ‘Concerto No. 1 for Horn and Orchestra in E Flat Major, Op. 11’ was a highlight of the Bavarian unity celebrations. Similarly, the Mainz celebrations saw sections performed from Max Bruchs’ ‘Loreley Opera Op. 16’, based on the famous legend of a betrayed young woman who jumped to her death from a high rock in the Rhine Valley, in today’s Rhineland-Palatinate, and went on to lure sailors to their death with her siren-like voice. Regional aspects influenced not only the choice of musical arrangement but also the selection of orchestra and choir. Traditionally, an orchestra from the host Land, such as the Hamburg Philharmonic State Orchestra in 1991 and the Chamber Orchestra of the

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697 Deutschland feiert, 1991, 2
Mecklenburg Federal State Theatre in Schwerin in 1992,\textsuperscript{698} played the selected compositions accompanied by a choir, often a youth choir of the host Land, such as the Pestalozzi-Grammar School Choir in Munich in 1996\textsuperscript{699} and the Choir of the Hanoverian Academy of Music and Theatre in 1998.\textsuperscript{700} A further sub-national element was supplied by the cordons of people dressed in regional garb marking the path of the Day of Unity VIPs from one element of the celebrations to the next. Emphasising and fostering historical, regional inheritance and tradition, in Hamburg in 1991, for example, police students dressed in knee breeches, tights and long skirted jackets lined the path of the Day of Unity guests from the entrance of the Chamber of Commerce over the courtyard to the town hall.\textsuperscript{701} Similarly, the Dresden unity organisers staged a cordon of 2,000 miners, marksmen groups and traditional associations clad in traditional dress to accompany the guests of honour from the Kreuzkirche, where the ecumenical service had been held, to the ceremony in the Semperoper.\textsuperscript{702}

Fourthly, not only the central celebrations but also the parallel celebrations in Berlin often promoted regional symbols. That the \textit{Wendefahne} frequently marked the beginning of the unity parades was only one of many manifestations of the interdependency of national and regional symbols in the capital. On the whole, the focus on the federal states was considerable in Berlin. This was particularly true of the staging of the parades that, aside from the national flag on the \textit{Wendefahne}, traditionally contained few national symbols. They comprised instead a representation of Germans from each of the sixteen federal states. The customary Day of Unity \textit{Marktplatz} in Berlin, presenting traditional foods from each of the Länder (similar once more to the staging of the Europe Days), further emphasised the regional aspect in the staging of the events. A selection of culinary specialities from each Land encouraged Germans to celebrate Germany through its variety. The

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{698}] Dietmar & Sadyń, 1992, \textit{Festakt}, NDR.
\item[\textsuperscript{700}] \textit{Festakt zum Tag der Deutschen Einheit: Übertragung aus dem Kuppelsaal des Congress Centrum Hannover} [Television broadcast]. (1998, October 3). Hamburg: NDR.
\item[\textsuperscript{701}] Kauntz, 1991, \textit{Der Jugendchor}, 3. For a historic analysis of local identities in Hamburg see Aaslestad, 2005, \textit{Place and Politics}.
\end{itemize}
staging of regional music, here in Berlin as before in each of the regional celebrations, likewise promoted regional variation and contributed a further sub-national dimension. In 1998, for example, as each representation of the Länder passed through the Brandenburg Gate, a well-known singer or band of predominantly Schlager or Volksmusik from the respective Land performed on an adjacent stage.\(^{703}\)

Regional aspects thus intertwined with, at times even replaced, national arrangement and national representations on the Day of Unity. Consequently, the Day of Unity developed a sub-national dimension. Yet why was Germany's national holiday staged to some extent on a sub-national basis? It is to the investigation of this question that this chapter now turns.

### 4.2 Constructing sub-national pride

The history of German federalism is 'unthinkable' without the cultural idiom of regionalism.\(^{704}\) "Patriotism first formed in Germany as Landespatriotismus"\(^{705}\) and this Landespatriotismus in turn played a decisive role in the formation of the German nation.\(^{706}\) In this vein, historians have called attention to the importance of 'pre-national loyalties and identities'\(^{707}\) in the nineteenth century when 'most Germans were Austrians or Prussians, Bavarians or Saxons, first and foremost'.\(^{708}\) The historic roots of the federal structure of the German Festkultur and remembrance rituals largely stem from the independent identities of the German states.\(^{709}\) Until the middle of the 19\(^{th}\) century, national days in their original forms were celebrated on a regional level; Bavaria, Prussia and Austria, essentially served as nations with their own national symbols.\(^{710}\) Yet despite the traditional importance of regional patriotism in

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\(^{703}\) *Deutschlands Fest* [Television broadcast]. (1998, October 3). Mainz: ZDF.

\(^{704}\) Umbach, 2002, German federalism, 7.


Germany, the sub-national staging of the Day of Unity was motivated less by regionalism than by federalism: it was not strong regional identities that motivated the regional, rotating organisation of the Day of Unity but rather the aspiration of the German political actors to present Germany as a federal state.

Nevertheless, regionalism did play a role in the mise-en-scène of the Day of Unity festivities since regional aspects were particularly prevalent in Länder with strong regional identities. The federal arrangement of the Day of Unity anniversaries served to construct and reinforce regional identities in order to promote regional pride. Two key examples illustrate this. These are, firstly, the staging of the 1996 unity celebrations in Bavaria and, secondly, the way in which the Berlin festivities commemorated history through regional traditions.

Unity organisers traditionally liaised with their counterparts in Länder that had already hosted the unity celebrations. The level of interaction varied from nominal contact with the organisers of the previous year to discussion with organisers from all previous host Länder, the majority of organisers liaised with organisers from at least one of the former host Länder. The Bavarian organisers, however, did not liaise with any former organisers of either the ceremony or the citizens’ festival. This suggests an intention by the regional actors to stage the 1996 celebrations entirely from a unique, Bavarian perspective. The Free State of Bavaria, the geographically largest federal state in Germany, which itself comprises three distinct regions – Bavaria proper, Swabia and Franconia – is well-known for its long tradition of regionalism and regional traditions. The unity celebrations in Munich, described by one journalist as ‘visually magnificent but lacking in terms of

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713 This was true of the Wiesbaden citizens’ festival organisers: K-H. Petry, personal communication, December 13, 2006.
content', emphasised regional pride more than any of the previous unity events. The Bavarian unity celebrations provided a platform for demonstrating such regional pride; regional aspects featured in most elements of the festivities, from the cordons and the ceremony to the citizens' festival, as in previous and later festivities, but with particular emphasis.

More than in Hamburg or Dresden, regional staging dominated the cordon marking the path of the Day of Unity guests of honour. Gebirgsschützen, a militia-like association with roots in the fifteenth century and considered a central Bavarian institution, marked the path of the guests from the ecumenical service in the Frauenkirche to the ceremony in the Herkulessaal of the Münchner Residenz. As a further demonstration of the regional pride and consciousness as 'Bavarian Germans', the Vorderlader- und Böllerschützverein Unterkönigen, a traditional Bavarian sharpshooters' association, stood dressed in traditional garb, firing volleys outside the Frauenkirche.

At the ceremony, the national anthem was followed by Bavaria's official hymn since 1966, the Bayernlied. This was a striking example of the duality of region and nation – the official ceremony of the national holiday ended with a regional hymn. A Day of Unity concert at the citizens' festival similarly concluded with the national anthem and the Bayernlied. To celebrate Bavarian traditions, organisers staged the citizens' festival with hundreds of people and musicians in traditional garb carrying the Bavarian flag. The presentation of displays of regional dress and traditions aimed to cultivate a regional identity and to encourage it to flourish. In this vein, the Bavarian organisers also staged a ballet at the citizens' festival based on Bavarian composer Carl Orff's spectacle Carmina Burana.
further promote regional pride through examples of Bavarian achievements. One could argue that the unity organisers exhibited Bavarian elements for tourism purposes in an attempt to promote the Land economically. Whilst, as discussed in section four below, this has been the case for many other Länder, it would seem that this was not the priority of the Bavarian unity organisers. That their main goal of the citizens’ festival was instead the ‘involvement of the Bavarian population’ suggests that the unity events were targeted more at the local community than at Germans from other Länder – that is to say they sought to mediate participation in the nation through participation in the Land.

In this way, the regional staging of the unity events can be understood in part as a means of celebrating regional idiosyncrasies, to both support diversity in Germany and promote pride on a regional rather than national level. Unlike national pride, regional pride provided an ‘acceptable’ form of patriotism without negative connotations of nationalism for Germans or for the international community. The promotion of regional identity thus sought to allow Germans to be bolder by promoting pride about being ‘federal Germans’. The endorsement of sub-national pride, specifically to the Land, in this way underlined Germany’s commitment to federalism – that is to say commitment to its decentralised political system and moderation in the use of economic and political power and influence it implied.

Whilst regional aspects of the staging were especially dominant in Bavaria, representations of the nation were nevertheless visible in the celebrations. The best example of this was the enormous national flag covered with the regional coat of arms, as in Baden-Wurttemberg, a Land with an almost equally strong tradition of regionalism. The similarity of the Munich and Stuttgart celebrations can be explained in part by the fact that the head of Stuttgart’s protocol department in the State Chancellery personally attended the celebrations in Munich. The national dimension of the Munich celebrations was intensified by the speech of Minister-President of Bavaria Stoiber. Stoiber, who greeted the audience with a ‘Grüss

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"Gott", a form of greeting with confessional-Catholic connotations much used in Bavaria, was criticised by the German national press for mentioning the German nation twenty-two times, whilst barely alluding to Europe.

During the first unification of Germany, local identity was fully compatible with the development of a united German nation-state. Indeed, as Alon Confino has shown, to some extent unification was made possible by Germans imagining the nation as an extension of the region. Moreover, as far back as Imperial Germany, Germans have been accustomed to celebrating the nation through celebrations of the region at national festivals. Historians have indeed argued that ‘nation, nationalism’ and ‘region, regionality and regionalism’ need not be ‘alternative or antagonistic constructions’. Instead, constructs of the region and the nation can offer mutual legitimacy: ‘the region is granted recognition of its identity claims while the nation is granted recognition of its claims of sovereignty’.

The integral, dominant role of the regional staging on the Day of Unity reflected the interdependence of regional and national symbols; the nation was imagined simply as an extension of the region. In fact, of all the Day of Unity anniversaries, the national dimension of the celebrations appeared most dominant in the Länder with strong regional identities and regional traditions — that is to say, Länder with a strong regional identity have been more comfortable in emphasising national elements at the unity events. These Länder, particularly Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, but also other federal states with a history of regionalism, such as Bremen, presented nation not as a contradiction to region, but rather as a sum of the regional parts. By emphasising the importance of regional elements, the Day of

728 Ibid.
730 Haslinger & Holz, 2000, Selbstbild, 28.
Unity could thus overcome the possible tensions of presenting national symbols in isolation. The symbiotic duality of regional and national symbols served to legitimise both the region and the nation.

The processions of the sponsored celebrations in Berlin, like the Munich event, promoted regional identities by displaying traditional groups and dress from each of the Länder. An analysis of the procession reveals that many Länder chose to stage themselves not only with regional products, but also with specific historical traditions. Brandenburg, for example, frequently represented itself by the Langen Kerls, based on the soldiers of Frederick-William I (1713-1740) whom the 'Soldier-King' had selectively recruited from across Europe for being over six foot tall. Saxony, meanwhile, chose to present itself by men on horseback – dressed as knights and holding jousting sticks – representing Henry I (876-936), Duke of Saxony and later King of the Eastern Franks, in 933 when he and his Germanic tribes successfully prevented a Magyar invasion.

As explored in Chapter Two, unified Germany struggled to celebrate its stigmatised national past. These examples illustrate that in Berlin, the 'capital of remembrance', the unity celebrations overcame this tension to some extent by serving as a platform for celebrating history through regional traditions. While the pre-1945 national past for western Germans and pre-1990 past for eastern Germans failed to evoke feelings of pride, regional traditions preceding and thus 'untainted' by National Socialism and the Communist era provided a source of historical pride. The regional staging of the Day of Unity therefore served as a platform to promote German feelings of pride by celebrating the German past, albeit at a regional, rather than national level.

If one considers the virtually uninterrupted success of the regionalist CSU party in Bavaria since 1946, one could argue that strong regional identities have political implications: the success of the CSU was due in part to its regional

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732 See, for example, Deutschlands Fest, 1998, ZDF.
733 Reichel, 2005, Schwarz-Rot-Gold.
affiliation. This suggests that there was also a political motive in fostering regional identity on the Day of Unity: Minister-President Stoiber’s effort to strengthen regional identities through regional staging must also be considered within the context of attempts to secure a strong voter base. While this example may be specific to Bavaria and cannot perhaps be generalised to other Länder, it is evident that political interests have shaped the Day of Unity. The unity celebrations can be explained not only in terms of attempts to foster regional pride but also as an attempt by regional political actors to secure more influence over the staging of the celebrations. It is the political interest in staging the unity events regionally that this chapter will now examine.

4.3 Centralised vs decentralised organisation

At the 1994 Deutschlands Fest in Berlin, Bundestag President and patron of the Berlin celebrations, Süßmuth, told reporters that the capital should be the ‘central location’ for future unity celebrations. Rejecting this argument of a national political figure, regional politician Wedemeier, Mayor of Bremen and host of the central celebrations in 1994, criticised the suggestion of centralising the unity events, arguing that ‘in the federal tradition’ the celebrations must rotate through the Länder. Wedemeier’s predilection is not surprising given that, as host of the central celebrations, the regional actors could stage and propagate their chosen image of Germany on the German national holiday — an opportunity that would not be open to them if the celebrations were centralised. These remarks, ahead of a debate on the question in the Bundesrat, also illustrate an ongoing conflict between regional and national actors in united Germany. This has been particularly apparent in the recent federal reform debates and subsequent constitutional reform of 2007 that aimed for greater clarity of federal and federal state competences with the aim of reducing blurred ‘mixed competence’ and the resulting institutional impasses. Indeed, for a

long time the number of parliamentary bills requiring the agreement of the Bundesrat continually increased.\textsuperscript{737} Moreover, 'in connection with German unification and European integration, the Länder have adopted common initiatives with the aim of extending still further the significance of the Länder in [national] politics'.\textsuperscript{738}

Thus, the debates about the decentralised nature of the unity celebrations demonstrate that the regional arrangement of the unity celebrations is also politically charged: in a struggle for influence over the staging of the celebrations, regional actors favoured a regional arrangement to the celebrations, national actors a national one. National actors consequently predominantly supported the parallel celebrations in Berlin, with Süßmuth as their patron. The debate over the decentralised organisation reached its peak in 2006, by which time each of the Länder had hosted the central celebrations once. At the 2006 Minster-President Conference and the 2006 Conference of the Heads of the State Chancelleries, those regional actors who had pressed for maintenance of the status quo won out, ensuring the unity celebrations would remain on a rotating, decentralised basis.\textsuperscript{739} The regional arrangement afforded regional political actors too significant an opportunity — to augment their own authority and to further their own political agendas — for them to willingly derogate the potential for influence over the staging back to the politicians in Berlin. The 1998 unity celebrations serve as a key example of how regional actors influenced the unity celebrations whilst a brief analysis of the Berlin celebrations demonstrates how this parallel event competed with the central celebrations.

On 3\textsuperscript{rd} October 1998, Schröder was not only Chancellor-Elect but also Minister-President of Lower-Saxony, President of the Bundesrat and thus host of the eighth unity anniversary celebrations. Schröder's influence in the staging of the celebrations epitomised the extent to which the event was shaped by regional actors. Breaking with what had become the tradition of the Day of Unity citizens' festival, Schröder, with an eye to a strained federal state budget, chose not to stage a \textit{Ländermeile} at the 1998 event in Hanover, in order to save money.\textsuperscript{740} Instead, he

\textsuperscript{737} Stammen, 1999, Federalism in Germany, 107.
\textsuperscript{738} Ibd.
\textsuperscript{739} K-H. Petry, personal communication, December 13, 2006.
\textsuperscript{740} C. Schröter, personal communication, November 14, 2006.
presented an *Objektmeile* of ninety metal blocks, each one metre twenty centimetres tall and sixty centimetres wide to represent key events in Germany's post-1945 history – the fact that the same number of blocks were allocated to events in both East and West Germany highlights the way in which Schröder was keen to afford a place for positive elements of the GDR's history in united Germany’s self-understanding, at odds with the generally consensual interpretation of the past presented by political actors on the Day of Unity. These blocks, designed to depict the history of Germany from its separation in 1949 to unification in 1990 and the growing together of East and West Germany on the path into a shared future, were staged in the heart of the city on the Hanover Opernplatz. The two parallel sets of blocks were separated during the period representing 1961 to 1989 by a 2.5-metre high sculpture of the Berlin Wall. They converged once they both arrived at the *Tor der Zukunft* (gate of the future), a miniature replica of the Brandenburg Gate to frame East and West Germany as two parts of a whole, separated artificially during the years of division and finally united again. Through the ‘gate of the future’, a ‘park of innovation’ allowed German-based technology companies to showcase videos of their new projects and goods as an advertising mechanism for the World Expo 2000 exhibition, which was to be held in Hanover a year and a half later. At a cost of five thousand deutschmarks per block, companies, organisations and institutions were able to sponsor up to ten blocks. In consultation with T&T Marketing, the agency responsible for the *Objektmeile*, sponsors, including the Deutsche Bahn, Volkswagen, Deutsche Messe AG and the Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung, could ornament or array the sponsored block with sculptures, picture collages or multimedia installations of their own design. Each block sought to represent political, economic, lifestyle and world events, with topics ranging from Red Army Faction (RAF) terrorism to the debut of the bikini. Schröder’s decision to replace the *Ländermeile*, traditionally funded by the host Land, with this sponsor-funded event shaped the citizens’ festival that year; for once, sponsors gained the opportunity to influence the staging of the

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742 Letter from Gerhard Schröder to potential Day of Unity sponsors, 1998, June 19.
743 *Treffpunkt Deutschland, 1998*, T&T Marketing GmbH.
main Day of Unity attraction for the citizens and to some extent the interpretation of the past propagated on the German national holiday.

As host of the unity celebrations, Schröder had discretionary power not only over the citizens’ festival but also over all aspects of the ceremony from the selection of the speakers to the staging of the flags and music. His controversial choice of the latter further demonstrated the degree of power that the decentralised organisation of the Day of Unity gave to regional political actors. In August 1998, Schröder sparked a political squabble when the Lower-Saxon government announced that Berlin composer Henning Bardo would conduct his ‘hymn mix’ entitled ‘Variationen zum Thema Deutschland’ at the unity celebrations.744 Despite accusations from the CDU and CSU that Schröder’s selection of the music, an amalgamation of the German national anthem, the GDR anthem and Peter Kreuder’s Schlager hit ‘Good bye Johnny’, reflected the SPD politician’s ‘disturbed relationship’ with German unity,745 the Big-Band played the music on 3rd October. In protest at Schröder’s deliberate undermining of a national symbol, the CSU refused to attend the unity celebrations,746 conveniently providing them with the opportunity to attend a commemoration for CSU founder Franz Josef Strauss instead.747

Henning’s composition received mixed responses from the Day of Unity audience. While Chancellor Kohl slowly and unenthusiastically clapped without even removing the programme from his hand, Havel was not quite able to stop his foot from tapping to the music.748 In an open demonstration of support for the composer and his controversial compilation, Schröder jumped up to shake Henning’s hand and then, boldly mimicking the Bavarian dialect to mock the CSU, started his speech by describing the music as ‘a schiane Musi’.749 Through the hymn mix, which implied that the GDR hymn could serve a function in united Germany, Minister-President Schröder was able to bring into question the very symbols of the German nation and the interpretation of its past. In this way, he once more implied there was

744 Mierke, 1998, Bundesregierung, RTL.
746 Mierke & Hofmann, 1998, Gute Stimmung, RTL.
748 Boeker, 1998, Würdig bis zum letzten Takt, 4; Mierke & Hofmann, 1998, Gute Stimmung, RTL.
a place for elements from the former GDR in united Germany's self-understanding. Despite being Chancellor-Elect, it was his function, and thus his discretionary powers, as a regional actor that permitted Schröder to influence these national issues on the Day of Unity.

The centrality of the main celebrations and thus potential influence of the regional actors has, however, been eroded by the entirely sponsor-funded parallel celebrations in Berlin. A weak correlation is discernible between the high attendance at the Berlin celebrations and the low attendance at the central ceremonies, and vice versa. In 1999, for example, when, with 900,000 guests\textsuperscript{750} Wiesbaden staged one of the most popular citizens' festivals, Berlin only attracted 80,000;\textsuperscript{751} this was roughly 70% less than its typical attendance of around a quarter of a million in years when the central celebrations attracted approximately 150,000 to 350,000 guests. On the other hand, the Berlin and central celebrations competed for media attention. While the private national company RTL frequently reported on the central and Berlin celebrations, its public counterpart ZDF, repeatedly transmitted only a live programme of the Berlin parade;\textsuperscript{752} the main citizens' festivals meanwhile appeared almost exclusively on regional television alone.\textsuperscript{753} The television coverage of the unity celebrations in Hanover, which was representative of other anniversaries and which reflects the regional dominance in reporting, included, for example, two hours of live reporting on N3, a brief summary in the Länder programmes, short news reports in the Tagesthemen of ARD, and brief reports in DAS and Hallo Niedersachsen.\textsuperscript{754} The national print press, whilst reporting on the main ecumenical service and ceremony of the central celebrations, rarely mentioned the citizens' festival and often gave details instead of various events and rallies in Berlin. The latter showed how demonstrators, too, often favoured Berlin as their chosen platform

\textsuperscript{750} K-H. Petry, personal communication, December 13, 2006.
\textsuperscript{752} See, for example, Deutschlands Fest, 1998, ZDF and Deutschlands Fest [Television broadcast]. (1996, October 3). Mainz: ZDF.
\textsuperscript{754} Treffpunkt Deutschland, 1998, T&T Marketing GmbH.
for political protest. The most important way in which Berlin competed with the central celebrations, however, was financial.

