

**WHERE ARE WE GOING?
ALWAYS HOME -**

A LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS OF THE
EVOLUTION OF THE PERCEPTION OF HOME
IN EAST GERMANY ACROSS SUCCESSIVE
POST-WAR GENERATIONS.

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ABSTRACT

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WHERE ARE WE GOING? ALWAYS HOME -
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The notion of *home* is an abstract concept that implies subjective associations. Especially, the advent of the globalisation epoch with its 'borderless' mobility makes a re-evaluation of the concept of *home* necessary. This thesis will provide a longitudinal analysis of the evolution of the sense of *home* in East Germany across three post-Second-World-War-generations in consideration of the progressing globalisation process and harmonisation of the different European cultures and identities. It aims to understand how East Germans perceive *home*, how this perception has changed over time and potential implications for our globalising world. Extensive literature review and primary research via questionnaires and face-to-face interviews in East Germany have led to the establishment of the following conclusions. There are various aspects that influence the sense of *home*. The East German perception of *home* has been and is expressed through various artistic means, mostly in a subtle way, which is often an attempt to come into terms with the (East) German past. Furthermore, it was established that the associations for *home* do change over time and across generations. The increasing mobility results in a stronger connection between the *home* and a particular location, often the place of birth and childhood. The distance between the place(s) we call *home* influences people's understanding of *home* more than profound changes in the home territory do.

In conclusion it can be said that the aspects associated with *home* are changing but the need for a *home* remains the same. The results of this dissertation can be used as starting points for further analysis with regards to expatriate and exchange student preparation.

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Heimat ist der Duft unserer Erinnerungen.

Home is the scent of our memories....

Anke Maggauer-Kirsche

1. Introduction

What is *home*? – At first, this question appears to have an easy answer, but on closer inspection turns out to be complex and difficult to define. The individual sense of *home* can be expressed by descriptions and stories which often involve the feeling of belonging. However, due to its associative nature, *home* has a myriad of individual meanings and expressions. Nevertheless, or perhaps due to this fact, there are many different ways of approaching the topic of *home*. Various researchers, government officials and marketers have tackled the issue of belonging and *home* through discussions of identity and social categorisation. Prior research on the topic has been conducted in the fields of expatriation issues, identity conflicts of minority groups, as well as immigration and adaptation problems. This dissertation will focus on the individual seen in relation to his or her *home*, since it is understood that this place, whatever, wherever or whoever it is, only gains its status as *home* if the individual identifies it as significant.

The concept of *home* has gone through numerous transformations especially in the last two centuries. Industrialisation and the rapidity, with which the process of globalisation has advanced has had tremendous effect on the dimensions of *home*. Globalisation in the context of this dissertation is understood as the progressing harmonisation and amalgamation of ideas, cultural values and expressions as well as economic and intellectual resources. As is the case with other rather interpretative notions such as culture, there are several approaches from different angles to understanding *home* depending on the backgrounds of their ‘creators’. The variety of explanations mirrors the complexity of approaches to the topic and of course the complexity of the question of *home* per se. ‘*Home* is where the heart is’, is perhaps one of the most commonly used definitions of *home* by the general public. It expresses the significance of an emotional attachment to a place that is connected with *home* and associates the term with notions such as house, safety, happiness, settling down, and dwelling. The widespread traditional understanding of *home* connects it therefore with a particular place of origin, the place where we were born, the fatherland. According to Heinze, Quadflieg and

Bührig (2006), who derive their approach from a psychological point of view, it can be said that *home*, in general, is associated with the conservation of traditions. For Johann Gottfried Herder, the renowned German poet, philosopher, and translator, on the other hand, *home* is language, in fact, the place where one does not have to explain him- or herself (Herder, 1986). Relph (1994), however, coming from the field of architecture, clearly connects *home* to a physical place, a location. All of these and other academic attempts of answering the question of *home* will provide a theoretical basis for further analysis.

The desire for acceptance, security, trust, and social bonding is a basic human need which dates back to the very beginning of human cooperation. Our *home* is the place where we belong, which satisfies our need for security and the assurance that we are not alone. Nevertheless, *home* entails different meanings and implications for different cultures, nations and individuals due to historical, cultural, or social circumstances.

While the sense of *home* may differ in different cultures, it has also changed over time. In the past, *home* and belonging were usually connected with and defined through rigid categories of identity such as religion, class, race, and nationality. In today's world, social identities can also be chosen and are not necessarily predetermined by the traditional identity markers mentioned above. The advent of the globalisation epoch has increased the significance of research made in the fields of belonging and social identity. Contemporary societies have become characterised by higher social mobility which above all includes mobility of people, ideas, languages and cultures. The movement towards more mobility and a similar cultural identity has created a distorted sense of belonging and *home*. Globalisation and the growing importance of boundless flexibility make the discussion about where we belong, what defines us and what constitutes our *home* contemporary and highly significant.

The leading questions of this paper are why and how the sense of *home* is experienced in general and specifically in East Germany. The main focus will be on how the perception of 'home' has changed over three post-war generations in East Germany and consequently how the outcomes can be transferred onto the European experience today. Using the example of three post-war generations in East Germany, the effects of

tremendous change and globalisation on the development of the concept of *home* will be analysed in depth.

This paper does not intend to find one single definition of *home*, which appears to be impossible due to the relational nature of the concept. However, through the analysis of existing literature and thoughts as well as the personal opinions of 57 East Germans, careful generalisations will be made in order to find potential answers to the research question.

The following sections will summarise the thoughts of scholars and writers about the different aspects of the concept of *home* and will analyse them in greater depth. First, we shall attempt to answer the question of why we have such a connection and sense of *home*. Secondly, dimensions of how we experience *home* will be analysed, followed by an in-depth analysis of the East German understanding of *home* through literature studies, the analysis of exemplary films and writings, as well as the examination of questionnaires filled out by East German members of three successive post-war generations.

The ultimate aim of this paper is to understand the values and beliefs which were in the past and are today important in forming ideas of *home*, how and in what ways they have developed over time (specifically within the post-war years), as well as to detect implications for the future meaning of *home*.

2. The concept of 'home'

2.1 Why do we have such a concept like *home*?

Different objects and feelings are connected with *home* for different people at different times. The concept of *home* can evoke positive as well as negative feelings and associations. Before the question of how we experience *home* is approached, the following section will summarise the main factors that create our sense of *home* in order to understand why there is such a concept. The reasons may themselves give rise to particular feelings and expressions of *home*.

2.1.1 Survival

The longing for a place that we can call *home* expresses the need for belonging, of being grounded somewhere, of knowing that we are not alone. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the need for belonging comes right after the basic need for personal safety (Maslow, 1987). His analysis suggests that belonging is a basic human need. More importantly, it can also be said that *home* is connected to Maslow's need for personal safety and of course physiological needs such as shelter, food, sleep and reproduction. This is a result of pure survival instinct and derives from our earliest ancestors. The living space in the beginning of human cooperation was a hostile environment with many potentially fatal dangers, including unfriendly predators, food shortage and missing shelter due to environmental influences. Survival was naturally at that time, as it is still now, our highest priority. Already our ancestors had realised that chances of survival are increased within a group. A group provides protection and a greater potential food supply. Within groups the first humans started to evolve and specialise and therefore adapt even further to combat potential threats. Family cohesion can be seen as a result of the growing awareness of the importance of being within a group. The roots of this group attachment may lie in the essence of cooperation. According to Hinde and Groebel, 'cooperation occurs when two individuals help each other to reach or obtain what is needed or sought' (Hinde & Groebel, 1991:4). In general, cooperation leads to the formation of some kind of relationship. A relationship can be understood as a condition in which individuals co-operate 'on a series of occasions' involving expectations for similar behaviour in the future based on the past. These relationships tend to be related to familiarity and trust and are often set within groups (ibid:5).

Cooperation is a means of increasing the chances of survival and mating which ultimately leads to the survival of the species. Therefore, the relationships within a group based on cooperation create a sense of belonging to the group. The identification with one group rather than another is derived from the higher degree of expected cooperation thus increased potential benefits for the individual. The concept of *home* can be seen as a result of the cooperation-expectation-re-cooperation-trust-circle. The establishment of trust within a cooperative group, the trust to be more protected from external threats within this particular group will most likely result in a feeling of attachment of an individual to this group and further develop in a sense of *home*.

2.1.2 *Social Identity*

As a result of the (at least perceived) decreasing outside threats for our survival, the concept of 'home' can also be connected to identity, especially due to its role as a point of reference. The place that we call *home*, which does not have to necessarily be a specific location, must be seen as a source of identity. As Robertson, Masts, Tickner, Bird, Curtis and Putnam suggest, *home* is linked to 'the story we tell of ourselves and which is also the story others tell of us' and therefore tied to the notion of identity (Robertson et al, 1994:95).

Identity is a concept connected to the *self* and self-image and is an element of many academic disciplines. Manuel Castells states, that 'identity is people's source of meaning and experience' (Castells, 1997:6). Identities are always constructed by using 'building materials from history, geography, biology, productive and reproductive institutions, collective memory and personal fantasies, power apparatuses and religious revelations' (ibid:7).

In order to construct identity, a point of reference is needed, whether it is a person, an institution or moral ideal. The concept of the *other* is intertwined with identity; in fact, it is the counterpart to identity within a polarity. By defining one's own identity, one clearly excludes the *other*. Thus, the internal homogeneity central to the notion of identity, the base for the unity, is constructed as opposed to a natural phenomenon. Rutherford therefore suggests that 'identity marks the conjuncture of our past with the social, cultural and economic relations we live within' (Rutherford, 1990:19).

An individual's identity is strongly influenced by the environment in which he or she grew up and/or lives. The environment is shaped, among other factors, by historical events, economic, political and social conditions, religion, culture and nature. Consequently, identity is not a static condition. Some theorists argue however that there is a basic, intrinsic and essential content to any identity and this content is defined by a common origin or common set of experiences or possibly both (Hall et al, 1996, Smith, 2001, Poole, 2003). On the other hand, many scholars believe that there is no such thing as preconditioned identities but that they are rather of relational nature and can be seen as a work in progress (Castells, 1997, Cabral, 2003, Rutherford, 1990).

An individual's identity appears to be connected to a 'persistent sameness and unity' which in fact differentiates the individual from other identities (Relph, 1976:45). The feeling of exclusivity may be seen as a form of demarcation and of marking the home territory. The division between *self* and the *other* is a strong identity marker. In a group sense, cultural ties - whether primordial or not - often cause this polarity. Every identity is relational and 'the affirmation of a difference is a precondition for the existence of any identity' (Robertson et al., 1994:107). The *self* can only be identified with reference to the *other*. Nevertheless, the *other* and the *self* are not necessarily binary but in fact, the *other* is part of the *self*. In the sense of *home*, we can see the *inside/self* as an imagined place with spatial limitations which only makes sense in relation to different kinds of *outside/other*.

The point of reference by which we distinguish between *inside/the self* and *outside/the other*, plays a significant role in identity construction. The concept of *home* certainly takes on the role of such a reference point due to the safety and comfort it provides. *Home* is a point from which people can make sense of the world around them and understand themselves. It is in fact a source of identity since the concept has significant impact on identity formation.

The metaphor of roots can be used to explain this role. Roots mean stability. They signify the attachment to a particular place which provides us with 'lifeblood'. Relph proposes that having 'roots in a place is to have a secure point from which to look out on the world, a firm grasp of one's own position in the order of things and a significant spiritual and psychological attachment to somewhere in particular.' (Relph, 1976:38).

Simone Weil suggests in her book *The need for roots* that in fact the need for roots is as important if not more important as the need for liberty, security, order and equality. She implies that roots are a potentially necessary precondition for the other ‘needs of the soul’ (Weil, 2002). The notion of *roots* entails a certain spatial connection, whether it is a specific location or a place of comfort, which can be related to the concept of *home*. ‘Having our roots’ in places means having an attachment that is derived from a certain familiarity with a place, from knowing and being known. This attachment often results in emotional affection and profound concern for that place.

