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The changing role of social activism in the environmental politics of eastern Germany

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THE CHANGING ROLE OF SOCIAL ACTIVISM IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS
OF EASTERN GERMANY

A Thesis in
Geography
by
Anke K. Wessels

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
August 1994
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This dissertation uses social activism as the point of entry into understanding changing ideas, images, and usages of the natural environment in eastern Germany. It examines the politics of nature as it developed before 1989, and as it evolves in the political, economic, and environmental restructuring since German unification. Specifically, the building of a new transportation infrastructure is used to examine how past ideals and images of the nature-society relationship, emerging from both west and east German green activism, are informing the current struggle over nature occurring as western social structures take hold and reorganize the physical and social geographies of three east German communities.

Using the perspective that nature is socially produced, this dissertation traces the social origins of pre-1989 ecological conditions in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The analysis reveals, for example, that the marxist/socialist political economy in fact channeled environmentally sound behavior in certain directions (extensive and successful recycling), while stimulating environmental destruction in others. Underground environmentalists brought to the discussion of political resistance (focused on the necessity of a democratic socialism), the importance of a sound nature-society relationship to the realization of a viable socialism.

Eastern German environmentalists, having been forced to organize underground in the pre-1989 totalitarian political environment, now tend to encourage a multiplicity of viewpoints by establishing communication and cooperation between grassroots groups, researchers, administrators, and legislators (evidenced in the national and local round table discussions emerging after 1989). This strategy tends to clash with the ideals of west German Greens, who have avoided cooperation with conventional scientists and politicians, arguing that it is exactly they who have played a pivotal role in creating an ecologically unsustainable society.

This research elaborates why the two Green parties of east and west Germany have had difficulty finding common ground. The examination of three case studies indicates that in some locations, the practical approach of the eastern Greens and their willingness to cooperate with people from diverse and
challenging groups, may be creating a new German Green Movement better able to effect practical changes in the environmental policies of Germany.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research would not have been possible without the support of several people and institutions. I thank the German Academic Exchange Service for the travel grant supporting my field work in eastern Germany. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Joachim Borer of the Humboldt University in Berlin, for his generosity of both time and resources. Also, my thanks to the Department of Geography at The Pennsylvania State University for its multi-faceted support, especially as I juggled the writing of a dissertation with motherhood. I extend my appreciation to Drs. Rodney Erickson, Craig Humphrey, Glenda Laws, and Diana Liverman for their careful and thoughtful reading of this manuscript. In particular, my sincere gratitude goes to Dr. Diana Liverman, for the many hours she dedicated in guiding me through this work. I thank Curtis Bayer for his support over the years, Elizabeth Wentz who lent me inspiration, and Ric Allen for the many conversations that grounded me. Finally, I lovingly thank my daughter Rachel who reminds me each day of nature's wonders.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

With the 1989/90 reunification of Germany, an unparalleled challenge to the organization of a political economy has emerged. The German government is hastily devising mechanisms with which to democratize and "capitalize" its neue Länder¹, while also addressing the serious environmental crises of these states. Not only is this process unprecedented, it is herculean in the rapidity with which it is meant to occur. Political, economic, legal, academic, and administrative institutions of the East are either being abolished all together, or restructured. This technical transformation of institutional procedures is a complex as well as costly endeavor, whose magnitude is becoming more and more evident to the German population as the process is realized.

It is also evident that the restructuring of institutions will transform east German² society. In the forty years since their split with the West, east Germans have gained their own character, consciousness, and practices. Specific social and technical relations were established at the local scale, structured by state policy, production processes, and cultural-historical factors. These include, for instance, labor relations based on the fulfillment of state determined production plans; or gender and household relations based on a 96 percent employment rate of East German women between the ages of 25-40 (compared to 67 percent in West Germany, in 1989) (Wochenbericht-DIW Dec 6, 1990, pg. 16).

¹ New states.

² The correct use of capitalization when referring to the East Bloc or Western Europe has become quite ambiguous now that the stark political distinctions between these regions no longer exist. Throughout this dissertation, I will refer to East Germany only when making reference to the German Federal Republic, in existence from 1949 to 1989. Similarly, when using East Germans I refer specifically to the people of the German Democratic Republic during the time of its existence. Otherwise, the area of the former German Democratic Republic will be referred to as eastern, or east Germany, and the people as east Germans. For consistency sake, the term "East Bloc" will be used for the political region under the Soviet sphere of influence after World War II up until the collapse of Soviet-style communism in these countries. Otherwise I will refer to the area of the former Soviet Bloc as eastern Europe.
Social contexts such as these are now changing dramatically, as non-locally based west German policies and forces of capital take hold in east German communities. For example, in the work place, the new western management expects personal initiative from workers. Yet this is not readily forthcoming from those accustomed to obeying decisions made high-up in the bureaucratic economic structure. At home, women, now less likely to be employed given the high unemployment levels of eastern Germany, and confronted with the closing of the previously abundant, state-run child day-cares (Hornig and Steiner 1992), are facing the novelty of becoming housewives.

It is the examination of the point of intersection between already established local human geographies (such as those produced through the forty years of socialist control) and non-local structures (such as those being transferred from western Germany to the east) which Allan Pred claims as one of the key tasks of any critical geography. At such intersections are found "struggles over social position, identity and self-determination" (1990, pg. 47). One such struggle of identity is illustrated through a comment made to me by an East Berlin professor of philosophy at the Humboldt University. Alluding to the crisis of self-determination now facing many east German women as they grapple with their new unemployment status, and are confronted at the same time with the still prevalent perspective in western Germany that women should stay at home, she said to me: "As I watch the Federal Republic approaching, I see for women only a regression into the past".

In this dissertation, I argue that at the collision between established local geographies and non-local structures, particularly strong in eastern Germany due to the speed at which western structures and institutions are supplanting those of the east, is also found a struggle over nature. New economic and political policies are redirecting the use of natural resources, altering local patterns in the physical environment, as well as the wealth and welfare gained from resource use. I examine in the following chapters how certain dimensions of nature, such as its valuation, its use in the production process, its deterioration and preservation, and ideas about nature, have been produced and

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3 By March 1992, 4.4 million east German jobs were lost from a total work force of 9.75 million people (The New York Times Mar 8, 1992, pg. D1).
reproduced through the socio-economic and political institutions of socialist Germany. I then show
how these are being profoundly altered as western institutions restructure eastern society, recreating
these dimensions of nature, regionally and locally. I also assess how individuals, acting as a collective
group, have entered into a dialectical relationship with dominant social institutions. They may
challenge, for instance, the predominant utilization of natural resources and prevailing
conceptualizations of the nature-society relationship, or they may initiate new ideas about nature and
the human use of it. These aspects of environmentalism contribute to the changing of physical
patterns in nature as well as the politics of natural resource use.

Margaret FitzSimmons argues that this "geographical and historical dialectic between societies
and their material environments" (1989, pg. 106) should be a critical component of a radical human
geography which emphasizes the social construction of our material reality (i.e., the spatial
distribution and manifestation of poverty, wealth, prejudice, tolerance, and intolerance). She argues
with Richard Peet, that while the discourse amongst radical geographers has focused predominantly
on spatial relations, it has been "conspicuously weak" (Peet quoted in ibid, pp. 106-107) in the area
of environmental relations. FitzSimmons thus suggests that we look to a wide range of struggles over
Nature4 occurring throughout the world: ideological struggles over the meaning of Nature, as well as
political struggles over the poisoning of our natural environment through production processes, in
order to make explicit the role of environmental relations in producing material and conceptual
patterns. It is in response to FitzSimmons' call for "an effective theoretical understanding of Nature
as social nature" that this dissertation is written.

Specifically, the goals of this dissertation are:

1) to document and explain the process through which

a) material nature, for instance the distribution and concentration of certain
pollutants; and

---

4 Margaret FitzSimmons capitalizes Nature to "differentiate explicit reference to Nature as a concrete
abstraction from a more general use of the term" (1989, Note 1), in order to parallel a similar use of
Space in the geographic literature.
b) concepts of nature, for instance the importance of nature in securing healthy social relations, have been derived from East German social institutions and are now being transformed as a new set of social structures abruptly takes hold in eastern Germany;

2) to document the evolution of green activism in the socio-historical context of a non-western society: the former German Democratic Republic (GDR). I focus particularly on tracing the ideas and knowledges developed through East German activism and their influence on environmental politics in the GDR and, subsequently, in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) since 1990;

3) to analyze the ways in which environmentalism, as one component producing and produced by local geographies, is contributing to the processes currently recreating dimensions of nature in the communities of eastern Germany.

Although social activists constitute a minority in number and often in opinion, I use environmental activism as a point of entry into understanding the changing environmental politics of the former German Democratic Republic because of their potential to create a space where social norms (for example, attitudes toward nature and assumptions of progress) and social inequities are challenged. In so doing I borrow from Alberto Melucci, who has described social movements as "rendering power visible" (1988, pg. 247), and has argued that they make explicit that which has been previously hidden in the normality of every day life. I also draw on the work of sociologists Eyerman and Jamison (1991), who view social activism as creating a space where new ideas are developed, explored, and disseminated into the popular culture.

During political and economic transformations, such as are currently occurring in eastern Europe, changes in the social structures that provide contexts for the human use of the environment also set new conditions to which individuals respond in their negotiation over natural resource use and environmental security. For example, the dismantling of brown coal based industries and potash mines in eastern Germany has set new conditions to which those dependent on former patterns of resource use react as they negotiate with the state and potential employers for both new jobs and healthy living and working environments. As an illustration: those left unemployed in Bischofferode as a local potash mine was closed in 1993, went on a hunger strike to protest not only the loss of
their jobs, but also, quite importantly, to rally against the new economic system which appears to value them less as producers and more as consumers (Der Spiegel Sep 27, 1993). The socialist system had emphasized the worth of these Bischofferode residents as workers in the building of a stable society. Now these people feel that, despite their unemployed status, they are valued by the west only as consumers who will revive the failing east German economy. One woman complains:

It just can't be true that we are no longer producers who make our own living. Certainly we can't just be consumers now. (ibid, pg. 45, my translation)

In this research, I examine the new social and physical geographies that are unfolding as such transformations of nature and natural resource use take place in eastern Germany, and consider the influence of environmentalism in this process.

The historical significance of environmental action in Germany

Historically, issues of environmental deterioration have been an important source of local solidarity in German communities. As early as the 1700s, citizens had organized into vocal conservation groups to protest (often with success) the damage incurred to wildlife and natural resources by local industries. Between 1820 and 1840, Von Thünen worked on a model to expand cultivated land while protecting local peasant farmers, who he believed were less likely to exploit the soil than non-local capitalist farmers (Bramwell 1990). Bio-dynamic farming gained popularity from the 1920s through the early years of Hitler's leadership, because it not only promoted organic

---

5 Examples of these include the 1715, 1721, and 1778 requests by citizens in Stuttgart that the government correct the silting and polluting of the Nesenbach. In the mid-1800s, voluntary neighborhood organizations in Hamburg complained about the pollution of the near-by Elbe. In the early 1830s, Rhinelanders were successful in their campaign to save the Drachenfels against small-scale industry. In 1891, residence of a suburb of Hamburg were successful in their complaint against a local foundry based on their argument that property values would diminish. A drive to protect Berlin's expansive Grünewald from development, which began in 1907, brought the mayors of seven surrounding suburbs to support popular protest. Finally, in 1915, the citizens of Berlin agreed to tax themselves in order to buy the land for the continued enjoyment of future generations. In addition to these and other Not in My Backyard-type protests, several, conservation societies with significant memberships were in existence by 1918 (Dominick 1992).
practices, but emphasized the unique, spiritual connection of the local, small farmer to the land.

Later, the plan of radical agrarian Nazis for the ruralization of Germany gained support because it was a means to ensure local autonomy in German communities through barter and self-sufficiency. This autonomy was seen as critical to the successful resistance of manipulation by capitalists, who, through foreign trade and industrialization could force the German peasantry into towns and the alienating process of mass production (ibid).

In the 1960s, fifteen years after the partitioning of Germany, West German Bürgerinitiativen (citizens’ initiatives) mobilized people around specific, local issues. These gained political clout through Chancellor Willy Brandt’s support, in 1969, of federal environmental legislation mandating public participation in environmental planning processes (i.e., city and regional planning, as well as the environmental regulation of major industries). By the late 1970s, one-thousand environmental Bürgerinitiativen merged to form an umbrella organization, the Bundesverband Bürgerinitiativen Umweltschutz (Federal League of Citizen Initiatives on Environmental Protection), which later provided a valuable resource base for the West German Green Party (Dominick 1988). This party has not only transformed political institutions in the FRG due to its radical, non-hierarchical, grassroots orientation, but it has also made politics of the environment explicit.

While the political evolution of green activism in western Germany has been widely studied by environmental activists and scholars, less is known as to how the rich history of German environmentalism served as a reference for environmentally-concerned citizens in the former German Democratic Republic. This dissertation serves to fill this gap by tracing east Germany’s current environmental politics to its environmental legacy.
In 1989, East Germany had the highest per capita pollution emissions of all industrialized countries. Due to the two world oil shocks of 1973/74 and 1979/80, the GDR came to satisfy 70 percent of its energy requirements with domestic brown coal (Börner 1991). This, in addition to the limited use of ecologically sensitive technologies such as smokestack scrubbers, resulted in sulfur dioxide emissions of approximately 320 kilograms per capita in East Germany. Per capita sulfur dioxide emissions in West Germany were only about 20 kilograms (World Resources 1992). While recent estimates report that on average 54 percent of East Germany's forests have suffered ill-effects from pollution, regions such as Leipzig, in the heart of the coal mining district, suffer 75 percent forest cover damage (Institut für Umweltschutz 1990, pg. 28).

The expansion of strip, coal mining has had devastating effects on the regions of southern east Germany. Between 1973 and 1983, approximately 5000 hectares of prime agricultural land, forest, and small farm land were subsumed by open-pit mining. From 1960 to 1980, 70 villages, 125 railroad tracks, and 190 kilometers of roadway were removed to make way for further mines. Coal mining is also a primary cause of water shortage in these regions. Strip mines, often 90 meters deep, required water drainage up to 100 meters below ground level. In 1978, the amount of water used in coal mining was as much as used by all the GDRs nationally-owned industries and water processing plants (Wensierski 1988, pp. 220-233). Despite efforts at intensification, the German Democratic Republic's use of primary energy was 20 percent greater than that of the Federal Republic, while national income per capita was 30 percent less (Petschow, et al. 1990, pg. 28).

In order to secure scarce foreign exchange, the GDR accepted industrial and household wastes from Western Europe. Over five million tons of waste per year were imported from West Germany alone and disposed of in dumps located in the no-man's land between the borders of East and West Germany, such as the one near Schönberg (Baerens 1990). With little regulation or monitoring of the
type of waste or the disposal process, the quality of ground water near these sites is questionable. In addition, unfiltered industrial waste has been flowing into streams and seeping into ground water for decades. For instance, the aluminum plants of Bitterfeld emitted large quantities of organic sulfuric compounds, cyanide, mercury, and phenol into the Mulde River, and consequently the Elbe which flows into the North Sea. Heavy metals from industrial sewage contaminate ground water and also agricultural land through irrigation (Frankfurter Allgemeine Sep 8, 1990).

As I will show, in response to this severe environmental record, and rallied by the political-ecological struggles of writers such as Stefan Heym, Wolf Biermann, Robert Havemann, Christa Wolf, and Rudolf Bahro, small environmental groups started organizing in the early 1970s to promote environmental awareness in local communities and to discuss the environmental implications of economic growth. In a socio-political atmosphere of risk and restraint, a tentative but passionate space for ecologically-oriented citizens was established through the Evangelical (Protestant) Church. By the mid-1980s, Gorbachev's radical attempts at reform coupled with the church hierarchy's hesitancy to break with the state leadership, gave many environmentalists the impetus to seek political expression outside of the church. From initially small church-organized demonstrations focusing on issues of peace, human rights, as well as the environment, large street rallies grew, bringing out up to 120,000 citizens (Der Standard Oct 20, 1989). These powerful and well publicized demonstrations led others throughout the GDR to take to the streets, culminating finally in the dissolution of Honecker's regime in 1989. As economic and political restructuring radically transforms the context for natural resource use in eastern Germany, environmental activism, once again, presents a critical voice to an overtly political struggle over nature.

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6 Interview with Hans-Peter Gensichen, Nov. 1992. Please see Appendix A for details concerning the interviews and interviewees which serve as data for this dissertation.
The intersection between established local social relations and non-local structures of power: A critical element of east German transformation

Eastern Germany has a certain advantage over other former Soviet Bloc countries also enduring processes of economic and political restructuring, in that the economic and political strength of western Germany provides relative stability to the unprecedented transition from marxist\(^7\) to market institutions. However, a significant disadvantage lies in the immediate imposition of an established bureaucracy as well as of western capital, which often assume the authority (based on a set of ideas and values, which tend to conflict with those established through the socialist/totalitarian experience) to make decisions which override local concerns and processes of change. Consequently, the tension arising as non-locally based power structures transform established social and technical relations is a critical component of the current transition. For example, because the chemical, mining, and energy producing firms of the east German industrial sector were uncompetitive in the world market, by the fall of 1993, two-thirds of all industrial jobs in the former GDR had been dissolved by the west German Trustee Authority in charge of the privatization of eastern firms (Der Spiegel Sep 27, 1993, pp. 42-58). Since the western economic recession has induced conservative business practices, the hopes of quickly employing the east German work force through newly created industry have been extinguished. Increasingly, east Germans are expressing feelings of frustration, disillusionment, and anger at being robbed of their jobs without prospects for new work (Der Spiegel Aug 23, 1993)\(^8\). In addition, western firms have flooded east German stores with their wares in an attempt to swiftly

\(^7\) It is important to clarify references made throughout this text to "marxism" which fall into three distinct categories. In this context, marxist institutions refer to the social institutions (i.e., legal, economic, political), which organized the political economies of former Soviet Bloc countries, and were legitimized by their adherence to the writings of Marx. References to marxist (or radical) social theory reflect an academic framework used to understand social relations in society which is based on the insights of Marx. Finally, marxian economics refers to a body of theory developed by Marx to explain how an economy functions and to argue the inevitable transition from capitalism to socialism.

\(^8\) The shock of unemployment is all the stronger for east Germans, since in the former GDR, all citizens were guaranteed the Constitutional right to work. Officially, there was no unemployment, other than that which occurs as people move from one job to the next (Burant 1987, pp. 121-122).
gain a significant market share. Western capital interests have rushed to buy up real estate in the center of major cities such as Leipzig and Dresden. The resulting gentrification has forced many east German city residents to flee the cities' centers with their now expensive apartments and stores. Such social upheavals have left many easterners feeling resentment toward the west, and a sense that their lifestyle under the old GDR system was not so bad.

The specific example I will later use to exemplify current struggles over nature occurring at this point of intersection between local physical and social geographies and non-local social structures is the "modernizing" of infrastructure in eastern Germany. Western policy makers in Bonn have emphasized the importance of well built rail, road, and water ways if eastern markets are to be made accessible to the western supply and demand of goods. This newly built transportation infrastructure will reorganize the physical and social geographies of natural resource use and environmental deterioration in many localities, since it is key to industrial investment (and dis-investment) decisions, fluctuations in land value, the tourist trade, as well as the very structure of cities, rural communities, and the modes of transportation which connect them. Highways are planned which will dissect large areas of thriving ecosystems, the likes of which have disappeared in western Germany due to its high population density and sprawling metropolises. Intra-city roadways are intended to facilitate economic activity. As a research focus, then, the issue of rebuilding eastern Germany’s transportation network provides a neat link between 1) concerns about environmental pollution (increased carbon dioxide emissions as car use increases; degradation of valuable ecosystems, such as wetlands); 2) concerns about how new economic and political forces will thrust local economies into the international market, alter the livability of urban areas as well as encourage urban expansion into the countryside;

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9 See for example an article in Die Zeit Jan 15, 1993, "Schöne Aussicht", pg. 13, documenting the struggle between concerned citizens, city planners, and historians of Dresden who want to preserve the city’s historic skyline, and state planners in conjunction with a Dutch telecommunications firm, who hope to build a high rise office building in the downtown district. Also, a Jan 29, 1993 article in Die Zeit, "Stadt ohne Plan", pp. 5-7, describes the speed at which foreign capital is gentrifying Leipzig’s inner city, while also building large shopping malls on Leipzig’s fringe which compete with downtown merchants.
and finally 3) issues of how these processes will change perceptions of the environment, of wealth, and of welfare. Certainly, a dramatic shift in the physical and conceptual patterns of space and nature at the hands of newly created transportation networks is currently underway in eastern Germany.

Guiding my analysis of this process are the following questions:

What impact is the massive expansion of the east German transportation network by west German authorities and industries having on regional and local environmental conditions? For what reasons are these changes occurring and who plans to benefit?

How is the new transportation network transforming urban structures?

How may the approach of environmentalists in response to these changes be explained through an analysis of their past activism? What is the motivation behind environmentalists' actions? Whom do they hope to benefit?

What actors and institutions are contributing to the transformation of physical and social geographies through the reconstruction of eastern Germany's transportation network?

**The relevance of case studies**

So far, I have set out to address the intersection between local geographies and non-local social structures at a very broad scale as an intersection between east German and west German social contexts, i.e., west German policies, industries, and social norms are radically transforming established east German social and physical geographies as they are transferred wholesale to the east. It is necessary to fine tune this analysis, through the use of case studies, in order to assess the differential impact east German restructuring is having on individual communities. Local environmental activism serves, in this study, as one component of the local power structure responding to the imposition of non-local state and economic structures. The use of case studies also enables an assessment of a geographic component to the current struggles over nature occurring at the local scale. My case studies attempt to answer the following questions:

What characteristics of a particular community contribute to the ability of environmentalists to influence the reconstruction of their locality in particular directions?

In what ways are the activities and ideas developed through environmental activism before 1989 impacting the unfolding of local environmental politics since unification?
Specifically with respect to the reconstruction of transportation networks, how is the new federal policy to rebuild the east German economy through the massive construction of urban, regional, and intra-national roadways having differential impact on the ecological, economic, and social conditions in various east German communities?

How is environmentalism influencing this process, and what factors contribute to activists having more effect in one community than in another?

How do experiences at the local level correspond to regional or national environmental politics?

To answer these questions I have chosen three case studies: the cities of Berlin, Leipzig, and Halle. These were chosen for their differences, particularly in scale, rather than their similarity, in order to gain a perspective on the diversity of changes occurring in eastern Germany, and the variety of issues raised.

Berlin, as the GDRs capital city, is also its largest metropolitan area with a population of 1,260,900. It produced 5.6 percent of the GDRs Gross Domestic Product (GDR Academy of Science 1989, pp. 37-40). Although housing conditions continuously declined, and of course, heat was based on brown coal, East Berlin residents were relatively sheltered from the severe environmental pollution of the south. As the national capital and cultural center, it was however a hotbed for political debate, and therefore engendered a politically vocal, underground environmental activism. In what way are environmentalists now engaging the processes transforming Berlin into the capital of a unified Germany and an international metropolis?

Leipzig, the second largest city of eastern Germany (population 552,00), is located in the southern coal-mining district. The Karl-Marx University, the country’s largest university, offers a relatively rich source of intellectual and cultural diversity. The city has been internationally known for its trade fairs, and as a headquarters for 37 of the German Democratic Republic’s 78 publishing houses. In the Fall of 1989, it also received international media attention for weekly mass demonstrations, where thousands protested in the streets and ultimately contributed to the collapse of the GDR regime (Burant 1987, pp. 234-250).

The pollution levels in Leipzig have been severe. As the center of the GDRs coal and energy
producing region\textsuperscript{10}, it suffered the highest level of sulfur dioxide concentrations in East Germany. While recent estimates report that 54 percent of East Germany’s forests have suffered ill-effects from pollution, 75 percent of Leipzig’s forest cover is damaged. This is the highest percentage of any region in eastern Germany (Institut für Umweltschutz 1990, pg. 28). The expansion of strip, coal mining has had devastating effects on the region surrounding the city of Leipzig. Villages have disappeared; ground water has been contaminated and effectively drained (Wensierski 1988, pp. 220-227).

How is the economic unification with West Germany transforming the environmental and urban conditions of Leipzig? Are environmental activists still as vocal as they were before unification, and what influence are they having on current processes of change? Although Leipzig’s city structure is rapidly transforming as national and international market interests compete for prime real estate (\textit{Die Zeit} Jan 29, 1993), its provincial character may allow environmentally-concerned citizens greater influence in the reconstruction of their city.

Halle (population 330,000) is the state capital of Sachsen-Anhalt. The chemical plants of Buna, Schkopau, Leuna, and Bitterfeld supported this region economically, producing 40 percent of the quota for GDR chemicals. They also produced tremendous levels of pollution. For instance, the aluminum plants of Bitterfeld emitted large quantities of organic sulfuric compounds, cyanide, mercury, and phenol into the Mulde River and consequently the Elbe which flows into the North Sea. Heavy metals from industrial sewage contaminate ground water and also agricultural land through irrigation (\textit{Frankfurter Allgemeine} Sep 8, 1990, pp. 7-8). Life expectancy in the region of Halle was reported to be five years less than elsewhere in the country (Albrecht 1987). Approximately 30 percent of the children living in this area suffer respiratory illness. Workers have endured severe headaches, heart disease, and dizziness associated with exposure to sulfur dioxide (Institut für

\textsuperscript{10} Twenty percent of the lignite and 35 percent of all coal-based chemical products were produced in the county of Leipzig (GDR Academy of Science 1989, pg. 61-64).
A 28 year old school teacher remarked to me, "If the Wende hadn't come, we would have been poisoned to death."

Since unification, production in the region of Halle has dropped off dramatically. Leuna, the area's biggest employer, has more than halved its work force since 1990 (The Economist Aug 4, 1993). How will such an environmentally damaged area balance ecological reconstruction with economic growth and what role will environmentalists play in influencing policy?

Answers to these questions may reveal varied local struggles over nature; varied ideas, concerns, strategies, and experiences which are reconceptualizing as well as recontextualizing Nature, not only in eastern Germany but throughout Germany. What role does environmentalism play in this process, and how is it changing?

**Theoretical perspectives**

Framing my analysis of the historical and contemporary materials which shed light on the role of eastern German environmentalism in contributing to the still evolving geographies of the former GDR are two bodies of literature. First, I draw heavily on the theoretical perspective that the human experience of nature is constructed through individuals' interactions with a wide range of social institutions. These contextualize and legitimize our uneven access to nature's wealth and exposure to its deterioration. When the institutions are transformed, as is rapidly occurring in eastern Europe, new relations of power and sources for empowerment re-condition the human use of nature, thereby altering patterns in the physical and social environments. In this sense, nature is socially constructed. This perspective has its origins in a debate between radical and positivist social scientists concerning the study of natural resource use.

Secondly, I focus on a theoretical perspective that social activism is a constructive force in the

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11 Wende is a German word which literally means turning point, and refers to the period between the opening of the Berlin Wall in November, 1989 and the unification of Germany in October, 1990.
creation of new ideas, ideals, and knowledges. This perspective (unusual in the social movements literature), encourages a historical study of a social movement not as a discrete entity but as a process. Social activism is thus understood as carving out a space—filled with the interaction of activists, institutions, academics, the media—from which creative concepts emerge. As the political culture, economic structure, and means of communication which condition activism transform, so too does the knowledge created through activism. Environmentalism, therefore, is a rich source from which conceptualizations of nature, its use in the production process, and its meaning and valuation are reconsidered.

Contributing to my analysis of environmental activism in eastern Germany is the geographic Urban Social Movements literature. In particular, the discourse within this literature concerning the dialectic relationship between social activists and the state in producing and reproducing social structures (Dear and Moos 1986; Moos and Dear 1986; Cox 1988) is linked to my analysis of how environmental activism enters into a dialectic relationship with state and economic institutions to produce and reproduce Nature.

The social construction of Nature: Theoretical perspectives in geography

The notion that nature is humanly produced may at first seem to be an oxymoron. After all, the natural environment is commonly understood to exist somewhere beyond the built environment. Yet, this dichotomy quickly vanishes when we consider the extent to which nature has borne the imprint of human activity. Historical examples abound as to how human populations have dramatically altered the land. As production systems have become more complex and global in scale, so too has the environmental pollution they engender. Increasingly, components of the natural environment normally thought to be beyond the reach of human interference, are being altered. These include genetic diversity, the ozone layer, the human immune system and the climate system, to name only a few.
In transforming nature through our modes of production, it is evident that we have also altered ourselves. To better tap the world's resources and cope with our effects upon it, we create new resources, new opportunities, new ways of organizing our societies. Associated with these is an uneven distribution of wealth and welfare, or conversely poverty and hardship. As these alter our experience of the world—a process accelerated through the electronic media—we struggle to create new knowledges with which to organize, facilitate, and understand our actions. Society becomes transformed through the evolution of these knowledges.

The development of these ideas stem from the 1970s and early 80s, when radical geographers found it necessary to respond to an academic environment which focused the cutting edge of its research on the positivistic science of spatial analysis (Schmidt 1971; Burgess 1978; Sayer 1979; Smith and O'Keefe 1980; Williams 1980, Smith 1984). Integral to their critique of positivism was a reconceptualization of the nature-society relationship, for not only had the presuppositions of positivism justified segregating the study of the social from that of the natural, they imposed on the former an ahistorical and apolitical objectivity inherent to the scientific logic of the latter. The abstraction of nature and nature's laws from the human observer is fundamental to the very rationality of science, and is left in relative peace by most marxists. Yet the abstraction of society from nature is far more problematic for radical geographers, who locate the unequal distribution of social wealth and welfare in a historically-based economic interrelationship with nature. Furthermore, the return to a discourse unifying society and nature seemed particularly germane to a discipline originally organized around but increasingly split by studies of the social and natural worlds.

In contrast to prevailing, conventional conceptualizations that nature and society are in opposition to or distanced from each other, radical geographers retrieved from the writings of Marx and Engels an argument that nature and society are dialectically interrelated. Human beings, in the act of refashioning nature's resources, not simply for their own reproduction (as in the case of animals), but for their liberation from immediate needs and constraints, create new resources, new opportunities, new modes of social organization, new knowledges: thereby refashioning themselves. Nature—that
which existed prior to humankind and known in the marxist literature as first nature—bears the
imprint of this social activity (Burgess 1978), and is transformed. A new nature is created—a second
nature. This notion of a second nature emerging from human labor is not particular to Marx, or to
Hegel, on whom he based many of his ideas concerning the nature-society interrelationship. The
ancient Greeks were acutely aware of the transformation of nature at the hands of human activity
(Smith 1984). Yet it is with Marx’s distinction between use-value and exchange value that second
nature gains a new meaning, and the marxian concept of the social production of nature emerges.

Given the world-scale of capitalist production, the domain of socially altered nature expanded
quantitatively through early industrialization, to the point where Marx observed in the mid-1800s:

[T]he nature that preceded human history...today no longer exists anywhere (except perhaps
on a few Australian coral-islands of recent origin). (Marx cited in Smith 1984, pg. 54)

Thus, the natural world with which most humans had contact was a socially transformed world. First
nature was replaced by second nature. To maintain a significant distinction between the concepts of
first and second nature, a qualitative change in their definitions became necessary. Marx and Engels
based this distinction on the difference between value-in-use and value-in-exchange.

According to Marx, nature does not create value, since value only arises in the process of
material production. Individuals invest their own nature\(^{12}\) through labor, and regain it through direct
consumption of the product created. The value derived from this process is value-in-use. Marx and
Engels argued that once labor is engaged in capitalist production, creating products that are not
directly consumed but instead sold in a market for a price (based on the "laws" of supply and
demand), a surplus value is generated which is not realized by the worker selling his/her labor for a
fixed wage. This surplus, stemming from value-in-exchange, is appropriated by the owners of the
means of production. The products defined by exchange value, as well as the social institutions
directing their production, comprise, according to Marx, a second nature.

\(^{12}\) In so far as human labor power is an expression of a natural force, and the potential for material
wealth resides in nature, Marx located the source of value within nature. Still, it is only through the
investment of labor that the use-value inherent to nature can be realized.
The same piece of matter exists simultaneously in both natures; as a physical commodity subject to the laws of gravity and physics it exists in the first nature, but as exchange-value subject to the laws of the market, it travels in the second nature. Human labour produces the first nature, human relations produce the second. (Smith 1984, pg. 55, italics added)

This realization became critical to marxists geographers contesting the apolitical, ahistorical approach of positivists, for if (historically and economically based) human relations produce nature, than human relations also determine the pattern of wealth and welfare derived from Nature.

Smith (1984) has argued that while this distinction between first nature as produced by human labor, and second nature as produced by social relations does capture the complexity of social organization, it is increasingly obsolete. Elements of first nature may be transformed into second nature by the laws of the market, while never embodying value-in-exchange. For instance, damage to the upper atmospheric ozone layer, structural deterioration of agricultural soil, toxic shock syndrome, as well as other humanly produced diseases are elements of first nature "very much produced, though not commodities" (pg. 56). The distinction between the materiality of first nature and the abstraction of second nature falls away, in the dominant reality that nature as a totality is produced.

Williams (1980) presents a similar argument in order to shake assumptions of both classical market and marxian economics which treat environmental deterioration as external aberrations of otherwise sound political economies. Williams locates the infertility of land, the pollution of rivers, the deterioration of the biosphere, explicitly within the production process. Not only are they humanly produced, albeit unintended, as Smith implies, but they are in fact products.

Furthermore, we ourselves are in a sense products: the pollution of industrial society is to be found not only in the water and in the air but in the slums, the traffic jams, and not these only as physical objects but as ourselves in them and in relation to them...We cannot afford to go on saying that a car is a product but a scrapyard a by-product, any more than we can take the paint-fumes and petrol-fumes, the jams, the mobility, the motorway, the torn city centre, the assembly line, the time-and-motions study, the unions, the strikes, as by-products rather than the real products they are. (ibid, pp. 83-84)

13 In order to distinguish the generalized concept of nature—the natural environment in contrast to the built environment—from the concept of Nature—a product of social relations, production, and social institutions—the latter is often capitalized (see FitzSimmons 1989).
Furthermore, the unequal access to these products and activities must be reckoned.

If we say only that we have mixed our labour with the earth, our forces with its forces, we are stopping short of the truth that we have done this unequally: that for the miner and the writer the mixing is different, though in both cases real; and that for the labourer and the man who manages his labour, the producer and the dealer in products, the difference is wider again. (ibid)

Finally, Williams argues that the validation for separating products from by-products, as well as for accepting the unequal access (or exposure) of groups within society to them, is located in the abstraction of nature from society. He argues that it is fundamentally this abstraction which legitimates interference with, transformation, and domination of nature-human as well as physical.

Thus, "rational" production processes can effect such irrational consequences as forest decimation.

Before we can rectify the environmental crises our activities have produced we must acknowledge that our understanding and knowledge are bound to our perceptions, which are necessarily socially derived.

[1] If the ecological dilemmas of rational, industrial society are to be addressed successfully, they must first be addressed at the level of our fundamental conception of knowledge, the conception of objective nature and scientific observations. More specifically, we must bring the idea of social life back into our idea of valid knowledge, so that all assertions of knowledge involve a reference to both nature and society, and to their interaction, rather than strictly a reference to nature. (Wright 1992, pg. 6)

This point, that the abstraction of nature from society produces a knowledge which legitimates domination vis-a-vis the social and physical environments, is crystallized by Margaret FitzSimmons:

We must recognize that externalized, abstracted, Nature...provides a source of authority to a whole language of domination. This is the domination of nature, but also the domination of human reality by Nature. (FitzSimmons 1989, pg. 109)

That scientific reasoning lends authority to particular modes of domination may first have been articulated by Machiavelli, who described the theory of politics as a rational technology of power.

More recently, and pertinent to this study, playwright and President of the newly formed Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel, stated in his essay Politics and Conscience:
Just as the modern scientists set apart the actual human being as the subject of the lived experience of the world, so, ever more evidently, do both the modern state and modern politics. (Havel 1986, pg. 143)

He suggests that the reduction of power to a mere technology of rule and manipulation is not only legitimimized by "the rationalistic spirit of modern science, founded on abstract reason and on the presumption of impersonal objectivity", but underpins the process of "anonymization and depersonalization of power" (ibid) in totalitarian states. Lest the citizens and leaders of western democracies feel absolved of this distortion of power, Havel warns

no error could be greater than the one looming largest: that of a failure to understand the totalitarian systems for what they ultimately are--a convex mirror of all modern civilization and a harsh, perhaps final call for a global recasting of that civilization's self-understanding. (ibid pg. 145, italics added)

This research intends to explore one set of voices struggling to respond to the distorted, depersonalized use of power over nature and citizens. East German environmental activists critical of the state struggled with the totalitarian political reality severely restricting their actions, to create an illegal underground network through which they explored principles for a more appropriate use of natural resources and sought to empower those suffering the brunt of environmental deterioration.

Now, with unification, activists must recreate their arguments, their views, and their strategies as they influence and are influenced by the environmental politics emerging from new political, economic, and social transformations. The reconstruction of eastern Germany is transforming political, economic, legal, academic, and administrative institutions, using western German institutions as models. A complete set of power interests are being imposed, legitimized by long-accepted assumptions of wealth and welfare under a free-market system. These assumptions have directed resource use, thereby creating specific patterns in Nature. Western patterns of the physical and social environment are being rapidly recreated in the east. As eastern environmentalists respond to these transformations they draw together a variety of ideas and strategies, thus refashioning understandings of the nature-society interrelationship. Although the geographic literature pertaining to the social construction of Nature focuses on the social structures contextualizing production (i.e.,
FitzSimmons 1989; Watts 1983; Redclift 1987; Hewitt 1983), I intend to demonstrate that environmental activism, i.e., social agency, is one of many processes (re)contextualizing Nature in Eastern Germany.

**Perspectives on new "anti-modern" social activism**

That the rationality of science has a power (manifest not only through technology, but also through economic and political policy), that significantly influences the human psyche was noted in a 1947 work of Horkheimer and Adorno. "Modern man", they argue, is more powerful as a collective entity but often feels himself individually weaker, more vulnerable, more socially uprooted and lost than the feudal peasant. The power of modern science is not his power. Indeed, he may feel even weaker in his own powers when he compares them to the latest machine. The result is an individual susceptible, especially during periods of economic and social crisis, to mass movements\(^\text{14}\) that speak to his needs for belonging and meaning. (ibid pg. 18)

While their assessment of collective action appears to have little generalizability for contemporary western movements which tend to decrease membership during periods of economic downturn (Kitschelt 1985), or the movements in "Third World" nations, which may better be understood as acts of empowerment rather than of weakness (Shiva 1988), the association between modernity and social alienation is becoming a significant part of understanding modern social activism.

For instance, in *Staying Alive*, Vandana Shiva introduces her work on the women’s ecology movement in India, by stating:

> The act of living and of celebrating and conserving life in all its diversity—in people and in nature—seems to have been sacrificed to progress, and the sanctity of life been substituted by the sanctity of science and development...[Indian women] have challenged the western concept of nature as an object of exploitation and have protected her as Prakriti, the living force that supports life. They have challenged the western concept of economics as production of profits and capital accumulation with their own concept of economics as production of sustenance and needs satisfaction. (Shiva 1988, pp. xiv, xvii)

\(^{14}\) The negative connotation apparent in the phrase "an individual susceptible...to mass movements" pertains to Horkheimer and Adorno’s reference to fascism.
Similarly numerous social movements of the West, arising out of the student protests of the 1960's, articulate a powerful critique of the logic underpinning industrialized society. They point specifically to the alienation and personal disempowerment that the modern economic and political structures must create in upholding their dual criteria of progress and economic efficiency.

From the context of liberation and left-leaning politics set by the student movements of western democracies, a "new" environmentalism, "new" feminism, "new" peace movement, and, in the United States, a "new" Afro-American movement emerged, focusing also on freedom of choice, direct participation, and a rejection of highly bureaucratic political and economic institutions. In fighting the alienation and depersonalization inherent to these western institutions, the "new" movements emphasize personal autonomy, solidarity, the grassroots, and changes in values or lifestyle.

These movements have formed to respond to an invasion of power, veiled in the anonymity of technology and bureaucracy, which erodes significant avenues through which individuals can consciously choose their interactions with the environment, the fruits of their labor, their community, and even their own bodies. Leading theorists of these movements have compared them with the "older" workers' movement and suggested they constitute an entirely new type of movement. They have been called "New Social Movements" (NSMs) as they appear to have radically different aims than the workers' movement, are organized differently, and have arisen from new political and economic conditions particular to post-industrial western democracies. Herbert Kitschelt characterizes this new generation of activists as "battling with agents of economic and administrative rationality" (Kitschelt 1985, pg. 283). According to Dalton, et al. (1991), the New Social Movements advocate a new social paradigm which challenges the dominant progress-oriented structure of industrial society. Can the NSMs categorization offer insight into movements in other parts of the world also fighting the alienation and personal disempowerment produced through bureaucratic economic and political structures?
Theorizing New Social Movements

A vast literature exists theorizing the organization, role, and significance of New Social Movements in post-industrial societies. In this section I review the major themes of this literature, but end by questioning its applicability to non-Western social activism. Since I argue its generalizability to eastern European as well as to "Third World" activism is cumbersome, I turn to an alternative which focuses on the ideas, identity, and knowledges produced through activism. Thus I forego an analysis of a specific group’s organization, successes or failures, common not only in the NSM paradigm, but also in its leading alternative in the social movements literature, the Resource Mobilization Theory. I focus instead on activism as a process; an agent in the creation of knowledge. This perspective, then provides a link to my argument that environmentalism acts as one force in the construction of knowledge about nature, our use, organization, and production of it.

The term "New Social Movement" was first applied to understand the 1970s and 80s Bürgerinitiativen (citizens initiatives) of the Federal Republic of Germany which appeared to break radically in character from older class-based activism. They originally organized around issues of nuclear power and weaponry, but later included a spectrum of environmental, peace, and minority issues. With respect to nuclear energy, activists complained that important decisions concerning the development of the largely state-owned nuclear power industry of the Federal Republic were being finalized through discussions between industry leaders, politicians, and scientists. Input from citizens, some of whom lived in close proximity to nuclear plants and were potentially exposed to health risks, was allowed only after plans had been drawn up. Thus, activists felt they had little political recourse to challenge state decisions regarding the development of nuclear power, and the subsequent impact on their health or quality of life. Their response was to act outside political channels by demonstrating at plant construction sites, staging media events, such as sit-ins, and mass demonstrations.

Membership within such initiatives (which have broadened beyond anti-nuclear demonstrations to
include peace initiatives, human rights, women's issues, minority issues, etc.) has not been based solely on class, as was the case with the older worker's movement. Members include people from all socio-economic backgrounds, although they are drawn predominantly from the growing service sector of the post-industrial economy of the Federal Republic of Germany. Initiatives have been organized through grassroots networks. They are quite informal, and based on principles of participatory democracy. The form of action is direct, emphasizing personal changes in lifestyle (i.e., recycling, reduced use of energy, community work, organic gardening), as a means by which to regain personal control over a quality of life activists feel is increasingly being determined by government and industry.

The following table (Table 1) from Scott (1990) encapsulates the primary differences between the citizen's initiatives of West Germany which provided the prototype of what later became the New Social Movements, and the "old" social movement, namely the workers' movement.

Table 1: Key points of contrast between new movements and the workers' movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Workers' movement</th>
<th>New social movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>increasingly within the polity</td>
<td>civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aims</strong></td>
<td>political integration/</td>
<td>changes in values and lifestyle/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>economic rights</td>
<td>defence of civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>formal/hierarchical</td>
<td>network/grassroots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium of action</strong></td>
<td>political mobilization</td>
<td>direct action/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cultural innovation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Alan Scott (1990), pg. 19*

In contrast to the worker's movement, whose aim has been to secure workers' rights and to gain access for workers to the political process, the New Social Movements (organizing around such issues as the environment, feminism, and peace) are generally described as aiming to regain a civil society by acting outside established political structures. While the worker's movement has a hierarchical structure, NSMs tend to organize at the grassroots and develop a breadth of networks.
between communities. New Social Movements seek to bring about social transformation by addressing values, lifestyle, and personal identity. They utilize techniques which are meant to raise the consciousness of individuals, such as group therapy, publicized sit-ins, direct interaction through grass-roots participatory democracy. In contrast, the workers' movement engages the existing political and economic structure, to mobilize political strength.

Those studying the phenomenon of these "new" movements in the Federal Republic recognized that similar movements had organized in other western democracies, specifically in the United States. In an attempt to find a common explanation for the emergence of these "new" groups in several countries, scholars began to focus on those characteristics of post-industrial western democracies which would encourage a new form of social activism. For instance, Kitschelt argues:

The rise of new social movements is linked to the transformation of capitalism toward an organized, "postindustrial" social formation, which generates new societal cleavages and corresponding forms of social mobilization. Issues of economic (re)distribution are likely to be supplemented or even displaced by conflicts over the relative autonomy of reproductive social relations from central control by the economic and political "production core" of modern societies or even over the transformation of the core itself. Such a realignment of cleavages generates conflicts over issues concerning the qualitative development of the production and administration of social relations that are more intense than in the past. (1985, pg. 274)

Lash and Urry (1987) focus on the theory of disorganized capitalism to account for the rise of NSMs. For instance, they claim that the increased internationalization of production, capital, and markets has weakened the political power of national labor movements. With a decline in class-based voting, the NSMs which speak to interests across class lines, gain power. In addition, Lash and Urry also understand NSMs as a manifestation in part of an increasingly influential service class (Baggerley 1992).

In a recent article, Frederick Buttel (1992) supports Lash and Urry's position that the New Social Movements are alternative forms of political mobilization that have arisen as trade unions and the social-democratic working class parties lose support of the electorate in post-industrial society. These parties are weakening as their support base, the industrial working class, is diminishing in relative size to other groups in the electorate, and as their leading struggles, such as bolstering the welfare-
state and the social wage, are failing in a political climate of fiscal crisis. Buttel suggests the "upwelling of NSMs" has occurred to "fill the void of social democratic party decline" (1992, pp. 11-12).

While Lash and Urry focus on the disorganization of modern capitalism in understanding the emergence of NSMs, writers such as Kitschelt (1986), Offe (1985) and Scott (1990), suggest exactly the opposite. They hypothesize that NSMs are the strongest in countries with the most organized forms of capitalism (Bagguely 1992). It is the corporatization of everyday life, the limited opportunities for individual choice in neo-corporatist Western societies, that have created a backlash through NSM activism.

In comparing the classic New Social Movement—the Green Movement of the FRG—with the Green Movement in the USA, Raymond Dominick reiterates their common political-economic context. He argues that similar political cultures in post-industrial societies have helped shaped similar Green movements. The similarities he highlights are necessarily related to liberal democracies:

1) democratic elections that produce a bipolar clustering of the great majority of voters around two blocs; 2) the drift of these two blocs toward the ideological middle ground; 3) the consequent lack of legislative representation for an agenda of radical change; 4) a federal governmental structure, which offer (sic) several levels of entry and activity for new aspirants to political power; and 5) protection of free speech and free assembly, crucial assets for movements whose initial efforts centered upon extra-parliamentary agitation rather than electoral politics. (1988, pg. 3)

A central theme arising in the NSMs literature is the political and historical significance of movements in the evolution of modern or postmodern society. Thus, Alain Touraine (1981; 1983) considers the rise of New Social Movements as an indication of a distinctly different stage of historical development. Jürgen Habermas (1987) investigates the significance of social activism in exemplifying the moral evolution of civilization.

While this emphasis on the role of activism in social transformation is compatible with my research goals, its focus on specific developments in postindustrial, capitalist democracies in explaining the emergence of NSMs, creates difficulty when trying to transfer the concept to less
capitalist and less democratic societies (as I seek to do). Despite superficial similarities with social movements in Eastern Europe and the Third World, i.e., questioning of the emphasis on wealth and material well being; advocating attention be given to cultural and quality of life issues; demanding greater opportunities to participate in the decisions affecting one's life, the NSM concept loses rigorous explanatory power when one attempts to understand contemporary activism in countries with fewer post-industrial, democratic characteristics.

The difficulty of extending or applying categories and principles developed to understand issues arising in western democracies to similar issues in other parts of the world is also explored by Iris Marion Young (1990), in the Epilogue of her work *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. She argues, for example that while injustice may be understood using categories of oppression and domination, the criteria of oppression developed in the context of western societies can, at best, serve as "useful starting points" (pg. 258) for exploring what oppression means in Asia, Latin America, or Eastern Europe. It is likely that they will require serious revision and potentially a complete transformation given the myriad of different structural contexts in which relationships of oppression are set.

I find that the conceptual ambiguity arising as the category, New Social Movement, is applied to a non-western context is well illustrated in a recent paper by David Slater (1991). Slater asks the question as to whether the grassroots struggles for true, participatory democracy in Latin America are fundamentally similar to those occurring in the First World, and whether the label *New Social Movements* is transferrable to contemporary activism arising in the Third World generally. His analysis finds basic similarities with respect to the quality of life themes, yet obvious differences with respect to the socio-political context framing the articulation of these themes. Since the socio-political climate of Western democracies is critical to the very concept of the NSM, Slater must stretch a few definitions to justify a comparison within the same framework. He finally argues that the two types of social activism are relatively similar in their themes and practices "in spite of the state", and that, with respect to the NSM terminology, "any classificatory schema must remain incomplete and flexible...a guide to the ordering of a highly fluid reality, not a complete frame of meaning" (Slater
While Herbert Knabe (1988) faces similar stumbling blocks in his comparison of social activism in the former German Democratic Republic with the New Social Movements of the Federal Republic, he has an easier time of defining East German society as postindustrial than Slater has with Latin American countries. The issue of democratic structures falls out completely of course. Yet, since NSMs are presumed to respond to the domination of the state over citizens which was potentially more acute in the former Soviet Bloc than in the West, classification of eastern social activism into the NSM category appears to Knabe as quite appropriate. As the form and content of the East German movements are similar to those of West German NSMs, Knabe concludes that the activism in the East is of the same type, though certainly framed by a differing political culture.

In the following chapters (specifically in Chapter 5) I argue against Knabe's conclusion. As Oleg Yanitsky (1991) warns, in his comparison of Soviet and West European environmental movements, it is very important not to brush aside the significant and fundamental differences between these social movements when highlighting their apparent similarities.

The emergence of Social Movements in a society with a market economy, developed democratic institutions, a multi-party system, and a decentralization of the population's social and cultural level of activity is one thing. It is quite another matter when such initiatives arise in a society with a centralized economy, where people lack many civil rights and have no experience of taking economic initiatives or engaging in political struggle. A second difference is no less important. In the first case we are dealing with social and political innovations within the framework of a comparatively stable social structure. In the second case we are looking at actions by social subjects that, in the final analysis, have led to profound changes in the existing social structure and have forced society to undergo a lengthy and extremely painful period of transition. (pg. 525)

The controversy about and implications of these very important differences of context and impact between social activism in the West and East are exactly what intrigue me. I therefore forego the work of creating and refining the New Social Movement concept in order to increase its generalizability. I am less interested in whether the movements are similar in form; more interested in what their differential impact has been. I focus specifically on the different knowledges produced by east and west German activism. Thus, my project is to speak to the specifically different context of
East European activism, and to explore the body of ideas, concepts, ideals, and intellectual activities—or what Eyerman and Jamison refer to as cognitive praxis—created by it.

The cognitive approach to social movements research

Eyerman and Jamison make explicit the dynamic role of social movements as bearers of new ideas, new theories, as well as political and social identities (1991, pg. 3). They view social movements not as particular organizations or interest groups, but as creators of a conceptual space filled by the interaction of groups and organizations. From this space, a new "consciousness" is produced. It is not the groups in and of themselves who define the movement, but the process of their interaction. Furthermore, it is through this dynamic process, that new ideas come into being, delineating the movement's identity and influencing the greater society.

It is through tensions between different organizations over defining and acting in that conceptual space that the (temporary) identity of a social movement is formed. (pg. 55)

Eyerman and Jamison suggest that the space, activity, and identity produced by a movement are conditioned by three historically and socially situated components, namely: political culture, shifts in economy, and societal modes of communication. This links beautifully to this dissertation's analysis of changing environmental activism in eastern Germany, since it is these which are dramatically transforming as the former GDR is incorporated into western Germany.

I also draw on Eyerman and Jamison's perspective that social activism, and more specifically, environmentalism, is a process through which knowledge concerning society and nature is created, to make a link with the geographic literature that dimensions of nature are socially produced. If environmental movements produce new concepts about how resources should be exploited; about the organization of production; about the nature-society relationship, and these ideas contribute to the transformation of social structures, then social activism may play a significant role in the social production of Nature. While the social construction of Nature has been primarily understood as
occurring through such macro-level forces as economic structures and political institutions (Hewitt 1983; Watts 1983; Redclift 1987), the framework of Eyerman and Jamison highlights the "contexts in which human beings construct their social reality", thereby recreating economic structures, political institutions and language (Eyerman and Jamison 1991, pg. 162, italics added). Their attempt to "show that 'society' is continuously being recreated through complex processes of interaction and innovation in particular contexts" (ibid) has inspired me to explore how Nature is being recreated in a similar fashion.

