



# Transformation of Public Administration in East Germany Following Unification

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## 1 TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN EAST GERMANY FOLLOWING UNIFICATION

In analysing the institutional transformation of post-socialist countries, East Germany has been interpreted to be a ‘special’ case (Wiesenthal 1995: 50). This is because in East Germany the collapse of the communist regime and the transformation of the existing system coincided with the process and dynamics of German unification and the GDR’s integration into the ‘old’ Federal Republic. Hence, East Germany’s transformation was, from the outset, propelled by a triad of exogenous factors, namely:

- ‘institution transfer’ (Lehmbruch 2000: 14) by extending the constitutional, legal and institutional order of the ‘old’ Federal Republic to East Germany;
- ‘personnel transfer’ as tens of thousands of West German officials and experts moved temporarily or permanently to East Germany to get involved in the transformation process; and

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- ‘financial transfers’ from West German public budgets and social security funds to East Germany.

### 1.1 *Institution Transfer*

The institution transfer took off and gained momentum as the politico-administrative structure of the ‘old’ Federal Republic’s ‘ready-made state’ (Rose and Haerpfer 1997) was extended to East Germany. This secular institutional shift set in as early as spring 1990 when on 17 May 1990 (for the first time) the democratically elected parliament (*Volkskammer*) of the (then still existing) GDR passed a new Municipal Charter that hinged on democratic local self-government. Subsequently, in July 1990, the parliament decided to re-establish the five regional States (*Länder*), which the communist regime had abolished in the early 1950s.

The most spectacular institution transfer occurred when, on the basis of the Unification Treaty signed on 31 August 1990 by the governments of the two German states, the GDR was integrated into the ‘old’ Federal Republic (and into the European Union) by way of ‘accession’ at midnight on 3 October 1990. In that unprecedented historic ‘second’, the constitutional and legal order of the ‘old’ Federal Republic was extended to East Germany, while, at the same moment, the GDR ceased to exist as a separate state and its legal world vanished.

Hence, key constitutional parameters were pre-decided during the preparation of the German unification (‘exogenously’ orientated towards West German requirements). In contrast to Germany, the other ex-communist CEE countries had to settle basic constitutional and institutional issues (‘nation building’, intergovernmental setting and accession to the EU) in conflicts and compromises between political parties and actors in the respective national arena (‘endogenously’).

### 1.2 *Personnel Transfer and ‘Elite Import’ from West to East*

The institutional transfer was accompanied and bolstered by a massive personnel transfer and ‘elite import’ from west to east as thousands of West German officials and specialists moved to East Germany, either temporarily or permanently, to assist the organisational and personnel transformation of *Land* and local administration. In June 1990, that is prior to unification, the ministers of the interior of the West German *Länder* decided to provide ‘administrative aide’ to the upcoming East German

*Länder* (see Goetz 1993: 451). In a similar vein, twinning partnerships were arranged between West German and East German municipalities and counties (Wollmann 1996b: 60ff.). By 1993, some 15,000 West German officials rendered ‘administrative aide’ in *Land* administration and about 4000 in local authorities by counselling, training and assisting their East German counterparts (Goetz 1993: 452). Moreover, a significant number of West German officials and experts moved and stayed permanently in East Germany to take up administrative top or meso-level positions. This ‘elite import’ aimed at filling the ‘political and administrative elite vacuum’ (Derlien 1993), which resulted from the resignation or removal (‘purging’) of most of the leading political and administrative functionaries of the communist regime. Thus, from the outset, ‘administrative aide’ and ‘elite import’ from West to East proved crucial in advancing the transformation of East Germany’s administration, which again differed profoundly from the other ex-communist countries.

### 1.3 *Financial Transfer*

Finally, another key factor was the huge financial transfer from West to East. Since the early 1990s, this figure has amounted to some US\$75 billion annually. This enormous flow of resources largely supported and promoted East Germany’s transformation, which again has had no parallels in other ex-communist CEE countries.