Home can therefore be related to Leferink’s concept of signs of identity which are not only objects or situations that represent identity but also that transmit, confirm and develop identity (Heinze et. al, 2006). This entails objects that have partly stable status like a flat or a house, partly ephemeral character like particular gestures or momentary physical feelings. The place we call *home* is the place of the highest concentration of identity signs, identity markers such as family members, the art on the wall, the feeling evoked when seeing the crucifix above the door, childhood pets and so on. These objects and feelings are expressions of our identity but also sources of our identity. The ‘egg and chicken’ question here comes into play. It can be said that *home* through its identity-forming character is in fact an expression of identity. Robertson et al. go even further by suggesting that ‘the process of identification is first of all a process of spatialisation’ (Robertson et al., 1994:33). Identity is connected to a location and relationships with others which is often related to *home*. Nevertheless, this connection to a place does not necessarily entail closure since the representation and full awareness of identity mainly occurs when there is a lack or a loss of this point of reference. *Home* can be seen as a foundation of one’s identity as individuals and as part of a community, a ‘dwelling-place of being’ (Relph, 1976:39) which is believed to only truly be experienced when the connection to it is fading or lost. Possibly only through the yearning for the abandoned or lost *home*, we start to truly appreciate and to some degree idealise our *home*.

2.1.3 Utopia

As a consequence, the concept of *home* entails also a more intangible, imaginative side. The promising smell of Grandma's fresh apple pie, the tingling feeling of soft summer rain on our skin, the nervous excitement of the first autumn storm, the happy sight of a picture drawn by our much younger self, the sweet taste of the first self-picked cherries of the year; everybody connects different things with home. Robertson et al. summarise these sensations as the 'search for a place in which happiness may be found' as 'a metaphor for the search to recover a memory of happiness' (Robertson et al., 1994:199). The yearning for *home* is a nostalgic search for a place in our past, supposedly the place and time where we felt and feel happiest. These feelings can be seen as a counter reaction towards rapid changes, modernity and undesirable conditions and can be connected to the saying '*Everything was better in the past*'. It is an idealisation of a place in the past as an answer to progressing urbanisation, industrialisation, ongoing homogenisation of the way of living and thinking, disorientation and disillusionment. Especially in the last two centuries the process of industrialisation and first and foremost of globalisation have increased the desire for a 'better' place, a place of belonging. This counter current to change, modernity, and undesirable circumstances creates hope and resistance through illusion and idealisation.

The search for this 'utopian home' is doomed to be never-ending since past moments cannot be recreated. Therefore, *home* can also be seen as something unfulfilled and unrealisable which only becomes alive in memories of childhood, hopes, dreams, and stories. We can speak of the magical charm of *home*. Something that is not truly real but something we always strive for. The mere thinking of the place we call *home* can create these secure feelings of comfort and warmth, even though the place most likely does not exist the same way our memories attempt to portray to us. By leaving this place, we may have given up the chance to regain exactly the same sights and feelings, we 'know' from our memories, after a potential return to it. This leads to the question of whether this place we refer to as *home* ever really existed in the way our memories depict. Bernhard Schlink (2000), in his book *Heimat als Utopie* describes it as a non-place, as a place that does not truly exist but rather lives and nourishes on our memories, dreams and desires.

The Romantics especially found *home* and the yearning for it as a focal point of their poetry and literature. The writings of, for example, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Samuel T. Coleridge, Friedrich Schiller, Henry Thoreau exude and romanticise this longing for belonging. Despite its illusionary aspects, the thought of this utopian place called *home* enjoys great popularity as it can provide people with hope, direction and stability.

2.2 Homesickness and other effects of physical and emotional displacement

Home is often only truly experienced when that what we call *home* is missing or if something that is representing *home* is missing (Schlink, 2000). Therefore, the polarity between being at *home* and being abroad is of utmost significance for the analysis of the term of *home*. Both aspects gain relevance in relation to each other. In popular discourse, being abroad or the more extreme loss of *home* is often related to suffering and discomfort, whereas *home* is, in general, related to happiness and comfort.

The last century was marked by extensive displacements, expulsions and flights. This violent ripping out from *home* is often traumatic and has a profound impact on people's feelings towards their home and to the concept of *home* in general. According to Gustav Seibt, the sense of *home* has been related, at least in the poetry of humankind, with memories of flight, cultural and personal uprooting (in Kossert, 2008). Goethe's *Iphigenia in Tauris* is an example of such writing. In addition to the forced exodus, chosen exile has been and still is the protesting reaction of many people to political or economic circumstances. An example for this is the loss of major parts of the German intelligentsia before and during the Second World War.

Exile can be seen as an opposite to the concept of *home*. Something or someone drives us out of our *home* which itself can become a distant 'land' clearly separated from our current condition or location and to where we always yearn to return. Many authors have dealt with the topic of exile extensively due to being in a forced exile, a chosen one or due to a romantic view of exile. *Home* from a distance creates romantic and idealistic connotations and therefore, disappointment frequently goes hand in hand with the dreams of *home* as resulting expectations can rarely be completely fulfilled. This yearning for *home* is often referred to as homesickness which tends to develop after an involuntary and voluntary leaving of *home* and manifests itself in emotions of delusion and heartbreak, as well as the lack of successful adaptation and acclimatisation to the

new conditions. As previously stated, it is often connected to the place where we had our childhood and youth and is therefore not entirely a longing for a particular place, but for a point in time that cannot be recreated. The place we call *home* gets its charm from images of the past which are only enhanced after time and through physical distance.

According to Bernet in Heinze et al. (2006), only from a distance we start appreciating our *home* and longing to go back. By using the example of Plato's *Odyssey*, he suggests that the place we left and have fond memories of, which is usually the object of homesickness, will no longer be the same as we left it. He emphasises that homesickness combines the spatial distance from 'home' as well as the irreversibility of time. Homesickness could be seen as an expression of the utopian dream of *home*, a place that exists in our minds and dreams, rather than in reality.

But is this homesickness really caused by being away from a particular place and can it really be healed by coming back to it? It appears that this question cannot be answered entirely from a spatial perspective. Our longing for our *home* idealises the place we call home. In fact, our attachment to *home* may not be the reason but rather result of the longing for this place of comfort (ibid). In addition to this longing for *home*, the situation of being in a foreign place surrounded by foreign people, cultures, and customs may create a mental sense of distance. Feeling like a stranger amongst strangers is an evermore common sensation in our society that is embracing individuality at the cost of a clear feeling of belonging.

The growing mobility of people – one effect of the continuing globalisation - and its impact on people's lives, social identities, and cultures is becoming an important topic in today's society. Globalisation is said to bring people closer together, but in fact has the potential to move people apart by creating a more anonymous world where neighbourhoods lose their cohesive character, where place loses its significance and people lose their sense of *home*. The question is, are we really living in a world where belonging and the sense of *home* are fond memories of the past or have these feelings simply taken a different form? It appears that modern man is a homeless being who lives in a society where the loss of attachment to a home is widespread. Robertson et al. (1994) put the potential results of this condition into words by suggesting that: 'Home for the exile and the migrant can hardly be more than a transitional or circumstantial

place, since the 'original' home cannot be recaptured, nor can its presence/absence be entirely banished in the 'remade' home' (ibid:15).

Globalisation, however, has also had the opposing effect of provoking a reorientation back to one's native country, culture, and region. This created, especially in the 1990s, a renaissance of nationalism and patriotism. At this time, various right-wing parties made their way into several national and provincial governments in Europe which resulted in the revival of a widespread discussion about values and nationalism. Regionalism, localism and the protection of regional particularities are still widely practised and supported which could have potential harmful effects on the European Union's efforts for unity among their member cultures. However, the positive outcomes of this development are far-reaching. It is believed that a 'Europe of the regions' would be a more effective tie between the different cultures as the movement away from the dominant influence at the national level creates a more equal point of departure for harmonisation and integration efforts.

2.3 How do we experience *home*?

Whether *home* is a genetically inherent human need or a utopian creation of the human brain to satisfy the desire for belonging, there are certain aspects that characterise the concept of *home*. Depending on the academic field, analyses of *home* have focused on different characteristics of the concept. Based on the reviewed literature, the following section will introduce four major dimensions of *home* separately.

2.3.1 Spatial Dimension

Home is often associated with a particular location; the place where we were born, the place where we live, the place where we are or have been most happy. Some scholars go as far as saying that 'Home is (in) a place' (Robertson et al., 1994:96). The spatial dimension of *home* is generally the most prevalent one. The expression 'going home' entails the meaning of location such as 'here' and 'there'. However, Robertson et al. suggest that 'we are born into relationships that are always based in a place' and that this 'form of primary and 'placeable' bonding is of quite fundamental human and natural importance' (ibid:97). Therefore, Relph and Robertson et al. understand *home* as a specific place which cannot be found just anywhere. In fact, the difference to other

spatial categorisations is expressed by Relph when he calls *home* ‘an irreplaceable centre of significance’ (Relph, 1976:39).

Before further analysing the spatial dimension of *home*, the distinction between *place* and *space* has to be made. Space is a purely geographical notion whereas place is a more abstract concept. Place can be understood as a construction of feelings that corresponds with the significance of a particular location while space describes an entirely objective sphere. The notion of place has been described as ‘space to which meaning has been ascribed’ (Scharf, 2008:45). In correspondence to *home*, place is naturally the more appropriate term to use due to the emotional and relational aspects of the concept of *home*.

The place where people feel safest and most comfortable is often referred to as their *home*; the house where they spent their childhood, the city where they live, or the country where they were born. Something special seems to encompass the place we call *home*. Some scholars have spoken – directly but mostly indirectly – of a certain spirit of a place, a *genius loci*. Aristotle ascribed a particular power to places (‘*echei tina dunamin*’) and believed that every material body possesses a place of origin, to which it belongs to and which entails a certain gravity and yearning (Aristotle, 1987). From the early beginnings of civilisation, people connected places of belonging and places of particular significance to them, with spirits that inhabit or protect the place. Transferred into today’s society, the spirit of a place can be related to the memories of and longings for a particular place that keep that place alive and therefore protected. The attachment to and yearning for *home* creates the *genius loci* of that place. It gains a certain kind of mysticism. However, the process of globalisation weakens the *genius loci*, sometimes even lets it disappear. Places lose their distinctiveness and people attempt to make their homes anywhere in the world. Relph writes that there is a ‘weakening of the identity of places to the point where they not only look alike but feel alike and offer the same bland possibilities for experience’ (Relph 1976:90). So, is *home* in fact a ‘non-place’, a place that does not exist? Relph introduces the concept of ‘placelessness’, which he describes as the opposite of a sense of place (ibid). He admits that most places are connected to a location, but argues that location is not a necessary condition nor is it sufficient to define *place* (ibid). This has significant impact on the understanding of *home* and place of nomadic peoples such as Bedouin and the Samish people. In fact, it reveals that this

kind of mobility and peregrination preclude a certain kind of attachment to place. Mobility is no longer an indicator exclusively of nomadism. In today's world it seems to be becoming a norm of the modern life style.

The uniformity of the 'modern' communities and the anonymity prevalent due to the lack of attachment to a particular place suggests that places of belonging, of *home* are interchangeable and no longer unique. The loss of the significance of a particular place representing *home* also results in an increasingly careless treatment of the environment. Without the connection to a place, without the feeling of responsibility towards a place, people often do not care. Nevertheless, due to this lack of care for the environment, disoriented identities caused by the economic and social globalisation, and the impending fall into anonymity, people need and desire the comfort and stability of a physical place and the sense of belongingness to a place even more. The distinctiveness of a location provides people with a point of reference from which they can understand the rest of the world. Therefore, the place called 'home' can be seen as an essential element of people's life, their position within their wider community and their view of the world.

2.3.2 *Temporal Dimension*

The temporal dimension is connected to the reminiscent, utopian thought of *home* which is often expressed in nostalgia and homesickness. Time plays a significant role in people's feeling of belonging and *home*. In fact, it could be said that *home* is not necessarily a place but a time. The irreversibility of time in connection with the concept of *home* is often neglected in favour of the attachment to a particular location although *home* and the longing for *home* is frequently connected to a different temporal sphere. Selective memories of the past and dreams of the future can have a profound impact on the perception of *home* and, in fact, they can embody *home*.

The understanding of *home* changes throughout time. This process can be detected during the ageing and maturing process of individuals as well as in generational perceptions. *Home* has a different meaning and status to a child than it has to a senior citizen. Individual life experience and different outside influences can change the understanding of *home* over the course of a lifetime. Differences in the perception of *home* between different generations may be explained by these differing experiences and diverse historical, political and economic conditions. Despite the modern pursuit for

individualism these factors may have impact on the attitudes and feelings of an entire generation.