The cognitive approach focuses on the conceptual space created by a social movement, the changing nature of this space, the activism it engenders, and its influence. When a social movement is understood as a process, the temporary organizational dissolution of a particular activist group or even of several groups is seen as an inherent element of that process. Thus, Eyerman and Jamison claim:

Social movements are all too often reduced to specific empirical phenomena, and as such their "theory" as well as their inner dynamic fades from consideration. We contend, however, that the distinctiveness of social movements, indeed their very historical significance, lies in their impermanence, disorganization, transience, in short in their motion. A movement moves, it can be seen as a kind of transition from one historical conjuncture to another; and, as such, its cognitive praxis can only be identified in formation. (pp. 59-60)

Within this perspective, the waxing and waning of a movement is not only inherent to it but critical to its particular identity.

In the above citation, Eyerman and Jamison allude to an alternative understanding of social activism, namely Resource Mobilization Theory, which defines a successful social movement organization by those characteristics which contribute to its constancy. The focus of this framework, well represented in the seminal works of Zald and McCarthy (1979; 1987) and Oberschall (1973), is to explain the permanence of a movement organization through its ability to gain sufficient resources in a competitive environment. The resources available to a movement include its members, financial backers, political connections, office facilities, and media interest. According to the Resource Mobilization Theory, if a movement organization is to survive as a viable entity, it must minimize
costs and maximize benefits as would any business. Successful organization leaders must be able to adapt to changing environments in order to continue the flow of resources needed to maintain the organization, and foster the movements growth.

This approach toward understanding a social movement is quite difficult to apply to the social activism which developed in the former German Democratic Republic. First of all, the groups of people who came together through their political critique of the state in the late 1950s did not constitute an "organization" per se. Their critique was carefully expressed, often through underground literature. Given the oppression of a totalitarian state, these groups were very concerned about remaining inconspicuous, with limited physical resources. They submerged and re-emerged throughout the history of the country in response to the oppression and monopoly control of the Socialist Unity Party's (SED) regime. As an entity with a structure and a (albeit very tentative) public voice, the "Alternative Movement" didn't surface until the late-1980's (as Gorbachev's new policies beckoned an apparently permanent move toward political openness and economic reform).

In addition, given the political danger of having been associated with an alternative movement, pre-1989 "movement membership" is impossible to quantify. Membership lists for environmental activists are a new phenomenon, associated only with post-unification environmental organizations. If lists existed before that, they were compiled by the Ministry of State Security for purposes of keeping track of "subversives". Importantly, the strong, organized oppositional force evident in Czechoslovakia or Poland never developed in East Germany—as new resistance leaders emerged they were simply deported to West Germany.

Furthermore, the apparent disbanding or splintering of social activism after German unification, has led many to question whether defining this activism as a social movement, or a set of social movements, is appropriate at all. For instance, Gert-Joachim Glaessner of the Free University of Berlin states that prior to the spring of 1989 there had been no "opposition" to speak of, which rather distinguished the GDR from the other socialist countries. To be sure, there had been various informal groups from the late seventies which usually worked in the protected space of the churches...Since about the mid-
eighthies there emerged a "second public" represented by various forms of semilegal and illegal publications, but there was no organized opposition comparable to Charter 77 in the CSR or Solidarity in Poland. (Glaessner 1993, pg. 109)

Even Eyerman and Jamison claim that political change in GDR "followed more as the unintended outcome of an unplanned and uncoordinated collective behavior rather than of a social movement in our sense of the word" (Eyerman and Jamison 1991, pg. 156). They sum up the East German grassroots activism by stating:

In East Germany what began as an economically motivated demographic movement, a flood of workers in search of better pay and consumers in search of goods into West Germany, ended up as a political revolution. (ibid)

Thus the Resource Mobilization Theory, with its emphasis on how a movement obtains a constituency and maintains resources, is difficult to apply in the GDR case, and is not insightful in understanding the influence of alternative movements on the GDR society. Yet, I argue in the following chapters that Glaessner's representation of East German activism is actually quite incomplete and Eyerman and Jamison's is shallow. Despite their claims to the contrary, the flexibility offered by Eyerman and Jamison's conceptualization of social movements as processes, which inherently go through periods of dissolution and resolution, is not only applicable, but tremendously useful in studying the alternative political activism of East Germany, and in offering insight into the current post-unification process underway in Germany.

Geographic contribution to the social movements literature: Urban Social Movements and structuration theory

As I have mentioned, the geographic discourse of the social construction of nature has focused predominantly on the power of social structures in producing Nature, leaving little discussion about the dynamic role of agents in this process. Thus, this dissertation contributes to the literature by examining the role of activists as agents in the social transformation of Nature. My perspective is that individuals, in a collective group, initiate a dialectic with state and economic structures, through which these structures are reproduced or transformed, thereby also transforming nature. A variation of
this perspective, which employs Anthony Giddens' (1979; 1981; 1983) theory of structuration, has been used in the geographic literature to analyze specifically the role of Urban Social Movements (Dear and Moos 1986; Moos and Dear 1986; Cox 1988) in transforming state structures.

According to Giddens, structuration refers to a process through which the structural components of a society (i.e., social institutions, rules, norms, and values) are both the medium and product of social practices. Thus, structures are both enabling—allowing individuals to act within and upon them, and constraining—limiting individual freedom to act. Giddens has argued that both the social system and individual actors are equally as important in explaining social patterns (Moos and Dear 1986), since structures are continually being modified as the activities of individuals which maintain them change\textsuperscript{15}. The ability of an individual or of a collection of individuals to intervene in the processes which reproduce structures depends upon his/her/their position in society.

While leading scholars of the Urban Social Movements literature have defined and analyzed these movements using a structural marxist perspective of the state and of social activism (Castells 1984; Fincher 1987; Katznelson 1981; Piven and Cloward 1977; Pickvance 1985)\textsuperscript{16}, several geographers interested in the phenomenon of Urban Social Movements have incorporated Giddens' theory of structuration to view the state structure as "both a condition for, and a reproduced or transformed outcome of, social struggle" (Cox 1988, pg. 417). Thus, Cox, for instance, views grass-roots movements as both an outcome of the state, and a condition for restructuring the state (pg. 426). Dear

\textsuperscript{15}This understanding of the interaction between structure and agency in producing social phenomenon stands in contrast to two prevailing frameworks for explaining social patterns. Structuralism emphasizes the power of social structures, a result of (capitalist) economic organization and the historical development of modes of production, in determining social phenomenon, and the relative inability of individual to transform these structures. The second framework for explaining social patterns focuses on the intentions, preferences, and actions of individuals in determining social phenomenon. This approach is commonly used by humanistic, behavioral, and economic geographers (Duncan 1985).

\textsuperscript{16}This perspective emphasizes the role of (capitalist) structures in constraining and shaping the outcome of human activity over space (Johnston, et al. 1994, pg. 599), and views the emergence of social movements as a symptom of class struggle inevitable given the social contradictions inherent to the class relations of capitalism. The capitalists state therefore conditions class struggle. The study of Urban Social Movements within this perspective tends to focus on whether these movements are "progressive", i.e., able to further working class interests such as issues of collective consumption (Fincher, 1987).
and Moos (1986), in their analysis of the "ghettoization" of ex-psychiatric patients in the City of Hamilton, found that the empirical application of structuration theory provided significant insights into explaining the effectiveness of collective action in challenging and, in fact, changing social policy. It is this consideration of how collective action (i.e., agency), and social policy (i.e., structure), come together to produce, reproduce, and transform society (Moos and Dear 1986, pg. 232) that I utilize in the research of this dissertation, to understand how environmentalism produces, reproduces and transforms nature. In so doing, I provide a critical link in the geographic literature between the discourse of social movements, social theory, and the social construction of Nature.

**Argument and outline of subsequent chapters**

The central argument of this dissertation is that environmental relations are not only produced through our modes of production, but also through collective action, which initiates one of many dialectics through which social structures are eventually transformed—thereby also transforming Nature. In order to pursue this argument in the context of the German Democratic Republic, I first analyze the ways in which specific social structures of East German society have produced Nature. In Chapter 2, I conduct a historical analysis of the predominant structural forces to trace how East Germany’s socialist/totalitarian political-economy generated severe environmental and social degradation. In Chapter 3, then, I use a cognitive approach to examine how agency, namely the alternative social activism of the German Democratic Republic has served as a constructive force in the creation of knowledge concerning the interaction between citizens and states. This analysis becomes more specific in Chapter 4, where I consider the ideas and ideals generated through environmental activism concerning the nature-society relationship. It is here that I also consider the dialectic relationship between environmental activism and the state in creating the environmental politics of the GDR. Together, Chapters 2 through 4 describe the manner in which Nature was socially constructed in the German Democratic Republic, both through social policy and
environmentalism; through structure and agency.

In Chapter 5, a comparison of Nature as constructed in East Germany, and Nature as constructed in West Germany supports the argument that two divergent political cultures produce two divergent Natures, both materially and conceptually. To analyze the differences in material nature produced by the FRG and the GDR, I compare air emissions levels in the two countries, since these data are available for the GDR and fairly accurate. I then compare the two Green Parties of East and West Germany, in order to determine whether from their divergent experiences, different ideas and ideals concerning the nature-society relationship were produced. In Chapter 6, the differences of the two movements are brought to bear in a discussion of the challenges and events of German unification.

What is particularly interesting about the example of the social construction of Nature in the former German Democratic Republic is that the social structures and the environmental activism which produced specific patterns in Nature before 1989, are now transforming dramatically. How can we examine this transformation? I have chosen to look specifically at a new transportation policy being developed for eastern Germany by the Ministry of Transportation in Bonn. In this case, structure, i.e., the transportation policy and the transportation network, is being radically transformed by non-local interests, namely the west German government authorities and the west German construction and automobile industries (who are privately financing a massive renewal of the eastern road network). What is the impact of this new transportation policy on already established local geographies? How will this change in policy transform the local natural and social environments? In Chapter 7, I compare and contrast the East and West German transportation systems, and then review the new transportation policy being developed for the eastern states. The analysis emphasizes the role of infrastructure in creating and recreating physical and social geographies. In addition, I consider the local reaction (specifically of environmentalists as one component producing and produced by local geographies), to the changes in transportation currently underway. Finally in Chapter 8, I consider the importance of geography in explaining regional differences, as local patterns of Nature and non-local structures intersect. My case studies focus on the struggle over Nature occurring as the new
transportation policy for eastern Germany reorganizes the cities of Berlin, Leipzig, and Halle.

Research materials and methodology

This research utilizes the theoretical perspectives outlined above to direct analysis of primary and secondary data sources. Secondary sources include East and West German newspaper and magazine articles, economic and political histories of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, environmental reports published in the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, and published interviews of East German social activists and government leaders. Primary sources include government documents of both the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, documents and speeches of social activist groups, documents of transportation policy, and personal interviews of academics, former social activists, members of current environmental organizations, and employees of public departments involved in environmental issues.

Materials were gathered both in the United States and in eastern Germany. A large part of my research of primary and secondary documents took place in the archives of the formally underground Environmental Library (Umwelt-bibliothek) in Berlin, the Wittenberg Research Center (Wittenberg Forschungsheim), the Environmental Library in Halle, and the Environmental Library in Leipzig. In these archives I focused primarily on files containing the underground newsletters (i.e., Briefe from the Wittenberg Research Center, Die Umweltblätter and Grenzfall, published by the Berlin Environmental Library) printed by environmental activists before 1989, as well as speeches of the social movements organizations which formed in the Fall of 1989, such as the New Forum (Neues Forum), Democracy Now (Demokratie Jetzt), Democratic Start (Demokratischer Aufbruch), and the Green Party (Grüne Partie). These archives, maintained in large part by current environmental

17 A description of these is found in Appendix B.
organizations such as the Grüne Liga (Green League), also contain material documenting the activities and goals of current environmental organizations. In reading these I focused predominantly on materials describing the organization and goals of these groups, as well as their involvement in the politics of transportation renewal in eastern Germany.

Interviews were conducted in person, and recorded by a cassette recorder. A complete list of interviewees and the length of interviews is given in Appendix A. Since one research focus of this dissertation concerns the knowledge, ideas, and ideals created through social activism, I interviewed both East German activists and academics, as the latter is typically considered the traditional source of knowledge creation. Activists interviewed included both those involved in activism before unification, and/or those involved in activism since unification. I also interviewed administrators in environmental departments of the three cases studies developed in this dissertation. In several cases, the interviewee fell into more than one of the above three categories (activist, academic, administrator). For instance, a former environmental activist may now be an administrator, or an academic may also have been a former activist. In total, 30 interviews were conducted. Some interviewees preferred to remain anonymous (see Appendix A).

Interview questions were organized around four subject areas: 1) if applicable, the individual's involvement in environmental activity before 1989, reasons for involvement, activities, and perceived goals; 2) current involvement in environmental issues of eastern Germany, reasons for involvement, activities, and perceived goals; 3) perception of other actors in the environmental politics of eastern Germany, i.e., federal government, local government, green party, environmental organizations, academics; 4) perception of the current transformation of environmental conditions in eastern Germany as a whole and locally, focusing on the reconstruction of the transportation network.

Newspaper reports were obtained through a perusal of leading sources in the West German press, such as Die Zeit, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Der Spiegel, Die Welt, Der Standard, Frankfurter Allgemeine, Frankfurter Rundschau, as well as local newspapers in my case study cities, i.e., die tageszeitung, Berliner Morgenpost (Berlin), Halle'sche Tageblatt (Halle), Leipzig'sche Volkszeitung (Leipzig). In order
to gain access from the United States of press reports or newspaper articles published in and about
the German Democratic Republic before 1990, I utilized the Foreign Bulletin Information Service
(FBIS) Reports of both Eastern Europe (EEU) and Western Europe (WEU) extensively. These reports
contain English summaries of leading articles of well known European newspapers. They also
contain, translations of official speeches and government texts. Thus, within the text of the
dissertation, quotes have been drawn from these summaries and texts which are already in English.
Quotes drawn from German texts and translated by me include "author's translation" in the
references.

Environmental data for the former German Democratic Republic is difficult to obtain, primarily
because the government banned the unofficial publication of environmental information in 1983 and
published little itself. The underground newspapers mentioned often contained quite sophisticated
analyses of environmental conditions in the GDR, since some scientists had access to information
they could not publish officially, but would offer anonymously to the editors of these newsletters.
The majority of the scientific articles published in these newsletters, however, had been allowed
public press in obscure journals with low visibility. Newsletter editors were therefore legally able to
reprint these. Peter Wensierski, an East German physical scientist, had unusual access for a short
period of time to the official environmental archives of the GDR. He published a book in 1988
through a West German press, Ökologische Probleme und Kritik an der Industriegesellschaft in der
DDR heute (Ecological problems and criticisms of the industrial society of the GDR today), which I
have used extensively. I also obtained environmental data from the first and only official
environmental report published in the German Democratic Republic (Umwelbericht der DDR, Institut
für Umweltschutz, 1990), and two environmental reports of the Federal Republic of Germany,

These materials were organized chronologically in order to conduct a historical analysis of
environmental activism and the production of nature through political and economic institutions from
the 1960s to the present. My analysis of the political and environmental activism in the GDR utilized
the methodology of Eyerman and Jamison (1991) as outlined in Chapter 3. My analysis of the social
collection of Nature in eastern Germany, considered such social structures as environmental policy,
state ideology, and technology, and the agency of activists' reactions to these and their potential
influence on them.
Chapter 2

NATURE AS SOCIALLY PRODUCED IN THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL STRUCTURES

In this chapter I trace the social origins of pre-1989 ecological conditions in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Using the perspective that nature is socially produced, I conduct a historical analysis of the predominant structural forces of the GDRs society to track how East Germany's socialist-totalitarian political-economy generated severe environmental and social degradation. The analysis further reveals the processes through which the structure of production channeled environmentally sound behavior in certain directions while discounting or indeed stimulating environmental destruction in others.

The chapter contains four sections. The first reviews empirical analyses found in the geographic literature which employ the theoretical framework used here: namely that Nature is socially constructed. In the second section I present a brief overview of the German Democratic Republic's political and economic history in order to provide the reader with the critical historical landmarks necessary to understand later discussions in this chapter and throughout the dissertation. The third section describes the ecological conditions of the pre-1989 German Democratic Republic. Finally, in the fourth section, I trace how these conditions were socially constructed by examining the political and economic ideology, technology, and environmental policy of the GDR.

The social construction of Nature: A review of empirical studies

In the last decade, a growing number of critical social theorists have tackled questions as to how views of the natural environment have produced certain ways of using nature's resources which are interrelated with the creation and distribution of wealth and welfare (or conversely poverty and hardship). In so doing they argue that dimensions of nature are social constructions. For example,
Carolyn Merchant, in *The Death of Nature* (1989), argues that predominant views about nature and women stemming from the European world view, can be connected to the historical evolution of Western science, technology, and modes of production. She gives many examples of how images of nature reflect images of women, i.e., storms, drought, and other natural disasters have been associated with the uncontrolled female spirit which men aspire to control; nature as the nurturing mother and bountiful female; the penetration of the earth through the mining of its ore as a violation of nature’s womb. The evolution of science and the sophistication of economic production have worked to improve upon and strengthen humankind’s exploitation of nature, as well as, Merchant argues, of women. Thus, conceptions of nature manifest in social institutions such as science and production processes have legitimized the social domination of women as well as the domination of nature.

Similarly, Vandana Shiva’s *Staying Alive* (1989), links the historical expansion of western capitalism to the current exploitation of nature and the economic marginalization of women in India. She locates the common source of exploitation in a patriarchal, technological, progress-means-growth-oriented, science.

In geography, natural hazards research was one of the first areas in which the perspective that nature is socially constructed was applied. As a result, the very foundation of this research has been challenged. Specifically, Kenneth Hewitt (1983) has made explicit the social consequences of the predominant approach towards hazards research and has revealed implicit assumptions which have led to highly technical and, he argues, fairly superfluous research methods. Yet, perhaps more importantly, he claims that these methods have in fact increased human vulnerability to calamity.

Hewitt argues that the dominant perspective in hazards research views calamities as "accidents"—events that occur by chance. They are objective geophysical processes, whose forces can be understood, contained, and managed only through "advanced institutional and technical counterforce" (pg. 6). When natural disasters are described as atypical or abnormal, the goal of scientists, he suggests, becomes to improve predictions of their occurrence in an attempt to maintain the "normalcy" of everyday life. This requires an impressive array of statistical and technological
techniques. The implicit assumption that natural crises can be managed given sophisticated technology, encourages a false sense of security amongst people who choose to reside in hazard-prone areas.

If, however, the dominant description of hazards acknowledged that they are, in fact, characteristic features of the places where they occur, less time and resources might be dedicated to their prediction or attempted management, and more toward the appropriate incorporation of the consequences of a potential hazard into the built and social environments. In other words, people would work to incorporate the risks associated with a natural hazard into their daily living, and adjust to them, rather than constructing a lifestyle which effectively ignores these risks, and then becomes dramatically disrupted when calamity strikes.

Employing a materialist perspective, Michael Watts (1983) further explicates the social consequences of typical environmental hazards research. He points out that the prevailing view of environmental crisis precludes understanding human vulnerability to natural disasters as a function of the inequities embodied in social systems. Thus, Watts argues:

[N]atural hazards are not simply natural..., for though a drought may be a catalyst or trigger mechanism in the sequence of events which leads to famine conditions, the crisis itself is more a reflection of the ability of the socioeconomic system to cope with the unusual harshness of ecological conditions and their effects...[A]ll too often, prevailing power blocs attributable [sic] to nature the inequalities for which the structure of society is responsible. (pg. 259)

Also focusing on the way in which the political-economy creates environmental conditions and therefore human vulnerability to those conditions, Michael Redclift (1987) views "environmental change as a social process, inextricably linked with the expansion and contraction of the world economic system" (pg. 3). In trying to define an alternative to the unsustainable, growth-oriented economic systems of the West, he first pursues a historical analysis of the "concept of the environment and sustainability...which present-day development serves to undermine" (ibid. pg. 4, italics added).

Lori Ann Thrupp (1991) provides an empirical example of how forces of economic development
have undermined the health of ecological and human systems in "Third World" countries. She focuses on the problems of human and environmental degradation resulting from the application of agrochemicals on large-scale commercial banana plantations in Central America. Her analysis indicates that these problems are not only related to technical and ecological factors of banana production, but also, and more importantly, to social and political-economic factors. These include the structure of production, the short-term profit motive of producers, and the uneven control by powerful economic interests of information pertinent to production. Thus, Thrupp argues that if sustainable and equitable forms of agriculture are to be achieved, substantive socio-economic and political changes must occur in conjunction with the necessary technical changes.

In the last section of this chapter, I provide an additional example of how material resources are differentially degraded as a result, not of technical capability, but of historically based political and economic institutions. The example of a former East Bloc country, namely the German Democratic Republic, broadens the above-mentioned literature in that it explores the forces of socialist/totalitarian political-economies, rather than of western-capitalist economies, producing Nature. To set the stage for this analysis, I first present a review of the GDRs political and economic history, and then the material evidence of environmental and social degradation in the GDR.

**A review of the German Democratic Republic's political and economic history**

On May 8, 1945, World War II came to a close as Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Allied powers dominated by the United States (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and France. As a result of the Yalta Conference in February of 1945 and the Potsdam Conference in July-August of that year, the Allies agreed to demilitarize Germany. This agreement was motivated by their desire to ensure that Germany never have the capability to wage war again. To this end, they established a plan to deindustrialize the German state, and to divide it into zones occupied by the four predominant Allied powers.
The target of the deindustrialization process was a reduction in Germany's production capacity by 50 percent. In the Western zone, industrial dismantling focused on banking, steel, chemical, and coal production. In the Soviet zone, the payment of war reparations to the Soviet Union resulted in the confiscation of approximately 60 percent of total industrial production. Of this, the heavy industry (about 20 percent of total production) was claimed outright by the USSR. The remaining 40 percent (from the 60 percent confiscated) was nationalized. This process of industrial and infrastructural dismantling in the Eastern zone of Germany continued into the early 1950s and far exceeded corresponding measures in the Western occupied zone (Leptin and Melzer 1978). The USSR also pursued an agrarian reform in the Soviet occupied zone of Germany, which resulted in the expropriation of all land owned by former Nazis, and limited total land ownership to 100 hectares. More than 3 million hectares of agricultural land were distributed among 500,000 peasant farmers, agricultural laborers, and war refugees (Burant 1987, pg. 44).

While signs of friction between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies manifested themselves during the War, cooperation between the USSR and the West came to a veritable halt in 1947. Between 1945 and 1947, Stalin had presented a stance of cooperation with the West, in order not to jeopardize the survival of Communist parties in western Europe. In 1947, with the installation of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan by the United States and the dismissal of Communist ministers from coalition governments in France, Stalin decided he had better focus his attention on maintaining his hold in Eastern Europe (Langer 1968, pg. 799). Thus, in that year, he abolished the influential peasant parties in all countries occupied by the Soviet armed forces. In 1948, he required that the Socialist parties of these countries merge with the Communist parties, creating, for example in East Germany, the Socialist Unity Party (SED) (ibid, pg. 800). Recognizing the wisdom of establishing a strong West German state given the increasing tension between the USSR and the West, the Western Allies met in March of 1948 to unite the German zones occupied by the USA, the UK, and France. The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was established in 1949. In response, the Soviet Union announced the formation of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) on October 7,
Between 1949 and 1955, the GDR government underwent a period of Stalinization similar to that occurring in other East Bloc nations. Despite the fact that the GDRs founding Constitution of 1949 established a Parliament (The People's Chamber) as the highest state body with legislative sovereignty, Stalin imposed a Soviet-style political structure, giving the Socialist Unity Party (SED) sole government leadership. The power of the People's Chamber was severely reduced. It effectively acted only to support decisions made by the SED (ibid).

In order to rebuild the East German economy, damaged not only by World War II, but also by the post-war Soviet confiscation of industrial capacity\(^{18}\), the Third Party Congress of July 1950 focused on industrial progress in its first Five Year Plan (1951-55). Centralized state planning was introduced, underscoring high production quotas for heavy industry and increased labor productivity. A tremendous lack of public support for these measures was evidenced by a mass exodus of East Germans to the West. In 1951, 11,500 to 17,000 people emigrated to the West each month. By 1953, this monthly average had increased to 37,000 people (ibid, pg. 46).

This drain of labor capacity, as well as the loss of Stalin's leadership through his death in March 1953, produced insecurity in the fledgling GDR government (Burant 1987). Unlike its sister countries of the East Bloc, the GDR faced a unique political challenge due to its cultural and geographic proximity to the Federal Republic of Germany. Direct comparisons were readily made not only because of the common border between the two Germanies, but also because of their common language, history, culture, and family connections. The economic miracle of West Germany thus posed legitimation problems for the SED as early as the 1950s and continued to plague the Party throughout East Germany's history.

In a preliminary attempt to assuage laborers demands for better working conditions, and to stem the tide of emigration to West Germany, the SED's economists developed an economic reform policy.

\(^{18}\) Approximately 25 percent of East German production went to the payment of war reparations which ended only with Stalin's death in 1953 (Burant 1987, pg. 129).
in 1953 called "The New Course". The "newness" of this policy was its concession to developing light industry in conjunction with the heavy industrial base so that citizens could have a wider range of consumer products. However, since "The New Course" maintained high production quotas and included an acceleration of farm collectivization, public dissatisfaction remained strong. On June 17, 1953, workers’ strikes and demonstrations erupted spontaneously in more than 120 East German cities (Leptin and Melzer 1978, pg. xv). Suppression by Soviet troops occurred immediately, resulting in the deaths of approximately 500 demonstrators (Burant 1987, pg. 47). This political suppression sparked another wave of flight to the West. The number of refugees swelled from 182,393 in 1952 to 331,390 in 1953 (Leptin and Melzer 1978, pg. 4).

Despite this reduction in the labor supply, the SED set relatively demanding objectives in its Second Five-Year Plan of 1956-60. Goals included a 45 percent increase in National Income, a 55 percent increase in production of manufacturing industries, and a simultaneous growth of 50 percent in the productivity of labor in manufacturing industries (ibid, pg. 5). In order to achieve these aims, the Five-Year Plan emphasized technological progress with the slogan "modernization, mechanization, and automation". In the agricultural sector, collectivization continued despite the resistance of farmers. By 1961, 90 percent of East Germany’s agricultural products were produced by the socialist sector.

While in the second half of 1957 and in 1958, economic development proceeded favorably, by the end of 1958 growth rates began to fall again. The 1956-1960 Five-Year Plan was reviewed and substituted with a seven year plan (1959-1965) which emphasized as its "principal economic task" per capita production levels that would overtake those of West Germany by 1961. The success of this plan appeared realistic at the time given the Federal Republic’s faltering growth19. Yet it depended heavily on increased labor productivity (hopes were for increased productivity of 85 percent) and therefore the SEDs ability to convince labor to stay in the GDR rather than to head West (Leptin and

19 By 1960 the FRGs growth rates had begun to fall from the 7.8 rate of growth achieved between 1950-60 (Nyrop 1982, pg. 160).
Unfortunately, the optimism expressed in the seven-year plan was considerably off the mark. The Federal Republic had experienced only a short economic setback which was soon replaced by a rise in growth rates. In the GDR, migration to the West continued. In 1959, 144,000 East Germans fled the country, a figure which increased to 199,000 in 1960. Fifty percent of these emigrants were under the age of twenty five. In all, 2.5 million citizens had left the GDR between 1949-1961 (Burant 1987, pg. 48). With the resulting decline in labor productivity, the GDRs economic productivity fell far short of the goals stated in the seven-year plan. By 1961, the seven-year program had effectively collapsed. The severity of these statistics led finally to the decision by the SED leadership to stem the loss of labor permanently. In August, 1961 the Berlin Wall was built.

As was occurring throughout the East Bloc during the early 1960s, the German Democratic Republic’s leadership decided in 1963 to initiate a fundamental economic reform in order to counteract the declining annual industrial growth rate experienced since 1959 (Table 2). In 1958, the growth rate was 10.7, a six-year high. Yet by 1961, this figure had fallen off dramatically to 1.6, a mark which would prove to be the lowest rate of growth ever achieved in the GDRs history. The reform policy, called the New Economic System (NES; Neues Ökonomisches System), mandated limited decentralization in economic planning through the partial transfer of decision-making from the central State Planning Commission and National Economic Council to the Associations of Publicly Owned Enterprises. In addition, based on the reforms of Soviet economist, Evsi Liberman, a profit rate was introduced into the pricing structure in hopes of inducing initiative and efficiency at the firm level (Leptin and Melzer 1978).

With respect to foreign policy, the Socialist Unity Party’s leader, Walter Ulbricht, responded conservatively to the climate of détente emerging between 1967 and 1971. Quite reluctant to

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20 In March and May of 1970, meetings between the Federal Republic’s Chancellor, Willy Brandt, and the Chairman of the GDR Council of Ministers, Willi Stoph, initiated a new phase of intra-German relations. Although it was recognized that tensions between the USA and the USSR deterred a reunification of Germany in the foreseeable future, it was hoped that relations between the two
Table 2: Official statistics for rates of growth of produced national income (percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1976</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8.7</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
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<td>1983</td>
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<td>10.7</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ian Jefferies (1987), pg. 10

Germanies could improve, especially with respect to humanitarian issues. At the same time, the Federal Republic signed treaties with the USSR and Poland, providing a critical element in the relaxation of East-West tension (Leptin and Melzer 1978, pg. xvi).
normalize relations with the Federal Republic, Ulbricht focused more heavily on strengthening ties within the Warsaw Pact, and in fact, organizing opposition to détente. This coincided with his campaign to intensify economic cooperation between the Comecon member nations, in order that the East gain economic independence from the West (Burant 1987).

By 1970, it became clear that the goals of the New Economic System could not be realized. Throughout the decade of the 1960s, rates of growth in National Income had not been impressive (see Table 2). The negative effects, in 1969, of extreme weather conditions on power supply, transportation, agricultural production, and construction, heightened already deficient supplies of consumer goods to East German communities. Insufficient reserves and the inadequate flexibility of enterprises to respond to such external shocks as severe weather pointed to significant weaknesses in the NES reform (Leptin and Melzer 1978). Ulbricht gave up the reform policy and reinstated complete centralized planning in 1970.

As an alternative to the decentralized economic decision making of the NES reform, Ulbricht planned to increase production efficiency and to make the task of centralized planning easier by vertically integrating industries into Kombinate (combines). These Kombinate comprised the merger of various industrial enterprises based on the interrelationship of their production activities. They were intended to replace the Associations of Publicly Owned Enterprises which had previously served as the administrative link between the ministries and individual enterprises. In each Kombinat, a single management directed the entire production process, from research and production, through to sales\(^{21}\) (Burant 1987, pg. 124). Despite these efforts, Ulbricht was unable to turn the GDR economy around, and was replaced in May 1971, by Erich Honecker (Burant 1987).

Honecker began his tenure by launching a massive campaign to reinstate the worker as the focal point of socialist policy. The material needs of the workers were emphasized through his slogan

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\(^{21}\) By the early 1980s, the establishment of Kombinate for all centrally managed and district-managed enterprises was virtually complete. In 1986, there were 132 centrally managed Kombinate with an average of 25,000 employees per Kombinat (Burant 1987, pg. 125).
"consumer socialism". As a result, the administration repressed consumer prices and accelerated the construction of new housing in an attempt to alleviate worker complaints (ibid). A 1971 price freeze on all new commodities was extended first to 1975, and then again to 1980, as a mechanism to avoid the price-related labor strikes plaguing Poland in 1970. The resulting distortion of prices, which biased the production process toward materials actually in short supply, was worsened in the early 1970s with an increase in world energy prices (Leptin and Melzer 1978).

Thus, in 1975 a decision to adjust upward the cost of raw materials for industry while maintaining consumer prices was made. It was hoped that industry would then be forced into raising productivity (ibid). However, since quota fulfillment was based on the value of output, and, under the socialist economic system, this value was based on the cost of labor and inputs used in production, a reduction in raw materials reduced the ability of an enterprise to meet its quotas. Thus, enterprises with little incentive to economize despite higher input costs, drained the GDRs scarce natural resources as well as its finances.

With respect to foreign policy, Honecker, unlike his predecessor, was amenable to détente. He balanced this position, however, with a staunch loyalty to the Soviet Union. While the official rhetoric between the FRG and the GDR had, until then, still emphasized the aim of German unification (though neither side was willing to concede to the other's political system), Honecker made the bold move to abandon this objective altogether. With one hand, he declared the GDR a sovereign state in allegiance to the Soviet Union, and with the other hand, he successfully negotiated the Four Power Agreement on Berlin in 1971 and the Basic Treaty with West Germany in 1972. The Four Power Agreement on Berlin became the kernel of East-West treaties, regulating relations between the two parts of Berlin as well as between the FRG and the GDR. The Basic Treaty created a basis for subsequent negotiations by formalizing for the first time the independence and sovereignty of the two German states (Leptin and Melzer 1978, pp. xvi-xvii). In 1973, both the FRG and the GDR were admitted into the United Nations (Buran 1987).

In spite of his amenability to détente, Honecker remained committed to Soviet-style socialism. He
maintained strict, repressive policies toward those who verbalized "anti-socialist rhetoric". When in the late 1960s and early 1970s a group of critical authors and artists within the Socialist Unity Party began to reexamine the possibility of the GDR establishing a democratic form of socialism (as had been attempted in Prague in 1968), their efforts led to their imprisonment or deportation from the country. For instance, the poet-songwriter, Wolf Biermann, and authors Robert Havemann and Rudolf Bahro were quite vocal in advocating a democratization of socialism. Biermann was expelled from the GDR in 1976. Havemann was placed under house arrest in the same year. Rudolf Bahro, best known for his book, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* (1978), was imprisoned in 1977 and finally deported to the West in 1979. In 1981, at the Tenth Party Congress, Honecker held tenaciously to his stance that "democratic centralism" was an impossibility in East Germany, while he strengthened his commitment to improving the economy, stabilizing the socialist system, and maintaining good relations with the Federal Republic of Germany (Burant 1987).

In the early 1980s, world energy prices rose to such an extent that the GDR state was hard pressed to satisfy the nation's energy demands. As a way to circumvent the world oil market, the government decided to exploit its domestic source of energy, namely brown coal. The aim was that by 1990, 80 percent of the country's power generation would be based on its domestic coal (*Neues Deutschland* Jan 24-25, 1981, pg. 3). This brown coal is a soft lignite which yields half the energy of hard coal. It therefore requires twice the volume to produce as much energy as hard coal. With a higher sulfur content than hard coal, it also produces considerable sulfur dioxide when burned. Since this lignite is strip-mined, its retrieval from the earth has destroyed vast tracts of farmland as well as entire villages. Mine reclamation, though legally mandated, was, in practice, quite limited. In addition, approximately six times more water is drained from open cast mines than the coal retrieved, taxing East Germany's already limited water supply (Wensierski 1988, pp. 220-227). Thus, as I show in more detail in the next section, although the SEDs aim to substitute coal for oil wherever possible made economic sense, it had devastating effects on the environment.

It was within the repressive political atmosphere of Honecker's regime, as well as the
increasingly severe environmental circumstances of the 1980s that people came to discuss issues of peace, human rights, and the environment within the refuge of Protestant churches throughout the GDR. Although the SED had traditionally been intolerant of any organization which existed outside of those officially approved of by the state, and had additionally towed the marxist line that organized religion was an "opium of the masses", it agreed, in 1978, to allow the church an official role in the cultural and political development of socialism. With this agreement, the church came to offer one of the only places in GDR society where individuals had the opportunity to share ideas, concerns, experiences, and their all pervasive fear of state repression. As they came together, they formed working groups, workshops, and seminars. For instance, in 1983, the Nikolai Church of Leipzig began to hold monthly peace services, from which evolved more vocal human rights and environmental workshops. As these groups became bigger, their activities drew considerable attention from and met with harsh repression by the Ministry of State Security (Stasi). Nonetheless, the momentum of alternative activism grew. By early 1987, demonstrations in Leipzig were held on a weekly basis—the famous "Monday demos". In the Spring of 1987, 600 people were attending marches. By October weekly rallies brought out 120,000 citizens (Der Standard Oct 20, 1989, pg. 3).

As church-led workshops and services turned into public demonstrations and protests, the church found it difficult to mediate between the state and activists. Feeling this constraint, leading activists decided to take the risk of violent Stasi repression, and organize outside of the church. By the Fall of 1989, a rash of independent movement organizations had formed. These included Democracy Now (Demokratie Jetzt), the Democratic Start (Demokratische Aufbruch), the New Forum (Neue Forum), the Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei), and the Green Party (Grüne Partei).22

The founding of these organizations coincided with and was motivated by a series of international as well as national events. In the GDR, apparent electoral fraud, in the spring of 1989

22 Democracy Now was founded in September, 1989; Democratic Start in October; the New Forum in September; the Social Democratic Party in October; and the Green Party in October (Rein 1989). See Appendix B for details concerning these organizations.
angered those citizens attempting to demonstrate their lacking support for the SED party by voting against it (Hamburg DPA Jul 8, 1989a; Hamburg DPA May 10, 1989). Peace activists held marches throughout the GDR as a form of protest.

In a petition to the GDR State Council, an East Berlin church peace group has pointed out "discrepancies in the communal election results published" and has demanded an investigation...In other East Berlin districts, in Leipzig and in some other places, grass-roots groups and civil rights activists also had pointed out discrepancies between the results compiled by them and those published by the GDR media...During a function of the "Church from Below," in East Berlin on Tuesday evening [May 9], former SED official and attorney Rolf Heinrich proposed a reform of the GDR election law. He said before an audience of about 300 persons that elections in the GDR are "not open. Elections that are not open are not elections."(Hamburg DPA May 10, 1989)

The final election results published by the GDR media showed that the percentage of votes against the Party was the highest in the Leipzig, Karl-Marx-Stadt, and the Frankfurt/Oder districts (ibid).

These accusations of electoral fraud coincided with public outrage at Honecker's refusal to denounce the Beijing suppression of student demonstrations for democracy in June. In an interview with the US newspaper, The Washington Post, Honecker responded to questions concerning the student uprising occurring at that time in the People's Republic of China:

I do not intend to interfere in the internal affairs of the People's Republic of China because such interference always has negative consequences...According to my own experiences I always assume that students have the task to learn and to study. At present there is horror news which obscures a clear view on the events as they are. For objective information we have all the relevant statements and information which has been published by the Chinese party and state leadership. In these statements the leadership said that for a long time it had shown great understanding to the students, but that in the meantime, however, numerous agitators have slipped into student circles. (Neues Deutschland Jun 8, 1989, pg. 1)

Honecker's position was all the more frustrating when East Germans looked to the East and saw open discussions of democratization emanating from the Soviet Union. In Warsaw, discussions between the Communists and those who opposed them, organized under the name of Solidarity, represented concrete steps toward democratic renewal in a sister state. By the summer of 1989, openly contested elections were being held in Poland, resulting in an unheard of sweep of the Communist Party by Solidarity. Similarly in Hungary, the power of the Communist Party was eroding, with open elections scheduled for the fall.
It is within this international political climate that, in the fall of 1989, the SED leadership had to respond to a defiance from its own citizenry. In early September, approximately 9,000 East German tourists vacationing in Hungary chose not to return home. They decided instead to wait in Budapest for permission to cross into Austria as a way into West Germany. Throughout the summer, Hungarian border guards had averted their eyes in order to let East German tourists pass. This steady stream of migrants began to intensify in the first weeks of September, to the point where the Hungarians finally removed the barbed-wire barriers along their borders on September 11. While GDR authorities responded by limiting access to Hungary, East Germans began to congregate at the West German Embassy in Prague. Czechoslovakia was one of the only countries to which East Germans could travel without extensive documents. Remarkably, Honecker did not resist this avenue of migration, and by October, thousands of East Germans boarded trains for Czechoslovakia each day, on their way to the West (The New York Times Oct 1, 1989).

Those who remained behind rallied against this mass exodus, shouting in the streets, "We are staying here", but also demanding democratic reform from the SED leadership. These calls were strengthened by Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to the GDR on October 9. Speaking on the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the GDR, he emphasized his vision of democratization, political openness, and self-determination for all citizens in the Soviet Bloc. Implicitly chastising Honecker for his adamant conservatism, Gorbachev spoke the now famous words, "Wer zu spät kommt, den bestraft das Leben" (Life punishes he who arrives too late). On October 18, Honecker resigned, appointing Ergon Krenz, the youngest member of the Politburo, as his successor.

Despite this changing of the guard, demonstrators throughout the GDR continued to take to the streets, demanding the resignation of the entire Communist elite. On October 23, hundreds of thousands marched peacefully in the streets of Leipzig, calling for the legalization of opposition movements, independent labor unions, and the separation of power between the Communist Party and the state (The New York Times Oct 23, 1989). On October 27, Krenz offered amnesty to all those East Germans who had fled or tried to flee the country. In the following week protests throughout the
GDR intensified. At the Monday demonstrations in Leipzig, 500,000 people gathered; 60,000 in Halle; 50,000 in Karl-Marx-Stadt; 80,000 in Erfurt; 20,000 in Schwerin; 10,000 in Gera and in Cottbus. On November 4, more than a half a million people gathered for a rally in East Berlin’s Alexanderplatz (Merkel 1993, pg. 1). On November 7, the entire East German cabinet resigned (Gwertzman and Kaufman 1990, pg. 175).

Two days later, on November 9, the unthinkable occurred. On that evening, Günther Schabowski, the newly appointed Central Committee Information Secretary, gave a televised press conference in which he stated that from that moment on, approximately 7:00 pm, citizens of the German Democratic Republic were allowed to travel to the West without any restrictions. By ten o’clock crowds had gathered at the border crossings in Berlin. The border guards, unsure of the correct procedures under these unusual conditions, were initially hesitant to accommodate the East Berliners demanding to cross over to West Berlin. A half an hour later, the crowds simply pushed their way through the gates. Within minutes, West and East Berliners were dancing on top of the Wall, sipping champagne (ibid, pg. 2).

Days later, Krenz called the long dormant East German Parliament into action. On November 13, the members of Parliament agreed that the Communist Party was no longer entitled to lead the country, given its tremendous failings. They elected Hans Modrow, a proponent of liberalization, as Prime Minister (The New York Times, Nov 13, 1989).

In an attempt to fill the void of power, Modrow organized a Round Table, in December, of leading alternative social movements, members of the old political establishment, and three representatives of the Evangelical (Protestant) Church. In mid-December, the FRG’s Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, and the GDR’s Prime Minister, Hans Modrow, met in Dresden amongst crowds cheering for the unification of Germany (Gwertzman and Kaufman 1990, pg. 330). By February, Modrow, Kohl, and the nine Round Table members had met to initiate the establishment of one German currency. The first free elections in the GDR were held on March 18, 1990. They were won (with 48 percent of the vote) by an Alliance dominated by Chancellor Kohl’s party, the CDU
(Christian Democratic Union). This Alliance advocated unification as quickly as possible (ibid, pp. 133-134). On October 3, 1990, this mandate was finalized with the political reunification of Germany.

**Nature as constructed: material evidence**

In this section, I describe the environmental conditions of the GDR before 1989. As indicated, the economic necessity to rely heavily on brown coal for energy, given the rising world prices of oil (approximately 70 percent of the GDRs energy requirements were satisfied by lignite), and the limited use of ecologically sensitive technologies (i.e., smokestack scrubbers) resulted in East Germany having the highest per capita emissions levels of all industrialized countries. In comparison to Japan, for instance, the GDRs per capita level of carbon dioxide emissions was three times higher, while per capita sulfur dioxide was more than thirty times greater (Bomer 1991). According to the World Resources Institute (1992), per capita sulfur dioxide emissions in East and West Germany were estimated at 313.3 kilograms and 24.2 kilograms, respectively. The heavily industrialized region of East Germany experienced average sulfur dioxide emissions well over double the cut off level considered tolerable for human health (Institut für Umweltschutz 1990, pg. 20). In 1989, low-temperature carbonization plants at Espenhain alone emitted 131,000 tons of sulfur dioxide and 29,000 tons of dust. Smaller carbonization plants at Deuben and Boehlen added another 100,000 tons of sulfur dioxide and 36,000 tons of dust (*Frankfurter Allgemeine* Sep 8, 1990, pp. 7-8). Despite efforts at intensification, the GDRs per capita use of primary energy was 20 percent greater than that of the Federal Republic, while national income per capita was 30 percent less (Bomer 1991, pg. 2).

Heavy sulfur dioxide emissions contribute to acid rain, and the associated forest damage. Recent estimates report that 54.3 percent of East Germany's forests have suffered ill-effects from pollution. From 1988 to 1989, damage to forest cover was reported to have increased by 20 percent on average, while the greatest damage has occurred in the Bezirke (districts) of Leipzig, Magdeburg, Berlin,
In order to secure scarce foreign exchange, the GDR accepted industrial and household wastes from Western Europe. Dumps were often established near the border between the FRG and the GDR, in the "no-man's land" to which few East German's had access. These locations were ideal since citizens living in the vicinity of a dump were often quite unaware of its existence (Baerens 1990). Over five million tons of waste per year were imported from West Germany alone. With little regulation or monitoring of the type of waste or the disposal process, the quality of ground water near these sites is questionable (Petschow, et al., 1990, pp. 83-86). Unfortunately, the GDR traded in water quality for a low price. While the Federal Republic required 300 to 4000 Deutsch Mark for one ton of toxic waste, the GDR only asked DM150 (Bomer 1991, pg. 4). More recently, departing Soviet soldiers left behind buried poisons, used oil, and munitions of unknown quantities and, it is suspected, in still unknown locations. German taxpayers will pay additional billions of Deutsch Marks just to protect against immediate dangers to human health, let alone to combat the longer term environmental and health threats of these hazardous waste sites (Berlin ADN May 1, 1991).

An additional source of soil and ground water contamination was the poor monitoring and often unrecorded dumping or burning of domestic industrial wastes. Despite a 1977 regulation that classified dangerous by-products, and a law from 1983 that required all firms to have their dump sites authorized, and to write a daily report as to the type, amount, and origin of waste products, government monitoring was grossly insufficient. As a result, industries (the energy and heating industries were the primary contributors) were able to burn toxic substances without purification measures. Nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide, hydrochloric acid, and other poisonous gasses were emitted freely into the air (Wensierski 1988, pp. 46-50).

Before unification some 30,000 tons of potassium salt were dumped into the Werra river daily by the potash-fertilizer industry, a major source of foreign exchange for the former GDR (DeBardeleben 1985, pg. 37). As a result, the Werra's fresh water fish have died off. The west German city of Bremen relies on the Weser, which flows from the Werra, for its domestic water supply. This source
was chronically at risk due to the high saline content originating in the east (most of Germany's major rivers flow east to west, with the exception of the Saale). In addition, unfiltered industrial waste has been flowing into streams, and seeping into ground water for decades. For instance, the aluminum and viscose silk plants of Bitterfeld emitted large quantities of organic sulfuric compounds, cyanide, mercury, and phenol into the Mulde, and consequently the Elbe and the North Sea. The Buna chemical plant in Schkopau used a chlor-alkali electrolysis process which discharged six tons of mercury a year into the Elbe. The city of Wittenberg, never having a sewage treatment plant, was discharging 8 tons of nitrogen and 2.5 tons of phosphorous into the Elbe daily, while Dresden was discharging untreated residential and industrial wastes into this river since 1987, when a flood destroyed its sewage treatment facility built in 1908. Heavy metals (i.e., lead, cadmium, mercury) from industrial sewage contaminate ground water and also agricultural land through irrigation (Frankfurter Allgemeine Sep 8, 1990, pp 7-8).

Nitrate contamination of ground water, drinking water, and soils as a result of heavy chemical fertilizer applications, intensive animal production, and the leaking of contaminated fluids from silos reached critical proportions in the former GDR. In 1980, the nitrate content of ground water was five times greater than in 1960. Although data of nitrate contamination were no longer published in the 1980s, a 1983 report from Dresden's research center on water technology stated simply that a growing number of East Germany's water processing plants were surpassing the state legislated cutoff level of 40 mg. of nitrate per liter--and that this trend had no foreseeable end (Wensierski 1988, pg. 204).

The result has been a doubling of average daily nitrate absorption by GDR citizens (from 78 mg. to 159 mg.), through food, milk, and water, from 1970 to 1983 (See Table 3 for a comparison of 1979 and 1983 data). The greatest sources of per capita nitrate absorption are vegetables, potatoes, and drinking water.
Table 3: Average Daily per Capita Absorption of Nitrate in the GDR: 1979/1983

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foodstuff</th>
<th>Nitrate/mg Daily per Capita</th>
<th>Percentage of Nitrate Absorption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>45 (60)</td>
<td>32.6% (40.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>30 (38)</td>
<td>21.7% (25.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking water (beverages also)</td>
<td>30 (40)</td>
<td>21.7% (26.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread/grain products</td>
<td>9 (5)</td>
<td>6.5% (3.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat products</td>
<td>7 (2)</td>
<td>5.1% (1.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>6 (1)</td>
<td>4.4% (0.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk/cheese</td>
<td>4 (1)</td>
<td>2.9% (0.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miscellaneous</td>
<td>7 (3)</td>
<td>5.1% (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>138 (158) mg.</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Wensierski 1988, pg. 207, author's translation
In 1989, 45 percent of the GDRs already scarce water supply was reported to be too contaminated to be processed for drinking water. Another 35 percent could only be processed for drinking with heavy economic costs (Institut für Umweltschutz 1990, pg. 36). A primary source of water shortage has been the mining of brown coal. Open-cast mines, often 90 meters deep, required water drainage up to 100 meters below ground level. Approximately six times as much water is consumed in this process than the coal retrieved. In 1978, the amount of water used in coal mining was as much as used by the GDRs nationally-owned industries and water processing plants combined (Wensierski 1988, pg. 220).

In the coal-mining regions of eastern Germany, ponds and wetlands are drying up, trees are dying from the withdrawal of water, wells are disappearing, animals and plants are retreating, while the ground itself is sinking. Not only has the water shortage, and subsequent effects on the environment threatened living conditions in these regions, but the very expansion of coal-mining has required the dismantling of entire towns. From 1960 to 1980, 70 villages, 125 railroad tracks, 190 km of roadways, and 60 km of water piping were removed. In addition, the reclamation of open-pit mines has not kept up with the expansion of mining. In 1945, from 45,000 hectares of mined surfaces, 22,000 were reclaimed (49 percent). In 1980, only 41,000 hectares were reclaimed from a total of 130,000 hectares mined (31 percent). Since 1980, approximately 4,000 additional hectares of land per year were developed for mining. In the district of Cottbus alone, 21 new mines were to be opened between 1987 and the year 2000. An estimated 45,000 people were to lose their homes (Wensierski 1988, pp. 220-227).

The impact of such environmental conditions on human health and welfare has been severe. While in 1974, every fourth or fifth child in the GDR was afflicted with a respiratory illness, this average increased to every second child in 1989. Approximately 30 percent of the children living in areas of heavy air pollution suffered from eczema (Institut für Umweltschutz 1990, pg. 65). Infants and small children are particularly vulnerable to the lethal effects of nitrate concentrations in food and water. Nitrates are absorbed through the intestinal walls, block the functioning of hemoglobin to
the point that it can no longer transport oxygen in the blood stream. Child mortality, attributed to nitrate poisoning (although not officially recognized) is suspected to be widespread (Wensierski 1988, pp. 204-210).

Workers in heavily polluted regions of the GDR have endured severe headaches, heart disease, dizziness, listlessness, and various other symptoms associated with exposure to sulfur dioxide (Institut für Umweltschutz 1990, pg. 65). Life expectancy in the region of Halle was reported to be five years less and the occurrence of respiratory disease was 15 percent greater than elsewhere in East Germany (DeBardeleben 1985, pg. 36). In 1984, GDR scientists published an unusually frank report stating that the number of cancer cases in regions with severe air pollution was increasing tremendously. Cancer cases were particularly prevalent in regions polluted by the open-pit mining of brown coal or with large power stations (Der Spiegel Aug 13, 1984). Women in heavily polluted areas have had a higher number of miscarriages than the average. While warned that their breast milk is likely to be contaminated, women found feeding infants formula also dangerous given the likelihood of pollutants in the water (Vorholz 1991).

Let us now turn to the structural forces which produced this severe environmental record in the GDR. I begin my analysis with the role of political ideology in the construction of the ecological conditions just described. Then I consider the influence of science and technology, and finally economic policies. This chapter is concluded with an analysis of how these ideas, institutions, and policies in fact selectively channeled environmentally sound behavior in certain directions while discounting environmental destruction in others.