While some national companies sponsored the central unity events in the regional capitals, the majority of sponsors were local companies. The main sponsors of the tenth central anniversaries, to give one example, included local companies such as Sächsisches Staatsweingut GmbH, Sachsen Lotto, Gasversorgung Sachsen Ost GmbH, Sächsische Dampfschifffahrt, Dresdner Verkehrsbetriebe, Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten, Dresdner Industrie- und Wohnungsbaugesellschaft and a few companies with their headquarters in Germany such as Audi AG, ADAC and Kabel Deutschland. With the exception of Swiss multinational company Nestlé, which sponsored the children’s unity event Kinderland, the central anniversaries attracted no international sponsorship. The Berlin events also failed to attract international funding, yet in contrast to the central celebrations, the events in the capital, fully funded by sponsors, customarily attracted national companies. Traditionally, two dozen companies, including those from the car industry and other big businesses, such as Ruhrgas, staged and funded the Deutschlands Fest under the direction of Deutschland Fest GmbH Director Wilhelm von Boddien. Among the many national companies whose presence was particularly evident in Berlin, the (still partly state-owned) Deutsche Post was an especially prominent sponsor.

The Deutsche Post sponsorship repeatedly dominated the Berlin celebrations through their mass of characteristic yellow marketing balloons, banners and baseball caps for children. Delegates from the Deutsche Post, dressed in their yellow uniforms, even introduced each federal state’s contribution to the procession. As a Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung journalist reported, the sponsorship influenced the staging of the Berlin celebrations to such an extent that Berlin could be described as celebrating unity ‘under a yellow flag’; indeed the Deutsche Post marketing was more dominant than either national or regional symbols. Although some political

756 Deutschlands Fest, 1996, ZDF.
757 Hebel, 1994, Sponsoren statt Parolen. 4.
758 See, for example, Deutschlands Fest, 1996, ZDF.
discussions did take place at various locations in the city, the *Frankfurter Rundschau* similarly emphasised the extent to which the Berlin celebrations were driven by consumerism, remarking that speeches had been replaced by sponsors.\(^{760}\) This reflected a criticism of many who attended the Berlin celebrations, namely that it was politically vapid. Contrary to the central celebrations, this apolitical staging of the Berlin celebrations encouraged a *Volksfeststimmung*.\(^{761}\) One might deduce from this that an emphasis on the political elements of unification and on celebrating enthusiastically were mutually exclusive. In the context of the economic and social problems resulting from unification this might well be indicative: by distancing themselves from the actual – invariably negative – political and economic issues associated with unity, the Berlin celebrations were able to encourage more enthusiasm for celebrating in its own right. The central celebrations, however, not least through the speeches at the ceremony and ecumenical service, were unable to escape from the realities and problems of unification. The largely apolitical atmosphere of the Berlin celebrations is one possible explanation for how Berlin attracted national sponsors.

A more probable explanation, however, is that the Berlin celebrations often offered a wider programme of high profile events than the central celebrations. The celebrations in 1994 epitomise how the Berlin celebrations competed with the central celebrations for sponsorship. In 1994, the celebrations in Bremen, overshadowed by violent riots, offered a far more modest programme than the Berlin event. Bremen showcased its highlights through a presentation of its ‘culinary variety’, a high-tech exhibition at its World Trade Centre, art exhibitions, discussion events, revue and cabaret.\(^{762}\) Though this programme was more extensive than many of the central unity events in other years, the Berlin celebrations were staged on a far grander scale. Singers including Elton John, Paul Young and bands such as the Gypsy Kings and Karat performed to an audience of 30,000 fans on Europe’s largest music stage.

\(^{760}\) Hebel, 1994, Sponsoren statt Parolen. 4.
\(^{761}\) See, for example, discussion with guests at the Berlin celebrations, Wolff, A. (1994, October 4). Nachlese zu den Feierlichkeiten zum Tag der Deutschen Einheit [Televised news report]. In Guten Morgen Deutschland, Cologne: RTL.
\(^{762}\) Bremen feiert, 1994, 2; Vier Jahre deutsche Einheit, 1994, 2.
constructed in front of the Brandenburg Gate. The Brandenburg Gate itself provided a ‘symbol of unity’ with which the central celebrations in Bremen were unable to compete.

As a correspondent from The Times observed, the Berlin organisers adopted a ‘bread and circuses approach’ to the staging with street fairs, beer festivals and the world’s longest sausage. There was, for example, as in other years, a 3.5km procession through the Brandenburg Gate, a highlight of the Berlin celebrations that few of the central celebrations attempted to match on that scale, not least because of the practical difficulties involved in staging large scale events. Given the extensive programme of events in Berlin and its suitability as a location of large-scale events, it is perhaps not surprising that the Berlin celebrations generally attracted more national sponsors than the regional events. Moreover, as the capital and location largely associated with German unity, Berlin also attracted so-called Einheitstouristen, tourists from outside Berlin who, particularly for the tenth anniversary, chose to celebrate unification in Berlin rather than at the central celebrations.

Berlin thus attracted mainly national companies while the central celebrations attracted local and regional sponsors. That it was largely local companies that underwrote the costs of the central celebrations not paid for by the respective State Chancelleries, could, however, also be understood as an attempt by regional actors to benefit from the decentralised arrangement of the celebrations. There was thus an economic dimension to the Day of Unity that will be explored in more detail in the following section.

4.4 Economic interest: a platform for Länder marketing

The unity celebrations provided an opportunity for sponsors and the host Land to promote and market their goods and tourist attractions. Indeed the promotion of the

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763 Krawalle bei Einheitsfeier, 1994, 1
764 McElvoy, 1994, Germans mark unity day, 14.
766 A notable exception was the large parade in Erfurt.
767 See Schubmann & Hofmann, 2000, Feierlichkeiten, RTL.
host Land was an explicit goal for many organisers of the Day of Unity celebrations.\textsuperscript{768} Although the respective Länder incurred costs as a result of financing the unity events, not all of which could be recouped through sponsorship, there were nevertheless potential economic advantages to hosting the event regionally for both the host Land and its local economy. Additionally, the unity celebrations also served as a platform for guest Länder and sponsors to present themselves in a different federal state on a yearly basis. The regional arrangement of the Day of Unity can therefore be understood as being of economic benefit to regional actors of the host Land and to other German federal states. The eastern German Länder, seeking to counteract their drab and technologically inferior image among many western Germans, particularly exploited the opportunity to boost their economies by raising awareness of their products and touristic potential on the Day of Unity. Though this was only to some extent valid for Thuringia, it was especially true of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Brandenburg.

Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, more so than any of the other federal states, overtly presented itself as a tourist location on the Day of Unity. Its marketing stood in stark contrast to that of the richer western German regions with more powerfully fostered traditions of regionalism, which more subtly promoted their distinctiveness and appeal for tourism at the unity celebrations. Bavaria, for example, tended to present itself at numerous Ländermeile with beer, long tables and benches in efforts to re-create a Bierfest atmosphere,\textsuperscript{769} Bremen frequently presented its city musicians\textsuperscript{770} and Schleswig-Holstein its folk music dancing groups and Frisian music.\textsuperscript{771} In contrast, in 1992, when it hosted the celebrations, and at previous and subsequent celebrations, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania explicitly staged its section of the citizens' festival as a tourist office. At the very first unity anniversary in Hamburg, for example, it used the Day of Unity as a platform for tourism by providing a mass of leaflets about the region as well as presenting an artificial


\textsuperscript{769} See, for example, Impressionen vom Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 2005, www.stk.brandenburg.de.


\textsuperscript{771} See, for example, Dietmar & Timpe, 1991, Sondersendung, NDR.
wildlife scene as a showcase of its landscape. Its tent at the citizens’ festival in Saarbrücken in 1993 similarly displayed large floor-to-ceiling photographs with enticing images of the region’s lakes and coasts. The images were accompanied by text in German and in French, in an attempt to market holidays in north-eastern Germany to an international audience. More than a decade later, in 2005, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania continued to use images of beaches and rolling pastures in a tent bedecked with Mecklenburg-Western Pomeranian flags and balloons. One notes here, once more, the parallels with the way in which the European Capital of Culture served as both as a platform for marketing purposes and for an image-makeover.

When its turn to host the central unity anniversary celebrations came, Saxony presented itself in more creative forms to promote the Land as a whole and specifically its capital, Dresden. As host of the celebrations in 2000, the unity event organisers focused on the history and culture of Dresden, as well as on its culinary specialities and technological capabilities to promote the local economy. There was, for example, an exhibition in the town hall entitled ‘Welcome to Dresden – High Tech and Baroque’, information stands in the city centre with leaflets and books about the legends and traditions of Saxony, and a presentation of food from fifty representatives of the Saxon food industry. Saxony, like Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, also took advantage of the unity celebrations hosted in other Länder. In 1991, for example, they marketed an extensive selection of Saxon produce, from marjoram mincemeat to handmade ceramics and glass.

Saxony-Anhalt, unlike most Länder, created special titles for the citizens’ festival in order to promote itself. One of the main goals of the event organisers was to present the potential of Saxony-Anhalt and to improve the image of the Land and

772 Ibid.
774 See, for example, Impressionen vom Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 2005, www.stk.brandenburg.de.
775 Programm zum Bürgerfest, 2000, 5-7.
776 Dietmar & Timpe, 1991, Sondersendung, NDR.
its capital Magdeburg. As host in 2003, it developed two themes to market its attractions, ‘UNESCO-World Heritage in Germany’ and ‘Innovative Saxony-Anhalt’. The UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) topic was selected to advertise that Saxony-Anhalt, with four world heritage sites, had one of the largest number of heritage sites in Germany. The topic innovation was by contrast designed to show recent achievements in the region. It sought to promote companies that had found innovative solutions for a variety of different sectors in recent years. These topics were intended to emphasise to visitors the historical as well as the modern dimension and capabilities of Saxony-Anhalt.

Brandenburg, as host of the celebrations in 2005, similarly focused on its tourist and economic potential. A tourism marketing company, TMB Tourismus-Marketing Gesellschaft, was employed to present Brandenburg as a ‘holiday destination with...unmistakable charm’. It sought to offer visitors to the unity celebrations a ‘cultural, historical and culinary journey through [Brandenburg] and to encourage visits to Brandenburg’s idyllic villages and historic cities’. The marketing of Brandenburg was staged in a variety of forms, from information leaflets to culinary displays of food from various areas within the Land. One of the main objectives of the organisers was the presentation of the future amusement park ‘Tropical Island’ in Brand. A further major focus of the advertising was to promote Brandenburg’s capital Potsdam in preparation for its application as European Capital of Culture 2010. The organisers emphasised Potsdam’s ‘grand scenery, its unique architecture and its traditional film scene’ in various ways. The marketing campaign for Potsdam was, for example, extended to the very advertising of the unity celebrations. As an iconic example of how the promotion of the host Land

778 A. Clausing, personal communication, November 6, 2006.
779 Ibid. In addition to the domestic advertising of Saxony-Anhalt in 2003 and at other unity celebrations, Halle-born Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher also promoted the Land abroad. At a reception of 2000 people held for him in the US by President George Bush on 3rd October 1991, Genscher used the Day of Unity as a platform on which to promote the benefits not only of investing in Germany as a whole but particularly the advantages of investing in his own Land, Saxony-Anhalt. See Kaps, C. (1991, October 4). Genscher wirbt für seine Heimat. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 3.
781 Ibid.
782 Ibid.
intertwined with the unity celebrations, leaflets advertising the fifteenth unity anniversary displayed the image of a statue of Frederick the Great, a historical symbol of Potsdam, with an official Day of Unity pass around his neck.

The regional arrangement and staging of the Day of Unity can therefore be explained in part as being economically motivated. The eastern German Länder in particular, used the Day of Unity as an arena for marketing to overcome the consequence of more than forty years of planned economy under Communism. Communism had not only shaped the economy of the GDR but also the democratic views of its citizens who, at the time of unification, had no experience of West German political culture. It is to the analysis of how the Day of Unity attempted to influence the political culture of united Germany that this chapter now turns.

4.5 Reinforcing political culture: democracy and federalism

Unification raised new questions regarding Germany’s political culture. Commitment to liberal democracy had become a deeply-rooted value among West Germans in post-war Germany. Germany’s increased responsibility, due to its enlarged size and population, made it more important for German political actors to strengthen democratic values among western Germans in post-1990 Germany. At the same time, united Germany faced the challenge of ‘westernising’ East Germans who had lived under Communism and had little experience of Western democracy – even though the chants of the East German demonstrators of 1989, ‘Wir sind das Volk’ (we are the people) might be construed as an inkling of this. As Abbe and Gibbas have demonstrated, East Germans were not a group with a clear, politically formulated group consciousness. Nevertheless, typical eastern German political values and views can be identified that vary from those of the average western German, even today. One clear example of the divergence is the considerably lower, and declining, support for democracy among eastern Germans. Although

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783 See, for example, Linden, M. (2007). Wie frustriert sind die Deutschen? Deutschland Archiv, 40(6), 977-987.
784 Breuilly & Speirs, 2005, The concept of national unification, 22.
785 Abbe & Gibbas, 2001, Der Osten, 20
786 For a detailed statistical analysis of the difference among German views, East and West, on democracy see Ibid., 15-22.
support for democracy has dwindled since unification across both eastern and western Germany,\textsuperscript{787} a decade after unification, at 92%, the vast majority of western Germans still considered democracy to be the best form of government, compared to only 78% of eastern Germans.\textsuperscript{788} As Arnd Bauerkämper has demonstrated, a 'fragmentation' existed in the political values of East and West Germans both in 1989 and in the years that followed.\textsuperscript{789} Bauerkämper has shown that eastern Germans have different political values to their western German counterparts both because of 'life and socialisation' in the GDR and because of the very process of unification and the rift between eastern and western Germany after unification. He has convincingly argued that the Communist dictatorship 'deeply ingrained' basic attitudes and that this history 'penetrated individual attitudes and unspoken assumptions' which has made adaptation to the changes since unification difficult.\textsuperscript{790} The continued lack of convergence in the views of eastern and western Germans towards democracy has also been highlighted in a recent study by Oscar W. Gabriel, Jürgen W. Falter and Hans Rattinger.\textsuperscript{791} This study, on the political views of Germans in united Germany, confirmed that the gulf between eastern and western Germans' views towards democracy has actually increased in recent years. The editors' typology, based on responses to basic values and to contentment, showed that whilst the percentage of 'non-democrats' in western Germany was 13% in 1994 and dropped to 8% by 2002, in eastern Germany the number actually rose from 28% in 1994 to 33% in 2002.\textsuperscript{792}

There were, however, not only differences in values regarding democracy, but also regarding federalism. While federalism was an established core of Germany’s political culture for most West Germans and an essential element of West Germany's


\textsuperscript{790} Ibid., 83.


\textsuperscript{792} Ibid., 262.
self-understanding, the same was not true of East Germans. Although in many respects a broad form of GDR state consciousness attempted to '[override] pre-existing regional diversity' in the highly centralised GDR state, regional traditions survived throughout the existence of the GDR. At the same time, and in contradiction, the SED also '[fostered]...regional identities for the purpose of attracting tourism' and '[attempted] to link the new claims to legitimacy of the GDR with a longer-standing more deep-rooted emotional identification with a local or regional Heimat'. However, though regionalism was not eradicated in the GDR, in contrast to West Germans, at the time of unification, East Germans had had no experience of federalism. In 1990, Germany thus stood as a country in which eleven of its federal states had a deep-rooted attachment to federalism and five, little attachment at all, possibly with the partial exception of Saxony with its long historical tradition of statehood.

In this context, the rotating character of the Day of Unity celebrations can be explained as an attempt to influence the political culture of united Germany by promoting democratic values and federalism. One of the roles of political days in a liberal democracy is to create consensus and legitimacy for the political culture and to have it supported by the citizens. In this vein, unity organisers used the Day of Unity as a platform, not only to deflect international fears, to promote regional identity and for political and economic interest, but also to influence the political culture of united Germany; they sought to support democracy in all parts of Germany and to strengthen and promote federalism, particularly in eastern Germany to encourage cultural synchronisation.

Unity organisers stated that involving citizens in the national holiday and providing information about the Länder, the federal institutions and German

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793 See, for example, Gunlicks, 2003, The Länder.
797 Münkler, 1995, Die Visibilität der Macht, 223.
federalism were the main aims of the citizens' festivals. 'Political remoteness can create alienation and a reluctance to participate in elections. It can be seen as a contributory factor to the disillusionment with politics (Politikverdrossenheit)'. It is in line with this that the staging of the German government marquees on the Day of Unity can be understood, namely as an attempt to encourage a greater political consciousness and more extensive involvement in the political system among Germans. From 1990 to 2005, the federal governments at the unity celebrations focused particularly on attempting to inform Germans about their activities, in an effort to encourage Germans to be politically active. At the first celebrations in 1991, for example, dignitaries from various ministries, including the normally distant foreign ministry, greeted people at the government marquee to inform them about the activities of the government. Similarly, at the Saarbrücken unity events in 1993, members of various government ministries presented 'Sternstunden', a selection of key political moments from the past. At the majority of citizens' festivals, key political actors, such as the Minister-Presidents and at times even the Chancellors and the Federal Presidents have spoken with members of the public in attempts to, quite literally, bring politics to the people.

In a further attempt to overcome potential Politikverdrossenheit, the government also sought to emphasise that it was involved in issues affecting German citizens. At the Potsdam celebrations, for example, the government underlined its role in improving infrastructure since unification; it staged a pathway leading up to the unity marquee with various questions: in order to find the answer to questions such as 'How many kilometres of motorway have been built since 1997 as part of the traffic project “German Unity”?' Germans had to enter into the information-laden

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804 See, for example, Tag der Deutschen Einheit: Eine Zusammenfassung, 1996, Bayerischer Rundfunk.
805 See, for example, Ruhle & Lingesleben, 2002, Spät Abendschau, RBB.
The government also sought to politically involve the younger generation and to increase their awareness of politics. On the Day of Unity in Stuttgart, for instance, the government strove to inform youngsters about the move of the seat of parliament by displaying competition entries of school children based on proposed designs for the Berlin Reichstag building. The government marquees thus intended to create political awareness of Germans in the host Land by informing them about the role of government, by emphasising how politics influenced their everyday life and by involving the next generation of voters.

The political discussion rounds and events at the unity citizens' festivals can also be understood in the context of attempting to politically socialise Germans and to stir them to be politically active. As NDR reported at the first unity celebrations, the citizens' festival should not be described a Fressfest since it was a Volksfest – but with culture and discussion at its core rather than Bratwurst. Unity organisers staged discussion rounds on the Day of Unity to involve the local population in debates of topics ranging from Germany's self-image abroad to German unity and its consequences. The citizens' festival discussions have taken the form of informal question and answer sessions with politicians and the audience, discussion between various political actors on a stage in front of spectators as well as televised debates or a combination of these.

Munich, for example, adopted a number of approaches meant to foster political thinking. Grammar school children discussed German unity with Minister of State Hans Zehetmair in the State Chancellery while Bayerischer Rundfunk televised a discussion about unification with German pupils and a number of high-ranking politicians, including Minister-President Stoiber, CDU/CSU Chairman Schäuble, Deputy Chairman of the SPD Thierse and Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the former GDR, Joachim Gauck. The attempt to

\[807 \text{Personal observation, 2005, October 3, Potsdam.} \]
\[808 \text{Zusammenfassung Bürgerfest, 1997, Südwestrundfunk.} \]
\[809 \text{Dietmar & Timpe, 1991, Sondersendung, NDR.} \]
\[810 \text{McEvoy, 1994, Steady rise, 12.} \]
\[812 \text{Endgültiger Programmablauf, 1996, Bavarian State Chancellery.} \]
involve the local population in the politics of unity was further emphasised by the decision to erect a ‘Memorial for the Remembrance of German Division’ in Munich’s large municipal park, the English Garden. This monument, unveiled by Stoiber as part of the unity celebrations on the 2nd October, implied a desire on the part of the Bavarian Minister-President to commemorate unification on a regional level in order to make Bavarians feel connected to unification. The very invitation to the unveiling, which approximately six hundred people attended, was decorated with the Bavarian Great Coat of Arms emphasising Bavaria’s attempt to stage unity as a regional event in a Land where Germans had little direct experience of unification. In this vein, directly following the memorial unveiling, Stoiber opened a unity exhibition at the Haus der Bayerischen Geschichte entitled ‘Growing Together –An Interim Appraisal’.

The tenth unity celebrations in the eastern German city of Dresden offered an even more extensive programme of events to involve Germans, particularly Saxons, in a critical discussion of politics in united Germany. Unlike most citizens’ festivals, which had little direct connection to the official unity ceremony, a large screen in the marquee (named Treffpunkt Deutschland) on the Theaterplatz transmitted the ceremony live. This pavilion, staged by the Leipziger Volkszeitung, Deutschlandfunk and the Saxon State Chancellery offered a diverse political, musical and cultural programme. Saxons were able to walk between discussions and interviews with a plethora of political guests: Deutschlandfunk interviewed Chair of the Central Council of Jews in Germany (Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland) Paul Spiegel, and Inspector General of the Bundeswehr Harald Kujat, while the television broadcaster MDR (Central German Broadcasting) staged a programme called Auf den Punkt comprising podium discussions with Minister-President of Saxony-Anhalt Reinhard Höppner, Minister-President of the Free State of Saxony, Biedenkopf, and former Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher. A so-called class-reunion (Klassentreffen) formed a further highlight of the political buffet for citizens.