However, the overall assessment that East Germany’s politico-administrative transformation was predominantly driven by exogenous factors needs to be qualified on a number of scores.

First, there was no single West German model that could have been transferred to the East. Instead, the Federal Republic’s political and administrative system is at all levels, and in most sectors, characterised by a considerable degree of institutional differentiation and variability so that the repertoire of institutional solutions on which East Germany’s institution building could draw was, to begin with, diverse and varied (see Chaps. 8 and 9). Moreover, the West German officials and experts, who came temporarily or permanently to East Germany, carried with them in their conceptual and mental ‘luggage’ the diverse institutional and organisational solutions typical of their ‘native’ *Land* or local authority (see Goetz 1993: 452; Derlien 1993: 329; Schimanke 2001: 181).

Second, the newly elected East German *Land* parliaments and local government councils as the relevant political decision-making bodies were

occupied entirely by East Germans (Wollmann 1996a, b: 77) who were politically poised and ready to take the pertinent political and institutional matters into their own hands. Therefore, notwithstanding the significant ‘exogenous’ influence, East German decision-makers were (‘endogenously’) guided by their specific ‘East German’ preferences, interests and goals.

Consequently, institution building in the East German *Länder* and local authorities has unfolded in organisational forms that range from (exogenously inspired) blueprint-type institutional imitation to (endogenously driven) adaptation and self-development (‘autochthonous development’, Lehbruch 2000: 14) and (even) innovation (see Wollmann 1996a, b; Kuhlmann 2003: 307ff.). As East Germany’s institutional transformation took place in a spectacular simultaneity of dismantling the GDR’s state structure, remoulding existing structures and building new politico-administrative institutions, this secular process bore traces of what Joseph Schumpeter, alluding to the elementary forces of capitalism, called ‘creative destruction’ (*‘schöpferische Zerstörung’*, Schumpeter 1942).

The following account will first address the organisational dimension of East Germany’s politico-administrative transformation and subsequently its personnel side.

## 2 ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

### 2.1 *Transformation of the GDR’s State Economy: The Activities of the Treuhandanstalt, THA (Trust Agency)*

Since under the communist regime and doctrine the GDR state essentially owned and operated most of the economy sector, the latter’s liquidation and restructuring was from the outset a prime goal and task of East Germany’s adaptation and integration into the ‘old’ Federal Republic’s politico-economic system (see Czada 1996; Seibel 1992, 2011; Wiesenthal 1995: 58). As early as 1 March 1990, the (reform-communist) GDR government decided to set up a trust agency, *Treuhandanstalt* (THA), designed to revamp the state economy while basically still holding on to state ownership. Shortly after, on 17 June 1990, the first democratically elected GDR parliament adopted a new Trust Agency Act which marked a conspicuous shift in the THA’s mandate to privatise the GDR’s state economy. Finally, in August 1990, anticipating imminent unification, the

THA was turned into an agency whose centralist organisational structure appeared, somewhat ironically, tailored to the GDR's previous centralised economic regime (Seibel 2011: 110). As the THA was accountable to the federal government and acted largely independent of the new *Länder* governments, it was called 'a second East German government' (Czada 1996: 99) or even 'a most powerful second national government' (as former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt put it, quoted by Czada *ibid.*: 94).

Under West German leadership, initially most prominently under Detlev Rohwedder, the former CEO of Hoesch (who was murdered on 13 April 1991 by the terrorist Red Army Fraction—RAF), the THA's mission was defined (in this preferential order) to privatise, restructure or liquidate the GDR's state economy. Consequently, from the outset the THA was responsible for more than 8500 state-owned enterprises with around 4 million employees, which made the THA the world's largest industrial enterprise (Czada 1996: 93). At the same time, it also took over 2.4 million hectares of agricultural land and large-scale public housing assets.

