



Taking Stock of Shock

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November 9, 1989



“Fear must disappear from the Earth”
A Poster in Berlin in June 1990

“No one will be worse off than before, but it will be much better for many.”

“Es wird niemandem schlechter gehen als zuvor, dafür vielen besser.”

- Helmut Kohl in 1990



“The present privatization process is also characterized by grave labor difficulties. Although the enterprises of the [Treuhand] presently employ 2.1 million people (after 4 million one year before), some 400,000 will have to be dismissed by the end of 1991... Their official dismissal will mean that unemployment in East Germany could go up to 40 percent by the end of the year.”



Manfred Bock, the former Director for Privatization of the Treuhandanstalt admitted in the fall of 1991 that:

“West German industry has mainly used privatization to broaden its production base and gain access to a new market of 16 million consumers.”





English Site > Germany > East Germany > Industrial Ruins: Forgotten Factories of Former East Germany

Rust in Peace

East Germany's Forgotten Factories

After Germany's reunification, factories across former East Germany shut down, fracturing communities and falling into disrepair. A new photo book details the abandoned workshops of a planned economy cut loose.

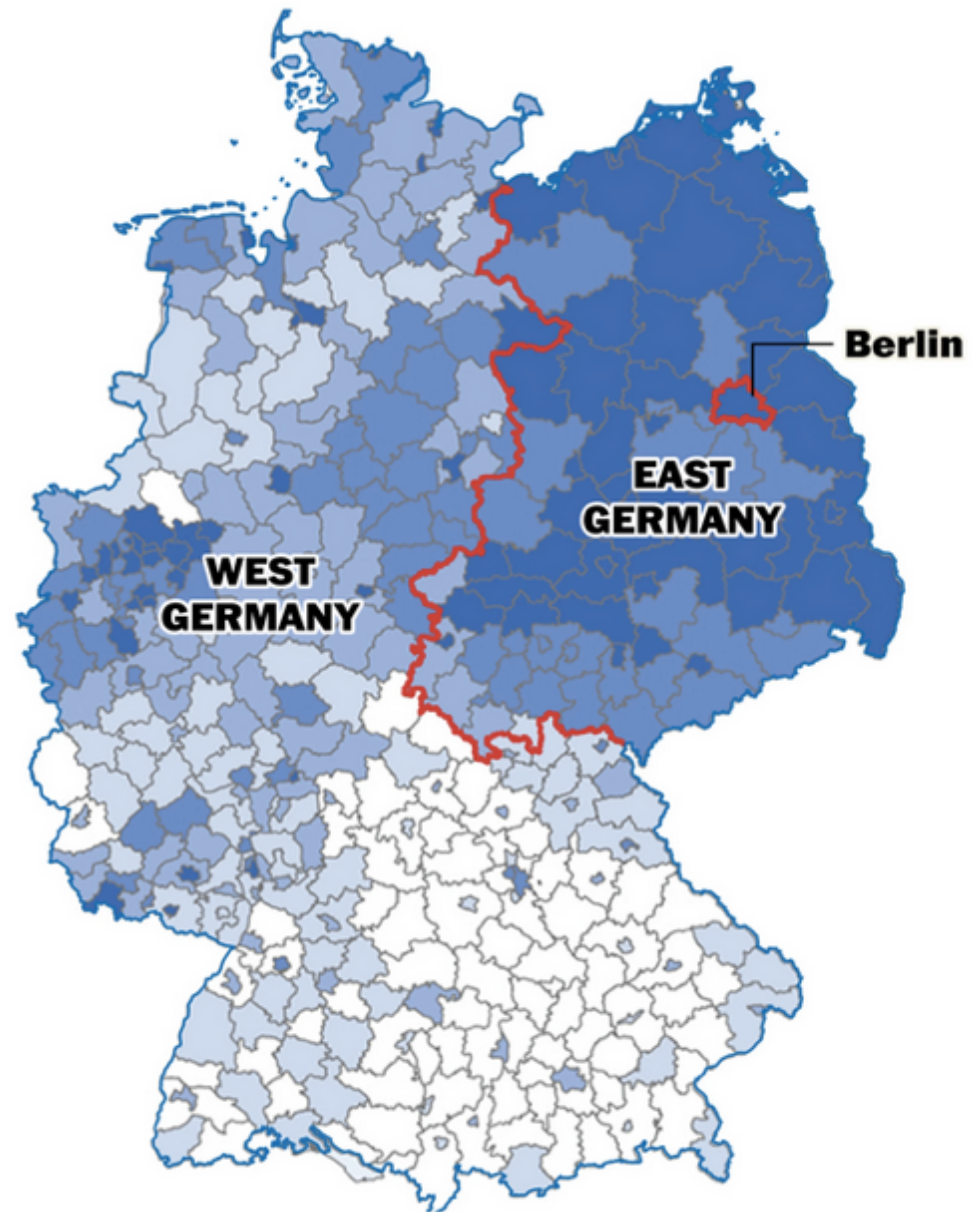


By *Fabienne Hurst* ▼

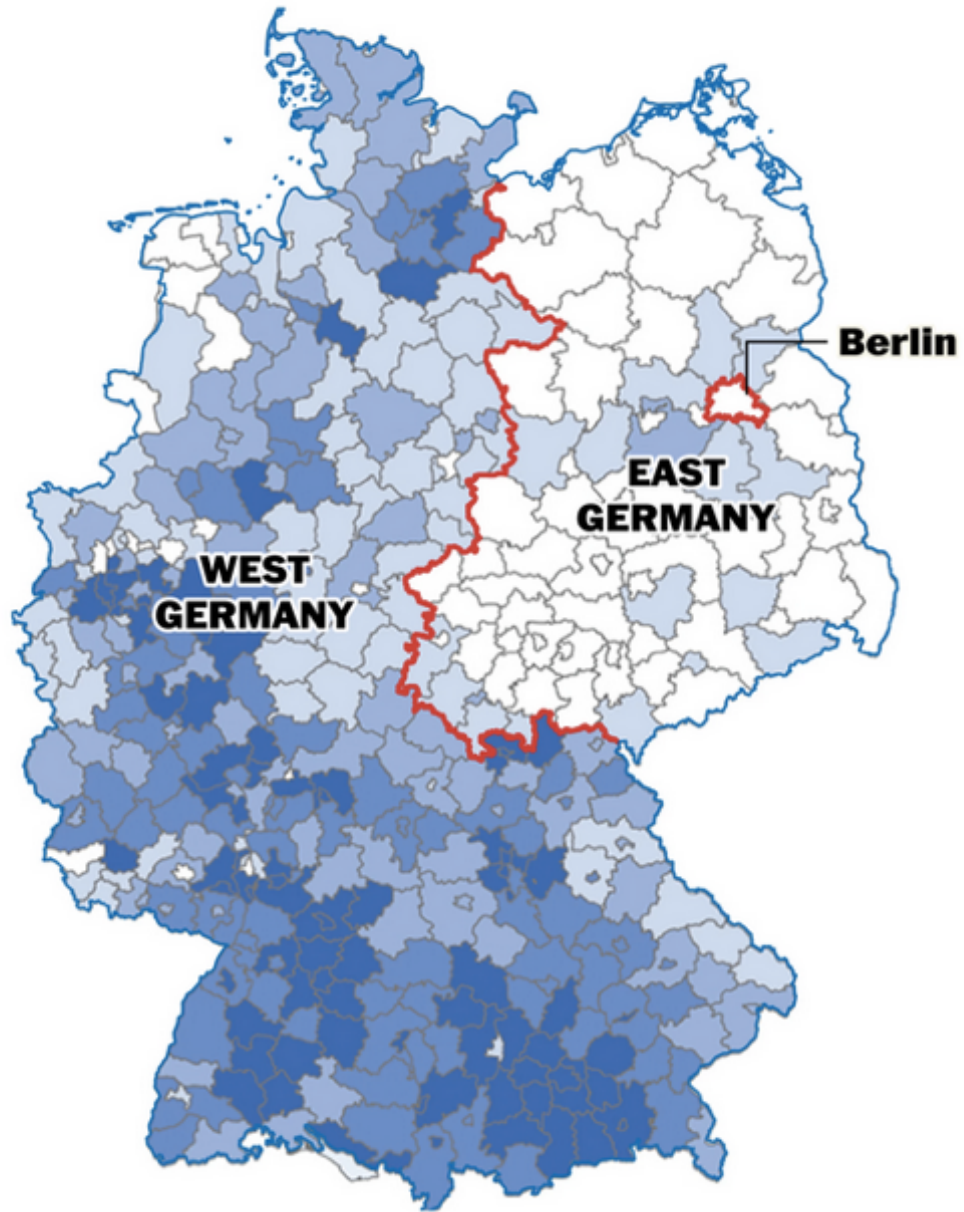


Unemployment rate

Data: 2013



https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/10/31/the-berlin-wall-fell-25-years-ago-but-germany-is-still-divided/?utm_term=.0cbc68460554