815 Programm zum Bürgerfest, 2000, 6.
816 C. Flume, personal communication, November 28, 2006.
Presenter Bärbel Romanowski also conducted numerous interviews with members of the last cabinet of the GDR under de Maizière.\textsuperscript{818} Political discussion rounds thus provided Germans in the host Land with a forum in which they could gain a sense of participating more fully in political debates.

The extensive eleven-page programme of these Dresden unity events produced by the \textit{Sächsische Zeitung}\textsuperscript{819} serves as an example to show that the regional arrangement of the Day of Unity encouraged not only the involvement of the local population but also of the local press. The regional television and print press focused predominantly on the citizens’ festival in ‘their’ Land (though this was also paired with an inverse trend which saw little regional coverage of unity celebrations in other regions). The Day of Unity thus provided an opportunity for the local press to report the Day of Unity from their perspective, bestowing a further sense of participatory legitimacy to the regional arrangement of the event.

By staging a significant political event not in the capital, but on a rotating basis through the Länder, the unity celebrations brought politics to the citizens of each host Land. The federal arrangement was thus democratic; it made politics \textit{bürgernah} and served to spread democratic values by providing Germans with the opportunity to feel politically involved and connected to the political system. This was particularly important in the eastern German Länder where, at the time of unification, there was little experience of liberal democracy; the regional arrangement provided a platform for exporting the political culture and democratic values long established in the Federal Republic.

The Day of Unity was also used as a platform for promoting federalism. The regional arrangement of the Day of unity, the sub-national mise-en-scène of the citizens’ festivals and the intentions of the eastern German organisers imply that the Day of Unity sought particularly to promote federalism in eastern Germany. Given the lack of a long continuous tradition of federalism in the eastern German Länder, it is unsurprising that unity organisers of the eastern Germany celebrations, more than their western German counterparts, explicitly sought to promote federalism and

\textsuperscript{818} Ibid.
excitement about the variety of the Länder. In this vein, the extensive regional staging of the citizens' festivals, particularly the Ländermile and regional flags, sought to socialise eastern Germans into Germany's federal structure and to encourage them to be enthusiastic about federalism. The rotating arrangement of the German national holiday celebrations similarly drew attention to, because it rested upon, the federal structures in Germany. While gauging the actual effectiveness of this rotating structure precisely would require an analysis of the reception of the day, rather than its staging, the attempt to bring a grass-roots attachment of politics and federalism to the local population is clear enough. The celebrations were structured to draw eastern Germans into a stronger identification, both with their own federal state and with the federal system as a whole. The unity celebrations thus served as a platform for the cultural synchronisation of eastern Germany and western Germany by extending the latter's regional, federal tradition of constitutional decentralisation and regional cultural identities to the East. The Day of Unity thus served as a platform to influence Germany's political culture by reinforcing and promoting democracy and federalism, particularly in the eastern German Länder.

Conclusion

The promotion of postnationalism on the Day of Unity by the country's political actors as seen in their staging of sub-national and, as we will see in the next chapter, supra-national, elements had the potential to serve a number of functions on the national holiday. First and foremost, it could act to reassure the international community and secure legitimacy for the country by showing that Germany, though now a united nation-state was committed, to some extent, to postnational ideas — and thus assuage fears of an overly powerful Germany or a repeat of the horrors of its past as a nation-state. Secondly, at a time when the challenges of the unity process contributed significantly to the re-emergence of support for right-wing groups and activities, the promotion of postnationalism offered a way of thinking for Germans

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820 C. Flume, personal communication, November 28, 2006; A. Clausing, personal communication, November 6, 2006; M. Meinung, personal communication, November 27, 2006.
that had no place for jingoistic sentiment.  

Thirdly, the benefits, not least financial and commercial, that Germany received through affiliation with the transnational institutions, such as the EU, made attachment to postnational ideas ever more appealing. Also, the growth of globalisation stood to threaten, to some degree, the very utility and legitimacy of the nation-state. Related to this, the promotion of postnationalism in the form of sub-national affiliation on the Day of Unity, particularly in attachment to regions, served to counter, to some extent, growing anxiety about the impact of globalisation.

The political actors’ attempts to stage the Day of Unity to some extent as a postnational event draws attention to certain tensions on 3rd October. Since World War II, Germany has striven not to be (seen as) nationalistic. The crimes and horrors committed by Germans in a unitary nation-state during the ‘Third Reich’ had discredited the concept of ‘nation’ in Germany. The extent of international anxiety, particularly in the early post-war years, about the dangers of a German nation-state had indeed been demonstrated by the way in which the Allies initially carved post-war Germany into occupation zones and the Americans and British created new regional (federal) states with especially the US and France then influencing the strongly federalist character of the Basic Law constitution.

In the post-war period, (West) German political actors sought to stress that Germans no longer saw the ‘nation’ as their only main frame of reference or as the core of their self-understanding. They also sought to counter any possible renaissance of nationalism among the German population. This desire to overcome the challenge of nationalism had motivated Germany’s integration into transnational institutions,
such as the EU, which encouraged ideas of citizenship that transcended the nation-state.\textsuperscript{827}

However, the creation of an enlarged German nation-state through unification of the GDR with the Federal Republic raised new challenges for Germany's political actors. While nationalism had not been the 'driving force' behind the largely unexpected unification, it was nevertheless 're-appropriated...as an acceptable political idiom' in 1989/90.\textsuperscript{828} Debate consequently emerged about a resurgence of German nationalism. These debates did not only take place among academics. Instead, like the Historikerstreit of the late 1980s, the topic entered the public space and was hotly debated at length in the serious German press around the time of unification – particularly in publications such as the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, the Süddeutsche Zeitung, Die Zeit, Der Spiegel, Stern and Focus.\textsuperscript{829}

At the heart of the debate were questions about what kind of nation Germany should be. 'Third way' dissidents in the GDR as well as some on the West German Left adopted the view that a German nation should not exist at all; they proposed instead that a separate, reformed, postnational GDR should be allowed to evolve. At the other end of the political spectrum, a number of 'New Right' historians, most notably Rainer Zitelmann, argued that unification marked an opportunity for Germany to loosen its ties with the West and to become a more self-confident nation.\textsuperscript{830} The main debate, however, took place between left-liberal and right-wing historians, academics and intellectuals who proposed different possibilities for the German nation. Habermas, Grass, Walser and Karl Heinz Bohrer were among the key figures of this debate. Strongly arguing against any form of German nationalism, Habermas promoted instead a model of constitutional patriotism. Constitutional patriotism in many respects overcame the tension of nationalism in that it promoted a

\textsuperscript{828} Fulbrook, 2005, Nationalism in the second German unification, 241.
\textsuperscript{829} Willer, 2000, Another country, 14.
form of belonging removed from the national context: it prioritised attachment to the constitution over any sense of belonging to a nation.

Grass, like many among the West German left-wing cultural elites, had interpreted the division of Germany as a punishment for the crimes of the ‘Third Reich’. In 1989/90, criticising any creation of a unitary nation-state, he called instead for a confederation of two equal states and the construction of a new constitution (i.e. through article 146 of the Basic Law). Grass advocated the concept of a Kulturnation (cultural nation) to unify all Germans. This concept, which can be traced back to the 18th century, understands people as united through language, traditions, religion and culture.

In stark contrast to Grass, whose recently published diaries reflect his strong aversion to unification around 1990, novelist Walser had been a fervent advocate of unification in the years of German division. Although he was originally considered to be left-wing, conservatives seized on Walser at the time of unification as a ‘conservative icon’. Walser had framed German division as something that must be overcome and promoted a German nation. It is thus not surprising that he declared himself supportive of Kohl’s strategy for unification. In the 1990s, Walser argued that the relation of Germans to their nation and their history (the German question), could not be reconciled until Germans had dealt with the issue of what they had done to Jews in the Holocaust. For Walser, future generations did not carry a sense of collective guilt but rather a sense of collective responsibility for German history. As we saw, his attitudes toward the National Socialist era provoked heated debate with Bubis in the late 1990s.

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834 Müller, 2000, *Another country*, 152.

835 Ibid., 172-174.
Bohrer similarly advocated German unification, albeit, as Müller has shown, as a 'remedy for [the Federal Republic’s] shortcomings'. For Bohrer, a united nation-state was essential for modern German culture – he argued that it would allow Germans to rediscover German traditions such as Romanticism. Unlike many on the Left, who argued that unification could lead to a dangerous turn away from dealing with the past, Bohrer stressed that all Germans had to be united in a nation in order to 'remember together'. According to Bohrer, in so doing, Germans in a unified Germany could be reconciled with the past and, at last, with the concept of nation.

How do these debates relate to the tensions on 3rd October anniversaries? The German national holiday presented particular challenges with regard to nationalism. The very existence of a national day for a country in which the majority of citizens were socialised into not being nationalistic is surely a contradiction in terms: celebrating the nation for becoming a (larger) nation would seem to be a paradox of a postnational nation-state. In simple terms, the political actors were faced with the difficulty of commemorating a national day, which they did not really want to have in the first place. Until unification, the Federal Republic’s 'national' holiday, by commemorating the GDR uprising, did not create the same tensions. It may have stood, at least at certain times, as a symbol of future German unification yet it is clear that the 'national' day of one half of a divided Germany presented less challenges with regard to nationalism than a national holiday of a united, enlarged German nation-state celebrating the fulfilment of that national unification.

As a national day, the Day of Unity has been an occasion when German political actors – increasingly moving toward a more assertive identity – have sought to influence attitudes within Germany. However, at the same time, the political actors have been aware that on an occasion such as their national day some in the international community would look to Germany for reassurance that there were no signs of renascent German nationalism. This balancing act of managing both domestic expectations and international concerns clearly presents certain challenges and has produced certain contradictory results on the Day of Unity. On the one hand,
initiatives such as ‘We are Germany’ and the advocacy of ‘normalisation’ of the National Socialist past have provided evidence of attempts by the political actors to foster pride among Germans for being German. On the other hand, however, careful attempts to avoid overt expressions of nationalism have been apparent in the prevalence of sub-national and, as we will see next, supra-national elements in the staging of the national day. This was also evident in the way in which the political actors struggled to find discourses that could be used as the basis for uniting Germans that did not seem nationalistic. They espoused instead a wide range of different arguments to encourage a sense of Wir-Gefühl – from reframing attitudes toward the unity process and eastern Germans to depicting differences among eastern and western Germans as both negative and positive. Put simply, the political actors attempted to cultivate a sense that eastern and western Germans should be united while avoiding any explicit mention of the nation as the frame of reference or to anything that could be construed as nationalism. This would certainly seem to suggest that we are in a period of change. A desire to promote a more assertive self-image for Germany may well be emerging. However, in the period from 1990 to 2005 this desire was undoubtedly tempered by an awareness of concerns – both within and outside Germany – of this change.

The calls from those in the unification debate for a more self-confident form of German patriotism, therefore, while gaining some ground, have only to a limited extent been heard on the German national holiday. Grass’ idea of a Kulturnation in the period from 1990 to 2005 also enjoyed little attention. By contrast, Habermas’ vision for a very different non-nationalistic united German nation-state has not completely fallen on deaf ears. It was clear, for example, that the political actors implicitly promoted attachment to the constitution. This was visible in their choice of date for 3rd October (commemorating a constitutional act) as well as in the way they framed Aufbau Ost and equality in living standard of eastern and western Germans as

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838 For the few explicit references to the notion of Kulturnation see Stüssmuth, 1993, Ansprache, 933. For indirect references of the ability of culture to unite Germans see Stüssmuth, 1995, Ansprache, 756 and Schröder, 1999, Rede, 636.
constitutional obligations. However, the Day of Unity actors rarely explicitly referred to constitutional patriotism. 839

It is perhaps surprising that neither the concept of constitutional patriotism nor of a Kulturnation were exploited on the Day of Unity. These concepts may well be ‘elite concepts’, lacking in public support. Yet the Day of Unity has, in any case, been used to present a somewhat idealised image of Germany. Advocacy of constitutional patriotism or of a Kulturnation on the German national holiday would surely seem to offer a number of advantages for Germany. Both would encourage a reflected form of pride without calling on instinctive national sentiment. In this way, they have the potential to allow Germans to be proud in a manner acceptable both to those wary of German nationalism within Germany as well as to the wider international community. Such postnational forms of belonging would also seem to be in line with other forms of belonging both below and above the nation-state that the political actors did actually advocate on the Day of Unity. Furthermore, they would complement the increasingly civic idiom of nationhood emerging in Germany by encouraging an expansive, inclusive definition of membership: constitutional patriotism or a Kulturnation are not limited to those of German blood but rather can be used to unite all those with German citizenship – and even others living on German territory. This could potentially serve as a way of integrating the large immigrant population.

At the very least, constitutional patriotism or a Kulturnation understanding would seem to provide a framework for uniting eastern and western Germans. Indeed, constitutional patriotism appears to offer the opportunity to transcend East/West differences: through the development of ‘post-conventional identities’, it promotes identification with universal values. 840 Similarly, a Kulturnation could

840 See Müller, 2000, Another country, 60. At a conference in Berlin on 5th-6th October 2006, organised by the Sonderforschungsbereich 640 and entitled ‘Wege zur Bundesrepublik. Deutsche Mythen, Identitäten und Selbstbilder’ (Paths to the Federal Republic. German myths, identities and self-image), Clemens Albrecht pointed out the ‘charm’ of the concept of constitutional patriotism: the question of inclusion and exclusion is defused through a constitutionally shared core. For the full conference report see: Hausteiner, Eva. (2006). Wege zur Bundesrepublik. Deutsche Mythen, Identitäten und
provide a possible framework for uniting Germans while at the same time promoting and celebrating diversity. If united through their attachment to the constitution or through culture, Germans would no longer need to work toward some distant 'goal of unity'. Instead, the goal would essentially already be reached: no further 'growing together' would be necessary and differences could be seen as enriching the political culture.

One could therefore argue that the political actors missed an opportunity to unite behind a coherent way of framing the nation by exploiting the concept of constitutional patriotism or a *Kulturnation*. This can perhaps be explained by the fact that these specific terms were themselves to some extent politically contested. While the Day of Unity commemorations were characterised by a high level of consensus, it would have been much more difficult to achieve consensus on such specific concepts. At the same time, however, there are actually signs that German political actors from across the political spectrum are promoting constitutional patriotism in other arenas. Recently, in their discussion in parliament regarding the European House of History, for example, Germans advocated a form of patriotism for EU citizens based on common values.841

Fascinatingly, the recent 2008 unity festivities were celebrated for the first time under the motto ‘*Kulturnation Deutschland*’.842 This may suggest that Germany’s political actors are beginning to recognise the potential of *Kulturnation* as a concept for overcoming the tension of celebrating the national holiday without wanting to appear nationalistic. The 2008 celebrations may well be an exception—not least given that they were organised for the first time under a CDU/Green coalition. However, they may indicate that we are in a period of change in which

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Germany’s political actors are possibly (re)discovering new ways to address the historically difficult relationship with nationalism in Germany.

Many European actors have propagated German federalism as a template for European unity. Indeed, many aspects of German federalism have been influential, if not formative, in the development of the EU. This highlights that sub-national and supra-national elements need not be contradictory or mutually exclusive but can instead go hand in hand. On the Day of Unity, German actors sought to emphasise not only Germany’s commitment to federalism, but also its dedication to the EU. Consequently, the Day of Unity was denationalised to some extent not only by sub-national but also by supra-national aspects. It is to the examination of this further manifestation of the somewhat postnational character of the German national holiday that the analysis now turns.
5. Denationalisation through EU-isation: a supra-national national holiday?

'We do not want a German Europe, we want a European Germany.'

(Thomas Mann, 1875-1955)

The struggle of the Germans to find their place in Europe shaped the course of European history for much of the 19th and 20th century. Unification of Germany in 1990 evoked fears among the country's neighbours that Germany's political actors would submit to renewed consideration the role Germany played in Europe. In post-war West Germany, the orientation of the mainstream political parties toward Western Europe had been unambiguous: multilateralism, that is to say, 'institutionalised co-operation that co-ordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of generalised principles of conduct', formed the core of the Federal Republic's foreign policy. German Christian Democrats, aware of the dangers of a Germany sandwiched between the democratic West and the totalitarian East, provided the initial impetus for integration into the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The Social Democrats, although originally sceptical about its possible adverse effects on German unification, also shifted to support Western integration from the mid-1950s onwards, especially following their pivotal Bad Godesberg conference in 1959. The desire of West Germany's mainstream political actors to attain international legitimacy and maintain peace on the continent converged with the Allied demand for decentralised power, which secured Germany's cross-party commitment to what has

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been described, in comparison with other larger European states like France and Britain, as ‘exaggerated multilateralism’.\textsuperscript{847}

Unification in 1990 redefined Germany’s geopolitical environment. No longer a ‘divided country in the centre of a divided continent’,\textsuperscript{848} Germany had long since become the most economically powerful state in Europe.\textsuperscript{849} The international community, including British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and, briefly, French President François Mitterrand, concerned for European security, questioned whether \textit{Westbindung} (commitment to multilateralism in Western structures) would remain the central tenet of German foreign policy.\textsuperscript{850} Many of those who did not doubt that Germany would remain deeply anchored in Western institutions nevertheless feared that a powerful, united Germany would turn away from its ‘civilian power’ status or dominate the EU.\textsuperscript{851}

Although the end of the Cold War transformed Germany, Europe and the rest of the world, German foreign policy from 1990 to 2005 largely continued the traditions of the Federal Republic.\textsuperscript{852} After the fall of the Berlin Wall, West German political actors fervently sought to integrate East Germany into the EU and NATO.\textsuperscript{853} This was facilitated on one hand through the support of the EU and, on the other, through the chosen legal form of unification, as a result of which the former GDR, by acceding to the Federal Republic, also acceded to the latter’s institutional affiliations. While transformations in the international climate influenced foreign policy making in united Germany, the three main principles underlying these policies, namely the ‘commitment to multilateralism, a preference for non-military instruments of foreign policy, and a defence strategy based in equal measure on deterrence and reassurance’,
nevertheless remained unchanged. The continuity in German foreign policy can largely be ascribed to three key factors: firstly, the foreign policy of the Federal Republic had proved so successful that there was little motivation for change; secondly, reticence in the use of force had become ingrained in Germany’s political culture; thirdly it served political and economic benefits since Germany, closely linked with the European and international institutions, may have suffered economically by withdrawing from them. German political actors framed the accession of the GDR to the Federal Republic in a European context. In the fine print of the 2+4 Treaty it was agreed that Germany would remain rooted in the EU and during the unification process, Germany amended Article 23 of the Basic Law to pledge commitment to developing the EU.

This chapter explores the way in which German political actors sought to frame united Germany’s relation to the EU on the country’s national holiday from 1990 to 2005. The chapter does not focus on the staging of Germany’s relation to NATO nor to other multilateral Western institutions since these did not serve as major points of reference on the unity anniversaries. Instead it will argue that the unity celebrations were to some extent denationalised through EU-isation, that is to say through a focus on rhetoric, aesthetic elements and bilateral relations linked to the EU. By examining the signs of erosion of national elements through EU-isation and the extent to which the Day of Unity can be described as a supra-national event, this chapter further contributes to the understanding of the postnational elements of 3rd October. To illustrate the extent of EU-isation on the Day of Unity, the chapter explores how the day was used by political actors both to underline Germany’s

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dedication to the EU and to foster strategic alliances, primarily with specific EU partners.

The chapter comprises two sections. Section one argues that the Day of Unity operated as an arena in which German political actors stressed Germany’s commitment to the EU in order to overcome international fears of German hegemony and to cultivate German public support for, and interest in, the EU. It identifies three key manifestations of Germany’s loyalty to the EU on the 3rd October anniversaries, which reflected shifts in the domestic and international political climate. Firstly, it shows how German political actors used the Day of Unity as a forum for promulgating Germany’s continued commitment to multilateralism in united Germany. Secondly, it illustrates how German political actors promoted the EU, chiefly in times of ‘Euro-scepticism’. Thirdly, it demonstrates that both German and international speakers used the Day of Unity to endorse eastern enlargement of the EU.

Section two argues that German political actors used the Day of Unity to strategically foster relations with certain international partners important due to historical relationships as well as for reasons of trade and security. Firstly, it shows how the Day of Unity operated to cement and improve relations, outside of Europe, with the US. Secondly, it demonstrates that the Day of Unity actors predominantly sought to improve relations with strategic EU partners: it argues that to some extent German political actors sought to cultivate the alliance with Germany’s traditional EU partner France but that, primarily, they attempted to foster relations with the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. Finally, it briefly argues that the German political actors dedicated less attention to other bilateral relations, occasionally with negative repercussions.

### 5.1. Germany’s commitment to the EU

#### 5.1.1 United Germany and the EU: an unbreakable partnership?

Signs of denationalisation of the German national holiday through EU-isation were visible in a number of elements of the staging throughout the period from 1990 to
2005. Guest speakers from EU member states traditionally served as the main speakers on the 3rd October anniversaries. German Day of Unity actors presented these European speakers as symbols of EU unity. Furthermore, the blue EU flag with its twelve gold stars, adopted by the EU in the 1980s, stood centre stage at the vast majority of unity ceremonies alongside the regional and German flags. Even in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, where organisers did not include the EU flag in the staging of the ceremony, but instead emphasised regional elements, the EU flag nevertheless appeared at various locations throughout their citizens' festivals. In addition to this, orchestras performed 'Ode to Joy', the official EU hymn since 1985 based on the final movement of Beethoven's ninth symphony, at numerous unity celebrations: the anthem featured at a number of ceremonies and accompanied various theatrical performances and laser shows at citizens' festivals.

