

MOTIVATION FOR INTELLIGENCE-SERVICE WORK – THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC STATE-SECURITY

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Abstract:

Though the interest in the motivation behind intelligence work is great, hardly any empirical investigations have been published. This may be due to the subject itself being difficult to research. Intelligence services, secret police and the police hardly report openly on such matters, especially considering their reluctance to expose their conspiratorial personnel in academic investigations. Included in the findings published by "experts" are mostly testimonials and evaluations from criminal proceedings involving informers, which, under empirical aspects, hardly lead to valid results. The group of defendants poses only an exposed minority, presumably aware of its advantage in criminal law, and consequently unlikely to venture more "primitive" motives. The greater number of testimonials, mostly communist and post-communist memoirs, is similarly unhelpful since the former agents, messengers or spies emphasise their ideals as motivation. In contrast, the confidants tending towards materialism report less openly about the structure of their motivation.

Keywords: Ministry for State Security, agents, scouts, spies, unofficial collaborators, motivation.

Introduction

Principally, the intelligence services and the police search for their candidates at best in, or in close contact to groups of their interest, in order to "break them out" or smuggle them in. The disposition, the presumed state of motivation of the target-person is to be estimated in every case and calculated during the first interview. The state-security of

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the GDR collected extensive information about a candidate in a formally defined process (called "Aufklärung"), in order to arrange a competent and reliable recruitment. This could be completed in a shorter time, but usually took a year or more. It did not depend on the candidate himself or his actual necessity alone, but also upon the degree of his freedom to decide whether he should cooperate or not. This obviously undermines the unproven empirical presumption that idealism is seldom found in criminal investigations, though practically always amongst dissident agents. This motive is more often suspected in recruits and members of the army than in prisoners, but even less in the rest of society.

Motivation is different when the consideration of advantages is involved. These may have been stronger in prisoners as in agents. Consequently, **prisoners will have been forced to collaborate more often than agents, who could always avoid such pressure**. Based on this assumption, the types of motive for intelligence-work revealed through the influence of imprisonment, the army, society and dissidence should each be separately considered.

Motives of prisoners

Candidates awaiting trial and those in prison had the least scope for making decisions. They were completely dependent upon the goodness of the warders, police, state-security, judiciary and, possibly, interrogators of the GDR. The basic interest in improved prison conditions, daily advantages, an earlier release or proportionally milder sentence, simplified the recruitment of possible informers who were called, in this microcosm, "unofficial contacts," or, "cupboard-agents," or, "cell-informers," or – from co-prisoners' point of view-, "Zinker," (zincer) with reference to criminal secrecy or, "Zellenrutscher" (Cell slide)¹.

The department IX of the Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit (Ministry of Sate Security, now foreword MfS) which was responsible for the cell-informers amongst prisoners awaiting trial, availed of a net of almost 200 unofficially employed prisoners – regarding the number of prisoners as a whole, a substantial proportion. On average, there were four to seven prisoners per "Zelleninformator" (ZI) – subversive

¹ All the translations are the author's unless otherwise noted.

collaborator (hereafter SC). This level of "saturation" was intended. At least one SC should be operational in every working-place and every sleeping-area, in all workshops and teams. Preferably, convicted criminals were to be mobilised. In the year 1987, 15 to 22 SC's were recruited (Müller-Enbergs, 2008, p. 317 and 321). During the late eighties, 68 % of the cell-informers were used for up to three months, 21 % up to six months and 11 % for over twelve months.

The fluctuation of the cell-informers was remarkably high, being subject to releases, amnesties and exposure of conspiratorial connections. Eleven per cent refused to continue with their cooperation for personal – "security" reasons. Their being in contact with the MfS in prison, posed a high personal and physical risk, since exposure by coprisoners was likely, and the resulting sanctions were severe.

Only one investigation into these motives exists to date. It was prepared by the state-security. The department IX of the MfS reported in 1987, of the 166 recruited cell-informers, 55 % admitted that "reparations" motivated them to cooperation, especially through the withdrawal of applications for emigration (Müller-Enbergs 2010, p. 87). In 40 % of the cases the central consideration was of personal advantages, especially in expectation of earlier release from prison, and 5 % attached their readiness to cooperate with the hope of permission to leave for West Germany (Beleites, 2001, p. 131; Erdmann, 1998; Müller-Enbergs, 2010, p. 87).