As the federal government decided that the THA was to wind up its mandate by the end of 1994, the latter acted under great time pressure. By 1994, about half of the 6545 enterprises were (entirely or partially) 'privatised', often after restructuring them in order to make them 'fit' for privatisation, 310 were transferred to local authorities and 3718 enterprises were liquidated. In addition, the so-called small privatisation was directed at some 25,000 state-owned businesses such as shops, restaurants, hotel, pharmacies, bookshops and cinemas. In total, two-thirds of the workforce lost their jobs in the process, entailing mass unemployment.

On 1 January 1995, the THA was transformed and organisationally restructured into a new political body called the 'Federal Agency for Special Tasks related to Unification' and into several smaller administrative units (see Czada 1996: 114).

The THA and its activities have evoked more discussions and controversies than any other field and sector of the GDR's transformation.

In assessing the role and impact of the THA in the economic transformation, a number of opposing views have been put forward (for a recent overview see Goschler and Böick 2017). On the one hand, some argue that given the unprecedented challenges posed by the collapse of the GDR's state economy, the THA has achieved, by and large, respectable results. On the other hand, the high unemployment and de-industrialisation that resulted from the activities of the THA and the selling off of GDR

assets to West German and foreign investors has provoked harsh criticism, including scathing critique of East Germany having been ‘colonised’ (Dümcke and Vilmar 1996).

## 2.2 *Transformation of the GDR’s State and Administration*

The GDR’s state was typical of the (post-Stalinist) ‘socialist’ state model based on the dual structure of the intertwined state and communist party apparatus which, by 1990, was made up of around 1000 administrative units with about 2.1 million functionaries and employees. This ‘dual’ structure and its strict hierarchical control comprised all tiers (central, meso and local) of public administration and, under the doctrine of so-called democratic centralism, ruled out any degree of autonomy at lower levels (Goetz 1993: 448). Fourteen meso-level administrative districts (*Bezirke*) were installed which, modelled on the (regional) ‘*oblasti*’ in the Soviet Union, served as the regional backbone of centralist party and state rule. In formally retaining the traditional two-tier local government structure, the (191) counties (*Kreise*) and (27) ‘county-free’ cities were turned into (centrally directed and controlled) local-level state units, while the some 7000 (‘within county’) municipalities played a minimal administrative role.

Following German unification, the historic task of restructuring the defunct GDR state consisted of the triple challenge of either liquidating part of the ‘inherited’ administrative structures, retaining and remoulding them into a new organisational architecture, or creating new ones.

### 2.2.1 *Central Government Level*

Under the distribution formula established in the Unification Treaty about 200 of the 1000 administrative units of the defunct GDR state fell to the Federation, in particular most of the GDR’s central administration (ministries and central agencies primarily based in Berlin) (Goetz 1993: 451). If not ‘liquidated’, institutional and personnel segments came under federal responsibility. Moreover, in some administrative areas, new federal institutions were created in the East German *Länder*, especially regional and local offices of the Federal Labour Market Administration (Wollmann 1996b: 65ff.).

### 2.2.2 *Länder Level*

The five new East German *Länder* (Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony and Thuringia) came into existence on the date of the election of the new *Länder* parliaments on October 14, 1990.

Under the Unification Treaty, about 800 out of 1000 administrative units—that is the lion’s share of the GDR’s state administration (with some 1.6 million employees)—fell under the responsibility of the five new *Länder* (see Goetz 1993: 451ff.; Wollmann 1996b: 80ff.; König 1997: 226ff.). So, each *Land* government, hardly formed in October 1990, was confronted with the challenge of setting up its own ministerial offices and staff from scratch and creating a new architecture for its entire administration. Thus, *Land* ministries, the Prime Minister’s Office, other central-level non-ministerial offices as well as the *Land* Court of Audit, had to be created *ab ovo* in each *Land* (Goetz 1993: 452). With regard to the lower levels of their administration, the new *Land* governments were faced with the decision of whether to liquidate the administrative units ‘inherited’ from the GDR state or retain and fit them into a new organisational architecture. In pursuit of this task, ‘often the ruins of the former administrative structure with its personnel and material equipment became a quarry for the new administrative units’ (Ruckriegel 1993; see Wollmann 1996b: 86).