Disposable Income

Data: 2011

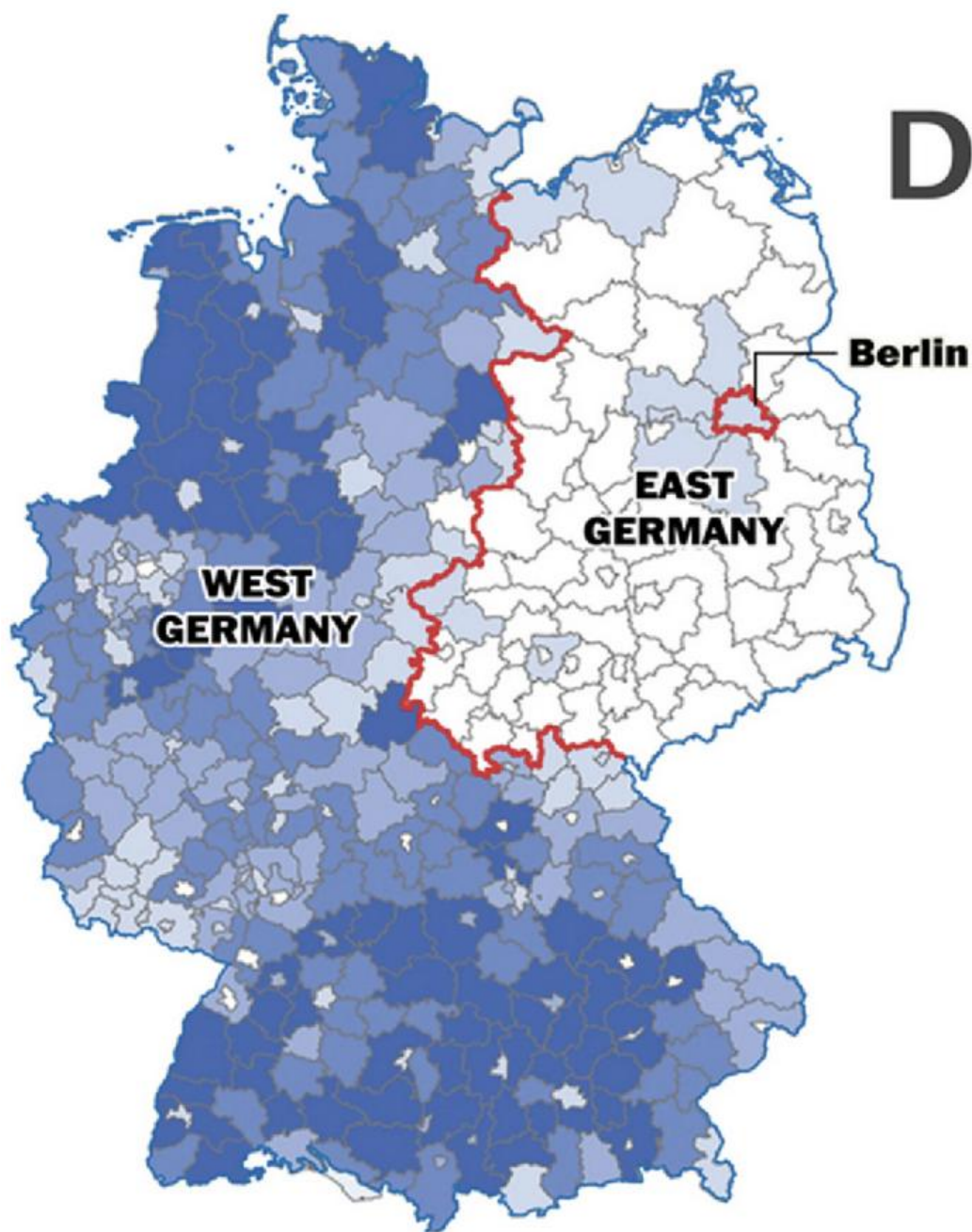
More

Less



Demographics

Percentage of young people
among total population



Data: 2011

Higher

Lower



Life satisfaction in Germany

Shown is the self-reported life satisfaction across German states (between 2012 to 2016) as reported on a scale from 0 to 10.