2.3.3 *Social Dimension*

Besides the locality and temporality of *home* the social dimension of the concept is well-documented. *Home* can be seen as a foundation of people's identity, as both individuals and as members of a community. Many scholars and people see *home* as a sphere of intimacy, personal emotions and relationships. Family, friends, and community seem to be one of the most important points of reference, a safe haven, from where people define themselves. The literature about the topic habitually involves the family as a main characteristic of *home*. Robertson et al. refer to this social dimension of *home* by suggesting that '(h)ome is (often) associated with pleasant memories, intimate situations, a place of warmth and protective security amongst parents, brothers and sisters, loved people.' (Robertson et al., 1994:94). Borneman clearly defines *home* entirely through the social dimension when he suggests that the sense of *home* means to be among kin (Borneman, 1992). Despite the fact that the traditional nuclear family is no longer necessarily the most widespread form of coexistence, the ties between family members constitute a particular bond and sense of *home*. In general, people feel most comfortable with their family since it is usually a place of disinterested and unconditional love and support. Friends and community are also decisive comfort factors and are often connected with feelings of belonging. Traditionally, the community has given individuals stability and protection. Papastergiadis describes community as a source of protection from isolation, conflict, vulnerability and estrangement. However, he also acknowledges that solidarity within a community goes beyond physical security and is in fact a way of 'making sense of the world' (Papastergiadis, 2000:196). This opinion connects the need for survival and identity which are understood to be an origin for the sense of *home*.

Nevertheless, the traditional markers of *home*, such as family, customs, religion and social class, appear to be increasingly replaced by other sources of identity such as work relationships, leisure clubs, and individual orientation. In today's world the relationship between community and belonging gradually loses significance. This can be illustrated by looking at the decreasing interest or perhaps even the decreasing necessity of knowing and getting along with one's neighbours. Yet, social ties are a significant link to the place we call *home*, or possibly the reason why people call a particular place their

home. The loss of these social ties may result in forms of anxiety, feelings of disorientation, unhappiness, dissatisfaction and the development of depression and more severe psychological conditions (Heinze et al., 2005). On the other hand, the process of globalisation, which promises endless and borderless opportunities and freedoms, can itself cause a negative perception of *home* and family, which is often associated with the feeling of imprisonment and of limited options of development. The sense of being inexorably tied to a place may result in discomfort and possibly in the desired ‘escape’ from that place.

2.3.4 Cultural Dimension

In addition to the spatial, temporal and the social dimensions of *home*, there are other aspects that the concept can be based on and experienced through. Here, they are combined under the umbrella of a cultural dimension which includes cultural identity, language, history, and traditions. MacGregor Wise (2008) explains the link between *home* and culture by suggesting that the process of home-making is a process of meaning-making, of traditions, and experience. Therefore, *home* can be construed as a domain of cultural identity. According to Clifford Geertz’s approach of ‘primordial attachments’, there are certain categories and aspects that may be used to understand cultural identity. These include the ‘givens’ such as common assumed blood ties, race, language, religion, region, and customs, which are used to describe the establishment of identity (Geertz, 1994). The category of assumed blood ties, in other words *ius sanguinis*, is also incorporated by Connor, who talks about a psychological connection due to ‘shared blood’ (ibid).

Cultural identity and the (assumed) cultural ties affect people’s perceptions and experiences of *home*. The connection between *home* and language may be one of the strongest aspects of the cultural dimension of *home*. The familiar sound of one’s own language often creates an instant feeling of belongingness, security and comfort. Johann Gottfried Herder, Friedrich Kluge, Bernhard Schlink and other poets and intellectuals have often acknowledged the significance of the mother tongue. Benedict Anderson (2006) makes the point by saying that ‘there is a special kind of contemporaneous community which language alone suggests’ (ibid:145). In today’s world with its limitless mobility, language may even be a more important aspect that distinguishes between *home* and a foreign place. The mere experience in a foreign place with a foreign language can cause anxiety and the recognition of the true *home* as well as the

resulting homesickness. As a major factor constituting a common culture, language has a profound impact on culture and therefore the sense of home. According to Deutsch, culture can be seen as the ability to communicate in an effective way (Deutsch, 1994). Another important aspect of a common culture and therefore influence on the concept of *home* is the common history which connects the people of one culture with each other. Anthony Smith emphasises the importance of a common repository of historical events, myths, heroes, and memories (Smith, 1991). Traditions, ‘the way we do things around here’, are often indicators of *home*. The attempt to protect traditions can be seen as a sentimental act of defending values and the *home* itself. Anthony Smith (1991) and Konrad H. Jarausch (1997) emphasise, among other authors, the importance of shared traditions for a connecting cultural identity and therefore a shared feeling of belongingness.

The cultural dimension of *home* can be derived from the distinction between ‘in-group’ and ‘out-group’ relating to the sense of belonging to a group. Nationalistic movements are characterised by focusing on and idealising the cultural exclusivity of *home*, which is often associated to racial and foreigner exclusion. The sense of ‘home’ can become dangerous when the yearning for belonging creates an ideology as it has happened numerous times in the world and especially in Germany for example the Revolution of 1848 and of course the National Socialism period (Schlink, 2000). The result of the marriage of the desire to be exclusive, cultural ties and propagandistic adoration of the home territory and home traditions may be a reason for extreme home enshrinement and nationalistic movements.

These four dimensions are seen as the most significant aspects of how people experience *home*. In conclusion, it can be said that the dimensions of *home* are all linked with each other. It is rare that *home* is experienced through only one aspect. They cannot be seen as separate characteristics but need to be held in relation to each other.

3. East Germany and Heimat

After having analysed the opinion of scholars regarding the concept of *home*, it is now time to focus on the East German understanding of *home*. To make the distinction between its meaning and the meaning of other terms in other languages, the German word for home *Heimat* will be used throughout the rest of the paper. The term in the German context lacks an exact equivalent in other languages. The Italian word *patria*, for instance, is mainly used to describe a physical place of origin while it is also very much connected to patriotic sentiments and nationalistic movements. Also the English word *homeland* does not involve the same intensity of meaning and it entails less expectation and yearning than the German word *Heimat*. A longing search and searching longing for salvation – this is how *Heimat* could be predominantly understood. One commonality of the concepts of *home*, *Heimat*, *homeland*, *patria*, and other is that they were all moulded by linguistic, historical, cultural, and social circumstances. Due to historical and cultural influences, the word took on its different meanings and connotations. In fact, it mirrors the cultural development and understanding of belonging. The modern meaning of *Heimat* was predominantly shaped and enforced during the early years of nationalistic movements but has its roots in the early beginnings of human cooperation.

In order to understand the German meaning of *Heimat*, we need to go on a journey into the past. Etymologically, the word *Heimat* is confined to the German language area and is derived from the word *Heim*, OHG *heima*, MHG *heim*. The meanings include house, dwelling, family, the place where one settles down, the place, the land where one was born (Pfeifer, 2000; Brockhaus, 1997). In addition to this, the suffix ‘at’ at the end of the word adds a quality to the term which can be described as belonging, trust and security (Scharf, 2008). The feeling of belonging and in fact longing are therefore closely connected to the German *Heimat*.

The importance of language for German nation-building and the German sense of *Heimat* is based on language being one of the most if not the most decisive factor through which the German people are defined and connected with each other. Stevenson even calls the Germans a ‘Sprachvolk’, ‘a people defined almost exclusively by language’ (Stevenson, 2002:17). The German language connected people with

different regional, historical and cultural backgrounds. The efforts to build a German nation took a rather late and slow start. This could be due to the fact that the area where German was the main spoken language had been fragmented into numerous kingdoms, duchies and counties. The only unifying aspect was the common (sometimes, due to extensive dialect formations, only similar) language. The use of the same language has profound associative and connecting effects. During the nation-building process language was often a powerful tool used to win the masses for the cause through propagandistic writings, speeches, songs and poetry.

Despite the connecting features of language, the German concept of *Heimat* differs also in its development and central meaning from other concepts of *home*. In general, the meaning of *Heimat* is related to the place, not necessarily a specific location, where we feel most comfortable. In its modern 'childhood', the word *Heimat* appeared more often and won its significance with the efforts of the German nationalistic movement as well as the artistic works of the Romantics in the 18th and 19th century. At that time up until the Second World War, *Heimat* was very much related to patriotism and exclusiveness. As in many other European countries, the concept of *Heimat* was idealised as something to strive for together as a people, something that separates the Germans from the rest of Europe. The Romantic Movement idealised *Heimat* to the point that it became a basis for the artists' desired melancholy and longing. The intense and often unfulfilled yearning for belonging and *Heimat* functioned as fuel for the Romantics' rebellion against the age of enlightenment. Especially the literature of the Romantic period used *Heimat* as a leitmotiv.

In the 19th century, however, the notion started to be influenced by an increasing social instability, estrangement, and urbanisation due to the rapid process of industrialisation. In this sense, *Heimat* was something people could dream about, the place of their happy childhood, a place where they once belonged to. The loss or the lack of it gave *Heimat* an increased significance and caused an extreme 'Heimat movement' in the end of the 19th century. The German imperialistic aspirations, which often violently misused the concept of *Heimat*, reached their ruthless highpoint with Hitler's regime and the Second World War. The end of the Second World War was in fact a turning point in the meaning of *Heimat*, the feelings towards Germany and its institutions as well as in what Germans were 'allowed' to feel and allowed themselves to feel for their *Heimat*. It is

true still today, 64 years after the end of the war, only the mere mentioning of the word *Heimat* lets many Germans shiver and shake their heads in disgust. In general, this is related to the atrocious crimes committed by many Germans during the Second World War. As Rüdiger Safranski suggests '(T)here is a German neurosis. Everything that is German fate is under suspicion. German past ought to be the past of the German crimes, basta.' (Translation by the author, Kossert, 2008:10). It was and is widespread presumption that a 'healthy' attitude towards *Heimat* in Germany can only be regained by dealing with the past and the individual and collective guilt from the past. In essence, the German *Heimat* is something that was and/or might be again.

The West German way of dealing with their horrific past was the focus on economic reconstruction, the (sometimes wilful) neglect of the removal of former 'Hitler's helpers' from key positions and the illusionary revival of a sense of *Heimat* which was mainly achieved with the help of the new mass media television and the so called 'Heimatfilm'. Films that focused on traditional stereotypes and dripped of kitsch were produced in masses and attempted to recreate a sense of home which in fact was supposed to boost productivity and consumption. Examples for such movies include Hans Deppe's *Grün ist die Heide*, 1951 (*Green is the Heath*), Wolfgang Schleif's *Die Mädels vom Immenhof*, 1955 (*The Girls from the Immenhof*), and Harald Reinl's *Wetterleuchten um Maria*, 1957 (*The sheet lightning around Maria*). The majority of these movies are set in rural Germany, especially in the mountainous regions of the South of Germany and use the themes of landscape and the traditional way of life to portray an illusion of an idyllic world.

East Germany had a different approach to deal with its past. Under constant observation by its Soviet brother, it can be said that the GDR established a new dictatorship in the name of Socialism. It created a society of guilt, of uniformity, where free movement and expression of opinion were memories of the past or never known. The idea of a place, a location as *Heimat* defined by the bourgeoisie, the nation, church, or family did not correspond with the Marxist ideology of placelessness. According to Marx, the proletariat does not need a place (Marx & Engels, 1986). In general, the topic of 'Heimat' was widely regarded as taboo and therefore rarely discussed.

In the years between the capitulation of Germany and the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, Germans were still able to move around occupied zones with little problems. Many East Germans felt that they were on the disadvantaged side after the war which can especially be highlighted by the 2.7 million people who left the GDR between 1949 and 1961 (Childs, D., 2006). However, getting closer to the beginning of the construction of the Wall on August 13, 1961, it became increasingly more difficult to move between the Soviet zone and the Western allied zones. In order to protect the East German political and ideological system, politics of restriction, demarcation and dictatorship were used by the GDR government with the help of its big brother, the Soviet Union. Thus, strategic and meticulously recorded surveillance, political imprisonment, a ban from carrying out a profession, even executions, were among the instruments used. The operations of the state's own secret police, called the 'Stasi', were intended to protect the East German ideological and political system, but instead harmed many East Germans physically as well as mentally and created an environment, in which everybody could be an 'unofficial collaborator', meaning an environment of suspicion and distrust. Most people suspected or knew that they had been spied upon some time during the existence of the GDR surveillance machinery, which is expressed by Borneman as 'most feared speaking too loudly when the topic concerned politics, and in extreme cases, some even indicated a fear of being denounced for inappropriate behaviour' (Borneman, 1992:130). This certainly influenced people's behaviour as well as their understanding of *Heimat*, as they could never really be sure if their home was a haven of comfort, security and privacy. This of course was yet to come at the time of the construction of the Berlin Wall. However, even when the signs augured a not so distant escalation of the stormy relationship between East and West and growing restrictions for Germans living in the Soviet occupied zone and the initiation of control mechanisms, most of them stayed there. Borneman states in his book *Belonging in two Berlins* that people's decision to stay in the Soviet occupied zone of Germany was 'closely tied to feelings of membership in familiar domestic patterns' (Borneman, 1992:181). Besides the political structure, the social and cultural climate went through changes as well after the more or less complete separation of the GDR and the FRG. However, in order to analyse the development of the concept of *Heimat* in East Germany across the post-war generations, there is a need to analyse the social and cultural influences on East German people. After the war conferences, the Soviet occupied zone of what was then Germany became the new home for millions of

refugees from the former most Eastern parts of Germany, including Silesia, Transylvania, Czechoslovakia and Pomerania. The newcomers were not everywhere welcomed warmly. In fact, they experienced widespread discrimination in most places in Eastern Germany (as in the Western German parts). For them, *Heimat* was a far away, unreachable place or something they could not remember. The topics of flight and displacement were taboo in the zone occupied by the Soviets and the GDR (Kossert, 2008). The discrimination, isolation, identity conflicts and homesickness were rarely touched on let alone discussed by GDR authorities as well as by the refugees themselves. Only the next generation could lead an integrated life in which they were not called 'Pollacken' (Pollack) or 'Rattenkatholiken' (rat Catholics), as many of their parents were. All inhabitants of the Soviet occupied zone and later GDR had to cope with the consequences of the war. The rebuilding process, the widespread distrust towards authority in general and towards the new allies, the Russians, specifically, the absence of men who had died or were in one of the many prisoner of war camps and the lack of food and other essential articles made it difficult to adjust to the new system.