**Political ideology and the construction of Nature**

The political and economic leaders of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) used Soviet Marxist ideology to frame their analyses of environmental issues. An understanding of society-nature relations was gleaned from the writings of Marx and Engels based on their use of
Marx and Engels realized a need to protect nature, so as not to destroy humans, or the nature within humans. Marx considered the human being as an evolutionary product of natural processes. In altering nature, he argued, human beings also alter themselves.

*Social* man [sic] is always conceived as a *natural* being, and external nature is always conceived as the other side of man, both individual and social, which is constantly humanized in man's dialectical dealing with it. (Parsons 1977, pg.9)

According to Marx, the *internal* contradictions within society were essential to social development. The *external* contradictions such as appeared between society and nature were not. Thus, the movement of social history did not depend on the society-nature relationship. Nevertheless, socialist economists have acknowledged that the natural environment does influence development by inhibiting or stimulating it. It has also been recognized that ignoring this role of nature in production and life could have significantly negative consequences for future generations (Paucke 1987).

The references to Marx's "ecological" understanding of the relationship between society and nature, often detract from a far more influential conception of nature proposed by Marx: that of abundance. This notion that nature as well as the human potential to refashion it is limitless finds its origins in the scientific revolution of the Enlightenment, and has fueled both socialist and capitalist industrial development.

Marx was very impressed with the industrial revolution and its enormous productive potential. For him freedom from the burden of work was intimately linked to the notion of material superabundance. The vastness of nature and the "invincibility of science and technology" (Füllenbach 1981, pg. 74), gave rise to a belief in society’s inexhaustible potential for growth, a cornerstone of socialist economic development. This Marxian ideal was often recalled in state speeches to the citizenry. For instance, Honecker, giving a speech before party activists in Gera, stated:

*Central [to our five-year plan] are such vital questions as secure supplies of raw materials and fuels and combining the virtues of socialism with the achievements of the scientific-technological revolution...Practical experience confirms that our party proceeds from the objective economic laws of socialism and applies them correctly under the conditions of our country. Our party program rightly treats as central tasks of our society the strengthening of*
our material-technological base, economic growth and increasing productivity, on which everything ultimately hinges. (East Berlin ADN International Service Oct 13, 1980, pg. E11)

Since the internal contradictions of capitalism (which include the social dimensions of environmental deterioration) were attributed by Marx to the private ownership of capital, socialist economies are based on the public ownership of the means of production. The state’s ownership of capital and resources is legitimized by a centralized decision-making process authorized to allocate resources for the benefit of the entire population. Increased material and cultural living standards, as well as the health and well-being of every citizen are stated priorities of socialist governments. Thus, it was argued, environmental policies essential to the realization of these objectives are integral to the overarching goals of society.

The pollution more and more evident in socialist countries could not, therefore, be attributed to a well-functioning socialist system. Instead, officials argued that existing pollution was inherited from the capitalist past of Eastern Bloc countries. In addition, the arduous and on-going task of reconstructing the inherited socio-technical system left few resources for environmental preservation. Thus, state leaders argued that overcoming the historical heritage of capitalism as well as the devastation of World War II required finances, materials, intellect, and most importantly, time. Environmental problems had to wait until true socialism was achieved.

**Science, technology and the construction of Nature**

Although it was recognized by socialist economists that the application of advanced industrial technology, critical to the fulfillment of the socialist vision, was further impairing natural resources, their proposed solution required a higher level of technological development. A stronger technical base and more advanced scientific management were necessary to obtain true socialism, at which

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21 Even in the USSR, which was highly agrarian before the communist revolution, ecological damage was blamed on the heritage of Czarist Russia (Füllenbach 1981).
time the environmentally related aberrations of an otherwise sound political economy would be rectified. A GDR economist explains:

The development and application of advanced productive forces show many negative side effects. They result in disturbances of the natural cycle in different areas (woods, fields, rivers) as well as media of nature (soil, water, air), expressing a historically *insufficient* level of development of the productive forces and of the domination of nature. (Paucke 1987, pg. 150, italics added)

Another proposed solution to the apparent contradiction between the social progress associated with the development of advanced production forces and their ill-effects on society and nature defined an objective and subjective dimension to science and technology (Fleron 1977). According to this argument, the objective aspect of technological development is the material gain derived from it. Economic growth, a priority for socialist development, could only be realized through innovation and the application of new technologies. Advancement in science and technology, whether developed in capitalist or socialist countries, was not only critical to the sustenance of a growing economy, but also the reproduction of socialist labor through better working conditions, content of work, and consumption satisfaction. Similarly, the reproduction of nature would be secured by newer technologies that use resources more efficiently (Steinitz 1967).

The subjective aspect of technology refers to the capitalist use of science and technology to exploit both the working class and the environment for the benefit of the bourgeoisie. It is through the social structure of capitalism that science and technology become exploitative. Only with the still on-going realization of a true class-less society, will technology "reveal its full liberating potential" (DeBardeleben 1985, pg. 52). Thus, GDR economists argued the road to socialism must be pursued with increased vigor. Through socialist relations of production the harm done to natural resources from the intensification of technology (the objective factor) would eventually be mediated\(^\text{24}\).

\(^{24}\) This logic is paralleled in capitalist economies with the dominant perspective that only when economic growth is in full swing do the resources become available to rectify the damage done to the environment in the pursuit of material security.
Economic policy in the social construction of Nature

The former GDR was in fact quite progressive in its official recognition of natural resource constraints to economic growth and the need to legislate environmental protection in order to ensure socialist progress. Problems in adhering to the environmental legislation arose when valuable resources were needed to monitor adherence, or when environmental conservation inhibited economic growth.

As early as 1954, the GDR Parliament articulated in its *Naturschutzgesetz* a national duty to protect nature against the onslaught of unwarranted economic misuse and destruction. Article 15, Section 2 of the GDR Constitution reads:

> It is to the benefit of all citizens that state and society shall take care of the protection of nature. Clean water and air as well as the protection of fauna and flora and of all natural beauties of our homeland shall be ensured by the proper authorities and by all citizens.

(Verfassung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1968, italics added)

In the 1960s the GDR passed a series of important regulations to protect water, air and soil (Table 4). These included the regulation of waterways and their exploitation, the protection of agriculture and forest land in accordance with "socialist use of land resources", the regulation of air emissions, the regulation of mines, and a regulation mandating the reclamation of mined land. These culminated in May 14, 1970 with the *Landeskulturgesetz* (*Land Use Law*) that earned East Germany the reputation of being a model among socialist countries in the field of environmental legislation. In November of 1971, a new ministry for environmental protection and water works was established.

Even by today's standards, these laws and policies contained very detailed and far-reaching regulation. Their potential was undermined for a variety of reasons. First, a fundamental constraint to the efficient use of natural resources by technology and production processes has been the Marxian theory of value. According to Marx, only the period of human labor allocated to production determines the value of a product. Although other objects have usefulness (use-value), they have no
Table 4: Date and Description of Significant Environmental Regulations in the GDR before 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 17, 1963</td>
<td>Law governing the protection, exploitation and maintenance of waterways, and also protection against floods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 17, 1964</td>
<td>Decree protecting agricultural and forest land, and for the establishment of socialist use of land resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 28, 1968</td>
<td>Regulation for the determination and limitation of air pollution/emission control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 12, 1969</td>
<td>Law regulating mines and quarries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 10, 1970</td>
<td>Regulation for the reclamation of worked-out mining areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 14, 1970</td>
<td>Land Use Law.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Füllenbach 1981, pg. 15
value in exchange unless created by human labor. A logical consequence of this theory has been the availability of readily obtainable natural resources to nationalized industries at minimal cost.

While resource abundance in the USSR afforded the Soviet economy this "free" use of raw materials, for the GDR, where natural resources were in short supply, the wanton exploitation of primary resources could not be tolerated for long. Iron ore deposits are scattered in locations unfavorable to mining, and have seams with an iron content of only 20 to 35 percent. In fact, most of the iron ore, high grade coal, and oil needed by the country had to be imported. All of its bauxite, chromium, manganese, and phosphate came from abroad, as well as lumber and cotton. Even the country's water supply was barely sufficient to meet domestic and industrial needs (Burant 1987, pg. 120). In order not to worsen these severe resource constraints, an ecologically sensitive amendment to the labor theory of value became critical by the late 1960s. To this end, GDR officials introduced a land use levy in 1968 (Füllenbach 1981). Still, resource conservation continued to be hampered by ideology-oriented policies, setting the stage for a deepening environmental cum economic crisis in the GDR, as well as in other Eastern Bloc countries.

Secondly, fundamental to the legitimized exploitation of natural resources in the Soviet Bloc was the political objective to catch-up to or overtake the West in material production. Socialist economies were geared for maximum output. Expansion was measured quantitatively. Enterprise quotas were based on product value which, until the reforms of 1963, was determined by the amount of resources and labor hours used in production. Even the early 1960s price reforms (essential to the decentralizing New Economic System) of the GDR, which included profit in price calculations, based

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25 The East German economist, Alfred Leonhardt, supported this view but attempted to attribute some value to nature by arguing that if natural resources were to lose their usefulness (i.e. through environmental deterioration), then labor would be required to recreate or restore it. Thus, through labor input, natural resources would obtain value. Amazingly enough, Leonhardt ignores altogether the (economic) process creating environmental deterioration. He simply states that polluted resources gain the value equivalent to the labor investment required for their restoration (Füllenbach 1981).
the profit margin on a percentage of labor input, material costs, or a combination of the two\textsuperscript{25}. This attempt to stay true to Marx's labor theory of value, encouraged the inefficient use of labor and inputs. For instance, if only labor creates surplus value (profit), then enterprises concentrate on the most labor-intensive production possible in order to increase the amount of profit they earn. This impedes the modernization process, i.e., the substitution of labor by capital. Similarly, when profits are based on input costs, firms seek the highest possible costs so as to drive up their price and therefore their profits. A more radical suggestion based profit on the productivity of capital as well as on wage costs. This attempt to encourage capital efficiency was, however, abandoned during the 1970s period of recentralization. The practical difficulties of implementing a price construction of this kind were apparently inhibiting (Leptin and Melzer 1978).

Another source of environmental deterioration associated with the East-West "competition between systems" (Fülgenbach 1981) was the arms build-up of the cold war. Not only did the production of arms and the maintenance of a military take away resources from other sectors of the socialist economies\textsuperscript{27}, (including the production of ecologically sensitive technology\textsuperscript{28}), increased nuclear warhead capacity--argued by the Soviet leadership as being precipitated by the West--was considered a far greater source of environmental destruction than any created by short-term

\textsuperscript{25} Profit margins were included in price setting to help finance investment, and therefore economic expansion (Leptin and Melzer 1978, pg. 49).

\textsuperscript{27} In 1987, the East German army consisted of approximately 175,000 personnel. Much of its defense force, consisting of border troops, ground forces, a navy, and air force was augmented by resources and personnel from the Soviet Union. The GDR produced primarily military supplies such as computers, clothing, military vehicles, and communications equipment, rather than arms which were obtained from the Soviet Union. Civil defense was a vital element of East Germany's system of socialist military education. This included mandatory pre-military basic training for all men between the ages of sixteen and nineteen. Military education was a formal component of the school curriculum, and began as early as kindergarten where children played games with a military orientation. Every citizen was obligated to contribute toward defense through conscription. In 1982, women between the ages of 18 and 50 could be conscripted into general military service rather than the previous noncombat roles (Burant 1987, pp. 246-261).

\textsuperscript{28} Horst Paucke, "The German Democratic Republic," in Environmental Policies in East and West, Enyedi, et al. (eds) 1987, pg. 155.
aberrations of the East European economies. For instance, in a 1984 report, the GDR Minister of environmental protection and water management stressed the inseparable connection between the protection of the environment, the reduction of the arms race, the prevention of a nuclear inferno, the securing of peace, and the return to international détente... *(Neues Deutschland* Nov 24-25, 1984, pg.2)

This argument in conjunction with the eventual environmental superiority of the socialist political economy, deflected criticism to the Western "class-enemy".

Finally, events of the early 1970s brought a new level of complexity to centrally planned economies. Since the very feasibility of economic organization was being severely challenged, economic policy was given top consideration over all other social issues, including the environment. The moderate reforms of East Germany's *New Economic System* were essentially abandoned due to their perceived weakness in responding to external disturbances (i.e., unusual weather conditions, increases in the prices of imported raw materials). Unfulfilled quotas and plan targets pushed leaders to favor conservative central planning. The introduction of capital-related prices was halted. A 1971 price freeze on all new commodities was extended from 1975 to 1980 in order to mollify those East German workers inspired by the 1970 price-related labor strikes in Poland. Terribly distorted prices induced economically wasteful production while also obstructing innovation. These distortions were further aggravated by world-wide energy price increases in the early 1970s, as well as greater geological difficulties in brown coal extraction, which should have pushed raw material prices up. By 1973, increased credit associated with the growth of petrol-dollars and an economic recession in Western countries, initiated substantial foreign trade deficits in most Eastern Bloc countries (Leptin and Melzer 1978).

The GDR was in a better position than most socialist countries, given its highly industrialized economy, to avoid serious trade problems by raising exports. In 1972, the manufacturing industry accounted for 61.1 percent of its national income, trade 12.8 percent, agriculture 11.1 percent, and
construction 8.2 percent (ibid, pp. xii, xiii). Thus, the GDR leadership increased pressure on domestic industry to conserve the use of increasingly expensive raw materials, while stimulating production for export. A 1975 decision to adjust upward the cost of raw materials for industry while maintaining consumer goods prices, was meant to force enterprises into raising productivity. However, by reducing raw material content enterprises reduced the value of their commodity output, and therefore worsened their ability to fulfill quotas (Leptin and Melzer 1978). Enterprises had little incentive to economize despite the new input prices.

Regardless, intensification of production became a leading policy objective in the GDR during the 1970s and 1980s. It was officially presented as the logical next step in socialist development. Shifting from the necessarily extensive project of building an early foundation of heavy industry for the improvement of post-war living and working conditions, intensification—the more efficient use of resources—was required for further economic growth (Paucke 1987). The 1970s brought a big push towards recycling in industry and households alike. A 1978 East German newspaper article, assailing the waste of metal scraps dumped in forests and in garbage heaps, stated that 75 percent of the raw material demands of the GDR steel industry were covered by recycled metal scraps (East Berlin Domestic Service Oct 26, 1978). In the period between 1975 and 1988, the reutilization rate of industrial waste was said to have risen from 20 to 40 percent, and was expected to reach 50 percent by 1990 (GDR Academy of Science 1989, pg. 424). Resource-saving strategies were praised for stimulating economic growth while conserving natural resources. Official reports state that for every year between 1971 and 1975, a 4 to 5 percent growth in manufacturing output was accompanied by a 2.8 percent reduction in unit consumption of energy and materials. Resource efficiency is said to

29 By 1989, industry accounted for approximately 70 percent of the GDRs national income. The industrial sector was still dominated by its lignite mining, energy, and chemical industry. Over 50 percent of the GDRs national income and industrial production was derived from foreign trade demands. In 1987, machinery, industrial equipment and vehicles accounted for 48 percent of all exports. High-tech goods were exported predominantly to the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), an economic alliance of East Bloc nations. Increased trade with capitalist countries was, according to an official report, based on the "GDR's desire to establish links based on the principle of peaceful coexistence between countries with different social systems" (GDR Academy of Science 1989, pg. 336).
have improved during the 1980s.

The consumption index for major fuels and raw materials fell by 29 per cent, and for materials generally by 25 per cent, over the period from 1980 to 1987. Unit water consumption throughout industry dropped by 33 per cent while over 17 per cent more harmful substances were recovered from waste water, boosting the overall rate of re-use to almost 55 per cent. (ibid)

Wastes from agriculture and food processing were also diligently collected and recycled. For example, a 1984 article from the West German paper, Die Welt, states:

As of 1 May, money can be made in the "GDR" from waste flour, waste from butter production, eggshells, and potato peels. On 1 May, East Berlin issued an unparalleled regulation, signed by "GDR" Premier Willi Stoph and Agriculture Minister Bruno Lietz (SED). It regulates with unusual bureaucratic perfection how all the republic’s waste must be theoretically collected as "fodder reserve". Because of the foreign currency shortage, East Berlin must economize on expensive grain and fodder imports. (Die Welt May 4, 1984, pg. 4)

When in the early 1980s world energy prices rose, the scarcity of foreign currency seriously threatened the state’s ability to import the energy necessary to satisfy demands from industry and households alike. The government decided to circumvent the world energy market by fully exploiting a domestic source of energy: brown coal. Brown coal was to substitute for fuel oil wherever possible. This increased reliance on a highly polluting source of energy was presented to the public in a rhetoric of national pride. An East German newspaper summarizes from an unattributed report titled "Brown Coal--Our Number One Raw Material and Power Source; This Year We Will Extract 261 Million Tons":

No other country in the world extracts as much brown coal as the GDR. Our share of world output is 28 percent. The extraction of brown coal deposits will constitute the backbone of the GDR's power industry far into the next century. It is a basic trend in our economic strategy to intensify refinement of brown coal. (Neues Deutschland Jan 23-24, 1981, pg. 3)

By 1990 it was envisioned that 80 percent of coal extraction would be refined to produce synthetic

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30 Brown coal is a soft lignite which yields half the energy of hard coal. Since twice as much needs to be burned to produce as much energy as hard coal, twice as much land area is mined. The brown coal is surfaced mined, thereby destroying vast tracks of land. Villages and farm land alike were plowed under to make way for new mines. Although land reclamation laws existed in the GDR, they were seldom enforced. In addition, brown coal has a higher sulfur content than hard coal, creating greater amounts of sulfur dioxide when burned.
gas, plastics, high quality polyurethanes and intermediate pharmaceutical products. In 1981, 30 percent of the state’s investment in industry was earmarked for developing a domestic power base through brown coal (ibid).

The technology with which sixteen newly developed open pit mines would extract coal was described with great admiration:

Modern, efficient stripping machines such as the new SRS 1,300 wheel bucket excavator of the Takraf combine, which handles 3,600 cubic meters of overlay shelf per hour, are available for this purpose. (Ibid)

The goal: that by 1990, 80 percent of the country’s power generation would be based on brown coal, up from about 60 percent in 1980 (ibid; East Berlin ADN International Service Jan 14, 1980).

Despite the positive rhetoric from government authorities, the physical degradation caused by this push to mine brown coal, made those living in coal-mining districts aware of some of the drawbacks. In an article of the January 1980 issue of Briefe (Nr. 1) ("Immissionsschäden im Erzgebirgswald") (Air pollution damage in the forests of the Erz Mountains), pp. 2-3, a Freiberg resident writes of the forest damage visible in the Erz Mountains. The cause of this degradation he attributes to increased sulfur dioxide emissions from brown coat processing and burning. In the April 1984 issue of Briefe (Nr. 9), two personal letters from women living in the southern coal-mining district are reprinted. These letters depict the suffering endured by those living with dirt and soot that penetrated the air, suffocated the plants, and settled on all objects, both inside and out. The letters express frustration about the dying trees, fear for the health of the children, and anger at not being able to get information about the environment. Thus, it can be no accident that the state’s great push to increase brown coal excavation and refinement coincided with an increased awareness at the grassroots of environmental destruction and pollution.

Yet, official government reports contradicted the living situation of many in the area of coal mines, refineries, or coal-based industries by suggesting that environmental pollution from an increased use of brown coal was being held under control. For instance, in 1984, at a multilateral conference on the environment held in Munich, the GDR minister for environmental protection and
water management, Dr. Hans Reichelt, praised the success of East German emission control legislation, stating that since the 1970s, sulfur dioxide emissions had been held constant while industrial production in that period had risen by approximately 80 percent. Since the 1980s the rational use of energy had not only conserved lignite, but had decreased the amount of sulfur dioxide (equivalent to 650,000 tons), emitted by industry. The GDR was touted as setting an international precedent by putting into production the desulfurization of lignite furnaces. East German leaders boasted that the economic strategy of intensification was improving environmental conditions and was, therefore, also in full accordance with the environmental mandate of the GDR Constitution (East Berlin ADN International Service Jun 25, 1984).

Furthermore, the GDRs economists argued that the costs of pollution and resource deterioration were incorporated in the centralized pricing system, through the labor theory of value. The amount of labor needed to restore a natural landscape, or to plant new trees in place of the old dead ones, could be calculated to reflect increased costs of certain production processes (Füllenbach 1981).

However, a 1983 state imposed ban on the publication of unofficial environmental data severely crippled the already slow process of price correction in a centralized economy. Paradoxically, making public information on environmental conditions which could be used to argue the ineffectiveness of socialism in its mandate to secure clean air and water, or healthy flora and fauna, was considered subversive. It questioned the eventual and logical superiority of socialist society over all others. Consequently, the ban on environmental data further hampered an already monumental task of incorporating the value of investments required to restore and prevent environmental damage in the calculation of centrally-determined prices. Without adequate environmental data, it was impossible to estimate the cost of pollution clean-up. Solutions for reducing the negative impact of pollution focused therefore on the receptacle of pollution rather than the source. A "reasonable" solution to pollution-related forest loss, thus proposed reforestation with "smoke-resistant" trees (Paucke 1987).
Social relations of production directing the construction of Nature

The perspective that Nature\textsuperscript{31} is socially produced, i.e., contingent on social relations, particularly those of production, encourages us to further unpack the processes from which the policies and justifications just described were derived, in order to decipher whether the structural constraints of East Germany's political economy selectively channelled environmentally sound behavior in certain directions while discounting or indeed stimulating environmental destruction in others.

Summarizing from above, three economic imperatives framed resource use in the GDR during the 1970s and 80s: 1) economic growth, 2) the labor theory of value, and 3) the intensive use of resources. Adherence to the labor theory of value, a pillar of marxist economics, created a pricing system whereby profit rates were either based on wage costs, or a combination of wage and input costs. If profit is contingent on wage costs, more labor hours will increase profits, thereby inducing a labor intensive form of production. Alternatively, when profit is based on a combination of wage and input costs firms are encouraged to increase input use as well. Neither encourages the efficient use of resources.

Since the labor theory of value was the fundamental component determining the value of a resource as reflected by its price, it became the leading mechanism directing which resources would be used intensively, and in turn, from whence economic growth would be sought. The strategy of intensification focused, quite obviously, on resources with value. In a socialist economy, however, valuation occurs through the process of production, therefore intensification came to focus on secondary materials, such as recycled metals, glass, and the recovery of substances from waste water. Conversely, since no tangible economic value could be attributed to primary materials, \textit{having not yet entered the production process}, their efficient use (despite all rhetoric) was effectively deterred. For these reasons, I describe resource use in East Germany through two opposing vectors, one associated

\textsuperscript{31} i.e., the use of nature in production, its valuation, the spatiality of its deterioration and preservation, the meaning attributed to it.
with the re-use of secondary materials (i.e., recycling) and the other with the more widely discussed undervaluation and therefore wasteful use of primary materials.

The waste management system in the former GDR provides an obvious example of this two-pronged valuation process and its impact on the use of resources in production. On the one hand, goods production in the GDR was geared towards potential recycling. For example, three standard recyclable bottles were used to contain most liquids sold in grocery stores; plastics and metals were made such that they could be easily recycled; packaging was minimized. Industrial production incorporated an official recycling system, the *Sekundär-Rohstoffwirtschaft* (secondary economy of raw materials). Such measures were quite successful in economizing waste materials. In the German Democratic Republic average per capita waste production per year was 175 kilograms compared with 365 kilograms in the Federal Republic of Germany (Priewe and Hickel 1991, pg. 44). Equally as important was the wide spread support by East German citizens of the idea that consumer goods could and should be recycled to supply future resource needs.

Yet, waste management in the GDR was also defined by minimal regulations for waste disposal or burning, leading to quite catastrophic consequences for natural resources, particularly with respect to (as yet unvalued) ground water. The poor monitoring of official dump sites was aggravated by a substantial level of unrecorded dumping. In 1988, two-thirds of non-industrial waste were brought to official dumps sites, leaving one-third unaccounted for. Exacerbating the environmental threats of domestic waste disposal, the GDR imported hazardous wastes from western Europe to such an extent that more foreign exchange was earned from importing waste than from the export of modern technologies (ibid pg. 45).

Intensification, which spurred the economically sound practice of recycling, had little effect, however, on directing production away from the old, highly polluting, and (primary) resource inefficient machinery. This is due to the fact that, despite the extravagant utilization of primary resources, older machines were in the best interest of firms. They required more labor and material input than modern technology, thereby increasing the value and profit rate of products and the ability
of firms to obtain production targets. While reliance on aging machinery also became a necessity for an economy scarce in foreign exchange and the materials to build capital, it epitomized the lacking economic incentive to redirect production methods away from wasteful uses of primary resources.

**Conclusion**

Although the severity of environmental deterioration in the former Soviet Bloc is widely publicized, less attention is given to the fact that countries such as the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) initiated large-scale industrial and household recycling campaigns which are unparalleled in the West. For instance, from 1975 to 1988, the reutilization rate of industrial waste in the GDR rose from twenty to forty percent, and was expected to reach fifty percent by 1990. While 75 percent of the raw material demands of the GDR steel industry were satisfied by recycled metal scraps, heavy sulfur dioxide emissions have caused more than half of East Germany's forests to suffer ill-effects. How may this apparently contradictory environmental record be explained?

While it is widely acknowledged that the labor theory of value leads to an undervaluation of primary resources, this chapter examined how it encourages the re-use of secondary materials. In the former GDR, ideological tenets selectively channelled environmentally sound behavior in certain directions while discounting or indeed stimulating environmental destruction in others. The analysis of this chapter contributes to a larger argument that dimensions of nature, and more specifically of natural resources, are socially constructed.

In a socialist economy, materials do not gain value until labor has worked them. Thus, unlike capitalist economies, where materials gain value when they are scarce and in demand—be it diamonds, ocean water front, tropical rain forests, or clean water—in a socialist economy, valuation occurs through the process of production. So, for instance, clean drinking water only gains value by the fact that labor may have to be employed to cleanse it. Since little economic value could be attributed to primary materials, having not yet entered the production process, their efficient use was
deterred. Instead, resource efficiency came to focus on secondary materials, such as recycled metals, glass, and paper. Again, this is quite unlike capitalist economies, where waste, not being scarce, has little value. Not until primary resources such as metal or landfills become expensive, does a mechanism exist to look for alternatives, and a market for recycled resources arises.

In the former GDR, the ideological and economic axiom of the labor theory of value determined how resources were defined and valuated. It therefore also determined the location of resource efficiency. Efficiency did indeed occur, just not in those places westerners normally look. The very successful and extensive recycling program of the GDR, which has since been dismantled, became the focus for economic intensification and a source for economic growth.

While the work in this chapter has focused on the economic, political, and social institutions producing dimensions of nature, the following two chapters further the analysis by considering specifically the power of individuals, who in a collective group, initiate one of many dialectics through which social structures are eventually transformed. This approach recalls Anthony Giddens’ principle of structuration which explicates the dialectical process through which the structural properties of a society (i.e., its institutions, rules, norms, values) are both the medium and product of social practices. It also draws on Eyerman and Jamison’s view that social activism, and more specifically, environmentalism, is a process through which knowledge concerning society and nature is created. Not only does environmentalism tend to challenge prevailing uses of nature, but it also pushes prevailing ideas and images of the society-nature relationship into new directions. Both actions may contribute to the social construction of Nature.
Chapter 3

THE COGNITIVE PRAXIS OF POLITICAL ACTIVISM

The rulers and leaders were once personalities in their own right, with concrete human faces, still in some sense personally responsible for their deeds, good and ill, but they have been replaced in modern times by the manager, the bureaucrat, the apparatchik—a professional ruler, manipulator and expert in the techniques of management, manipulation and obfuscation, filling a depersonalized intersection of functional relations, a cog in the machinery of state caught up in a predetermined role. This professional ruler is an "innocent" tool of an "innocent" anonymous power, legitimized by science, cybernetics, ideology, law, abstraction and objectivity—that is, by everything except personal responsibility to human beings as persons and neighbors. (Havel 1986, pg. 143-144)

This chapter explores the space carved out by those who, like Vaclav Havel, struggled against the dehumanizing power of the totalitarian state. Using a cognitive approach to examine social activism, I trace through the GDRs political resistance movement the evolution of ideas about the ideal state-society relationship. This examination makes explicit the manner in which the political alternative has been a constructive force in the creation of knowledge concerning the interaction between citizens and leaders in a socialist state.

The evolution of political resistance in the GDR, whose genesis dates to the late 1950’s, took certain routes, was articulated in certain ways, and drew upon certain leaders as a reflection of and interaction with complex political, economic, and social events. An understanding of this body of experience and knowledge provides a backdrop for examining East German environmentalism (Chapter 4) which gained a voice in the early 1980’s.

In the past three decades, social movements in both western and eastern industrialized countries have challenged the rationality upon which the economic and political development of their societies have been based. It is the logic of a growth-means-progress, technological refinement-gives-power orientation of modern societies that social activists have come to question. Quality of life appears on the decline as industrialization threatens the global environment, complex bureaucratic structures inhibit democratic decision-making, and scientific expertise runs rough-shod over the legitimacy of
subjective life experiences. The new peace, environment, anti-nuclear, and human rights movements (to name a handful), have organized around a fundamental point: the modern definitions of progress (i.e., economic growth, technological advancement, economic efficiency) are creating the material conditions for social and environmental crises. As long as these definitions remain unchallenged, it is argued, these crises will escalate to the point of systemic collapse.

The overarching issues around which East German activists organized were not unlike those of social movements in other industrialized countries, i.e., the critique of bureaucratic government, technocratic corporate production, the political invasion of personal space, alienation from society and nature. Yet totalitarianism conditioned the space in which ideas, concepts, and ideals concerning these leading issues were formulated in a way quite different than that of liberal democracy.

For example, in East Germany, as I will show in the following sections, state intolerance of free expression and political protest distorted and crippled movement activism, yet the socialist ideal of economic equity and socio-political solidarity provided a strong undercurrent to activists' goals. This combination led to an emphasis in social activism on eliminating political distortion through equal access to information. Once, so to speak, the information plane was even, the basis for a socialist democracy would be established in which all people could engage all issues without disadvantage or fear of reprisal. A forum could thus be created in which leaders and citizens interact face-to-face, fostering a sense of personal responsibility on the part of policy makers to the lived experience of fellow East Germans. This forum would constitute the critical component of a healthy state-society relationship.

In West Germany, social activists have also championed equity in their disavowal of hierarchical structures. Yet the reality that the relatively unbridled competition of a market economy thrives upon, and indeed broadens, socio-economic inequities has buried any idealistic notion of an equal political plane (this is developed in more detail in Chapter 5). Activists have instead espoused diminished

32 A dramatic and ironic consequence of the totalitarian context is that the space created by GDR activism ultimately grew to envelope the entire population and contributed to the 1989 collapse of the SED regime.
involvement in institutionalized politics. They strive to temper the accumulation of power inherent to competition amongst unequals by diminishing the political scale. True participatory democracy, they argue, can only occur in small, localized communities. Any advantage in working with and within traditional federal politics is highly debated.

Despite a common German past and similar themes, then, the ideas, organization, and criticisms produced through West and East German social activism differ to the point where a common vision amongst activists has been hard to forge in the post-unification period (Hager 1991; this point is also developed in detail in Chapter 5). The cognitive approach of Eyerman and Jamison provides a valuable framework for uncovering the roots of these differences since it focuses on the dynamic role of social movements as bearers of new ideas, new theories, as well as political and social identities. The following section of this chapter reviews the methodology through which the cognitive praxis of a social movement can be defined. In the third section, I present a historical overview of the underground political alternative of the GDR. The cognitive praxis developed through the process of movement activism is then considered. Finally, the significance of studying political activism from the point of view of its changing cognitive space, i.e., the development of the ideas, images, and ideals is linked to the themes of this dissertation and in particular, the following chapter on environmentalism in the GDR.

**Methodological framework**

Eyerman and Jamison view social movements as processes through which spaces for the creative interaction of individuals can take place. The "space" they refer to is a conceptual space in which ideas are exchanged, fused, and debated.

A social movement is not one organization or one particular interest group. It is more like a cognitive territory, a new conceptual space that is filled by a dynamic interaction between different groups and organizations. It is through tensions between different organizations over defining and acting in that conceptual space that the (temporary) identity of a social movement is formed. (1991, pg. 55)
The organizations within a movement may be understood as vehicles "carrying or transporting or even producing the movement's meaning" (pg. 60). In "reading" the texts of social movements, which are derived from such sources as written documents, publications, speeches, interviews, newspaper articles, and statements, Eyerman and Jamison thus focus not so much on the political effect of these texts, but on the historical meaning or project the movement articulates (ibid, pg. 64).

In their studies of the cognitive space created by western environmentalism, nineteenth century social activism, and the American civil rights movement, Eyerman and Jamison define three dimensions of "knowledge interests" characterizing a movement: cosmological, technological, and organizational. These are derived by operationalizing the "knowledge constituting interests" considered by Jürgen Habermas in the 1960s (Habermas 1972). They provide the analytical framework structuring the empirical investigation of documents, newspaper articles, and interviews with social activists.

Cosmology refers to the social movement's worldview—that which articulates "its historical meaning" (Eyerman and Jamison 1991, pg. 68). So for instance, with respect to western environmentalism, its cosmological dimension consists of attitudes to nature and society, and their interrelationships.

Central here are the concepts of ecology—ecosystem, dynamic balance, state of equilibrium, niche, network, etc.—which were adopted by environmental activists in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a defining part of their movement identity. (pg. 70)

In their study of the American civil rights movement, Eyerman and Jamison define its cosmology as a combination of legality and spirituality.

In their actions, movement activists were reaffirming American ideals of equality and democracy, claiming their rights to be included in the mainstream of American life. At the same time, they were embodying archetypical Christian beliefs of redemption and reconciliation, asking their enemies to respect them, appealing to a higher order, and to the moral example of Jesus. (pp. 122-123)

Eyerman and Jamison explain that the technological dimension of cognitive praxis incorporates the specific criticisms a social movement directs against "established patterns of technological development" (pg. 69), including criticisms of the institutions directing social development. This
dimension translates Habermas's technical-practical interest into an operational category. So, in their study of the civil rights movement, Eyerman and Jamison found the technological dimension to consist of the specific objects of social movement opposition (for instance, barriers to the voter registration of blacks) and, "even more importantly, the tactics, the techniques of protest, by which those objects were opposed" (pg. 123). Therefore they point to the technique of nonviolent direct action as the central component of this movement's technological dimension. In their study of environmentalism, Eyerman and Jamison argue the technological dimension to be characterized by a search for alternative technologies in agriculture, energy, medicine, and industrial production (pg. 75).

Finally, the organizational dimension reflects the communicative interest of Habermas and includes "the way in which movements get their message across and the organizational forms within which their cognitive praxis unfolds" (ibid). The organizational dimension thus provides the link between the theory and practice of a movement; the cosmological and technological dimensions (pg. 76). Thus, Western environmentalism carries out its anti-elitism, its popularization of ecology, and its challenge to the established scientific community through grassroots activism and non-hierarchical organization. In the civil rights movement, Eyerman and Jamison contend that the boycotts, mass meetings in church, and the process of "rediscovering" black culture and black history constitute the organizational forms which provided the locus for action (pg. 124).

It is through the combination of the cosmological, technological, and organizational dimensions that a movement creates a space "for new kinds of ideas and relationships to develop" : its cognitive praxis (pg. 60). Thus, for instance, the environmentalism of the late 1960s and 1970s has created a space for the development and popularization of ecology, not only as a science, but as a way of life.

There was no talk, before the environmental movement began to put its ecological cosmology into practice, of ecological living or ecological lifestyles or even ecological poetry. This movement made the space for those types of knowledge and experience to be able to emerge. (pg. 73)

Furthermore, Eyerman and Jamison point out that the particular expression of a movement's cognitive praxis, i.e., its ideas, ideals, and activities, is conditioned by the political culture, structural shifts in economy, and societal modes of communication (pg. 145) from which it develops. The civil rights
movement, for example, was shaped specifically by concurrent transitions in American society such as the shift toward a post-industrial economy and the rapid replacement of the print media by the electronic media. While in its early years the civil rights movement focused on the experience of the southern black, later years brought a reorientation toward younger urban blacks and the plight of the ghetto in America’s large industrial cities. Eyerman and Jamison explain that it was the shift in economic conditions which contributed to a reorientation of black issues within the movement, and also created serious rifts amongst movement leaders. The rise of the electronic media during the time of the civil rights movement was skillfully used by its leaders, and contributed to the widespread public exposure of its grievances.

According to Eyerman and Jamison, important to the development of a social movement are the "movement intellectuals" who come to articulate the interests and identity of the movement. Although all activists contribute to this process, there are some who become more vocal, and whose voice may gain public recognition thanks to the media or particular circumstances of the political culture. While the predominant paradigms of Resource Mobilization and the New Social Movements framework view the intellectuals, leaders, ideologists and planners of a movement as quite distinct from the activists, Eyerman and Jamison focus on the dialectical process through which some activists come to articulate the identity of a movement. As the movement changes, earlier "movement intellectuals" may become less vocal, while other activists take on the position of (re)creating the new collective identity.

Thus, there exists an interactive relationship whereby movement intellectuals articulate the interest of a social movement and the movement itself, as it undergoes change, calls forth new kinds of intellectuals. Neither the intellectual nor the movement are understood as ready-formed entities. Instead, intellectual activity is conceived of as a process, evolving as the movement develops, and conditioned by socially determined constraints such as the prevailing means of communication or elements particular to the political culture. Because social movements can respond spontaneously to social problems as they arise, they create spaces from which new "exploratory" intellectual activity
can emerge. It is this dynamic element of a social movement which makes it one source of knowledge creation (pp. 94-119).

A critical element conditioning contexts for the articulation of a movement’s identity, both through its activities and intellectuals, is access to modes of communication. These are socially determined and change over time, either because of technological advances, or the ability of the movement to create or draw upon new resources for communication. As the modes of communication transform, so too does the character of the movement, the composition of its activists, and the skills of its leaders.

By defining the cosmological, technological, and organizational dimensions of East German social activism, I explore the cognitive praxis of the GDRs environmentalism, and assess its influence as a constructive force, not only in the former GDR, but also (in Chapters 5, 6 and 7) in the post-unification process currently underway. Specifically, I focus on the construction of ideas and ideals pertaining to nature, technology, and the nature-society relationship. Yet, since this cognitive space grew from that of political activism, this chapter first examines the alternative political movement as it evolved during the past three decades.

**Historical overview**

November 4, 1989, in Alexander Square in East Berlin was the moment when artists, intellectuals, and other groups in our society came together and achieved the greatest possible unanimity. That moment was by no means just a fortunate accident, as amazed Western reporters interpreted it. It was the end product and climax of a long process in which literary and theater people, peace groups, and other groups had been coming together under the aegis of the Church, to meet and share talk from which each learned the urges, thoughts, and language of the others, and drew encouragement for action. (Wolf 1993, pg. 325)

In this passage the well-known East German author, Christa Wolf, makes reference to the many people who came together over decades, sharing ideas, concerns, and hopes for political change. Their work culminated dramatically in 1989 with mass demonstrations on the streets of East Germany’s urban centers. In this section I explore the events and meanings of reference which
defined their actions. In so doing I echo the sentiment of Alberto Melucci, who in theorizing about western peace movements wrote:

[I]t is difficult to understand the massive peace mobilizations if one does not take into account the vitality of the submerged networks of women, young people, environmentalists, and alternative cultures. These networks make possible such mobilizations and render them visible in a punctual manner: that is, at the moment when there emerges a confrontation or conflict with a public policy. (Melucci 1988, pp. 247-48)

In the case of East Germany, a series of specific confrontations with public policy produced the spontaneous mass mobilizations of 1989, i.e., apparent electoral fraud in the spring of 1989, Honecker's silence concerning the Beijing suppression of student demonstrations in the summer, and the summer flight of East Germans to the West across Hungary's open border. Yet a much richer intellectual and activist history provided the fertile soil from which this uprising emerged. The following is a historical account of the submerged networks which, in raising awareness and offering courage, made the massive popular reaction to the political events of 1989 possible.

Activism and discussion in the GDR's political alternative movement may be easily broken down into three historical time periods. The first, marks the time during which a revival of socialist ideals brought activists to question the ever growing bureaucratic Socialist Unity Party (SED) government. The second period is defined by the renewal of the church's role in East German society and the swelling of alternative groups under the protective roof of the Evangelical Church. Finally, the quick sequence of events leading to the fall 1989 "revolution" mark the third period. In this section, the first two phases are discussed in detail. The last phase, heavily influenced by environmentalism, will be developed in Chapter 4.

**Socialist renewal**

Interestingly, initial political dissent in the GDR came from within the ranks of the socialist party. With the 1956 acknowledgment of the Stalinist reign of terror by the 20th Congress of the Russian Communist Party (three years after Stalin's death), many intellectuals in the SED began to
question the Lenin-Stalinist legacy of socialism. The 1953 workers riots, as well as the flood of over 500,000 refugees to the West between 1952 and 1953 (Leptin and Melzer 1978), were reexamined. Did they indicate structural problems of Soviet-socialist rule? Politically recognized and privileged authors and artists such as Christa Wolf (1964; 1971), Volker Braun (1970; 1974), Sarah Kirsch (1973; 1977), Ulrich Plenzdorf (1973; 1979), Günter de Bruyn (1979), and Günter Kunert (1970; 1973; 1974) began to discuss the flaws in the present system. They wrote avidly, if symbolically, about the changes necessary if a truly socialist society was to be realized. Although this critique was initiated as an internal process contributing to the achievement of socialist ideals, the realities of state censorship, and access to official publishing houses only, forced these authors to formulate their critical ideas carefully. They wrote to the perceptive reader, able to catch various nuances by reading "in between the lines". This enabled them to circumvent censorship while opening a far-reaching debate as to how to avoid abuses of power legitimized by socialist ideology.

By December 1965, however, the SED Central Committee publicly denounced this "self-evaluation" emanating from its own party, claiming it undermined the historical position of the state in the realization of socialism. As a result, a leading socialist theorist, Robert Havemann, and the critical song writer, Wolf Biermann, were denied the right to work. Many authors were accused of anti-socialist thinking. Several retreated from further criticisms so as not to lose their privileges, while others felt uneasy about breaking the connection to a system which they felt still offered the best alternative to western imperialist capitalism (Rüdenklau 1992).

The 1968 events in Czechoslovakia had significant repercussions throughout the East Bloc, inspiring those with a faith in the possibilities of democratizing socialism for years to come. East Germans who had advocated political change listened with hope and astonishment to the news, coming primarily through the West German media, as a communist party finally spoke of internal reform, pluralism, freedom, and human rights. The abrupt curtailment of this attempt through the

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33 These riots were suppressed by Soviet troops in more than 120 East German cities.
Prague Spring invasion of East Bloc (including GDR) troops in 1968 could not eradicate the seed of hope that "really existing socialism" could one day be reformed.

With the replacement of Walter Ulbricht's Stalinist-style regime by Erich Honecker in 1971, the GDRs alternative thinkers hoped those changes initiated in Czechoslovakia could come to fruition in the German Democratic Republic. In East Berlin, several well-visited worker and student clubs were organized by critical writers, musicians, and artists in which the everyday problems of state doctrine were openly discussed. In Jena, a discussion circle had gained a membership of about 200 between 1973 and 1975 (Rüddenklau 1992, pg. 19). While discussions focused on largely theoretical debates concerning Marxism, an influential local church youth group brought to the discourse Christian beliefs and ideals. In Halle, a group of Trotskyites gained significant membership and public exposure, while Maoists found a base in East Berlin. In speaking and listening to those active in these groups, I learned that although the range of ideological discussion was broad, the search for alternatives provided a common theme. These forums for relatively open discussion were seized enthusiastically by those who had struggled with the repression of Ulbricht's control.

The sense of a new political leniency lingered for only a short time, however. As early as the fall of 1973, the Ministry for State Security (MfS or Stasi), responded to the political challenge so quickly evolving outside institutionalized channels by imprisoning its leading figures. Christoph Priifer of the Halle Trotskyites was arrested in 1973, sentenced to four years in prison, and was thereafter deported to the West. By the summer of 1975, the various East Berlin clubs housing alternative discussions were shut down. In the same year, a pastor set himself on fire to protest increased state suppression of youth initiatives. When the official GDR newspaper, Neues Deutschland, mocked his death, public protests developed spontaneously. Three demonstrators (Ruppert Schröter, Rudi Moldt, and Reinhardt Langenau), who participated in writing a letter of

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34 For instance, Hans-Peter Gensichen of the Wittenberg Research Center, Rudolf Bahro, Gisela Kallenbach of Leipzig, Joachim Borner of Berlin. See Appendix A for details concerning interviews which serve as data in this dissertation.
protest to both Honecker and to church leaders, were arrested and sentenced to prison (Rüddenklau 1992, pg. 23).

The discourse for political alternatives, temporarily driven from the public spaces of clubs, discussion circles, and seminars continued in what could be, when needed, a more private and therefore safe realm of an individual reading text. The powerful books of Robert Havemann, particularly *Dialectic without Dogma* (1990), and *Questions and Answers and Questions* (1970), both published in West Germany, were smuggled over the border, read avidly, and passed along from one reader to the next. Havemann advocated a return to the humanism developed in Marx's earlier works in his vision of a pluralistic socialism. As with Havemann's books, tapes of Wolf Biermann's music were duplicated, the texts typed and carbon copied, then passed along. In 1976, Havemann was placed under house arrest for "slandering the GDR by publishing articles and interviews in the Western press" (Hamburg DPA May 18, 1979). With the expulsion of Biermann from the GDR during the same year protest letters were written to Honecker, serving to introduce future activists to the opposition movement—as well as putting them on the Stasi's list of "counterrevolutionaries". Twelve well known East German authors, among them the already mentioned Sarah Kirsch, Christa Wolf, Volker Braun, Stefan Heym, and Günter Kunert, wrote an open letter protesting Biermann's deportation on Nov 17, 1976. In the following days, 200 writers and authors signed this letter, a daring show of solidarity during that time (Rüddenklau 1992, pg. 24).

In 1977, renewed attempts at creating discussion groups were given fresh material through another influential book written in the East, published in the West, and then smuggled back. *The Alternative* (1978), by Rudolf Bahro, openly criticized the leading political and economic system of the GDR, while attempting to present a viable, socialist alternative. Groups gathered surreptitiously in the privacy of living rooms and weekend retreats to discuss Bahro's ideas. Bahro himself was arrested, imprisoned for two years, and deported to the West in 1979 (*Der Spiegel* Oct 22, 1979, pp. 20-23).

By 1979, the critical energy sparked by these books created a renewed confrontation with the
Stasi. A harsher GDR criminal code came into effect in the Fall of 1979, stating that writers could expect up to five years imprisonment for smuggling banned manuscripts into the West for publication (Hamburg DPA Sep 7, 1979). At that time, the Writers’ Union, the official state association through which GDR authors were organized and obtained publishing contracts, dissociated itself from several dissident writers, eliminating all official publishing opportunities for these critical authors.

The membership meeting of the Berlin area branch of the GDR Writers Union, as the union’s highest body in the GDR capital, has considered the behavior of a number of members who have offended against their duties as members of the union and harmed the prestige of the Writers’ Union...The facts cited by the president of the Writers’ Union in his speech prove that, contrary to their undertaking enshrined in the statutes to work as active fellow-fashioners of the advanced socialist society, these union members have thought it right and proper to take a slanderous stand from abroad against our socialist state, the GDR, the cultural policy of party and government, and the socialist legal system. In this, they have not merely disregarded their duties arising from the statutes of our union but have also placed themselves at the service of the anti-communist incitement against the GDR and socialism...The membership meeting has therefore decided to expel Kurt Bartsch, Adolf Endler, Stefan Heym, Karl-Heinz Jakobs, Klaus Poche, Klaus Schlesinger, Rolf Schneider, Dieter Schubert and Joachim Seyppel from the ranks of the Writers’ Union of the German Democratic Republic. (East Berlin ADN International Service Jun 8, 1979)

In support of the Writers' Union's stance against "anti-socialist" artists, the official organization of Theatrical Workers made a public statement:

We concur with you [the GDR Writers' Union] in the opinion that we must not permit this continuity of the militant alliance between party and artists to be questioned by any side; he who does this finds himself deliberately or inadvertently outside the tradition of an art which is obliged to progress and which serves the cause of socialism. We theatrical workers will continue this tradition and will not permit anybody to stop us in this effort. Our association endorses all the artistic enterprises of our country’s theatrical workers aimed at strengthening real socialism and at making the communist ideals the living ideal, of all people, first and foremost of our youth. We dissociate ourselves from all those individuals who are abandoning this road and who also want to prompt others to desert this road. We will have it out with them as a matter of principle. (Berliner Zeitung May 29, 1979, pg. 6)

In response to the dismissal of critical writers from the GDRs Writers' Union, two authors, Thomas Klein and Stefan Fechner wrote open protest letters to Honecker, and to Berlin’s regional committee of the Writers’ Union. These letters contained up to 200 signatures of support. They focused on the need to allow open discussion concerning the leading issues framing life in the GDR. The Stasi responded by arresting and imprisoning Klein and Fechner, ransacking the apartments of others involved, and questioning them extensively (Rüddenklau 1992, pg. 25).
In 1979, Havemann wrote his "Ten Theses on the 30th Anniversary of the GDR" in which he outlined initial steps necessary for achieving a democratic socialism—the only possibility if socialism were to survive (Frankfurter Rundschau Oct 3, 1979). In 1980, the minister of state security, Army General Erich Mielke, made clear the official response toward "subversives" such as Havemann: they were participants in international anti-socialist plots. He stated that among the duties of the state security organs was their very great responsibility

for recognizing and foiling in time the aims of imperialism's global strategy, especially counterrevolutionary activities against the socialist states...It is and remains a decisive task to strengthen the power of the working class and its allies in every respect and consistently protect it against any attack...This is a demand made on us by the interests of the working class and all working people. Together with them we shall see to it that no enemy will ever stand a chance in the GDR. All hostile intentions and actions will be put down adamantly. This is how it is and how it will remain. (Mielke in a speech to the party activists of his ministry, quoted by East Berlin ADN International Service Oct 16, 1980)

Church renewal

While 1968 marks an important date for renewal in the political discourse of socialist reform, 1978 marks an equally significant date for renewed engagement of the Evangelical (Protestant) Church in the social debates of East German society. In 1978, Bishop D. Albrecht Schönerr and SED leader Erich Honecker reached a historic agreement concerning the role of the church in the cultural and political development of socialism. The phrase "church in socialism" was coined by Schönerr to describe the officially sanctioned role of the church as an active partner in achieving the socialist vision. Specifically, Schönerr stated that the formula "church in socialism" meant

first of all, a presence of the church where its members live and work, and then it means participation in the problems and achievements of society, and it means responsibly contributing to [society's] development. (Neues Deutschland Apr 23, 1979)

The partnership between church and state was to be based on "openness and trust" (Kuhrt 1984, pg. 133). Although the reason for this radical shift of a socialist state's position regarding religious
organizations is still uncertain, many with whom I spoke\(^\text{35}\) speculated that the church provided for the state an easily monitored and infiltrated outlet for the still tenacious political critique of previous years.

The church context influenced the debates of societal reform by emphasizing the *ethical*, in contrast to purely *socialist*, imperatives of democracy, human rights and solidarity. Discussions of peace, central to the theology of Christianity, were approved of by the GDR regime due to the state’s strong rhetoric supporting détente. Official SED speeches emphasized the socialist community’s commitment to securing a "peaceful coexistence" of states with different social systems. By publicly supporting those policies and opposing the introduction of new weapons systems in Western Europe by the United States, the church gained state favor.