In the prisons of the GDR in the '80s there were, on average, about 33.000 prisoners (Werkenthin, 1995, p. 408), whose unofficial infiltration was considerable. Tobias Wunschik was the first to investigate the motives of prisoners for subversive cooperation using established empirical material, but was unable to define the connection between the motive-groups. The central theme was a lighter or a shorter sentence, including more bearable positions within the worksmanagement and, for example, the occasional material bonus of a packet of tea. Wunschik did not find evidence of ideational motives, as was apparent in the '50s amongst communist prisoners (Wunschik, 2003 and 2012). The few statistical reports on the motives of prisoners awaiting trial, permit conclusion that **psychological pressure and personal gain were instrumental for the cooperation with the state-security.**

Motives of recruits and relatives of the army

Within the MfS, "Hauptabteilung I" was the department responsible for the recruits and the relatives of the "Nationale Volksarmee", the Army. The 2.300 full-time staff was responsible for the personal and functional security of management, troops and all facilities, not only of the army, but also of the border patrols of the GDR. Furthermore, the responsibility of the staff covered the Ministry for National Security and its own facilities. In addition to this, came the task of espionage in the Bundeswehr (Army), the Bundesgrenzschutz (Federal Border Guard) and the Grenzpolizei (Border Police) (Wiedmann, 2018, p. 217). With approximately 22.000 subversive collaborators, the department controlled 13 % of the SCs of the MfS. The scope between collaboration and refusal, concerning subversive involvement during military service in the GDR, especially in the "Volksarmee", could not have been great. Leadership qualities were in high demand since the military had to be ready for battle 85 % of the time. The intelligence work was done in close contact with the military hierarchy. Soldiers' career-options and improved service conditions were promoted by cooperation with the state-security. Nonetheless, leading a SC life was just as difficult as it was in the prisons. Conspiracy at the meetings in barrack-conditions was difficult, because the members of the MfS were well known. Whilst on duty, a SC would not be able to leave the military base without permission, for meetings outside the base he would require a leave-permit or holiday-permit, and would have to register out. This also applied to officers. There was also the problem that the SCs had to seem respectable amongst their comrades, which hindered them in collecting valuable information about irregular behaviour. If they showed difficult behaviour, their career-options may have been limited. With regard to conscription, the MfS tried to engage young SCs beforehand, as it was practically impossible during the 18month duty period. The conspiratorial work of most of the SCs ended with the completion of their conscription, partly because the local section of the MfS no longer required them, and partly because they were no longer willing to continue the work. The proportion of ideational motives will probably have been more poorly represented for exactly this reason.

Motives for subversive work in everyday life in the GDR

At the MfS own law school, "Juristische Hochschule" (JHS) – the Secret Service School, at Golm-Eiche near Potsdam, in the department, "Politisch-operative Spezialdisziplin", the employees had a chair of psychology at their sole disposal (Moritz, 2017). Research made by the JHS in the year 1973 with the title, *The Recruitment of Subversive Staff and their Psychological Requirements*, emphasised the increased importance of the "use and development" of SC-candidate and SC motives (Korth, 1973).

The investigation involved was concentrated mainly with the preventative work of the MfS, the area of work, operating primarily within the GDR, and listed the motives, called here, "Reasons for Recruitment", in three complexes: conviction, needs and interests as well as blackmail ("making amends"). The complex, conviction, was subdivided in the investigation into Marxist-Leninist, patriotic, humanistic, religious, moralistic and anti-capitalist conviction.

Positive models were given and used as examples for SC work. The needs and interests' motive were diversified partly into material and social, and partly intellectual interests. The complex concerning blackmail was called, "the reparation and secure continuation – effort", or recruitment "under pressure", as mistakes by individuals were not reasons for punishment, but for compensation, following cooperation (Korth, 1973, p. 583).

Although the MfS abided by this rather stiff framework, it developed a delicate evaluation in differentiating between the individual motives. If the practical intelligence work with compromising information had a high status in the '50s and '60s – almost as high as political conviction – it disappeared in the following years in favour of material gain. This may, according to the authors of the abovementioned investigation, not be immediately presumed to be a morally inferior, but rather a stronger motive. This research and the SC guidelines themselves also point out correlation and development of individual SC motives. Lastly, it was desirable to be able to claim political conviction as the basis for cooperation in SCs.