The generation born in the 1950s and 1960s, could be called a proto-generation. As the first generation being born in the new GDR, they were educated and trained to be obedient followers of socialism, sometimes successfully but often in vain. In order to make 'its youth into ideologically fervent socialists, the East German proto-state founded the FDJ, Free German Youth (from ages 14 to 24), in March 1946, and it created the Young Pioneers, a separate club for children (from ages 6-13), in December 1948' (Borneman, 1992:162). These organisations were meant, on the one hand, to support the parents juggling with work and child supervision and education and on the other hand to infiltrate the ideology into the children's and young people's brains. According to Borneman, in '1961, FDJ members totalled 50.3% of all youth; by 1978 they totalled 69.9%. In 1985, nearly all youths between 14 and 18 were members' (ibid:163) and the participation rate of the Young Pioneers reached 76% by 1960 and a 99% rate by 1970 (ibid:163). The success of such organisations often depended on the variety of values and ideologies the child was exposed to and they were most effective the smaller this variety was. Most members of the generation born in the 1970s and 1980s, lived part of their childhood/youth under the socialist regime of the GDR and the other part in a reunited democratic Germany. Two political and ideological systems, two histories, two sides of 'the story' required extreme reorientation skills by the young

people. This second generation born in the GDR only knew the reality of a separate Germany and the portrayed normality of this division until the fall of the Berlin Wall. Saunders mentions that they were ‘schooled to show loyalty to the GDR state through comprehensive programmes of patriotic education’ and almost over night were confronted with textbooks and a curriculum filled with (former) subversive ideas and praise for the yesterday’s ‘class enemy’ (Saunders, 2007:2). This of course created a sense of insecurity and inner turmoil in many children, however, their age allowed them to adapt much quicker than older generations. The 9th of November, 1989 and of course the 3rd of October, 1990 are dates engraved in every East German’s biography. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the following reunification of Germany caused such drastic and far-reaching changes for them that it could hardly be any different. Borneman states that ‘with the collapse of their state and social system, East Germans lost their time and space coordinates’ (Borneman, 1992:319). Although this point of view may be a bit too drastic, there is no doubt that the new East German way of life had changed tremendously.

Historic events, the economic, political and social situation and ideology played the main part in constructing a different ‘Germanness’ in the East, a particular East German identity and a different understanding of *Heimat*. Soon after the reunification, the promised land ‘where milk and honey flows’, seemed to be more and more a construct of phantasms of a new ideology. An increasing stream of disappointment and disillusionment made its way into the East German hearts. The mass unemployment, increased income disparities, and the attrition of the all-embracing social welfare system created a sense of delusion and loss in East Germans. The words often circulating during the reunification process of Germany and (perhaps wrongly) accredited to Willy Brandt, ‘now grows together what belongs together’, sound too optimistic, almost ridiculing given the level of social and economic development in East Germany. East Germans could almost be seen as a minority within Germany due to their different historical, cultural, economical, and social background. In fact, Eastern Germans often identify themselves with other East Germans first, as opposed to other Germans. Flockton and Kolinsky (2000) propose that ‘while both east and west Germans exhibit a complex mix of identities – Germany, east/west Germany, the Bundesland and the local community – an exclusive identification with ‘east German only’ is more frequent than with ‘west German only’ (25% to 4% in 1995)’ (ibid:93).

Disappointed East Germans often take refuge in a GDR nostalgia, a form of homesickness, which caused the resurrection of numerous GDR products and bands as well as an increasing electoral success of the PDS, the former SED (Socialist Unity Party) (Jarausch, 2000:12) and now part of *Die Linke*.

Clearly, the understanding of *Heimat* and the implicitness of the never-changing *Heimat* of Germans was influenced by the events and circumstances of the last 70 years. Yet, after having gone through a long, bumpy and never fully completed healing process, Germany experienced a renaissance of a kind of patriotism. The return of patriotic thinking and (often) healthy appreciation of *Heimat* started in the 1980s (in the West of Germany) but truly unfolded after the reunification of Germany. Nevertheless, with increasing influence and power, movements tend to split and some parts may wander off into a more extremist area, as the growing number of Neo-Nazi groups and their misuse of the concept of *Heimat* proves. *Heimat* continues to be a sensitive topic in the German context. East Germans particularly went through several profound changes in the years after the Second World War which affected their sense of *Heimat* and made it a more confusing concept to define for them.

3.1 Representation in Cinema and Literature

The sense of *Heimat* has found its expression through various channels. The arts have always played a crucial part. The aftermath of the Nazi regime and the Second World War somewhat paralysed any German sense of *Heimat* and numbed and made the artistic discussion of the topic very delicate, sometimes dangerous and certainly difficult. The 1970s somewhat marked a turning point for this behaviour in West Germany (reunification in East Germany). Time had allowed and made it necessary to stop the silence and the looking in the opposite direction when it came to sensitive topics about the past and about the potential psychological dispositions, tendencies to xenophobia, and the susceptibility to subordination and to start dealing with the ghosts of the past. Numerous books and articles, exhibitions, documentaries, television programmes, and conferences have focused since then on German history and influenced the national identity and concept of *Heimat*. These endeavours were and are intended to find answers, to ask new questions and to fill a kind of vacuum that had existed since the Second World War. Kaes (1992) goes as far as saying that Germany

has more politicians, journalists, academics, artists and writers that are dealing with the history and identity of their *Heimat* than any other country. However, artists take a special role in this *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (*dealing with the past*) and the understanding of *Heimat* due to their imaginative and creative level of expression and the width of audience they can reach.

3.1.1 East Germany and Cinema

In the GDR, the artistic media was said to be the primary means through which the ‘hearts and minds of the populace for ‘Heimat’ and ‘Vaterland’ (fatherland)’ were won (Allan and Sandford, 1999:205). The film industry played an important role in this process. Films can reach a wide audience by being shown and repeated on the big screen and the television screen, wider than for example conferences and books. They also have the power to reach people in a more emotional way which may move them and influence their thinking. In fact, ‘fictional films are able to unlock the viewers’ hidden wishes and fears, liberate fantasies, and give material shape to shared moods and dispositions’ (Kaes, 1992:x). In addition, film has been used as one of the most effective propaganda tools throughout the last century by all of the political systems.

Soon after the segmentation of Germany into four occupied zones, the Soviets began to control the film industry in order to use film as a weapon in the fight against fascism in their zone and of course as a very effective tool to reach and manipulate the masses in order to ‘re-educate’ them according to the Marxism/Leninism ideology (Kaes, 1992). The Deutsche Film-AG (DEFA) was founded in 1946 under Russian License (ibid). The films produced by the DEFA under Russian supervision in the German Democratic Republic were ‘profoundly concerned with the causes and effects of National Socialism, specifically with war, fascism, the persecution of Jews, and the resistance movement’ (ibid:11). In fact, the first films produced in the GDR were mainly focused on deconstructing any warm feelings for *Heimat* in Germans. The positive aspects of *Heimat*, of Germany as *Heimat*, were left out on purpose, in fact, *Heimat* was portrayed as something that on the one hand had such negative connotations that it was almost a sin to mention it and on the other hand it was something that had to be rebuilt according to socialist values and ideologies. The constant supervision by the GDR government and other authorities, however, did not allow the complete expansion of artistic expression. During its forty-five years of existence, DEFA banned several

nonconformist films, 11 alone between 1965 and 1966 (Allan et al., 1999). According to Allan et al. (1999), '(a)ll too often an unusual way of filming something or a strange lighting effect resulted in a film being accused of displaying formalistic tendencies' (ibid:8). Due to these artistic restrictions many prominent actors, writers and other artists left the GDR to gain more freedom. This 'drain of talent' had often hindered the production of films in the GDR (ibid).

In the following, the development of the concept of *Heimat* in East Germany will be analysed by looking at some of the most significant films made in consecutive order in East Germany. One of the most influential and best-known movies of the GDR's 'first hour' is Staudte's *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, 1946 (*Murderers among us*). This film belongs to the so-called 'Trümmerfilme' (rubble films) made between 1946 and 1948 (Kaes, 1992) and the first German cinematic expression after the Second World War. These early films had the profound task of trying to make sense of the horrific events of the war in the face of cities and personal lives still in ruins.

Die Mörder sind unter uns stars the young Hildegard Knef and is the source of the well-known quote: 'We do not have the right to judge, but we have the duty to accuse'. It has to be seen as a nonpartisan artistic approach to come to terms with the past which raised questions of guilt and atonement. A similar effect was intended by Gerhard Lamprecht's movie *Irgendwo in Berlin*, 1946 (*Somewhere in Berlin*). Both of these movies, among others, reached their intended goal by their authenticity and the expressiveness of the bombed East German towns (Allan et al., 1999). Following movies dealt more often with the new ideology. As a propaganda tool, the GDR film industry produced throughout its existence numerous movies that embody and praise, directly and indirectly, the socialist thought and way of life. One of the early films portraying a socialist perspective is Slatan Dudow's *Unser täglich Brot*, 1949 (*Our Daily Bread*). By narrating the story of a Berlin family and their everyday post-war problems, the movie discusses the different ideologies, the old capitalist position versus the new socialist one. Later films were much more explicitly limited to a perspective that clearly favours socialism as the salvation. *Ernst Thälmann – Sohn seiner Klasse* and *Ernst Thälmann – Führer seiner Klasse* (*Ernst Thälmann – Son of his Class* and *Ernst Thälmann – Leader of his Class*) are portrayals of an 'exemplary' socialist life.

A common theme in GDR films is the protagonist's actual or potential seduction by Western influences, the following downfall and happy recovery by finding their way back to the fold of the GDR and socialism. Often these movies were set in the separated Berlin making the protagonist's decision even more imminent and symbolic. The portrayal of *Heimat* in GDR films was not entirely restricted to the glorification of the socialistic ideology. East German landscapes and nature always played a significant role in films and in fact their presentation is slightly reminiscent of particular advertising techniques as for example in the film *Drei Haselnüsse für Aschenbrödel*, 1973 (*Three Hazelnuts for Cinderella*). Long nature shots, zooms, certain camera angles draw on and induce romantic associations of *Heimat* (Allan et al., 1999). With GDR's last decade and its citizens beginning to feel disillusioned about the socialist promises, the movies of the late 1970s and 1980s are more openly critical about the system which also changed the portrayal of *Heimat* into a more negative one. Films such as Heiner Carow's *Die Legende von Paul und Paula*, 1973 (*The Legend of Paul and Paula*), Konrad Wolf's *Solo Sunny*, 1979, and Herrmann Zschoche's *Bürgschaft für ein Jahr*, 1981, (*On Probation*) portray a more grim view of life in the GDR with less polarising black-and-white ideology. The end of the GDR also meant the end of political censorship as well as the beginning of a new era of freedom of speech and expression in Eastern Germany. Nevertheless, the process of dealing with the past through film had a slow start. In fact, early films about East Germany and the GDR often took a humorous approach instead of making a serious discussion of the issue. Films such as *Go Trabi go*, 1990, and *Sonnenallee*, 1999, portray life in Eastern Germany and earlier in the GDR in a comic way thereby always moving closely sometimes crossing the line to ridiculing the people and time of the GDR. Later, more critical and dramatic films were produced with the topic of GDR. Widely-acclaimed films such as *Goodbye Lenin*, 2003 and especially *Das Leben der Anderen*, 2006 (*The Lives of Others*) dealt with the East German history in a more serious way, sometimes answering previously asked questions, sometimes creating new questions. These films had different impacts on Western and Eastern Germans. People from Western Germany often use them as a source of information. Based on my interviews, conducted with East Germans for the purpose of this paper, and personal experience, it can be established that the knowledge about historical, political and cultural facts on East Germany and the GDR in the general West German public is relatively limited partly due to lack of material in the schools' curricula as well as in the media and partly due to

lack of interest (on both sides). For people from Eastern Germany, on the other hand, these movies were and remain a way of dealing with their past. While the early films may have still instilled a sense of inferiority, the more time passes the more films are produced that are attempting to portray reality as authentically as possible.