Lecturer Dr. Carl-Juergen Kaltenborn of the Theology Department of Berlin’s Humboldt University reaffirmed the Eisenach statement that "creating peace constitutes a fundamental task within the church’s mission." He emphatically denounced the danger of an arms race for which the NATO powers are responsible, and defined the introduction of new weapons of mass destruction as anti-Christian. (*Neues Deutschland*, Nov 18, 1980)

On Monday Klaus Gysi, state secretary for church affairs, met with the Council of the Evangelical Church of Anhalt headed by Church President Eberhard Natho, and with Gerhard Kootz, president of the Synod of the Evangelical Church of Anhalt in Halle. Helmuth Klapproth, chairman of the Halle Bezirk Council, also attended the trustful constructive talk on topical fundamental questions of the present. Concerning the decisions of the 19th SED Congress, Klaus Gysi stressed the importance of increased joint efforts of all peace forces in view of NATO’s intensified armament. The church representatives expressed their agreement with the GDR peace policy and spoke out in favor of continuing the constructive relations between the state and church in the spirit of the March 1978 meeting between Erich Honecker and the Executive Committee of the Conference of Evangelical Church Directorates in the GDR. (*Neues Deutschland* Oct 27, 1981, pg. 2)

Manfred (Stolpe), consistory president of the Berlin-Brandenburg church, on 11 November in Leipzig, urgently warned against stationing additional nuclear missiles in Western Europe, because—as he put it—not much imagination is needed to find out that this stationing of missiles planned for Western Europe also will constitute a considerable burden for us. This is why the church—even though it has to withhold from giving wise advice to the politicians—must urgently request all governments to ponder all consequences of their decisions, above all those resulting for mankind. (*East Berlin Domestic Service* Nov 28, 1982)

In October of 1981, Robert Havemann wrote a pivotal open letter to the Soviet Party state leader,

\(^{35}\) For instance Christine Steiner, Joachim Borner, and Hans-Peter Gensichen.
Leonid Breschnev, addressing the magnitude of danger presented by continued arms build-up between the West and East. He emphasized that the arms race presented a particular danger to the two Germanies, the obvious site for an East-West confrontation. Havemann demanded that occupation troops be withdrawn from both German countries, thus concluding the peace treaties initiated thirty-six years earlier (Frankfurter Rundschau Oct 7, 1981, pg. 4).

Although Havemann's letter was still in line with official peace policy, a February 1992 open letter written by Pastor Rainer Eppelmann (among the signatories of Havemann's open letter) strayed from the official position on détente and thus received a harsh response from the SED authorities. The protest statement called "Berlin Appeal--Create Peace without Weapons", with thirty signatures on the original document and 200 on a supporting petition, demanded of the GDR leadership immediate action in securing all of Europe as a nuclear-free zone, eliminating military instruction in schools, and discontinuing public demonstrations of military power (Frankfurter Rundschau Feb 9, 1982, pg. 1). Several signatories of the appeal were temporarily arrested and subjected to intensive interrogations. Pastor Eppelmann was accused of "defamatory propaganda against the state" a charge that, if prosecuted, would have carried a 10-year prison term (Paris AFP Feb 11, 1982).

While détente remained a critical issue for the peace movement, a strong opposition to the mandatory military service of the GDR, to which was made mention in Eppleman's letter, grew within church-based groups. The increased "militarization" of society--the intensification in military training of young people, partial extension of mandatory military service, civil defense exercises, the training of combat groups parallel to the army--became a point of strong contention and conflict between activists and the GDR state (Le Figaro Nov 9, 1981, pg. 3), and a point of tension between the church leadership and the state. Although the church supported the official policy of détente, it rejected the increased "militarization of society" which penetrated into individual's private lives. A 1983 statement by the synod of the Evangelical-Lutheran Regional Church of Mecklenburg explicates the church's stance on peace:
As citizens of our country on the border between two power and defense systems we cannot regard the deployment of missiles in our country as measures which will make us safer. Rather we recognize especially in the continued effect of the spirit and the logic of deterrence the drift toward a nuclear catastrophe...In contrast, we consider it an encouraging sign if people are guided by creed, conscience, and common sense even if they thereby invite considerable negative consequences. In this connection the synod also backs conscripts who, despite their commitment by the Military Service Law and the service oath taken, no longer consider themselves capable of continuing service under arms...Many petitions reached the synod which dealt with the problem of military service for women. The synod shares this shock of women and families. To many people it became clear only now in what way the Military Service Law dated March 23, 1982 can be applied. This application of the Military Service Law is another step in the direction of a militarization of society which particularly deeply [sic] intrudes in the private and family spheres. (*Die Welt* Nov 17, 1983, pg. 4)

Motivated by this position, one of the more successful actions stemming from the church and influencing state policy was a demand that the state allow an alternative to mandatory military service: the *Bausoldat* (construction soldier). The state conceded to this demand. Such peace activism put aside the traditional communist argument that peace was a logical consequence of true socialism. Instead it hinted at the opposite argument: true socialism could not be achieved if peace were not recreated and defended in everyday life.

Between 1980-85, emblems of the church-based peace movement, such as "Swords into Plowshares", became symbols of political opposition, associated also with the church’s stance against increased militarization at home. The state responded harshly, accusing this appeal as a threat to socialism and the GDR constitution. This repression brought forth some innovation on the part of activists.

Young GDR pacifists circulated a new badge after their emblem "Swords into Plowshares" was banned by the authorities this year. The badge, a red stamp on a 9 by 9 centimeters piece of felt bears the words "Prepared To Help Instead of Defend". The motto is a hint at a demand which is being made since last year by many church peace groups of the GDR to create a social peace service as an alternative to military service. (*Der Spiegel* Nov 1, 1982, pg. 15)

In so far as peace activism criticized the state’s implementation of socialist ideology, it was branded as "anti-socialist rhetoric" and therefore dangerous. Periodically, the state police accosted and arrested those (largely the youth) with the "Swords into Plowshares" emblems publicly visible (Rüddenklaau 1992, pg. 30). The church leadership expressed concern about this state reaction,
making explicit the contradiction of a peace policy which advocated, on the one hand, the peaceful co-existence of nations, but on the other hand, destroyed peace at home.

For the second time within a short time leading Protestants in the "GDR" have criticized the East Berlin leadership for its measures against those bearing the badge "Swords Into Plowshares." After Bishop Johannes Hempel (Dresden), the future "GDR" church league chairman, had already pledged a more composed attitude of the government toward ecclesiastical peace movements, Krusche, the still acting church league chairman, now demanded an outright "open dialogue" in the "GDR" society on questions of peace and security policy. It was only in this way that a contribution could be made toward a "unified peace movement" as proclaimed by the SED leadership. It was, however, "peace destroying" if people with different views are exposed to reprisals. (*Die Welt*, Nov 1, 1982, pg. 3)

This rapid politicization of peace issues worsened the relationship between church and state, thereby also creating contradictions within the church itself about its position concerning the state's peace policy. For instance, in October, 1982 Werner Reich, Land Bishop of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Thuringia was reported to have described the preservation of peace as a task which is inseparably interwoven with political, humane and moral concerns...It is reassuring to be able to say about the GDR politicians that they are working responsibly and with all their power toward this goal. (*East Berlin Voice* Oct 8, 1982)

Yet, one month later, Bishop Johannes Hemple, the future GDR church league president, contradicted this statement. The West German newspaper, *Die Welt*, reported that Hemple had "voiced criticism of the SED leadership".

Before the Saxonian Land synod he had denounced the state's campaign of hatred against the Federal Republic and expressively defended "pacifist initiatives" in the church communities. The report (of the church leadership to the synod of the Saxonian Church province) says: "Whenever spontaneous initiative and impulses arising from a passion for peace are obstructed, peace is not greatly promoted." The authors (of the report) are deploring once again the police measures against those bearing the badge "Swords into Plowshares." (*Die Welt* Nov 1, 1982, pg. 3)

In the early 1980's, church-based peace groups had gained significant followings throughout the south, in the cities of Dresden, Saalfeld, Jena, Erfurt, Naumburg and Halle. On the 37th anniversary of the allied bombing of Dresden (February, 1982), 5,000 people marched in an unofficial peace demonstration organized through the church (Rüddenklau 1991, pg. 31). Also in 1982, a particularly strong organization, the *Peace Community*, was founded in Jena. In the same year, the East Berlin
group, *Women for Peace*, was established with a membership of 400 (ibid, pg 34).

In the summer of 1983, the church leaders intensified their campaign challenging both citizens and leaders to initiate peace at home. Its "word of mission" was the call to all peoples in both the East and West to "Dare to Trust" (East Berlin ADN International Service Jun 12, 1983). Trust, it was argued, was an integral element of a healthy relationship between state and society. Yet it had been effectively destroyed in the GDR. At a church conference in Rostock, a superintendent from Karl-Marx-Stadt spoke of the lacking trust between leaders and those whom they govern:

> Trust brings greater closeness and more security. For security reasons, people are often prosecuted with undue means, in many cases no reasons are given for the rejection of an application. If the authorities let it be seen that they allow themselves to be criticized, that they are even open to criticism from outside, then they are trusted. (Hamburg DPA Jun 11, 1983)

Also, in the fall of 1983, the church established "Ten days of peace" in response to the imminent rearmament of the East and West. This action was staged to publicize the commitment of the protestant church to peace, and its protest that more arms would create instability rather than security (East Berlin Domestic Service Nov 6, 1983).

When on the 22nd of November 1983, the West German *Bundestag* (Parliament) voted to station new middlerange weapons in the FRG, thereby embarking on a period of rearmament, the peace movements in both West and East Germany became greatly disillusioned. The East German peace activists were further hampered by the GDR regime's strengthened attempts, through *Stasi* infiltration, to break individual groups apart. Among reasons for this increased repression was the state's desire to maintain a positive international image due to its increased dependency on Western credit (Rüddenklau 1991, pg. 37).

By 1985, the state and church leaders were at significant odds with respect to the peace issue, and Honecker was feeling pressure from some of his colleagues to react harshly against the church.

> Because of some of Honecker's comrades in the SED Politburo...the flirtation between church and state is soon to be over. For quite some time their chief's dealings with the

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36 Here he is probably making reference to applications to travel abroad.
Christians have been irksome to them under real socialism. At a Politburo meeting on 24 September, Hermann Axen, responsible for the party’s foreign relations, and Berlin’s party boss Konrad Naumann openly revolted against Honecker. They were applauded by Defense Minister Heinz Hoffmann. The Politburo attack did not come out of a clear blue sky: The Soviets have been watching Honecker’s church policy with growing distrust ever since the SED, on the occasion of the Luther Year 1983, incorporated the Christian reformer in the socialist heritage, thus inevitably further upgrading the church. (Der Spiegel Nov 18, 1985, pp. 57-59.)

The tension developing between the state and the church also resulted in constraints being put on church-based activism by church leaders directly. A church leader explains:

Often the danger with which we dealt, was that the growing tension evident in state-church relations was further transferred onto the activities of the groups, be it for example through a refusal to grant rooms for groups to work in, or through disciplinary measures against colleagues engaged in activism. (Brinksmeier 1991, pg. 58, author’s translation)

Despite these problems, a few peace workshops were so popular they became annual events attracting thousands of people. For instance a 1985 peace workshop of the Erlöser Church had 3,000 participants in its third year. "An attraction especially for young people...participants...debated in forums, discussions, and amateur theater plays those questions that are most pressing to them" (Hamburg ARD Television Network June 30, 1985). I learned from my interviews of former activists that forums such as these allowed them to carve out something new and unique in GDR society—a place where (they believed) the monopolistic control of the state didn’t penetrate; where personal empowerment was allowed to flourish; where the anonymous expansive force of control was tenaciously pushed back and staved off.

The 1985 founding of the Initiative for Peace and Human Rights marks a turning point in the alternative activism of the GDR. In fact, to some this initiative marked the beginning of the GDR resistance movement (Rein 1989, pg. 8). A group which brought together individuals with very strong personalities, it came to represent the split between those focused in grassroots activism and civil rights, and those interested in the structural changes within society if human rights and lasting peace were to be guaranteed (Rüddenklau 1991, pg. 52). The former, reflecting the work of church-based groups, were targeting civil society—changing values and lifestyle through direct action. The latter, echoing the social reformists of the 60s and 70s, were intent on integrating their concerns in
the fabric of social organization, through political mobilization. The *Initiative for Peace and Human Rights* served as the catalyst for the third and final phase of political-environmental activism of the GDR, culminating finally in the collapse of the SED regime in 1989.

I learned from my discussions with former activists that as Gorbachev embarked on a dramatic reform within Soviet-socialist structures, GDR activists gained courage to test the new political waters. They became quite bold in their demands for democratic changes.

Grassroots and initiative groups have demanded a reform of the political system of co-responsibility in the GDR, including the electoral system and electoral procedure. The changes in the Soviet Union stimulated thought on "principal questions of social and political renewal." The main problem in GDR society remains democratization, says a "Letter to Christians in the GDR and Their Parish Representations", which became known at the weekend on the periphery of the Evangelical Church Conference in Goerlitz. (Hamburg DPA Jul 5, 1988)

The promise of a political opening in the Soviet Union was staunchly resisted by the SED leadership. In reading the founding statements of the alternative political organizations which formed in the fall of 1989 (i.e., New Forum, Democratic Start, Democracy Now), it is evident that activists assumed eventual plurality would develop nonetheless. Without the military strong arm of the Soviet Union, activists felt confident that despite increased state pressure, they would, at least, avoid the fate of the *Prague Spring* revolutionaries. There was evidence that the GDR leaders were becoming more and more split on their stance toward "counter-revolutionary" activism, given the steps toward democratization occurring in the USSR.

Manfred Stolpe, deputy chairman of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR and president of the Consistory of the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg, spoke of upcoming changes within the SED leadership at a church event on Monday afternoon...Stolpe also spoke of a "struggle within the power apparatus over the future course," which can only mean that advocates and opponents of the Gorbachev course of restructuring, renewal, and openness in East Berlin are more or less irreconcilably divided. The church representative states that this struggle within the power apparatus is the reason for the current problems of GDR churches. The leadership is looking for a hostile image: in the struggle against the church, the SED is only waging a war-by-proxy, he pointed out. The church believes that it is being "misused," that it is exploited to prepare the ground for changes in the leadership, Stolpe stated in East Berlin. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* Oct 12, 1988, pg. 2)

In retrospect, Stolpe's comments are quite insightful and point to the influence East German activists
had on the unraveling of the GDR regime. It has since been discovered that Stolpe’s information was probably more accurate than given credit, since, though unknown at the time, he was acting as an informer for the Stasi.

My interviewees agreed that by 1988, most citizens in East Germany expected radical change in their country. The tensions which existed had to be resolved, either toward liberalization or increased conservatism. Amongst activists, a tremendous hope existed that they would accomplish a peaceful democratization of East German socialism. None discussed the possibility of socialist collapse and German unification. Their letters of public appeal spoke confidently of the political changes underway which would ultimately necessitate reform.

An unrest is going through our land. More and more people are leaving it, since they have given up the hope of a meaningful life here. Others are staying and seek ways to finally do what must be done. A democratic reorganization is necessary. (From Democratic Start Oct 2, 1989, in Rein 1989, pg. 34, author’s translation)

Only a few years ago, "really existing" socialism was all that was possible. Its characteristics are the power monopoly of a centralized state party, the state possession of all means of production, the state's penetration and creation of uniformity in society, as well as discouragement in its citizens. Despite its indisputable achievements of social security and justice, it is today obvious that the era of state socialism is coming to an end. What is required is a peaceful, democratic renewal. (From Democracy Now Sep 12, 1989, in Rein 1989, pg. 59, author's translation)

In effect, grassroots groups such as Democracy Now, Democratic Start, and the New Forum insisting on social renewal, carved out, within the months of October and November 1989, a political plurality before official institutions had time to react. While the alternative organizations first presented their public statements of intent in the early fall, by November the SED leadership had already thrown in the towel.

**Cosmological dimension**

The cosmological dimension of what Eyerman and Jamison have called a social movement's cognitive praxis refers to its basic assumptions, worldview, beliefs, and utopian mission. In the case
of the political activism recounted above, its cosmology did not appear, fully formed from the beginning. Instead it developed over time, through the fusion of two strands. The first, democratic socialism, stemming from the early socialist reformers, and the second, social ethics, stemming from the theological work of the church.

The early phase of political resistance marks a period when the demands on the GDR state from oppositional voices focused on eliminating the Stalinist power structure, a grotesque hindrance to the ultimate achievement of a truly democratic socialism. Certainly, the concept of democratic socialism existed prior to this time, but it is through the influence of authors such as Stefan Heym (1973; 1974; 1977), Robert Havemann (1970; 1973; 1990) and Rudolf Bahro (1978; 1982), as well as the near success of the Czechoslovakian reform attempt in 1968, that a strong commitment to its realization became articulated.

Stalinism, and the mechanistic state apparatus it required, became defined in the dissident writings as a barrier to the forces of socialist evolution. This barrier was holding back the inevitable, and through its resistance, creating a critical tension that had to find release. The 1968 reform movement in Czechoslovakia and the call to reform in Poland during the 1970s were clear indications that an evolutionary process was underway. In the final analysis, every attempt to repress this process, every act of state oppression, would only create in the forces of change more tension, more energy.

Critical then to facilitating the inevitable, a democratization of socialism, was the destruction of Stalin's legacy, the bureaucratic state structure. Robert Havemann suggested that this evolutionary process was already underway in Prague, and despite outside repression, the dismantling of old structures could not be reversed. Stalinism was crumbling.

The Stalinist structure was in fact largely destroyed and the first step was taken into a new epoch—that of free and democratic Socialism...They can put Czechoslovakia under external pressure, limit her outward freedom of movement and forbid the "freedom of the press", but they cannot restore the Stalinism without re-establishing its structure. And this structure cannot be recreated once its life has been extinguished. With each day, the politics of intervention are seen to be wrong and the intervening power loses face. David is stronger
than Goliath. Precisely as a result of the intervention, it is inevitable, in the long run, that the ideas of the Czechoslovak Communist Party will spread with greater vigour—even in those countries that intervened. Freedom is the disease of which Stalinism will die. (Havemann 1973, pg. 43)

Dismantling of the old required first and foremost a dismantling of the communist party as it existed, propped and bundled up by layers and layers of bureaucracy. The party had made itself into a cancerous entity, all pervasive, uncontrollable—taking the life from socialist society. It had to be removed, if socialism were to survive.

When all is said and done, the uncontrollability of the Politbureau and its apparatus presents the foremost political problem under actually existing socialism. The centralist monopolization of all economic, political and intellectual decision-making leads to an insuperable contradiction between the social task of the party and its political and organizational form of existence as a political organization. The party dictatorship proves a failure at the most elementary level at which any system of domination has to maintain itself, if it wants to fulfill its social function. (Bahro 1978, pg. 246)

In arguing that the enormous party structure be dismantled, dissidents also had to tackle the logic upholding it. According to the socialist leadership, the communist goals of salvation were only achievable by staying true to the historical laws, of which the party leadership claimed to be the sole executor (Merkl 1993). This mechanistic view of politics established by Stalin, lent a scientific character to the will of the party bureaucracy. Since the party saw itself as the only entity able to execute the historical laws leading to true socialism, all those who resisted the party were labeled "subversive" or "counterrevolutionary". The leading GDR dissidents, while still maintaining a belief in the historical inevitability of socialism, viewed the party leadership’s argument of justification an abuse of scientific rationale—and of rationality. In the GDR, "science, and social science in particular", Bahro argued,

gives expression to those interests that most coincide with the ruling forces in society. If it is possible to arrive at rationality only via the state and the party, then science serves these institutions and becomes an instrument of struggle for the social stratum involved in them...In any investigation, the premises of particular interests intervene from the start, premises which precisely falsify the basic structure of social facts before they are even cast a first glance. Nothing can come out of such an investigation that contradicts the prevailing interpretation. If this does exceptionally happen, then the intention that led to the undesirable conclusions must have been wrong. The researcher in question was lacking in party spirit. A science of this kind deserves no more than contempt, precisely from the Marxist standpoint. (Bahro 1978, pg. 245)
It should be noted that Bahro does not criticize rationality itself. He still adheres to the "laws" of socialist evolution, but denounces the bureaucratic party as the executor of these laws.

While the political critique of this time emphasized the disempowerment of a society whose life-force was siphoned off by a monopolistic state apparatus, it was argued that truly effective change could only come through a revolution originating at the top. Havemann, for instance, spoke in 1979 about the means by which socialist reform would take place.

In my opinion, in our state it is not a matter of gradually changing society by means of demonstrations, marches and protests. Here it is a matter of completing a revolution which began some time ago, and specifically revolution from above. As in Czechoslovakia in 1968: there we saw that this is possible... (Havemann in an interview with L'Unita Jun 21, 1979, pg. 3, italics added)

Similarly, in a 1979 interview with the West German news magazine Der Spiegel, Rudolf Bahro interpreted the increased state repression in response to his book, The Alternative, as integral to the evolutionary process of socialism underway. It indicated that the influence of alternative ideas was growing, particularly amongst those most vital to reform: the party leadership. He commented with self-satisfaction:

I was not yet arrested when they told me in the Ministry of State Security that there were Bahro fans in this ministry. (Bahro interviewed by Der Spiegel Oct 22 1979, pp. 20-23)

This belief that lasting change must originate from the top, was later revived and legitimized by the reform efforts of Gorbachev in the mid-1980’s.

During the period after 1978, when the church housed and influenced alternative political thinking, this belief in the inevitable unfolding of socialist laws as the solution to social ills, was reconceptualized and in fact lost its strength. Emphasis was placed instead on the role of personal and social conscience in the achievement of socialist ideals.

We focused on the individual. If each individual could act responsibly, and in a manner consistent with his ethical beliefs, then the chance for a true transformation of society existed. Certainly we acted within structural constraints, which meant small steps had to be taken, to open the possibility for more significant changes in the future. But each step must come from the individual. (personal interview with Hans-Peter Gensichen, 1992, author’s translation)
Answers needed to be explored through honest, open dialogue if the fear so prevalent in GDR society be extinguished and true democratic socialism be achieved. Pastor Friedrich Schorlemmer states in the first of 20 theses for the renewal and reorganization of the GDR, made public at a church gathering in Halle, June of 1988:

1. Because we as Christians, in the freedom and commitment of our faith, feel a shared responsibility and blame for what this country becomes, we take as necessary and advisable that we overcome our fear, and distrust, and our lack of expectations; and that we gain an openness with which, in a critical solidarity, we push for a renewal of our society.
2. Because feelings indifference, resignation, and stagnation have spread throughout our society, and because the number of people who are withdrawing or who no longer want to live here because of these feelings has increased, we take it as necessary to speak openly about this and to reorganize conditions framing our society, so that more citizens experience their participation in society as worthy. (Schorlemmer 1988, "20 Thesis from Wittenberg for the Renewal and Reorganization of the GDR", in Israel (1991), pg. 81, author's translation)

The notion that ready-made answers existed—as represented through the assumption of existing social "laws"—lost credibility. A statement of the New Forum acknowledges the chaos which can emerge when previous structures no longer provide guidance for opinions about and desires for a just and equitable society. Yet the statement offers hope in the establishment of dialogue:

In order to hear and to evaluate all the contradictions, opinions, and arguments—a democratic dialogue about the duties of a state of law, the economy, and the culture is necessary. We must be able to consider and discuss with each other these questions in complete openness and throughout the land. Whether we can, in the near future, find ways out of the current crisis-filled situation will depend on the readiness and willingness to speak openly. (New Forum, Sep 1989, in Rein, 1989, pg. 14, author's translation)

The church leadership was, at first, taken aback by the myriad of groups that formed spontaneously under its protection. Since 1945, the church had been marginalized by the state and its membership had dropped. The church hierarchy, while speaking out against the social, and often political or economic prejudice against Christians, came to hold back its involvement in local community. After 1978, the groups organized by politically concerned Christians and non-Christians alike, drew out those church leaders already sympathetic to political issues, and aware of the significant contribution their theological perspective could offer those struggling to find answers. Pastors with particular personal conviction—such as Rainer Eppelmann who was adamantly against armament, and had as a young man dared to oppose mandatory military service—were quickly pulled.
to become movement leaders.

They brought to the movement their beliefs that the betterment of society required personal conviction, creed, conscience, common sense. They focused their discussions concerning issues such as peace, on broader principles of human dignity, justice, freedom, and perhaps most importantly individual responsibility. In so doing, they questioned the "inevitable superiority" of socialism as interpreted by the state leadership and their legitimating "laws of history", but evoked traditional socialist principles such as citizens' participation in the building of a socialist state.

It has for years been stressed that in the building of a socialist society, it is important that we, as citizens, participate in the shaping of our social life. This desired participation requires that one agrees with the formulation of goals, that plans are worked out jointly, and that the initiative of participants is aroused and drawn upon. In this manner co-responsibility can be undertaken and preserved. However, the impression is given in our country that only a part of the citizenry is allowed to take part in this process and to undertake co-responsibility. More and more, the guiding and leadership positions are filled by nominations of the Socialist Unity Party...Mustn't this lead to the situation that Christians--even when they are capable of leadership positions--are coming less and less into question for this societal work? Aren't active citizens being pushed off into private life, because their capabilities for participation are being denied? If Christians are to undertake responsibility, they would like to be able to think along, independently, and in their field of activity; not be required to wait for direction "from above", but bring their self-responsible action into social processes. (Kuhrt 1984, pg. 134, author's translation)

The really existing socialism of the GDR had all but destroyed the principles mentioned above. That the church could within its realm openly address and indeed promise self-expression and promote personal initiative to its followers, became an attribute instantly attractive to a wide range of people. The church offered a genuine chance for personal empowerment in the face of an all-pervasive social passivity. It offered individual conviction in a society whose leaders appeared to make arbitrary and irrational choices; it sought to replace fear with trust.

Our task as Christians concerned about peace in the GDR--on the border of both world systems--includes: the complete affirmation of life and Christianity in the socialist society of the GDR--the location of our calling as presented by God; service to domestic freedom in our society, to its stability; and that means: to its positive evolution, the building of trust and openness and the dismantling of distrust and fear in our society. (Kuhrt, 1984, pg. 133, author's translation)

While political activism came to pull out leaders from the church hierarchy, the church, with its relatively safe network and orientation toward serving the spiritual and social needs of individuals,
drew many to the political movement who may otherwise not have become active. In a 1992
conversation with a religious sister from a church in Wittenberg, I heard how, in the late 1980s, the
churches were packed on Sundays, a rare phenomenon in the 1970s. It is in these services that a wide
spectrum of people learned about the possibility for regaining personal strength and peace in a
society filled with fear and distrust. The result: it was increasingly viewed that only through a
valuation of social ethics—personal, conscientious, and responsible action (as opposed to obedience to
social laws)—would true socialism be achieved.

**Technological dimension**

In challenging the state to incorporate democratic socialism and social ethics into its structures,
social activists publicly addressed the tremendously unhealthy state-society relations which existed in
the GDR. Their primary point of contention was that honest communication between the state
leadership and the citizens did not exist, and that this was fundamental to recreating a stable, viable
society. Earlier dissidents such as Bahro and Havemann hoped and struggled to get their ideas heard
by government administrators, as a means of initiating political discussion and change. Church-based
groups focused on the need to develop trust between leaders and citizens if the state-society
relationship be healed. Therefore I characterize the technological dimension of the political
alternative's cognitive praxis as consisting of the techniques of communication developed through
activism.

The restrictive nature of communication in the GDR led to the creation by political activists of a
new, explicitly public space for political discussion. Direct communication between the leadership
and the citizenry on such "taboo" subjects as socialist reform, human rights, and militarization within
society, was non-existent. The very writing of open letters to government officials indicated the
lacking channels through which citizens could engage their "representatives". Printed in the Western
media first, and then brought to the East, these letters revealed the extent to which the relationship
between state and society was disrupted. Since not just the authors, but other activists signed these letters and accompanying petitions, the polarization between the silence of a bureaucratic party apparatus on critical issues of GDR life and the citizens demands for truth was made explicit.

Within the church structure, the movement was able to expand an existing resource to satisfy citizens' need for open dialogue. Church-based newsletters (i.e., Evangelische Nachrichtendienst, Die Kirche, Potsdamer Kirche, Glaube und Heimat, Mecklenburgische Kirchenzeitung, Briefe, and Umweltblätter) were allowed a leniency unlike any other publication in the GDR, as long as they were ear-marked "for inter-church use only". Officially, this meant for the purposes of church employees, but as I learned from Hans-Peter Gensichen, the director of the church-run Wittenberg Research Center, within the Protestant Church all Christians are considered pastors. Thus, its leadership morally and legally justified the distribution of its newsletters to all church members.

Historically, the church has given priority to the mission of communicating, discussing, and disseminating the Word, viewing praxis as important but nonetheless secondary. It considers itself particularly strong in reflecting upon fundamental issues of ethics and human vulnerability (Gensichen 1991). The expression of social concern within the church therefore lent itself quite naturally to discussion, written debate, and the distribution of information. Certainly, critiques of the state were also much easier camouflaged in and between the lines of newsletters than on the streets and sidewalks of cities. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that the church had long since established relative freedom from the state with respect to written materials. Had action been a primary directive of the church, the church may never have been given the independence it gained from the state. At the very most, an isolated pocket of state-tolerated praxis may have arisen within the domain of the church, changing the character of the activism it nurtured.

Since the dissemination of information concerning the conditions of everyday life was monopolized by the state, these church newsletters came to offer a valuable service. They also brought to the movement many academics and scientists who, by sharing their expertise, empowered movement activists with data otherwise not available. This information offered fuel for discussion
groups and workshops. The newsletters themselves augmented the grassroots nature of the movement, since written critique was, for the first time, being generated, published, and read by members of a community for members of that community without having to first pass through the Western presses. From letters to the editor to sophisticated science articles, these newspapers gave access to a forum of communication for anyone willing to become involved. Furthermore, since these newsletters were distributed between churches, they provided a national grassroots network of communication previously impossible.

**Organizational dimension**

Since the Czechoslovakian movement was taken as the model by political activists for a similar evolution of socialism in the GDR, its organization was adopted as the means by which reform would unfold in the SED. Political critique in Czechoslovakia had found its voice in the elite, amongst the ideologists of communism. Leading Czechoslovakian writers, artists, and scientists had expressed discontent with their working conditions, unable to pursue certain intellectual paths without the fear of censorship. At the same time, leading social scientists, technicians and economists, had realized that economic reform could not happen without social reform. Through the pressure of these two groups, the Czechoslovakian state leadership lost its certainty and dismissed Novotny.

It is with this model in mind that East German political activists looked to, and indeed actively searched out, the critical artists and authors for intellectual leadership. Conversely, many artists and authors saw it their responsibility to offer politically constructive criticism (for the good of socialist development). Critical scientists who viewed themselves as key figures in directing society toward the socialist utopia, were also pulled to the political critique. These dissidents, as dedicated communists and part of the intellectual elite, believed they could create a chain reaction of self-reflection in the government leadership. From this process, an internally driven transformation of policy would ensue, leading to an opening of society, and the eventual, peaceful transition to
democratic socialism.

Unfortunately, the application of this model in East Germany was flawed by a particularly German element, the partition of Germany. The SED successfully disrupted the coalescence of organized opposition simply by sending its leaders to the West. Much more humane and politically tolerable than extended prison sentences or execution, this solution to the "dissident problem" gave the GDR government an outlet for maintaining political stability not available in other countries of the East Bloc.

Ironically, the attention given to those who were deported, made possible by the fact that West German media were readily available to East Germans, made the desperate acts of socialist governments in their attempts to cover up internal crisis, painfully explicit. A sense of alienation and disillusionment grew as more and more citizens felt they were being used simply as raw material in furthering a material wealth of which they benefitted little37. Their faith that as socialist workers they actively participate in a partnership with the state to build the only stable society—a socialist society, was ridden with fear and distrust.

The church offered to patch up this faith by augmenting it with an overarching belief system. It promised a place to regain personal identity and empowerment. It offered a reprieve from the day-to-day necessity of making do with a system, which at every turn reminded citizens of the limitations on their freedom to act, speak, and think as they pleased. The church emphasized individual growth and responsibility.

It therefore supported grass-roots activities specifically for the opportunities of personal development they offered. To this end, many of the church-organized activities, such as picnic

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37 Women, in particular, felt overburdened state demands of its citizenry. They were encouraged to "do their part for society" by not only having children but also working full-time. While the state sponsored child-care, women still felt an enormous burden in playing a dual role in the production and reproduction of society (Hornig and Steiner 1992). So important was the status of the national birth rate to the government that it was reported in state economic reports along with other economic indicators such as energy consumption and production, quota fulfillment in various industries, and the success of agricultural harvests (See, for example, "Statistical Administration Reports 1978 Economic Data", in East Berlin ADN International Service Jan 18, 1979).
seminars, plays, peace gatherings, workshops, and tree-plantings provided an artistic outlet as well as the chance to gather and share with others. The activities themselves reflected the church context, in that they were highly symbolic. This arose not only from the constraints presented through state repression, but also from the interpretive methods already established by the church for understanding "the Word", and getting it out.

The juxtaposition of the organizational influence of the Prague Spring model, which saw as the ultimate source for fundamental political change the state leadership, and the church-based model which encouraged step-by-step change at the grassroots, came to a head, as I have mentioned, in the conflict over strategy in the Initiative for Peace and Human Rights.

Yet despite the apparent grass-roots nature of the church-based groups, the desire to establish an open social dialogue between the state and its citizens was paramount to church peace activism. Thus, few believed the institution of the state itself should be emasculated, just its monopoly control. If honest dialogue with the citizenry could be ensured, the state's decisions would be more trustworthy and responsible--less arbitrary and irrational. As the view that a healthy society-state relationship must ensue from the top fused with the religious influence of personal growth and responsibility, an amalgamation developed which portrayed the individual citizen as critical to the rebuilding of social structures.

We call all citizens of the GDR to active and responsible behavior. Exactly the deep resignation and distrustful helplessness which has worked its way into all social organizations requires that in the next months a resuscitation of democratic activities amongst all citizens and in all existing structures take place. (from the New Forum Oct. 6, 1989, in Rein 1989, pg. 16, author’s translation).

**Movement intellectuals**

Eyerman and Jamison (1991) state that all activists may be viewed as intellectuals since "through their activism they contribute to the formation of the movement's collective identity, to making the
movement what it is" (pg, 94). This may be particularly true in the case of the GDR political alternative movement of the 1970s and 80s, since anyone involved in activism had to be dedicated enough to risk personal safety. These activists developed through their underground activities an intense movement identity based on solidarity. Those I interviewed agreed that most activists suffered Stasi surveillance, yet few made headline news in the West or East. They were involved because of considerable personal conviction. Unfortunately, several also succumbed to Stasi pressures and became "informal employees" of the secret police (Richter and Zylla 1991). By the late 1980s, as more people were arrested for activities only known to friends, it became clear that some of the most trusted members of the movement were also working for the Stasi. For instance, Freya Klier, a theater performer who was a member of a Berlin church-based activist group, was imprisoned and deported in 1988 because she and her husband had attempted to help a biologist, who had in his research inadvertently come across data pertaining to the ill-effects of the Chernobyl accident on the GDR. They had agreed to get the data from the biologist and publish it. No one other than Wolfgang Schnur, a pastor leading the activism in the church where Klier and her husband were involved, knew of this exchange with the biologist. The arrest of Freya Klier and her husband Stefan Krawczyk could only be explained by Schnur’s collaboration with the Stasi. Their suspicions were later verified. Schnur, despite his participation in and apparent sympathies with the underground political alternative, had been a Stasi informer (ibid, pp. 35-47).

The early movement intellectuals, the dissidents, came to articulate the movement’s identity through their connections to publishing possibilities in the West. While many other people expressed frustrations with the government, openly supported the ideas expressed by dissidents, or even put their oppositional ideas in writing, their views were quite easily extinguished. Work, school, or other social opportunities were quietly retracted from these "subversives" and also often from their families. This stealthy undermining of a person’s support network provoked a fear that became pervasive throughout the GDR society as more and more people were exposed to the Stasi’s tactics. Most adapted by learning to censor their words, and likewise even their thoughts. Only people like Bahro,
Havemann, Heym, and Biermann, with connections abroad, could avoid this immediate censorship by sending their work to the West. The fact that their books and songs had then to be smuggled back and read surreptitiously heightened their popularity. While the authors were eventually deported, their ideas, printed and bound, were passed from one hand to the next.

Many of the church leaders involved in political activism had experienced a life-long marginalization within the GDR due to their Christian beliefs. By holding on to their convictions, they had to accept a distancing from civil society. This experience gave some a personal affinity to the issues of human rights and justice championed by the political movement (for instance, theologian Wolfgang Ulmann). Others, such as Pastor Rainer Eppelmann, were drawn to the church as the only place where people with a concern for social well being could do meaningful work. Many of the lay people influential in the movement became politically active following critical public events of citizen protest, such as the deportation of Wolfgang Biermann to West Germany in 1976, Roland Jahn in 1983, or the 1988 demonstration of civil rights at the annual state parade in remembrance of Rosa Luxemburg. Others had experienced Stasi surveillance for personal actions, such as submitting a request to move to the West, had been denied the normal advantages of being a GDR citizen (i.e., right to work, to pursue certain tracks of education), and had then become politically-engaged as a form of resistance to this repression. Many activists were academics, well-educated, aware of the politicization of everyday life. As professionals they were filled with a desire to effect change in society. In any case, most of these activists and "movement intellectuals" represented a different generation from the Havemann, Bahro, and Heym contingent.

Although they were often quite committed to socialist ideals, they were born after the Nazi time, they did not take part in the establishment of the GDR, in realizing the dream of a socialist German society--"the better Germany". Instead, they experienced the heavily centralized bureaucracy, the invasion of the state into their very thoughts and language, and the arbitrary decisions of that state. They sought more to empower themselves and each other through their discussions, than to achieve the ideal socialist state. Their overarching concerns were to create open dialogue, so that a fear which
kept people from interacting on the streets, in buses, on trains, and supermarkets, could be overcome.

One of the more powerful features the church brought to the political activist movement was the voice of the youth. Church youth groups, integral to the church’s organization, provided exposure of those in their late-teens and early twenties to the political alternative. They became the leading organizers of politically-oriented activities, and in effect, the loudest protest voice.

The youth had less loyalty to the promise of state socialism since their experience of the state was solely bureaucratic and restrictive. In fact, amongst the youth there existed a strong theme of anarchism causing tension with those interested in working constructively to effect real change while maintaining the GDR socialist state (Rüddenklau, 1992). Generally, the youth were zivilisationskritisch, critical of a civilization where the power to structure their own lives had been taken from them (Büscher and Wensierski 1984). Their job choice was limited, their living arrangement restricted, their discussions censored.

It was the energy and rebellious nature of the youth which gave the political critique its vibrancy and, conditioned by the church, its grassroots quality. For instance, through the influence of the church the phrase "Swords into Plowshares" was coined, but it was the youth who popularized these slogans, wearing them as a matter of defiance, on their jackets, shirts, and backpacks.

Leaders within these groups were among those kept under surveillance or arrested when their activities clashed with the Stasi. In June, 1983, Roland Jahn, aged 29, one of the most inspirational leaders of the Jena Peace Community was deported to the West. In the few weeks previous to his deportation, about 20 members of Jena’s peace movement had also been expelled from the country (Hamburg DPA June 10, 1983). By December of 1983, the West German paper Süddeutsche Zeitung reported:

The GDR state authorities are seriously concerned over spontaneous activities by young people and are extremely afraid of uncontrolled peace demonstrations. The state security service and the police react in an indecisive, irritated, and nervous manner. Those people suspected of organizing private initiatives are particularly under intense pressure. This past Monday, for example, four women who had worked in private peace groups and established contacts with a female member of the British peace movement were arrested in East Berlin. (Süddeutsche Zeitung Dec 16, 1983)
In February of 1984, four 18-year-old members of a church peace group from Weimar were sentenced to prison terms ranging from five to eight months. They were charged with hooliganism, which referred to the spray painting of slogans such as "SS-20--No Thank You" on walls. (Hamburg DPA Feb 24, 1984). In July of the same year, ten young people, between the ages of 19 to 28, were sentenced to jail terms ranging eight to thirty-four months. They were accused of "establishing illegal contacts", "organizing to pursue illegal aims", as well as "public defamation" (Frankfurter Allgemeine Jul 28, 1984).

These, among many other arrests, exposed a new source of tension within the state-society relationship. No longer were artists and authors with quite sophisticated political and economic criticisms arrested, but now, energetic, college-age peace activists\(^\text{38}\), often participating in such simple protests as placing petitions for peace in their apartment windows, were being met with state repression. The fact that the state was advocating peace, while repressing the peace movement of its own country, brought many to view the state's actions as irrational and arbitrary.

**Conclusion: The cognitive praxis of the GDRs alternative political movement**

The significance of a social movement need not only be determined through an organizationally-based or historically-based assessment of its successes or failures. In the pursuit of understanding the changing *ideals, ideas, activities* which shape a movement's identity, the analysis of this chapter has focused on the cognitive territory created through the GDR's alternative political movement. This provides a historical bases for examining the East German environmentalism that emerged from it.

The alternative political movement of the GDR was shaped by the political culture in which it evolved. As conditions within this context changed the ideas, ideals, and activities--the cognitive

\(^{38}\) While universities have provided an important locus for social activism in Western countries, this was not as prevalent in the Eastern Bloc. Academic freedom did not exist since research and teaching had to reflect socialist ideology. Although many movement leaders were also academics or university-trained professionals, they could not use the space of the university to articulate their ideas.
praxis—of the movement were recreated and modified. For instance, the opening of the church as a significant contributor to socialist society moved the predominant locus of activism from dissident writers and authors to the grass roots. The writing of biting but often abstract political petitions to the state, was largely supplanted by practical yet also symbolic activities through which a wide range of people could come together, share their fears, and discuss issues. This process pulled leaders to the movement. As the movement developed, the type of activists it drew upon changed, modifying the movement identity. No longer dominated by dissident artists, the alternative political movement of the GDR gained vibrancy as well as impatience from the large youth membership it acquired through the church.

The political activism of the GDR also developed in the ideas it proffered. Throughout, its meaning focused on the achievement of democratic socialism in the GDR. While at first, the best model for realizing this goal required a realization by government leaders (through prodding from society's intellectuals) that Stalinism stood as a barrier to socialist evolution, the church-based activists of the 1980s spoke predominantly of the personal, spiritual renewal of individuals. Such renewal would offer the hope that the interaction between individuals would develop from a position of peace and trust, rather than fear and doubt.

In recognizing that the state-society relationship of socialist Germany was destroying the viability of their society, activists specifically challenged the anonymity created through Stalinist state structures. They confronted the very rationality of socialist ideology by questioning the state party's position as sole executor of the "laws" of history leading to socialism. In struggling against this rationality, they came to focus on personal conscience and responsibility. These very elements of personal experience are the "subjective" factors (alluded to in the quote from Havel introducing this chapter) that are excluded from a scientific pursuit of truth—in this case socialism.

The political activism in the GDR focused on the opening of society. The idea of democratization changed as the movement transformed. Democracy was not necessarily something guaranteed if the leadership provided appropriate policy. It also required open social dialogue,
freedom of information, and the building of trust of citizens by the state and vice-versa. There existed in the early political movement a belief that the "true" GDR communists would recognize the inevitability of democratized socialism. Later this trust in the party's ability of self-reform waned, but the importance of open, honest dialogue, between the citizen and state leadership, remained central to the church's stance vis-a-vis the state. Fundamentally, an ethical sense of social responsibility was argued if the state leadership were to honestly uphold its mandate in creating a just socialist society, and the citizens constructively uphold their role in participating in its development. Based on these principles, a humane use of power could evolve and with it a healthy state-society relationship.

The knowledge created through the cognitive praxis of this movement shaped the social reality and identity of East German citizens. Debate concerning what constituted a healthy state-society relationship disseminated into the ranks of the SED leadership, creating, for instance, conflict within the party with respect to the role of the church in socialism. Furthermore, high-ranking members of the SED appear to have been at odds about the legitimacy of activists' complaints. For instance, in 1988, the deputy chairman of the Federation of Evangelical Churches, Manfred Stolpe, spoke of a power struggle occurring within the SED power apparatus over the future course of the party. It seemed that the advocates and opponents of Gorbachev's reforms for restructuring, renewal, and openness were irreconcilably divided. Stolpe, considered to be the church leader best informed about political developments of the time (it was later discovered he was a Stasi informant), predicted that there would be "upcoming changes in the SED leadership" (Frankfurter Rundschau Oct 12, 1988, pg. 2).

As I will discuss later, the ideal that social dialogue necessarily be based on respect and trust, central to the identity of political activism, had an impressive impact on the unification and post-unification process. It became explicit in the platforms of the 1989 groups that formed outside of the church. The social message created through the process of alternative political activism in the GDR: only through extensive open discussion was social reform possible.
Important to the current development of society is that a large number of people participate in the social reform process, and that the diverse individual and group actions find a means for joint negotiation. For this reason we are forming a political platform for the entire GDR, that makes it possible for people of all professions, social circles, parties, and groups to participate in the discussion and working out of the essential social problems of this country. (Platform statement of the New Forum Sep, 1989, in Rein 1989, pg. 14, author's translation).
In the previous chapter I characterized the cognitive space and history of the alternative political movement of the GDR. From this space, which was in continuous motion, waxing and waning, submerging and re-emerging, ideals and ideas developed concerning the components critical to a healthy state-society relationship, and a well-functioning political-economy. Although this activism evolved through different periods, throughout emphasis was given to the vision of democratic socialism. Later, emphasis was also placed on the importance of open social dialogue, social trust, and social responsibility. It is from these that a critical environmentalism, surfacing in the late 1970s, took shape.

In this chapter, I explore the cognitive praxis of East German environmentalism. Because environmental activists were in close association with other alternative groups, utilizing similar resources, and strategies, I argue that the organizational and technological dimensions of environmentalism are similar to those of political activism. I focus then primarily on the cosmological dimension particular to environmental activism in the GDR, the cognitive praxis it created, and its dialectical relationship with the state. This analysis makes explicit the manner in which environmental activism placed a new emphasis on the role of nature in the building of a sound socialist state.

**GDR environmentalism**

As early as 1972, after the publication of the Club of Rome’s report, *Limits to Growth* (smuggled from the FRG into the GDR), and a year after the state established a Ministry for Environmental Protection, several leaders of the evangelical (protestant) church came to discuss the contributions theology could offer in trying to understand the ecological crises of modern society. By 1973, a few
articles pertaining to environmental deterioration had appeared in the newsletters of the church. In 1976, a retreat for ministers focused on environmental issues, from which a paper was published for use in seminars. Not surprisingly, given the church's still tenuous position in socialist Germany, what arose from this preliminary discourse was a consensus with the state that socialist modes of production were the most effective means through which environmental deterioration could be rectified (Gensichen 1991).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, as members within the church actively pursued their officially sanctioned role in socialist society, a framework in which to broaden environmental interests and distinguish them from peace initiatives was developed. During these years the church's international agenda emphasized the social (including environmental) problems associated with progress, science, and technology. Specifically, a church study, published in 1978, considered "the responsibility that Christians in a socialist society have vis-a-vis the environment and the future of humanity" (Wensierski, 1989, pg. 15, author's translation). The study focused on five areas where this responsibility may be demonstrated: economics-politics, law, social-psychology, science, and ideology. With respect to ecological issues, discussed by way of these five themes, it was determined that:

The [environmental] situation has several aspects and must be differentially evaluated. Sensible ecological action can be derived from the social system, and in reality there are several positive starting points which can be further developed. However, they run up against boundaries and resistances which must be overcome. The situation is therefore open. Critical will be the horizon at which the ecological problems, social responsibilities, and future will be perceived. (ibid, author's translation)

The study went on to state that the most important element directing environmental policy and ecologically oriented initiatives in the GDR was

the immediate goal of socialist production...to satisfy completely the continuously growing material and cultural needs of society. (ibid, author's translation)

Since the Socialist Unity Party (SED) considered the domestic stability of the GDR to be based on the everyday supply of material goods, its pursuit for economic growth was never-ending.

It was this quest for material freedom, fundamental to the socialist ideology, that the church
began, tentatively at first, to put into question. Theologians suggested that freedom from material needs alone could not satisfy the equally as important spiritual needs of individuals. They demarcated, then, two sets of needs: spiritual and material. Although the satisfaction of basic material necessities was indeed deemed important, a continued emphasis on material growth above and beyond basic necessities, without a concomitant emphasis on spiritual growth, would ultimately create a shallow, consumer society. They further argued that the constant demand for material needs satisfaction which characterizes a consumer society, was becoming institutionalized in socialist Germany. Consumerism was therefore becoming part and parcel of the socialist fabric.

In really existing socialism, social and spiritual needs are managed through organizations and become, therefore, institutionalized. The pseudo-satisfaction of material needs through material, organizational, and institutional resources creates not only frustration among the needy, but also constantly increases demands for the satisfaction of material needs. It therefore forces ever-growing pressures on the production sector. It is valid, then, to distinguish between those needs that contribute to the preservation of the material necessities of life, and those—equally as fundamental to the very structure of humanity—which contribute to spiritual-intellectual health. After all, it must be determined which needs are artificially created, intentionally or unintentionally, and whether unrealistic objectives or utopian promises of happiness are having an effect on human lifestyles. Such an examination could help, not only to confront a consumer orientation, but to establish a greater appreciation for life as well as a richer structure to our way of life. (Briefe Nr. 3, Jan 1981, author’s translation)

They went on to argue, that environmental crises reflected and were a reflection of the spiritual (and consequent intellectual and cultural) crisis in the GDR. Environmentally-concerned pastors asserted that the human psyche was damaged as nature was being transformed through Stalinist, socialist modes of production. This damage to the psyche, they suggested, was materially manifest in the natural and built environment.

The destruction of intellectual-cultural character of the people is outwardly documented by the decrepit state of our inner cities, the disturbed landscape, crumbling historical buildings, and the swelling of mass housing (Neubert 1989, pg. 146, author’s translation)

Neubert, a consulting sociologist to the theological studies department of the evangelical church, believed Honecker’s push for unity in economic and social policy was failing because it snuffed out the intellectual and cultural energy of East Germans. The resulting resigned passivity was evident in the lack of vibrancy of the GDR’s theater, literature, and education, as well as in nature. Thus,
the economic-ecological and social-political crisis is simultaneously a cultural crisis. (ibid, author’s translation)

Many critical thinkers felt that social activism was a means by which to challenge this growing passivity. Büscher and Wensierski for instance, who have written several articles and books on social activism and environmental deterioration in East Germany[^39], saw the emergence of social activism as inevitable given the oppressive stifling of creative energy in the GDR.

This is a critique of civilization: It is inevitable that when the intellectually and culturally engaged are turned over to the police and secret security, socialism’s primary orientation toward material well-being would be challenged. In this respect, the activities of the ecology movement [are] about more than just environmental protection in the style of forest management. (Büscher and Wensierski 1984, pg.46, author’s translation)

The ecological movement of the GDR was as much a movement of the environment as a movement challenging the socialist ideology which emphasized material well-being. The environment was a critical component, one of many in the GDR society, which was decaying as state authorities blindly focused on material growth and refused true participation from the citizenry. Importantly, it was one of the only aspects of social life that people could visibly witness changing and deteriorating. The deterioration of air and water quality was experienced in the day-to-day routines of people throughout east Germany. It threatened their health and therefore evoked, as will become evident, a passionate response from a wide spectrum of citizens.

The church-based discussions concerning the ideal nature-society relationship were closely linked to discussions concerning the state-society relationship. A spiritual emphasis on inner peace and social responsibility was woven throughout written and verbal discussions on these matters. For instance, church leaders such as Bishop Albrecht Schönherr, argued that peace within a community or society required that a sense of inner peace be fostered within individual members. Yet the

[^39]: For instance, Büscher and Wensierski (1984) *Null Bock auf DDR: Aussteigerjugend in anderen Deutschland* (No desire for the GDR: the youth who are bailing out in the other Germany); Wensierski and Büscher (eds) (1981) *Beton ist Beton* (Concrete is Concrete); Wensierski (1988) *Ökologische Probleme und Kritik an der Industriegesellschaft in der DDR heute* (Environmental Problems and Critique in the Industrial Society of the GDR today); Wensierski (1981) "Nach Alternativien wird gesucht" (Alternatives are being sought), in Wensierski and Büscher (eds) (1981) *Beton ist Beton.*
development of personal, inner peace necessitated an overarching awareness and valuation of
equality, social participation, and ecological sensitivity.

[B]elonging to...inner peace is equality, an ecological living style and participation (Bishop

As it became clear from the 1982 ban of environmental data that the state was hiding the severity of
environmental deterioration from the GDR citizenry, and thus eliminating informed participation,
environmentally concerned citizens began to focus on the increased social instability resulting from a
state-society relationship based on deceit.

How could this deceit be overcome? A vocal point for debate in the church-based environmental
discussions of the early 1980s was the responsibility and capability of individuals to participate in
decisions concerning the use and utilization of science and technology. This participation required
access to environmental data as well as a renewed sense of personal commitment to the greater
society. The theologian Heino Falcke explains:

The issue is that the citizen, the individual, become competent, and ethically mature, so that
he can help carry out decisions [about the use of technology]. (Falcke, 1979, in ibid, pg. 18,
author's translation)

It was argued that the decisions made by a small group of SED decision-makers to pursue technology
and science based on the criterion that material growth is progress, was taking the GDR down an
unpredictable, socially destabilizing path.

If we do not learn to also regulate the progress of science, the further stages of our
development will be increasingly determined by chance. (Briefe Nr. 3 January, 1981,
author's translation)

Note that this statement expresses an assumption that progress can be regulated. Technology can be
used wisely. Theology was being called upon to establish a new ethic for the proper use of
technology and the sciences in general.