These elements of the EU-isation of the unity events were habitually staged by German political actors from across the political spectrum throughout the period from 1990 to 2005. However, the particular discourses regarding the EU that were adopted by the political actors varied throughout the time period of analysis reflecting changes and concerns in the domestic and international political climate.

Particularly in 1990 and 1999, years in which the EU-isation of the unity events was especially pronounced, the German political actors focused on EU topics in order to reassure the international community that united Germany would remain committed to the foreign policy of the post-war Federal Republic.

At the stroke of midnight on 2nd October 1990, barely perceptible amid the fireworks and jubilant cries, Federal President von Weizsäcker gave a brief statement of three sentences in front of the Reichstag, to mark the birth of united Germany. In sum, the Federal President pledged united Germany's commitment to a united Europe. At the official unification ceremony hours later, the EU defined the nexus of

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859 See, for example, Glockengeläut, Feuerwerk und Volksfeste, 1990, 1.
860 See, for example, Tag der Deutschen Einheit: Eine Zusammenfassung, 1996, Bayerischer Rundfunk.
861 See, for example, Zum Nationalfeiertag starke Sicherheitsvorkehrungen, 1992, 2.
rhetoric: each of the Day of Unity orators emphasised at length Germany’s continued commitment to the EU in the post-Cold War setting. Bundestag President Süßmuth and Federal President von Weizsäcker stressed that Germany’s loyalty to the EU was not newfound but rather a continuation of foreign policy since 1945. ‘We gained trust after 1945’, Süßmuth stated, a trust that, as von Weizsäcker described ‘grew with the Federal Republic’. ‘We want’, Süßmuth continued, ‘to maintain that trust and not to disappoint’. The Bundestag President further stressed Germany’s commitment to the EU by expressing the country’s desire for a ‘United States of Europe’, a phrase promoted by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in his Zurich address of 1946. Reflecting the diluted enthusiasm for the project of EU integration, in Germany as well as much of the EU from the early 1990s, this particular term with very strong federalist connotations did not, however, re-emerge again on the Day of Unity in the period from 1990 to 2005. Mayor of Berlin Momper similarly expressed Germany’s continued dedication to the EU as a means of countering fears of ‘many Europeans...who look with concern at [the] new, large, German state’. Former Volkskammer President Bergmann-Pohl went yet further by placing German self-understanding as inextricably linked to the EU, ‘We promise’, she stated, ‘to be as European as we are German’. References to the EU thus played an important role on the German national holiday from its inception.

Day of Unity actors underlined Germany’s allegiance to the EU in other ways at the unity anniversaries that followed, as we will see, yet it was not until 1999 that they did this in the context of explicitly reaffirming Germany’s commitment to traditional foreign policy values. Throughout his 1999 Day of Unity address, Chancellor Schröder pledged Germany’s commitment to multilateralism, particularly to the EU, and underlined that the German tradition of a ‘culture of reticence’ with regard to the use of force remained integral to Germany’s self-understanding. He underlined that Germany remained committed to only using military force when

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863 Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.
865 See Otte & Greve, 2000, A rising middle power, 131.
866 See Momper’s speech: Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.
867 See Ibid.
absolutely unavoidable and necessary to secure peace and security in Europe. Against this backdrop, Hesse Minister-President Koch emphasised the strong bond between Germany and the EU, without which, he stressed, German unification could not have taken place. The symbolic invitation of newly elected European Commission President Romano Prodi as the main guest of honour that year similarly served to place Germany’s continued steadfastness to the EU at the centre of the Day of Unity. Koch remarked that it was particularly fitting that Prodi should hold his first speech as President of the European Commission in Germany and on the Day of Unity.

The emphasis of German commitment to the traditional foreign policy principles on the ninth Day of Unity anniversary can be accounted for by three key factors that had unsettled the international community. Firstly, Schröder had been elected as Chancellor in late September 1998. Schröder, unlike his forerunner Kohl, did not belong to a generation for whom European integration represented 'a matter of war and peace'. Instead, the new Chancellor, a 'sixty-eighter' whose political socialisation took place in a democratic, westernised, post-war Germany, considered his generation not to be Europeans 'because [they] have to be' but because 'they want to be', as a result of which they were 'freer in dealing with others'. More so than his predecessors, Schröder thus unabashedly focused on the national costs and advantages for Germany in EU matters, particularly with regard to the financial burden of EU enlargement. Budgetary concerns had indeed become more pressing in united Germany in light of the considerable financial burden of Aufbau Ost. The stance of the new Chancellor raised concern among Germany's EU

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871 Hyde-Price, 2000, Germany and European order, 5.
872 Schröder made this announcement shortly after his election: see Bulmer et al., 2000, Germany’s European diplomacy, 109.
partners, particularly Germany’s traditional core EU partner France, about the extent to which Germany would remain committed to the EU.\textsuperscript{874}

Secondly, between September 1998 and March 1999, the newly formed governing coalition of SPD and Greens came to the decision to commit Bundeswehr air-force units to a combat mission in Serbia under NATO command.\textsuperscript{875} German forces were, in contrast to the intervention in Bosnia in the mid-1990s, acting for the first time without a UN mandate. German participation in the NATO intervention in Kosovo evoked fears, not least within the coalition parties themselves, that Germany was turning away from established post-war foreign policy, namely its traditional ‘culture of reticence’.\textsuperscript{876}

Thirdly, the move of political power from provincial Bonn to the more cosmopolitan Berlin, originally decided in 1991,\textsuperscript{877} sent further alarm bells ringing in the international community. The values Bonn had symbolised, namely modesty and \textit{Westbindung}, looked threatened in the move to this imposing eastern German city and former capital of Prussia and Imperial Germany.\textsuperscript{878} Moreover, Chancellor Schröder framed the supposed end of the ‘Bonn Republic’ and the beginning of a so-called Berlin Republic as marking the transition to a new start for Germany. Consequently, the Chancellor argued, key topics, such as ‘drawing a line’ under the National Socialist past and German self-assertiveness and influence in EU matters, could be brought into question.\textsuperscript{879} Against this background, many feared that they were witnessing a turning-point in Germany’s relation to the EU and the rest of the world. It was in this context that German political actors underlined, at the ninth Day

\textsuperscript{874} Bulmer et al., 2000, \textit{Germany’s European diplomacy}, 3-58.
\textsuperscript{875} Hacke, C. (2002). Between benevolent multilateralism and new zest for action: German foreign policy after ten years of reunification. In J. Leonhard & L. Funk (Eds.), \textit{Ten years of German unification: transfer, transformation, incorporation?} Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 115-123, here 123.
\textsuperscript{876} See Berger, 2002, \textit{The power of memory}, 77-78.
\textsuperscript{877} For details of the negotiations and debates that led to this decision see \textit{From Bonn to Berlin: the decision to move to Berlin}. (2000). Retrieved, January 8, 2008, from http://www.bundestag.de/htdocs_e/art_arch/bonntoberlin/decls.html.
\textsuperscript{878} Hyde-Price, 2000, \textit{Germany and European order}, 219.
of Unity celebrations, that Germany under a new government and in a new capital remained committed to the country's traditional foreign policy tenets.

5.1.2 A platform to counter Euro-scepticism

The EU-isation of the 1993 celebrations in Saarbrücken and those in 2005 in Potsdam served a very different purpose. At these celebrations, the political actors did not so much attempt to influence attitudes abroad, but rather to change opinions at home. More so than the other unity festivties, these 3rd October anniversaries served to promote the EU to the German public in order to maintain their support for this supra-national organisation.

Of all the unity celebrations from 1990 to 2005, those in Saarbrücken were the most EU-centric. Three key elements underline the denationalisation of the German national holiday by EU-isation on the third anniversary. Firstly, the President of the European Commission Jacques Delors was selected as the main speaker. Known to the world media as 'Mr. Europe', Delors, President of the European Commission from 1985 to 1995, was the 'recognisable voice - and face - of European integration'. On the Day of Unity, Delors stood as a guest symbolic of Germany's inextricable link with the EU.

Secondly, the rhetoric of the German political actors was dominated by references to the EU. Both Bundestag President Süßmuth and Minister-President of Saarland Lafontaine explicitly underlined the necessity of the unbreakable ties between Germany and the EU in their speeches. Süßmuth stressed that Germany held a 'great responsibility' for Europe and called for Germans to understand that 'only with Europe' would they 'have a future'; she was keen on this being mentioned much more frequently in united Germany. Lafontaine devoted the majority of his Day of Unity address to the promotion of the EU. The Saarland Minister-President

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881 Ibid., 15. In 1990, conscious of Germany's importance to the EU and eager for the latter to have some influence in the unification process, Delors had strongly advocated the importance of unification taking place within a European framework. In that vein, in January of 1990, he argued that East Germany should be viewed as a 'special case' and granted a place within the community. See Anderson, 1999, German unification, 34.
882 Süßmuth, 1993, Ansprache, 934.
called for a postnational understanding of Germany’s relation to the EU, stating that ‘overcoming nation-states in a united Europe must remain our goal’. With the analogy of a Russian doll, he described how he envisaged a ‘nation in a nation, in a nation...’ to promote a trilogy of regional, national and European affiliation, which characterised the staging of the Day of Unity anniversaries from 1990 to 2005. ‘If Europe really wants to become Europe’, he argued, quoting renowned SPD politician and academic Carlo Schmid’s declaration of the early 1970s, ‘there must one day be a ‘nation Europe’.

The Saarland was occupied by France after World War I but became reintegrated into the German Reich in 1935; it was then again separated from Germany in 1946 when it became an economically and politically dependent territory of France before it rejoined the Federal Republic on 1st January 1957 through a referendum of the Saar population. On the Day of Unity, Lafontaine, who was born in Saarland in 1943, presented the history of his home Land as a tale of a federal state torn between two nation-states to illustrate the need for Germans to overcome thinking about nations in terms of nation-states. As a further example of the high level of influence of regional actors, as Bundesrat President in 1993, Lafontaine, responsible for the staging of the third unity anniversary, told reporters that since he wanted the German national holiday to frame the nation in a European context the event had been organised as a ‘festival of solidarity’ and a ‘festival of friendship between peoples’.

Thirdly, the EU elements largely replaced national elements at the citizens’ festival. Saarland became a member of SaarLorLux, a ‘Euroregion’ encompassing Saarland, Lorraine, Luxembourg, Western Rhineland-Palatinate and Wallonia in 1971. Lafontaine explained that he had invited representatives from these states and regions, such as Luxembourg’s Prime Minister Jacques Santer, as well as a number of


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businesses, to emphasise the European dimension of the Day of Unity.\textsuperscript{887} From the St. Johanner Markt and along the south bank of the Saar River, businesses from these regions promoted tourism and their local produce.\textsuperscript{888} Representatives from other EU member states meanwhile provided entertainment throughout the streets of the city. A group of flag-throwers from the Italian region of Tuscany, for example, who represented a key highlight of the citizens' festival, performed 'for a better European future'. Wanda Kirst from the Italian Consulate, who accompanied the group, said that since German unification was a ‘European affair’ it was important for Italy, as represented through one of the regions, to be present on the Day of Unity.\textsuperscript{889}

This can be understood in the broad context of a ‘Europe of regions’. Recent literature has suggested that a form of ‘new regionalism’ has developed in Europe as a result of globalisation.\textsuperscript{890} ‘Regions’ also became a favoured political entity within the EU with rhetoric of a ‘Europe of the regions’ as part of what political scientists have described as ‘multilevel’ governance. Such a ‘Europe of regions’ was to some extent institutionalised in the EU through the formation of the Brussels-based Committee of the Regions, which was created in 1992 by the Maastricht Treaty and which sat for the first time in 1994 to increase the participation of regional actors in EU affairs.\textsuperscript{891} German political actors rarely explicitly referred to the concept in their Day of Unity speeches\textsuperscript{892} and only a very small number of speakers indirectly made


\textsuperscript{888} Kauntz, 1993, Das schwarz-rot-goldne Band, 3.

\textsuperscript{889} Tag der Deutschen Einheit 1993, 1993, Saarländischer Rundfunk.


\textsuperscript{892} Mayor of Berlin Momper made one of the very few references in his 1990 address: see Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.
reference to the idea by describing their Land as rooted in Europe. The notion nevertheless expressed itself in the staging of the unity events where regional, national and EU elements intertwined. Regional actors, for example, spoke about EU topics, regional and EU flags stood either side of the national flag at the majority of Day of Unity ceremonies and the EU-isation of the event, as explored in this chapter, took place in a regional arena owing to the rotating, sub-national organisation of the celebrations.

The citizens' festival in Saarbrücken attracted around 300,000 people, an average attendance for the Day of Unity celebrations. Nevertheless, both Chancellor Kohl and Federal President von Weizsäcker sought to frame the EU-dominated event as, in Kohl's words, 'by far the most successful' celebrations so far. Stressing the link between the German nation and the EU, von Weizsäcker told reporters he considered it 'wonderful' that key German political actors had given speeches alongside the President of the European Commission on the German national holiday. Their enthusiasm for the way in which the event was staged implies that the German Chancellor and Federal President also sought to promote the EU on the third Day of Unity by influencing attitudes about the success of the EU-isation of the German national holiday. This, combined with the promotion of the EU elements by other speakers and organisers, points to a consensus on the merits of the EU staging among political actors from across the political spectrum.

The promotion of the EU and the extent of denationalisation of the German national holiday through EU-isation in 1993 can be attributed to a number of factors. To some extent, it can be explained by Lafontaine's own influence over the celebrations. The location of the unity event also especially lent itself to an EU-centric organisation. As Süssmuth stated in her unity address, 'where better' could the preamble to the constitution, 'a united Germany in a united Europe', be expressed on Germany's national holiday than in the Saarland, a border Land in the heart of the

893 See, for example, Koch's speech: Koch, 1999, Rede, 633-635.
894 Kauntz, 1993, Das schwarz-rot-goldne Band, 3.
896 Ibid.
However, one must look predominantly to the shift from ‘Euro-optimism’ to ‘Euro-scepticism’ in Germany in the early 1990s, as emphasised in the speeches of both Delors and Süssmuth. In 1992 and 1993, there was evidence of disillusionment with the EU among citizens of its member states. On 2nd June 1992, for example, the Danes unexpectedly rejected the Maastricht Treaty in a referendum; three months later, on 20th September, the same treaty was only narrowly accepted by the French. For Germany, the Maastricht Treaty was of symbolic as well as of substantive importance: Kohl’s early pledge of his country’s commitment to Economic and Monetary Union of the European Union (EMU), after the fall of the Wall, an issue at the core of the treaty, had in many respects facilitated unification. Since EMU would increase the ties between Germany and the EU, for many in the international community it symbolised the opportunity to ‘tie Germany down in Europe’.

However, in the early 1990s public opinion in Germany became sceptical of the Maastricht Treaty, which was signed on 7th February 1992. Concerns about the domestic economy, arising from the challenges created by unification and fomented by the media hype about the death of the deutschmark, together with the European exchange rate crises of 1992 and the general inertia in EU affairs, bred discontent about the EMU. There were serious concerns among many Germans that unrestrained political, and more importantly, financial commitment to Europe would be disadvantageous to their country. The Maastricht Treaty, widely considered both by German and EU elites as central to the deepening of the EU, eventually entered into force on 1st November 1993 after a second successful Danish referendum, less than a month after the third Day of Unity celebrations in Saarbrücken. The EU-centric staging on 3rd October 1993 can thus largely be understood as an attempt to address and militate against Euro-scepticism. The Day of

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897 Süssmuth, 1993, Ansprache, 932.
899 Anderson, 1999, German unification, 45.
901 Otto & Greve, 2000, A rising middle power, 118.
902 Anderson, 1999, German unification, 46-47.
Unity served as a platform for both German and EU political actors to promote the importance and benefit of the EU to the German public. This was in the interest not only of the German political actors, keen for their citizens to be enthusiastic about the EU project in the service of enhancing its democratic legitimacy, but also for the EU guests and speakers, particularly for Delors, whose Commission had provided the momentum for the drafting of the Maastricht Treaty.

The German political actors once again used the Day of Unity as an instrument for overcoming Euro-scepticism in a climate of so-called 'Eurosclerosis' in 2005. On 29th October 2004, representatives from each of the EU member states had signed the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (TCE). This treaty, which aimed to restructure decision-making and to codify human rights, was subject to ratification by each of the twenty-five member states. In Germany, where the Basic Law does not provide for referenda, the Bundestag and Bundesrat had ratified the European Constitutional Treaty. On 29th May 2005, however, the French electorate rejected the treaty in a referendum; three days later, the constitution also failed to receive sufficient support for ratification in the Netherlands. As a result, other EU member states chose to halt the ratification process in their countries. The breakdown of the constitution's ratification process plunged the EU into crisis. Following a 'period of reflection', political actors from across the EU began to accept that, if popular support for the EU was to be achieved, they must promote the community as more than simply an economic space.\(^\text{903}\) Within this context, many believed that emphasis on shared values which united all EU member states – particularly respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights as outlined in Article Two of the drafted Constitutional Treaty\(^\text{904}\) – could help overcome public apathy towards the EU. In this context, on the Day of Unity later that year, Bundestag President Thierse argued that for 'inner unity' in Europe – a term traditionally reserved for intra-German relations on the Day of Unity anniversaries – the EU must look beyond economic competition

\(^{903}\) For a recent analysis of the need to focus on values rather than policies in an attempt to construct a sense of EU-consciousness see, in particular, Karolewski, I.P., & Kaina, V. (Eds.). (2006). European identity: theoretical perspectives and empirical insights. Berlin: LIT Verlag.

and build a common social community with shared values. Minister-President of Brandenburg Platzeck similarly stressed that Germans must remain committed to the EU and criticised the way in which, although Europeans were no longer afraid of Germany, Germany was now afraid of its future and of its role in Europe. For the German public, uncertainty about the future of the EU was fuelled not only by the waning ‘permissive consensus’ on the desirability of the EU and further integration but also by its enlargement to the East.

5.1.3 German unity and European unity: ‘two sides of the same coin’

Particularly in the early years after unification and again in 1997 and in 2004, the EU-isation of the Day of Unity manifested itself in the considerable amount of rhetoric dedicated to EU enlargement. As part of a larger discourse about Germany’s commitment to the EU more generally, the Day of Unity served as a platform for German political actors to promote EU eastern enlargement. It also acted as a forum for representatives from other EU member states, particularly France, to do so. Dedication to, and promotion of, ‘widening’ the EU manifested itself both in the fostering of relations with particular Eastern European partners, as discussed later, as well as through the staging of the unity events.

In the twentieth century, Germany’s challenging and fragile relationship with Central and Eastern Europe was shaped by conflict and catastrophe. During World War I, Germany had attempted to draw Eastern and South-Eastern Europe further into their sphere of economic and political influence. In the subsequent decades – before, during and after World War II – Germany’s relations with its Eastern European neighbours saw a number of different phases: conflict, annihilation, suppression,

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907 This is a phrase originally coined by Leon Lindberg and Stuart Scheingold: see Lindberg, L., & Scheingold, S. (1970). Europe’s would-be polity. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
liberation and détente. At the end of the Cold War — an ending which opened the gateway to the West for Germany’s eastern neighbours — the German government provided the momentum for the eastern enlargement of the EU; they spearheaded, for example, EU assistance programmes such as the ‘Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies’ (PHARE) initiative and the ‘Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States’ (TACIS) programme.

At the first Day of Unity anniversary, Mayor of Hamburg Voscherau stated that with the process of German unity complete, Germany must stand by the states of Central and Eastern Europe. A year later, Minister-President of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Seite also stressed the ‘heavy responsibility’ of Germany in Eastern Europe. In 1997, German political actors, particularly Chancellor Kohl, spoke at length about Germany’s ‘moral responsibility and duty’ to its neighbours to the East, stressing that Germany must ‘push forward with the unification of Europe at full power’. To reassure the international community that Germany’s commitment to eastern enlargement would not lead to the country becoming a non-aligned broker between East and West, an idea chiefly popular among the SPD in the early years after World War II, Kohl stated that ‘Germany cannot and will not be a ‘bridge’ between East and West’. The Chancellor instead implied that Germany, no longer anxious on account of its Mittellage in Europe, could only assist the CEE states by being fully rooted in the West; Germany, he argued, could ‘hold open the door’ to the EU for the new democracies. The promotion of eastern enlargement in 1997 can be understood in the context of the publication of the first Agenda 2000 report and the signing of the Treaty of Amsterdam. In July 1997, the European Commission published the Agenda 2000, a document which outlined the EU’s vision for its enlargement. This report signified a major step towards eastern enlargement as it highlighted a group of states, including the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland,

910 Berger, 2002, The power of memory, 94.
913 Seite, 1992, Ansprache, 1007.
915 Ibid.
Slovenia, Estonia, plus Cyprus, with which the EU could begin accession talks. In addition to this, on 2nd October 1997, the day before the seventh German unity anniversary, the Treaty of Amsterdam was signed. This treaty, which came into force on 1st May 1999, increased the powers of the European Parliament, deepened the Common Foreign and Security Policy and aimed to reform the EU institutions in preparation for enlargement. In 2004, six months after ten new member states had acceded to the EU on 1st May, the Day of Unity celebrations were once more devoted to the topic of eastern enlargement. The festivities in Erfurt were staged to celebrate 15 years since the peaceful revolution not only in East Germany but also in Central and Eastern Europe, as a gesture toward the new members of the EU. The latter were invited to present themselves at stands on the Ländereiße as part of the citizens’ festival entitled ‘1989 to 2004: 15 Years of Peace and Freedom for Europe’. The multimedia event ‘In Every Way: Germany in Europe’, largely dedicated to the peaceful revolution in Eastern Europe and the enlargement of the EU, formed the highlight to mark the end of the 2004 unity celebrations. Although the regional actors had full discretionary powers in staging the events – and thus had the potential to influence international topics – without exception, they all chose to underline Germany’s habitual commitment to the EU, in line with the prevailing discourses among mainstream German political actors in united Germany.