In conclusion, the medium of film in East Germany had a much more significant task than solely entertaining the masses. It has also been and still is used as a means of propaganda, a channel for criticism and a way of understanding, narrating and of coming to terms with the past. Another, equally powerful medium of expression in which *Heimat* has taken the role of a most welcome and often used theme is literature. Throughout history, the concept of *Heimat* has often found its way to the hearts of the people through literature and poetry and has thereby been instilled and enforced. Due to its associative nature, it provides a myriad of potential plots. Many authors associate *Heimat* with longing and hope. From Greek tragedies to romantic novels to partisan writings, *Heimat* has had a place in literature and poetry throughout human history. In the following, East German literature and its relationship to the concept of *Heimat* will be explored.

3.1.2 East Germany and Literature

Literature in Eastern Germany can be seen as a separate branch of German literature due to different historic, political and social circumstances which profoundly influenced it. In order to gain a hearing in the GDR and other eastern bloc countries, East German writers were indirectly forced to be members of the *Schriftstellerverband* (Writers' Union). This union officially operated as a forum for the exchange of thoughts and for concerns, but its main functions were control as well as direct and hidden censoring (Humble and Furness, 1994). Following the conformity requirement did not allow complete freedom of artistic expression, but held benefits and freedoms of a different nature not open for other East Germans. As with the film industry, early GDR literature mainly dealt with the painful legacy of fascism. The events and results of the National-Socialist regime in Germany often influenced the literature written after the Second World War in the GDR but the elimination of the guilt and the trauma was 'a simple matter of conversion to the new order' (ibid:156). In fact, life under the Nazi regime was the focal point of many literary works due to the GDR government's propagandistic claim that the GDR was practically born out of antifascism and

completely broke free from its National-Socialist past but first and foremost because of the role of many East German authors in resistance movements.

Many such writers, who associated themselves with the communist and socialist idea and who had been prosecuted in fascist times, had settled in the GDR. With the establishment of the GDR as a nation state, GDR literary works predominantly expressed loyalty for and adoration of the socialist ideology. Anna Seghers' books have to be mentioned here as an example for this transition from a focus on antifascism as in her novel *Die Toten bleiben jung*, 1949 (*The dead remain young*) to the support and admiration of the new socialist system as in her novel *Die Entscheidung*, 1959 (*The decision*). Later on, there were two fractions of writers, one side conforming to the socialist system and therefore supporting it, while the other side was more critical of the conditions in the GDR. This division reached its highpoint after Wolf Biermann's deprivation of citizenship, which was confirmed during his concert tour in West Germany in 1976 due to his nonconformist comments and lyrics. This event had a twofold result. On the one hand, it assured artists and writers more of the rightness of their position and made them often more courageous to take a stance more openly. On the other hand, it split the field of the GDR writers and artists into Biermann supporters and opponents, in fact, the one side demanded reforms or even the abandoning of the system and the other side tried everything to prove its loyalty to and conformity to the state (ibid). The polarising effect of this ideological split among GDR writers almost caused the creation of two different national literatures in the GDR. *Heimat* therefore also received different meanings in GDR literature depending on the attitude of the writer. In general, the sceptical field saw *Heimat* in a negative, almost melancholic way, as their *Heimat* with its people and thoughts, suppressed, in their eyes, by a despotic regime. On the other hand, conformist writers often portrayed socialism and the socialism way of life as *Heimat*. Christa Wolf can be described as a critical yet socialist writer who believed in the possibility of making the GDR into a better place for everybody through reforms. Her acclaimed works such as *Der geteilte Himmel*, 1963 (*The divided sky*) and the later *Kassandra*, 1983 are examples of self-critical narratives filled with hope for the socialist system (after reforms). Due to not official yet widely practised censorship, many books which expressed the slightest criticism of the GDR system were not available for the general public in the GDR as so many Western books which were regarded as incitement of the East German people and

products of the class enemy. Post-wall East German writers had more freedom of expression than their GDR counterparts but also had the burden and task of creating a new literary way of dealing with the past. Jana Hensel with her novel *Zonenkinder*, 2002 (*After the Wall*) attempted to come to terms with her divided childhood, partly in the GDR, partly in the united Germany. She was one of the first authors to broach the issue of the enormous adaption and reorientation difficulties of most East Germans after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Thomas Brussig's *Helden wie wir*, 1995 (*Heroes like us*), on the other hand, deals with the event in a more humorous and ironic way. This description of life in the GDR went a bit too far over the top and did not necessarily help East Germans come to terms with their past with regards to their own involvement in the socialist machinery of the GDR and/or the harms and traumas resulting from it. With the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall this year, books on GDR topics spring up like mushrooms. However, this wave will most likely die down as quickly as it came. Despite the need for answers and new ways to deal with the GDR past, it appears that today, the topic of GDR is almost out-dated, people are oversaturated.

Nevertheless, films and literature are important tools for expressing feelings of *Heimat*. The examples mentioned above show the problematic relationship of East Germans towards the concept of *Heimat*. In the following section, the analysis of questionnaires and personal interviews will be presented and will attempt to analyse the personal feelings of East Germans and therefore shed light onto the difficult question of *Heimat* and the meaning of *Heimat* to three post-war generations as well as potential implications for this globalised world.

4. Methodology

The research questions for this qualitative analysis are focused on why and how is the sense of *Heimat* experienced in general and specifically in Eastern Germany. More specifically, the focus will be on how the conception of *Heimat* has changed over three post-war generations in East Germany and consequently how the outcomes can be transferred onto the European experience and European Union policy-making today.

The following objectives were set up to act as guidelines.

- To establish generational breakdown, including age cohort, historical, social, political and economic circumstances
- To determine which associations of *Heimat* are made and potential traditional markers of *Heimat*
- To examine respondents' demographics in order to establish potential correlations between their demographics and opinions regarding *Heimat*
- To discover attitudes towards East Germany as *Heimat*

Prior to the conducting of the survey, several hypotheses had been established based on readings and personal experience.

1. The concept of *Heimat* has changed over the generations.
2. The connection between *Heimat* and a particular place, often the birthplace is believed to decrease the younger the generation is.
3. Traditional markers of identity are losing their significance moving from the oldest to the youngest generation.
4. East Germans have a problematic relationship to *Heimat*
5. Globalisation and/or Europeanisation have changed the perception of *Heimat*
6. *Heimat* is less connected to a location the more people have lived in different towns or countries. *Heimat* as a place loses more and more its significance for people who have lived or are living in different towns or countries.

In order to collect quantitative and qualitative data, a survey and personal interviews have been conducted. The number of 57 respondents allows the collected sample to be representative. The utilised questions have been formulated based on an extensive literature review and pre-testing interviews. These interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis and were intended to collect initial primary data and to explore possible

questions and areas to be analysed. They were semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with representatives of different age cohorts.

A questionnaire was used as the main source of collecting primary data. Given the limited time frame, this was an appropriate method to use as a primary research strategy. The questionnaire consisted of a series of 38 questions that were designed in order to assist in answering the research question. In order to minimise potential response error and to ensure validity of the questionnaire, pilot-testing on three individuals was conducted. The data of the survey was collected semi-anonymously, as some personal information was requested while names were purposely neglected to make people feel more at ease for answering the questions truthfully.

The questionnaire was compiled based on prior research and interviews. There are four question categories namely questions regarding demographics, the concept of *Heimat*, *Heimat* and East Germany and *Heimat* and Europe. This division was chosen in order to group the questions and make the filling-out process easier. The questions of the first part 'About you' aimed at gathering demographic information which is used as a basis for further analysis. Demographic questions are, in general, easily answered and answers were checked for any significant correlation which will help to find conclusions and ultimately to answer the research questions. The following part is entitled *Heimat*. The questions in this section are intended to collect opinions and thoughts about the concept of *Heimat* itself without connecting it to East Germany. The questions tend to have a more general scope in order to avoid leading the respondents to answers and truly detect their opinions. As opposed to the previous part, these questions are intended to lead to opinion-based answers. The next section of questions is concerned with the concept of *Heimat* in relation to the location of East Germany. It focuses on the East German context of this dissertation in order to make conclusions regarding the research problem. Due to its particular history and culture, substantially influenced by the three different political, ideological and social systems East Germans went through in less than 50 years, the relationship between East Germans and their *Heimat* is believed to take a special path compared to other cultures.

The following questions are related to the (potential) relationship between *Heimat* and Europe. These questions attempt to discover the respondents' opinion about Europe and

how it may have changed their perception of *Heimat*. Also, it attempts to detect differences and similarities in answers of different generations which may be used for further analysis. More detailed rationales for each question are included in Appendix C.

In order to establish facts regarding the research question, a sample of the population was taken to reduce the amount of data and time spent on collecting the data. The initial sampling frame consisted of people who live or have lived a considerable amount of time in the area of former East Germany. Due to the limited time frame available, a non-probabilistic sampling technique was used, meaning not all East Germans had an equal opportunity to be chosen. Individuals were mainly chosen from a pool of people living in the area of origin of the author namely the city of Halle / Saale and surrounding areas. In order to establish the pre-categorisation of living or having lived in Eastern Germany for a long time, short interviews have been conducted with potential participants. The initial demographic questions of the survey confirm the scope of this research.

Quantitative research of data regarding *Heimat* is rare and difficult to conduct due to the abstract nature of the notion. Listening to and reading about people's stories of their experiences and feelings while contextualising these descriptions by using appropriate literature and historical documentations, were to me the most appropriate approach to the topic of *Heimat*. Through this method, the potential changes in the perception of *Heimat* held by members of different generations can be detected and analysed.

4.1 Generations

In order to facilitate the analysis of the development of the concept of *Heimat* on a temporal basis, the respondents have been divided into three post-war generations. This segmentation has been established based on groups of people born during a specific period of time who are distinct from other groups born in different periods due to different demographic, political, social, and economic circumstances. According to Mannheim, 'a generation is determined not by the shared problems of the time, but by the responses to these shared problems and objective conditions (eg. war, poverty, geographical resettlement, change in political regime)' (paraphrased in Borneman, 1992:48).

In fact, it can be said, the glue that holds generations together is compiled of similar attitudes, norms, behaviour and feelings. Prior to conducting interviews and the survey, the generational breakdown has been determined based on the time the individuals were born. It is believed that through the analysis of these generations, a pattern of development will be found. For the purposes of this research, three post-Second World War generations were considered. Respondents were allocated to the different generations based on the first question of the questionnaire.

The first generation includes, in general, the people who were born during Second World War or the immediate years before and after the war as these individuals grew up mainly in a post-war Eastern Germany. The childhood of these individuals was in general marked by intense hardship due to the war. They also witnessed the early years of the new GDR growing up. Having lived in a time of war as well as the woe and uncertainty caused by it and later in a new state with a new political and social system, may have similar effects on the perception of *Heimat* on the individual members of this generation which will be referred to as Generation I.

The second generation used for this analysis includes people who were born from 1950 to 1970 thus, individuals who lived their childhood, their youth and a significant amount of their adulthood in the GDR. These people grew up entirely in the socialist system of the GDR and were often exposed to extensive socialist propaganda. They were educated to be obedient followers of the system (sometimes successfully, sometimes only superficially and sometimes without success at all). This generation will be referred to as Generation II.

The final generation considered for this research was mainly born in the years between 1971 and 1985 as these people had a somewhat divided childhood or adolescence. The individuals of this generation, Generation III, were partly educated in the socialist system of the GDR and partly in the newly united Germany which may have caused a similar problematic perception of *Heimat*.