Data source: Gluecksatlas.de

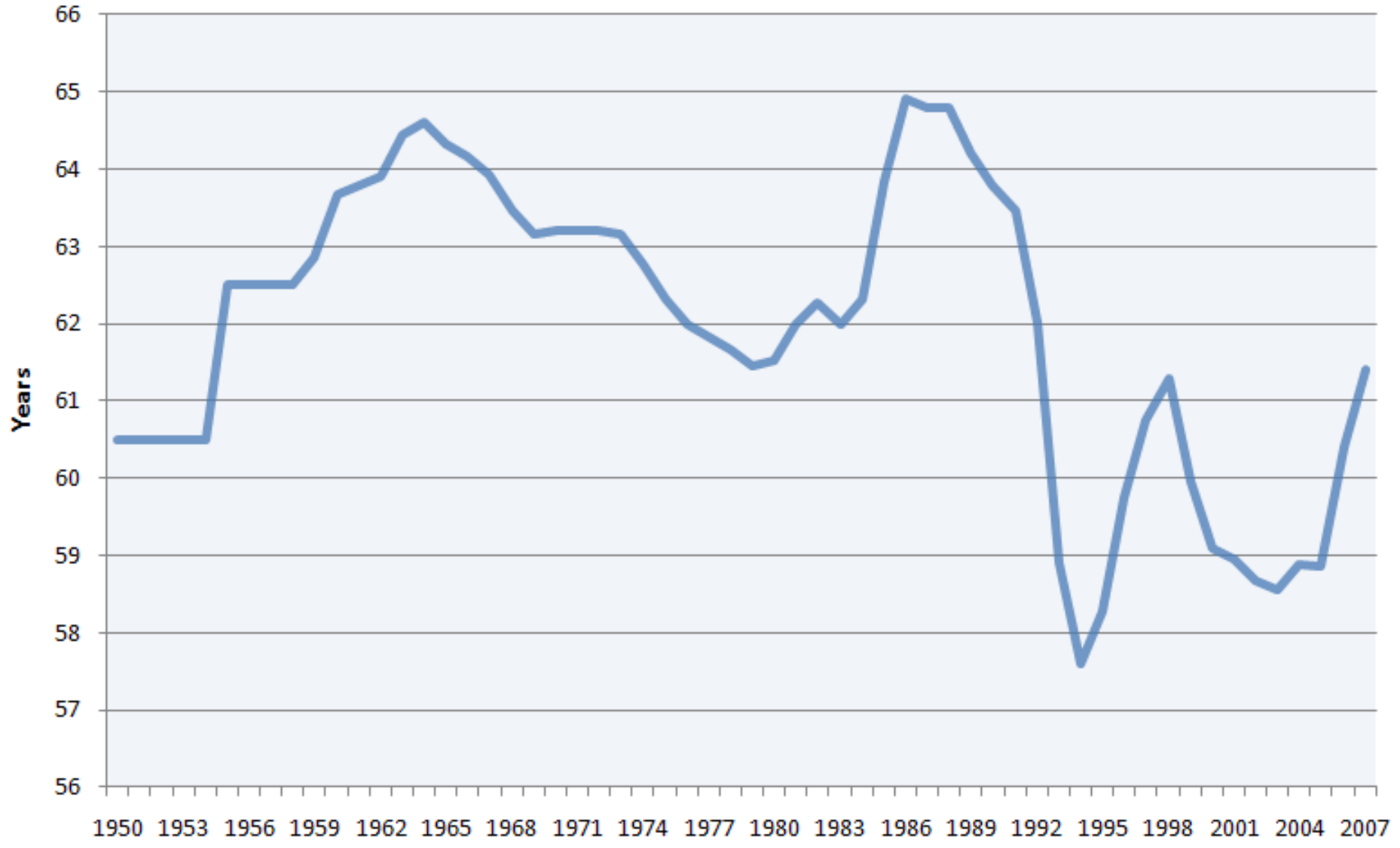
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From [OurWorldinData.org](https://ourworldindata.org). There you find research and more visualizations on happiness.

In 1998, researchers confirmed increased mortality rates for East Germans between 1989 and 1990, and attributed these excess deaths to the “drastic social, political, and economic changes that took place during the transition from the socialist to the market economy.” The German authors found the rise in deaths from alcoholism, heart and circulatory problems, and suicide causally related to the reunification process, mostly among middle aged men. Thousands lost their lives prematurely from the “psycho-social stress” associated with the transition.

Zimmermann, Klaus F.; Riphahn, Regina T. (1998): The Mortality Crisis in East Germany, *IZA Discussion paper series*, No. 6, pg 40. Online at: <http://www.econstor.eu/dspace/bitstream/10419/20852/1/dp6.pdf>. Accessed: March 8, 2016.

Russian Male Life Expectancy



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Easterlin, Richard A.