The focus on EU enlargement on the 3rd October anniversaries by the German political actors can be understood not only as part of Germany’s strategic trade and security priorities and ‘moral obligation’ as discussed later, but also as a further opportunity to frame German unification as a supra-national (EU) event. At the inaugural unification ceremony, Federal President von Weizsäcker framed the division of Germany at the end of World War II as the ‘defining symbol of European unity’. In this context, Bundestag President Süßmuth portrayed German unification as an ‘important building block’ for Europe. At the subsequent unity anniversaries, regional, national and international guest speakers similarly depicted

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916 On this process see Anderson, 1999, German unification, 54.
919 Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.
920 Ibid.
German unification in European terms. For Minister-President of Bavaria, Stoiber, for example, the opening of the Iron Curtain ‘changed the face of our continent’ and ‘did not give only Germans unity’. Instead, he stated, it brought about the possibility for Europe to ‘become a truly pan-European community’.\(^{921}\) Federal President Rau went so far as to present German unity and European unity as ‘two sides of the same coin’.\(^{922}\) Foreign guest speaker Polish writer Szczypiorski similarly considered German unity a ‘step toward the unity of the whole of Europe’.\(^{923}\) The Hungarian Prime Minister Horn also stressed the extent to which German unification had shaped the future perspectives of the EU.\(^{924}\) He went on to further present 3rd October as a Day of European Unity by stating that the Day of Unity represented the ‘promise of a united Europe’.\(^{925}\) In this way, denationalisation of the German national holiday was promoted not only by the German but also by the international political actors.

The focus on the EU, rather than German domestic topics, allowed the international guest speakers to promote their own agendas pertaining to eastern enlargement. In 1999, main speaker European Commission President Prodi exploited this opportunity to call for readiness for reform from the EU member states, so that the ‘exciting and ambitious project’ of enlargement might be realised.\(^{926}\) The following year, in line with other Day of Unity speakers’ appeals for rapid integration of the CEE states, main speaker French President Chirac dedicated over half of his speech to the promotion of eastern enlargement and the consequent need for EU reform. For Chirac, enlargement did not threaten the ‘solidarity’ among existing EU member states, but, he argued, considerable institutional reform was nevertheless necessary to ensure the EU was not weakened.\(^{927}\) In expressing the EU’s commitment to its eastern neighbours, Chirac employed particularly emotive

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\(^{921}\) Stoiber, 1996, Ansprache, 829.
\(^{923}\) Szczypiorski, 1994, Ansprache, 844.
\(^{924}\) Horn, 1996, Ansprache, 834.
\(^{925}\) Ibid., 837.
language, 'We are waiting impatiently for you!' he declared, 'Our support will not be lacking'.

Chirac's emphasis on EU enlargement in his Day of Unity address can be accounted for by a number of factors. Firstly, France held the rotating EU Presidency; the main goal for the French EU Presidency, as Chirac expressed in his 3rd October speech, was the reform of the EU institutions. Secondly, an intergovernmental conference was due to take place just two months later on 11th December. Its task was to streamline decision-making in the EU in preparation for enlargement (as a result of the conference, the Treaty of Nice was signed on 26th February 2001 and came into force on 1st February 2003). Thirdly, Chirac's enthusiastic support of eastern enlargement can be understood as an attempt by the French President to woo the CEE states — by the late 1990s, Chirac had become determined to 'stop seeing eastern enlargement as an inevitable defeat for France'.

Many political actors in France were indeed concerned that, in stark contrast to its German neighbour, their country was not benefiting sufficiently from progressive association and integration of the CEE states. Finally, by concentrating on the reform of EU institutions, Chirac had selected a topic on which both French and German political actors agreed. In a climate of strained Franco-German relations, the emphasis that 'deepening' of the EU was a prerequisite for its 'widening', served to unite the two governments. It is to the way in which the Day of Unity served to improve international, predominantly EU relations, the chapter now turns.

928 Ibid.
929 McCarthy, 1999, France, Germany, 53.
930 Accession of the CEE states to the EU had, in many respects, presented more opportunities for Germany than for France. Germany was geographically better situated than its western ally to benefit economically from the transition of the CEE states and their eventual inclusion in the EU. See Ote & Greve, 2000, *A rising middle power*, 59. Moreover, the once-deliberated enlargement of the EU across the Mediterranean, in which France had considerable security and economic interests, ceased to be a priority as a result of the collapse of the Iron Curtain and the need to integrate the CEE states in the EU. See Bulmer et al., 2000, *Germany's European diplomacy*, 115. In 1991, the Weimar Triangle, comprising the defence ministers and heads of state or government from France, Germany and the largest of the CEE states Poland, was formed, not least to allow France to feel more involved in enlargement policy. See Martisen, K.D. (2005). The end of the affair? Germany's relationship with France. *German Politics*, 14(4), 401-416.
5.2. Fostering relations with strategic partners

Alongside the EU-isation of the events visible in the attempts to stress Germany's commitment to traditional foreign policy tenets, to overcome Euro-scepticism and to promote EU enlargement, it also manifested itself in the hierarchy of bilateral relations presented by the political actors on the Day of Unity. Day of Unity organisers invited international guests to give the main address on the German national holiday as a gesture towards the respective speaker's country. The choice of international speaker influenced the topic of the speeches of the German political actors, who exploited the visitor's presence as an opportunity to redefine Germany's 'official' view toward, and strengthen relations with, the respective country. Other elements of the staging also suggest that the Day of Unity served as an arena in which the German political actors tried to improve bilateral relations with strategic partners. An examination of the staging of the unity celebrations from 1990 to 2005 reveals that German political actors sought to foster bilateral relations with countries particularly important for reasons of shared history, shared commercial interests and shared security concerns – to some extent the US, but predominantly EU states.

5.2.1 Germany and the US after 1990: old friends, new challenges

German-US relations dominated the seventh unity anniversary, played a minor role on the eleventh anniversary and formed the focus of the twelfth Day of Unity commemorations. In 1997, Minister-President of Baden-Württemberg Teufel stated, in his Day of Unity address, that Germany did not 'owe a great deal' but rather 'everything' to the US. In this context, he invited Former US President George H.W. Bush as a gesture of gratitude to the US. The US had indeed assisted Germany in a number of ways: by providing considerable financial support,

933 Teufel, 1997, Ansprache, 934.
934 Ibid.
935 During the Cold War, the US assisted Germany in many ways. In economic terms, the US devoted approximately 1.7 billion dollars to West Germany as part of the Government and Relief in Occupied Areas (GARIOA) programme. The US also developed the Marshall Plan in 1948 to stimulate the economic recovery of West Germany and other European states, through which the US made a further
protecting the German security environment and by remaining largely supportive of unification throughout the Cold War period.

In the context of the aid provided to Germany by the US during the Cold War, it was particularly fitting that Bush was invited to speak on the Day of Unity in 1997: a number of German political actors, including Chancellor Kohl, had just commemorated the 50th anniversary of the announcement of the Marshall Plan in Washington in May that year. 1997 also saw another gesture of German-US alliance. On 5th June 1972, to celebrate the imminent 25th anniversary of the Marshall Plan and as a gesture of thanks to the US, West German Chancellor Brandt had announced the creation of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF), a German-funded institution developed to establish and strengthen cultural, educational and business ties between Germans and Americans. In 1997, despite having fulfilled its commitment to fund the institution for twenty-five years, the German Bundestag nevertheless decided to continue its yearly endowment of 10 Million deutschmarks and established the German Program for Transatlantic Contact.

The US, with George H.W. Bush as its President, had supported German unification and played a major role in convincing many of Germany's more sceptical European neighbours. Unification was indeed to some extent made possible
through German-US diplomacy. In the seventh Day of Unity anniversary, both Chancellor Kohl and former President Bush, key actors in the unification process, emphasised the importance of the transatlantic alliance of 1989/90. In speeches dominated by mutual back-patting – Bush, for example, referred to Kohl’s contribution to unification seventeen times – these two architects of unification reminisced about the German-US partnership and emphasised the continued importance of strong German-US relations in united Germany. Kohl, for instance, stated that because close diplomatic co-operation with the US was of ‘existential importance’, in the same way that Germans ‘could and can rely on the United States’, the US has, ‘now and in the future’, a ‘reliable friend and partner’ in Germany.

On the eleventh Day of Unity anniversary, German political actors expressed sympathy for, and pledged solidarity with, the US following the 9/11 terrorist attacks less than a month earlier. In this particular context, the staging of the eleventh Day of Unity also sought to strengthen the alliance. As part of the international year of volunteers, a ‘Courage Gala’ was organised in the Mainz Staatstheater, at which high-profile German politicians awarded the most prestigious prize to a courageous American fire-fighter who rescued numerous victims from the collapsing World Trade Tower buildings on September 11th. Furthermore, at the citizens festival, in a space provided for them, a large group of US firemen surrounded by US flags sold badges marked with '11.9.2001' to raise funds for the families of firemen killed during the 9/11 rescue efforts. Despite the strong sense of attachment exhibited in 2001, during the following year German-US relations underwent a turbulent transformation, predominantly over divergent interpretations, not least among the political leaders of the two countries, of whether or not it was necessary to declare war on Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. By 2002 then, unlike the seventh, and to some extent
the eleventh, anniversaries, which had both attempted to further strengthen an already firm alliance, the twelfth Day of Unity was strapped with the task of improving a somewhat soured relationship.

Although a small number of well-known international poets, novelists and former politicians also stood as main speakers on the Day of Unity, German political actors principally expressed their country’s ‘friendship’ toward another nation by inviting the incumbent head of state of the respective country. For the twelfth anniversary, however, the American invited to give an address on the Day of Unity was not President George W. Bush. Chancellor Schröder had angered the US President during his re-election campaign, when, on 3rd September 2002, he explicitly stated that, even with a UN resolution, Germany would not support a war in Iraq.946 On 22nd September Bush and his administration were disappointed when Schröder narrowly won the election on an ‘anti-war ticket’.947 Just two days after his re-election, aware of the strategic importance of the transatlantic alliance, Schröder met with British Prime Minister Tony Blair, a key ally of the US President, for advice on how to repair German-US relations.948 By the Day of Unity two weeks later, however, Bush’s congratulatory letter for German unity, addressed not to Schröder but rather to Federal President Rau, suggested that renewed rapprochement had not yet commenced. The German media interpreted the US President’s letter as an olive branch to Germany.949 However, close analysis of the letter reveals that while Bush did not directly refer to the proposed intervention in Iraq in his missive, he nevertheless strongly emphasised all that the US had done for Germany, implying that the US had expected reciprocation. Federal President Rau’s Day of Unity address correspondingly stressed that Germany remained grateful to the US; Rau

946 Szabo, 2004, Parting ways, 55.
highlighted the historical ties between the two nations and particularly praised the
collection of Kennedy and George H.W. Bush to German unity.950

Given the strained relations with President Bush in 2002, it was very
conceivable that the German public would not welcome the US President in a climate
of strained German-US relations; moreover, Bush was unlikely to accept such an
invitation. Host of the celebrations SPD Mayor of Berlin and Bundesrat President
Wowereit instead invited former President Bill Clinton to celebrate the twelfth
anniversary of unification in Berlin. Clinton presented a number of advantages over
Bush: as a Democrat, he was closer in terms of political orientation to the German
Chancellor and Mayor Wowereit than his Republican successor – Schröder openly
admired Clinton’s emphasis on ‘jobs, jobs, jobs’;951 he was also, as evidenced by the
way in which he was enthusiastically greeted on the Day of Unity,952 much more
popular among the German public. Clinton, who in 1994 had been the first US
President to go through the Brandenburg Gate,953 did not undertake the traditional
role of the guest of honour on the Day of Unity: instead of speaking at the central
ceremony, removed from the general public, he stood on a platform raised above the
masses at the Brandenburg gate to watch its unveiling and gave only a brief speech in
which he called Germans ‘a wonderful people’.954 The staging of the former
President’s visit allowed around a million people in front of the Brandenburg gate,
together with a vast number of reporters who had gathered, not least, to witness the
long-awaited unveiling of ‘Berlin’s diva’ after twenty-two months of restoration,955 to
observe the former US President smiling and laughing with the German Chancellor
and other leading German politicians. This symbolically powerful attempt to

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950 Wirtz, C. (2002, October 4). Rau lobt Hilfe der USA bei der Wiedervereinigung. Südliche Zeitung, 6. The idea that Germany was indebted to the US was later taken up by Hungarian novelist Kertész who repeated this in his 2003 Day of Unity address six months after the invasion of Iraq had commenced. In response to this Gerhard Schröder defended German foreign policy and largely avoided explicit references to German-US relations. See Kertész, 2003, Wenn die Freudenfeuer verglichen, 45 and Schröder, G. (2003). 'Vor uns liegt noch ein langer und beschwerlicher Weg'. Retrieved May 2, 2007 from http://www.zeit.de/reden/deutsche_innenpolitik/schroeder_einheit03.

951 'Die Deutschen sind ein wunderbares Volk', 2002, 2.


953 'Die Deutschen sind ein wunderbares Volk', 2002, 2.

954 This was a term coined by The Guardian to describe the Brandenburg Gate: see Connely, 2002, Zipper gate, 14.

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underline the importance of German-US relations served to demonstrate, as Clinton said in his speech, that Germany was a ‘genuine friend’ of the US.\textsuperscript{956} The very day before the twelfth anniversary, Schröder had met with French President Chirac to discuss a united European front at variance with US plans for Iraq.\textsuperscript{957} The Day of Unity thus served as a platform on which to emphasise that, despite differences in foreign policy, Germany nevertheless esteemed its relations with the US.

The end of the Cold War had in many respects transformed the main raison d’être of the transatlantic alliance. Germany no longer needed a Superpower to protect it from the Soviet Union nor, with the country united, an advocate of unification. Why then, did the German political actors prioritise relations with the US on the German national holiday? Despite its reduced dependence on its transatlantic partner, united Germany had considerable interest in maintaining strong relations with the US for three key reasons. The first reason can be understood in the context of the attempts of the German political actors on the Day of Unity to emphasise continuity between the foreign policy of the old and new Federal Republic. By underlining, on the German national holiday, the continued importance of German-US relations, the German political actors reinforced the message that united Germany remained committed to the traditional foreign policy tenets of West Germany, specifically the importance of the transatlantic partnership. Secondly, the focus on German-US relations on 3\textsuperscript{rd} October anniversaries can also be understood in the context of trade interests. The US remained united Germany’s second most important trading partner after France between 1990 and 2005: Germany exported on average 48.4 billion dollars of goods and services each year to the US, while imports from across the Atlantic amounted to an average of 34.4 billion dollars annually.\textsuperscript{958} At the same time, the inability of the EU and its member states to stop the bloodshed in the former Yugoslavia in the first half of the 1990s and in Kosovo in 1998 demonstrated that united Germany, like its other EU neighbours, to a large extent still required US military strength for security in a post-Cold War world. For these

\textsuperscript{956} Hooper, 2002, Zipper gate, 16.
reasons, the Day of Unity celebrations fostered the traditionally important and beneficial transatlantic relationship. To a far greater extent, however, the German national holiday can be understood as an arena for the promotion of relations with partners within the EU.

5.2.2 A new hierarchy of strategic diplomacy? Strengthening relations with old and new EU partners

Saxon Minister-President Biedenkopf invited Chirac to give the main address at the tenth jubilee celebration of unification in Dresden; German and international political guests interpreted the invitation to the head of the French state on this key anniversary as symbolic of the importance attached to the Franco-German partnership. In his address, Chirac also acknowledged the symbolic gesture, describing it as an expression of how ‘close’ Franco-German relations remained. While de Maizièrè from the former GDR, who dedicated his speech almost entirely to the discussion of intra-German relations and the economic and social problems resulting from unification, barely referred to the Franco-German alliance, both Biedenkopf and Federal President Rau paid tribute to France by framing the latter as a role model for Germany. Biedenkopf gave a description of France’s positive and defining influence on Germany since the French Revolution of 1789, while Federal President Rau argued that Germany could learn from the French how to celebrate a national holiday.

Franco-German relations had been pivotal to the maintenance of peace and prosperity in Europe following World War II. Unification, however, posed new

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961 Biedenkopf, 2000, Rede, www2.hu-berlin.de.
963 The main aim of the partnership was to build a Europe so integrated that war between its nation-states would be unthinkable. This goal motivated the creation of greater economic and institutional ties between France, Germany and other European states in the form, originally, of the ECSC in 1951 and, eventually, in the establishment of the present-day EU. The Franco-German interaction was widely considered ‘privileged’ on one hand, because of the volume and extent of institutional ties and interaction between the governments of the two states and on the other because, at least initially, the Franco-German partnerships played the role of ‘motor’ in European integration. See Bulmer et al.,
challenges for the Franco-German alliance. Although France, keen to keep Germany firmly anchored in the EU, ultimately supported German unification in a European context, French President Mitterrand was initially highly sceptical about the creation of a larger, more powerful Germany. After 1990 a number of difficulties contributed to a deterioration of Franco-German relations. Firstly, French political actors became increasingly concerned that Germany would assume a leadership role in the EU creating an asymmetrical partnership between the two countries. Secondly, negotiations for the Maastricht Treaty, a treaty considered crucial for France to counter the possibility of an economically far superior neighbour, put strains on the relationship. French political actors became concerned about Germany's commitment to the development of the EU. The German 'policy of equidistance' between France and the US together with fears of German hegemony in Central and Eastern Europe spurred further worries. 64 Despite the strained relations, France nevertheless remained crucial for Germany for reasons which help explain the attention paid to Franco-German relations by the various domestic and international actors on the German national holiday. The historic tension and bloody history between France and Germany underlined the never-ending importance of loyalty to a firm partnership between the two countries. Furthermore, as with US relations, emphasis on the continued importance of this 'old friendship', can be understood as a further expression by German political actors that Germany remained committed to its traditional diplomatic international relations, despite having started a new 'relationship', as we shall see below, with the CEE states. In addition to this, from 1990 to 2005, France remained Germany's main trading partner in terms of the imports and export of goods and services: the former represented on average 48.0 billion dollars per year, the latter 62.1 billion dollars. 65 As a neighbour and powerful ally in the EU, France was also a vital geo-strategic partner in terms of security.

The invitation to Chirac and the rhetoric about the Franco-German tandem on the tenth anniversary demonstrated that German political actors in united Germany

still attached substantial importance to the long-standing relationship. However, outside the tenth unity celebrations, the Franco-German partnership received little attention on the Day of Unity anniversaries. With the exception of the first three anniversaries, at which some German political actors made brief reference to the importance of the Franco-German partnership and the fourth and eleventh anniversaries where fleeting comparisons were made between Franco-German and German-Polish relations — that is to say the former as an example for the latter⁹⁶⁶ — Franco-German relations were not prioritised on the German national holiday. Given that bilateral relations with France were on the whole stable and strong, the German political actors instead devoted their efforts on the Day of Unity to strengthening relations with new partners in Central and Eastern Europe, particularly the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.

Political actors sought to contribute to the process of easing the historically troubled relations between Germany and the Czech state⁹⁶⁷ on a number of Day of Unity anniversaries. The year before Germany signed a treaty for good relations with Czechoslovakia on 27th February 1992, for example, the Prague Philharmonic orchestra had played alongside orchestras from Hamburg’s other twin-cities, as a gesture of ‘friendship’ on the German national holiday.⁹⁶⁸ It was not until 20th December 1996 that a ‘Declaration of Reconciliation’ was signed between Germany and the Czech Republic, divided from Slovakia through the Velvet Divorce of 1st January 1993.⁹⁶⁹ In light of this declaration, Foreign Minister Kinkel travelled to Prague on the seventh Day of Unity to commemorate the role of Czechoslovakia in

⁹⁶⁷ On 30th September 1938, as a result of the Munich Pact between the heads of government of Britain, France, Italy and the German Reich, Hitler had given a guarantee of peace in exchange for the ‘return’ to Germany of the Czechoslovakian border area, the Sudetenland. Six months later, on 14th March 1939, Slovakia became a Nazi client state. The following day, Hitler violated the Munich agreement when his troops invaded Bohemia and Moravia, which remained under German control until the end of World War II. The Nazi occupation of the western half of Czechoslovakia shaped the troubled ‘relationship’ between Germany and the Communist state during the Cold War. Even relations between the GDR and Czechoslovakia were not trouble-free within the Soviet bloc, when the SED leadership offered GDR troops to put down the Prague Spring in 1968, although the Soviet Union declined the offer because of the obvious historical connotations.
unification. Following the July 1997 'Agenda 2000' talks, at which German political actors strongly advocated EU enlargement to the East, the Czech Republic was invited to begin negotiations for accession to the EU in March 1998. Six months later, German-Czech relations once more played an important role on the Day of Unity. At the central celebrations in Hanover, Schröder selected President of the Czech Republic Havel to give the main address. As a consequence of this, the rhetoric of German speakers focused on their country's partnership with its eastern neighbour. Havel's speech was particularly interesting: symbolising the need for united Germany to both strengthen ties with, and reassure, its Eastern neighbour and indicative of the gulf in attitudes between existing and candidate EU member states, with the latter widely accepting the EU as a guarantor for their security, President Havel said that 'obviously nobody knows' whether or not Europe will live in safety, freedom and peace.