From the outset, the question of whether the GDR’s meso-level administrative districts (*Bezirke*) should be dissolved or retained and transformed into meso-level administrative districts in line with those traditionally (albeit increasingly contested) in place in most West German *Länder*, where they are primarily in charge of coordination and supervisory functions (see Chap. 8), took centre stage. The controversy surrounding this issue was fuelled by widespread recollections of the ominous role the districts had played under the communist regime as the regional strongholds of its centralist party and state rule. The decision of the parliaments in the *Länder* of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Brandenburg to abolish the meso level—thus choosing a two-tiered architecture of *Land* administration made up of the central and the local government levels—was also largely due to this fact. By contrast, it was decided to retain the GDR’s meso level in the *Länder* of Saxony and of Saxony-Anhalt and turn it into meso administrative districts (*Regierungsbezirke*) in line with their respective West German partner *Land* (see Kuhlmann and Wollmann 2019: 94).

### 2.2.3 *Local Level*

The (191) counties (*Kreise*) and (about 7500) municipalities (*Städte, Gemeinden*) were the only political and administrative structures that institutionally survived the disappearance of the GDR state. Tellingly, from early 1990 when the GDR central government was increasingly sliding into agony, until early 1991 when the new *Länder* governments became operational, it was almost solely the local authorities that bore the brunt of the secular political, institutional and socio-economic system change. In the same vein, from the beginning they were confronted with the task of fundamentally remoulding the organisational and personnel structure left behind by the GDR's centralist state.

Manifesting the radical departure from the communist regime's unitary and centralist state model, the democratically elected GDR parliament adopted a new Municipal Charter on 13 March 1990, thus essentially restoring the concept of local self-government (Kuhlmann and Wollmann 2019: 96ff.; see Chap. 9). In accordance with the 'dual task' model entrenched in the German tradition, local authorities are in charge of carrying out 'genuine' local self-government tasks that basically follow from the traditional general competence clause, on the one hand, and 'delegated' tasks transferred to them by the state, on the other (see Kuhlmann and Wollmann 2019: 161ff.).

### **Internal Organisation**

In restructuring their administrations, the East German local authorities drew heavily on organisational designs and the practical experience of the 'administrative aides', their West German counterparts and advisers. A crucial role in this was played by the Communal Joint Office for Administrative Management (KGSt), a local government-funded non-profit consultancy organisation, which has long since acquired a high reputation and considerable influence in the field of administrative reorganisation. It should be noted that since the early 1990s, KGSt has abandoned its previous advocacy of the 'Weberian' administrative model and shifted to propagate a New Public Management (NPM)-inspired 'managerialist' New Steering Model (NSM) (see Kuhlmann and Wollmann 2019: 284 seq.). After 1990, however, when it came to the administrative restructuring of the East German local authorities, KGSt conspicuously recommended doing this on the basis of the (traditional) 'Weberian' legal rule-bound hierarchical model. Consequentially, in contrast to their West



German counterparts, the East German local authorities initially exhibited considerable restraint (Wollmann 1996a: 156; Kuhlmann et al. 2008: 856).

Furthermore, under the Municipal Asset Act of 6 July 1990 and the Unification Treaty of 31 August 1990, a myriad of (social, cultural, health, etc.) organisations, which until then had operated under the responsibility of the GDR state and its state economy, were transferred ('communalised') to the local authorities. As a result, the number of local government employees virtually 'exploded' (and, for instance, in county-free cities skyrocketed within weeks from 5000 to 50,000). For the range of tasks the local authorities had to perform in order to reduce their 'overstaffed' personnel, see below.

In institutional terms, especially in facing this 'avalanche' of institutions and personnel, the local authorities chose to either organisationally integrate them into their 'core' administration or 'outsource' them in their 'corporatised' form as organisationally and legally separate municipal organisations or companies (usually as limited companies or stock companies; see Chap. 17).