Working Paper

Lost in Transition: Life Satisfaction on the Road to Capitalism

SOEPpapers on Multidisciplinary Panel Data Research, No. 94

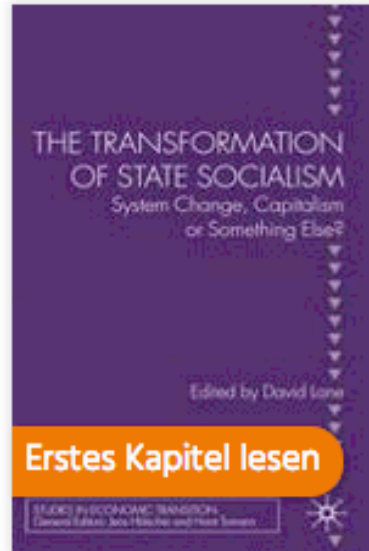
Provided in Cooperation with:

German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin)

Suggested Citation: Easterlin, Richard A. (2008) : Lost in Transition: Life Satisfaction on the Road to Capitalism, SOEPpapers on Multidisciplinary Panel Data Research, No. 94, Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (DIW), Berlin

“A visiting economist from Mars, confronted only with these GDP data, might well conclude that an economic disaster on the scale of the Great Depression had befallen some 400 million of the world’s population.”

Mass Privatization and the Post-communist Mortality Crisis



Autoren: Lawrence King, David Stuckler

Verlag: Palgrave Macmillan UK

“Countries in the ‘mortality belt’, spanning from Estonia in the north to Ukraine in the south, experienced life expectancy declines of up to six years within the first half-decade of reform — a peacetime mortality crisis unparalleled in modern history. To put this in perspective, eliminating all common forms of cancer corresponds to a life expectancy increase of approximately three years, a little less than half of the magnitude of Russia’s mortality experience. The United Nation’s MONEE project tabulates that the excess mortality during the 1990s, or deaths that would not have occurred if mortality had remained at 1989 levels, totalled over 3.2 million. This crisis is in no respects over; 15 years after transition 11 out of 25 of the post-communist countries have failed to recover to pre-transition levels of life expectancy”

Format: Abstract ▾

Send to ▾

[Int J Health Serv. 2009;39\(3\):461-89.](#)

Rapid large-scale privatization and death rates in ex-communist countries: an analysis of stress-related and health system mechanisms.

[King L¹](#), [Hamm P](#), [Stuckler D](#).

⊕ Author information

Abstract

“The authors show that implementation of neoliberal-inspired rapid, large-scale privatization programs ("mass privatization") was associated with significant declines in life expectancy, as well as with greater alcohol-related deaths, heart disease, and suicide rates. The authors interpret these findings as evidence that rapid organizational reform created excess psychosocial stress, which, consistent with the public health literature, increases risk of death at the individual level.”

THE IMPACT OF TRANSITION ON WELL-BEING





Those born at the start of transition are
1cm shorter than those born before or after