Compared to German-Czech relations, German-Hungarian relations received greater attention from the German political actors on the Day of Unity. These relations were not nearly so strained historically (precisely because of close German-Hungarian co-operation in both World Wars). The emphasis on German-Hungarian relations on the German national holiday was particularly evident in the symbolic invitations to two Hungarian guest speakers. Nobel Prize winner Kertész' presence as main speaker in 2003, and the attention his country received in the speeches of the German political actors that year, demonstrated that German-Hungarian relations were considered crucial for Germany a year before Hungary's accession to the EU.

In the earlier years running up to Hungary's entry into the EU, German-Hungarian relations also received attention on the Day of Unity anniversaries, most markedly in 1996. While the German Foreign Minister celebrated the sixth anniversary of unification in the German Embassy in Budapest, back in Munich Hungarian Prime Minister Horn gave the main Day of Unity address, four years after

970 Bulmer et al., 2000, Germany's European diplomacy, 104.
972 During World War II, the Hungarian authoritarian-fascist regime had collaborated with the Nazi regime. The country was only occupied after this regime had fallen, towards the end of the war.
Germany and Hungary had signed a treaty of co-operation and friendly relations on 6th February 1992. Horn – who had physically opened the border between Hungary and Austria allowing many GDR citizens to escape to the West and triggering to a large extent the subsequent collapse of the GDR – and Bavarian Minister-President Stoiber described at length Hungary’s significant contribution to unification and celebrated the German-Hungarian partnership. Stoiber’s rhetoric and his invitation to Horn can perhaps be understood as a further example of how regional and EU aspects intertwined on the Day of Unity: the Bavarian Minister-President’s regional agenda benefited from the promotion of good relations with the CEE states. As seen in policy papers published on the Common Agricultural Policy in 1995 and the Structural Funds in 1996, Bavaria, located on what was then the EU border (with the Czech Republic), involved itself in EU enlargement debates in order to promote specific Bavarian agendas, such as those related to subsidies and deregulation. Furthermore, Bavaria had a vested interest in maintaining some influence over the nature of the enlargement. In these ways, the staging and rhetoric of the Day of Unity celebrations drew attention to the importance German political actors assigned to German-Hungarian relations. Of all the bilateral relations German actors sought to promote on the Day of Unity, however, it was those with Poland that received the most attention.

With the thorny question of the Oder-Neisse border finally settled in 1990/1991, united Germany was able to start building bridges with Poland – a process to which the majority of Day of Unity anniversaries sought to contribute. At the unification ceremony in 1990, both former Volkskammer President Bergmann-

973 Gasteyger, 2006, Europe, 249.
974 See Horn, 1996, Ansprache, 834-837.
976 Bulmer et al., 2000, Germany’s European diplomacy, 113.
977 German-Polish relations – refracted through the prism of the Prussian role in the Polish divisions in the eighteenth century and ethnic and territorial conflicts after 1918 – reached their nadir at the end of World War II. The German Reich, which attacked Poland in September 1939, was responsible for the death of six million Poles (of which approximately three million were Jews), one-fifth of the entire population. Since the countries were separated by the Iron Curtain, repairing relations during the Cold War was arduous. It was thus only after 1989/90 that a conducive climate for rapprochement slowly developed. Zaborowski, M. (2004). Germany, Poland and Europe: conflict, co-operation and Europeanisation. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 170-171. For a recent overview of German-Polish relations before and after unification see Cordell, K., & Wolff, S. (2005). German foreign policy: towards Poland and the Czech Republic. London: Routledge.
Pohl's and Federal President von Weizsäcker echoed the message of Kohl's televised address the previous evening in which the Chancellor stressed that a united Germany sought 'permanent reconciliation between the German and Polish people'. The following year, German-Polish relations similarly received considerable attention from the German Day of Unity speakers.

On 5th April 1994, Poland applied for membership of the EU; during the German Presidency of the EU from July to December 1994, German political actors pushed forward concrete plans, resulting in the so-called Europe Agreements for EU candidate states. During the same year, Polish writer Szczypiorski was invited by Mayor of Bremen Wedemeier to give the main speech on the Day of Unity as a gesture of 'friendship' toward his country. Both Szczypiorski and Wedemeier devoted virtually their entire speeches to fostering German-Polish relations by paying tribute to the troubled German-Polish past, framing the end of the Cold War as a new opportunity for the 'relationship' between the two nations and celebrating Poland's path toward the EU.

In 2001, German-Polish relations once more stood at the centre of the Day of Unity celebrations when Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski was the main speaker. Minister-President of Rhineland-Palatinate Beck invited the Polish head of state from the SPD's sister party there to complement his vision for 'the European perspective' as the 'focal point' of the Day of Unity, a gesture which Bundestag President Thierse framed as a 'wonderful symbol of Europe pulling together'. Kwasniewski, who focused exclusively on his country's relations with Germany and who made, for example, no direct reference to the 9/11 attacks, suggested that since German-Polish relations had 'become so matter of fact', so 'boring', Germans and

978 See Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.
979 See Ibid.
980 Kohl, 1990, Fernsehansprache, 1225.
982 Bulmer et al., 2000, Germany's European diplomacy, 106.
984 Szczypiorski, 1994, Ansprache, 844-845.
987 Ibid.
Poles must become more enthusiastic about the 'relationship'. While he praised initiatives that already existed between the citizens of the two countries he argued that more must be done to bring its citizens closer together; the Polish President ended his speech by thanking Germany for its support of Poland’s accession to the EU. Four years later, during the ‘German-Polish Year 2005-2006’ the staging of the fifteenth Day of Unity anniversary in Potsdam also underlined the priority of German-Polish relations. This was most evident in the way that the Mazowsze Ensemble, a celebrated Polish dance group, was invited to open the two-day citizens’ festival. Dressed in traditional Polish garb, hundreds of dancers entertained a modest crowd.

The focus on German relations with the Czech Republic, Hungary and particularly Poland by the German political actors on the Day of Unity anniversaries can best be traced to a combination of three factors. Firstly, it can be understood in the context of Germany’s tradition since 1945 of reconciliation with former enemies and with those who had suffered during World War II. Relations with the CEE states, and the integration of these countries into Western institutions, have been described as ‘deeply personal’ issues for many German political actors. As a number of German Day of Unity actors emphasised, united Germany considered itself to have, as Kohl described in 1990, a ‘moral obligation’ to support the transition of the CEE states to Western democracy. At the time of unification, German-Czech relations were strained as a result of the difficult relations during Nazi occupation, ethnic cleansing and the inability of the two countries to address these issues from either side of the Iron Curtain, combined later with the tensions that emerged over the Czech government’s refusal to revoke the Beneš Decrees of 1945. German-Hungarian relations were likewise fragile given the relations of the two

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990 McCarthy, 1999, France, Germany, 52. For exploration of the argument that Germany’s commitment to reconciliation was a key element of post-war identity and remains so in united Germany see Berghahn et al., 1997, Germany and Europe, 173-200.
states during World War II. The German-Polish past which, as we also saw earlier in Chapter Two, was especially complicated, received particular attention from the German political actors at the Day of Unity commemorations.

However, the fact that German political actors did not use the opportunity presented by the Day of Unity celebrations to focus on fostering relations with all CEE states but rather concentrated specifically on the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, suggests a second motive: strong relations with these three large CEE states carried potential significant economic benefits for Germany.\(^{992}\) Put simply, for the political elite to facilitate and encourage trade with these important EU applicant states, relations had to be mended: the Day of Unity served as a cog in the wheel of that process. In terms of trade, the emerging markets of the Czech Republic, Hungary and primarily Poland presented considerable economic opportunities for neighbouring Germany.\(^{993}\) Benefiting from the preferential trading agreements arranged between the EU and the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland as part of the ‘Europe Agreements’ of December 1991, the number of exports from Germany to the Czech Republic was able to reach 23.1 billion dollars by 2005. To put this into perspective, this amounts to per capita German exports to the Czech Republic of 2,257 dollars - 654 dollars more than per capita German exports to France. Trade with Hungary was also significant, representing 17.7 billion dollars in imports and 16.7 billion dollars in exports in 2005. Trade with Poland, however, was the most substantial, particularly with regard to the export of German goods and services: while imports reached 19.8 billion dollars by 2005, exports represented 26.8 billion dollars.\(^{994}\) Germany thus became the leading trading partner of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland\(^{995}\) and had a vested interest in these countries developing trade


\(^{995}\) McCarthy, 1999, France, Germany, 43.
patterns more oriented toward Germany before their accession to the EU in 2004. Indeed the economic benefits German industry drew from these countries became increasingly important for Germany. The economic potential was particularly noted by Chancellor Schröder who promoted EU enlargement and strong relations with the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, not just for reasons of ‘moral obligation’ or to bestow them with the ‘“gift” of Western democracy’, but because they provided new markets for Germany.

However, trade reasons alone cannot explain the special attention paid to the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. To be sure, bilateral relations with countries such as China or India as huge emerging markets, or even those with Germany’s key trading partners, such as the Netherlands, received absolutely no attention from the German political actors on the Day of Unity. Instead, a third factor contributed to the strategic fostering of relations with the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland: the German political actors had a strategic interest in strengthening ties with these countries to ensure German security. An Eastern Europe in chaos would have been at odds with the German political actors’ desire for stability on Germany’s borders; united Germany thus had a vested interest in assisting the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, the first three CEE states to join NATO, to ‘perform [their] role as a buffer zone’. Without EU enlargement, Germany may have been forced to cope single-handedly with re-emerging nationalism and economic disorder on its eastern border. In this context, German support of EU enlargement has frequently been understood as an ‘instrument for stabilising’ the CEE states and as a ‘guarantor of German security’. The particular attention paid to Polish relations on the Day of Unity can be understood not only in economic terms, but also in the context of the particular geopolitical importance of Poland: with 38 million inhabitants, it was the largest of the CEE states and thus could become an important actor in the EU.

996 Bulmer et al., 2000, Germany’s European diplomacy, 134.
997 Ibid., 105.
998 Niven, 2002, Facing the Nazi past, 5.
999 Szabo, 2004, Parting ways, 53.
1000 Berghahn et al., 1997, Germany and Europe, 185.
1001 McCarthy, 1999, France, Germany, 43.
1002 Bulmer et al., 2000, Germany’s European diplomacy, 105.
1003 Zaborowski, 2004, Germany, Poland and Europe, 174-176.
Furthermore, with the exception of Russia, it was the only former East bloc country with significant armed forces. As Adrian Hyde-Price has argued, ‘a stable, prosperous and secure Poland [was] vital for a stable, prosperous and secure Germany’.

5.2.3 Other EU states and Russia: a tale of neglect

As a consequence of the decision by German political actors to foster strategic partnerships on the German national holiday with the US and specific EU and accession states, relations with other EU member states and Russia considered further down the hierarchy of importance received less attention. Relations with Ireland and Spain, for example, countries whose governments, according to Kohl’s memoirs, were the only European partners to support German unification from the outset, received no mention at all in either the rhetoric or mise-en-scène of the unity events. This is not surprising given the largely smooth relationship of Germany, historically, with these countries and their low importance in terms of considerations such as security – these partnerships arguably required no special attention from the German political actors on the Day of Unity. The role in the celebrations of Ally and former occupying power Britain was also insignificant. The sponsors of the separate Berlin celebrations occasionally invited British veterans, such as those involved in the Berlin Airlift, to participate in the capital’s unity parade. With the exception of sporadic expressions of thanks to the four Allied powers by German political actors, British political actors at the central Day of Unity events, however, were limited to a role of occupying a seat in the audience and were not invited to speak. Thus, while political actors of the Federal Republic attached considerable importance to cultivating relations with its World War II adversary, the German Day of Unity organisers did not prioritise diplomacy with Britain, whose policy priorities were often at odds with

1004 McCarthy, 1999, France, Germany, 44.
1005 Hyde-Price, 2000, Germany and European order, 217.
1007 See, for example, Deutschlands Fest, 1998, ZDF.
those of united Germany. The lack of deep-rooted institutionalisation between the two countries, compared, for example, to those between France and Germany, together with the divergence between the British government's more intergovernmentalist approach to European integration and the more integrationist policy favoured by the German government, made celebration of relations with the UK an unlikely component of the Day of Unity festivities. As has been argued, united Germany's political actors staged the Day of Unity in such a way to facilitate bilateral relations to certain ends, in the service of which the inclusion of Britain would have proven rather vapid.

Relations with Russia were also overlooked to a large extent on the Day of Unity. In their Day of Unity addresses of 1990, Chancellor Kohl, Federal President von Weizsäcker and Mayor of Berlin Momper underlined the vital contribution to German unification made by the last President of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, through his reform policies of perestroika and glasnost and summit conferences with US President Reagan and Chancellor Kohl had brought an end to the Cold War. At subsequent Day of Unity anniversaries, however, Gorbachev's achievements were rarely mentioned. Furthermore, in 1997, the former President — arguably an uneasy role model on the Day of Unity given that he was essentially not a democrat by western standards — was not even invited to attend the celebrations. An insulted Gorbachev told the Leipziger Volkszeitung that Kohl must explain to the German people why he had not been invited. In an obvious attempt to address this issue, all Day of Unity actors uncharacteristically praised Gorbachev liberally for his role in facilitating unification. Gorbachev was, however, the only Russian figure to whom German Day of Unity actors referred from 1990 to 2005.

Bulmer et al., 2000, Germany's European diplomacy, 73.
See Kohl, 1990, Fernsehansprache, 1225.
See Tag der Deutschen Einheit, 1990, ZDF.
See Ibid.
The lack of attention afforded to German-Russian relations by the German political actors on the Day of Unity from 1990 to 2005 can likely be understood in the context of the very turbulent Russian domestic politics and the abuses of human rights in Russia in the first decade after unification. What is particularly surprising, however, is that Chancellor Schröder's well-known unique interests in fostering close diplomatic relations with Russia, particularly Putin, in order to secure oil and gas supplies—largely at the expense of close relations with Poland, the Baltic States and the Ukraine—were not reflected on the Day of Unity celebrations. As we have seen, the respective Day of Unity organisers and regional political actors were afforded considerable flexibility in staging the unity celebrations—something fully exploited by actors, including Schröder. What is thus striking is that, despite the clear and often-discussed tight relationship between Putin and Schröder, especially regarding the North Stream project, the Day of Unity was used to promote other bilateral relations priorities. Indeed, the diplomatic priorities presented by the political actors on the German national holiday remained essentially unchanged throughout the period from 1990 to 2005 and was not particularly influenced by changes in either federal or local government.

In 2000, the diplomacy prioritisations of the German political actors on the Day of Unity actually served to provoke international tensions. For the tenth unity celebrations, the political actors failed to invite the head of state of Austria. As a result of the rotating organisation, the invitation of guests lies in the hands of the regional actors. This episode demonstrated that whilst regional actors may not have intentionally interfered in disrupting the 'harmony' and consensus of the image of German foreign policy and diplomatic interests presented on the German national holiday, they nevertheless had the power to influence not only regional and domestic but also international politics. The task of easing the subsequent tensions evoked by the invitation that never arrived, however, fell to Parliamentary State Secretary Fritz Rudolf Körper. He was faced with the challenge of countering accusations that the

German federal government had had a hand in ‘not inviting Austria’ to this important celebration. In his written responses to questions from members of the Bundestag three days after the event, Körper argued that Austria, like other EU member states, had in fact been represented through the attendance of EU Troika delegates. Moreover, he stated, inviting the Austrian head of state was not included in the protocol and the Austrian Ambassador had taken part in the celebrations.\footnote{Bundestag Drucksache: Fritz Rudolf Körber, Parl. Staatssekretär beim Bundesminister des Innern (14/4206). (2000, October 6). Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag, 11795B - 11797C.}

The German and Austrian media, as well as a number of leading politicians from both countries, nevertheless sternly criticised the ‘oversight’. Politicians, particularly those from the CSU such as Klaus Rose\footnote{Bundestag Drucksache: Klaus Rose, CSU (14/4206). (2000, October 6). Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag, 11793D-11795B.} and Max Straubinger,\footnote{Bundestag Drucksache: Max Straubinger, CSU (14/4206). (2000, October 6). Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag, 11795B - 11797C.} perhaps on account of the stronger ties of Bavaria with Austria and their party with the Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP) of Chancellor Schüssel, called for the German government to apologise for having ‘excluded’ Austria from the celebrations. In Austria, a number of political actors expressed outrage that neither the Austrian Federal President Thomas Klestil nor any member of the government had been invited to the unity ceremony. Foreign Minister Ferrero-Waldner, for example, expressed her dismay to journalists that the German government had ‘forgotten the important role of Austria’ in bringing about the fall of the Iron Curtain,\footnote{Österreich sieht sich brüskiert. (2000, October 4). Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 2.} referring to the way in which the Austrian government had permitted thousands of GDR citizens to flee through its border with Hungary and had subsequently undertaken a number of logistic and bureaucratic tasks before German unification. Chancellor Schüssel similarly criticised the German government saying that ‘in contrast to the German people...many of those in power’ no longer remembered Austria’s contribution to German unification.\footnote{Rau lobt Engagement, 2000, 1.}

The Austrian Ambassador in Berlin, meanwhile, linked the lack of invitation to an Austrian head of state or government to the recent EU sanctions against his country. Following the success of Jörg Haider’s Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) in
the Austrian legislative elections of October 1999, this anti-immigration and extreme right-wing party was included in the new Austrian coalition government with the ÖVP. In protest, on 31st January 2000, the fourteen other EU member states announced that they would suspend bilateral ties with Austria, reduce interaction with Austrian ambassadors and oppose Austrian candidacy for international positions.1022 Schröder and the SPD had played a leading role in marginalising the Austrian government with the ÖVP Chancellor (sister-party of the German CDU and CSU) and the FPÖ. The Austrian Ambassador in Berlin stated that he was 'astounded' that, particularly in light of the EU-14 sanctions on Austria, Germany had not sought to re-establish strong Austro-German relations on the German national holiday.1023 This incident highlighted that the Day of Unity thus operated not only as a platform for improving bilateral relations but also provided, through the mechanism of neglect, perceived and genuine, the potential to damage relations. In this way, it further underlined the important role of the staging of the German national holiday.

Conclusion

The denationalisation of the German national holiday through both sub-national and supra-national elements highlights that the German political actors strove to some extent to stage the Day of Unity as a postnational event. In some regards, other forms of belonging were already starting to emerge in divided Germany at the expense of national consciousness. In the GDR, the SED attempted to foster a separate 'state-consciousness' (Staatsbewusstsein) and a consciousness based on class rather than nationality – a so-called 'class-consciousness' (Klassenbewusstsein). In the Federal Republic, by contrast, emphasis was instead on what could be described as somewhat postnational forms of belonging, expressed not least by avid promotion of integration into transnational institutions such as the EU as well as by promotion of

1023 Österreich sieht sich bräusiert, 2000, 2.
Through the promotion of a postnational self-understanding for the Federal Republic, a notion first forwarded by Bonn historian Karl Dietrich Bracher in 1976, the Federal Republic became to some extent, in the words of Christian Joppke, Europe's first 'culturally postnational state'. Both before and since unification, postnationalism has, however, predominantly been a utopian and elite concept, rather than a widespread, popular understanding by the population.

Postnationalism is a highly contested idea. In the German context, Habermas is arguably the most prominent advocate for postnational forms of belonging. Reasoning that globalisation is challenging the relevance of the nation-state, Habermas has called for solidarity among individuals based on universalistic principles that go beyond ties of nation, place, language and heritage. There are signs, however, that some circles of German academics and intellectuals are moving away from postnational ideas. Renowned historian Heinrich August Winkler, for example, who once avidly stated that 'the nation-state definitely belongs to the past' recently described united Germany as 'a democratic post-classical nation-state'.

To date, much of the broader debate among scholars surrounding postnationalism has focused on citizenship and rights — that is to say who belongs to a nation and who is entitled to the rights the nation-state affords. Brubaker's position is largely representative of one side of this polarised debate. For Brubaker, the nation-state remains the central frame of reference. Despite the challenges of migration, new forms of citizenship rights afforded to migrants as well as steps toward economic and political union, he argues that, in a European context,
citizenship is a 'last bastion of sovereignty'. Through his exploration of the different idioms of nationhood in France and Germany, Brubaker maintains that the freedom of the nation-state in deciding who has what rights as regards to citizenship, underlines its continuing importance.

A number of academics have broadly supported this viewpoint. In his comparative study of post-war immigration politics in the United States, Germany and Britain, Joppke, for example, concludes that, in relation to immigration at least, nation-states remain 'resilient'. He interprets constraints on sovereignty in immigration issues in contemporary liberal democracies not as signs of postnationalism but rather as 'self-imposed' by the respective nation-states. Joppke reasons that the restrictions stem from self-limitation among domestic interest groups, autonomous legal systems and moral obligations toward specific immigrant groups.

Through an examination of the relation between identity and territory in Europe in their recent interdisciplinary edited volume, Mabel Berezin and Martin Schain have equally stressed the persistence of the nation-state. They contend that, if theorised in terms of territory, the nation-state as an entity 'calibrates power, nature and culture in bounded physical space'. Adopting a more empirical approach, Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham have reached a similar conclusion. In their comparative study based on content analysis of daily newspapers, they have argued that the nation-state remains the main frame of reference for the claim-making of migrants and ethnic minorities in Britain and Germany. More recently, Dina Kiwan has argued that citizens' rights are dependent on membership of a political

1030 Brubaker, 1992, Citizenship and nationhood, 190.
1031 Ibid., 180.
1033 Ibid., 262-263. See, also, Joppke & Morawska, 2003, Toward assimilation.
community. In this way, she has highlighted the role of the nation-state in administering those rights.