### **Territorial Reforms and Functional Reforms**

Immediately after the formation of the new *Länder* in October 1990, their governments and parliaments turned to territorially redraw (upscale) the counties whose size (averaging 80,000 inhabitants) was considered likely to seriously impair their administrative capacity (see Wollmann 2010; Kuhlmann and Wollmann 2019: 203ff.; also Chap. 16). Moreover, territorial county reforms aimed at preparing the ground for follow-up 'functional reforms', that is transferring (decentralising or deconcentrating) further administrative functions from *Land* administration to local authorities (see Kuhlmann and Wollmann 2019, 175; Chap. 16).

## **3 EMPLOYMENT SECTOR**

In the GDR's 'cadre administration' (König 1992: 153ff.), following the Soviet Union's model, the executive and administrative leadership positions were occupied by a 'nomenklaturist elite', the members of which were directly appointed by and subjected to the communist party. By the same token, in the recruitment and staffing of personnel, the loyalty and obedience to the party was given priority over professional qualification (Goetz 1993), which fostered what was pointedly called 'politicised incompetence' (Derlien 1993: 324). The GDR's state sector had some

1100 administrative units with a total of around 2.1 million functionaries and employees. In addition, the ubiquitous state security service, commonly known as the ‘Stasi’, comprised approximately 85,000 official and 180,000 ‘unofficial’ collaborators (Derlien 1993: 325).

### 3.1 ‘Elite Change’ and ‘Purging’

The radical transformation of the GDR’s employment sector (see also Chap. 13) took place in two ways.

First, a policy was pursued of ridding (‘purging’) the personnel who had been involved in the communist regime and particularly in its ominous state security service (the Stasi) and to a degree deemed politically unacceptable. According to the Unification Treaty of 31 August 1990, public employees could be dismissed for ‘having collaborated’ (in official or unofficial capacity) with the Stasi or for having ‘violated principles of humanity or rule of law’ (Goetz 1993: 460; Derlien 1993: 326). The (federal) Stasi Records Agency (informally dubbed ‘Gauck Agency’ after its first director Gauck, who was later elected president of Germany from 2012 to 2017) was established when the Stasi Records Act came into force in December 1991 with the mandate, upon request by federal or *Länder* authorities, to scrutinise public employees and identify those possibly falling under the ‘purging’ verdict. By mid-1995, the ‘Gauck Agency’ was requested to scrutinise some 1.3 million public employees, about 10 per cent of whom were identified as ‘purging’-relevant and about 1 per cent (i.e. approximately 1300 in total) were finally dismissed (see Derlien 1997: 277).<sup>1</sup> While the final number of ‘sanctioned’ cases appears relatively small, the institutionalised scrutiny process proved to be a sword of Damocles hanging over the entire process of personnel transformation.

Second, an almost complete elite change in the administrative ranks took place as the holders of higher positions of the communist regime were almost completely ousted and replaced by ‘elite import’ from the West or by the recruitment and appointment of East German personnel.

At the *Länder* level, the build-up of the new *Land* ministries and central-level agencies was marked by a sizeable ‘elite import’ (Derlien 1993: 328) from West German partner *Länder* as a significant number of executive and administrative leadership positions in *Land* administration were occupied by West German ‘transferees’. For instance, initially three out of five East German prime ministers, all state secretaries, four out of five justice ministers, the majority of the ministers of economics and

finance as well as up to three-quarters of the department heads and section heads in *Land* ministries were West Germans (Derlien 1993: 328; Wollmann 1996b: 79ff.). However, administrative top positions were also taken over by East Germans, albeit as a rule in less important ministries and often in lower echelons. This applied to administrative ‘newcomers’ who had no previous experience in public administration proper, but came from (meanwhile ‘liquidated’) economic enterprises or scientific institutions. This also held true for East German administrative ‘old-timers’ who were previously employed in technically oriented administrative segments, particularly in district- or central-level administration, and resumed new positions in qualification equivalent to ministries or agencies (e.g. environment, health) (Schimanke 2001: 180).