4.2 Method

In order to collect initial primary data, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with one member of each generation who had been selected randomly. The interviews were kept in a dialogical style as it appeared to be the most efficient method to gather information. The respondents of the questionnaire were selected randomly, while people in the personal surroundings of the author had a higher probability to be chosen. The questionnaire was delivered and answered in German. Translations were done by the author whose mother-tongue is German.

In order to confirm or reject the hypotheses made and to facilitate the analysis of the responses, the following categories and subcategories have been established. The first group is intended to establish the general feelings and associations of *Heimat* of East Germans. For the purpose of examining the particular associations in more depth, they were grouped under the respective dimensions of *Heimat* established in part 1 of this dissertation. Included are the following dimensions:

- Heimat and Spatial Dimension
- Heimat and Temporal Dimension
- Heimat and Social Dimension
 - Heimat and Family
 - Heimat and Friends
 - Heimat and Gender
- Heimat and Cultural Dimension
 - Heimat and Language
 - Heimat and Traditions
 - Heimat and Religion

The last two categories go into depth about the concept of *Heimat* in East Germany and *Heimat* and Europe.

The collected responses were grouped under these subcategories. The completed questionnaires are numbered and answers are referred to the number of the questionnaire in order to ensure confidentiality. The answers to each question can be found in Appendix D.

5. Analysis and Discussion

The following section is dedicated to the discussion of the primary data collected with a focus on the 57 completed questionnaires but also considering the personal interviews conducted. Answers and correlations have been analysed with regards to the political, social and economic conditions that may have influenced the respondent's answers.

The information gathered from 57 completed questionnaires and during face-to-face interviews was used to determine tendencies in the understanding of the concept of *Heimat* and its associations for East Germans, focusing on the generational development of the notion. The interviews were intended to deepen the understanding developed from the outcomes of the questionnaire as well as to gain further, more specific information.

The respondents were grouped into the respective generation based on the first question of the questionnaire. The questionnaire sample is composed of the answers of 23 Generation I individuals (16 females and 7 males), 16 Generation II individuals (11 females and 5 males) and 18 Generation III individuals (10 females and 8 males). The aspects of *Heimat* were analysed with respect to the respondent's answers for the demographic questions of the first part of the questionnaire 'About you' while emphasis has been put on the generational development of the concept of *Heimat*. There are four expatriates, meaning persons who are temporarily or permanently living in a different country than their country of upbringing, among the respondents, all from Generation III, one individual from Generation II, who lives in the Western parts of Germany today and one individual from Generation I, who has moved from the FRG to the GDR in the 1960s. Today, the majority (91%) live in the territory of the former GDR.

First and foremost it can be said that the reaction to this questionnaire was overwhelmingly positive. The completion process was predominantly enjoyable for the respondents. In follow-up interviews, some respondents told me that it was challenging to fill out the questionnaire but examining their concept of *Heimat* felt rewarding to most of the respondents and in fact, encouraged further discussion in their private environment. As a general impression it must be said that the majority of the respondents' answers exude a certain melancholy with regards to *Heimat*. This is

particularly expressed by individuals who have lost or given up the aspect(s) that represents *Heimat* to them. Although when asked whether their feelings towards *Heimat* tend to be more positive or negative, the overwhelming majority of the respondents (except for one individual) connect *Heimat* with positive feelings, the individuals described in the previous sentence more often tend to express longing and nostalgia with regards to *Heimat*. One Generation III individual who has lived abroad for a considerable amount of time describes her feelings towards *Heimat* as ‘Nostalgic. My Heimat is a place, which I like to think of, and where I like to be, but when I am there, I know that I could not live there anymore, with my experiences and expectations’ (questionnaire 1, question 15, Translation by author). This melancholic connotation seems to be connected to a longing for something that has been in the past or possibly will be in the future.

5.1 *Heimat* associations

The concept of *Heimat* is associated with different aspects and feelings. Due to the subjective nature of the notion, different associations were found with regards to *Heimat*, often related to the respondents’ age and experiences. In general, to most East Germans surveyed, *Heimat* is a place of comfort and security. There is an almost unanimous agreement on the role of *Heimat* as a safe haven where familiar circumstances dominate and a social net provides comfort and security. This is often expressed along the lines of the following statement: ‘Coming home, to a place where one can feel comfortable and secure’ (questionnaire 4, question 11). The associations that were mentioned by most respondents are family (81%) and birthplace (60%) and these two aspects are mostly correlated, since in most cases, the respondent’s family still lives in that place. Many respondents think that *Heimat* is not necessarily a location or connected to any association but rather a feeling within themselves. This sentiment involves the feeling of familiarity, comfort, room for self-fulfilment, warmth, culture, memories of the past, and loved ones. One respondent describes her feeling of *Heimat* as ‘A return to the people who accept me the way I am’ (questionnaire 5, question 11). Room for self-fulfilment and acceptance, being able to just ‘be’ without justifications necessary, appears to be a fundamental aspect of *Heimat*.

Besides these sensations, language is among the most frequently used associations with regards to *Heimat*. The mother tongue and its familiar sound exude the earlier described

feelings and increase the intensity of the connection to *Heimat*. Social bonds with family members and friends are to most respondents indicators of *Heimat*. In addition to language, these ties help create the feelings ‘necessary’ to make a *Heimat*. Most respondents imply that their *Heimat* is their *Heimat* because of the social net including family and friends.

Furthermore, nature and particular landmarks are often catalysts of the sense of *Heimat*. 25% of respondents emphasise the importance of nature and the familiar landscape for the sense of *Heimat*. Nature is especially mentioned by Generation I individuals (35%), however not at all an association for *Heimat* for Generation III individuals. This may be a matter of age as the appreciation for nature and the peacefulness it exudes, in general, increases with age. Landmarks and nature often take the role of a ‘signifier’ of *Heimat*, along with language, traditional foods, and other *Heimat-specific* characteristics. Few people would say that *Heimat* is their language or that mouldered, old house across the street. However, these and other features signalise their *Heimat*, and are more a part of the structure of *Heimat* than the feeling of *Heimat*. Also cultural heritage and activities fall into this category and are an important ‘Heimat-building’ component to many respondents, especially Generation I and II.

Most people feel the strongest connection to their *Heimat* when they are away, whether for a short holiday or a longer stay abroad (30%). The longing for the familiarity and belongingness of *Heimat* is missed most abroad, as one respondent suggests that it can be beautiful abroad but one can never really belong there (questionnaire 23, question 16). The second strongest connection to *Heimat* is felt when with family, friends in a comfortable environment. Other circumstances when people feel closest to their *Heimat*, when the tie is strongest, include positive news about progress in the home region, memories, and regional particularities (culture, traditions, music, dialect, landmarks). The answers to when they feel least connected to their *Heimat* are believed to be more East-German-specific as they express a certain shame with regards to disrespectful, discriminative and ignorant behaviour of their fellow citizens in foreign cultures and within their own culture. One respondent expresses the circumstances of the least felt connection with their *Heimat* as the moment ‘when the ‘Germanness’ is emphasised and dominating’ (questionnaire 6, question 17).

The question of *Heimat* away from *Heimat* can be used to clarify the notion of *Heimat*. First and foremost, the distinction of *Heimat* (home) and *zuhause* (at home) must be emphasised. A number of respondents believe that it is possible to feel *zuhause* (at home) in several different places, but there is only one *Heimat*. In order to feel at home, people often rely on memorabilia and loved ones. However, most respondents believe that the actual *Heimat* cannot be recreated by the help of only one aspect. The combination of a number of *Heimat* characteristics is decisive, which makes it more difficult to ‘move the *Heimat*’. In fact, only 24% of respondents state that the actual location of their perceived *Heimat* has changed through the course of their lives. This relatively low number shows the importance of the ‘right ingredients’ necessary to create *Heimat*. It appears that if one factor of what *Heimat* means to the individual or one association for *Heimat* is missing another place cannot be *Heimat*. Objects from the *Heimat* such as photos or pieces of furniture are used to commemorate *Heimat* or, in other words, to create similar feelings as in their *Heimat* which is also a search for comfort and belongingness. Associations of *Heimat* are often overlapping which means that no single association represents *Heimat* but several aspects combine to stand a sense of *Heimat*.

In order to analyse the responses and opinions of the 57 East Germans surveyed in more detail, the answers have been examined with respect to the four dimensions of *Heimat* that have been established in the first part of this paper. Furthermore, the topics of ‘*Heimat* and East Germany’ and ‘*Heimat* and Europe’ were emphasised in order to find conclusive answers to the research question.

5.2 *Heimat* and Spatial Dimension

According to the literature, *Heimat* is very often connected to a particular place. Relph and Robertson emphasise the relationship between belongingness, *Heimat* and place (Relph, 1976, Robertson et al., 1994). Deriving their theories from different fields of study, these scholars, among others, highlight and explain the significance of place and location in the home-making process.

42% of respondents believe that the feeling of *Heimat* is tied to a location, 53% of them belonging to Generation III (67% of Generation III). In fact, when asked about where or what their *Heimat* is, 89% of Generation III relate it to the place of their birth and

childhood. In 60% of the cases, individuals of all generations see the place / region of their birth, childhood and youth as their *Heimat*. The majority of individuals who do not have children are amongst this group (71%). Without their 'own' family, people tend to be more connected to their parents and the place of their childhood. This can be explained by the expression 'centre of life'. With the establishment of one's own family including children, the centre of life often switches from one's own parents to the 'new' nucleus family.

The increasing mobility of people, goods and ideas can be seen as a result of the ongoing globalisation process. The European Union is especially embracing this aspect. However, it is a fairly new concept in the minds of the inhabitants of former GDR. Up until 20 years ago, movement in the world was very difficult for the common citizen of the GDR and often limited to fellow Eastern bloc nations. The hypothesis that the feeling of *Heimat* is less connected to a particular place for people who are more mobile, who have lived in several places away from the place of their birth and for people belonging to Generation III, could not be confirmed. These two aspects seem to be very much related though. Generation III individuals questioned are more mobile and have lived in many different places, often abroad. In fact, four of the 18 Generation III respondents are expatriates, and nine of them (50%) have lived in a foreign country for several months, therefore 72% of Generation III while only 12.5% of Generation II and only 8% of Generation I have had a living experience in a foreign country. This considerably increased mobility of Generation III members can be explained by the various mobility programmes initiated for example by the European Union (eg. ERASMUS). However, the former GDR takes on a particular position since its politics of demarcation and surveillance made travelling to "Western" states - in fact any travelling abroad - let alone stays of long duration in such countries extremely difficult, even impossible for the majority of GDR citizens. 23% of respondents mentioned travel restrictions when asked for limitations in the GDR. This clearly explains the lack of "foreign experience" of Generation I and II. The surprising and unexpected outcome of this survey was that people who have not left their *Heimat* region connect *Heimat* less with a location, a particular place than people who have lived or are living in several different places, towns, countries. All expatriates tie *Heimat* to a particular place, namely the place of their birth and childhood. 50% of 'mobile' individuals connect 'Heimat' with a location, while only 34% of people who have not left their *Heimat*

region do the same. This was surprising since it was believed that an increased mobility would result in a less important spatial dimension and an increased social dimension. Especially the people of Generation III who have spent time or still live abroad connect *Heimat* with the place of their birth, childhood and youth.

The relationship between *Heimat* as a location and mobility can be clearly shown by looking at Generation II. 70% of Generation II individuals still live in the place of their birth or the same region and only 19% of Generation II individuals believe that *Heimat* is connected to a particular place. This is considerably less than the number of Generation III individuals who associate *Heimat* with a location (67%). However, the number of people from Generation II who have lived abroad or have left their home region for some time is minimal (only two of 16). This could be explained with the concept 'you miss what you have lost or given up'. Many Generation III individuals have changed their place of residence numerous times in a relatively short period of time. The instability caused by this unsteady lifestyle may cause this reorientation to their roots and the place of their childhood. In addition, due to the absence of having their own children in most cases and their relatively young age, the ties between these individuals and their parents are very strong.