The goal of this discourse is not to develop a humanist way of thinking in which, under the
inclusion of theology, all sciences would be allocated a well-ordered place. Instead, the
purpose is to mutually develop strategies, whereby human behavior does justice to the reality
of nature (in the view of the natural sciences) as well as doing justice to the will of God and
with the Creation (the formulation of theology). Suggested is therefore something like a
peace-ecological-economics ethic, that is not just interested or oriented toward scientific facts, but also the Whole of reality. (Briefe Nr.1 Jan, 1981, pg, 8, author’s translation)

Leaders of the church-based environmentalist movement, such as Hans-Peter Gensichen of the Wittenberg Research Center, hoped that this new ethic could provide the basis for tempering the objectivity of science with moral considerations, while also opening communication between the state-dictated scientific community and the church. The environmental decay evident in GDR society was associated with a misuse of technology (Hager, 1991) arising as state authorities cut themselves off from the citizenry. To build a stable political economy through a sound relationship with nature, the pursuit of economic growth had to be balanced with the pursuit of cultural, spiritual, and intellectual well-being. Science and the state socialism it supported should be enhanced through the ethical contributions of theology.

According to Hans-Peter Gensichen, church leaders defended their interest in these themes to their congregations and the SED by referring to the Church's historical council on the ethical implications of natural resource use. Stated goals of church-based environmentalism were to: 1) increase environmental awareness by informing citizens of environmental deterioration in eastern Germany, 2) discuss the human implications of this deterioration, local, national, and international, 3) consider the ethical implications and future prudence of the prioritization of economic growth in industrial societies, and 4) argue the moral imperative of all individuals, not just Christians, to respond (Gensichen, 1991; Briefe Nr. 1, Jan 1980; Wensierski, 1981).

As early as 1979, church-based activities were organized to raise awareness about environmental issues, and more profoundly, about the effect of science and technology on the individual’s relationship to nature. Youth group members in the northern region of Mecklenburg began the first tree planting activities in 1979, which later became regularly planned events (though several times thwarted by the Stasi) throughout the GDR. These were often combined with a weekend retreat during which broader issues concerning Christian responsibility to God’s creation were discussed (Gensichen 1991). Fifty people participated in the first tree-planting retreat, 100 in the second, and by
September of 1980, 200 youth were involved (Wensierski and Büscher 1981).

These tree plantings were not simply regarded as practical improvements to the landscape, but consciousness raising, spiritual, and political projects. Since the political repercussions for any public activity not associated with the advancement of socialism were usually severe and immediate, activists had to be very careful about the events they planned. Thus, symbolic action was often the most effective for raising an environmental consciousness while not evoking conflict with the state. The tree itself was a symbol for the significance of aesthetics in human life. It represented interdependence within an ecosystem, continuity and responsibility between generations and over centuries, and hope in a better future (Gensichen 1991, pg. 150). An explanation offered by one group providing information about future tree-planting events states:

The planting (of trees) itself is a symbolic action, whose practical value alone is not a decisive factor. What is important to us, is that people become sensitized to environmental problems and through this increased awareness can draw conclusions with respect to their practical behavior. (Wensierski 1981, pg. 24-25, author’s translation)

In 1980, the state officially engaged the environmental concerns being expressed in the church through two events. First, on March 6, 1980, a seminar on nuclear energy development was held by the state secretary for church affairs, Klaus Gysi, and state science experts. Secondly, the state created the "Society for Nature and the Environment" (Gesellschaft für Natur und Umwelt). Within the ranks of alternative activists, this state sanctioned environmental organization was widely considered to be an attempt by the SED to co-opt growing state criticism based on environmental deterioration. Nonetheless, many East Germans regarded it as a legitimate and productive place for environmental action. Thinking ecologically meant planting trees, caring for public parks, creating new recreational areas, and providing education about the industrial imperative to use natural resources wisely (DeBardeleben 1985). In the former GDR, approximately 2,400 local and regional groups organized volunteers to work in over 750 nature reserves that covered over 100,000 hectares.

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40 Hans-Peter Gensichen of the Wittenberg Research Center explained to me how difficult it often was to develop projects that didn't raise the eyebrows of the Stasi. For instance, even an organic gardening project he organized was met with Stasi resistance.
Volunteers worked to build nature trails, improve residential and recreational areas, overhaul waste and water treatment facilities, and clear damaged timber from forests (GDR Academy of Science 1989). Under the motto "Join to Improve our Towns and Villages" (East Berlin ADN International Jun 1, 1987), many East Germans strove to demonstrate support for socialist ideals by fulfilling their Constitutional obligation to conserve the natural environment for the welfare of future GDR citizens.

The establishment of an environmental organization within official state structures did not, however, cause the church’s support for environmental issues to wane. In fact, a continued commitment to increasing the environmental awareness of pastors was evidenced by the fact that by 1980, courses on environmental protection were part of the curriculum in seminaries. In 1981, theology students in Leipzig organized a working group to discuss issues of environmental protection and security.

These theology students worked together with the Church Research Center located in Wittenberg, to put their ideas and discussions concerning Christian responsibility vis-a-vis the environment into action. In the spring of 1981, an action was organized called Mobil ohne Auto (mobility without a car). The car was chosen as a symbol of the attractiveness and destructiveness of a progress-oriented, technical civilization. By renouncing its use for a weekend, other ecologically friendly means of transportation were supposed to be sought. In addition, the car represented the distancing between humankind and nature created by a blind dependence on technology. The weekend’s message was that this growing dependence, which typifies industrial society, must be challenged through individual action if a less-alienating, stable relationship with nature is to be achieved (Gensichen, 1991). In its first year, 50 to 100 people participated. In later years the numbers increased as the event spread to other regions in East Germany, making it one of the most public events of a predominantly underground environmentalist movement.

In 1982, bicycle rides were organized in Berlin as protests against the inhibiting city structure which made bicycling quite dangerous. These broadened to include bicycle trips for the purposes of
increasing citizens' awareness of the horrendous environmental conditions in concentrated pockets throughout the GDR. For instance, in May of 1983, a three day bike tour brought the 80 participants to a major polluter, the cement factory in Rüdersdorf, as well as the vast crater strewn landscape east of the metropolitan area of Berlin.

On account of these activities, the very use of a bicycle in Berlin became symbolic. The state security police, nervous about the potential for rebellion, often responded by harassing bike riders, particularly those, who for a while tied white ribbons on their handlebars as a sign of resistance, and solidarity to the opposition (Rüddenklau 1992).

From a Dresden-based ecological working group, a project was organized in 1983 to bring children from severely polluted regions to the relatively clean countryside during the summer months. While in 1983 twelve children took part, by 1985 the total was 200 (Gensichen 1991). In the same year, the Wittenberg Research Center began a fund raising drive—Öko-Fonds—to promote ecologically oriented projects, i.e., the building of a solar-heated house, the ecologically-sensitive operation of a café, the construction of an ecologically-sound sewage plant. Although the scale of possible projects was quite small since the funds available amounted to only about $15,000 yearly, they gave many much needed evidence that ecologically-sound living is possible (Gensichen 1991).

In 1983, a group of Berlin environmentalists coordinated an action with a church group in Karl-Marx-Stadt (now known as Chemnitz) concerning the dying stands of trees in the Erz Mountains of East Germany. Simultaneous to a series of lectures on this topic held in various East Berlin churches, an eco-seminar took place in Karl-Marx-Stadt, which concluded with a protest march in the forests by Olbernhau (Rüddenklau 1992). In 1983, the first monthly peace services were also held at the Nikolai Church in Leipzig. Among the goals of these workshops was the raised awareness of environmental deterioration as well as the associated health implications. I learned from my

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41 Although the participation of eighty people in a bike tour may not seem to be very radical in western terms, in the Soviet Bloc, these activities were blatant statements of state criticism, for which participants could be jailed for "subversive, anti-state activity."
interviews that intense discussions concerning the role of the state in protecting citizens from pollution were also widespread in these grassroots workshops and activities, but required considerable camouflage\textsuperscript{42} to conceal this "anti-state rhetoric" from the Stasi.

Throughout the 1980s, the Wittenberg center was the primary source for environmentally related data otherwise not readily available to GDR citizens (Rüddenklau 1992). From the center were published two newsletters containing articles ranging from the responsibility of Christians in the preservation of God's creation to technical analysis of forest deterioration or the concentration of pollutants in soil\textsuperscript{43}. The more prominent newsletter, Briefe (Letters), was founded in 1980 with a circulation of 400 copies. By 1989, 2750 copies were printed, challenging, as the director Hans-Peter Gensiichen told me, the center's meager resources to print, collate and mail issues. Gensichen explained it was for this reason that they encouraged readers to cancel their subscriptions and share copies instead. The sharing of issues was already avidly done.

Not only did these newsletters offer valuable information and a forum for discussion, they encouraged the organization of local environmentally-oriented groups and activities. While in 1983 about 30 environmental groups existed in the GDR, by 1988 that number had more than doubled (Gensichen 1991). Their topics of discussion were predominantly related to local environmental issues, though not exclusive of the domestic and international politics framing local circumstances (Büscher and Wensierski 1984).

In April 1986, the nuclear reactor catastrophe in Chernobyl provided environmentally-concerned GDR citizens a blatant example in which the political decision-making process about the use of

\textsuperscript{42} Due to fear of Stasi infiltration, access to such discussions by new members was often hard to obtain (interview, Christine Steiner, 1992). In addition, particularly political discussions still often occurred in the relative safety of private living rooms, or on retreat in the wilderness (interview, Hans-Peter Gensichen, 1992).

\textsuperscript{43} Although there was a publishing ban on unofficial environmental data, many scientists had access to such information. In fact, in a 1992 interview with a Humboldt University chemistry professor, I learned that environmental data were often surreptitiously passed amongst scientists, though not allowed to enter official research journals or classrooms.
science and technology was flawed. While the East German state had ensured the citizenry that its nuclear power generation was exceptionally safe, similar technology as used in the GDR had just melted down in the USSR. Even on the heels of the Chernobyl accident, the GDR authorities continued their positive political rhetoric about nuclear development, since East German safety measures were said to be better than those of the USSR. Yet as information about the extent and causes of the Chernobyl accident began to infiltrate into East Germany through West Germany, GDR residents felt their distrust of the authorities growing. Grassroots groups attempted public protests, yet these were immediately repressed. One school teacher, who refused to allow her students to play in the sand boxes of the school's playground, was reprimanded with a written notice from the authorities (Rüdenklau 1992, pg. 61).

Because public anti-nuclear demonstrations of any sort proved impossible, grassroots groups focused on informing themselves and as many others as possible about the dangers of nuclear power. This was done specifically to prepare a formal petition to the state. Particularly active in this endeavor were Brigitte Neumann and Kai Becker from the evangelical student group in Halle, Erika Drees from Stendal (who organized people against the planned building of a nuclear reactor in Stendal), and Heiltraut Friedrich from Oberseifersdorf. In East Berlin, grassroots groups worked together to write a ten page appeal "Chernobyl has an effect everywhere". In subsequent meetings, these groups analyzed the GDRs energy policy over the last decades, and informed themselves about the pros and cons of alternative energy. The Initiative for Peace and Human Rights wrote "An appeal for a popular vote", signed by 1,000 people in which it was stated that: "The government has moved beyond its area of competence. A fundamental discussion with and an informing of the entire population is necessary" (Rüdenklau 1992, pg. 63, author's translation). This public declaration received no comment from the SED authorities. Another grassroots discussion pertaining to nuclear energy took place at the 1986 Ecology Seminar in the Zionskirche (Church of Zion) in East Berlin, bringing together 100 people from 36 different organizations throughout the GDR (ibid).

In 1986, a growing, highly political critique emanating from environmental activism was given a
locus for expression: the first underground Environmental Library (*Umwelt-bibliothek*) was founded in the basement of the *Zionskirche* in East Berlin. According to Wolfgang Rüdenklau, a founder of this library, a number of environmental activists expressed the need for a centralized location, where environmental information could be obtained, discussion groups could gather, and informal conversations could take place. The individuals who established and frequented this new, highly controversial, library were generally young, under the age of twenty-five, and very critical of the state. They discussed environmental deterioration as one indicator, among many, of political oppression.

The library's founders also published an environmentally-oriented newsletter, *Umweltblätter* (environmental notes). While the newsletter of the Wittenberg Research Center (*Briefe*) covered similar themes of environmental decay in the GDR, the Berlin group made explicit the highly political element of this environmental deterioration. By 1987, this blatant political critique prompted the *Stasi* to respond. In November of that year

seven people were caught red-handed in the act of producing material hostile to the state in the cellar of a building next to the Zion Church. (East Berlin ADN International Service)

On November 25, 1987, a West German news agency reports:

Last night, during the 2 and 1/2 hour search of the Environment Library...the pastor of the Church of Zion, Hans Simon, five members of a peace and environment group were arrested, of whom one 14-year-old boy was released at around noon today. The other four persons had apparently not been released by this evening. In the case of one of them, Wolfgang Rüdenklau, a second house search was made this afternoon, it was reported this evening...Duplicating machines, stencils and information material were reportedly seized in the Environment Library...The search was justified on the basis of paragraph 218 of the GDR Criminal Code, which deals with "association for the pursuit of illegal aims". (Hamburg DPA Nov 25, 1987)

Also in 1987, church-based peace groups were incorporating environmental concerns into their protests against the government. In Leipzig, the monthly peace services had transformed into weekly

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44 Once again, the establishment of a library in the basement of a church may not appear terribly radical to most western readers. However, the existence of this library verged on being an open affront to the socialist government. It was officially tolerated (though often ransacked by *Stasi*) because it was established through the church and was designated for church use only.
demonstrations—the "Monday demos". These usually emphasized issues of peace and human rights, interwoven with environmental concerns. In the Spring of 1987, 600 people were attending marches. By October, weekly rallies brought out 120,000 citizens (*Der Standard* Oct 20, 1989, pg. 3).

By 1988, the Ministry for Security began to respond specifically to environmentally-related activism. In November of that year, Carlo Jordan, the co-founder of the "Green Network of the Evangelical Church in the GDR" was refused permission to leave the country in order to participate in a city ecology seminar in Prague (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* Nov 24, 1988, pg. 2). In the early months of 1989, GDR authorities attempted to prevent weekly religious services in Leipzig. They also interfered repeatedly with the publication and dissemination of protestant newspapers in which environmental issues were heavily discussed. Newsletters such as the *Evangelische Nachrichtendienst*, *Die Kirche, Potsdamer Kirche, Glaube und Heimat*, and the *Mecklenburgische Kirchenzeitung* were continuously under surveillance in 1988, and often suppressed (Hamburg DPA Apr 20, 1988; *Süddeutsche Zeitung* Apr 26, 1988; *Die Welt* Jul 5, 1988; Hamburg DPA Oct 1, 1988; *Süddeutsche Zeitung* Oct 18, 1988; *Süddeutsche Zeitung* Dec 13, 1988; Vienna Domestic Service Dec 30, 1988). Typical statements found in these newsletters linked environmental concern with political demands that, for instance,

> the state fully inform the public about any environmental damage caused by its economic policy, regularly release measuring data, and take effective measures to remedy existing and prevent future damages. (*Die Welt*, Jun 30, 1988, pg. 8)

In response to such blatant statements of state criticism, environmental and human rights activists were arrested, their apartments searched, and books, documents, and diaries seized (Paris AFP Jan 14, 1989).

These crackdowns were probably more significant for their political impact*45* than for their attempt to control subversive activities. The church was easily monitored, and its information

*45* By 1987 it was clear that Gorbachev's policies of reform were to precipitate fundamental and lasting changes in the political economy of the Soviet Union as well as other Eastern Bloc countries. The conservative SED was threatened by Gorbachev's reforms as well as the courage his ideas gave East German citizens to demonstrate publicly. The SED responded with severe crackdowns of public protest.
channels controllable. Church publications were subject to unofficial yet effective censorship, through the infiltration of Stasi informers. As more is revealed about the Stasi involvement in the opposition challenging the state, there has been increased speculation that some within the Stasi may have actually encouraged the articulation of anti-state arguments in such well contained and easily infiltrated forums (Kramer 1992). Informally, conservative estimates of Stasi membership in the underground environmentalist movement range from 25 to 30 percent. Nevertheless (or perhaps in spite of this), the church was perceived as one of the strongest opposition forces in the GDR, second only to the West German television service (Neue Kronen-Zeitung Apr 30, 1985, pg.1).

The heightened tension between activists and the Stasi stretched the church's capacity to act as mediator between the people and the state. Although several high-ranking church leaders were sympathetic with and in fact led peace and environmental activism, the bottom line was that the Protestant Church of East Germany was not a political organization. By participating in actions increasingly more political than religious, it threatened its state sanctioned place in East German society. Given that many church leaders were also either involved with the Stasi or watched by them, this threat to the church's security was too great. As a result, friction developed between church leaders and the grassroots groups, resulting in, for example, broken communication between activists and the church.

The East Berlin Evangelical Church leadership has canceled a meeting with representatives of church grassroots groups which was scheduled for today. The topic of the meeting, which was organized by Bishop Forck and Superintendent General Krusche, should have been "The future of the church." In a letter, Forck and Krusche declared that the situation concerning talks has again become more complicated. (Die Welt Nov 3, 1988, pg. 4)

For this reason, in 1989, environmental and political activists began to organize outside of the church, forming the already mentioned New Forum, Democracy Now, Democratic Start, the Green Party, and the Social Democratic Party.

The frequent confrontations between activists and the state's secret police not only served to raise political awareness in East Germany, but also to publicize environmental issues. A 1989 survey of environmental perceptions of east German citizens (Table 5), indicates a fairly widespread awareness
and dissatisfaction with leading indicators of environmental quality. The highest levels of dissatisfaction with respect to environmental quality amongst those surveyed by Maier and Franke was associated with water, air, and environmental quality in general. The quality of water and air are experienced in everyday living, thus it is understandable that these indicators received the highest response rate, with only 12 and 18 percent, respectively, of those surveyed not having an opinion. On the other hand, the condition of the forest and agricultural land (about which 35 percent of those surveyed had no opinion) is not as readily perceptible, and in the GDR state where unofficial information was banned from publication, not easily investigated.

Table 5: Perception of Environmental Quality: East Germany: 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>% Satisfied/ Very Satisfied</th>
<th>% Dissatisfied/ Very dissatisfied</th>
<th>% Without stated opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water Quality</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Quality</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Quality</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Information in Media</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Awareness of Environment</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition of Forest and Agricultural Land</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Maier and Franke 1990*

Dialectic between environmentalists and state: agency and structure

It is no accident that the diminished involvement in peace initiatives following the 1983 rearmament coincided with an increased involvement in environmental issues. The state, though wary
of any unofficial gathering of people, was initially less threatened by the environmental groups than those discussing specifically peace and human rights issues (Rüddenklau, 1992). Thus, for some, discussion of environmental problems became the safest mechanism through which to vent highly political criticisms of the state (Gensichen, 1991). This appears particularly true of the Berlin activists, whose environmental newsletters were filled with political satire, reports of Stasi oppression, and bold challenges evoking the state leadership's irresponsibility in preserving environmental as well as economic and political security for GDR citizens (See for example some cartoons published in Umweltblätter: Figure 1). Environmental deterioration was one of the more obvious, physical manifestation of distorted state power.

Figure 1: Political cartoons selected from Umweltblätter
Source: Umweltblätter, published by the Umwelthistorische Bibliothek in Berlin
In response to the increasingly obvious ecological damage as well as the more vocal environmental activism developing in the GDR, the SED leadership addressed environmental issues by focusing on the global rather than local scale. Thus, the SED avoided reference to regionally specific environmental crises. Instead, it concentrated on its involvement in international environmental problems, such as ozone depletion, the arms race, and cooperation with the FRG. For example: On International Earth Day in 1989, the Minister of the Environment, Hans Reichelt, gave a speech focusing on the GDRs contribution to climate and ozone research as well as international policy. Linking these efforts to the work of détente, he stated:

The GDR believes that to protect the ozone layer and to prevent possible climatic changes, it is indispensable to make even larger efforts to create a system of international security, to halt the arms race, above all to reduce nuclear weapons, to work for détente, and to work for the peaceful cooperation of states--irrespective of their social system. (Neues Deutschland Jun 5, 1989, pp. 1, 3)

The GDR leadership followed-up on these goals by formalizing, in 1989, substantive environmental agreements with the Federal Republic of Germany.

The FRG will subsidize six environmental projects in the GDR costing DM300 million. FRG Environment Minister Klaus Toepfer and his GDR counterpart Hans Reichelt signed an agreement to this effect in Bonn today. According to Toepfer, the GDR will invest DM470 million. (Hamburg DPA Jun 6, 1989)

As I learned through my interviews, environmentalists were increasingly frustrated by the SEDs strong rhetoric on international environmental policy and its links to international security on the one hand, and its environmentally destructive domestic policy on the other. This parallels the experience of peace activists who revealed a contradiction in GDR policies that emphasized détente, but suppressed the peace initiatives of the GDRs own citizens.

By 1989, then, the politics of nature in the GDR were characterized by two contrasting positions. The state, focusing its political rhetoric on international environmental security, and activists demanding the publication of environmental data to achieve domestic environmental security. GDR authorities were consistent in their responses whenever criticized on policy (whether social, economic, or now environmental), by expounding upon the advantages of socialism in the East-West
dichotomy. Its discussion of environmental issues was usually global, and included the environmental threat posed by the nuclear build-up. Radical environmental activists demanded that the state effect the ideals of democratic socialism at the local level. They emphasized the destruction of peace and trust amongst the citizenry locally, and between the state and society nationally. Environmental deterioration was a glaring manifestation of the cultural, intellectual, and spiritual desolation produced in a country seized by state violence, internal fear, and distrust.

**The technological and organizational dimensions**

As discussion about environmental issues moved from the realm of theologians to the forum of grassroots environmental workshops, seminars, and public protests, emphasis continued on gaining access to information and raising awareness so that individuals could act more responsibly and the state could be held accountable for its policies. As with the political movement characterized in Chapter 3, open communication between the state and the citizenry was a primary point of contention. The ban on environmental data in 1983 made explicit the state's refusal to speak honestly to or receive input from citizens. The deterioration of the environment was a direct reflection of the unhealthy state-society relationship based in deceit. Thus, as with the political alternative, I characterize the technological dimension of the GDRs environmentalism as consisting of the techniques of communication developed through activism.

Since the alternative environmental movement, as with the peace movement, found a locus for action in the church, its organizational dimension was contextualized by the organizational structure of the church. The church structure encouraged seminars, retreats, and workshops through which to learn about and meditate on environmental and peace issues. These were combined with actions, largely symbolic, through which to explore these issues, in praxis, further. Such actions included fasts, tree-planting, bicycle trips, weekends without motor vehicles, organic gardening, and the compilation of health food recipes.
The reliance on written materials continued to be central to the rapport established between activist and supporter within the east German environmentalist movement. For instance, given that the readership was actively—and with risk—searching out information, writers could assume a directed audience, alternative in its political orientation. Therefore, the newsletters contained quite sophisticated debates, ideas, and facts concerning the human use of the environment. Typical titles include: "Science and Progress"; "Towards an orientation to the conflict between Humans-Nature"; "The impact of air pollution in the forests of the Erz Mountains"; "The pros and cons of nuclear energy use"; "Soils—a look into the deep"; "Environmental damage from the use of salt on roads".

Eyerman and Jamison (1991) point out that this form of directed communication no longer occurs in most "modern" social movements which employ electronically-based media. Electronic media are utilized to grab the attention of an, as yet, unengaged audience.

The mediation of the commercial electronically based mass media has broadened the audiences involved. Audiences are no longer as restricted to activists or supporters as they once were, but have been greatly expanded to include an unknown and largely unsympathetic or at least indifferent mass public. This means that words and deeds must be very carefully chosen, more complicated messages toned down or removed altogether. (ibid, pg. 139)

Furthermore, the illicit nature of protest literature and discussion fostered solidarity amongst those who took part, actively or as supporters. Although considerable risk was involved in becoming an active member of these groups (despite their relative protection by the church, many activists were jailed or deported), anonymous participation through the reading of newsletters, or the attendance of a church sermon required little arm twisting. An intense thirst for information as well as its illicit quality pulled people to the cognitive space created by the movement.

**Conclusion: the cosmology and cognitive praxis of environmentalism in the GDR**

It was in reaction to a passivity amongst East German citizens linked to a cultural, spiritual, and intellectual oppression produced by the state's Stalinistic structures that church leaders began to discuss the responsibility of Christians in this socialist state. They focused on the spiritual-cultural
void produced by an economic system that emphasized freeing the socialist worker from material needs. They argued that when science and technology are employed to raise productivity, without acknowledging what harm they do to the environment, or that their use is not satisfying other equally important needs of the citizenry, then they are being inappropriately implemented. The proposed solution of church-based activists was to gather information, bolster the citizens’ sense of personal responsibility, and hold the state accountable for its actions. It is for these reasons that I characterize the cosmological dimension of the GDRs alternative environmentalism differently from that of the political alternative. While the political alternative’s worldview was punctuated by the utopian mission of establishing a democratic socialism and social ethics in GDR society, environmental activism focused specifically on the nuts and bolts of responsible and accountable action vis-a-vis the environment. I therefore characterize the cosmology of environmentalism as a combination of responsibility and accountability.

Exposure of family members, friends, and co-workers to the life-threatening conditions of the severe environmental pollution described in Chapter 2, outraged many and provoked questions as to the rationality of the East German socialist state. A continued discounting of what constituted the silent poisoning of thousands if not millions seemed simply absurd. When the ban on environmental information took effect in 1982, the stands of dying trees, the thick smog, the disappearance of villages ahead of expanding strip mines came to reflect more than just ecological crises. To many citizens the state of the environment and especially the secrecy in which it was shrouded had become a tangible, breathable manifestation of distorted state power. They saw in their environment testimony to irreconcilable political contradictions and irresponsible, irrational decision-making. The more the GDR state repressed individuals’ attempts to make visible these contradictions, the more activists, encouraged and empowered by Gorbachev’s reforms, were convinced change was imminent. In coping with the impacts of environmental pollution and political oppression, they created new resources, new opportunities, new ways of organizing their lives, and of envisioning a better future where citizens and the state would be held accountable for their actions.
Fundamentally, the environmentalism of socialist Germany made explicit that the evolution of social history and the potential of socialism depended directly on a sound society-nature relationship. Crisis in this relationship could no longer be understood as external—solvable once the internal contradictions associated with the economic relationship between labor, the means of production, and material wealth were eradicated. Environmental crisis threatened the material stability of society—a primary goal of socialism—as well as the GDRs social stability. Sound ecological conditions were seen as critical to the building of a sound socialist state and of a healthy state-society relationship.

Perhaps surprising for westerners who blame much of socialism's failure on its denial of private property, environmentalists did not question the public ownership of the means of production. Instead they focused on the centralized, bureaucratic, un-democratic, and therefore unaccountable and often irresponsible, decision-making process which characterized the stalinistic state bureaucracy. Although it was increasingly clear that socialism as it existed could not ensure an environmentally sound economy (as it had promised), debate did not turn to the economic inefficiencies associated for example with distorted goods and resource prices. Instead, discussion of failed policies emphasized the state leadership's deception of the citizenry.

My interviewees confirmed that there was an overwhelming perception among GDR citizens that they were treated as children: directed as to what to do, while kept in the dark with respect to the decision making, and the truth of economic, political, and environmental conditions. Political activists generally championed democratic socialism, in which open social dialogue would be paramount, as a solution. Only then could policies be created that ensure sufficient levels of material goods while also fostering the intellectual-cultural needs of all GDR citizens. Environmentalists furthered the theme of democratic socialism, developed by the political alternative, by focusing specifically on gaining access and disseminating environmental data to the citizenry. With this data the citizens would be more aware of the state of the GDRs environment, they could themselves act more responsibly vis-a-vis the environment, and they could argue intelligently with their leaders, holding them accountable to their environmental promises.
Environmentalists were tired of the SED leadership's repetitious East-West comparisons. They argued that these were being used to hide the domestic atrocity of socialist maldevelopment. They challenged the state to be accountable for its actions; at the very least, to protect and support the constitutional right of all citizens "to take effect on the execution of necessary preservation measures, to demand their planning, to take an active part in their implementation, and to control their realization" (Paucke 1987, pg. 160).

 Paramount in the theological debate as to how to preserve God's creation was the church's role in providing an ethical framework for the appropriate, responsible use of science and technology. It was also argued that technology itself was distancing individuals from nature. Practically, what the church provided were simple techniques through which individuals would first become aware of this distance and then learn, bit by bit, how to regain a healthier relationship with nature.

 In search for new ideas and ideals whereby to organize society, environmentalism furthered another argument evolving through the alternative political movement, namely that trust could not be placed in simply facilitating the laws of history that would inevitably lead to true socialism. While the SED claimed to be the sole executer of these laws, activists labeled this "scientific" legitimation of its monopoly control as contrived and abusive. They demanded participation in policy making.

 Environmental policy appeared, more and more, to be determined for its propaganda value. Interviews with science experts highlighted the extent to which they were forced to publicly uphold the good image of the state's environmental record, often despite their knowledge of severe environmental deterioration. This deception was abetted by the publication ban of unofficial environmental data. East German environmentalists worked, therefore, to erase all means of deception by advocating open social dialogue, freedom of information, and pluralistic representation of all opinions. A healthy society-nature relationship could only come about through an honest and respectful relationship between society and the state. Interestingly, this optimism, that the opening of channels between the leadership and citizenry has significant constructive potential, invoked an a basic tenet of socialist theory, namely that social solidarity, based in citizens' participation, is widely
agreed upon and highly valued.
Chapter 5

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF NATURE IN WEST GERMANY: MATERIAL NATURE AND ENVIRONMENTALISM

In the preceding chapters I have documented and analyzed ways in which the political, economic, and cultural institutions of East Germany contextualized growing environmental activism. These institutions also framed the construction of the material nature to which environmentalists responded. As a result an explicit politics of nature emerged in the former GDR, as activists saw in environmental deterioration a reflection of social, political, and economic disfunction.

This chapter describes the social construction of Nature in West Germany as a point of comparison to the East German narrative presented in previous chapters. Here, I examine both the material manifestations of pollution produced through the Federal Republic's economic and political structures, as well as the conceptual manifestation of ideas concerning the nature-society relationship produced through the FRGs environmental activism. The analysis affirms that from the different political cultures of West and East Germany has emerged not only a (perhaps) obvious divergence in the type of pollution produced, but also a less evident divergence in the understanding, critique, and re-creation of the social-nature interrelationship. This chapter highlights where West and East German environmentalism intersect as well as where they clash. In Chapter 6, I then consider the new environmentalism emerging as East and West German Greens try to reconcile their differences within the new political and economic contexts of united Germany.

This chapter contains four sections. The first presents a brief overview of the Federal Republic of Germany's economic history and structure in order to provide the reader with an understanding of the economic forces shaping the production of material nature in the FRG. Then, in the second section, I compare and contrast the environmental pollution produced by West Germany's regulated free-market system with that produced by socialist East Germany. In the third section I describe the West German environmental activism which organized in protest to West Germany's environmental policies. I
focus specifically on the ideas and concepts popularized through the FRGs Green Party. Finally, I compare the "cognitive territory" that was created through West Germany's green movement, with that of East Germany's green movement.

A review of the Federal Republic of Germany's economic history and structure

As in East Germany, the demands of the four Allied powers (the United States, the United Kingdom, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and France) for the industrial and technical disarmament of Germany after World War II resulted in the extensive dismantling of industry in the western occupied zone. The Allies hoped to reduce production capacity by 50 percent and to reduce the German standard of living to that of 1938. As early as May 1946, however, this course of action was being reconsidered given increased friction between the Western Allies and the USSR. Thus, in August of 1947, France, the UK, and the USA reversed their original plan and decided to increase the industrial capacity of the Western occupied zone in order to reestablish a strong post-war West European economy. The United States provided the necessary financial support through the Marshall Plan, passed in the same year.

Nonetheless, the initial dismantling of key industrial branches of the Western zone, i.e., steel and chemical production, banking, and coal combines, which had occurred from 1945-47, delayed economic recovery in the western zone of Germany. In addition, the migration after the War of 9 million East Germans, who settled largely in rural areas due to lack of housing and jobs in the cities, contributed to high rates of unemployment in the late 1940s46.

When the Federal Republic of Germany was formed in 1949, popular elections gave a majority to the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), headed by Dr. Konrad Adenauer (Langer 1968, pg. 802). He was re-elected in 1953, 1957, and 1961. In 1949, an economic policy was developed by Ludwig

46 Once the infrastructural support from the Marshall Plan took hold, this large reserve of workers and entrepreneurs helped fuel an astonishing expansion of the FRGs economy in the 1950s and 60s.
Erhard, then Minister of Economic Affairs and later Chancellor (1963-66), based on a *Soziale Marktwirtschaft* (regulated free-market, or socially conscious free-market economy). He envisioned the government taking the role of maintaining a well-functioning economy while providing significant social programs for the people. Within this economic philosophy, government authorities were sanctioned an active role in guiding the economy in specified directions (Nyrop 1982, pg. 218).

As a result, economic associations with considerable clout, such as the Federation of German Industries (*BDI*) and trade unions, have been able to exert substantial influence on the direction government authorities have taken in guiding the economy. Many organizations also influence political parties, thereby affecting economic policy less directly. For example, one of the biggest political parties, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) is strongly identified with the interests of big business and banking. Since this party was in power from 1949 to 1966 (ibid), it is largely responsible for the fact that today's West German economy, as the following review will show, is dominated by a few politically connected, powerhouse firms.

In its first two decades, the Federal Republic's economy experienced a massive expansion. Gross National Product (GNP) increased, on average, 6.4 percent annually between 1950 and 1970. The possible reasons for this successful expansion are manifold. First, the reduction of economic controls in 1948 allowed industry to respond to pent-up consumer demand. After five years of economic instability, labor was also quite willing to work hard in order to improve the standard of living. Secondly, the high unemployment of skilled labor following World War II provided a labor pool with moderate wage demands upon which industry could draw. Thirdly, international aid, coming primarily from the USA, (approximately US$4 billion), provided needed imports, a saving of foreign exchange, and the financing of key investments. In addition, the area of Germany which became the Federal Republic in 1949 was resource rich. It contained about 63 percent of the industrial assets that existed in 1944. Finally, the Cold War contributed to the West German economic expansion in so far as the Allied Powers provided financial support to West Germany in order to ensure political stability throughout Europe (ibid, pp. 159-60).
In 1969, Willy Brandt, head of a coalition of Social Democrats and Free Democrats, became Chancellor. In 1970, he signed treaties of friendship with the USSR and Poland. By 1972, the Bundestag (Parliament) formally approved these treaties as well as treaties between East and West Germany easing access into West Berlin (Hoffman, 1990).

The primary goals of the Federal Republic’s economic policy have been to achieve steady growth, stable prices, and full employment under a market system. The Constitution (Basic Law) of 1949 required a balanced budget, which limited the government’s ability to stimulate growth directly. Thus, since the 1950s, economic policy has focused instead on providing incentives, such as large depreciation allowances, benefits for the reinvestment of profits, and other tax breaks, in order to influence the supply and direction of investment. In the 1950s efforts to promote growth focused on key industries, such as coal, iron, and steel. This focus shifted, in the 1970s, to nuclear technology, and high-technology components for computers and communication. Economic incentives have also been used to distribute industry spatially to less desirable locations such as West Berlin, and eastern border areas (Nyrop, pp. 159-162).

Since 1949, the government has retained part of its business holdings in key industries in order to exert influence on their management. For example, the federal government retains 20 percent of the shares in the Volkswagen company, and 44 percent in the Vereinigte Elektrizitäts und Bergwerks AG, the country’s largest industrial company producing electrical, petroleum, and chemical products (ibid). In the 1950s, a tendency for West German industrial firms to merge in order to increase efficiency led, in 1957, to a disputed regulation of the formation of cartels. Although this law was strengthened in the 1970s, West German industry in the 1980s was still dominated by large concerns with tight relationships to banks, customers and suppliers (ibid).

By 1980, industry, including mining and construction, accounted for 48 percent of gross domestic product. Agriculture accounted for only 2 percent, down from the 1950 level of 10 percent. The major industrial sectors of the Federal Republic--coal and lignite, iron and steel, motor vehicles, chemicals, electrical, and engineering--have changed very little since 1949 (ibid, pg. 161). In light of
the unification of Germany, it is important to note that the heavily industrialized East German economy was also dependent on its chemical and lignite industries. Since 1990, these eastern German industries, which constitute a significant share of economic activity in the eastern states, have been in competition with their western German counterparts.

Hard coal is the Federal Republic's most important natural resource. The Ruhr district contains the largest coal field in Europe. In 1981, the metallurgical (63 percent) and electric industries (22 percent) accounted for 85 percent of all coal used. The Federal Republic only mines about half as much lignite (brown coal) as was mined by the former German Democratic Republic (ibid, pg. 201).

In the mid 1960s, the West German steel industry underwent considerable restructuring in an attempt to maintain a competitive edge in a difficult international market. Thirty-one of West Germany's steel producers formed four marketing cartels. By the early 1980s however, production of sheet steel, steel rods, wire, and steel tubes declined due to declining steel demand worldwide (ibid, pg. 204).

Another pillar of the West German economy, the automobile industry, peaked production in 1979 with just under 4 million motor vehicles. Increases in car production between 1973 and 1979 equalled the achievements of the Japanese car industry at that time. Since 1981, however, the West German car industry has been plagued with problems similar to those of the USA industry, i.e., Japanese competition, inflated wages, stagnant productivity, and losses in export markets (ibid, pg. 205).

In the 1980s, the West German chemical firms--Hoechst, Bayer, and BASF--were the world's largest. This industry was also the largest exporter of chemicals in the world despite the downturn in market demand in the 1980s. The electrical industry of West Germany is dominated by the country's biggest industrial firm, Siemens AG. It is active in transportation, illumination, metallurgy, communications, electrochemical processes, and the production of machines, appliances, and electric motors (ibid, pp. 208-210).

The West German economy has been heavily geared toward foreign trade. In the 1980s, it was
the second largest importer and exporter in the world. Interestingly, trade with East Germany was considered to be internal, and therefore not recorded in foreign trade statistics. By 1980, purchases from the German Democratic Republic amounted to about US$2 billion, or 2 percent of total exports. Approximately every fourth job relied on sales abroad. Machine-building firms sold roughly 45 percent of their products through foreign trade. The automobile industry sold only slightly less of its output abroad (ibid).

Recently, as the international world economic climate has worsened with economic downturns experienced in the major industrial countries of the USA, the UK, and Japan, German industry has also felt the effect of lowered demand. Furthermore, the unification of Germany, and the pressures to revive eastern German industry, have placed a considerable strain on the FRG's economy, with a veritable economic collapse in the new eastern German states.

According to a 1991 report from the German Institute for Applied Economic Research, excerpts from which were published in Die Zeit (Oct 11, 1991, pg.11), the former GDR is suffering tremendous job losses in nearly all sectors of the economy. For example, approximately 80 percent of all jobs in the metal-working industry have been lost, 65 percent in agriculture and forest management, and 15 percent in science, education, culture, health, and social services. Although it has been hoped that the service sector could provide enough jobs to offset the massive unemployment these statistics connote, the report envisioned only moderate increases of employment in banks and insurance companies.

The Institute's report goes on to explain that women, especially, are losing financial security due to the collapse of the eastern economy. By 1991, 59 percent of women were unemployed, while overall unemployment in the new states stood at 17 percent in 1992 (Die Zeit Feb 2, 1992, pg. 26). The dense network of daycares that existed in the former GDR was financed through enterprises which are now being shut down without replacement. Since women have historically been more poorly paid than men, the report states that they are especially threatened by poverty (Die Zeit Oct 11, 1991, pg.11).
Tyll Necker, the vice president of the Association of German Industry (BDI) is pessimistic about the economic recovery in eastern Germany. In a 1992 interview with *Wirtschaftswoche*, he predicted that production in those east German industries which must compete in the international market will continue to fall. He only sees hope for enterprises based within the local and regional economy. Even the national market, he contends, is uninviting for eastern firms. West German entrepreneurs would like to minimize the increased competition coming from eastern Germany, and are therefore ready and willing to buy out eastern competitors. Subsequent consolidation often means the closing of eastern branches. Necker criticizes this process as short-sighted:

> Today there is a cartel of egoists [in the west] who say: What do we need any competition for when we have all the customers? That is thinking in the short term, and it is short-sighted, because, if the industrial landscape between the Elbe and the Oder turns into a wasteland, and the people there are no longer employed, they will have to be supported by the citizens from the Rhine to the Elbe. (Necker quoted in *Wirtschaftswoche* Jan 24, 1992, pg. 21)

Western interests are inclined to invest in industries which are bound up in local conditions, such as the foodstuffs industry, in order to achieve a market position in the east. Yet they are not willing to create joint enterprises with eastern firms. Thus, much of the capital gained through such investment returns to the West. Western investors are also shying away from investing in internationally competitive key industries such as motor vehicle construction and machine building, electrotechnology, and chemistry (*Wirtschaftswoche* Jan 24, 1992, pp. 24, 27). Instead, concerns such as Siemens, Volkswagen and Daimler-Benz are becoming involved in the Czechoslovak investment goods industry, where skilled workers and engineers are no more experienced than German workers, but earn considerably less (ibid).

While the Trustee Authority, in charge of privatizing eastern businesses, is providing financial backing for eastern firms in order that they maintain viability, its president, Birgit Breuel, explains that this backing can not be provided much longer. She gives the startling statistic that 95 percent of eastern German firms would not exist had the Trustee Authority not provided financial backing (ibid). Such subsidization cannot continue, but according to Michael Lezius, manager of Workers'
Association for Fostering Partnership with the Economy, national politicians are not supporting the measures necessary for a locally-based rebirth of industry. "The national politicians have no sense of home-grown, grass-roots capitalism as a basis for a new industrialization" (ibid). He continues to state that:

[i]f Bonn does not become more involved here, in a few years we will be complaining about the unjust distribution of wealth in eastern Germany. (ibid)

A February 2, 1992 article in Die Zeit reiterated the severity of economic conditions in eastern Germany, and the consequences of a federal policy which is concentrating on staving off unemployment through temporary job-creation measures (ABM), while avoiding measures that could revive local economies with home-grown industry. The article reported that recent unemployment statistics for the former GDR stood at 17 percent. But, given the fact that the majority of jobs created through the federal ABM program have no prospect for becoming permanent positions, it may be more appropriate to speak of an unemployment rate closer to 38 percent. "In some areas, the labor market is a desert and regular jobs are as scarce as oases" (Die Zeit Feb 2, 1992, pg. 26).

A comparison of pollution air emissions: West and East Germany

A parallel account of West Germany’s economic history may be partially read from the sources and forms of natural resource degradation that have resulted as certain industries have been targeted over others, certain consumption patterns encouraged over others, and certain production processes implemented over others. In this section I compare the environmental conditions of East and West Germany in order to make explicit the differences in their types of pollution--one component of economic production.

A detailed description of environmental quality in the former German Democratic Republic has been presented in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, with several comparisons made to the Western industrialized nations on key indicators. For instance, the former GDR had the highest per capita
emissions levels of all industrialized countries. The GDRs per capita carbon dioxide emissions were three times greater than Japan's; its per capita sulfur dioxide levels were thirty times greater (Bomer 1991). Per capita sulfur dioxide emissions in East and West Germany were estimated as 313.3 kilograms and 24.2 kilograms, respectively (World Resources 1992).

Here, I focus specifically on air quality since data of air emissions are available for both countries, are relatively comparable, and accurate. As was mentioned in Chapter 2, the GDR leadership was selective in monitoring environmental pollution. However, since international agreements, i.e., the 1985 Helsinki agreement, emphasized transboundary air pollution, the GDR was obligated to maintain fairly detailed statistics of air emissions at the local, regional, and national scale.

As indicated in Table 6 below, in 1982, the total sulfur dioxide ($SO_2$) emissions level of the German Democratic Republic (population 16,736,000) was estimated to be 4.73 million tons per year, while that of the Federal Republic (population 60,162,000) was approximately 3.0 million tons annually.

Table 6: Comparative statistics for $SO_2$ and $NO_2$ levels and sources: 1982

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$SO_2$</th>
<th></th>
<th>$NO_2$</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GDR</td>
<td>FRG</td>
<td>GDR</td>
<td>FRG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total in million tons</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent attributed to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power/ Heating stations</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households, small users</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Wensierski 1988, pg. 30b

Both the West and East German power and heating stations contributed the largest percent to the
total sulfur dioxide emissions levels (62.1 percent and 61.5 percent, respectively). In East Germany, households contributed significantly more (20 percent) than in West Germany (9 percent), presumably because East German households were heated with brown coal furnaces or stoves. On the other hand, West Germany’s industry and transportation sectors (25.2 and 3.4 percent, respectively) contributed more to the total emissions levels of sulfur dioxide than did those of East Germany (18.1 and 0.4 percent, respectively).

By 1987, the German Democratic Republic’s extensive energy dependence on brown coal, as well as lacking desulfurization technologies, had pushed its total sulfur dioxide emissions up to 5.6 million tons. This is graphically depicted in Figure 2 of sulfur dioxide emissions in East Germany over time. It is also apparent from this graph that despite a 1985 international commitment to decrease sulfur dioxide emissions by 30 percent of 1980 levels, the GDR was unable to keep SO₂ emissions from reaching historical highs between 1983 and 1986. The environmental impact of high levels of sulfur dioxide emissions are detailed in Chapter 7. Briefly, sulfur dioxide is a component in the production of acid rain, which has been considered a causal factor in the dieback and thinning of west and east German tree crowns.

In West Germany, however, a rash of environmental legislation (Table 7) was produced in the late 1960s and early 1970s, resulting in a dramatic downturn of emissions levels for most major air pollutants (Bundesumweitministerium 1989, pg. 107). While in 1964, a general guideline was passed for industrial emissions levels and emission control technology, by 1974 a more specific emissions control act was established, requiring the best available technology be used to control both air and noise pollution, and mandating air quality maintenance plans for regions suffering from heavy air pollution. The subsequent and spectacular decrease of sulfur dioxide emissions in West Germany over time (Figure 3) stands in stark contrast to the GDRs record. Notice that after 1976, sulfur dioxide emissions dropped dramatically. In 1989, SO₂ emissions were only 30 percent of the 1976 peak.
Figure 2: Sulfur Dioxide Emissions in the GDR
Source: Bundesumweltministerium (1992), pg. 24
Table 7: FRG legislation regulating air pollution: 1964-1974

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Technical Guidelines for Air Pollution</td>
<td>Specified maximum emissions for particular pollutants and technical procedures for pollution control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Antipollution Ordinances for Autos</td>
<td>Implementation of European Economic Community guidelines for West Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Gasoline Lead Law</td>
<td>Reduced permissible lead content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Federal Emissions Control Act</td>
<td>Required best available technology to curtail air and noise pollution; mandated air quality maintenance plans for regions with heavy pollution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Taken from table produced by Dominick, 1992, pp. 191-192
Figure 3: Sulfur Dioxide Emissions in the FRG
Source: Bundesumweltministerium (1992), pg. 25
Let us return to Table 6 to consider the comparative statistics of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) emissions in West and East Germany. In 1982, West Germany was producing almost eight times more nitrogen dioxide (3.1 million tons) than East Germany (0.4 million tons). In East Germany, power and heating stations contributed the largest amount to total NO₂ emissions levels (40.7 percent), while in the West it was the transportation sector that accounted for the largest percentage (56.6)⁴⁷.

A look at Figures 4 and 5 gives an indication of how nitrogen dioxide emissions have changed over time in the GDR and the FRG respectively. While in East Germany, total NO₂ emissions are considerably less than in the West Germany⁴⁸, they remained quite consistent over the fourteen years that emissions levels were recorded. In West Germany, on the other hand, nitrogen dioxide emissions soared between 1967 and 1974. Between 1975 and 1986, the NO₂ emissions levels continued to rise, with a slight dip in 1982. Total emissions finally began to drop off between 1986 and 1989. Despite this fall off in total nitrogen dioxide emissions levels, it should be noted that the percent of NO₂ emissions accounted for by "street transportation", i.e., cars, buses, and trucks increased.

The patterns of carbon monoxide production in the GDR and FRG (Figures 6 and 7 respectively) are similar to those of nitrogen oxide, except that total emissions have been successfully reduced in West Germany since their peak level in 1973. Although emissions have decreased steadily since 1970, the percent contribution of street transportation to total carbon monoxide emissions has increased. In 1970, street transportation constituted 58 percent of total emissions; in 1973, 65 percent; and in 1989 approximately 70 percent. In comparison, while East Germany's total carbon monoxide emissions were on an upward trend between 1983-87, street transportation has consistently increased.

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⁴⁷ For comparison, in the United States, 45 percent of NO₂ emissions in 1985 stemmed from vehicles, 30 percent from power stations, and the remainder predominantly from industrial fuel combustion (Zimmerman et al. 1988).

⁴⁸ The GDR had only about one-third the population of the FRG which must be considered in any comparison of statistics.
Figure 4: Nitrogen Oxide Emissions in the GDR
Source: Bundesumweltministerium (1992), pg. 26
Figure 5: Nitrogen Oxide Emissions in the FRG
Source: Bundesumweltministerium (1992), pg. 27
Figure 6: Carbon Monoxide Emissions in the GDR
Source: Bundesumweltministerium (1992), pg. 28
Figure 7: Carbon Monoxide Emission in the FRG
Source: Bundesumweltministerium (1992), pg. 29
contributed about 50 percent of the total since measuring began in 1975.

To summarize, Figure 8 presents an overview of West Germany's record of emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), suspended particulate matter, lead concentrations, cadmium concentrations, and particulate deposits between 1960 and 1987. With the exception of nitrogen dioxide concentrations, all indicators show a decreasing trend in emissions levels. These data reveal that the emissions record of West Germany, although generally better than that of East Germany is still consistently blemished by one indicator; namely nitrogen dioxide concentrations. In contrast, nitrogen dioxide concentrations have remained fairly stable in East Germany (with the transportation sector contributing only 22 percent to total NO₂ emissions). Furthermore, although West Germany's emissions levels of nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide have recently been on the decline (total carbon monoxide emissions in the FRG have dropped off significantly since 1973), the percent of emissions contributed by cars, trucks, and buses has increased.

What changes are occurring in the emissions of air pollutants in the two Germany's since unification? Since 1990, the immediate abandonment of the coal-based chemical industry has reduced sulfur dioxide emissions dramatically. This industry alone processed 35 million tons of coal annually, an estimated 12 percent of total coal production. Although original plans were to shut down all low-temperature carbonization of coal by 1994, and all carbide furnaces by 1998, the realization of these goals was accelerated as soon as the monetary union took affect. Coal-based plants are not currently viable in an oil-based economy. The last carbonization plant was closed in August of 1990. The result is that the annual emission of 100,000 tons of sulfur dioxide per plant has immediately ceased. Oil and natural gas is being substituted for coal in all chemical plants, with a dramatic increase in energy efficiency (Frankfurter Allgemeine Sep 8, 1990, pp. 7-8). Transformations such as these, as well as the transferal of the FRG's environmental regulations to the east on July 1, 1990, have dramatically decreased sulfur dioxide levels in the GDR.
Figure 8: Air Pollution in an Agglomeration—Trends in the FRG from 1960 to 1987
Source: Bundesumweltministerium (1989), pg. 107
Yet, with unification, the use of automobiles in eastern Germany, which are significant producers of nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide, is on the rise. This is true both for private transportation and for the transportation of goods. The oil company, Deutsche Shell AG, conservatively estimated that the number of passenger cars per thousand people would increase from 371 to 570 in the neue Länder by the year 2010. Only two years after the opening of eastern Germany this figure had already increased by 70 (Frankfurter Allgemeine Sep 7, 1991, pg. 31).

The structure of east Germany’s freight transportation is also undergoing a considerable transformation. While the national railroad used to handle 70 percent of the freight transported in the GDR, a professor and traffic expert at the University of Giessen, Gerd Aberle, estimates that even with the most favorable conditions the GDR railroad will be unable to keep even a 50 percent market share in long-distance freight traffic (Die Zeit Nov 30, 1990, p. 29). Most recent estimates from the new Minister of Transportation, Matthias Wissman, forecast a 30 percent increase in passenger transportation and a 95 percent increase in freight traffic on German roadways (Der Spiegel July 19, 1993).

Furthermore, the reconstruction of eastern Germany’s cities is encouraging the use of private automobiles, and is likely to produce a previously non-existent dependency on the car (BUND 1992). As capital flows into the major urban centers, rents in downtown areas are rising to the point where people are moving to cheaper housing in surrounding areas. Shopping malls are also appearing on city fringes, while downtown stores suffer lost clientele and rising rents. Cars are becoming a necessity in this new urban structure. Thus, it is probable that the patterns of air emissions in the GDR will soon resemble those of the FRG with increases in nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide emissions due to the increased use of motor vehicles.