At the local government level, too, on the heels of the (voluntary or forced) exodus of the Communist party appointed (‘nomenklaturist’) position holders, a new generation of local leaders emerged. Most of them were administrative ‘newcomers’ with no previous experience in municipal administration and often had a professional and occupational background in engineering or natural science, many coming from management and technical functions held in (meanwhile dissolved) state economy companies.<sup>2</sup> Some were administrative ‘old-timers’ previously employed in local administration and often with a technical background. Interestingly, contrary to the *Länder* level, only a few West Germans have assumed leading positions in local administration. The fact that the East German ‘new local administrative elite’—whether newcomers or old-timers—have predominantly an educational and occupational background in engineering or other technical trades makes for an intriguing difference between them and their West German counterparts, among whom a legal or quasi-legal background prevails (Wollmann 2002: 170).<sup>3</sup>

It is worth noting that the ‘elite import’ (from West to East) and the scrutiny (‘purging’) procedure are salient features of East Germany’s transformation, which sets it apart from other ex-communist CEE countries<sup>4</sup> and is another aspect of its ‘special case’ profile.

### 3.2 *Reduction in Personnel*

As previously mentioned, after 1990 the newly formed five *Länder* and the local authorities were confronted with the challenge of reducing an ‘oversized’ workforce ‘inherited’ from the defunct GDR state. Thus, as of 30 June 1991, the number of employees of the new *Länder* totalled some

634,000, which amounted to a ratio of 39 per 1000 inhabitants compared to 29.50 in the West German *Länder* (Wollmann 1996b: 98). Between 1991 and 1999, they cut their personnel numbers by 16.24 per cent to about 30 employees per 1000 inhabitants and thereby narrowed the gap between them and their West German counterparts (see Jann 2001: 114, table 1).

As a result of the myriad of institutions and personnel that were transferred ('communalised') after 1990 to the local authorities, their workforce doubled (per capita) compared to their West German counterparts (Wollmann 2002: 168, table 5). Since the early 1990s, the number of East German local government employees has been drastically reduced and, by the end of the 1990s, had almost halved from some 660,000 in 1990 to about 340,000 in 1999 (see *ibid.* table, Jann 2001: 114, table), which in terms of personnel size per capita came close to their West German counterparts.

### 3.3 *Vocational Training and Qualification of Administrative Personnel*

Applying the complex legal system transferred 'from West to East', and coping with the multiple administrative tasks following unification, posed unprecedented challenges to the East German administrative personnel.

In order to prepare and train the administrative staff to master these difficulties, a huge campaign of vocational training was launched. Funded by the federal government and the West German *Länder*, crash courses were organised and offered to thousands of *Land* and local government employees (see Wollmann 1996b: 130). However, amid the operational turmoil and urgency, there was often hardly any time available to regularly attend the vocational training courses. Consequently, learning-by-doing and on-the-job-training came to prevail.

There are strong indications that East German administrative personnel, by and large, have learned remarkably fast to cope with the new legal world and task load. For instance, a study on the implementation of federal building law constituting a particularly complicated piece of legislation plausibly demonstrated that after an initial period, during which the legal provisions appeared in part to have been 'ignored' by local practitioners, the practice and standards in their implementation and application soon came to largely match those in the West German local authorities (see Wollmann 2002: 171; Kuhlmann 2003, 2004).

A major lever and driver for this fast pace of adaptation and qualification plausibly lay in the ‘disciplining’—if not ‘compelling’—effect which the newly established administrative courts exerted on the administrative personnel and their performance. The administrative courts played a crucial role in ensuring that the administrative practice was guided by the rule of law (*Rechtsstaat*; see Chap. 12), thus sealing the secular break from the previous regime in which public administration essentially acted under the sway of the Communist Party and which bordered on ‘legal nihilism’. It is, moreover, noteworthy that the newly created administrative courts and their judges, most of whom were West German ‘transferees’ (see Wollmann 1996b: 100ff.), assumed an advisory and ‘pedagogic’ function in the interaction and exchange with their ‘clients’ (see Kuhlmann 2003: 202ff.).