Generation I needs to be divided into expellees and non-expellees as the understanding of *Heimat* and the experiences of these two groups differ considerably. Seven Generation I individuals (30% of Generation I) surveyed were, as children, forced to leave their *Heimat* due to the stipulations of the war conferences, particularly of the Potsdam Conference held from July 16 to August 2, 1945 by the Allied forces (Brockhaus Encyclopaedia, 1997). The agreement in Potsdam resulted in the reduction of Germany by 25 percent compared to its pre-war borders, shifting the eastern borders westwards. The former German regions of Silesia, East Prussia, West Prussia and Pomerania were now Polish territory and most German inhabitants of these regions were forced to leave their *Heimat* and make their way, mostly on foot, in the middle of the harsh winter of 1945, to German territory. Many of those expellees often describe their experiences in their new 'exile' *Heimat* after their expulsion in a rather bitter manner. Discrimination in the new *Heimat* was common as described by many expellees. In the times of the GDR, the expulsion of German citizens was a taboo topic and expellees were euphemistically called 'resettlers'. Most expellees call their forced

resettlement ‘escape’ which makes its unwanted nature apparent. Most of them were very young at the time of leaving their first *Heimat*, which can explain why none of them ties *Heimat* to the place where they were born. One expellee describes her feelings with the following statement: ‘After the escape a sense of *Heimat* did not emerge and before the escape it hadn’t been developed yet’ (questionnaire 8, question 23). For most of them, a new *Heimat* feeling developed only with the formation of their own family including their own children. Expellees often, in contrast to other members of their generation, prioritise the relationship between loved people and *Heimat* rather than regional culture and *Heimat*. Only few Generation I individuals still live in the place of their birth and childhood (17%), however, the majority (30%) lives in the region of their birth. Besides forced resettlement, moving was often work-related.

5.3 *Heimat* and Temporal Dimension

Heimat has a significant temporal dimension. The majority of the respondents (75%) relate feelings of the past to *Heimat*. To many of them, *Heimat* survives in their memories of the past. In most cases, this correlates with the understanding of *Heimat* as the place of birth, childhood and youth. As all of the respondents are in their adulthood, these periods lie in their past. Only 12% relate it to the present time and a minimal 5% to thoughts of the future. Due to the overwhelming connection of *Heimat* with thoughts and memories of the past, no noteworthy generational change has been detected.

The connection between *Heimat* and nostalgia becomes apparent within this temporal dimension. As for most East Germans surveyed the sense of *Heimat* is related to the past, aspects of *Heimat* cannot at all or can only rarely be recreated. This explains the impression of a subliminal melancholy and sad longing with regards to *Heimat* reflected in the opinion of a Generation III male when asked about where or what *Heimat* is: ‘Lost’ (Questionnaire 11, question 13).

The majority of respondents believe that their understanding of *Heimat* has changed over their lifetime through experiences and knowledge gained (70%). A large number of people suggest that before their adulthood, they had only little relation to the concept of *Heimat* and in fact developed their grasp and appreciation of *Heimat* only by leaving this *Heimat* for a certain time or with increasing age. ‘When I was younger, I never really reflected about ‘Heimat’. Only within the last couple of years, I have developed a

particular longing for 'Heimat' that is also related to the present and not only to the past' (questionnaire 5, question 20). A number of Generation I individuals state that in their younger years, the topic of *Heimat* was taboo since it was related to fascism. As mentioned before, the concept of *Heimat* has often been misused in German history for propagandistic purposes. This perspective is slowly weakening which gives room for 'new' thoughts, discussions and understandings with regards to *Heimat*.

The majority of people who have left the place and region of their childhood indicate that their understanding of *Heimat* has changed over the years, while most of the people who state that their understanding of *Heimat* has never changed throughout their lifetime have never left their Heimat region for longer than a holiday trip (82%). This can be explained with the help of some of the answers from the questionnaire. Many respondents believe that only by leaving their *Heimat* do they start to think about what *Heimat* means to them which often changes their understanding of *Heimat*.

5.4 *Heimat* and Social Dimension

The social dimension of *Heimat* is related to social relationships. *Heimat* is the notion used for a location of belonging due to a social network that guarantees or seemingly guarantees social integration and safety.

5.4.1 Heimat and Family

Family can be seen as one of the strongest social ties between humans, genetically and emotionally. Several questions that are intended to detect a potential connection between *Heimat* and family have been included in the questionnaire as preliminary research indicated a significant connection between *Heimat* and family. The aspect of family is the most frequently mentioned association of *Heimat* among the respondents. A large number of them understand *Heimat* and nucleus family as synonymous. In fact, 81% of the East Germans surveyed emphasise the important role of family in the Heimat-making and Heimat-preservation processes. The allocation among generations is relatively equal, suggesting that family is significantly connected to *Heimat* among all generations surveyed. Several respondents (40%) implied that *Heimat* is where the family is, binding *Heimat* inseparably to family (questionnaires 1, 5, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 24, 25, 29, 31, 32, 33, 37, 39, 45, 47, 54, 57, question 25). No significant correlation between the association of family with *Heimat* and the number of persons in

a household or the number of children could be found. The individuals who do not view family as necessary building material in the *Heimat*-making and preservation process expressed, in general, a more loose relationship to their family due to disputes or the passing of family members.

5.4.2 *Heimat and Friends*

Friends and community constitute a similar social network as family, mostly without the genetic ties. Therefore, the role of them in the home-making process is more significant to people who do not see family as an important aspect of *Heimat*. The general tendency is that friends are important, yet not crucial for transforming a place into a *Heimat*. Friends make most respondents feel ‘at home’ as they give a feeling of belongingness but do not make up or create *Heimat*. One Generation II member explains the relationship between friends and *Heimat* the following way and reflects other respondents’ opinions: ‘There where one has many social contacts, it is easier to feel ‘at Heimat’. Through them a place becomes a centre of life but not ‘Heimat’ (questionnaire 41, question 27).

5.4.3 *Heimat and Gender*

With regards to subjective, often interpretative notions, gender-specific differences are common. Prior to the analysis of the questionnaire, it was assumed that there might be certain gender-specific tendencies with regards to the perception of *Heimat*. These assumptions were not confirmed. In fact, no correlation between the understanding of *Heimat* and gender were to be found. To both genders the concept appears to be equally emotional and no gender-specific associations were detected.

5.5 **Heimat and cultural dimension**

5.5.1 *Heimat and Language*

As explored in the first part of this paper, *Heimat* is often related to language. The mother tongue and its presence is, for many respondents (83%), a determining factor of *Heimat*. The familiarity of the sound of one’s own language can create an instant sense of *Heimat*. Alongside family, language takes on the most significant role in the *Heimat*-making process. Even within the circle of family, a common language that is understood by all of the members is in most cases a given. Therefore, a commonly understood language is a key ingredient and prerequisite of the mixture that makes a *Heimat*. It

does not create *Heimat* by itself, but in combination with other factors such as family. Language is a crucial part of one's identity. Guibernau and Breakwell are among the scholars who emphasise the importance of language in the identity construction process (Guibernau, 1995, Breakwell et al., 1996). The use of a different language, even when fluently spoken, often results in the weakening or even loss of the means of expression for particular personality aspects. Language reflects numerous cultural and personal particularities that often cannot be recreated when using a 'foreign language'.

Only 26% of the respondents are able to speak another language fluently besides their mother tongue. The overwhelming majority (93%) are Generation III individuals, while only one of Generation II and no one of Generation I speaks another language fluently. In fact, 83% of all Generation III respondents state the fluency of at least one other language. This is certainly connected to the increased mobility of this generation which was established after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the proceeding unification efforts of the EU.

Prior to conducting the survey, it was assumed that the increasing mobility of people and thus the number of fluently spoken languages besides the mother tongue may have an impact on the significance of the mother tongue. People who have lived abroad for quite some time are mostly able to speak another language almost as well as their mother tongue. Therefore the mother tongue could lose its exceptional position and significance as a basic constituent of an individual's social identity. This loss may be an explanation for the loss of a sense of *Heimat* – imagined or not – of sojourners. This is not confirmed by the answers. The mother tongue is equally important to people who live in a foreign country or have lived in one for some time and are able to speak another language fluently as to people who have not had such experience. The mother tongue seems to not lose its significance in the identity and home-making process, even after years of living with a foreign language. One expatriate who has lived outside of Germany for about ten years describes her feeling towards her mother tongue the following way: 'I am at home within my language (meaning her mother tongue)'; she continues by suggesting that this is possibly the reason why she does not feel at home in her current location of residence (questionnaire 1, question 28). This is therefore also true for the one individual who has established her own family abroad. In fact, she mentions that her mother tongue gained significance after the birth of her first child

abroad. People who have not had a living experience abroad, surrounded by a ‘foreign’ language, and who do not speak another language, often describe the understandable language as a necessary condition for the *Heimat*-making process, since there is no other way to communicate and build social networks. For the people who have lived abroad, the mother tongue has a special position of a connecting tie to their *Heimat*. One expatriate suggests that when he meets someone abroad and this person speaks his language/dialect, he listens more closely and immediately feels a bit more connected (questionnaire 7, question 28).

Dialects often play an important role in the feeling of *Heimat* in many countries. For example, Italians put a lot of emphasis on their regional dialects as a crucial part of their identity. In East Germany dialects tend to have a rather negative connotation. Often spoken dialects are understood as indicators of a lack of education. One respondent even connects an ‘underclass character’ with the regional dialect (questionnaire 18, question 28). The regional dialect seems to play only a subordinate role in the understanding of *Heimat* of the surveyed East Germans. The negative connotation of the regional dialect is most developed in Generation III while many Generation I individuals express a certain nostalgia with regards to the ‘lost’ regional dialect as to many it is enjoyable to hear dialects of their childhood and in fact it transmits a sense of *Heimat*. However, with the death of the old generation many dialects and traditions get lost (questionnaire 51, question 28).

5.5.2 *Heimat and Traditions*

Traditions and family are often two inseparable notions. However, traditions can also be linked to the national culture or the local culture, as well as the particular group culture. To many respondents, traditions were seen as part of the family life and their personal procedures. A number of respondents, however, separated this aspect from the cultural and regional dimension of traditions which include town celebrations, folk music, regional poetry, and literature.

Family and personal traditions play a significant role in the *Heimat*-making process throughout all generations. Traditions in the more cultural or regional sense seem to be considerably more important to people from the oldest generation with 35% of Generation I allocating a significant role to regional traditions in the *Heimat*-making

process, while only one Generation II individual and no one of Generation III agrees. Family and personal traditions, however, seem to be much more significant to the ‘younger’ generations. When asked for particular songs, poems, or literature that are connected with the respondents’ sense of *Heimat*, it turned out that music especially seems to have a *Heimat*-connecting character. 88% of the respondents connect music and particular songs with *Heimat*, among other factors. In fact, most respondents suggested at least one regional-specific song. Often the music mentioned is related to childhood. Besides language, music is one of the first cultural aspects children are exposed to, an aspect inseparable from childhood memories. Therefore, many respondents relate particular songs they have regularly sung in school or other occasions to *Heimat*.

As life becomes increasingly more global-oriented, regional traditions lose their meaning and high status for the younger generations. Traditions play no role at all to 56% of Generation III. The percentage decreases as we move towards Generation I (Generation II: 38% and Generation I: 22%). This development often results in the disappearance of many regional traditions such as traditional clothing and customs. Nevertheless, due to the relatively new European Union focus on regions and their traditions, many customs experience a renaissance, especially in the entertainment field such as festivals.

5.5.3 *Heimat and Religion*

Assumptions of a noteworthy relationship between *Heimat* and religion could not be confirmed. 60% of the respondents found religion to be not connected to the concept of *Heimat* at all. One Generation III puts this tendency into words with: ‘But even if I would change religion, my *Heimat* would remain my *Heimat*’ (questionnaire 54, question 26). As expected due to decreasing significance of church in everyday life, the percentage of Generation I individuals who feel that religion plays an important role in the construction of a *Heimat* is highest among the generations analysed. 52% of Generation I associate religion with ‘*Heimat*’, while only 31% of Generation II and 28% of Generation III think the same. Members of Generation I and especially those individuals within this group who were forced to leave their homes in the Eastern parts of pre-war Germany tend to highlight the connection between *Heimat* and religion. To many of them, church was the place within a rather hostile environment where they

found acceptance, a feeling of belonging, and sometimes a *Heimat*. Also Generation II members, if baptised, see church as one of the first points of reference to recreate the sense of *Heimat* after moving. However, this tendency is decreasing with Generation III, whose religious background is merely basis for values and many traditions rather than a place of belonging.

Most of the aspects mentioned above are interrelated. A particular location becomes significant or *Heimat* because it is the place where the family lives, where the childhood was spent, where a community has been found. In general, Generation III seems to be particularly drawn to the spatial dimension of *Heimat*. Generation II clearly emphasises the importance of the social dimension and Generation I, while including all other dimensions into their understanding of *Heimat*, in comparison with the other generations, particularly leans toward the cultural dimension of *Heimat*. Thus, a change of the associations with regards to *Heimat* over three post-war generations of East Germans can be detected. Therefore, the understanding of *Heimat* within the East German context will be analysed in order to draw further conclusions regarding the research question.