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In the previous section, I focused on air quality to emphasize that the two political economies of West and East Germany produced different types of pollution. Although it is perhaps not startling to learn that East Germany's air quality was generally worse than West Germany's, it may be interesting to note that West Germany continues to have difficulty reducing those emissions produced by motor vehicles, namely nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide. These two air pollutants contributed only marginally to the overall poor air quality of East Germany. The high West German emissions levels of nitrogen dioxide are, however, gaining increased press since nitrogen dioxide is one pollutant that causes acid rain (the other is sulfur dioxide). It is also a critical pollutant which through photochemical processes, produces tropospheric ozone. Ozone and the acid precipitation are the suspected culprits of Germany's increased forest damage. This Waldsterben (forest death) has become Germany's hottest political cum environmental issues.

In the following sections of this chapter, I reveal how the two political cultures of West and East Germany not only led to the creation of two very different types pollution, but also two very different types of environmentalism. The politicization of nature through these movements opened two different spaces for understanding and thinking about the nature-society relationship. As I will show in Chapter 6, these spaces, in which ideas and notions of nature and human interaction with it were discussed and conceived, were in fact so diverse that the east and west German green movements have had difficulties in their attempts to unite after 1990.

**Historical context of West German environmentalism**

The environmentalist movement of the Federal Republic of Germany, which became an important political force in 1980 with the establishment of the Green Party, is an amalgamation of two historical social movements, namely the student activism of the 1960s, and the environmentally-
related citizens’ initiatives (Bürgerinitiativen) stemming from the 19th and 20th centuries. I must therefore first present a brief history of the intellectual themes and strategies of these two previous movements to show how these have re-emerged in the organization and ideals of the Green Party.

In the second half of the 1960's, major protest movements developed throughout the industrialized West in reaction to US involvement in the Vietnam War. Although peace activists protested modern warfare in general, they also came to focus specifically on the absurdity of nuclear weaponry. This anti-nuclear stance was particularly strong in the Federal Republic of Germany, due to the geo-political reality of a partitioned Germany: nuclear arsenals of the West and East were facing-off on German territory. While arguing the threat to humanity of nuclear annihilation, West German activists also came to reveal the environmental dangers associated with the mere production of nuclear technology, the use of nuclear energy\(^{30}\), and of modern technology altogether.

As mentioned, the discussion of these environmental issues was largely in the context of the 1960s student protests. It was, therefore, also influenced by Herbert Marcuse and Max Horkheimer, who had provided the intellectual leadership for student activism. Marcuse inspired the utopian ideals expressed by student activists with his vision of a culture without mechanisms of repression. In such a culture a "new human being" could flourish (Langguth 1986, pg. 2). Horkheimer, articulating a theory of the authoritarian state, influenced and directed the 1960s student groups by rallying against authoritarian structures. Despair associated with the anonymity of an increasingly bureaucratic state, brought students together in the hopes of recreating utopian images of community.

The militant attitude of young German intellectuals and their radical criticism of modern industrial society are developing within a clearly discernable socio-cultural pessimism. Their demand for the renewal of a radical utopia is based on a basic attitude of despair, their

\(^{30}\) Although the German anti-nuclear movement gained national and international attention in the 1970s, its origins date to the 1950s. In particular, the physician Dr. Bodo Manstein conducted significant research on the effects of radioactivity on living organisms. In conjunction with a physics professor, Dr. Karl Bechert, several press-conferences were conducted concerning the dangers of atomic energy. In addition, a nature conservation organization, Friends of Nature, was a key component in organizing the Fighting League against Atomic Injuries during the 1950s. This provided the organizational backbone for the famous Easter Marches--focusing on nuclear weaponry--which took place in the 1960s (Dominick 1992).
longing for a belief frequently based on nihilism which sees the humanistic values of our civilization as mere hypocrisy. (Richard Löwenthal, quoted in Langguth 1986, pg. 3)

The variety of student-based groups, i.e., Maoist, Marxist, terrorist, anarchist, and nonconventional subculture groups, which organized on the heels of the anti-Vietnam demonstrations, articulated visions for utopian communities. They expressed anger, despair, and a criticism of the irrational destruction of natural resources and human welfare through war, capitalism, and technology. Interestingly, these themes also came to the surface after World War I and World War II. Thus, a parallel can be made between the intellectual themes of West Germany's 1960s and 70s protest movements (including environmentalism), generated in response to the Vietnam War and the Cold War, and the intellectual themes which emerged after World War I and World War II.

For example, in the aftermath of World War I, the apparent irrationality of war time devastation led many German intellectuals to search for a "Third Path" in nature-based thinking. In rejecting industrialization, technology, and the alienation embedded in capitalist modes of production they championed a return to nature, to the earth, and to simplicity. Peasant life epitomized this simplicity. "Blood and Soil", a phrase coined in the 1920s, encapsulated for many Germans the importance of the peasant in propagating German kinship—the life-blood of the nation. A special relationship was claimed between Nature, Mother Earth, and the peasant-landowner. Historian Anna Bramwell (1991) has argued that this relationship became a rallying point for national strength and provided a foundation for the establishment of Nazi Germany.

In the wake of the physical, social and cultural devastation produced by World War II, a passionate discourse concerning the ills to society and nature at the hands of rationalism-gone-bad also emerged. "Technology is the rape of nature," writes a Nazi resistance fighter in 1945."Technology murders life by striking down, step by step, the limits established by nature. It devours men and all that is human...The anti-life demonic quality of technology manifests itself most horribly in total war. In war, technology's productive capacity is so up-to-date that on the hour it is able to annihilate everything organic whatever it may be—suddenly, totally and precisely" (Nickisch, cited from Bramwell 1991, pg. 184). In 1944, Martin Heidegger reflects on the alienation produced through the capitalist market: "Not only does it establish all things as producible in the process of production by means of the market. In self-assertive production, the humanness of man and the thingness of things dissolve into the calculated market value of a market which not only spans the whole earth...but also...trades in the nature of Being and thus subjects all beings to the trade of a calculation that dominates most tenaciously in those areas where there is no need of numbers" (Heidegger 1975, pp. 114-115).

In order to understand the emergence of fascism in Germany, a country which had embodied the liberal ideals of the Enlightenment, Horkheimer and Adorno, argued in 1947 (Dialectic of Enlightenment) that these ideals must, in fact, be quite vulnerable and shallow to "be displaced so readily by forces of irrationality" (Alford 1985, pg.16). In their analysis they suggest that rationalization objectifies social relations to the point where "[m]en and women come to see themselves and others entirely in terms of their role in the production process rather than as individuals. Human relations are transformed into exchange relations" (ibid).

The themes outlined above—finding a "third path"; criticizing capitalism, technology, and specifically technologies of destruction; and arguing that a faith in rationalization which overrides the experience of
While the 1960s and 70s student groups provided an intellectual foundation for the Green Party established in 1980, the widespread organization of Bürgerinitiativen (citizens' initiatives) in the 1970s provided it with a valuable resource base. These citizens' initiatives organized in protest to specifically local instances where government leaders or industry seemed to overstep their authority by making decisions affecting public health and welfare without considering citizens' input.

Although protests developed over the construction of dams, highways and airports, the most publicized demonstrations were those pertaining to the development of nuclear power. Far-reaching decisions concerning the building of nuclear power plants were made behind the closed doors of public administrators in conjunction with technical experts. Citizens argued that by not allowing them input into the decision-making process until after final plans were complete, the state by-passed the voting public, and thereby undermined democracy (Hager 1991).

These Bürgerinitiativen have echoed an effective form of citizen protest in Germany with a legacy dating back to the 1700s. The research of Raymond Dominick (1992) has shown, for instance, that in 1715, 1721, and 1778, citizens of Stuttgart petitioned the government to abate the silting and polluting of the Nesenbach. In the early 1800's neighborhood groups in Hamburg complained to the city leadership of harmful vapors rising from the Elbe. In fact, Dominick cites many examples where citizens of the 1800's organized, beseeching their governments to counteract the smoke, ash, and noxious smells emanating from near-by factories. While these actions reflect a NIMBY phenomenon, Conservation Societies concerned with the preservation of the diverse geological, ornithological, and botanical beauty of Germany also sprang-up during the 19th and 20th centuries. For instance, foresters formed local conservation groups in the early 1800s and established a national society in 1872. In 1873, the Society for the Care of Public Health was established by medical

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individuals can lead to irrational consequences--resurfaced in the Cold War context of the 1970s student-based groups, and as I will show later in this section, influenced the platform of the West German Green Party.

52 NIMBY: Not In My BackYard.
authorities, city planners, and government officials. In 1877, the Society against the Pollution of Rivers, Soil, and Air was founded. The League for Bird Protection, which later became the German League for Bird Protection was organized in 1899. In 1900, Bavarian botanists came together to establish the Society for the Protection and Care of Alpine Plants. The Conservation Societies, with established structures, resources, and membership often came to the aid of the citizen action groups, which organized only long enough to rally support around a specific local issue. These two forms of environmental activism shared not only concern for a specific environmental issue, but also their willingness to include government authorities in their protest action (ibid). By-and-large protests against the destruction of nature, and potentially human health, were motivated by an interest in the future viability of a strong local and ultimately national economy—and German society. Political leaders were petitioned, as mediators between industrialists and citizens, to negotiate a path of economic growth which was acceptable to both.

It is on this point that the 1970s radical citizens’ initiatives differ from their predecessors as well as the Conservation groups still in existence (ibid). The popularity of the Bürgerinitiativen is rooted in citizens’ distrust that the government leadership actually legislates on their behalf. West German activists have taken a radical stance, arguing that the mechanisms of conventional politics are not conducive to tackling the every-day problems faced by citizens.

The degree to which citizens perceived their every-day life experience to be ignored by government authorities and industry is witnessed in the fact that by 1980 approximately fifty thousand Bürgerinitiativen had organized, with over two million participants (Mewes 1985). A network of cooperation amongst these locally-specific groups developed early on. In 1972, for instance, sixteen Bürgerinitiativen established a nationwide umbrella organization, the Federal Association of Citizen Initiatives for the Protection of the Environment (BBU). In 1977, 1,000 groups and over 300,000 members were affiliated with this organization (Langguth 1984, pg. 6).

Instead of presenting official complaints to their political representatives through existing political channels, activists have utilized the mass media to publicize specific environmental issues and
political decisions. They thereby inform the general public and place pressure on government officials to account for decisions made in the privacy of meeting rooms. A common tactic to attract the press as well as voter support has been the staging of media events. In the late 1960s residents of Munich staged a mass rally in a rented meeting hall in downtown Munich as protest against the construction of a planned airport. Protestors of a proposed dam on the Upper Lech paraded canoes past the site (Dominick 1992). Anti-nuclear activists staged large demonstrations at proposed nuclear power sites, such as in 1979 at Brokdork and Gorleben (Frankland and Schoonmaker 1992). Environmentalists have also placed paid advertisements in the local press to sway public opinion (Dominick 1992). In so doing, they have created a space for citizen action that did not exist previously; a space outside the established political realm so heavily influenced by economic interests and bolstered by scientific expertise. The issues they protested, i.e., the building of dams, airports, highways were local conflicts, where quality of life was seen as threatened by bureaucracy, technology and industry.

The Green Party of the Federal Republic of Germany

The West German Green Party, established in 1980 as an outgrowth of this environmental activism, reiterated some of the intellectual themes and organizational forms mentioned above. For instance, a basic axiom of its 1980 economic platform was that industrial society’s growth economies rest on an "intrinsic and pervasive destructive power" (Mewes 1985, pg. 17). The Greens argue that all economics must be subordinated to comprehensive ecological imperatives rather than to those of profit and growth. Decentralized units and small-scale, environmentally compatible technology must replace today’s multinational corporations. The costs of all transitional processes, moreover, must be carried by governments. Most importantly, future investment decisions and the introduction of new technologies must be controlled by workers and by the people affected...Scientific research is to be free from military and industrial influences (ibid).

Ultimately, most Greens believe that humanity must live in harmony with nature through a non-violent, gender- and race-equitable, community-based society. Ecological relations—understood as harmonious, balanced, and sustainable within a community of interconnected individuals—symbolize
the ideal for a "third path", i.e., neither capitalist or socialist.

Both West and East German environmentalists have targeted environmental crisis to be associated with an abuse of state power. As I have shown in Chapters 3 and 4, East German activist viewed this abuse as a function of the Socialist Unity Party's contrived "scientific" legitimation as executor of the laws of history. In western experience, however, the abuse of power is regarded as being derived from the collusion of power in a competitive market of unequals. Through this collusion an inherently undemocratic approach to decision-making is created. The less powerful, i.e., individual citizens, tend to have little influence as the more powerful, i.e., the chemical, automobile, construction, banking industries, battle out issues, gain or lose market share, and vie for state support based on economic clout. Nature, ill-represented in this process, has become a component and victim of it. For example, environmental policy in the FRG significantly influences the balance of power between political parties, leaders, and economic interests. As was the case with the partially state-owned nuclear power industry against which the first Bürgerinitiativen organized, science experts in conjunction with the power industry tended to work out the most politically and economically amenable policy. Citizens' input was only allowed after policies had been set and were ready for implementation (Hager, 1991). Environmental quality has, thus, been determined more through the struggles of differential political and economic power than by the welfare of citizens per se, or for that matter, the environment. In addition, the capitalist growth economies of the west are recognized as discounting environmental destruction for the sake of sustaining high profit margins. Thus, it seems increasingly apparent that inherent to a system lauded as the best able to improve human welfare, is the veritable production of ecological damage.

Among other things, these processes have led to a distrust amongst members of the West German Green Party of the objectivity of scientific expertise, the gains from our current capitalist economies, and the democratic processes running parliament. They have argued that a healthy nature-society relationship can only be achieved through a radical transformation of all social structures based on the vision of an "ecological society" (Mewes 1985).
In the attempt to reform politics so that a collusion of elites is prevented, the Greens have prioritized, citizens' initiatives and participatory democracy (as opposed to parliamentary democracy). To this end they have proposed a new party organization guided by the permanent control of all office holders, representatives and institutions by the membership-at-large and their replacement at any time in order to make the organization and its policies transparent to all and to counter the ability of individuals to act on their own volition. (Die Grünen, Das Bundesprogramm, in Langguth 1986, pg. 71)

The belief that those who hold office for too long are eventually corrupted by their position of power has led to the implementation of rotating representatives in the Green Party. After a year of service, Green Party representatives must seek a renewal of their mandate from their constituency. Unfortunately, distrusting the integrity of representatives by limiting their time in office also means that the benefits they gain through experience and the security needed to develop and implement creative long range plans are lost.

Given West Germany's status as a highly industrialized, internationally dependent, capitalist society, the economic policies which could lead to the Greens' vision of a community-based society grounded in ecological relations are understandably difficult to define. Thus, much of the discussion within the Green movement and Party has focused on political ideology rather than economic reality. The radical movement has moved from its early position of forging a "third path" between socialism and capitalism, solidly to the political left. Yet factions within the left have produced such tensions within the Green Party that its original appeal of uniting people across class and party lines has been undermined. Additionally, it became evident that the Party's radical disavowal of the current political and economic institutions was becoming questioned by those within the Party who wanted to effect practical change.

Mewes (pg. 33) outlines five factions which cover the leftist spectrum of the Green Party:

1) Marxists who view environmental destruction as simply the final crisis of capitalism which will usher in socialism;

2) Left-wing Social Democrats who would like to see a coalition between their party (SPD) and the Greens;
3) ecological fundamentalists, such as Petra Kelly, who tend to denounce participation in parliamentary politics. They do however feel their "anti-party party" can be successfully used to convince humanity that its self-destructive mode of operation must be replaced by spiritual renewal;

4) liberal environmentalists who are critical of current social structures but willing to enter into conventional politics to effect pragmatic reform. They advocate appropriate technology and green consumerism as an interim path toward a more sustainable future; and

5) anarchists who suspect any authority, and engage in party activity only to protect Green movement programs.

The tensions that have arisen between these factions, as well as the Green Party’s struggle against other major political parties in the competition for constituents has redirected much of the Greens energy from concrete issues of the environment to political survival. By the late 1980's the Greens were effectively immobilized by factional infighting as well as decreased participation of its membership.

The Greens’ fear of being co-opted by the world of party professionals, media consultants, and bureaucratic elites led them to develop a very weak institutional structure in a universe of very strong party institutions. Dispersed power led to pluralistic stagnations...Beyond their talk about the need for tolerance in the larger society, the Greens’ style of organizational guerrilla warfare between persons and factions indicated a want of civility that diminished both internal effectiveness and the image of the party in the mind of potential supporters. Critical dissent has its virtues; conflicting policy statements from a hydra-like organization undermined public confidence (Frankland and Schoonmaker 1992, pg. 190).

The Greens’ persistence in maintaining the strength of participatory democracy and constraining that of parliamentary democracy, had in fact produced quite un-pluralistic consequences. For instance,

Article 33 of the Basic Law of the FRG requires that:

members of parliament are representative of the entire nation. They are not bound by directives and guidances but are subject solely to their own conscience. (Langguth 1984, pg. 71-72)

Yet as Gerd Langguth (1984, pg. 72), a German political scientist, has pointed out, both the Green’s one year imposed mandate and the principle of rotation violate this provision by demanding "absolute obedience" to the party.
A comparison of the ideas and ideals: West and East German environmentalism

In this section, the ideas and ideals developed through the two environmentalist movements of the FRG and GDR are contrasted. The comparative analysis of their cognitive praxes demonstrates that on fundamental issues of democracy, technology, nature, and the most effective relationship between citizen and state, two sets of definitions were carved out through the interaction of activists with contrasting political cultures. Subsequently, as I will show in Chapter 6, the two Green political parties of the East and West have had difficulty forging a common strategy for environmental reform.

While both the FRG and GDR environmentalists have championed participatory democracy to combat state abuse of power, they differ in their strategies of incorporating grassroots democratic participation in the larger economic and political systems. Western Greens have struggled with the effectiveness of infiltrating a hierarchical parliamentary system with a grassroots democratic organization. A strong antiparliamentary tendency defines the Green Party. "The institution of parliament does not permit the exercise of direct democracy which we seek," stated the Klaus-Jürgen Schmidt in 1982, the former chairman of the Berlin Alternative List.

The way in which that institution is now organized, so far removed from the interests of the people and working through committees--all this has little to do with direct democracy. (Schmidt, cited in Langguth 1986, pg. 70)

The founding premise of the radical West German Greens has been that the environmental and social crises of today are systemic to our political and economic structures, as well as their supporting institutions, such as science and academia. Therefore the structures themselves must be dismantled and recreated along radically new "ecological" lines if a healthy relationship between society and nature is to be achieved.

Prior to the late 1980s, East German environmentalists were interested in recreating an established ideal, namely democratic socialism. Coupled with the vision of a truly equitable, classless, democratic society was the notion of an ecologically sensitive socialist political-economy. Emphasis was placed on the existing political provisions available for facilitating ecologically sound economic
decisions. For instance, activists demanded that Constitutional clauses, which mandate environmental protection, be upheld.

Activists targeted Stalinist-bureaucratic structures as the source of irrational, environmentally-damaging political decisions. Environmental destruction perpetrated by ill-used technology was for these activists an indication of the SEDs "monopoly on truth", epitomized by its ban on the publication of unofficial environmental data. Ecological disruption was blamed on arbitrary and irrational government policies rather than an intrinsic quality of modern technology, or political ideology, per se. Church leaders, though often quite critical of growth-oriented economics, the technology it required, as well as the distance from nature it engendered, advocated a theologically-based ethic to provide the moral basis with which to develop the "appropriate" use of science and technology. Wolf Krötke, in an essay entitled "For the theological premise of a Creational ethic"

Theology can not take part in the condemnation of modern science and technology, but must help to shed light upon their nature. (Krötke in Briehe Nr. 4 Aug 1981)

Thus, as with the political ideal, the ideal that technology improves human welfare (a central tenet of marxist economics) was relatively sound. Its implementation needed, however, to be tempered through a democratic, and potentially spiritually-based decision-making process. Reflecting perhaps the approach of Germany's earlier citizen groups, East German activists called upon the SED leadership to utilize its power as an informed, rational mediator between the citizens and industrialists, for the purposes of achieving a level of material welfare amenable to the interests and concerns of both.

Although Germany's rich environmental conservation heritage was reestablished in 1980, in the East, with the state-organized "Society for Nature and Environment", this Society's ability to act as arbitrator between environmentally concerned citizens and the state was handicapped in that its sole purpose was to uphold party policy. Nothing concerning such taboo subjects as the environmental...
damage from coal mining, the threat to human health from industrial emissions, or the devastation of East German forests was available.

Thus, as I showed through my analysis in Chapters 3 and 4, East German alternative activists were predominantly interested in opening channels for the flow of information and dialogue between the leadership, citizens, and international groups, so that reform could occur. Interestingly, Rudolf Bahro, the East German dissident, who was deported to the West in 1979 and then became a pivotal leader of the West German Green movement, retained the Eastern sentiment that people of all points of view should be asked to engage in the project of social renewal. He has argued that even conservatives should participate in the inevitable process whereby "green republics" will emerge from the ruins of a self-destructed capitalism (Mewes 1985). It is on this point that many West German Greens have disagreed. For instance, Bahro and Petra Kelly split ranks because he was willing to remain in touch with all other political parties while she rejected such cooperation outright (Langguth 1984, pg.16).

A critical component contextualizing these differences between the form of East and West German environmentalism is the way in which the German historical legacy was translated in post-war East and West Germany. As indicated, the evolution of West German activism since the 1960s has been strongly influenced by a despair over the atrocities of two World Wars initiated by the German state. With the escalated arms race, the apparent imminence of a nuclear war on German soil invoked an entire discourse about the tendency of Germans to feel comfortable in a structured, authoritarian society. It is with this legacy, that West German activists have struggled. They have made overt efforts to avoid the concentration of political and economic power by emphasizing anti-authoritarian, non-hierarchical, decentralized structures. It is because of this legacy that the Greens have heatedly debated fairly philosophical points about the most politically and socially responsible course for Germany.

In East Germany, however, the morbid despair associated with Germany's fascist legacy and its larger meaning for German society has had little perceptible influence on alternative social activism.
This may be attributed to the fact that East Germans were socialized to believe that their country had succeeded in eradicating all remnants of fascism through the victory of socialism; communists were anti-fascists. Philosophical debates amongst activists, therefore, focused less on the tendency of German society toward monopolistic structures, and more on the achievement of true socialism through democratic reform (which was hindered by a Soviet not German legacy, namely Stalinism).

Environmental activists in the East, have, thus, been less concerned about utilizing the economic, political, and scientific resources of the elite. Their efforts are very practical, and translate political responsibility into open dialogue. Ironically, it is exactly such an open forum which some Western Greens have resisted since it acknowledges those elite groups who have marginalized citizens from effective political action.

**Conclusion**

From the two divergent political-economies of East and West Germany, two divergent Natures were produced. Not surprisingly, air quality in the two Germanies was different. Total sulfur dioxide emissions levels were considerably higher in the former GDR than in the FRG, due to the brown-coal based industries of the East German economy. While air pollution has been on the decline in the old German states as a result of increased regulation of air pollution between 1964 and 1974, an analysis of the sources of pollution emissions indicates that the contribution of the transportation sector to air pollution has been increasing. This is particularly disturbing for environmentalists who view the trend of increased automobile traffic, thanks to a push to increase the road density of eastern Germany, as irresponsible (this will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 7 and 8).

From the two contrasting political cultures of East and West Germany, two different activist-based strategies have arisen in the struggle to create a better state-society relationship and therefore a better society-nature relationship. Despite often parallel usages of concepts and language with western environmentalism, the ideas, ideals, and organization of East German activism was reflective of both
the political climate shaped by Stalinism, as well as the material destruction of nature it produced. East German activists envisioned a just, ecologically-benign society which encouraged open social dialogue, the participation of all citizens, and the responsible use of science and technology. West German environmentalists, on the other hand, tend to distrust the established political bureaucracy and scientific community, viewing them as those forces which concentrate authority and by-pass democratic processes. A new source for democratic participation, grass-roots organizations, is essential if the German society is to fight against past experiences of extreme authoritarian control as well as current environmental deterioration.

The analysis in this chapter has shown that one of the critical components contextualizing differences between East and West German activism is the way in which the German historical legacy of fascism was interpreted differently in their respective countries. West German activists have focused on the responsibility of Germans to build a social structure which discourages the concentration of power in order to avoid the return to any system which might approach fascism. East Germans, on the other hand, having been socialized to believe that fascists were eradicated from their territory by the communists, have viewed the centralization of power as characteristic or inherent to stalinism, not to German society. Their aim was to dismantle stalinist structures in order for open communication in conjunction with accountable, responsible action to flourish.
In the last chapter, I highlighted the differences of material and conceptual nature in East and West Germany. This discussion supports a basic argument of this dissertation, namely that dimensions of Nature are socially constructed and vary depending on the social, political, and economic contexts from which they emerge. During the Wende period of the GDR, East German environmentalists had to reorganize and rethink their strategies if they wished to take part in the rather chaotic processes restructuring the GDR politically, economically, and socially. Thus, the ideas and values developed through their activism under authoritarian rule, were suddenly given new lease within a more open, politically tolerant atmosphere. A study of this time, reveals the seeds of a new environmental politics taking hold in eastern Germany.

Eastern environmental activism during the Wende

As eastern activists began to reorganize within the new political atmosphere of the Wende, one element that was carefully avoided, though evident in the West German Green Party, was the notion of allegiance to any one organization or vision. Even as activists created citizens' organizations such as the New Forum, Democracy Now, Democratic Start, and the Initiative for Peace and Human Rights, they spoke hesitantly of their visions, so as not to claim having the vision. Jens Reich, a founding member of the New Forum, refers to the general platform statements of this organization by saying:

54 The German word, Wende, which literally means turning point or change, is used to describe the period of time when the East German political system was falling apart. Although a process with no defined beginning or end, it is bound roughly by the opening of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989 and the unification of Germany on October 3, 1990.
The first texts were more general, because we didn’t want to substitute one program which made up people’s minds for them by a new one. (Reich quoted in Rein 1989, pg. 28, author’s translation)

In the founding statement of Democratic Start, even a basic belief in socialism’s strengths is left open to new interpretations. The authors express the hope of "learning anew what socialism can mean for us" (Rein 1989, pg. 34, author’s translation). Konrad Weiss, from the citizens’ initiative, Democracy Now, explores this concept further:

We want to save the socialist utopia...whereby we believe the concept Socialism has during the forty years of praxis here in the GDR been so discredited that one can only use it with reservation and care, if one wants to echo it at all. For that reason we make use of the concept "a society based in solidarity", and fundamentally, underlying this is a social image which is marked strongly by Christianity and socialism. We would like to build a just society, in which people are free, but also act responsibly for the common good. (Weiss quoted in Rein 1989, pg. 70, author's translation)

In this one statement, Weiss has combined the various ideological streams defining the pre-1989 social activism of East Germany: democratic socialism, solidarity, Christian responsibility, and community.

With respect to the environment, most of the newly formed citizens' initiatives emphasized the practical necessity of uncovering the severe damage done to the environment by the Stalinistic SED regime. Thus, emphasis was placed on the need to unveil the facts of environmental deterioration, and act toward creating a more ecologically benign economic structure. For example, Democratic Start emphasizes in its founding statement, the importance of a democratic reorganization, based on political freedom, economic security, ecological relationships, and social equity. In describing the ecological component of the democratic reorganization, the statement explained:

By this we mean an ecological relationship, that fulfills our responsibility to nature. All people must finally learn the truth about the extent of damage to the water, soil and air. We all must learn to subordinate our economy and our needs for the protection of the environment. (Rein 1989, pg. 34, author's translation)

Interestingly, most citizens’ groups which formed in 1989 supported the socialist economic vision of providing meaningful and productive work for all citizens, yet none addressed the connection between the labor theory of value, a central tenet of marxist economies, and the wasteful use of
natural resources. This is quite unlike the radical environmentalist critique of the west which views the profit motive, a central tenet of capitalist economies, as a critical perpetrator of ecologically damaging uses of natural resources.

Although most of the newly formed citizens' initiatives emphasized the importance of environmental security in their founding statements, the unheard of and unexpected political upheaval of the spring and summer of 1989, required that all socially engaged citizens concentrate on the most pressing issues of democratic freedom: freedom of the press, of elections, and of travel. Within this upheaval, environmental concerns received less attention. In order to reposition the ecological devastation of the GDR in the public arena, two environmental organizations were founded in November 1989; the East German Green Party, and the Grüne Liga (Green League).

On November 24, 1989, 150 members of various environmental groups founded the Green Party of the GDR (Gransow and Jarausch 1991, pg. 89). For this group, political ideology was less an issue than that of retaining political emphasis on and representation of environmental degradation. So, although it echoed the conceptual framework of the West German Greens in being "ecological, feminist, and anti-violence", as well as being critical of economic growth, it spoke quite specifically about areas of ecological devastation which needed immediate attention. Thus, its founding statement declared, "The Green Party"

The strict and consistent ecological rebuilding of our country through a radical refusal of an environmentally disruptive, raw materially wasteful economic growth, and of the Stalinistically marked approach toward people, the economy, and the environment. There exists an immediate necessity to handle the ecologically catastrophic areas of Leipzig-Bitterfeld-Halle, Dresden-Karl-Marx-Stadt, and Cottbus, as well as to save many of the historical towns, the cultural landscape, and metal works, i.e., in Mecklenburg. (Gründungsaufruf für eine Grüne Partei, 5 Nov. 1989, in Gransow and Jarausch 1991, pg. 89, author's translation)

The statement goes on to list in far less detail, other general goals such as the protection of peace through disarmament, the disavowal of violence, nationalism, and racism, and equal rights for all men and women.

The party's program is very detailed with respect to the reorganization of energy and raw
material use, waste management, land, water, and forest management, animal protection, nature and landscape preservation, and transportation regulation. This strong focus on ecology and environmental planning stems from the fact that a majority of those involved in founding the party are physical scientists, ecologists, planners, and technical experts (Kühnel and Metzner-Sallmon 1992).

While the ideas emanating from the West German Greens have evolved through the interaction of different and in part conflicting political, ideological streams, the East German Greens have avoided ideological debate and are quite narrowly focused on specific ecological issues. Matters which have long consumed the West German Greens, such as the time-limitation of all political posts, or the prevention of the accumulation of political positions, play no role in the founding documents of the East German Greens. Neither are there long debates concerning the relative importance of a decentralized party organization, or the differential power of local, regional, or state level associations (ibid). Thus, while the FRG Greens have tried to define an alternative based on radical green politics, the GDR Greens have defined its alternative by prioritizing solutions to ecological problems.

Since the original members of the GDR Green Party are by and large technical experts, their position towards science itself is not one of adversity. Scientific tools, when well-implemented (rather than misused as they were under the Stalinist SED regime), will be useful in assessing current ecological damage, implementing clean-up strategies, and managing resource use in order to prevent future ecological catastrophe. In a similar vein, the federal regulation of the market economy is considered valid insofar as it is embedded in an ecologically-sensitive framework (Gransow and Jarausch 1991, pg. 89). The western Greens' economic vision—where national and transnational firms are supplanted by many locally-owned small businesses in order that a regionally specific economy be created whose functioning and political control are in the hands of those most closely affected—is not found in the Green platform of the GDR.

The establishment of the GDR's Green Party in 1989 did not occur uncontested. In fact, the majority of members from the various environmental groups of the time, voted at a November 5, 1989 national meeting of environmentalists, to organize an independent umbrella organization instead
of a political party.

Resistance to the establishment of a political party was especially strong amongst the church-based environmental groups, who felt their long involvement in environmentally-related work would be overshadowed by a Green Party (Hans-Peter Gensichen, 1992, personal interview). Across the board, the main argument against forming a party was that the organization of a broad based, unified movement should take priority. With this basis and support network, a party could then later be established which would, with a strong constituency in organized activism, have a greater chance for survival. The highly regarded Hans-Peter Gensichen, went further, to question the necessity of a Green Party, altogether.

No one in the GDR is asking the question whether green politics must even enter into Parliament. That is, the politics—yes, but whether the greens as people should necessarily be in Parliament...This is a question that has long been disputed in the FRG. (Interview with Peter Gensichen 1990, in Kühnel and Metzner-Sallmon 1992, pg. 15, author's translation)

Despite the fact that the majority of members from various environmental groups voted against the creation of a Green Party in 1989, several still felt that the fast-paced dynamic of the political climate required a quick response. These activists wanted to play a responsible role in the unfolding of a new environmental politics by creating a political body representing ecological issues. Thus, on the 24th of November the Green Party was quickly established without further consultation with the larger body of GDR environmentalists (Thomas Kompa 1992, personal interview).

Both the Grüne Liga and the Green Party were asked to take part in the Round Table meetings first established during the void of political power immediately following the collapse of the GDR regime in November 1989. The "round table" initially consisted of members from leading alternative social movements, members of the old political establishment, and three representatives of the

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35 This was in fact achieved with the foundation of the Green League (Grüne Liga) on the 26th of November (Kühnel and Metzner-Sallmon 1992).
At further rounds of discussion, the "green" perspective was given the opportunity to be heard. Members of the Green Party, though at first critical of the Grüne Liga's political role, found the presence of the more broadly based activist group augmented its own political standing. Thus, the existing tensions between the Grüne Liga and the Green Party dissipated, as both were being allowed to participate in the decision-making processes recreating east German politics and policy (Kühnel and Metzner-Sallmon 1992). Their principle contributions to the Round Table discussions were that: a confederacy should be established between West Germany and East Germany, private property rights should be guaranteed, it should be illegal to import wastes from the FRG, the State Security Police should be disband, and a committee for the ecological restructuring of society should be constitutionally guaranteed (ibid, pg.17).

The good relations established between the Green Party and the Grüne Liga has led to an acceptance of the others political role. Since the Grüne Liga, as an umbrella organization for local environmental groups, is not bound by party politics, it can work openly with all nature and environmentally interested groups. Upon its creation,

[a]ll existing and newly forming groups were called upon to make their contribution to this process while maintaining their independence, their identity, and local basis. (Grüne Liga, e.V. 1991, pg. 5)

Critical to the formation of such an umbrella group in a country racked by bureaucracy was the guarantee that centralization would be avoided. As can be read from its pamphlets and documents, the Grüne Liga has, through its organizational framework, made all attempts to remain a "network of ecological movements". However I learned in my interviews of members from the Grüne Liga in Halle and Leipzig, that the fact that the organization's main office is in Berlin, and funds are distributed through this office, has created tensions between a few local groups and the Berlin office.

36By February 1990, Hans Modrow, the newly elected Prime Minster of East Germany, Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and the nine original round table members met to initiate the establishment of one German currency. Open elections on March 18, 1990 for members of Parliament indicated by the percentage of votes going to parties calling for unification, that an overwhelming number of GDR citizens favored the unification of West and East Germany. On October 3, 1990, this mandate was finalized with the reunification of Germany.
A study of the Grüne Liga's documents, brochures, and pamphlets indicates that the group's orientation is predominantly toward local politics, not national. It therefore defines itself not through a social or political program, but through concrete action against specific threats to the environment. Some of its initial work has been to push for the establishment of national parks in the Harz Mountains, and of bioreserves in the Spree forest. It has launched protest actions against existing dumps, and declared solidarity with those living near the nuclear waste dump of Gorleben. Other projects include researching the restoration of the Elbe, working out model waste management strategies, working with scientists and government officials to rehabilitate the ecosystems dependent on the Baltic Sea, and promoting ecological farming. It has also been a critical force in advocating the establishment of a park where once the Berlin Wall stood (Grüne Liga, e.V. 1991). A National Center for Environmental Advice has been established through the Grüne Liga to organize regional offices which

are meant to be places of communication shared by grassroots groups, advisers and researchers, for the development of environmentally safe technologies and models for the transparent management of organizations and democratic decision-making (ibid, pg. 24).

Further echoing the position that cooperation between legislators, scientists, and activists is critical to solving the former GDR's environmental crises, the Grüne Liga states in a publicity brochure:

Considerable importance is attached to the work on a local level, i.e., to the cooperation with local administrators and legislative institutions. Making use of the experience from the peaceful revolutions, the Grüne Liga, encourages the establishment of environmental advisory boards and round tables. (Ibid pg. 3)

Thus, in the post-1989 period, eastern environmentalists have actively sought to tap the previously hidden knowledge held by East German officials and scientists as a means of empowering citizens. This is quite unlike many Western environmentalists, who shun members of the official bureaucracy, whose very existence, in their experience, disempowers citizens. In the spirit of social solidarity (and within the ideal to which they were indoctrinated), easterners define participatory democracy as cooperation between former state leaders, current politicians, social activists, scientists, and any other groups who have valuable information to impart in a dialogue for exploring solutions.
Westerners define participatory democracy in contradistinction to the existing political system (Mewes 1985), and tend to exclude traditional politicians and technocrats from their dialogue.

In addition, the severity of east German environmental deterioration and social oppression has meant that easterners are inclined to look favorably on the prospect that advanced technology could improve social welfare. Radical western Greens tend to hold a deep cynicism toward technological promise. How are these differences influencing the ability of German environmentalist groups to tackle the environmental challenge of establishing ecological parity in a unified Germany?

The post-unification environmental challenge

During the first two years after unification, the Federal Republic's leadership seemed to be working in cooperation with environmental groups. Through its job creation program, it has supported the staffing of these groups with state funds. Time and again, the federal government spoke adamantly about the need to rescue east Germany's severely polluted environment--for the benefit of both the east and west. Federal Ministers assured German citizens that the Europe of the 1990s would handle both the economy and ecology with equal priority (Hamburg Internationales Verkehrswesen Oct 1990, pg. 298, 300-301).

In April of 1990, a Joint Commission on the Environment was established by the Federal Environmental Minister and his counterpart in East Berlin. They drafted a comprehensive strategy for creating a parity of environmental conditions in the former GDR and the FRG within a decade. They emphatically claimed that no exceptions with respect to environmental standards would be made (Hamburg DPA Apr 28, 1990). On July 1, 1990, the environmental laws of the Federal Republic were officially transferred and made applicable to all new investments in the GDR (ibid).

In the spring of 1991, the equivalent of eleven billion dollars were allocated from the budget of the "Economic Program for Eastern Germany" to be spent specifically on ecological reconstruction in
the new states. In order to encourage eastern citizens to stay put, the Environmental Minister allocated an additional four billion dollars for job creation measures in the area of environmental protection (Neue Zeit Mar 16, 1991, pg. 1). Chancellor Helmut Kohl stated in his 1991 inaugural speech that the protection of nature and the environment constituted the biggest challenge of the 90s (Der Spiegel Jan 1993, pp. 32-33).

He was right. The difficulties of reconstructing the east German economy have effectively overridden environmental issues. In the face of having lost 4.4 million jobs in a total work force of 9.75 million people (The New York Times Mar 8, 1992), the federal government has accelerated its search for successful economic growth strategies. These have often been at the expense of environmental concerns. Despite the fact that the federal leadership said environmental policy would not be altered, several critical policy changes have been made in order for investment and development to proceed unimpeded. For example, summarizing from Der Spiegel Jan 1993, pp. 32-33:

Environmental planning proceedings through which development projects are regulated, have been radically shortened.

In eastern Germany, environmental planning proceedings are to be eliminated altogether if "significant investments would become unreasonably delayed".

Citizens' participation in the planning process, required under the law of the Federal Republic has been restricted.

During the next five years, citizens of eastern Germany will find it quite difficult to argue against certain development projects. Queries concerning the construction of industrial buildings will be directed through a newly established document office. This is slowing down processing through the extended paper work.

Finally, developers whose plans would destroy a natural landscape are normally required to compensate for this by putting up the money to reclaim an already damaged site, such as a drained wetland, or an abandoned strip mine. In the next five years, fulfillment of this obligation will no longer be required.

This emasculation of what Willy Brandt had argued was every citizen's right to engage the decision making process concerning environmental quality (Dominick, 1992) has outraged many social activist groups in the east. Many with whom I spoke felt they were getting the short shrift of the democratic
process. While west German activists may have two months to protest construction plans which threaten an ecosystem, east German activists, working under the new time constraints for east German economic reconstruction, may only get two weeks (Thomas Kompa 1992, personal interview). It thus appears that political rights are in fact being redefined for the eastern citizens.

These changes in environmental policy are based on an assumption that environmental regulations unnecessarily impede economic growth, so desperately needed in eastern Germany. Yet environmental concerns have by no means been the only dampening effect. From newspaper articles of 1991 and 1992, I have found the media to suggest that after an initial period of euphoria, a rapidly decreased willingness set in among west Germans, to share risk and sacrifice with eastern citizens. An east German political leader, Lothar de Maiziere, was quoted as saying "the will to overcome the maldistribution of benefits in united Germany by sharing is not ingrained in the rich west" (Die Zeit 11 Oct, 1991, pg. 11, author's translation).

The social significance of these tensions should not be underestimated. While conducting field work in eastern Germany, I was struck by the number of conversations which eventually turned to a discussion of the easterners' frustrations with the westerners' assumptions of superiority. The theme of these conversations is well-captured in the results of a 1991 survey (Table 8) published in the German news magazine, Der Spiegel.

More than 80 percent of east German respondents agreed with the statements that East Germany is viewed as a dumping ground for western goods, and that West Germans consider themselves smarter than East Germans. Sixty percent of East German respondents agreed that the West Germans took over the GDR as if it were a colony, and that West Germans are unwilling to share their wealth. Given the wording of the questions in this survey, it is quite surprising that so many West Germans also agreed to these statements. For instance, over half the West Germans surveyed agreed that the new eastern states were viewed as a dumping ground for western goods, and that west Germans think
Table 8: Views of German Unification: Percent of Respondents Agreeing with Statement

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<th>STATEMENT</th>
<th>WEST GERMANS</th>
<th>EAST GERMANS</th>
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<td>&quot;The West Germans took over GDR in colonial style.&quot;</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;West Germans do not share their wealth.&quot;</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;East Germany is viewed as a dumping ground for western goods.&quot;</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;West Germans think they are smarter than East Germans.&quot;</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Der Spiegel July 22, 1991, pg. 24-29*
they are smarter than east Germans. These ill-feelings create an important subtext to the debates and policies aimed at creating an economically, politically, and ecologically equitable Germany.

While substantial federal subsidies for those western enterprises taking over pre-existing firms or starting new ones in the east, induced an eastward flood of capital, the originally hoped for joint ventures have not materialized (Süddeutsche Zeitung Sept 28, 1990, pg. 35). Reasons cited for an increasingly conservative approach to east German business opportunities include: a recession in the international economy, economic uncertainty in the new eastern states, as well as often violent social instability. The nationalization of wealth in the former socialist GDR, has left most eastern citizens without capital to start their own enterprises (ibid). Easterners are left in a somewhat vulnerable position since most investments must come from the west. But if capital is to stay in the east, and stimulate regionally-induced and ecologically sound development, east-west collaboration must increase not decrease.

The privatization of property, and subsequent influx of western investment has caused land values in eastern Germany’s cities to sky-rocket. For example, office space in downtown Leipzig sells for more than in Hamburg and Düsseldorf (Die Zeit 29 Jan, 1993). As land values go up, tenants who under the socialist system paid only nominal rents, cannot afford to live in the downtown areas. Although the process of urban flight is not yet fully documented, anecdotal evidence indicates that former city residents are moving out into less expensive housing on the fringes of Leipzig (ibid). Furthermore, following unification west German investors built Germany’s largest shopping center just outside Leipzig’s city lines (Leipziger Blätter 1992 pp. 40-41). Thirty more shopping malls are on the drawing board for Leipzig. This pattern of urban restructuring, financially supported by the Federal Republic’s decision to focus funds on "growth centers" rather than distributing aid equally throughout the eastern states, is particularly widespread in the major east German cities of Dresden, Berlin, and Leipzig.

Several local environmentalists have used the ecological issues emerging as east Germany’s economy is restructured on the model of west Germany, to rally the strength of their pre-unification
In addition to protests against the speed at which banks and land speculation are driving the life out of the cities, the environmentally-concerned question the ecological consequences of building the type of infrastructure needed to support this style of urban and regional renewal. These include increased air and noise pollution due to an increased dependence on motor vehicles; the destruction of ecosystems as a result of massive highway construction; and the loss of a harmonious and integrated city structure as residential and shopping districts are built outside the city center.

**Consequences for a unified east-west environmentalism**

Although the western Greens sympathize with the issues confronting eastern environmentalists, they have been irritated by the easterners trust in a responsible use of scientific expertise and technology. They therefore resist the pragmatic solutions raised by their eastern counterparts. The east German Green Party, on the other hand, is equally resistant to the western Greens, since it is unwilling to lose its self-identity and specific relevance to eastern issues to the west’s ideological infighting (Hager 1991).

Based on these differences, the two Green parties were unable to unite for the all-German elections held in December of 1992. So, unlike the other major parties in Germany, the Green Parties of the east and west ran separately, as the western Greens, and an eastern alliance of the GDR’s Green Party with three citizens’ initiatives (*Democracy Now, New Forum, and Initiative for Peace and Human Rights*), known as *Bündnis ’90*. Perhaps because the radical left, postmaterialist position of the west German Greens had lost its edge under the new political climate, the western Greens failed to make the five percent threshold in the all German elections. The alliance of *Bündnis ’90/Greens* received eight seats with six percent of the vote (Table 9). The political culture of the East and West Germanies produced such different environmental groups, that unification with respect to basic ideals of democracy, citizen participation, and a just nature-society relationship could not be
Table 9: Percentage votes and number of seats in the 1990 Bundestag (Parliament) election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>West</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th># of Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU)</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Democrats (SPD)</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Democrats (FDP)</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greens</td>
<td>4.8a</td>
<td>6.0b</td>
<td>5.1c</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS)</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Parties</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>662</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aWithout 5 percent, the Greens of the West received no seats.

*bWith 6.0 percent, Bündnis '90/Greens of the East received eight seats.

*cThis 5.1 percent vote means that if the Greens of the West and the Bündnis '90/Greens of the East had run in coalition they would have received around forty seats in the Bundestag.

Source: Frankland and Schoonmaker 1992, pg. 222
forged between them.

Conclusion

With German unification, many of the ecological issues around which Eastern environmentalists had originally organized are being tackled. Polluting industries have been shut down, improving air and water quality. Significant efforts on the part of west and east German authorities, as well as private firms, are being made to uncover and clean-up waste sites. The round tables set up between government leaders, science experts, and social movement leaders acknowledged the political power of local activists. Plurality seemed to have been achieved. In most major cities, umbrella groups such as the New Forum, the Green League, the Green Party, and Greenpeace, have organized to take advantage of each other's resources and communication networks. Increased dialogue as well as resource sharing has been facilitated by the housing of these activist groups in a common building. For instance, Dresden, Leipzig, Berlin, and Halle each have a "House of Democracy" in which all major citizen's initiatives are located.

Now as the speed and intensity of economic restructuring reconfigures established patterns of power, meaning, and nature, eastern environmentalists are faced with new challenges. How are they confronting these? The analysis of this chapter has demonstrated that based on differences in ideas, ideals and concepts with respect to democracy, citizen participation, and technology the two Green Parties of east and west Germany have been unable to create a united environmentalist strategy concerning the east German ecological reconstruction. In the next two chapters, I consider specifically the reconstruction of transportation networks in the new eastern states (Chapter 7), and three case studies (Chapter 8), to examine the ways in which east German environmentalists are contributing, implementing, and modifying their historically derived ideas and strategies in the

57 From an interview with Jörg Hartmann, the administrator of the environmental department of the city of Wittenberg in Sachsen-Anhalt, 1992.
current reconstruction of their physical and social environments.
Chapter 7

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF NATURE THROUGH STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION: A CASE STUDY

In this chapter I consider the structural transformations underway in eastern Germany since 1990, their impact on Nature, and the contribution of environmental activism to this process. Specifically, I examine new policies, developed by the western-based Ministry of Transportation, aimed at rebuilding east Germany's transportation network, their *raison d'être*, and their bearing on the natural as well as built environment, i.e., the dissection of wetlands, the emissions of air and noise pollution, the building of highways through and around cities. The response of environmentalism, as one component producing and produced by local geographies, is also examined. As I will show, the construction of new transportation networks, central to west German plans for the "capitalization" of eastern Germany, is quite important to the changing face of environmental concerns. It is through this example, then, that I explore one of the current struggles over nature occurring in eastern Germany at the point of intersection between local physical and social geographies and non-local social structures.

This chapter contains three sections. In the first I compare and contrast the transportation sectors of the former German Democratic Republic and the former Federal Republic of Germany to provide the context for the transformation within this sector currently underway. Then I examine the new transportation policy developed specifically to rebuild rail, road, and waterways in the new eastern Länder. Since the Minister of Transportation, Günther Krause, is wielding more than DM100 billion for the reconstruction of this road and rail network, his influence on regional development is tremendous. In fact, the West German newspaper, *Wirtschaftswoche* (Jul 5, 1991, pg. 23), called him eastern Germany's "greatest regional planner for the next few years". In my analysis of his policy I give close attention to the reasons cited for the reconstruction of east Germany's transportation
network and the mechanisms used to realize his policy's aims. In the second section, I consider the response of environmentalists to the actual and potential transformations of east Germany's natural and built environment. Parallels are then drawn to the history of Germany's transportation system, highlighting the historical experience that contextualizes current decision-making and the reconstruction of Nature.

**A comparison of transportation sectors in the FRG and the GDR**

Both the leadership of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany viewed the restoration of the transportation industry as imperative to the reconstruction of their national economies after 1945, and both aimed toward achieving a "rational" system for distributing goods and passengers. They stressed the importance of a sound transportation system in the development of a strong economy. For example, an official description of the GDRs transport industry states:

[The transport industry] plays a major role in advancing the economic integration of the CMEA [Comecon] member countries and in achieving a more rational distribution of the productive forces on a national scale. (GDR Academy of Science 1989, pg. 329)

Similarly, an official brochure describing the FRG's transportation network states:

Reliable, safe and economical means of transport are indispensable for industry and trade and are very important for economic growth and jobs. (Press and Information Office of the Federal Government 1987)

Yet, despite agreement with respect to the critical role of transportation in a strong economy, the divergent political-economies of these two countries produced remarkably different transportation structures.

In East Germany, government investment in transportation focused primarily on mass transport. While major road ways were left relatively untouched since they were constructed under Hitler, the railway network was systematically expanded and became the most dense of all CMEA countries. Advanced technology such as microcomputers improved the coordination of railway traffic. Efforts
since 1976 focused on electrifying rails. A container transport system, begun in 1968, was
significantly extended in the 1980s. In order to encourage passenger trips by train, fares for inland
train routes, unchanged since 1945, were the lowest in all of Europe (The GDR Academy of Sciences
1989, pg. 329).

In the early 1980s, the volume of goods and passengers requiring transport services pushed the
GDR government to respond "flexibly by organizing the more rational use of the different forms of
transport" (ibid). An official document states:

Between 1981 and 1985, the transport of some 38 million tonnes of goods was transferred
from the roads to the railways and inland waterways, which are, in terms of energy
consumption, the most efficient forms of transport. This represented a reduction in the
proportion of goods transported by road in the GDR from 25 per cent in 1980 to 15 per cent
in 1987, the fraction carried by rail and barge rising from 69 to 76 per cent during the same
interval. Currently, the GDR's transport organizations carry about 12 million passengers a
day. (ibid)

It should be remembered that in the early 1980s, world energy prices rose, causing the GDR
government to reform its energy policy. It was at this time, then, that the strong push away from oil
and toward domestic brown coal began. Transportation policy was certainly influenced by this push
away from oil exploitation, and therefore (inadvertently) developed a more ecologically-sound
transportation system than those emphasizing automobile use.

In comparison, an official brochure published by the Federal Republic in Bonn boasts of the
increased reliance on the road in the transportation of freight.

Road haulage accounts for over 50 per cent of total freight. In 1950 the amount transported
by road was 690 million tonnes. Today it is 3,000 million tonnes, three quarters of which is
truck freight. The second largest carrier of goods are the Federal Railways, which account
for only 25 percent, a far cry from 37 years ago when they cornered well over half the total
volume. So road transport has gained the upper hand, not least because the dense road
network enables goods to be delivered from door to door. (Press and Information Office
1987)

The FRG's focus on developing an intricate road network as opposed to a sophisticated rail
system is evidenced in the following statistics. In the past thirty years, 150,000 kilometers of
roadway were built in the FRG. In the same period only 600 kilometers of rail. The total investment
in roads was 230 billion dollars greater than the investment in rail (Die Zeit Nov 30, 1990, pg. 29).
Both public and private sources have invested in the FRG's road network (it is second in length only to that of the United States (Press and Information Office 1987)), enabling the expansion and maintenance of the roads and *autobahns* without the use of tolls. The Federal Railways, however, have been a steady drain of federal funds (ibid). Thus, in contrast to a glowing report of the modernized and extensive road network that facilitates expanded freight and automobile traffic, the railroad, "[f]aced with unrelenting competition from other means of transport--cars, ships and aircraft"--is [not surprisingly] an unprofitable operation for which the government must "foot the bill". Although it is acknowledged in the brochure that the railway helps conserve energy, is indispensable for those without a car, and is a very safe type of transport, the stated barrier to its expansion is affordability (Press and Information Office 1987).