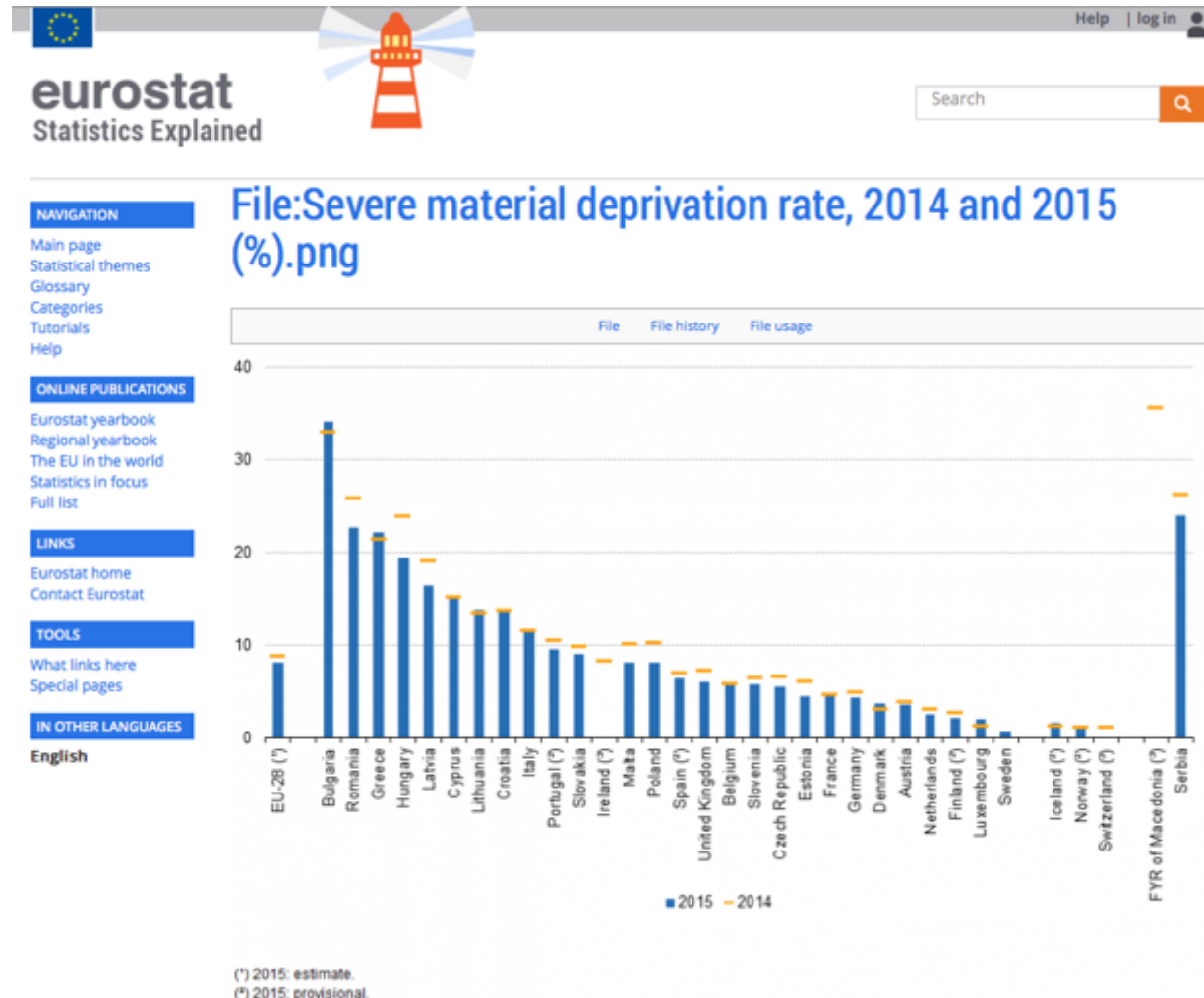


Reflecting factors like **stress** and **malnourishment**



That's comparable to growing up in a **war zone**

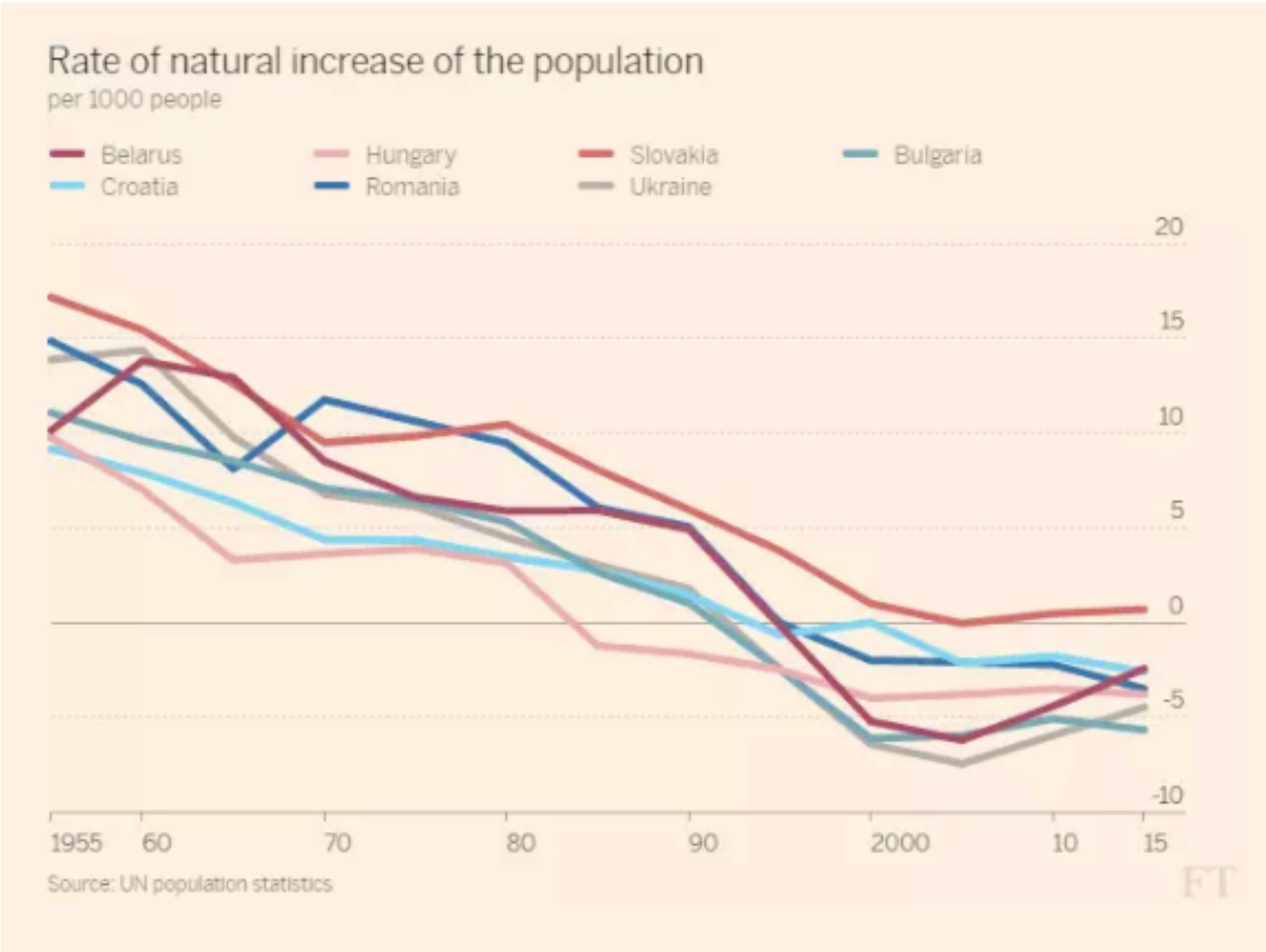
Increased poverty and deprivation



The top 10 countries with the fastest shrinking populations are all in Eastern Europe (with a few in Central and Northern Europe), according to [UN projections](#). Bulgaria, Latvia, Moldova, Ukraine, Croatia, Lithuania, Romania, Serbia, Poland, Hungary, are estimated to see their population shrink by 15% or more by 2050.

Country	2017 (million)	2050 (million)	Percentage change
Bulgaria	7.08	5.42	-23
Latvia	1.95	1.52	-22
Moldova	4.05	3.29	-19
Ukraine	44.22	36.42	-18
Croatia	4.19	3.46	-17
Lithuania	2.89	2.41	-17
Romania	19.68	16.40	-17
Serbia	8.79	7.45	-15
Poland	38.17	32.39	-15
Hungary	9.72	8.28	-15

Source: “The fastest shrinking countries on earth are in Eastern Europe,” <https://qz.com/1187819/country-ranking-worlds-fastest-shrinking-countries-are-in-eastern-europe/>