5.6 *Heimat* and East Germany

In the forefront, the relationship between post-war East Germans and their East German *Heimat* appeared to be somewhat problematic. Eastern Germany went through three very different political systems within less than 50 years, including the systems' ideologies, values and attitudes. Generation I and II lived most of their lives within the socialistic system of the GDR. Most Generation III individuals spent part of their childhood in this, often quoted as despotic, system. The limitations due to GDR policies and demarcation tactics were mostly mentioned when asked about life in the GDR. These limitations put many East Germans under an enormous amount of pressure and included travel restrictions, limitations in the choice of field of study and work, lack of freedom of speech and assembly, forced conformity, obligatory military service for at least one and a half years for all young men, the surveillance machinery of the Stasi (GDR secret police), prohibition of contact to 'Westfamily', psychological pressure due to the construction of the Berlin Wall, fear of the authorities (eg. Border controls), career limitations, plus the planned economy and its restricted allocation of consumer

goods such as cars and telephones. It was for example common to wait for a very long time for the ordered car, sometimes even up to 10 years. Moreover, members of religious groups, first and foremost Protestants and Catholics, suffered vast life restrictions and were often under constant surveillance. Many of the respondents mention such limitations and political as well as social pressure from the authorities due to their (open) membership in a religious group. The most frequently mentioned limitation was the restriction regarding free travelling (37% of all respondents).

While Generation III was in general not directly affected by these constraints due to their age (78% of Generation III did not feel oppressed or limited in any way), the impact on the lives of Generation II and I was often more profound. 88% of Generation II and 78% of Generation I state that they have felt oppressed or mostly limited in the GDR. In fact, only two of 16 Generation II respondents did not feel affected in any way by the GDR authorities.

Feelings connected with and memories of the time in the GDR are generally of a positive nature and include (non-political) values such as solidarity among people and a feeling of togetherness, respect for each other, community, a certain amount of security (work and social system), the good quality of the education system and a happy childhood. Negative memories include the feeling of being imprisoned. However, most respondents suggest that they made the best out of every situation despite the limitations and more difficult circumstances and are in fact proud of their lives in the GDR (without taking any political or ideological standpoint). One Generation II member states that life in the GDR taught her 'to whip a lot up from nothing' (questionnaire 27, question 33). Many of the answers exuded a subliminal pride of having lived in the GDR apart from the political and ideological circumstances and of having been part of a peaceful revolution.

Still today, 20 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and 19 years after Germany's unification, many East Germans feel predominantly more East German than 'totally' German (39%). Respondents explain this by the different history and experiences and by often different treatment of East Germans by West Germans. A number of East Germans surveyed criticise West German lack of knowledge and interest in East Germans and East Germany. The majority of people who think this way belong to

Generation I, while most Generation III individuals make no difference between East and West Germans.

5.7 *Heimat* and Europe

Globalisation is believed to have a profound impact on the perception of *Heimat* in today's world. Within this work globalisation is used as an umbrella term for the ongoing coalescence of cultures, in terms of economy, politics, values, ideologies, and behaviours.

The ongoing unification process of the European Union makes movement within its borders almost unlimited. The projects promoting intercultural dialogue and common European values are countless. These developments have caused ecstatic waves of enthusiasm but are also vulnerable to critical attack, which, though sometimes exaggerated, has often been justified. Negative effects within the intercultural context certainly include the amalgamation of cultures at the cost of cultural particularities. Furthermore, the often described loss of roots due to seemingly borderless movement for education, work and leisure, can cause confusion and a sense of disorientation. Positive as well as negative effects need to be considered and dealt with accordingly in order to profit the most from the globalisation process. The prevailing attitude towards the globalisation process is positive, yet most respondents express the importance of caution within the process as it has the potential to, and often does, create an imbalance among different parts of the world.

Most of the East Germans surveyed believe that the concept and meaning of *Heimat* has changed due to this economic, political, social and cultural unification process. The majority believes that the connection between *Heimat* and a particular location will diminish and cultural horizons will be broadened due to the increased mobility. However, especially Generation I members suggest that in general only Generation III individuals are directly affected by the positive and negative changes within today's world. When it comes to assessing the success of the European Union's promotion of a European citizenship - meaning a political, social and cultural connection between Europeans - the question of feeling European was used to detect initial thoughts. 61 % of East Germans feel European but often only in a context outside of Germany. This attitude however is clearly generation-specific as all of the Generation III respondent

feel like Europeans (100%) while only 44% of Generation II and 52% of Generation I do so. This must be connected to the increased mobility and the resulting contact with other cultures of Generation III (as established above). The significance of the geographical context can be described with the degree of cultural familiarity, both with regards to the local culture and the geographical knowledge of the counterpart.

The analysis of the questionnaires and interviews confirmed some of the hypotheses established beforehand and rejected others. In conclusion, it can be said that the associations and their significance to the individual have changed across the three post-war generations analysed. The connection between *Heimat* and a particular place is, as opposed to the prior hypothesis, strengthening the younger the generation is. Traditional markers of identity such as language and family are not found to be losing significance moving from the oldest to the youngest generation. However, the importance of particular identity markers, such as traditions, differs from generation to generation while family and language are equally vital for the identity and homemaking-process among all generations. Growing up and living in the GDR has often influenced the respondents' relationship to their *Heimat*. A consistent negative attitude towards their *Heimat* in East Germany could not be detected, but negative developments today and the feeling of imprisonment in the time of the existence of the GDR are frequently mentioned as reasons for discomfort and frustration in East Germany. Nevertheless, many of the East Germans questioned expressed a subtle pride with regards to their life in the GDR and the connected attitude of making the best out of every situation.

The analysis of the primary research conducted for this dissertation gave revealing information with regards to the East German understanding of *Heimat*. Especially the young Generation III seems to juggle their explorative spirit with their longing for their *Heimat*. This longing is often connected to a feeling of loss which in most cases has not been replaced yet by memories and feelings of *Heimat* towards their own children and their 'own' family apart from the place where they have grown up. *Heimat* must be seen as the counterpart of abroad, the foreign, the unfamiliar. Despite having lived within another community for a long time, the exact combination of aspects that make up 'Heimat' for the individual seems to be difficult to recreate. This is most likely related to the distance from the original *Heimat* and the resulting increased nostalgia for the old

Heimat, which is naturally developed when the amount of ‘foreign’ things and ways of doing things prevail. This nostalgia portrays an idealised image of *Heimat* that combines memories of the past with wishful thinking, and is in fact a longing that cannot be satisfied by reality anywhere.

The older generations have lived most of their lives in the nation construct of the German Democratic Republic until 1989 when their *Heimat* started to change drastically around them. Familiar ways of doing things, familiar buildings and products, and familiar customs disappeared within a short period of time. Nevertheless, this seems to have had a limited effect on their actual feeling of ‘Heimat’ and their associations with *Heimat*. Most of them mention certain difficulties and obstacles they were confronted with in the time of the existence of the GDR yet this did not gravely influence their understanding of *Heimat*. The processes that seem to influence the sense of *Heimat* the most are the forceful departure from *Heimat* including displacement as well as the deliberate abandonment of *Heimat*. In addition, the establishment of one’s own family including children has a profound impact on the perception of *Heimat*.

6. Conclusion

Home sweet home, fatherland, house, dwelling, Heimat, lieu d'origine, patria, domov, ojczyzna, מולדת, مَوْطِن, the place where we feel comfortable, where the heart is, where our kin is, where we were born - The notion of *home* has many expressions. Our need for a *home*, for belonging, is timeless. Despite different perceptions of *home* and the changes the concept has gone and is going through, the sense of *home* and the assurance of comfort and belongingness related to it appear to be a basic human need. *Home* is often taken for granted and is a concept upon which people in general do not spend a lot of time to reflect. However, changing political, social, and economical circumstances and especially the increasing mobility in today's world changes the perception of 'home'. *Home* is still equally important, but its implicitness seems to decrease in our globalising world.

The German expression *Heimat* is not solely the translation for the English word 'home'. In general, *Heimat* can be understood as the expression of the relationship between people and place with its meaning as a point of significance. *Heimat* is not merely nation-state, hometown or flat. It entails the entirety of German consciousness and memories and involves an intense longing for a 'better' place that has often been used and misused for political purposes. The concept involves a feeling of belonging and the situation from where we can make sense of the world. *Heimat* takes part in the construction of our identity. It is the sum of all of our personal living conditions, experiences and memories. This fact makes it almost impossible to recreate *Heimat*. The values that are involved in forming *Heimat* are belonging, unconditional love, safety, solidarity, family, comfort, familiarity, conservation of the environment, and stability.

The last century differentiated the German understanding of *Heimat* unchangeably with the profound marks it has left on the lives, the identity, and the self-conception of Germans. The example of East Germans demonstrates the impact of such marks and the changing circumstances, as the people of East Germany have gone through drastic changes in a relatively short period of time. The analysis presented in this paper clearly showed generational differences in the understanding of *Heimat*, while the significance

of something we can call *Heimat* has not decreased. In fact, roots and belongingness seem to be progressively more important as people's mobility increases.

The research for this dissertation can be transferred onto the concept of *home* per, despite the particular meaning of *Heimat*, due to general tendencies. The concept of *home* turned out to be rather difficult to define due to its subjective nature. In fact, everybody has a different understanding of *home* since it is constructed by particular experiences, memories and circumstances. By reviewing and examining a wide range of literature available in connection with *home* as well as analysing primary data collected through a questionnaire and face-to-face interviews, certain dimensions and commonalities in the understanding of *home* have been detected including the spatial, temporal, social and cultural aspects of *home*. These dimensions help to understand how we experience *home* and are constituted of the elements that, always in a person-specific combination, make a *home*.

The East German perception of *home* has gone through the stages of horrifying extremism, a taboo topic, safe haven for socialism, suspiciously-eyed surveillance machinery, confusing twilight zone, a place that is longed for. When asked about their *home*, East Germans have some difficulty answering the question and do so often with great care. Different generations prioritise their associations with *home* differently; however, the need for *home*, for belongingness remained the same. The primary research conducted in East Germany with 57 questionnaires and several face-to-face interviews showed different generational tendencies regarding the associations with *home*. One of the most significant outcomes of the survey was that the more the individual has moved around including longer distances, the more his or her understanding of *home* is connected to a particular location, mostly the place of birth and childhood. This result has implications for the increasing movement of people as well as the unification and mobility programmes of the European Union. Often the positive outcomes of such mobility have been emphasised including increasing knowledge, tolerance, and understanding of other cultures, national as well as group cultures. However, despite the undoubtedly numerous advantages, the results on the more negative side ought not to be neglected. Rootlessness and the feeling of a lack of belonging may result in less integration and less comfort, which can lead to unhappiness, restlessness, and potentially lower productivity. Mobility and living

abroad, away from the *home* influences the concept of *home* more while the change of the physical environment of the place we call *home* seems to have only a minimal effect. The nostalgia for this place often experienced when away from it cannot be completely satisfied anywhere unless the very same combination of aspects that represent *home* to the individual exists. People can feel *at home* in several places and many situations but the actual sense of home can rarely be recreated in a new place. With the rising mobility of people in Europe, the future meaning of *home* will be much more connected to a particular location, an often utopian place since it truly exists only in our memory or imagination. These aspects should be included and discussed in preparation seminars and materials for expatriates and exchange students to find possible solutions as knowledge of it may dampen negative reactions and possibly decrease the culture shock experienced in a foreign environment.

This research made the importance of a sense of *Heimat, home*, obvious. Life conditions and *home* associations may change. Nevertheless, the need of relying on a *home* remains a basic human need. Globalisation and the increased mobility that come along with it puts pressure on the understanding of *home* and may result in the necessity of re-evaluating the term. As a result of the analysis of literature and the primary research, it was established that the uniqueness of *home* is based on a combination of associative aspects and feelings that cannot or can only very rarely and under great difficulty be recreated. This is due to the fact that *home* is inseparably connected to memories, often reminiscent of ‘better’ times and that individual ‘recipe’ that make a place a *home*.

Research, policy-making and integration efforts needs take this significant aspect of *home* into consideration. Future analysis may involve the examination of perceptions of *home* in different cultures and in-depth studies of the understanding of *home* of expatriates. The tolerance and open-mindedness is one of the greatest gifts humans can make themselves by living in and with different cultures. Yet, *home* gives us the meaning, the foundation for our life. It provides us with a point of reference, an anchor to understand the world and us as individuals in this world. It is believed that travelling the world can only continue to offer the magical charm, the picturesque memories and the voluptuous diversity if we have a place to return to that gives us stability, safety, love and a *home*.

This is our home, these things, remain in the depth of our soul.

Carl Spitteler

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