Since 1970, the Federal Republic of Germany's road network has more than doubled. The length of public roads has steadily increased between 1965 and 1987 (400,000 km to 490,000 km), while the length of the railway system has declined (30,000 km to 28,000 km) (Bundesumweltministerium 1989, pg. 27). Of the roads being built, the length of roads within municipalities has grown considerably (131,000 km to 194,000 km). Increasing settlement trends are correlated with new roads being built within cities, towns and villages. Thus, 50 percent of all distances covered by car are less than 5 kilometers--a distance easily covered by bicycle or mass transport (fifty percent of West Germans own bicycles) (ibid, pg. 30). While the introduction of 3-way catalytic converters has helped reduce air emissions per car, the number of motor vehicles increased consistently between 1975 and 1988, thus offsetting the potential for emissions reduction (ibid, pg. 29). In particular, the rapid increase of the long distance transportation of goods by roads has contributed to an increase in total nitrogen oxide emissions (ibid, pg. 34). The introduction of a Single European Market, as well as the opening of eastern Europe is emphasizing this trend.

While the consequences of this transportation pattern on the built and natural environments are many, one telling indicator of the penetration of roads into the lives of West German people is "areas of over 100 km² unspoilt by traffic infrastructure and traffic". This indicator was first developed in
1977 by West Germany’s Federal Environmental Agency. An area unspoilt by traffic infrastructure is defined as

\[\text{an area of at least 100 km}^2 \text{ which is not intersected by motorways, main thoroughfares and railway lines. (ibid, pg. 72)}\]

This measure reflects an area in which a person could take a day-long hike without being "visually or acoustically confronted by traffic" (ibid).

In 1977, 349 areas in West Germany, which accounted for 22.6 percent (56,184.7 km²) of the country, were defined as "unspoilt by traffic". In 1987 there existed only 53 (7,453.5 km²) such areas (ibid). Thus, in 1987, ten years later, only 3 percent of West German territory could offer a day-long reprieve from the sight and sound of automobiles.

Another consequence of increased vehicular traffic is increased tropospheric ozone levels. One of the primary air pollutants from motor vehicles, nitrogen oxides, is a principle component producing photochemical ozone (O₃) near the earth's surface. This tropospheric ozone can cause damage to a plant's metabolism, it attacks cellular membranes, and inhibits photosynthesis. Indirect effects are also significant. Recent studies indicate that plants may be less resistant to stresses such as disease and frost after being exposed to ozone. From observations in the United States, ozone has been recognized as causing damage to forests in California, as well as significantly affecting agricultural crop yields (Flückiger 1989 pg. 27). The National Crop Loss Assessment Network has estimated that the value of US crop loss attributed to ozone exposure ranges between one and five billion dollars per year (White 1993, pg.57).

Unfortunately, data on ozone concentrations in Europe are still inconsistent. Thus, the role of ozone in the decline of European forests, for example, is not agreed upon (Krause et al. 1986; Prinz 1987; Ashmore et al. 1985; Tomlinson 1986). Over the past several decades, ozone concentrations have increased in specific European localities. Across Europe, ozone has been measured as frequently exceeding ambient air-quality standards (Duinker 1990, pp. 132-133). According to the Federal Republic of Germany's Environmental Ministry, the Federal Republic had "significantly higher"
ozone levels than the German Democratic Republic in 1989 (Bundesumweltministerium 1992, pg. 40).

The main cause of dieback and thinning crowns of trees noticed first in the mid-1960s and well into the 1980s was initially attributed to high sulfur dioxide emissions, acid rain (the product of water, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen oxides reacting in the atmosphere), as well as to specific climate conditions associated with higher altitudes. The cloudy and foggy conditions of higher altitudes enhance sulfur deposition (Kreutzer 1993, pg 84-85). In the late 1970s and early 80s, a new type of European forest decline has been observed, whose cause appears to include other factors such as drought, disease, photooxidants such as ozone, and exposure to other pollutants such as nitrogen oxides (ibid). In fact, ozone is now thought to be the cause of forest decline previously attributed to acid rain (White 1993, pg.58; Duinker 1990).

In 1982, only 8 percent of West German forests were dead or damaged. By 1983, this figure increased to 34 percent. In 1986, total damage was estimated at 53 percent (Miller 1989, pg. 166). Initially, soft conifers were most affected by air pollutants, yet damage to hardwood, deciduous trees has become more widespread. For example, beech and oak are now more extensively damaged than spruce and pine (Bundesumweltministerium 1989, pg. 88). A 1990 estimate by the former GDR government reported that 54 percent of East Germany’s forests suffered ill-effects from pollution (Institut für Umweltschutz 1990). A 1992 analysis of united Germany’s environmental quality reports that 64 percent of all forest cover is injured (Bundesumweltministerium 1992). Diminished levels of sulfur dioxide may contribute to improving the health of forest ecosystems, yet the ill-effects of nitrogen deposition, photochemical oxidants such as ozone, and the complex combination of these on forests and soils are still undetermined.

Nitrogen can also act as a fertilizer for nitrogen deficient vegetation. A boom of tree growth in most parts of Central European forests during the 1950s and 60s due to increased nitrogen levels has been well documented (Kreutzer 1993). When nitrogen is not a growth-limiting nutrient, however, high levels of nitrogen emissions contribute to 1) acidification of soils; 2) nitrogen accumulation in
ecosystems causing increased water stress, sensitivity to frost, and leaching of nutrients from forest canopies; and 3) changes in the biotic composition of forest ecosystems as species living in nitrogen-deficient environments are replaced by those living in nitrogen-rich environments (Alcamo et al. 1990).

Although increased nitrogen oxide emissions can have serious consequences on human health (by affecting the respiratory system), and on agricultural crops yields, *Waldsterben* (literally forest death) has become one of Germany's hottest environmental issues. A 1991 report published by the Minister of Nutrition, Agriculture, and Forestry, Ignaz Kiechle, notes that while the federal government began a "Save the Forest" campaign in 1983, the measures taken in the program did not sufficiently reflect the condition of the trees (The Week in Germany Nov. 29, 1991, pg.7). Harald Schäffer, the environmental spokesperson for the Social Democrats has directly blamed automobile exhaust for forest damage, and decries federal policies aimed at increasing the road network throughout Germany and facilitating car transportation over mass transportation in the reconstruction of eastern Germany. Jutta Braband, a member of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), (the successor party to the Socialist Unity Party (SED)) has joined the "Society for the Protection of the German Forest" to call for a halting of the "car-centered traffic policies" being developed for the eastern states (ibid). Environmentalists are arguing that if damage to trees is to be decreased, *both* a decrease in sulfur dioxide as well as nitrogen oxide emissions is required. A banner at a recent protest where environmentalists poured earth onto a highway stated: "The forest continues to die--you determine the pace" (ibid).

Although most environmentally-concerned activists acknowledge that transportation in the east must improve, they emphasize the careful, innovative development and implementation of *mass transportation*, an area in which eastern Germany has been, ecologically-speaking, stronger than western Germany. For example, in East Germany, on average, 27 percent of urban passenger trips were accomplished through public transport in 1987. West Germany's public transportation, which facilitated 66 percent of all passenger trips in 1950 (Press and Information Office 1987), only handled
11 percent of all passenger trips in 1987 (John Rucher 1990)\textsuperscript{a}.

\textbf{The "new" transportation policy for eastern Germany}

Environmental protection measures announced in September 1990 (\textit{Frankfurter Allgemeine} Sep 8, 1990, pp. 7-8), by a joint commission on the environment (comprised of advisors from the West German Environment Ministry, East Germany's Minister of the Environment, Chemist Karl-Hermann Steinberg, and Bonn's Environment Minister, Klaus Töpfer) suggested that laws of the Federal Republic which were producing ill-effects to the environment should be avoided in the legal transformation of the eastern states, and that ecologically beneficial practices in place in the former GDR should not be dismantled.

Among the latter is, for instance, the ecologically harmless transport of freight by water and rail, as well as the collection and recycling of waste or "secondary raw materials". (ibid) Furthermore, "both German environment ministers are making efforts to safeguard the now rare niches of those 'underdeveloped' regions [of the GDR] in which there is still the full diversity of life". This apparent commitment to environmental preservation was however diminished by a later qualification: "development will not be prevented, but made to proceed with due deliberation and care, to protect the long-term interests of people and other creatures" (ibid).

It is within this framework that Bonn's Transportation Minister, Günther Krause, has developed his Transportation Program for German Unity (\textit{Verkehrsprojekte Deutsche Einheit}). The 17 transportation projects proposed to facilitate the unification of Germany consist of nine new rail lines, seven highways, and one water way\textsuperscript{b}. The maps in Figures 9-11 illustrate the location of these

\textsuperscript{a} In the United States in 1987, 3 percent of urban passenger trips were accomplished by public transport (Rucher, 1990).

Figure 9: Transportation projects: Nine rail lines
Source: Krause (1992), pg. 13

Figure 10: Transportation projects: Seven highways  
Source: Krause (1992), pg. 14
Figure 11: Transportation projects: One water canal
Source: Krause (1992), pg. 15
proposed routes.

This transportation policy is considered critical to the federal government's plans to reconstruct eastern Germany's economy. Its key function, as described by the Transportation Ministry, is the growing together of the new German states with the old.

The swift building up of the transportation infrastructure [of the new states] which has been criminally neglected for decades will create the urgently needed jobs, and will make the new federal states appealing to both domestic and international investors...The opening of eastern Europe is irreversible. Germany will be the turntable of economic and transportation streams in Europe, both in the north-south direction as in the west-east. [While] the transportation infrastructure of the old federal states is of high quality and fundamentally efficient [that of the new federal states] must be renewed from the ground up: rebuilt and broadened. I have submitted therefore, in anticipation of the Plan for Federal Transportation Routes 1992--which is presently being established--17 transportation projects for the unity of Germany. These most important East-West axes have as their key function the growing together of Germany and the economic upswing of the new Federal states. (Minister of Transportation Dr. Günther Krause, in Bundesminister für Verkehr 1992, pg. 4, author's translation, italics added)

The Transportation Minister ensures the "environmental-friendliness" of his new policy by emphasizing that eleven of the seventeen routes are "environmentally-sound" rail and water ways. Specifically, he states in an official brochure of the Transportation Ministry: "Environmental protection and security with respect to transportation are prerequisites for all transportation planning measures. With respect to transportation policy, the environmentally just management of transportation translates into:

* A strengthening of environmentally friendly modes of transportation,
* The dismantling of avoidable traffic,
* The building-up of cooperation,
* The utilization of modern technology in order to better use existing infrastructure,
* An environmentally-careful building of transportation routes,
* The promotion of environmentally-friendly technology (Bundesminister für Verkehr 1992, pg. 6, author's translation)

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60He is probably referring to linkages and cooperation between the various modes of transportation.
Along with the 17 transportation projects, Krause's policy includes the

\textit{Verkehrswegeplanungsbeschleunigungsgesetz} (Law for the acceleration of planning transportation routes, or the "fast-track law") which was passed by Parliament to ensure that the normal 10-20 year planning period for such a large undertaking be halved.

The fast-track law should contain general regulations for shortening the design process in the new länder. The funding measures should, in practice, replace the planning procedures, in that the construction of certain transit routes will be decided on by the law-makers. Such bills would have the advantage that construction could begin practically as soon as those bills had been passed. (\textit{Handelsblatt Apr 10, 1991, pg. B2})

This law was passed in order to prevent an "unbearable" delay, and a "primary danger" to the economic upswing of eastern Germany from occurring (ibid).

With respect to the financing of his massive transportation renewal policy, Minister Krause stated in April 1991:

> Given the enormous need for construction and capital improvement...we need additional financial resources. Private capital must be drawn into the financing...It appears that deliberations are concentrating on leasing models. They are not only the least bureaucratic for the public, but are also the most economical form of private financing for the government. I particularly welcome the constructive proposals for private financing which are being made by private industry. (\textit{Handelsblatt April 10, 1991, pg. B2})

Thus, despite the fact that more railways than highways are proposed by the Federal Transportation Ministry—nine rail lines, seven new highway connections, and one waterway--\textit{autobahn} construction is being financed largely through private investment. Rail construction is constrained by tax collection. Since private financial backers will push for quick construction in order to see their investments pay off (\textit{Die Zeit Nov. 30, 1990, p. 29}), road construction will be accelerated while that of rails will fall behind. For those environmentalists and politicians alike, interested in a major shift in transportation policy from the private automobile to mass transportation, the \textit{Economist} (Nov 9, 1991, pg. 21) comments cynically: "Taking on Germany's car lobby is brave, and no sure bet." Thus, the September 1990 proposal of the joint commission on the environment to preserve eastern Germany's emphasis on mass transportation is limited by the Ministry of Transportation's solicitation of the automobile and construction industries for private investment.
An estimated 340 billion dollars will be raised to finance the major, high speed arteries transporting goods and traffic between east and west Germany, as well as eastern and western Europe (Der Spiegel Feb 15, 1993). The Bonn government argues this investment is critical to stimulating east German economic growth, securing work places, improving traffic safety, and environmental protection. A typical statement explicitly linking improved living standards to the use of private vehicles was recently expressed by a leading west German administrator. He remarked that increased motor vehicle traffic in the former West Germany was a key component of economic growth and had contributed to the affluence of West German citizens (Schmitt 1992). Deiter Schulte, the parliamentary state secretary in the Ministry of Transportation, reiterated this theme by stating emphatically:

We will achieve full motorization there [in the East] as we have here [in the West]. You can restrain traffic only if you completely reorganize society. To state it clearly, this would be the end of our affluent society. (Schulte, quoted in Die Zeit Nov 30 1990, pg. 29)

At the local level, the director of Germany’s largest mall, outside Leipzig, echoed these sentiments in saying:

of course the shopping center is designed so that the customer must come by car. That is one of our advantages over shopping centers in the center city, and it should remain that way. (Geissler in Leipziger Blätter 1992, pg. 40)

**Environmentalists’ response**

Many environmental activists with whom I spoke are questioning these assumptions. They challenge the notion that facilitating the transportation of private automobiles will provide jobs, speed, wealth, and independence. For instance, Thomas Kompa, an activist associated with the Naturschutzbund (environmental protection association) in Halle, told me that the proposed employment increase that large-scale road construction will engender is, at best, temporary. While the minimally-paid labor needed for manual construction may be secured from the masses left unemployed when the chemical industries supporting this region were shut down, Kompa stated that
the highly-skilled, better paid, experts are being brought in from the west. In addition, some eastern activists feel that the lion's-share of capital growth facilitated by a better eastern transportation network will simply flow back to the west where the capital owners reside (Süddeutsche Zeitung Sep 28, 1990, pg. 35). Thus, many environmentalists argue that the big winners will be the western-based construction and automobile industries, who are privately financing the bulk of the proposed federal roadways (Grüne Liga 1992; Greenpeace 1992; Verkehrsclub Deutschland 1992).

These environmentalists also argue that this law is eliminating standard procedures established in the FRG to prevent environmentally negligent decision-making. The push to finalize decisions about road, rail and water way construction, it is argued, has allowed disregard for environmental concerns. Thus, the environmental security promised by Krause may be negated by a central component of his policy: the fast-track law. To summarize, the Grüne Liga criticizes the law because:

- It violates federal law concerning Environmental Tolerance Studies.
- The jurisdiction of planning is centralized in Bonn, thereby restricting authority at the state-level.
- Possibilities for public protest have been dramatically reduced. The possibilities for citizens' complaints have been reduced to only one appeal, instead of the normal three.
- Decision-makers based in Bonn can expropriate property from private landowners for the purposes of building these federal transport routes. (Grüne Liga 1992)

Notice, that fundamental to these criticisms is the fact that decisions affecting local configurations of power and land are being made in Bonn (a city which, until recently, was for all intents and purposes as far away as New York City).

Some environmental activists claim veritable damage to local economies will ensue at the hands of Krause's transportation policy (Grüne Liga 1992; Greenpeace 1992; Verkehrsclub Deutschland 1992). First, the fast-track law is watering down environmental impact assessments. In-depth analyses of environmental sensitivity to the proposed transportation routes are necessary if the GDRs ecologically rich areas are not destroyed as new roads or rails dissect them. If large wetlands or fields, rare in central Europe, are severely disturbed by the building of high-speed international
transportation routes, it is argued that the economic, cultural, as well as natural wealth of the region is diminished. Secondly, the logic of facilitating the importation of goods also produced locally, but not as cheaply, is being questioned. Why should local farmers sit with their products unsold? What sense does it make to import goods from all over Europe, when they are made at home?

Transportation should connect effectively, and that means by creating the shortest connections, not the longest. (Grüne Liga 1992)

Greenpeace has published several brochures arguing that the building of roads in West Germany has encouraged increased reliance on and use of the automobile. Instead of facilitating traffic flow, road construction has facilitated congestion. For instance, Figure 12, printed by Greenpeace, indicates that since 1975, the road network in West Germany has increased dramatically—and with it the average number of automobiles utilizing the roads. Thus, the government's push for additional roads in both the west and east is seen as part of the problem rather than the solution. Greenpeace activists believe that what is needed for the 90s is an ecologically sound transportation network emphasizing automobile-free cities and mass transportation.

The major environmental organizations such as Greenpeace, the Grüne Liga, and the Naturschutzbund (environmental protection association) thus argue that the rapid increase in east German automobile traffic will threaten a still ecologically-healthy countryside, the livability of urban areas, the local base of regional economies, as well as the recent international commitment made by the FRG to reduce carbon dioxide emissions 30 percent by the year 2005 (Greenpeace 1992). The comparative analysis of air emissions in Chapter 5 demonstrates the extent to which air pollutants in the FRG are derived from vehicular traffic, and the potential changes the creation of an equally car-dependent society in eastern Germany may have on air quality. Through my interviews with environmental activists in the Grüne Liga in Leipzig and the Naturschutzbund (environmental protection association) in Halle, as well as through my reading of brochures published by these organizations I have summarized their arguments to include that: more roads encourage the use of more cars, which will mean more traffic jams, and therefore less mobility; the construction of built
1,000 motor vehicles passing every 24 hours.

Figure 12: Traffic density on West German roads: 1975 and 1990
Source: Greenpeace (1992)
environments under the assumption that people have access to cars, forces a dependence on automobiles; time spent in traffic may lengthen trips rather than shorten them; the reorganization of cities based on the widespread use of the automobile allows living areas to be farther from the center city, and both to be separate from the shopping districts, thereby diminishing the day-to-day living routines taking place in a city; increased dependence on the private automobile inhibits those unable to drive such as the elderly and the young from being mobile, while increasing noise and air pollution levels.

**Parallels in Germany's past**

In tracing the cultural history of the car in Germany, Wolfgang Sachs (1992) focuses on the pivotal role of this technology in changing the land as well as our perception of it. Unlike most new technologies, the car necessitated a complete network of supporting structures in order to facilitate its use. The old rural roads which posed problems for the speedier car were more than just a "barrier to the fun associated with driving a car."

They were grounded on a different conception of space; they were connecting lines between neighboring locales, not thoroughfares to distant destinations. (ibid pg. 45)

The car encouraged roads to cut through space simply as a means to shorten distances. As paths upon which a variety of vehicles, people, and animals traversed, exchanging as their routines intersected a valuable part of day-to-day life, country roads were becoming extinct. Interestingly, one of the leading arguments used in the early 1900s against those who complained about overturned wagons, automobile accidents, and disturbances to rural peace was that "the well-being of the German industry" rested on the automobile (ibid pg. 24). This argument, as Sachs points out, suddenly moved discussion about the car into a dimension that had little to do with the advantages or disadvantages of the car for everyday life. It had become and has remained a powerhouse of the German economy. It is then little wonder that Bonn’s 1992 transportation policy would be biased toward the automobile,
and that the automobile industry would be a key player, not only in rebuilding the transport routes of the east, but also in reviving the eastern economy.

In 1925, the automobile and construction industries recognized the value of building "automobile-only" roads. Without streets void of encumbrances, the car's worth was diminished, and therefore also the potential gain to these industries. A comprehensive grid of highways was planned and encouraged, but the Weimar administration of the time, pointing to the already existing railway system, was hesitant to agree to the automobile and construction industries' visions. It was Hitler, with his Reich Automobile Law of 1933, who finally implemented massive highway construction. He saw several advantages. A large-scale construction project created jobs for construction workers, steelworkers, as well as automobile producers. In addition, he viewed highways as a means through which to unify the German people as well as to control opposition through spatial expansion.

The roads of the Führer will be developed into great traffic arteries, which not only will contribute to the melding of the German people into a stronger political and economic unit, but will also put an end to the last remnants of particularistic thinking. (from Die Strasse 1936 quoted in ibid, pg. 51)

The slogan framing the massive construction focused on the unification of Germans under a strong state leadership: "One People, one Reich, one Führer".

In a similar vein, though without the fascist overtones, Transportation Minister Krause, in his 1992 declaration of the 17 transportation routes of "The Transportation Program of German Unity", states:

These most important East-West axes have a key function in the melding together of Germany and in the strong economic upswing of the new federal states. (Krause 1992, pg. 3, author's translation)

After years of "marching in step", suffering air raids and bombs, the West German people relished the freedom, security, and economic prosperity of the 1950s. The hardship and scarcity experienced during the second World War contrasted sharply with the miracle of material abundance and promise. The automobile proved an influential symbol of this abundance. Similarly, the east Germans, having endured the relative dearth of consumer goods under the socialist political-economy, and the mockery
of west Germans about their noisy, polluting, two-piston Trabants, are now eagerly buying western automobiles as a symbol of economic promise. The oil company, Deutsche Shell AG, conservatively estimated that the number of passenger cars per thousand people would increase from 371 to 570 in the neue Länder by the year 2010. Two years after the opening of eastern Germany, this figure had already increased by 70 (Frankfurter Allgemeine Sep 7, 1991, pg. 31).

In the 1960s, the encouragement of mass consumerism as a means for economic growth and political stability in West Germany also translated into mass motorization. "[Social and economic policy] regards motor transport not only as the engine of a modern economy," states the 1965 manifesto of the Association of German Automobile Clubs,

but in the same way it regards the private possession and operation of an automobile as a share in prosperity, meant for and open to every citizen. The further increase in motorization is for that reason not only a necessary consequence of growing "prosperity for all," but also an explicitly declared political goal of the state. (Sachs 1992, pg. 76)

In 1990, the parliamentary state secretary in the Ministry of Transportation cited above, echoed this sentiment when he declared that restraining automobile traffic would signal the end of Germany’s affluent society.

In the late 1950s, the construction of an intensive highway network was championed, not only to alleviate domestic traffic bottlenecks and to support domestic industry, but also to respond to West Germany’s position as "the transportation crossroads of Europe" (ibid). With similar terminology, Günther Krause stated in 1992 that "Germany will become the turntable of the economic and transportation streams of Europe, in the North-South direction as well as in the West-East direction" (Krause 1992, pg. 3). Krause’s solicitation of private funds to finance his transportation policy also has historical precedent. In the mid-1950s, budgetary constraints to road construction were removed through private investments. The German Society for Public Works was established, as a federal enterprise under private law, which secured millions of marks from private investors in order to finance autobahn construction (Die Zeit Nov. 30, 1990, pg. 29).

The Regional Planning Law of 1965, whose purpose was to equalize living conditions by linking
rural areas with metropolitan centers by means of national roads and highways provided the legislative support for the vision of mass mobility. Thus, as Wolfgang Sachs recounts, between 1962 and 1978 road construction in West Germany became the order of the day. The countryside was being tied and incorporated into the industrialized cities. In addition, urban space was covered by overpasses, dissected by highway access ramps, and encircled by beltways. "Urban space deteriorated into a distance to be overcome" (Sachs 1992, pg. 85). The Volkswagen, a cheap, reliable car brought the dream of individual mobility to the masses. While in 1962 only 27.3 percent of West German households had cars, by 1975 "full-motorization" had been achieved. Perhaps by the year 2005, the same will be achieved in eastern Germany.

**Conclusion: redirecting the construction of Nature**

The joint commission on the environment, mentioned above, which met in April 1990 to secure that by July 1, 1990 environmental laws comparable to those in West Germany would become valid in East Germany, started a process whereby factories along the Mulde and Saale rivers were shut down in order to reduce the discharge of harmful substances. It agreed to invest 627 million marks into pilot projects that would transform chemical combines such as the one in Buna into environmentally as well as economically viable enterprises (Hamburg DPA Apr 28 1990). In June 1990, the West German Environment Minister Klaus Töpfer announced that the Bundestag (Parliament) had approved 28 environmental pilot projects for East Germany, involving a total budget of one billion marks. Most of these projects focused on improving the GDRs air, water, and soil quality through a re-tooling or dismantling of its key industries (Cologne Deutschlandfunk Network Jun 26, 1990).

Environmental protection and security have also been a critical component of the federal government's explanations of the proposed transportation renewal of eastern Germany. Stressed is the fact that more railways are planned than roadways. Yet since private financing has been readily
obtained from the automobile and construction industries for the building of roads (as was done in the mid-1950s), while rail construction relies on an already burdened tax base, road construction is likely to receive priority, thereby also encouraging automobile use. More stringent regulations concerning the emissions of individual automobiles are championed by the government as a way to reduce the ill-effects of a transportation network heavily reliant on the automobile (Der Spiegel July 19, 1993). Yet West German experience has shown that while each individual car may successfully emit less carbon dioxide, an increase in the sheer number of cars has diminished the potential for overall emissions reduction (Bundesumweltministerium 1989, pg. 29). Recently, highway tolls have also been considered to finance road construction as well as to discourage automobile travel, yet whether these additional costs can make a relatively neglected rail system competitive in inter and intra-national freight transport is highly debated (Der Spiegel July 19, 1993).

Thus, while many Germans agree that the transportation infrastructure in eastern Germany needs repair, questions are arising as to whether it should be as car-dependent as that of western Germany. For example, a July 1993 survey conducted by Der Spiegel indicates that a majority of those polled feel money being put into the construction of 11,000 kilometers of long-distance roads should be invested in the rail network instead (Table 10). Results from a survey conducted by Der Spiegel indicated that 52 percent of those people asked were in favor of investing money being spent on road construction in rail construction instead. Only 33 percent of those surveyed were in favor of expanding roads over rails. So, why not rebuild east Germany's transportation sector in a new, more ecologically-benign fashion, by improving and encouraging innovation in mass-transportation?

Historically, the car has been strongly associated in Germany, as in other western countries, with individual wealth and freedom. The car as a symbol of prestige and freedom, as well as a source of national wealth developed soon after the first automobiles appeared on German roads. It gained importance as a means by which to unify Germans when Hitler implemented a massive nation-wide construction of "automobile only" highways. When, in the wake of World War II, the pursuit of
Table 10: A survey concerning the expansion of roads over rails.

The Minister of Transportation is planning the construction of 11,000 km of long-distance roads. Do you welcome this, or should the money be invested in the rail network instead?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Germans as a whole</th>
<th>Those who use car daily</th>
<th>Those who use car often</th>
<th>Those who don’t have a car</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In favor of expanding roads.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In favor of expanding rails.</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Der Spiegel July 19, 1993, author’s translation

individual freedom and economic profit were seen as critical to the revitalization of the West German economy, a mass love affair with the car blossomed. This historical experience has produced infrastructure, industry, and assumptions that further encourage the expansion of automobile use, despite the resulting environmental deterioration, i.e., forest damage, noise pollution, limited natural spaces free from interference from cars. The outcome is that west German economic and political institutions have quickly transformed those east German modes of resource use that are out-of-date in the west, economically inefficient, and highly polluting—thereby dismantling the economic base of many east German regions. However, these western economic and political forces are also stimulating an arguably out-of-date, resource inefficient, and highly polluting mode of transport that has served as an economic base for western Germany.

Increasingly easterners are expressing anger with respect to changes in resource use and environmental protection that appear to benefit the west while leaving the east with little economic security. Many eastern environmentalists claim that established western norms of political rights are being redefined when applied to them (Grüne Liga 1992). The gain from increased road networks, so

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61A similar heritage in the former GDR was subdued by socialist ideology that placed security for the masses above pursuit of individual freedom. Mass transportation ensured mobility for all workers, while the private ownership of a vehicle was a luxury attributed to the bourgeoisie.
strongly stated by western developers is questioned since the jobs created through road construction are temporary and the profits gained from increased commerce flow back to the west (Greenpeace 1992; Verkehrscub Deutschland 1992). Since most of the newly planned roads have not yet been built, it is impossible to assess the validity of such statements. Nonetheless, the argument of environmentalists reflects a broader source of cultural tensions between eastern and western Germans. Many easterners feel that the westerners are taking over, reaping benefits from their still meager resources, and leaving established local economic and social norms in shambles. Environmentalists merely highlight one point at which non-local interests clash with local concerns. In a conversation I had with Hans-Peter Gensichen, he made reference to the growing east German cynicism of western economic promises. Recalling a slogan from a recent advertisement touting that the "new" Germans could enjoy one-half fare prices on the Federal Railways, he said:

Westerners seem to view us in the east as suppliers of cheap labor and buyers of all their excess goods. They are indeed getting "Das ganze Volk zum halben Preis", (The entire nation for half the price). (personal interview 1992)

In the following chapter, I examine how specific localities in eastern Germany are handling these cultural tensions and conflicts over resource, as a way to understand how local environmental politics are currently unfolding.
Chapter 8

LOCAL STRUGGLES OVER NATURE

In this chapter, the issues and experiences documented in the previous 7 chapters inform an analysis of three case studies of east German cities. These case studies constitute a preliminary documentation of how local configurations of Nature are changing dramatically as they intersect with non-local capital and state institutions. With unification, many eastern German communities are struggling to recover from the severe environmental pollution produced and legitimized by former structures of power in an effort not only to secure the health of their communities, but also to secure economic opportunities under the new circumstances of an internationally competitive market system. They are faced with a new set of power relations that inform decisions as to how resources will be used and what benefits will be gained or lost. Since this dynamic process is still in its early stages, the analysis of this chapter can only lay the groundwork for a long-term study tracing the transformation of nature and environmental politics currently underway in eastern Germany.

This chapter is guided by the following set of questions: What specific struggles over Nature--its valuation, use in production, preservation, and deterioration--are occurring in eastern Germany, and how are they playing out differently in various cities or towns? What issues are being raised concerning the use of natural resources and the benefits particular usages will bring the community? What new physical and social geographies are being created in each case study? How do these differ from place to place? How does the response of environmentalists differ from place to place?

In order to address these questions I will narrow my focus again to the issue of infrastructure. The establishment of new transportation routes in eastern Germany is a central component changing the face of environmental concerns in the new states. It is also a focal point of tension between local and non-local sources of power due to its bearing on economic and ecological stability. Thus, though essential to the economic recovery of eastern Germany, infrastructural renewal is controversial in terms of its form and function. How do past local experiences help explain current arguments against
This chapter contains three case studies in which I describe the expected transformation of transportation routes for the three cities of Berlin, Leipzig, and Halle (Figure 13), as well as the response to these changes by local environmentalists. An attempt is made to link current environmentalists' actions to the pre-1989 activism of each locality. Berlin, Leipzig, and Halle were chosen for their differences, particularly in scale, rather than their similarity, in order to gain a perspective on the diversity of changes occurring in eastern Germany, and the variety of issues raised.

Surveying a changing Nature

It wasn't better before, but today it is worse. (anonymous quote from an east Berliner, 1993)

Walking down the streets of east German towns in 1992, perhaps the most shocking observation is the decrepit condition of most built structures. Building facades bear the bullet holes of World War II. State subsidized low rents, public ownership, and a limited supply of construction materials minimized incentives to keep up building repairs. While in West Berlin small window balconies have been painted with contrasting colors to pull into relief their ornate design, the architecturally equivalent balconies in East Berlin have long since fallen off, leaving unpatched scars on blackish-grey facades. Leaking roofs, left unattended, forced many tenants to evacuate top floor apartments. As the rain fell through, tenants at lower levels also had to move out, eventually leaving only those on the bottom floor behind. Signs reflecting the dilapidated conditions of buildings abound: *Abrissgrundstück* (condemned property), *Achtung Einsturzgefahr* (Careful, danger of collapse).

The buildings also bear witness to the many years black soot has fallen on east German communities. The already bleak, uniform grey of most homes and buildings was darkened by the black of pollution. A young mother from the town of Wittenberg in Sachsen-Anhalt, the southern
Figure 13: Location of case study cities: Berlin, Leipzig and Halle
Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit (1988), pg. 19
chemical-based industrial state of East Germany, remarked to me:

Apples from the trees here never really got clean. We would wash them four times over, and still feel the waxy grime left behind.

Clothes hanging out to dry, came back dirty. Children playing in the playground, came back black. Unification has offered some hope and many promises that with new industry and new jobs, these physical conditions can be transformed into light, color, and de-toxification.

Thus, the equally striking observation in visiting eastern Germany: widespread construction. Facades are miraculously regaining color and design. Roads are being torn up in order for new water mains, electrical and telephone wires to be lain. Tall white placards stand in front of large construction sites, documenting which predominantly west German sources are funding the new mini-mall, shopping plaza, parking garage, or renovation. Such construction is so widespread and occurring at once that entire city centers are debilitated. When asking a taxi driver, on my arrival in the Halle train station, how far it was to the address of a friend of mine, he leaned his head back and laughed, loudly. "Driving through town is impossible. If I take you to your friend's, we'll first have to drive out of town and around it. That would take an hour. If you go by trolley, you'll be there in fifteen minutes."

The building of roads appears particularly symbolic of the "capitalization" process East Germans are currently experiencing. The roads bring with them goods, which have flooded east German stores, replacing regionally produced products. The roads bring investors, buying and liquidating economically inviable and often ecologically damaging eastern industry. Labor, left without employment, heads west along the new connecting routes. Roads facilitate the operation of an already fast-paced market economy. They shrink space for citizens whose travels rarely left the GDR. While the motorized market economy stands triumphant in the West, its success in rebuilding the east is coming increasingly into question.

In the fall of 1993, only 67 percent of east German working-able men held jobs, and only one-third of the women. Two-thirds of all industrial jobs have been lost (Der Spiegel Sep 27, 1993).
contrast, in the former GDR, national employment stood at about 98 percent. The western economic recession has strangled hopes of employing the east German work force through newly created industry. Western investors interested in the east European labor market find cheaper wages beyond the border of Germany. For the cost of an east German, 6 Hungarians can be hired, 8 Czechs, 10 Poles, 20 Bulgarians, and close to 30 Russians (ibid). The exceedingly messy bureaucratic process of handling property claims in eastern Germany has also inhibited investment in the Neue Länder.

Claims for confiscated or nationalized property are being made mostly by westerners (The Economist July 11, 1992). One million two-hundred thousand people are laying claims to 2.6 million titles. Checking one claim takes at least six months. Only 22 percent of all claims have been settled. In Halle only 6 percent of the claimed property has been privatized. Officials at the Office for the Regulation of Property Questions admit it will take at least another ten years to close the files. This delay represents a lot of missed investment opportunities (The Economist Sep 4, 1993).

Yet even in cases where the Treuhand (Trusteeship Authority62), whose task it has been to privatize or liquidize eastern industries, has decided in favor of western firms investing in (usually buying up), eastern industry, eastern jobs are often sacrificed. For instance, the Treuhand recently decided that a proposal made by an individual to privatize a potash mine in Bischofferode was "too risky". Instead the fusion of the mine with a western German company, the BASF conglomerate, was considered economically more sound. Yet, fusion plans called for the closing of the Bischofferode mine. In July of 1993, workers desperate to save their jobs went on a hunger strike (The Week in Germany July 23, 1993). A local politician of Bischofferode, Wolfgang Thierse, reflects upon the despair as jobs vanish without much hope for replacement: "They want to take away our home, by changing everything" (Der Spiegel Aug 23, 1993). Already by February 1991, hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated in mass rallies in several eastern German cities, protesting job losses, as well

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62 The Trusteeship Authority was created by the Federal government for the purpose of privatizing, financially rehabilitating, or liquidating the enterprises in eastern Germany (Der Spiegel Feb 1991, pp. 108-117).
as the Treuhand’s privatization strategy. A trade union chairman spoke to a crowd of 100,000 people in the town of Erfurt:

If sacrifices have to be made, then more should be required of the rich than the poor. A frontier of poverty should not grow up where there used to be barbed wire. (Berlin Deutschlandsender Network Feb 27, 1991)

In Dresden, a local government representative offered little hope for improvement.

Things are bound to get worse. Western German companies simply see Dresden as an additional market in which to sell their products. They will not invest: they are waiting until all the firms go bankrupt so they can get them for nothing. (Local politician in Dresden, Jürgen Löffler, Tony Paterson, "Ghosts from Germany’s Past Gatecrash the New Year party", The European January 4-6, 1991, pg. 5)

Since 1989, 80,000 coal miners have lost their jobs. In the textile and clothing industry, only 9 percent of the 300,000 employed still have work. President of the German Institute for Economic Research, Lutz Hoffmann, states that "at this time, eastern Germany is structurally at the niveau of countries like Tunisia, Honduras or Sri Lanka" (Der Spiegel Aug 23, 1993).

These severe unemployment conditions stand in stark contrast to the myriad of new stores and western products flooding the eastern states. In January 1991, the Federal Bureau of Statistics recorded a tremendous increase in the flow of goods from western Germany to the former GDR. Between January 1990 and January 1991, goods valued at DM 2.457 billion were shipped to the eastern part of the country, representing an increase of DM 1.845 billion or 301 percent (The Week in Germany March 29, 1991, pg. 5). In contrast, western German stores stock very few east German goods. In food stores, eastern German products made up only slightly more than one percent of total western German sales. In non-food stores, the proportion was even lower (The Week in Germany Feb 12, 1993, pg. 5). Faced with the prospect of no work, but an ever growing supply of western goods, one woman of the Bischofferode community exclaims:

We can't just be consumers. That just can't be, that we are no longer producers, that support ourselves. (Der Spiegel Aug 23, 1993)

Linked to these economic struggles are issues of resource use and environmental deterioration.

The potash, coal, and chemical industries were among the most environmentally destructive. Within a
market economy they are economically not viable. Thus, closing these plants, though economically induced and disastrous for employment (since alternative industrial activity is scant), is also an ecological imperative.

On July 1, 1990, the new states of the former GDR became subject to environmental laws comparable to those existing in the FRG (Hamburg DPA Apr 28, 1990). Yet as has been mentioned, many of these regulations have been bent in order not to inhibit economic investments. So, at a time when radically innovative new laws are necessary to handle the unprecedented process of ecological cum economic restructuring in eastern Germany, economic hardship has been used as a reason to lighten up on the environmental mandate.

For instance, in a letter to Tyll Necker, the chief of the Federal Association of Germany Industry (BDI), Chancellor Helmut Kohl assured German businesses that his administration would undertake nothing that would hinder the competitiveness of the German economy. Specifically he spoke of the burden on business incurred by taxes and environmental regulations. "A national carbon-dioxide tax is no longer envisioned" (Der Spiegel Sep 6, 1993). So, while the eastern industrial sector is being destroyed for its economic and environmental infeasibility, western businesses are enjoying looser environmental regulations.

Increasingly easterners view these decisions concerning resource use and environmental protection, as benefiting the west, while offering little solace to the east. Western investment has yet to substitute the jobs liquidated with other, less ecologically damaging prospects. Westerners, filing claims to land either confiscated from generations earlier, or left behind by them, uproot patterns of land use established for 40 years, as well as the people living or working on this land. Thus, it appears to some that the roads being built for the sake of expediting economic growth are only draining labor, flooding communities with non-local products, and are additionally ecologically questionable. How are specific localities in eastern Germany handling these conflicts over resource use? In what ways are local environmental politics unfolding? How does the geography of a locality impact on the environmental action and legislation taken place?
Berlin

Berlin, as the GDRs capital city, was also its largest metropolitan area with a population of 1,260,900 (3,921 per square kilometer). It produced 5.6 percent of the GDRs Gross Domestic Product. Forty percent of its industrial workers were employed in electrical engineering and electronics (GDR Academy of Science 1989). Although housing conditions continuously declined, and of course, heat was based on brown coal, East Berlin citizens were relatively sheltered from the severe environmental pollution of the south. The environmental activists in Berlin focused predominantly on the political implications of the ecological damage evident elsewhere in the country. When discussions turned local, they naturally turned to the politics of urban ecology and urban planning.

New economic and political forces constructing an urban ecology

With the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the city's real estate market experienced a veritable gold rush. Those who own property can demand prices previously unheard of (Frankfurter Allgemeine Jun 21, 1991). Private competition in the East Berlin real estate market is fierce. The historically renowned Potsdamer Platz, which was located in the death strip of the Berlin Wall and therefore inaccessible for 40 years, has been sold off to Sony and Daimler-Benz. In the Friedrichstrasse, more than 2 million square meters are being built and planned upon. Hans Stimmann, the city's chief of construction has said that "by 2010, we will need at least an additional 11 million square meters of office space" (Wirtschaftswoche Jul 5 1991, pp. 16-24, author's translation). During its most recent construction boom, even Frankfurt created barely 100,000 meters square of new office space annually (Die Zeit Jan 8, 1993). Unlike Paris and New York, Berlin has space. Berlin's streets and pavements are among the world's widest. Of the city's 884 square kilometers, a third is woods, parks, gardens, farm plots or water. Only one quarter is housing space (The Economist Nov 9, 1991, pp. 19-21).
Berlin’s prominence in the national and international economic market has had repercussions throughout Germany. According to Thomas Vajna of the German Economic Institute in Cologne:

All of Germany has become a better location because of a strong Berlin. Investors who otherwise would not have located within our borders will now come here. (*Wirtschaftswoche* Jul 15, 1991, pp. 16-24, author’s translation)

Berlin’s rise has also brought some fear that cities such as Hamburg, Frankfurt, and Munich, will become second rate. Certainly the move of the national capital from Bonn to Berlin has meant the loss to Bonn of many economic and lobbying organizations. For example, the Central Association of the Electrical and Electronic Industry, the head office of the German Construction Industry, lobbies such as the German Industry and Commerce Congress, Aids Foundation, Sugar Industry Association have all moved to Berlin (*Wirtschaftswoche* Jul 5 1991, pp. 16-24).

Although these industries and organizations represent considerable economic clout, the move of their headquarters to Berlin does not translate into more jobs for the capital. In fact, in 1991, Berlin lost an estimated half a million jobs. Hardest hit by this loss was the eastern part of the city (ibid).

Berlin’s Senate Committee for Transportation and Business has estimated that by 2010 the population of Berlin will grow from 4.3 million to 4.9 million (*Senatsverwaltung für Verkehr und Betriebe* 1992, pg. 10). With it, the number of private cars will increase from 1.3 to 2.1 million. Economic and service support traffic will at least double. Thus, plans are quickly being developed to create an effective transportation network which is made up of efficient roads, attractive mass transportation, well-managed parking opportunities, and a strengthening of park and ride services (ibid). While mass transportation is promoted as important to the new infrastructure, a sophisticated road network is recognized as essential for the new economic and governmental responsibilities of the city. Herwig Haase, the Senator for Transportation and Business, commented recently that without an intricate road system "the future economic metropolis of Berlin is not even imaginable" (*Herwig Haase* 1992, pg. 3).

Haase argues that since 15 percent of yearly car travel was supported by the highways of Berlin, and they only account for 1.2 percent of total street length, more highways are needed. In addition,
the present traffic patterns show heavy concentrations on the radial roads of Berlin, causing traffic to flow through the center of town. Thus the construction of a "ring" or beltway as well as tangential connections are seen as prerequisites to solving the capital's transportation problems.

In order to determine which variations of possible road routes are the most feasible, a model has been created whereby the predicted transportation level for the year 2010 is used to compare which road would best diminish the flow of traffic on the inner streets of the city. In compliance with Article 15 of the environmental law mandating environmental tolerance tests, road variations are also assessed according to environmental vulnerability. According to a 1992 report of the Senate Committee for Transportation and Business (Senatsverwaltung für Verkehr und Betriebe 1992, pg. 15), this measure is based on an assessment of landscape potential, living space, leisure space, soil, climate, water, and bio-ecology in order to determine ecologically vulnerable areas. Results from this analysis are then overlapped on a map indicating the surface area requirements, noise and pollution emissions, and landscape partitioning effects of the routes under consideration (ibid, pg. 17). In the report, it is recognized that this model was built without much information about eastern Berlin, since reliable data about the development of living areas, work places, and other surface areas are not yet available (ibid). This omission leaves East Berlin open, essentially as uncharted territory, malleable according to patterns dominating in the western part of the city. Thus, road construction (based on west Berlin conditions) will determine the environmental, residential, and business patterns developing in eastern Berlin, instead of vice-versa.

According to the city's Mayor, Eberhard Diepgen, Berlin is often looked to as a smaller version of how the unification process will run throughout Germany (Die Zeit Oct 8, 1993, pg. 3). Yet if the above mentioned omission is any indication of how decisions concerning the economic and ecological reconstruction of the east are being determined by the economic, political, and cultural forces guiding economic development in the west, then regionally specific development may be difficult to achieve in the new eastern states. Pessimistic about the development occurring in Berlin, Ingrid Stahmer, a Berlin senator, warns that while the capital city may prove a model for the success
of unification, it is more likely to represent a hardship case of German unification (ibid).

Environmentalists’ vision for the construction of an urban ecology

While in 1989, 66 environmental groups had formed throughout the GDR, now 35 environmental organizations exist in east Berlin alone (Umwelt und Naturschutz und Okologie 1992). Evoking the strength of east German social activism, Berlin’s environmentalists have echoed the popular weekend retreat of pre-unification days called Mobil ohne Auto (mobility without a car), with the slogan Auto oder Mobil (mobility or the car). The German Association for Environment and Nature Protection (BUND), vocal in issues of transportation, focuses its arguments against urban reconstruction based on the car by pointing out the likely destruction of Berlin’s living space (BUND 1992).

The BUNDs activists argue that with the opening of the Berlin wall a catastrophic traffic situation has been created, which has existed in the West for decades. "Auto-mobility", though highly praised, has culminated in nothing but "traffic jams and absurdity." Deforestation and vegetation damage in Berlin is already severe—69 percent of west Berlin’s trees are visibly sick, 85 percent of the east’s. Increased automobile emissions can only make this situation worse (ibid, pg. 2). These environmentalists call for an ecological restructuring of the city, based on a step-by-step reduction of car use. This concept is captured in the term "traffic ecology" (ibid, pg. 3).

The BUND quotes a 1991 survey conducted by the Federal Environmental Ministry, which indicates that 72 percent of those polled are in favor of a speed limit on highways. Furthermore, 73 percent of the westerners and 84 percent of the easterners polled are in favor of a car-free city center (ibid, pg. 2). Although Berlin, due to existing rail lines and broad streets, has a lot of potential to restructure alternative means of transportation effectively, i.e., the rail network, pedestrian and bike paths, mass transport, priority has undoubtedly gone to the construction of roads. For example, 130 street connections were established over the former border before the first S-bahn (intra-city train) deficiency (between Potsdam and Wannsee) was eliminated. In 1991 more money was invested in
street construction than in mass transport construction. In fact, the Berlin Senate was obligated to return 25 million DM to Bonn, because the construction for a planned S-Bahn route was not even begun in 1991 (ibid). A myriad of groups have formed, such as the "Forum for Traffic Ecology" in order to challenge politicians and planners to construct environmentally sensitive means for transportation, and to reduce the environmental damage produced by cars (ibid).

The arguments of the BUND as well as the Berlin branch of the Grüne Liga are many (ibid; Grüne Liga 1992b). Traffic accident statistics are quoted to reflect the literal sacrifice of life and limb made by Berlin's inhabitants. In 1991, the number of traffic accidents in eastern Berlin doubled from 1990. The total reached 157,823. The number of people injured was 19,892; the number who died, 198 (BUND 1992, pg. 6). Despite the fact that high speed was cited as the primary cause of these accidents, on many east Berlin streets driving at 50 km/hr is still allowed. The fact that the Berlin Senate Transportation Authority has lifted the 30 km/hr speed limit on 41 streets is viewed as irresponsible and negligent. The BUND calls for 30 km/hour speed limit for all Berlin city streets (ibid).

The BUND also focuses on the street level pollution produced by cars, particularly cars idling in traffic. According to their statistics based on a "study of the ecological tolerance of the Berlin city center to emissions of motor-vehicles", in approximately 70 percent of Berlin's major streets the European Community's cut off for nitrogen oxide emissions is surpassed. Catalytic converters offer little relief since they are only effective once the motor has reached a certain temperature, usually obtained after travelling four kilometers. Fifty percent of all car trips are less than 5 kilometers. In addition, catalytic converters do nothing to restrict the emission of CO₂ (BUND 1992, pp. 7-10).

The noise produced by automobile traffic is also considered a significant health hazard for those living in the city. Noise robs people of their sleep, is considered a cause of high blood pressure, and disturbs a sense of peace. The Federal Health Agency reports that when a person is consistently exposed to noise levels of 70 decibels, the risk of heart attack increases 20 percent. According to the BUND, 95 percent of Berlin's cities surpass daytime decibel readings of 65 (ibid, pg. 11).
The BUND and Grüne Liga environmentalists also quote figures indicating that the surface area required by automobiles is ten times greater than that for mass transportation. Since streets are no longer safe social spaces, those hardest hit by this dominance of the automobile are those less mobile by car, i.e., children and the elderly (ibid; Grüne Liga 1992b).

Finally, the BUND claims that traffic problems are not solved by the construction of more roads. Road construction tends to lag behind the growth in traffic, therefore the incidence of traffic jams seldom decreases and usually increases (Greenpeace 1992). It is argued that the "beltways" proposed by the Senate for Transportation and Business, will facilitate traveling by car, and therefore pull traffic to the city rather than relieve the city of traffic. "Those who build more roads, want to reap more traffic" (BUND Aug 1992, pg. 3, author's translation).

Environmentalists propose the reconstruction of Berlin based on transportation networks suitable for human beings and the environment (BUND Aug 1992; Grüne Liga 1992b; Unabhängiges Institut für Umweltfragen 1992). They define an attractive city as one which is livable. Livability will improve as car traffic is diminished. In order to minimize reliance on the automobile, they propose the decentralization of Berlin through polycentral city structures, and polycenter regions in the surrounding areas. The BUND envisions intermixed living places with work places, services, and places to relax. Most everyday necessities could be satisfied by foot. Rental prices would have to be protected in order to avoid the typical segregation of a city into financial districts, shopping malls, and living spaces connected through road ways necessitating the use of a private vehicle (BUND 1992, pp. 26-30). In addition, the BUND and the Grüne Liga propose laws be created which would prevent the building of big shopping centers outside the city lines (BUND Aug 1992; Grüne Liga 1992b). People living in the suburbs should also be able to conduct everyday activities within their living area, without having to hop in the car. New living spaces should be established in walking distance of train connections, so as to minimize car use for travel into the city (ibid).

Generally, these activists wish to revive the street as a living space by encouraging pedestrian and bike traffic, wide sidewalks, bike paths, 30 km/h speed limits for cars, and the restriction of truck
travel. In so doing, they harken back to arguments made against the automobile as Germany was first becoming motorized. For traffic pertaining specifically to the economic activities of the city, they suggest the transference of much of these activities to "goods street-cars" for which bigger firms and shopping areas could get their own end-of-the-line rail. Finally, the price of goods transported by truck or car, should include a cost reflecting the environmental damage incurred through such transportation (BUND Aug 1992). It is argued that the integration and harmonization (a choice of words reflecting the language of ecology) of a city's various functions are being destroyed through present transportation trends. If changes are not made, this process will exclude dimensions of nature important to human health and the psyche. Without these, the livability of a place is ruined (ibid).

In 1992, the discussion of the reconstruction of Berlin's transportation network was active, and included members from citizens' initiatives, planners, economists, and politicians. Several workshops have been held as open forums in which to present arguments and ideas. (i.e., the Berliner Verkehrs Werkstatt, June 12, 1992). As a result, the suggestion that speed limits on Berlin streets be 30 km/hr has produced compromises on the part of planners. The speed limits on certain routes have decreased (IVZ Berlin 1992). While activism has increased the visibility of ecological issues in east Berlin, the ability of social activism to affect change appears quite limited due to the fact that the powerful economic and political forces transforming Berlin are located in national and international communities who have a vested interest in seeing Berlin become a "modern" world metropolis.