The argument that the nation-state remains the key frame of reference in liberal democracies has, however, not gone unchallenged. Yasemin Soysal’s work on the incorporation of migrant workers in post-war western nation-states is particularly representative of the other side of the debate. Rejecting the idea that citizenship can be explained solely through reference to the nation-state, Soysal has instead advocated a postnational model of membership. She reasons that individual rights are no longer based on national belonging but rather are organised and legitimated on the principle of ‘universal personhood’. From her perspective, ‘the logic of personhood supersedes the logic of national citizenship’ suggesting that the transnational rights of migrants has had the effect of eroding the significance of national citizenship. David Jacobson has adopted a similar line of reasoning to support this postnational view in his study on migration in the United States, Germany and France. Jacobson argues that transnational migration and international human rights law have eroded national sovereignty and that ‘as rights have come to be predicated on residency, not citizen status, the distinction between “citizens” and “alien” has been eroded’. Using a political economy argument, Saskia Sassen has also supported postnational ideas by arguing that the autonomy of the nation-state in immigration policy is increasingly limited. Sassen maintains that, since money, goods, ideas and rights transcend national borders due to international human rights and economic globalisation, state attempts to control the movement of

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people are also highly restricted. More recently, Sassen has shown that at times it is the very processes of denationalisation of the nation-state's institutions and networks that facilitate and shape globalisation. Damian Tambini has similarly drawn attention to how economic globalisation and transnational institutions together with cultural denationalisation and migration have threatened the power of national citizenship in providing equality, liberty and civic participation. For Tambini, although nationalism continues, the institutions as well as the meaning of nationhood have been transformed. At the same time, Stephen Castles and Alastair Davidson have framed citizenship as increasingly postnational in a globalised world in which people belong to more than one political community. They have drawn attention, for example, to the development of European citizenship as a form of supra-national membership. Indeed, European citizenship is often cited as representing instances of post-national rights. Above and beyond this, the fact that a number of EU citizens are beginning to describe themselves as European, if not as their first, then as their second form of identification, has been interpreted by some as a sign that a postnational European identity is beginning to emerge.

The findings of the analysis of the Day of Unity commemorations are able to contribute to this polemic debate about the role of the contemporary nation-state. On

1047 Ibid., here 207.
the one hand, the research has shown that there are indeed aspects which support postnational arguments to some extent. The nation-state was certainly eroded by both sub-national and supra-national elements on the German national holiday. The denationalisation through sub-national elements was pronounced in the decentralised staging of the commemorations, in the staging of the citizens' festival as well as in the regional flags, music and cordons. The supra-national elements, as manifested in the EU-isation of the event, were visible in the concentration of rhetoric relating to the EU, in the mise-en-scène of the celebrations as well as in the way in which the German political actors prioritised EU relations. At the same time, however, the degree of postnationalism should not be overplayed. It is important to remember that the arena in which these postnational elements played out was a national day. Despite attempts by some of the Day of Unity actors to frame 3rd October as a European event, the unity anniversaries celebrated, by their very name, German Unity. This was not a holiday of all EU countries, but rather of the German nation-state. Furthermore, the continued significance of the nation as a frame of reference was underscored by the topics the political actors chose to address in their speeches at the festivities. The National Socialist and GDR pasts and intra-German relations are — at least as long as the construction of a European memory remains a distant reality — arguably essentially national topics. These topics continued to receive considerable attention on the German national holiday undermining the argument that the nation-state has become obsolete.

This 'centrist' position, that there are signs of postnationalism but that the nation-state still matters, resonates most closely with the work of Lydia Morris. Morris has demonstrated, for example, that even European citizenship can be interpreted as a 'derivative status'; although it affords rights to EU citizens that supersede nation-states, one must in the first place belong to one of the nation-states in order to receive those rights.\(^{1051}\) Indeed, beyond this, as Brubaker has shown, the very rules for attaining citizenship to those nation-states are at the discretion of the

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respective nation-states. Morris has also explored the rights of third country nationals in Europe to highlight that while rights may go beyond the nation-state, the latter continues to grant those rights. Furthermore, rejecting the claim that all rights have become 'universal', Morris has convincingly argued – particularly with regard to employment, family unification, asylum and unlawful presence – that variation exists between European nation-states in the rights that they grant to migrants. This 'civic stratification' highlights the limits to the power of transnational rights and thereby underlines the persistence of the nation-state.

The extent to which national variation exists among nation-states in Europe is indeed demonstrated by the degree to which Germany's own citizenship law remains different to that of its neighbours. The 2000 citizenship law did signify a step toward harmonisation. However, the continued avoidance of dual citizenship in the law – at odds with the citizenship laws of both France and Britain – is a clear example of the enduring sovereignty of the nation-state. Similarly, Germany's new immigration law, which came into being on 1st January 2005, represents another major shift toward synchronisation of policies among the nation-states of the EU. However, owing not least to the realities of different labour market needs, norms and procedures for third-country nationals continue to vary both within and across the EU member states.

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1052 See Brubaker, 1992, *Citizenship and nationhood*.
In a broader context, it is clear that the EU plays a role in contributing to postnationalism. Its legal penetration, economic integration and multi-level governance facilitate the emergence of a postnational identity. Indeed, the very fact that many within the EU use the term 'foreigner' to refer only to non-EU citizens is telling. Above and beyond this, the steps toward convergence of citizenship and immigration policies among the EU states and the way in which states appear to be influencing each other – not least in the promotion of civic nationalism – could be interpreted as further manifestations of postnationalism. Perhaps more systematic attempts will be made in the future to construct a form of European nationalism. Such a form of nationalism would surely raise new challenges – not least for transatlantic relations, as it could lead on to a more assertive EU external policy which may well be at odds with US preferences and policies. What is apparent, however, is that the construction of any such form of postnational belonging is, at most, in its early stages. What is more, it is clear that we are currently in a state of transition: only time will tell if the future will bring the further evolution of postnational constructions and attitudes or a back-lash of nationalism.

1059 There are indeed those who are setting out to construct such a form of nationalism. See, for example, Couloubaritsis, L., De Leeuw, M., Noel, É., & Sterckx, C. (1993). The origins of European identity. Brussels: European Interuniversity Press.
Conclusion

This thesis has adopted a cultural history approach to understanding politics, recently advocated by a number of historians, as a means of analysing how political actors utilise political representations as vehicles for their various agendas. In this framework, representations such as the Day of Unity are not merely secondary, inconsequential reflections of politics. Instead, they are used by political actors for framing and reconstituting political agendas and discourses in the public sphere. In this understanding, then, analysis of the Day of Unity sheds light on the political history of united Germany by providing insight into the political agendas pursued by political actors in this one arena.

The thesis has shown that the staging of the Day of Unity was to some extent structurally determined by certain elements. Foremost, the celebrations were organised regionally, a fact that bore consequences for the staging not only in terms of geography but also with regard to interests served, organisation, personnel and the scale of the events. The staging of the individual anniversaries lay in the hands of regional actors, empowering a wide array of institutions and personalities to shape the festivities. Furthermore, the Day of Unity celebrations took place in a global context over which the individual organisers held little influence but the orbit of which they could not escape. Finally, as the Day of Unity began to lose its novelty, later organisers had to contend with some aspects of the staging that, through constant repetition by their predecessors, had become invented traditions. This is the framework that determined, but only to a certain extent, what the unity organisers might do in any given year. Yet for all these traditions and constraints, the organisers still retained extensive discretionary power in deciding how to stage the Day of Unity commemorations in their Land.

The Day of Unity was thus a vehicle for the furthering of political agendas within the structural restraints set by those relatively static aspects of the staging. It is important to realise that — not least because the political actors involved in organising and speaking at the celebrations changed from year to year — the Day of Unity was not beholden to any single political agenda but rather was a vehicle that enabled the
framing and reshaping of various discourses and political goals. Turning to the conclusions of the thesis, then, this final chapter will summarise the various agendas in the service of which the Day of Unity was used by political actors. It will become evident that these various agendas did not necessarily co-exist in complete harmony; they were, considered side-by-side, sometimes at odds with one another and rarely very coherent. Moreover, certain agendas were pursued with particular verve one year, only to fall into disregard the next as regional interests, geographic realities and the domestic and international political climate changed. Nonetheless, upon analysing the years between 1990 and 2005, it becomes clear that the staging of the Day of Unity was largely determined by a small number of factors. This chapter thus sums up the eight main findings of the empirical chapters. It then briefly summarises the way in which the work has contributed to broader debates. It ends by exploring how the findings of the thesis might inform further research.

To begin with, the thesis has shown that the Day of Unity served as an instrument for presenting and promoting a specific image of united Germany to Germans and the international community. The image of Germany presented, foremost by German political actors, sought to address challenges stemming from unification and to define, redefine and promote specific ideas about united Germany’s core political and cultural values. Eight key aspects were staged as central to united Germany’s self-definition:

Firstly, the political actors framed Germany as a polity based on the structures, traditions and values of the post-war Federal Republic. This was particularly visible in the western German dominance of the staging of the celebrations, which served to reinforce West German conventions and to present united Germany as an extension and continuation of post-1945 Germany. This was also evident in the way in which German political actors stressed that united Germany, like its predecessor, would continue to take responsibility for its National Socialist past. Furthermore, it was apparent in the way in which the German political actors emphasised continuity with West German foreign policy priorities, most notably the commitment to multilateralism and to strong bilateral relations with the US and France.
Secondly, as epitomised by their choice of 3rd October as the German national holiday, the German political actors promoted the image of a constitutional Germany. Contrary to 9th November, which would have placed an emphasis on the role of grass roots civic action, 3rd October—a date celebrating the legal unification—accentuated a constitutional act as the foundation of united Germany's self-understanding.

Thirdly, the extent of rhetoric devoted to the history of the two German dictatorships on the Day of Unity anniversaries illustrated how German political actors propagated the image of a Germany aware of its past.

Fourthly, by stressing that eastern and western Germans were already beginning to grow together despite forty years of division, the German political actors defined their country as united, or, at the very least, on the path to becoming united.

Fifthly, they depicted the image of a democratic Germany. This manifested itself predominantly in the democratic organisation of the celebrations—the rotating structure, the presence of Germany's five key constitutional bodies and other political figures—in the promotion of democracy at the citizens' festivals, as well as in the condemnation of right-wing, anti-democratic extremism in the speeches.

Sixthly, as expressed in the sub-national elements of the staging, the Day of Unity served as a platform from which the German political actors staged Germany as a federal system and framed federalism as a cornerstone of united Germany's self-understanding.

Seventhly, as manifested in the mise-en-scène of the unity celebrations, as well as in the rhetoric regarding the EU and its enlargement, German political actors represented Germany as a country both committed to and rooted in the EU.

Eighthly, they orchestrated the staging to depict Germany as a country attached, to some extent, to postnational ideas, as best illustrated in the sub-national and supra-national elements of the 3rd October commemorations.

In consequence of the political actors' desire to promote these images of Germany, the National Socialist and GDR pasts, intra-German relations, federalism and the EU dominated the discourses on the Day of Unity. We saw, however, that certain elements of the staging limited the scope and transformed the intended messages of the political actors in their attempts to stage Germany in a specific way. This
potential divide between the messages transmitted and those received can explain certain unintended consequences. While the media played the most considerable role in this process of subversion, other elements — sometimes derivative of the basic principles of the staging, as above, and sometimes accidental — also limited the effectiveness of the Day of Unity, most notably, the rotating organisation of the unity events, the lack of unity event literature for non-German speakers, the advertising, the lack of symbols at the festivities and the date chosen for the celebrations.

As its second main result, the thesis has highlighted that, while the promotion of the above key elements of Germany’s representation remained largely unchanged throughout the period from 1990 to 2005, there was nevertheless a diachronic dimension to the unity celebrations in this period. Shifts and transformations in certain topics on the Day of Unity highlighted the changing domestic and international concerns of political actors. In particular, the political actors altered the specific staging of the National Socialist and GDR pasts as time passed; they framed intra-German relations in different ways in the light of social and economic problems and public attitudes; and the various forms of EU-isation, or the way in which Germany’s commitment to the EU was pledged, changed in response to shifting domestic and international realities. In this way, the Day of Unity contributed to the process of inventing, forgetting and reinventing elements of the image of Germany’s self-understanding, both at home and abroad, from 1990 to 2005. In this way, the research has shown that we appear to be in a period of change.

Thirdly, the research has demonstrated that the Day of Unity was characterised by a high degree of consensus in the presentation of key ideas by German political actors across the political spectrum, from the moderate Left to the moderate Right. This consensus shaped the largely uniform approach of the regional actors in staging the celebrations. Despite their considerable discretionary powers, the regional political actors opted to adopt invented traditions based on the Hamburg celebrations. With only few exceptions, most notably Bavaria in 1996 and Hanover in 1998, there was thus broad consensus on the nature of the core constituent elements of the celebrations as well as on the staging of those elements throughout the fifteen year period. Even the very date of the Day of Unity itself had been achieved as the result of broad cross-party
consensus. On the presentation of the National Socialist past too, there existed considerable consensus among the German political speakers, even though this did not always extend to the international speakers. The depiction of the GDR past similarly enjoyed a consensual interpretation, with the notable exceptions of Schröder’s Objektmeile and hymn mix and Platzeck’s 2005 speech. There was likewise consensus among all political actors – given to making sweeping generalisations on the topic – that intra-German relations should be improved. As we have seen, consensus also manifested itself in cross-party support for federalism and promotion of the EU. Finally, there was broad consensus on the hierarchy of bilateral relations as instantiated on the Day of Unity.

The high degree of agreement with regard to the values and understanding of the past, present and future in many ways simplified and reinforced the messages, serving to present a homogenous value system. This served to project the image of a Germany, not riven by ambiguity and self-doubt, but instead deeply grounded in its established traditions. It also provided legitimacy for that which was presented through repetition and facilitated cultural synchronisation more easily than would likely have been possible through more complex messages.

Although the official central celebrations were characterised by consensus and thus escaped partisan politics for the most part, 3rd October nevertheless served as a political tool in other arenas. This was most notable in 2000 at the CDU and SPD party congresses, in the media and in the Bundestag – where inter-party squabbles about the ‘ownership’ of unification were played out in an attempt to gain credibility and undermine the legitimacy of the political opponents – as well as in demonstrations throughout the period from 1990 to 2005. In these demonstrations, right and left-wing extremists attempted to use the Day of Unity to promote images of united Germany very different from those presented by the political actors at the official events. While the right-wing extremists envisaged and propagated a nationalist and neo-fascist Germany, the left-wing extremists questioned the very merits of unification and of a German nation-state and sought to undermine a number of governmental political reforms.

Fourthly, the thesis has demonstrated that the Day of Unity was used by the political actors to construct and redefine united Germany’s interpretation of the past.
The political actors placed the history of National Socialism and of the East German dictatorship at the core of Germany’s history and attempted to influence attitudes on these two aspects.

Interpretation by the German political actors of the relevance of the National Socialist era for united Germany changed dramatically from 1990 to 2005. In the early 1990s – when they sought to reassure the international community that a united Germany would not turn its back on the process of Vergangenheitsbewältigung, to assuage fears of a nationalist resurgence in the wake of unification and to extend the dominant interpretation of the past of the Federal Republic to eastern Germans – the rhetoric concentrated on the National Socialist past. Key topics in these years included Germany’s acceptance and accountability of its past as well as emphasis that the past should and would never repeat itself. In this way, the political actors staged responsibility for National Socialism as a defining feature of united Germany’s self-portrayal. The mid-1990s saw the interpretation of the past as presented by the political actors moulded by the anniversaries of key historical events: the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw uprising shifted focus to the German-Polish past; the liberation of Auschwitz and the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II generated more rhetoric about the need for all Germans to continue dealing with the National Socialist past as a duty to the international community; and the 150th anniversary of 1848/49 gave German political actors the opportunity to draw attention to positive aspects of German history and to redefine the National Socialist era as merely one chapter in a far more differentiated German past. This last development represented the first indication at the Day of Unity commemorations of ‘normalisation’ in the presentation of the National Socialist past, reflecting the German political actors’ desire to reframe the place of the National Socialist past in their country’s self-understanding. In the late 1990s and early 2000s this trend continued and manifested itself not only through a greater focus on the positive aspects of German history but also through the absence of references to National Socialism as well as through mention of German victimhood.

As for the GDR past, German political actors presented a thoroughly negative image throughout the period from 1990 to 2005, though here too, shifts were visible, most notably in the particular tone of condemnation. Thus they censured the GDR
immediately after unification, softened their rebukes in the mid-1990s to allow eastern
Germans to take pride in their biographies, and vehemently criticised the GDR and
stressed the reasons for its collapse in the late 1990s and early 2000s at a time of nascent
Ostalgie among eastern Germans and disgruntlement among western Germans.

Fifthly, the thesis has highlighted that the German political actors used the 3rd
October anniversaries to improve intra-German relations. In this way, they sought to
facilitate the construction of a Wir-Gefühl among Germans. To this end, the German
political actors redefined ideas about unification and unity by reframing initial
expectations as overly ambitious, by evoking pride for that which had already been
achieved and by staging unity as an ongoing challenge. To improve the image of
eastern Germans and eastern Germany among western Germans they also used legal
arguments (stressing western Germans' constitutional obligation in the context of
Aufbau Ost), moral arguments (emphasising that eastern Germans had taken the
burden of the past and had struggled most during and since unification), social
arguments (highlighting eastern Germans' positive values and their role in
unification), and economic arguments (framing eastern Germany as innovative and
staging reconstruction in the East as beneficial to all Germans). In a further attempt
to improve relations between Germans, East and West, the German political actors
also framed differences among these two groups paradoxically as both negative and
positive. Whereas the former was evident in the emphasis on elements that already
united Germans, from cultural achievements to sports and joint initiatives, the latter
manifested itself in the way in which uncritical and undifferentiated homogeneity was
criticised as a recipe for dictatorship and differences were praised as traditional,
regional, complementary and enriching of German political culture.

Sixthly, the thesis has revealed that the German national holiday served as a
mechanism for cultural synchronisation by extending West German value systems and
frameworks to eastern Germans through the promotion of specific (West German)
versions of the past, present and future. In this way, German political actors encouraged
cultural synchronisation on West German terms. The 3rd October anniversaries thus
sought to encourage social integration and assimilation of eastern Germans into the
Federal Republic in the service of the broad, ongoing process of integration,
convergence and cohesion of eastern and western Germans. The western German dominance of the celebrations served to encourage this cultural synchronisation – it stopped elements from the GDR from finding a place in the staging of united Germany’s self-understanding. This cultural synchronisation was supported by politicians from across the mainstream political spectrum including, with the exception of Platzeck, the eastern German political actors. Above all, the political actors used the Day of Unity to create Germans who were aware of their past and were democratically, regionally and EU-minded.

The German political actors used the German national holiday as an arena for reinforcing the Federal Republic dominant interpretations of the past among western Germans and bringing these aspects to eastern Germans, as a means of encouraging cultural synchronisation in views of the past. In this way, the political actors fostered a shared historical consciousness among eastern and western Germans and facilitated the construction of a common interpretation of the past as a foundation for a shared future. This was particularly apparent with regard to the National Socialist past in the calls for all Germans to acknowledge responsibility in addressing the history of the ‘Third Reich’. The political actors also encouraged cultural synchronisation in attitudes toward the GDR past through their thoroughly negative depiction of this past. The unambiguously negative portrayal sought to stem eastern German reminiscence about positive aspects of the GDR. It also underlined the Federal Republic’s moral, political and economic superiority over the GDR and justified the continuity between the established traditions and frameworks of the Federal Republic and united Germany. Furthermore, it stressed that there was no constitutive place for the GDR in united Germany’s self-understanding.

The unity commemorations also served to influence Germany’s political culture by reinforcing and promoting democracy and federalism, particularly in the eastern Länder, to overcome the gulf in attitudes on these issues between eastern and western Germans. It served to encourage cultural synchronisation by extending the regional, federal traditions of the Federal Republic to the former GDR. The citizens’ festivals, in particular, were geared toward providing information about the democratic political system, the Länder and German federalism. In the service of spreading democratic
values and countering *Politikverdrossenheit* in a federalist frame the government marquees, with information stands and various dignitaries, informed Germans about the actions of the government. The discussion rounds with politicians and politics-based competitions for adults and children similarly fostered critical understanding and awareness in an effort to stimulate greater political participation. The regional organisation meanwhile promoted federalist democracy through its immediacy, by being *bürgernah* and by involving Germans from each of the Länder in contemporary political questions and concerns. The Day of Unity thus served to encourage throughout Germany enthusiasm for, and understanding of, federalism by urging Germans to identify with their own federal state and with the federal system as a whole.

The Day of Unity also served to encourage cultural synchronisation among Germans in the belief that the country’s future should be entwined with that of the EU. German and international actors sought to market the EU to eastern Germans and to maintain support for it among western Germans, particularly in times of Euroscepticism.

Seventhly, the research has highlighted that the German political actors attempted, to some extent, to stage the German national holiday as a postnational event. Postnational aspects of the Day of Unity manifested themselves in the ways in which the unity celebrations were denationalised to some degree through sub-national and supra-national elements. The German political actors at times underlined the place of regions and the EU in their country’s self-portrayal: they staged the nation as one made up of parts and rooted in the EU. While there was reticence on the part of the German political actors about using national symbols, we saw that regional elements appeared in various forms: from the decentralised, sub-national organisation of the celebrations, to the staging of the citizens’ festivals, the regional flags, music and cordons of the ceremonies at the central celebrations as well as the staging of the parallel events in Berlin. The promotion of federalism can also be seen in this context as a somewhat postnational expression of sub-national loyalties and self-understanding. Signs of denationalisation through supra-national elements, as seen in the EU-isation of the commemorations, were also visible. This expressed itself in the concentration of rhetoric relating to the EU, in the mise-en-scène of the celebrations, in the status of
the international guest as main speaker and in the way in which specific EU relations were prioritised on the Day of Unity.