Source: "Eastern Europe has the largest population loss in modern history," Financial Times, <https://www.ft.com/content/70813826-0c64-33d3-8a0c-72059ae1b5e3>

IMF STAFF DISCUSSION NOTE

**Emigration and Its Economic Impact on
Eastern Europe**

Ruben Atoyan, Lone Christiansen, Allan Dizioli,
Christian Ebeke, Nadeem Ilahi, Anna Ilyina,
Gil Mehrez, Haonan Qu, Faezeh Raei, Alaina Rhee,
and Daria Zakharova

July 2016

SDN/16/07

Since the 1990s, over 20 million young people have migrated from Eastern to Western Europe looking for better opportunities

Ghostly Bulgaria

WEB EXCLUSIVE



Milena Mihova documents tales of poverty and depopulation in the Balkan nation. Photos by Hristo Rusev.



Abandoned villages
and depopulation

STRÖER

723-Plakat.de: Für die Werbeaussage ist allein die werbende Partei verantwortlich.

KOMMUNALWAHL 2019

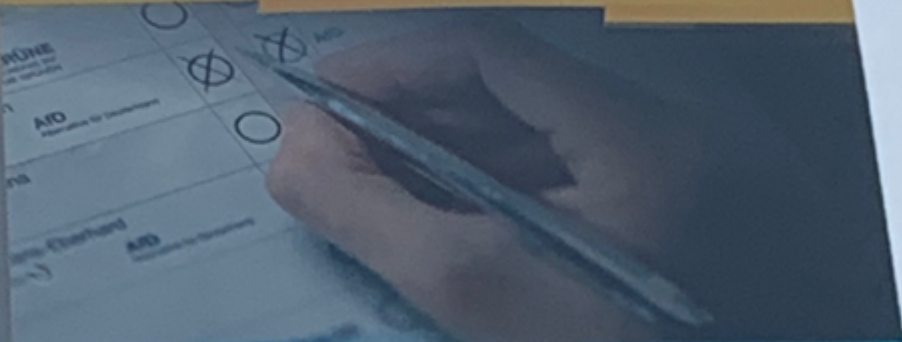
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SCHREIB' GESCHICHTE!