Nonetheless, the pressure to make reference to environmental issues in planning measures is quite evident. Politicians, economists and planners are attempting to incorporate environmental concerns into their plans to improve the stature of Berlin (Senatsverwaltung für Verkehr und Betriebe Oct 9, 1992; Senatsverwaltung für Verkehr und Betriebe December 1992; Senatsverwaltung für Verkehr June 1992). Yet, the primary purpose of any transportation route they envision is the facilitation of the city's economic and political functions. These include the activities of Berlin's inhabitants to the extent that they support the political and economic operation of Berlin. Law requires that environmental issues be taken into consideration, as for instance in the model I mentioned above.
However, without adequate data, this model does a poor job of planning an environmentally sensitive urban structure, particularly in east Berlin.

The environmentalist groups mentioned, i.e., the BUND, Grüne Liga, as well as the Unabhängiges Institut für Umweltfragen (Independent Institute for Environmental Issues) have focused on the livability of Berlin for the city’s residents. While planners and developers may view Berlin’s residents as a supporting cast for the major actors, namely international political and economic powers, environmentalists view the latter as the support for the former. They argue that, if the residents live in a city conducive to providing sane, peaceful, and clean spaces—including streets—then they will work effectively and efficiently. A sound, integrated city-nature relationship must be developed first, if the city is to have a sound political-economy.

In what way may these arguments reflect those of pre-1989 activists? Unfortunately, the extent of my data is not great enough to adequately address this question. From my interviews with activists working for the BUND and the Grüne Liga I learned that current volunteers are quite new to social activism. This is in fact not a phenomenon particular to Berlin, but is evident in the leading grass roots environmental groups of Leipzig and Halle also. Some activists are students who view their work as an internship. Others have been newly employed through the federal temporary job creation program (ABM).

When asked about their, or their organization’s, connections to pre-1989 activists, answers varied. Most spoke of the inspiration the former activism gave them, but mentioned how different current conditions were from those of the past.

Every so often, we get in touch with one of the well known activists from before the Wende to give a talk or to offer advice about making connections with other groups, but things are so different now. Now we need to know how to get the attention of the papers, how to get money and expertise from the wessies, how to find the resources to keep our offices staffed and functioning. (personal interview with anonymous worker for the Berlin office of the Grüne Liga 1992, author’s translation)

Several of my interviewees viewed the organization of workshops, where experts from a variety of areas, i.e., planners, administrators, politicians and activists, can present their point of view about
transportation developments in Berlin, as a critical component of their work. This may reflect the eagerness of east German activists to access previously unattainable information by collaborating with established professionals in all areas as was mentioned in Chapter 5.

**Leipzig**

With a population of 552,000 Leipzig is the second largest city in eastern Germany. It was internationally known for its trade fairs, and as a headquarters for 37 of the GDRs 78 publishing houses. The Karl-Marx University, the country's largest, is also located there. Twenty percent of the lignite and 35 percent of the coal briquettes produced in the GDR come from mining areas south of Leipzig. Ninety percent of all coal-based chemical products were produced in the county of Leipzig. Major enterprises in the field of mechanical engineering and industrial plant included the TAKRAF combine in Leipzig, manufacturers of rail-mounted and mobile slewing cranes, the Leipzig Grimma chemical plant manufacturers, and the Hartha Elektromotorenwerk, which produced electric motors. The county of Leipzig produced 7 percent of the country's agricultural produce, concentrating on wheat, sugar beet, potatoes, and milk (Burant 1987, pp. 234-250).

The pollution levels in Leipzig were severe. As the center of the GDRs coal and energy producing region, it suffered the highest level of sulfur dioxide concentrations in East Germany. While recent estimates report that 54 percent of East Germany's forests have suffered ill-effects from pollution, 75 percent of Leipzig's forest cover is damaged. This is the highest percentage of any region in eastern Germany (Umweltbericht der DDR 1990). The expansion of strip, coal mining has had devastating effects on the region surrounding the city of Leipzig. Villages have disappeared, ground water has been contaminated and effectively drained.
New economic and political forces reconstructing Leipzig

Approaching Leipzig by car or rail, the influences of the international market become visible about eight kilometers from the city’s border. Car dealerships line the roads. Suzuki and Mazda showcase their cars next to newly built, neon gas stations. The surrounding meadows are lost from view as a line of construction signs announce the coming attractions of more automobile dealerships, shopping centers, and garden centers. Closer to the city line are hastily constructed warehouses, sheds, and salesrooms (Die Zeit Jan 29).

Germany’s largest shopping center, the Saale-Park, has been built just beyond the city’s borders. Flocking to the 160,000 square meters of retail space are 60,000 consumers daily, in 20,000 cars. Per year, 8 million DM are spent at this mall, representing 8 million DM not spent downtown. The Saale-Park’s smaller counterpart, Sachsen-Park, is also thriving, while thirty more malls encircling the city are either being built or on the drawing boards (Die Zeit Jan 29, 1993, pp. 5-7; Leipziger Blätter Fall 1992, pp. 40-41). Why so many?

Unlike in west Germany, where city limits tend to enclose large metropolitan areas, east German cities are fairly condensed and surrounded by small independent communities. Leipzig’s regulations for urban planning, therefore, do not apply to its outlying communities. I learned from my interview with Giesela Kallenbach, a former activist and present administrator of environmental planning with the city of Leipzig, that the mayors of these surrounding areas, also struggling to attract investors and potential jobs, made deals with western investors immediately before unification, in order to avoid the Federal Republic’s planning laws. Kallenbach informed me that in the case of Saale-Park, contracts were finalized one day before unification.

Unfortunately, the building of shopping centers outside of the city is not only affecting downtown retailers, but is also encouraging the use of private automobiles. Leipzig, a city which has historically maintained a tight structure in which living, work, recreation and shopping areas were in close proximity, is being decentralized (Die Zeit Jan 29, 1993, pp. 5-7; Leipziger Blätter Fall 1992, pp. 40-
Thus, associated with the symbol of consumerism—the mall, is the car—a symbol of wealth. The director of the Saale-Park mall states:

Of course, the shopping center is designed so that the customer must come by car. That is one of our advantages over shopping centers in the center city and it should remain that way. (Hans-Joachim Geissler 1992, quoted in "Stadt und Umland", Leipziger Blätter, pg. 40)

Leipzig’s city center is also transforming. Nylon netting, indicating the reconstruction of facades underneath, hangs down from most buildings: the new City Hall, the steeple of the Thomas church, the train station. Leipzig is hardly recognizable from 1989 (Die Zeit Jan 29, 1993; Regierungspräsidium Leipzig 1991). Soon after the Wende, in June 1990, 30 well know architects, city planers, and historians came from both parts of Germany to develop plans for a responsible rebuilding of this city which suffered relatively little damage from World War II. The June conference was the follow-up of a two-day session held in January of that year, during which architects, artists, and citizens insisted that significant historic preservation be pursued so that old buildings would not simply be torn down. Since, for example, 30,000 of the city’s 253,000 apartments are unusable, the inclination to tear down is strong (Der Spiegel Sep 27 1993, pp. 42-58).

Sixty citizens’ organizations (Lebensraum 1992, pg. 21) have formed in Leipzig to influence the rebuilding of their city. In 1992, they published two glossy pamphlets containing descriptions of their activities and articles written by their members. These pamphlets entitled, "Citizens shape their city: Organizations and citizens’ initiatives introduce themselves" and "A space for living: Ecological city development--A chance for Leipzig" (author’s translation), reflect activists’ attitude that they can make a difference in the processes of urban development.

Fortunately, activists also have a sympathetic city planner on their side: the west German, Niels Gormsen, the advisor for city development and planning. His form of planning--workshops attended by architects, city planners, politicians, citizens, and investors--mirrors the structure of a round table discussion (Die Zeit Jan 29, 1993). While trying to spare Leipzig the experience of west German cities, Gormsen works against the fast pace of the investment market, and with limited resources. His staff is overworked. Most of his co-workers are still unfamiliar with the new planning regulations,
while several have left city planning to make it on their own as architects and independent consultants (ibid).

Privatization of property and subsequent influx of western investment has caused land values to sky-rocket. Office space in downtown Leipzig sells for more than in Hamburg and Düsseldorf (ibid). Juxtaposed to an effective unemployment rate of 30 to 45 percent, the gentrification of the city-center has many local residents concerned. Recently a 200 year old book store was replaced by Benetton.

Commenting on Leipzig's architecturally renowned shopping arcades, with stores now catering to the elite, one window shopper complained:

These arcades used to be accessible to everyone. Certainly there wasn't much to buy. But now, with the new stores, the shopping arcade is a tabu place for me. I can't pay their prices. (ibid)

Niels Gormsen fears that if the thirty shopping malls planned are actually built, then downtown Leipzig is likely to become a Frankfurt-style financial district, void of the everyday routines of urban living (ibid).

Environmentalists active in the reconstruction of Leipzig

A dynamic world needs a sensitive nervous system at the grass roots. (Trümpler 1992, a member of the Organization for Ecological Building in Leipzig)

Since 1989, Leipzig has not only been recognized for its trade fairs, architectural richness, and publishing houses, but also for its social activists who played a leading role in the events of that year. Here, the word Bürgerbewegung (citizens' movement) evokes a sense of pride, of accomplishment, of importance. The mayor of Leipzig, Dr. Lehmann-Grube recently commented: "Leipzig has taken a firm position in the younger history of Germany. From this town came, in 1989, the turning point into a German and European future" (Lehmann-Grube 1991). Where are those activists now?

Several of the younger members, such as Roland Quester and Ralf Elsässer, have become central figures in the Ökolöwe, a prominent Leipzig environmental group organized within the national
umbrella association, *Grüne Liga*. Others, who were professionals before unification but pivotal to local environmentalism, have maintained their professional occupations, and remain members of the newly established environmental organizations\(^6\).  

Frau Gisela Kallenbach, active in the former church-based environmentalism of the GDR, is now an in-house expert for the city's Department of Environmental Protection and Recreation. She too is a member of the Ökolöwe, but admits that the stress and demands of working within the new political, administrative, and economic system leave her little time to be as active at the grassroots as she would like. While she ran for and was elected to the state Senate as a representative of the east German Green Party, she decided after a year not to run again. Her effectiveness appeared greater in administrative office, she said. Since another former environmentalist, and member of the Green Party now heads the city council, she feels that the political atmosphere in which she works is quite attuned to environmental issues.

She therefore argues that the fairly common accusation that the strength of pre-unification activism has splintered and dissipated is a myth. Although it is true that the number of people active in alternative social activist groups, such as the Ökolöwe, is relatively small, former activists are now practicing their convictions through their professions. Within the framework of Eyerman and Jamison, the ideas and concepts produced by activism are being incorporated into the mainstream.

Kallenbach holds much hope for the city of Leipzig. It is small enough, that people of like minds, having entered into various professional, administrative, and political positions, can tap into a supporting network to effect change. With respect to the building of roads, and their influence in changing the face of Leipzig, she comments:

> The assumption that modern economic activity requires that investors be brought from their door step to the next by their own automobile is an assumption of welfare which gains strength in political form. Therefore, the decision to build roads is practically impossible to fight since it is a political, subjective decision (Kallenbach Nov 1992, personal interview)

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\(^6\) For instance, Helmut Hartmann, M.D. is an honorary member of the Ökolöwe. Christoph Richter, M.D. is an honorary member of the Organization for Ecological Building in Leipzig (ibid).
In Leipzig, the construction of roads is a debated issue since it is intimately linked to the transformation of the city's structure. Environmentalists working with the Ökolöwe argue that the reconstruction of their city, with shopping malls on the fringes and financial offices downtown, is unnecessarily biased towards increasing the use of private vehicles, and away from improving the livability of the city (Ökolöwe 1992). Roads are being broadened and traffic is being organized to give vehicles right of way, thus slowing down modes of mass transportation. This encourages the use of cars, that bring fumes and noise into residential areas (ibid).

If in the former East Germany, environmentalists revealed that nature and human reality were dominated by the absurdities of political ideology, in post-unification eastern Germany, environmentalists argue nature and human reality are dominated by the absurdities of capitalist forces. In a pamphlet published by Leipzig environmentalists, the regional benefit of the massive importation of products across national boundaries is questioned if local producers, left uncompetitive in the new market, are stuck with their goods unsold. There is a sense that Leipzig is becoming a draw for investments simply because of its strategic location--its accessibility to eastern markets (Grüne Liga 1992a).

The speed at which capitalism and its supporting structures are taking hold has reinforced a negative image of the free-market to which every East German citizen was socialized. Despite this, Leipzig activists tend to embrace negotiations with local authorities to temper capitalism's social biases and failures. Many, in fact have taken public office since unification. There is a sense of optimism that the people of Leipzig can regain control over the rebuilding of their city. They have once again assumed the position, now legitimated through the ideals of democracy, that the management of nature should be a collective process. So, unlike their western counterparts who have struggled with their role in parliamentary politics, eastern activists, having pushed for plurality,

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64 See for example the publication Bürger Gestalten ihre Stadt: Vereine und Bürgerinitiativen stellen sich vor (Citizens shape their city: The citizens' initiatives introduce themselves), Wolf-Dieter Trümpler, Verein für ökologisches Bauen Leipzig e.V., Oct 1992.
engage the political sphere whole-heartedly.

This is not to say there isn't an awareness of the limits imposed on a functioning democracy by bureaucracy and powerful economic or political interests. In fact, given their experience of a socialist government in which economic decisions were necessarily political, these activists assume the collusion of politics with economics. Since the socio-political structures have been transferred wholesale from west Germany, it seems logical they would legitimize and support west German power interests—thereby limiting the emergence of power from east German localities. In Leipzig, it is hoped that this configuration of power can be challenged—as was the force of totalitarianism.

**Halle**

Halle is eastern Germany's fourth largest town with a population of 330,000. The chemical plants of Buna, Schkopau, Leuna, and Bitterfeld supported this region economically, producing 40 percent of the quota for GDR chemicals. They also produced tremendous levels of pollution. For instance, the aluminum plants of Bitterfeld emitted large quantities of organic sulfuric compounds, cyanide, mercury, and phenol into the Mulde River and consequently the Elbe which flows into the North Sea. Heavy metals from industrial sewage contaminate ground water and also agricultural land through irrigation (*Frankfurter Allgemeine* Sep 8, 1990, pp. 78). Life expectancy in the region of Halle was reported to be five years less than elsewhere in the country (Albrecht 1987). Approximately 30 percent of the children living in this area suffer respiratory illness. Workers have endured severe headaches, heart disease, and dizziness associated with exposure to sulfur dioxide (*Umweltbericht der DDR* 1990). A 28 year old school teacher remarked to me: "If the Wende hadn't come, we would have been poisoned to death."

**The impact of new economic and political forces on Halle**

Since unification, production in Sachsen-Anhalt (Saxony-Anhalt) has dropped off dramatically
(see Figure 14). Leuna, the area's biggest employer, has more than halved its workforce since 1990 (The Economist Aug 14, 1993). Since the Federal Government has decided to concentrate its funds for east German reconstruction in designated "growth centers" such as Leipzig, Berlin, and Dresden, Halle is left with considerably less federal help. Furthermore, Halle's tax base of DM 83 million annually, will barely put a dent in the DM 15 billion, which according the mayor, Klaus Rauen, will be needed over the next decade to repair streets, upgrade sewers, and modernize 11,000 uninhabitable apartments (ibid). The need for creative financing has led the mayor to radical measures of city government reform. For example, in an attempt to eliminate inefficient bureaucracy and to raise capital from the private sector he has solicited consultants from Price Waterhouse to transform the operation of several municipal services into private hands (ibid).

In addition, he has struggled to transform the media image of Sachsen-Anhalt, epitomized by pictures of Bitterfeld draped in an acrid smog with rancid sewage flowing into streets (ibid). Halle's planners have focused on two regional characteristics in their attempt to win over investors.

First, they argue that Sachsen-Anhalt has profited tremendously from the federal transportation projects of "German Unity". Four highways, five rail lines, the Elbe-Havel canal, and two airports are on the agenda. Thus, brochures for attracting investors emphasize Sachsen-Anhalt as the turn table between the East and West, the North and South (Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Technologie und Verkehr des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt 1991). Of course this slogan has become a mainstay phrase for most east German cities, not just Halle.

Secondly, planners stress that with the establishment of an economic market, the oldest and most environmentally damaging industries surrounding Halle were closed. What is coming apparent as the soot settles, is that this region is ecologically rich. The concentrated nature of East German towns produced concentrated levels of pollution, but left wide areas in the countryside undisturbed, at least by the built environment of human settlement (ibid). Halle is encircled by six nature and landscape protection areas, eighteen natural and historic preservation sites, and 10 protected parks. West of Halle is the largest contiguous reed marshlands, the Saale-Elster-Luppe Aue, in the state of Sachsen-
Figure 14: Production drop-off in Saxony-Anhalt
Source: The Economist, Aug 14, 1993. pg. 23
Anhalt which is home to 60 different bird species—an increasingly rare occurrence in central Europe (Stöck 1992). "It is an international airport for birds" said Andreas Listefrom the Arbeitskreis Hallesche Auenwälder (working group for Halle's meadow-forest land) (Hallesche Tageblatt Nov 5, 1992). Thus, the imagery used by planners in their brochures for Halle's economic reconstruction, is of "a phoenix rising from the ashes. From the light sand of the Saale to the high peaks of the Harz mountains spans an area replete with diverse landscapes" (Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Technologie und Verkehr des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt 1991, pp 8-9).

The natural beauty and cultural historical treasures of this area need only to be pulled out from the closet and polished a little. (ibid)

It is prophesied that by the year 2000, the area Halle/Bitterfeld/Merseburg will be a model for the economic and ecological renewal of eastern Europe. It is hoped that an ecologically sensitive "soft tourism" can be successfully promoted so that people would no longer think of this region as environmentally destroyed, but as a place to relax, unwind, ride horses, bike, and go hiking (ibid). In order to avoid the loss of any more green spaces to industry, environmentalists and planners alike suggest the building of new industries on sites of those shut down. The federal government is championed by Halle's mayor and planners as helping their tourist-based reconstruction by supporting the development of transportation networks (Stöck 1992).

Environmentalists and the politics of transportation

Environmentalists involved in preserving the meadow and marsh lands surrounding Halle do not necessarily disagree with the strategies of local planners. In fact they are in full support of environmental conservation for the sake of tourism. The pre-1989 experience of severe environmental pollution has made the prospect of financially beneficial nature preservation very attractive. What these environmentalists do object to is the speed at which infrastructural decisions are being made.

In the fall of 1992, the issue at hand was an InterCity Express (ICE) train route planned to
connect Erfurt in the west with Halle and then continue on to Leipzig. The location favored by the authorities cuts through the Saale-Elster-Luppe meadow and marshlands. Environmentalists argue this route will significantly damage the meadow in which birds flock to breed. Twelve environmental groups from Halle and the surrounding area gathered to inform the citizenry through brochures, handouts and workshops about the dangers of and alternatives to the proposed route (*Hallesche Tageblatt* Sep 5, 1992). Citizens were also asked to sign petitions against the ICE project.

"We know that we need to support transportation. And the rail is relatively more sensible than the autobahn," said Jörg Braeuer, from the Arbeitskreis Halleische Auen, e.V. (Study group on Halle's meadow-marsh land). "The problems with the rail line rest in its location" (ibid).

Five potential routes for the ICE connection between Erfurt and Leipzig were under consideration by the railway's planning committee. They were assessed according to their environmental tolerance, costs, length, and technical feasibility. Two of the five were chosen as the most favorable. One runs to the south between Weissenfels and Merseburg, parallel in parts to the highway A9, and through the brown coal district of Schkeuditz and Leipzig. The other passes north between Halle and Merseburg through the Saale-Elster meadow-marshlands. "You don't have to be an expert to know that the construction through the mining area is more costly than through the meadow," said Braeuer (ibid). The project manager, Wolfgang Watzlaw, agrees. "The northern route at approximately 4.4 billion DM costs considerably less, is quicker, and," he adds, "more ecologically sound." It is this latter point that has sparked debated.

Here we have a rare biotype, whose disturbance will have consequences for drinking water, animals, and plants. The railroad ordered an environmental tolerance study which is full of holes and bears witness to little scientific or regional knowledge. (Stöck 1992, author’s translation)

Stöck is suspicious that the decision to go with the northern route is based solely on costs, and that monetary constraints will lead to the sacrifice of a regionally unique ecosystem.

Criticisms about the ICE also pertain to the regional development of Sachsen-Anhalt. In order to build the InterCity Express, many of the rail lines connecting smaller towns within the region will be
abandoned. Thus, intraregional travel will be made more cumbersome, in order to facilitate fast, long
distance travel from west Germany through Halle and on to Leipzig. Train connections between
towns will become so convoluted that people will resort to using cars (Breuer, 1992). Although
authorities state that 10,000 jobs will be created through the construction of the ICE rail, my
interviewees point out that these jobs are only temporary and do not lend much to the long-term

Halle's mayor has stated his concern about the potential environmental damage produced by the
ICE. However, he is emphatic that Halle be on the rail line connecting Erfurt to Leipzig. If the
southern route were chosen, and Halle were left high and dry from this major connection then "that
would be economic suicide for the region" (Rauen in The Economist Aug 14, 1993). The Economic
Minister for Halle, Horst Rehberger, agrees, "the southern part of the country, with its cities of Halle
and Leipzig and a proposed airport, must be connected through modern train transportation"
(Halleshe Tageblatt Nov 20 1992).

With twenty-three newspaper articles in three of the local papers during one month,
environmentalists were pleased with the publicity of this issue (Thomas Kompa, personal interview,
1992). But they also recognized the fairly impenetrable wall they face in the
Verkehrswegebeschleunigungsgesetz. This federal law requires that decisions about the construction
of transportation routes be accelerated. It allows for objections to routes planned in eastern Germany
be voiced only to the highest authority, the Federal Administrative Court. Thomas Kompa of the
Naturschutzbund (Environmental protection organization) in Halle remarked on the barrier posed by
this law: "Before, we were running up against a brick wall. Now it is made of cotton, but equally as
dense." Others hold out some hope. "We will continue to defend ourselves, gather signatures, and
inform others. It just can't happen that the last piece of undisturbed natural landscape by Halle is
destroyed. We have to think of our children" (anonymous activist, Halleshe Tageblatt, Sep 9, 1992).
In November 1992, the plan to build the controversial route was finalized. Construction is to begin in
1994.
Conclusion

These three case studies of Berlin, Leipzig, and Halle focus on different issues of the natural environment and have diverse manifestations of what may be considered economically viable ecological restructuring. Yet the positions of environmentalists in these case studies were quite similar insofar as they were all concerned with preserving a local urban identity in the face of nation-wide transformation. Perhaps paradoxically, since we assume the natural environment to exist beyond the built environment, these environmentalists are arguing that one component of a viable, "livable" urban space is nature.

Berlin, as the capital of the former East Germany and now the federal government seat for the unified country, is a particular challenge for environmentalists who have emphasized the local above the international. The image that Berlin is to be a world metropolis overpowers activists concerns for a livable, harmonious city. Leipzig, the second largest city of eastern Germany, is located in the southern coal-mining district. While it too is being quickly subsumed by international market interests, its provincial character has allowed environmentally-concerned citizens to have more of a say in the reconstruction of their city. This is particularly true since many members of the strong, pre-1989 underground activism of Leipzig were professionals who have now entered administration, academia, and politics. Here they are able to effect change from within the system rather than from without. Leipzig is also renowned for its cultural heritage, an advantage in efforts to preserve its historical character and green spaces. Halle is the state capital of Sachsen-Anhalt. This region has suffered some of the most concentrated environmental pollution at the hands of the chemical industry of all the eastern German states. Interestingly, however, it also contains wide expanses of ecologically rich marshes, meadows, and mountains. Halle, not as cosmopolitan as either Leipzig or Berlin, is focusing both on ecological reconstruction and ecological preservation in its bid for a niche in the new market economy. Environmentalists agree with this strategy but debate the speed at which the market has forced infrastructural reform. They claim that hasty decisions about transportation
routes will incur irreversible damage to the surprisingly abundant ecological treasures of this area.

From these varied experiences and issues, a plethora of ideas, concepts, and strategies are emerging providing fertile soil for a reconceptualization as well as recontextualization of Nature as critical to the "rebirth" of east German cities, i.e., urban ecology, cultural ecology, ecological tourism. In the pre-1989 period of environmental activism, discussion focused on creating a healthier state-society relationship which would also necessitate a healthier nature-society. The basic critic coming from this activism was that the state had undermined its citizenry by refusing to allow for real and effective communication. Now, environmental activists are in the process of establishing communication links, and applying the information gained to specific issues. One component of this process is the active engagement with and participation in administrative, political, and economic activities.

This survey of three east German communities indicates that the politics of nature is changing dramatically as western economic and political interests influence the potential for regional development and environmental protection. Since the hoped for industrial upswing has not arrived in the east, high unemployment figures have lent to considerable bitterness on the part of eastern citizens. Attempts amongst environmentalists to preserve the cultural, intellectual, and environmental distinctiveness of particular communities are challenged by the fast-paced market, and supporting federal regulation. The result is an ideological struggle over the deterioration and preservation of natural environments through production processes. Once again, east Germans are faced with a system, operating within a logic which tends to run rough-shod over regionally specific development concerns and opportunities. As the west German-based development programs take hold at the local level in eastern Germany, environmentalists assert that wise urban planning must recognize that a close association exists between improved urban living and urban ecology.

Of the three case studies, Leipzig appears to be the best able to stave off non-local interests. Since unification, some of the former activists have taken leading positions in governmental and public administration. Some are also science experts, physicians, and educators. The close network
they needed to establish in the pre-unification days is now being tapped to keep former activists involved, as professionals, in the political decision-making process. This is a vital development through which the process of policy making and the social structures it forms are being recreated. Thus, the vitality, success, and determination of pre-unification activism, has provided a resource for maintaining a strong regional base as economic, political, and environmental transformation occurs.
Chapter 9

CONCLUSION

The geographical and historical narrative of this dissertation has emphasized the dialectic relationship that exists between societies and their material environments. One critical element undermining the former East German society, both politically and economically, was the increasingly severe deterioration of air, water, and land. The state of the environment became for many East Germans a blatant manifestation of distorted political power. Environmental destruction was apparent in the everyday lives of Germans across the GDR. It was evidenced by every breath of soot taken, by every fourth child born with respiratory illness, by every mother who struggled to find clean water for her children to drink, and by every man who lived five years less than the average East German. These experiences came to epitomize the dangerous environmental cum social consequences of a society-state relationship based in deceit and obfuscation. Ideological struggles over the meaning of nature emerged in the late 1970s and were articulated in the underground, church-based environmental activism of the 1980s. As these actions brought people to the streets, they quickly became political struggles over the poisoning of the natural environment through production processes.

The 1989/90 collapse of East Germany and the subsequent whirlwind as western political and economic institutions took hold changed not only the context but also the content of these struggles. While the democratization of the east German states has delivered many yearned for liberties such as the opening of information channels, the promise of communication, free elections, and travel opportunities, the rapid transition from a marxist to a market economy has left many without work. Since the current international economic climate has engendered conservative investments from western firms, the hoped for joint ventures between the west and east which would have offered capital for local, east German entrepreneurship, have not been abundant. Existing east German
industries, particularly the chemical and coal based firms, have been shut down because they can not
compete in the current market economy. New conditions have been set to which individuals are
responding in their attempt to gain both economic and environmental security. This dissertation
examines these processes as political struggles over nature.

Specifically, three goals have defined my research. First, I have aimed to document the evolution
of green activism in the former German Democratic Republic. While the West German Greens have
been widely studied, the fact that East German environmental activism even existed under totalitarian
rule, let alone, its influence on East German society is less known. Furthermore, in light of German
unification and given that the West German Green Party has carved out a space in which popular
approaches to environmental problems can gain political clout, the perspectives of eastern activism
may have significant impact on the greater German society. Thus, I have been interested in
understanding what approaches have taken shape through eastern environmentalism and what this
may mean for the dynamic environmental politics of united Germany.

Secondly, I have aimed to document and explicate the process through which material nature—for
instance the distribution and concentration of certain pollutants, and concepts of nature—for instance
the importance of nature in securing healthy social relations, have been derived from social
institutions and are being transformed as a new set of social structures takes hold in eastern Germany.
The reconstruction of eastern Germany, at the hands of a radical shift in social structures, offers an
unusual opportunity to further our understanding of the processes through which political, economic,
legal and cultural norms direct the patterning of nature in certain directions over others.

Thirdly, I have aimed to analyze the ways in which social activism is contributing to these
processes creating dimensions of Nature. While it is apparent that our social institutions, such as, for
example, the profit-based market economy in the West or the labor theory of value in the East,
significantly influence the way in which natural resources are valued, exploited, and conserved, my
goal in this dissertation has been to look to the less considered power of individuals, who in a
collective group, initiate one of the many dialectics through which social structures are transformed—
thereby also transforming nature.

My research has been informed by two bodies of literature: theories of collective action and of changing views toward nature. In the vast social movements literature of both geography and sociology, I have found most insightful the theoretical perspective which treats social movements as processes as opposed to organizations or particular special interest groups. This approach forgoes an analysis of a specific group's organization, successes or failures. Instead it focuses on the role of activism as an agent of social transformation. Alberto Melucci has argued that social activism reveals conflicts concerning the codes, knowledge, and language organizing our social relations. In a recently published book on the cognitive praxis of social movements, Eyerman and Jamison also focus on the dynamic role of social movements in shaping knowledge. Their suggestion that the praxis of social activism is conditioned by three structural components, namely political culture, shifts in economy, and societal modes of communication, links beautifully to my analysis in eastern Germany, since it is these which are dramatically transforming as the former GDR is incorporated into western Germany.

Relevant to this perspective of social activism is Allan Pred's argument that the intersection between local and non-local sources of power reveals struggles: struggles over social position, self-determination, and the production of place. These struggles, he argues, are critical to processes of regional and local transformation. I have hypothesized that at this intersection, so powerful in eastern Germany due to the immediate transferral of western structures, are also found struggles over nature--its meaning, valuation, and use in the production process.

I also draw upon the geographic debate in the Urban Social Movements literature concerning the differential power of structure and agency in shaping society. This framework enables my goal to ascertain the power of and constraints to individuals in transforming social structures and the Nature they produce.

Finally, I draw upon works theorizing processes changing views and images of nature. Under this heading fall such ecological histories as those of Carolyn Merchant (1983), Donald Worster (1977; 1993), and Anna Bramwell (1991). The discourse concerning the social construction of Nature serves
as an important geographic contribution to this literature. Geographers have provided critical landmarks in the evolution of this discourse. While these have focused predominantly on the role of social structures in producing nature, my goal has been to broaden this research by documenting the dialectic between both structure and agency in transforming nature. Informed by a study of social movements, I draw on Eyerman and Jamison to view social activism, and more specifically, environmentalism, as a process through which knowledge concerning society and nature is created. Not only does environmentalism tend to challenge prevailing uses of natural resources, thereby working to transform physical patterns of nature, but it also pushes prevailing ideas and images of the society-nature relationship into new directions. Both of these components contribute to what I understand as the social construction of Nature.

Through the research of this dissertation, I have sought to establish links between the nature-society and social movements literature. In the nature-society literature, ecological histories contribute to understanding the derivation of current patterns in resource use and prevailing ideas about nature. Linking this, with a perspective from the social movements literature that social activism is a process with a history conditioned by political culture, shifts in economy, and modes of communication, I have used environmental social activism as my point of entry into the environmental history of East Germany.

Secondly, utilizing the argument of sociologists Eyerman and Jamison, that social movements carve out a space through which new knowledges are produced, I have made a connection with the argument from the geographic literature that dimensions of nature are produced. If environmental movements produce new concepts about how resources should be exploited, about the organization of production, about the nature-society relationship, and these ideas contribute to the changing of structures, then social activism plays a significant role in the social production of Nature.

It is here that my research also relates the geographic discourse concerning structure-agency to that of the social construction of Nature. Typically, social structures are considered to be the major forces constructing Nature. I call on Anthony Giddens' notion of structuration, to consider the power
of collective action to recreate structures and therefore Nature.

How do these theoretical arguments and linkages between diverse literatures play out in this dissertation? Using the perspective that Nature is socially produced, Chapter 2 contains a historical analysis of the predominant structural forces of the GDRs society in order to trace how East Germany's socialist/totalitarian political-economy generated severe environmental and social degradation. In Chapter 3, I have utilized the methodology of Eyerman and Jamison, to describe the political alternative in eastern Germany as a process, and to consider the ideas, ideals, and conceptualizations of the state-society relationship which emerged from it. These two chapters together provide the necessary historical backdrop for a study of environmentalism which emerged from political activism in the GDR. The analysis of Chapter 4, which focuses on the ideas and activities of pre-1989 environmental activism, makes explicit the manner in which environmental activism placed a new emphasis on the role of nature in the building of a sound socialist state.

The dramatic transformation of social structures in eastern Germany, offers the opportunity to push the argument that Nature has been socially produced in a way previously not possible. If Nature--both conceptualizations of nature and material nature--is socially produced, then it must be changing tremendously under the upheaval of social contexts being experienced in the former GDR. In order to explore this hypothesis. I first look to conceptions of nature and of the nature-society relationship developed through green activism both in the Federal Republic of Germany and in the German Democratic Republic to see how different they truly are. Then, in the first few years of unification, how their respective set of ideas have been modified due to the changing social contexts.

In Chapter 5, I describe the social construction of Nature in West Germany as a point of comparison to the East German history presented in previous chapters. Both the material manifestations of pollution as well as the conceptual manifestation of ideas concerning the nature-society relationship are considered. The analysis points out that from the different political cultures of West and East Germany has emerged not only the expected divergence in the type of pollution produced, but also a less obvious difference in the understanding and criticism of the social-nature
relationship. In Chapter 6, I then go on to consider the new environmental activism emerging as East and West German Greens try to reconcile their differences within the new political and economic contexts of united Germany.

What is happening to the material and conceptual components of Nature in the former GDR, now that the social contexts have been dramatically transformed? In order to consider this question I focused, in Chapter 7, on the transformation of transportation systems in eastern Germany, and the social forces directing this transformation. Finally, in Chapter 8, three case studies are developed to provide a analysis of what is happening to Nature in specific communities of eastern Germany, and to consider the importance of tension between local and nonlocal sources of power in producing struggles over nature.

**Results**

Given my goals, and the theoretical perspectives I have used as tools for my analysis of environmental activism and politics in eastern Germany, what are the results of my research? It is in the empirical analyses of the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters that we can see the theoretical issues I have addressed and the implications of the historical analyses of Chapters 2 through 4 playing out.

The early chapters of this dissertation explore how dimensions of Nature in East Germany were materially and conceptually constructed through both social institutions and social structures. Interestingly, the analysis of East German structural institutions indicates that while it is true that the labor theory of value, as a critical element of socialist economic theory, encouraged the inefficient use of primary, raw materials, it actually directed resource efficiency toward secondary materials. The industry and household-wide recycling of secondary materials far exceeded such measures in western countries. Since, in a socialist-marxist economy, materials only gain value once labor has worked them, secondary materials had a tangible economic value (price) which primary materials didn’t have.
Thus, resource efficiency, geared toward conserving those materials with value, focused on the re-use of secondary materials such as metals, glass, and paper, rather than the conservative use of primary resources such as coal, labor, and wood. Thus, resource efficiency did occur in eastern Germany, just not in the location westerners normally tend to look.

In this dissertation I have demonstrated through an analysis of the two contrasting political economies in East and West Germany, that conceptualizations of nature and images of the nature-society relationship articulated through environmental activism were quite distinct. This lends credence to the argument that our ideas about nature and how we should interact with nature are socially constructed. While both West and East German environmentalists targeted environmental crises to be associated with an abuse of state power, the analysis of East German social activism indicates that in the East, this abuse was viewed as a function of the party's contrived "scientific" legitimation as the sole executor of the laws of history. The party had become a massive bureaucracy, functioning solely to keep itself afloat, rather than to further the socialist ideal. In so doing, it avoided monitoring adherence to environmental regulations which would diminish economic output, so critical to maintaining the state's legitimacy. It banned the publication of environmental data that revealed the severe pollution evident in much of southern Germany.

From a reading of Chapters 3 and 4, it is evident that Eastern political and environmental activists, who experienced the vast control of this bureaucracy in their everyday lives, articulated an ideal about the state-society relationship based on respect, trust, and open communication. They envisioned dialogue between people of all walks of life who would have an equal opportunity to organize and express their preferences to others and to the government. The state, they felt, should act as arbitrator of these discussions and of any conflicts which arise between interest groups. While the alternative political discussion centered on the argument that a sound state-society relationship required an open, democratic socialism, environmentalists highlighted the importance of a sound nature-society relationship to the realization of an ecologically, culturally, and economically viable society. Both the political and environmental activism, influenced by their location within the church,
came to focus on the role of the individual in contributing to society and public decision-making in a responsible and conscientious manner. This required not only self-respect, but also a respect of all people, such that everyone, no matter his or her view, could contribute to the decision-making process.

These ideals became most clearly manifest in two locations. The first was in the round table discussions that emerged both nationally and locally immediately after the Berlin Wall came down in November 1989. The aim of these round table meetings was to create a forum, where representatives from various groups had an equal voice in deciding the future course of the country. The second was in the reorganization of eastern German environmentalism after 1989. Able and needing to develop new strategies for expressing their concerns about resource use in a now rapidly changing eastern Germany, environmentalists gravitated to and sought out the exchange of information between people from all areas of expertise such that open discussions and effective problem solving be encouraged. Eastern political and environmental activists have carefully avoided claiming to have a vision. They support a multiplicity of viewpoints by establishing communication and cooperation between grassroots groups, researchers, administrators, and legislators. They seek as much information as possible as a means to empower citizens.

In the western experience, the abuse of state power is regarded by environmentalists as being derived from the collusion of power amongst strong economic and political interests. Through this collusion an inherently undemocratic approach to policy making is created. Western activists derived from their experience a leftist vision of an ideal "ecological" society where class and political hierarchy are eliminated. They have been very cynical of any hope that a true pluralist society with a strong federal government can exist. They avoid cooperation with conventional scientists and politicians, for it is exactly they who have played a pivotal role in creating an ecologically unsustainable society.

In the post-1989 period, then, while eastern environmentalists have actively sought to tap the previously hidden knowledge of officials and scientists as a means of empowering citizens, western
environmentalists have shunned members of the official bureaucracy, whose very existence, in their experience disempowers citizens. In the spirit of social solidarity, easterners have defined participatory democracy as cooperation between all groups. Westerners, have seen as a prerequisite to participatory democracy the emasculation of traditional politicians and technocrats.

The severity of east German environmental deterioration and social oppression has brought easterners to look favorably to technology as a means through which to improve their welfare. They are oriented toward the practical necessity of uncovering the severe damage done to the environment by the regime of the Socialist Unity Party. Radical western Greens tend to be quite cynical about technological promise, as they see the sophistication of technology as furthering the aims of the politically and economically powerful.

Through my research, I have found a critical component contextualizing such differences between East and West German environmentalists to be the way in which the historical legacy of fascism was translated in post-war East and West Germany. West German activism has been strongly influenced by a despair over the atrocities of the two World Wars. Activists have struggled with the tendency of Germans to feel comfortable in a structured, authoritarian society. They have made overt efforts to avoid the concentration of political and economic power by emphasizing anti-authoritarian, non-hierarchical, decentralized structures both in their own organization and in their visions of the "ecological society".

In East Germany, however, despair associated with Germany's fascist legacy has had little influence on alternative social activism. This may be attributed to the fact that East Germans were socialized to believe that their country had succeeded in eradicating fascism through the victory of socialism. Philosophical debates amongst activists focused, therefore, less on the tendency of German society toward monopolistic structures, and more on the achievement of true socialism through democratic reform. They viewed the realization of true socialism to be hindered not by an inherently German characteristic but by a Soviet one, namely Stalinism. Their efforts have been very practical, and translate political responsibility into open dialogue. These differences between the ideals and
ideas stemming from East and West German environmentalism were so serious that the two respective Green parties of the West and East could not find common ground on which to unite in the 1990 all German elections.

Interestingly, by May 1991, the political challenges of east German environmental issues and economic restructuring were already causing a transformation in the west German Green Party. In a nationwide conference of the "ecological left", 300 participants agreed unanimously to leave the West German Green party over "irreconcilable differences regarding party policy", and to found their own party (The Week in Germany May 17, 1991). Two years later, May 15-16, 1993, a radical attempt to resolve differences between the eastern and western Greens has resulted in the unification of these parties, and a move toward the political center for the western faction. The two groups have agreed to unite under the name Bündnis '90/Die Grüne. The name affirms the significance of the alliance of east German social movements (Bündnis 90, with only 3,000 members), despite the fact that it is becoming associated with a much larger organization, the west German Greens (Die Grüne, with approximately 37,000 members). In their document of unification, "protective clauses" have been included in an attempt to assure the east Germans that they will not be overpowered by the westerners. For instance the Bündnis '90 will have a separate organization within the joint party, including the right to veto in the Länderrat (council of the state organizations). They will also appoint four of the eleven members of the executive committee (The Week in Germany Jan 22, 1993). The new territory of environmentalism in Germany carved out by this alliance is reflected in the following passage of an east Berlin newspaper:

The questions of participation in governing or reform policies are no longer being discussed in all-or-nothing-terms...Responsibility for society, for democracy, whether as a governing or an opposition party; this formula can dissolve the old battle fronts. (tageszeitung May 17, pg. 4)

Thus, the west German Greens have compromised their leftist stance in order to acknowledge the easterners concerns and approaches. Given the easterners willingness to accept politicians, scientists, experts, clergy, communists, and business interests in search for solutions to environmental problems
(something that the western Greens have strongly resisted), the unification of these two groups is likely to alter the environmental politics of unified Germany. It is thus a critical example where the agency of east German activism is influencing and transforming the structure of German politics. What influence this process will have on material nature is still to be seen.

In this dissertation, I have considered how differing social institutions construct two divergent material natures. Using the example of air pollution, I have presented evidence indicating that, as may be expected, air pollution in eastern Germany was generally more severe than in western Germany. Yet, what is less known is that with respect to one air pollutant, namely nitrogen oxides, West Germany has the worse record of the two. Furthermore, as the predominantly mass-transport based transportation system of East Germany is restructured to reflect the predominantly car-based model of West Germany this record will only be exacerbated. I have documented that this pattern evidenced in nature has been produced by a historical legacy punctuated with economic, political, and cultural forces or figures such as Hitler, the car industry, the construction industry, and not least the symbolic association of the car with wealth, economic prosperity, and German unity. The influence of these on west German society have become so ingrained that they are being transferred to the east with little question as to their validity in current contexts.

In order to explore how these forces are playing out at the local level, Chapter 7 contains a preliminary analysis of local transformation at the hands of infrastructural change, and the role of environmentalists in this process. Although early in the research process I had intended to conduct an extensive analysis of the regional restructuring taking place as transportation routes are laid down, this proved to be impossible since most of these routes are still in the planning stages. Thus, Chapter 7 analyzes the struggles over nature and resource use arising between environmentalists and other economic, political and social interests, due to the planned building of roads or railways.

Generally, environmentalists are challenging implicit norms coming from the west: that space should be decentralized through the use of a car, that speed is a fundamental goal of a transportation system, and that the sacrifice of a few wetlands is worth the economic gain of transporting goods and
people quickly across longer distances. Then the three case studies of Berlin, Leipzig, and Halle, are
developed to determine whether geographic differences with respect to environmentalists' response to
urban infrastructural changes exist.

Through my research I have found that in Leipzig, the widespread sense that their activists dared
to confront the leadership, and helped to bring it down, has attributed to an acknowledgement that
social activism is an important part of the transformation which has taken place. The people of
Leipzig are proud of and feel relatively powerful because of their critical role in the overthrow of
Honecker's repressive regime. Furthermore, the close network activists needed to establish in the pre-
unification days is now being tapped to keep former activists involved, as professionals, in the
political decision-making process. This is a vital development through which the process of policy
making and the social structures it forms are being recreated. From the struggle between this still
reorganizing local configuration of power, and that of non-local economic interests has arisen
regional transformation. One can witness this not only in the malls and roads being built, but also in
the recent emphasis on putting urban parks in place of torn down buildings, of broadening roads for
pedestrian and bicycle traffic as well as for cars. Interestingly, issues which would normally tend to
fall under urban development are increasingly accepted as environmentally important,
environmentally-relevant.

As was seen in the arguments of east Berlin activists, critical to the livability of a place—a city—
has become the reintroduction of nature. In other words, activists are protesting processes
externalizing nature in the pursuit of economic growth and international prestige. This
externalization of the environment is associated with an externalization of living quality.

In Berlin, activists were as vocal as those in Leipzig during the 1980s. They were of the avant
garde, daring, formative to the national underground activism. Yet now, the powers shaping what has
become an international city, are generally beyond their reach. The forces of change are located more
in the west, as united Berlin has become a legitimate city, adopted as the national capital. It has been
adopted and shaped more eagerly by western interests than any other of the eastern Germany cities.
Thus, although the ideas emerging from environmental activism are influencing some forums debating issues of urban transformation, Berlin's reconstruction is being decided predominantly by non-local interests.

In Halle, a town with a less vocal activism, a smaller base, and less assets than either Leipzig or Berlin, a dependence on western resources is greater. Westerners are also quite wary of a region publicized as an environmental disaster. Ingenious marketing strategies have been called upon to entice investments to the state of Sachsen-Anhalt, and its capital Halle. While environmentalists have resisted the dissection of the surrounding countryside by a high speed rail, and decry the inconveniences to regional transportation such an emphasis on national and international transport will create, their political leverage is minimal. Halle simply doesn't have the luxury to be choosy about the direction of its regional development.

In all three case studies it has been difficult to demarcate the struggles surrounding economic development, urban transformation, and environmental change occurring at the local level purely along the lines of local versus non-local sources of power. Yet, it is true that transportation policy has been handed down from Bonn, from a westerner, namely the Minister of Transportation Günther Krause, and has been supported by the western car and construction industries. This collusion, as I mentioned in my brief economic history of the FRG, has been quite common in West Germany, and is, in fact, a stated economic tool for directing the economy. It is against the power of this collusion between the state and strong economic interests that eastern activists are now struggling.

Implications

What are the implications of these results, and those presented throughout the dissertation? First, this research links diverse and controversial bodies of literature. In demonstrating that social activism has played a role in changing social structures in Germany--through for example the development of
Round Table discussions nationally during the interim government and locally thereafter, the reorganization of the Green Party, the developed network of former activists in politics, administration, science, and the grassroots—this research broadens the nature-society literature through both that of structure-agency and of social movements. It contributes to an understanding of the forces reconstructing eastern Europe by highlighting the power of activists in this process. Thus, for instance, the influence of Vaclav Havel in the political sphere represents not merely a fluke or the power of one individual, but potentially the face of a new politics in a united Europe. New conceptualizations of the state-society relationship and the nature-society relationship may be underway. It is yet too early to tell.

Finally, by comparing the social movements of the East and West through their cognitive praxis rather than their form or function, this research has been able to explain why the two Green Parties have had difficulty finding common ground, and what significance their eventual unification could have for the environmental politics of Germany. It is indeed possible, that with the practical approach of the eastern Greens and their willingness to cooperate with people from diverse and challenging groups, that the new Green party will become more successful in effecting practical changes in the environmental policies of Germany.
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All interviews were one hour long and recorded on tape. Many interviewees preferred to remain anonymous.

**Joachim Borner:** Dr. Borner is and has been both an academic at the Humboldt University and a social activist for several years. He was officially denied the right to work in the 1970s because his doctoral dissertation questioned the ability of the marxist economy to ensure environmental and social security. Since the early 1980s he has been teaching and conducting research on environmental economics at the Humboldt University, a position he gained through friends with political clout. He is currently very active in providing communities such as Bitterfeld, who suffer from severe environmental and economic hardship, workshops on finding solutions to the social difficulties incurred through unification.

**Christine Steiner:** Ms. Steiner is a sociologist living in Berlin. One area of her research has been the changing nature of the pre-1989 underground women's movement of the GDR. She was periodically active in several of the Berlin opposition groups. Currently, she is also researching the sociology of older workers, left unemployed due to the current economic restructuring, but still not close to retirement age.

**Hans-Peter Gensischen:** Pastor Gensischen is the director of the Church Research Center of Wittenberg which was the primary source environmental data for the underground environmentalists of the pre-1989 period. He was and still is a leader in church-based environmental activism. The Research Center continues to operate, publish its newsletters, and offer valuable information to environmentally-concerned Christians and non-Christians alike. Gensischen was interviewed twice.

**Giesela Kallenbach:** Ms. Kallenbach of Leipzig was active in the church-based environmental activism of the pre-1989 period. She is a member of Ökolöwe, a Leipzig-based environmental organization associated with the Grüne Liga. She is now a consultant for the Leipzig city department of Environmental Protection.

**Thomas Kampa:** Thomas Kampa is a post 1990 activist with Naturschutzbund, Halle. He is currently employed with them due to a federal assistance program for east German students.
Hilmar Schröder: Dr. Hilmar Schröder is a professor of geography at the Institut für Geographie in Halle. He is currently involved in the establishment of a natural park in the Salle river valley.

Peter Hupfer: Dr. Hupfer is a professor of meteorology at the Humboldt University and is currently interested in climatic change.

Jörg Hartmann: Dr. Hartmann is the Director of Environmental Planning in Wittenberg.

Ralf Elsässer: Mr. Elsässer is a leading activist for the Grüne Liga in Leipzig. In the pre-1989 period, he was a member of a student-organized environmental group at the Karl-Marx University.

Roland Quester: Mr. Quester is a leading activist for Ökolöwe in Leipzig.

Anonymous interviewees

Four members of the Naturschutzbund, Halle were interviewed. All were university students. One was employed through the temporary federal job creation program. None expected to be working for the organization for more than two years.

Three members of the Ökolöwe, Leipzig were interviewed. All were university students. One hoped to be able to find a permanent position working as a consultant for an environmental organization.

Three members of the Grüne Liga, Berlin were interviewed. One was a free-lance writer for several smaller newspapers. The other two were students.

Four members of the Unabhängiges Institut für Umweltfragen, Berlin were interviewed. They were all students with an advanced education in the physical sciences and wished to apply their experience as environmental consultants.

Two members of the BUND, Berlin were interviewed. One was also involved with an organization called Tempo 30 Initiativen Berlin, active in encouraging the reduction of speed limits in Berlin. The other was a student.

Two members of the Grüne Liga, Halle were interviewed. Both got their positions through the temporary job creation programs, and hoped to continue working within the realm of environmental activism.
Appendix B

GRASS-ROOTS ORGANIZATIONS AND THE GDR OPPOSITION

Political Movement Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democracy Now</td>
<td>A small left-wing East German opposition party founded on September 12, 1989.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Start</td>
<td>A small East German opposition party formed in October 1989 which later became part of the ruling Alliance for Deutschland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative for Peace in and Human Rights</td>
<td>A leading organization of the East German democratic opposition founded January 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Forum</td>
<td>A leading organization of the East German democratic opposition which was founded on September 10, 1989.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Democratic Party (SPD)</td>
<td>Germany’s Social Democratic Party which was formed in 1875. The East German SPD emerged in the GDR on October 7, 1989.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Environmental Movement Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greenpeace</td>
<td>Greenpeace opened offices in the former GDR in spring 1990.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grüne Liga</td>
<td>Founded in January 1991. A network of ecological movements with regional offices throughout eastern Germany. Importance attached to work at the local level. Encourages the establishment of environmental advisory boards and round tables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturschutzbund Deutschland</td>
<td>Organization for the environmental protection of Germany. A traditional conservation organization of both eastern and western Germany.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ökolöwe

An environmental organization in Leipzig that now belongs to the Grüne Liga. Founded in November 1989, through a combination of church-based activists and those from the officially sanctioned environmental organization, Gesellschaft für Natur und Umwelt (Society for nature and the environment).

Unabhängiges Institut für Umweltfragen

Independent institute for environmental issues. Founded in the fall of 1989 by a group of forty scientists. Primary goal is to gather information and data concerning the state of the environment.

Sources: Grüne Liga (1992) "Network of the ecological movement"; Unabhängiges Institut für Umweltfragen, e. V. (1992); BUND (1992) "Auto oder mobil".
VITA

Anke K. Wessels

Education


Employment

Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, Syracuse University, Aug 1993-present.

Teaching Assistant, Department of Geography, Pennsylvania State University, Sep 1989-May 1993.

Research Assistant, Department of Agricultural Economics, Pennsylvania State University, Sep 1987-Aug 1989.


Membership in professional organizations and honorary societies

Gamma Theta Upsilon, Geographical Honor Society, The Pennsylvania State University.

Gamma Sigma Delta (Honor Society in the College of Agriculture), Agricultural Economics, The Pennsylvania State University.

Phi Beta Kappa, Boston College.

Association of American Geographers.

Publications