The postnational elements in the staging of the German national holiday presented a number of advantages for the German political actors. By stressing that the united German nation-state was committed, to some extent, to postnationalism they were able to reassure a potentially wary international community and to assuage fears of an overly powerful Germany. The sub-national and supra-national elements particularly served to militate against the possible connotations of German nationalism inherent in the use of national symbols. In addition to this, postnationalism served to counteract the trend of reascent nationalist tendencies in the German population. Furthermore, it was to Germany's economic benefit to promote transnational institutions. Promotion of postnationalism in the form of sub-national affiliation, particularly through attachment to regions, also served to offset growing anxiety about the impact of globalisation. The aspects of postnationalism on the day as manifested specifically through the sub-national elements of the celebrations also allowed the political actors to construct and foster regional, rather than national, pride and loyalties. This legitimised national pride within a regional context by encouraging Germans to express pride for being German on their national holiday but in a form of patriotism devoid of negative connotations for Germans or the international community. There was thus a symbiotic duality of regional and national elements, which served to legitimise both the region and the nation. The sub-national staging also had specific advantages for the regional actors in that it gave them authority to shape the staging of the German national holiday and therefore influence not only regional but also national affairs. It also provided them with the opportunity to boost their local economy by providing a platform for marketing the Land's tourist attractions and products. The sub-national dimension to the staging further helped to reinforce aspects of the political culture, particularly democracy and federalism. The postnational elements of the Day of Unity as presented specifically through the supra-national aspects of the staging also assisted Germany's political actors in the processes of underlining Germany's commitment to the traditional foreign policy priorities of the
Federal Republic, of promoting the EU to its citizens and of promoting eastern enlargement of the EU.

Eighthly, the thesis has demonstrated that the German national holiday was used to influence bilateral relations. We saw that, while international guests from across the world were traditionally invited to attend the celebrations, there was a hierarchy of bilateral relationships, which the German political actors chose to foster at the unity events. German politicians prioritised diplomacy with partners especially important for Germany historically as well as for reasons of trade and security. To some extent, they sought to reinforce and improve relations with the US but, predominantly, the Day of Unity served as an arena for fostering EU partnerships. German political actors sought to strengthen the Franco-German 'friendship' and, above all, to cultivate relations with the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. We discovered, however, that the German national holiday also had the power to damage bilateral relations with countries not prioritised by the German political actors.

The research has also contributed to a number of theoretical and intellectual debates. To begin, the work contributed to ongoing debates about nationalism. It supported the idea that nations are not natural entities but rather can be conceived of as imagined communities. It demonstrated that the Day of Unity contributed to the broad ongoing process of nation-building in Germany. Indeed, we saw that 3rd October is a form of invented tradition. In their discourse and the staging of the unity events, the political actors constructed, defined and maintained the self-image of united Germany. We also discovered that Germany is increasingly moving away from a purely ethnocentric understanding of nationhood toward a form of civic nationalism. In addition to this, the work was able to contribute to the debates about the politics of memory. In the context of Geschichtspolitik, the research highlighted that interpretations of the past were politicised by the political actors in the service of both domestic and international agendas. We also saw, in line with the notion of collective memory, that the Day of Unity kept alive images of the past that may otherwise have been forgotten. Furthermore, the interpretation of the past presented by the political actors changed in light of the needs of the present. Alongside this, the research illustrated that the Day of Unity stood as an example of cultural memory. At the same time, however, since
German unity remained part of everyday communication, cultural memory and communicative memory overlapped on the Day of Unity. In addition to this, the research referred to the historians' debate in the late 1980s and the public debate in the press about the resurgence of nationalism at the time of unification. The work showed, above all, that we are in a period of change. The role of the National Socialist past in Germany's self-understanding appears to be declining. There are also signs that Germany's political actors are searching for new ways to define the German nation. We ascertained that the very existence of a national day in a state attempting to avoid recourse to nationalism created certain tensions on the Day of Unity. Finally, the research was able to contribute to the debate about postnationalism. It revealed that while there were some signs of postnationalism emerging, the nation-state remained an important frame of reference. It is too early to know whether postnational constructions of identity and allegiance will continue in the future, and whether they will be effective with the population at large or remain an elite phenomenon. What the research as a whole has shown, however, is that the analysis of representations from the perspective of the cultural history of politics can provide key insights into identifying such changes.

How can these findings be used for further research? In the German context, the findings of the research would be fruitful for a reception-based analysis of the Day of Unity commemorations. A research project with extensive time and financial resources could conduct large-scale, representative surveys into attitudes within Germany to explore why the German national holiday was so unpopular. By detailing the nature of the unity celebrations, this thesis offers a rich basis for questions for such surveys — how, for example, did people feel about the choice of topics in the Day of Unity speeches? Were they likely to attend a unity celebration in a Land other than their own? Did they see any advertising for the celebrations? Did the social and economic problems following unification stop them wanting to celebrate the German national holiday? What would have made the celebrations more relevant to them?

More broadly, by highlighting the role of the German national holiday, the research opens up threads for further research into the function of representations in other modern liberal democracies. The thesis has illustrated that the concept of the cultural history of politics can be employed to further understand the ways in which
political actors attempt to influence agendas and discourses and to construct and propagate particular versions of a country’s past, present and future. Specifically, the research has presented a model for exploring how a contemporary national holiday can serve as a mechanism for redefining the nation, legitimising the state, sustaining democratic principles, highlighting shifts in the political culture, creating consensus, creating a sense of belonging and influencing bilateral relations. In this way, the research provides a framework for identifying changing priorities and concerns of the political actors of other countries over time to provide insight into domestic politics and social tensions. Furthermore, the approach taken in this research has shown that representations can be examined to highlight condensed ‘official’ versions of the past as well as to examine the extent to which the nation is used as a frame of reference by a country’s elite. It has also provided a basis for identifying a hierarchy of bilateral relations to shed light on the diplomatic interests of a given country’s political actors.

The research could also provide the foundation for an innovative comparative study. In the tradition of comparative (contemporary) historical research and adopting the approach of cultural transfer, it could be particularly insightful to conduct research into the extent to which representations in other EU states have been similarly denationalised. On the basis of this thesis, new projects could compare any sub-national elements of representations in other countries in an effort to examine the degree of the erosion of the nation-state as the key political frame of reference and to shed light on the development of a ‘Europe of Regions’. Comparison of the supranational elements, specifically the extent of EU-isation, in political commemorations in other countries would draw out idiosyncrasies and similarities of the German case and lead to further understanding of the place that political actors of other states afford to the EU in their country’s self-portrayal. Comparison with commemorations in France and the CEE states particularly lend themselves for comparison here. Have French

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commemorations – in a country with a long tradition of commitment to the EU, like Germany – also been denationalised through EU-isation to some extent? Certainly the presence of German tanks within the five-nation Eurocorps on the Champs Elysées on 14th July 2003 suggests that there are at least preliminary signs of such EU-isation and thus of latent shared characteristics of the national holidays of contemporary France and Germany. Have the political actors in the newly formed post-Communist nation-states, newcomers to the EU scene, used their official representations to foster enthusiasm among their citizens and to define their countries as rooted in the EU in the same way as their counterparts in the West? In the vein of this thesis, such a project would espouse an approach largely neglected by British contemporary historians and would offer the potential for considerable conceptual transfer and innovation.

Appendix 1: coding categories for Day of Unity speeches

**Bold text:** 1st Stage coding
**Non-formatted text:** 2nd Stage Coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Role of national days**

* Sedantag: Criticism of Sedantag
* WR days: Controversy surrounding national days in the Weimar Republic
* NS days: Criticism of commemorative days during National Socialism
* 17th June: Comparison of 3rd October with 17th June
* Bastille Day: Comparison of 3rd October with French national holiday (Bastille Day)
* Independence Day: Comparison of 3rd October with US national holiday (Independence Day)
* Gift: 3rd October as an important date/reason for celebration/gift
* Inability: Inability of Germans to celebrate

**3rd October as appropriate/inappropriate date for German national holiday**

* Pro-3/10: Defence of 3rd October as the correct date
* Anti-3/10: Criticism of 3rd October as the wrong date
* Pro-9/11: Promotion of 9th November
* Anti-9/11: Criticism of 9th November

**Political Party Aspects**

* Pro-CDU: Promotion of CDU
* Pro-SPD: Promotion of SPD
* Pro-other: Promotion of other political parties
* Anti-CDU: Criticism of CDU
* Anti-SPD: Criticism of SPD
* Anti-other: Criticism of other political parties

**Manner of Unification**

* Pro-article 23: Support of unification through Article 23
* Anti-article 23: Criticism of unification through Article 23
* Pro-article 146: Direct/Indirect reference to possibility of unification through Article 146

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Extremism
Anti-Left extreme: Criticism of left-wing extremism
Anti-Right extreme: Criticism of right-wing extremism

National Socialist Past
VB FRG: Vergangenheitsbewältigung in the Federal Republic
VB GDR: Vergangenheitsbewältigung in the GDR
Joint view NS: Joint interpretation of the National Socialist past in united Germany
Responsibility NS: Increased responsibility to address past in united Germany
Unique NS: Germany as unique due to National Socialist past
Joint culpability NS: All Germans as responsible for National Socialist past
Elite NS: National Socialist elite responsible for National Socialist past
Division Punishment: German division as a punishment for World War II
Anniversaries: Commemorative anniversaries
Berlin Republic: Support/Criticism of ‘Berlin Republic’
NS one part: National Socialist past as only one chapter in German history
Positive past: Positive aspects of German history
Victims: Germans as victims

GDR/SED Past
Responsibility GDR: Need to address the GDR past
Doppelte VB: Doppelte Vergangenheitsbewältigung
Joint view GDR: Joint interpretation of the GDR past among all Germans
Anti-GDR: Negative aspects of the GDR
Ostalgie: Ostalgie as unfounded/unhelpful
GDR implode: GDR collapsed independent of other events

German unification/unity
Redefine unity: Need for continual redefinition of unity
Progress: Progress already made
Take longer: Unity will take longer than envisaged
Expectations: Expectations of the German people were too high
Citizens’ assistance: How Germans can improve unity
Children: Children as a symbol of unity
Inner unity: Intra-German relations, inner unity
Elements unite: Elements which unite all Germans
Values unite: Values which unite all Germans
Pro-differences: Differences as positive

Eastern Germans
EG role in unity: Eastern Germans made unification possible
EG Values/Skills: Values and skills of eastern Germans
EG not SED: Eastern Germans as separate from SED
EG burden NS: Eastern Germans carried the burden of the National Socialist past
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>EG burden unity:</strong></th>
<th>Unification as more difficult for eastern Germans than western Germans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EG innovative:</strong></td>
<td>Eastern Germany as innovative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AO economy:</strong></td>
<td><em>Aufbau Ost</em> economically important for the whole of Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AO constitution:</strong></td>
<td><em>Aufbau Ost</em> as a constitutional obligation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Federalism**  
**Pro-federalism:** Merits of federalism  
**Federalism EU:** Federalism as an example for the EU  

**Regionalism**  
**Regional identity:** Regional traditions/culture  
**Europe of regions:** Europe of regions  

**Economy**  
**Regional produce:** Regional products/specialities  
**Globalisation:** Alterations required for globalisation  

**Foreign policy commitments**  
**International fears:** International fears of united Germany  
**Continuation FRG:** Continuation of Federal Republic foreign policy  
**Multilateralism:** Commitment to multilateralism  
**Commitment EU:** Commitment to EU  
**Pro-EU:** Praise of EU  

**EU enlargement**  
**European unity:** German unity as a step toward European unity  
**Enlargement:** EU enlargement  

**International relations**  
**US:** German-US relations  
**France:** Franco-German relations  
**Poland:** German-Poland relations  
**Czech Republic:** German-Czech Republic relations  
**Hungary:** German-Hungarian relations  
**Gorbachev:** Praise of Gorbachev  
**Allied Powers:** Praise of Allied Powers  
**Other IR** Other international relations
Appendix 2: questionnaire template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informationsblatt zum Fragebogen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ich danke Ihnen sehr herzlich für Ihre Bereitschaft, den nachfolgenden Fragebogen zum 'Tag der Deutschen Einheit (Jahr) in (Stadt)' zu bearbeiten, um somit mein Forschungsanliegen im Rahmen meiner Doktorarbeit zu unterstützen. Bevor Sie den Fragebogen ausfüllen, möchte ich Ihnen vorab einige Informationen zu meiner Person, zur Forschungsarbeit und zum Fragebogen geben:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INFORMATIONEN ÜBER MICH**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Befragerin:</th>
<th>Charlotte Ball</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-Mail:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ballcharlotte@hotmail.com">ballcharlotte@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beruf:</td>
<td>Doktorandin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universität:</td>
<td>University of Portsmouth, England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stipendien:</td>
<td>Stipendium des Centre for European and International Studies Research, Stipendium des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INFORMATIONEN ZUM PROJEKT**

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veröffentlichung: Optionale Veröffentlichung als Dissertationsschrift und/oder in Form einzelner Forschungsartikel in wissenschaftlichen Zeitschriften.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**INFORMATIONEN ZUM FRAGEBOGEN**

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grund, warum Sie als Ansprechpartner ausgewählt wurden: Sie verfügen über wertvolle Fachkenntnisse in Bezug auf die Organisation der offiziellen, zentralen Feierlichkeiten des Tages der Deutschen Einheit in (Stadt) im Jahr (xxxx).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Für die Durchführung der Forschungsarbeit ist eine möglichst vollständige Beantwortung des Fragebogens von großem Vorteil. Selbstverständlich steht es Ihnen trotzdem frei, nicht alle Fragen des Fragebogens vollumfänglich zu beantworten.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 273 |
Ich versichere Ihnen, dass die Ergebnisse dieses Fragebogens mit den Organisatoren aus anderen Bundesländern nicht diskutiert werden.

Wenn Sie anonym bleiben möchten, wird Ihr Name an keiner Stelle meiner Arbeit oder in zukünftigen Publikationen erscheinen.

Der Fragebogen umfasst 56 kurze Fragen. Er gliedert sich in 4 Teile: (1) Angaben zu Ihrer Person (2) Fragen zum ökumenischen Gottesdienst (3) Fragen zum offiziellen Festakt und (4) Fragen zum Bürgerfest.

**Fragebogen**

### 1. Angaben zu Ihrer Person

1. Geben Sie Ihr Einverständnis, dass ich die Antworten dieses Fragebogens in meiner Dissertation und in potenziellen Publikationen benutzen darf?

2. Bitte nennen Sie Ihren vollständigen Namen, sofern Sie nicht anonym bleiben möchten:

3. Wie lautet Ihre aktuelle Berufsbezeichnung?

4. Was war Ihre Berufsbezeichnung am 3. Oktober *(Jahr)*?

### 2. Fragen zum Ökumenischen Gottesdienst zum Tag der Deutschen Einheit


2. Welche Hauptpunkte umfasste das Protokoll?

3. Wie wurde entschieden, in welcher Kirche der ökumenische Gottesdienst stattfinden soll?

4. Auf welche Weise wurde das Kernthema für den oder die Hauptredner des ökumenischen Gottesdienstes festgelegt?

5. Wie wurde entschieden, wer die Reden für den ökumenischen Gottesdienst halten soll?
### 6. Wer waren der oder die Redner für den ökumenischen Gottesdienst?

### 7. Nach welchen Kriterien wurden Ehrengäste zum ökumenischen Gottesdienst eingeladen?

### 3. Fragen zum offiziellen Festakt zum Tag der Deutschen Einheit


2. Welche Hauptpunkte umfasste das Protokoll?

3. Führte die Umsetzung des Protokolls vereinzelt zu Schwierigkeiten? (z.B. unzureichender Platz)

4. Bestand im Vorfeld Kontakt zu Organisatoren anderer Bundesländer, die den Festakt der zentralen Feierlichkeiten bereits in der Vergangenheit organisiert hatten?

5. Gab es – neben dem ggf. vorhandenen Protokoll – aus den Vorjahren Elemente der zentralen Feierlichkeiten in den anderen Bundesländern, die Sie übernommen haben? Wenn ja, welche und warum?

6. Gab es Elemente der zentralen Feierlichkeiten in anderen Bundesländern, die Sie nicht übernommen haben? Wenn ja, welche und warum?

7. Haben Sie regionale, nationale oder europäische Symbole im Rahmen des Festakts verwendet? Wenn ja, welche? (z.B. Flaggen, Hymne)

8. Konnten Sie entscheiden, welche regionalen, nationalen und europäischen Symbole im Rahmen des Festakts verwendet wurden?

9. Nach welchen Kriterien wurden die nationalen Festredner ausgewählt?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frage</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Was war dieses Thema?</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Wer hat dieses Thema ausgewählt?</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Wurde der Inhalt der nationalen Reden mit den auftretenden Rednern/zuständigen Redenschreiben im Vorfeld abgesprochen?</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Nach welchen Kriterien wurden die nationalen Gäste des offiziellen Festaktes ausgewählt?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Gab es nationale Festredner oder Ehrengäste, die eine Einladung abgelehnt haben? Wenn ja, wer und warum?</td>
</tr>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Nach welchen Kriterien wurden die internationalen Festredner ausgewählt?</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>Was war dieses Thema?</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>Wer hat dieses Thema ausgewählt?</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>Wurde der Inhalt der internationalen Reden mit den auftretenden Rednern/zuständigen Redenschreiben im Vorfeld abgesprochen?</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Nach welchen Kriterien wurden die internationalen Gäste des offiziellen Festaktes ausgewählt?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Gab es internationale Festredner oder Ehrengäste, die eine Einladung abgelehnt haben? Wenn ja, wer und warum?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Worin unterschied sich der Festakt in Ihrem Bundesland von den Festakten anderer Bundesländer in den Vorjahren?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4. Fragen zum Bürgerfest am Tag der Deutschen Einheit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frage</th>
<th>Antwort</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Ergaben sich Schwierigkeiten/Hürden bei der Umsetzung des Protokolls? Wenn ja, welche?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Bestand im Vorfeld Kontakt zu Organisatoren anderer Bundesländer, die das Bürgerfest der zentralen Feierlichkeiten bereits in der Vergangenheit organisiert hatten?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Gab es Elemente der vorhergehenden Bürgerfeste in anderen Bundesländern, die Sie nicht übernommen haben? Wenn ja, welche und warum?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Haben Sie regionale, nationale oder europäische Symbole im Rahmen des Bürgerfests verwendet? Wenn ja, welche? (z.B. Flaggen, Hymne)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Konnten Sie entscheiden, welche regionalen, nationalen und europäischen Symbole im Rahmen des Bürgerfests verwendet wurden?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Worin unterschied sich das Bürgerfest in Ihrem Bundesland von den vorhergehenden Bürgerfesten?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Hatte das Bürgerfest ein zentrales Thema?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Haben Sie bei den Organisatoren vorhergehender Bürgerfeste Informationen eingeholt, um die Zahl der Besucher abschätzen zu können?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Wieviele Besucher erwarteten Sie zum Bürgerfest?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Wieviele Besucher sind zum Bürgerfest tatsächlich gekommen?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Welche Ziele wurden mit dem Bürgerfest verfolgt?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Wie sind Sie vorgegangen, um zu überprüfen, ob die mit dem Bürgerfest verbundenen Ziele erreicht wurden?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Wie wurde das Bürgerfest finanziert?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Wie groß war das Budget für das Bürgerfest?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. War das Budget ausreichend?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Gibt es aus Ihrer Sicht wichtige Fragen zur Inszenierung des Festakts zum Tag der Deutschen Einheit, die – entgegen Ihrer Erwartungen – im vorliegenden Fragebogen nicht enthalten waren?/Haben Sie sonstigen zusätzlichen Kommentar?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Herzlichen Dank für Ihre freundliche Unterstützung!
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Interviews:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hamburg</td>
<td>Ms Heide Böckermann</td>
<td>November 14, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bremen</td>
<td>Dr. Klaus Sondergeld</td>
<td>November 16, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munich</td>
<td>Mr. Werner Meister</td>
<td>November 29, 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stuttgart</td>
<td>Mr. Werner Schempp</td>
<td>February 19, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanover</td>
<td>Ms Christel Schröter</td>
<td>November 14, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiesbaden</td>
<td>Mr. Karl-Heinz Petry</td>
<td>December 13, 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dresden (Ceremony)</td>
<td>Ms Heidrun Müller</td>
<td>February 2, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dresden (Citizens’ festival)</td>
<td>Ms Christina Flume</td>
<td>November 28, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin (Ceremony)</td>
<td>Mr. Hans-Peter Thurau</td>
<td>November 29, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin (Citizens’ festival)</td>
<td>Mr. Hans-Rudolf Zschernack</td>
<td>November 27, 2006</td>
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Organisational documents from Day of Unity organisers:

Guest lists
Invitation templates
Layout plans
Marketing material for sponsors
Programmes
Security guidelines

Bundestag plenary minutes & Bundestag printed papers (1990-2005):

Legislative period 11, 1987-1990
Legislative period 12, 1990-1994
Legislative period 13, 1994-1998
Legislative period 14, 1998-2002
Legislative period 15, 2002-2005

Literature

Books


**Book chapters**


**Journal articles**