1989 | 2019
VOLLENDE
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1.9.
WÄHLEN
GELIEN



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**DER OSTEN
STEHT AUF!**

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Die -FRIEDLICHE REVOLUTION-
MIT DEM STIMMZETTEL



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**HOL DIR
DEIN LAND
ZURÜCK!**

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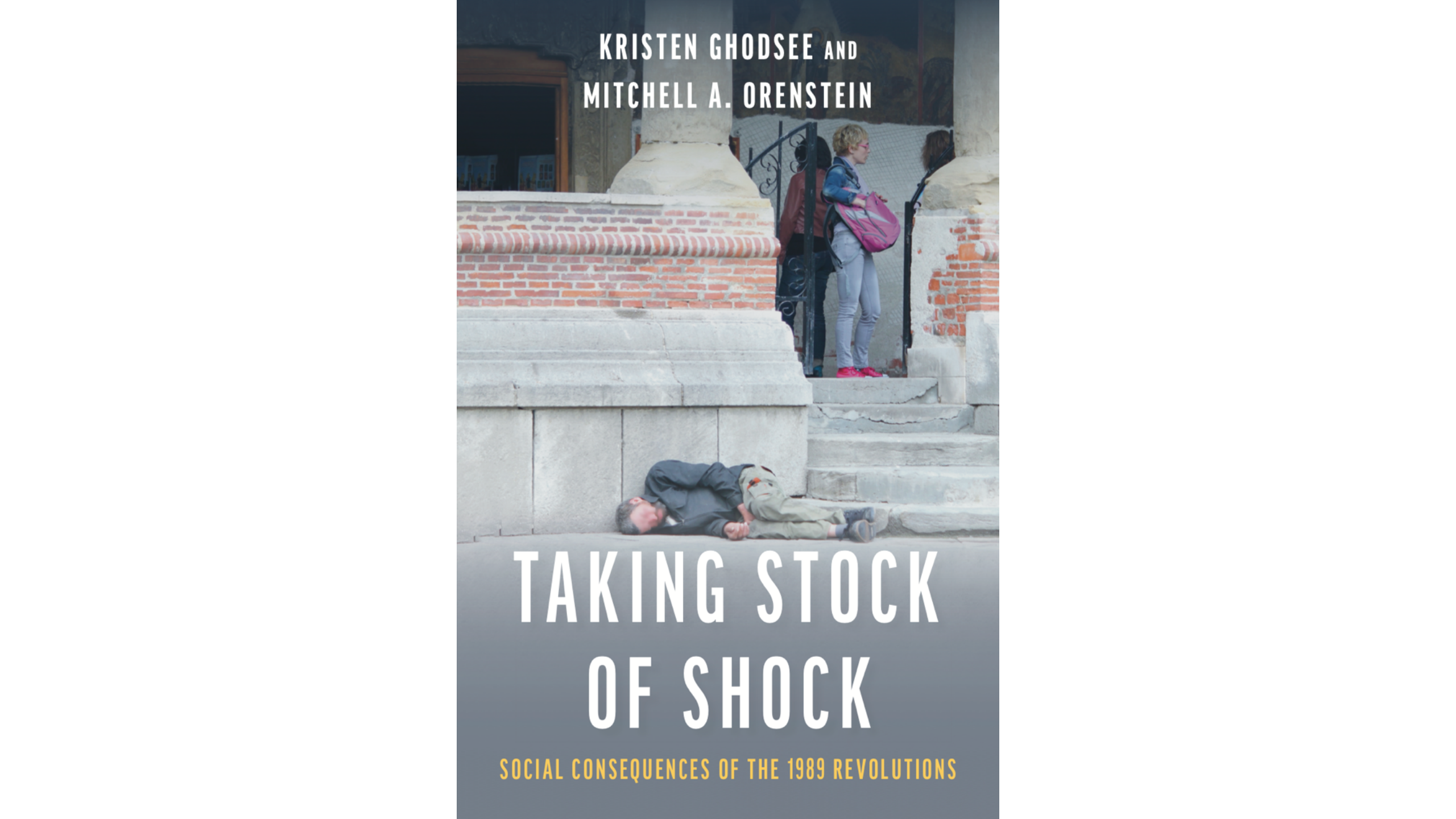
Die -FRIEDLICHE REVOLUTION-
MIT DEM STIMMZETTEL





East: Respect, Dignity, Recognition

Many will be worse off than before, but it will be much better for a few.



KRISTEN GHODSEE AND
MITCHELL A. ORENSTEIN

TAKING STOCK OF SHOCK

SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE 1989 REVOLUTIONS