Additionally, in dealing with the turbulence and intricacies of the transformation process, the East German administrative personnel also exhibited a disposition to seek ‘pragmatic’ and *ad hoc* solutions. This pragmatism arguably reflects the collective experience which the East Germans at large were prone to have under the communist regime when, vis-à-vis the endemic bottlenecks, supply gaps and malfunctions of the socialist system and economy, they learned to improvise and ‘find ways out’, which has, in hindsight, been pointedly called a ‘chaos competence’ (Marz 1992 quoted in Wollmann 1996b; 144; see also Schimanke 2001: 180ff.; Kuhlmann 2003, 2004).

#### 4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, a somewhat ambivalent summary should be proposed.

On the one hand, East Germany’s transformation in *Land* and local administration has proceeded remarkably fast and, after some ten years, has attained an institutional format and a performance profile that come, by and large, close to their West German counterparts (see Jann 2001: 105). The essential reason for this ‘fast track’ transformation of East Germany’s politico-administrative plausibly lies in the fact that it was embedded in the process of German unification and driven by East Germany’s integration into the ‘old’ Federal Republic. Thus, basic institutional decisions (e.g. relating to the introduction of the *Länder*, local self-government, rule of law/*Rechtsstaat*-guided public administration and also the inclusion in the European Union) were pre-determined and ‘fore-gone conclusions’ by the GDR’s spectacular accession to the ‘old’ Federal Republic at midnight on 3 October 1990. By contrast, in other

ex-communist CEE countries, the basic decisions on the transformation of their politico-administration (nation-building, intergovernmental architecture, accession to the EU, etc.) were often the result of protracted political conflicts and compromises (see Wollmann 2020).

On the other hand, the ‘fast track’ transformation of East Germany has had noticeably negative consequences. As it was strongly driven from the outset by ‘exogenous’ factors and actors, in particular by the triad of institution, personnel and financial transfers, East Germany’s transformation came to be perceived and criticised as ‘externally determined’ and even as ‘colonisation’ (Dümcke and Vilmar 1996). Particularly the *Treuhandanstalt* that had the time-limited triple mandate to restructure, liquidate or ‘privatise’ the GDR’s state economy has been reproached for having inflicted lasting political ‘traumata’ on East Germans in the wake of persisting de-industrialisation and unemployment.

## 5 LESSONS LEARNED

Before finally addressing the question of whether or what lessons can be drawn from the ‘East German case’ by countries that find themselves in political and socio-economic transition or transformation, a note of caution is needed. The singularity of conditions under which East Germany’s transformation took place should be kept in mind in order to forestall ‘hasty’ conclusions. Keeping this caveat in mind, the following suggestions can arguably be put forward:

- The basic decisions on the organisational (central, meso and local level) architecture should be made as early as possible in the transformation or transition process in order to relieve the decision-making process from these basic organisational issues and proceed to tackling and resolving other urgent problems of the ongoing development.
- The building of a competent, effective, efficient and trustworthy public administration should be given prime importance as being an indispensable (*sine qua non*) condition for coping with these urgent problems.
- For this purpose, the introduction and consolidation of a rule of law-bound (‘Weberian’), politically independent and non-partisan public administration is absolutely essential as well.
- By the same token, of utmost importance is the establishment of independent administrative courts with qualified administrative

judges as guardians of judicial review of the public administration activities and their compliance with the rule of law (*Rechtsstaat*).

- The recruitment and employment of professionally qualified and politically non-partisan public personnel who are immune to corruption is equally of crucial importance. In order to ensure high professional (and ethical) standards of future public personnel, appropriate educational and vocational training facilities and programmes need to be put in place.

## NOTES

1. For more data and references see Wollmann (1996b: 97).
2. For detailed data see Wollmann (1996b: 124, table 9).
3. For detailed data see Wollmann (1996b: 125, table 10).
4. With the exception of post-communist Czechoslovakia where, for the limited duration of three years, a comparable ‘purging’ procedure (called lustration) was put in place.

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