The job of the managing officer, or the leading SC member, also included establishing psychological characteristics of SC-candidates,

which could lead to motivation. After the candidate was chosen, he was subject to a series of tests on suitability, honesty and reliability. The more precise the confirmed information about the motives for collaboration was, the more likely a successful recruitment would become. Although this routine command of SC-testing by an organisation like the MfS seemed to be binding, it was obviously deviant when put into practice. Having studied archive procedures, the authors of the same research concluded that merely 15 % of the cases were founded on the judgment of reliability and honesty. Only 34 % showed SC-candidates' own willingness to cooperate. Moreover, 80 % of the assessments listed objective factors without even beginning with the subjective requirements. The analysis of documents regarding SC-candidates who refused to cooperate, showed that 35 % of the cases under examination lacked "possibilities for persuasion" in the personal details. Here the "politically ideational reputation" and the "knowledge of objective irregularities" were all that was to found from which uncertified conclusions could be drawn. This, though, seems to have been normal practice.

It is certainly of great interest to establish how closely related, the differing SC motives were. This query cannot be answered without involving the state-security. A remarkable dissertation from 1967 in ministry archive material, brought this complex to light in an empirical investigation (Hempel, 1967). The theoretical frame of this dissertation refers to the psychology of motivation from Hans Thomae (Thomae, 1965, pp. 3-44), with which it is sporadically, but not continuously comparable with the outlined concept. Even if the results of the dissertation cannot be confirmed - the number of investigated cases is not mentioned - the listed results correspond with the modern process of evaluation. A questionnaire was developed for the actual MfS examination and presented before a "representative selection" of SCs in the regional management in Potsdam. Asked about the major components of persuasion of SCs – it was possible to give several - 60.5 % named "recognition of social expectations" and, at any rate, 49.1 % "moral compulsion and moral constraint". Personal gain was named by only 27.4, "practical goals" by 39.9 and "self-satisfaction" by

11.9 %. "Threats and blackmail" were named by 23.4 % of those questioned, as a convincing motive (Hempel, 1967, p. 83).

So, the greater number of those questioned claimed that "politically ideational factors" were decisive in the subversive collaboration. Nonetheless, the proportion of "threats and blackmail"-cases were considered to be "surprisingly high", in that 22.1 % of those questioned included it as a secondary component. Accordingly, by almost every second person tested, anxiety, fear, stress and inhibition occurred at being asked to participate in subversive collaboration, also affecting behaviour (Hempel, 1967, p. 85).

Furthermore, it was clear from this survey that there are significant differences between the motives of men and women, just as there are between different age-groups. Even professional employment did not seem to be the fundamental influence on the nature of motivation.

Other results listed concerning the party-political are connections. Members of the SED or block-parties, recognised in 83 and 55.5 % respectively, the "social necessity"; 68.5 % of the recruited SED members and 42.1 % of the block party members felt a sense of moral duty and a compulsion of conscience, to work in collaboration with the state security. Amongst the recruited non-party members, these components were less distinct with 41.2 and 31.2 % respectively. The conclusion is: "Positive political and moral attitudes and lovalty to the socialistic society" promote, and "anti-social efforts" to gain personal advantage, hinder decidedly the existence of the subversive collaboration. "Negative political and moral attitudes, however, have the opposite effect" (Hempel, 1967, p. 94)

The connection between the nature of the recruitment and the motive is shown in the following results: where compromising material was used, 54 % claimed the threats and blackmail-motive to be the main component, just as 62.5 % of those asked about materialist interest. At the same time, 62.5 % of those persuaded by political conviction claimed the recognition of a social necessity (Hempel, 1967, Bd. 1, 97; Bd. 2, 6).

In the investigation, the question also arose, as to whether the reasons for recruitment had changed. The answers showed that "during collaboration, the motives of the unofficial collaborators change

substantially". Where, earlier, 60.5 % had claimed "recognition of a social necessity" as the main component of persuasion, 78 % did so at the time of the investigation. On the other hand, "personal profit" sank from 27.4 to 21.6 %, and "threats and blackmail" from 23.4 to 12.6 %. Though, "selfsatisfaction" increased conspicuously from 11.9 to 25.4 %. This was explained by the fact that "the conspiring manner of the work somehow causes temptation and the interesting atmosphere, the extraordinary" emotional side-effects are "really experienced in many cases and consequently have a positive influence on the behaviour towards the state-security divisions during the probationary period." (Hempel, 1967, p. 101) As the cooperation continued, to follow suit, the frequency of the motives shifted to reasons of a singularly social connection: 50.2 % of the SCs asked, had doubts at the beginning of their unofficial collaboration, whereas 44.4 % had none. At the time of the investigation though, the number of doubters had sunk to 28.6 %, but those without doubt had risen to 68.7 %. Therefore, "substantial changes" had appeared during the unofficial collaboration, wherein the explanations and directions of the SCmanaging staff play "the biggest role".

The dissertation concludes that "the research into the recruitment of the unofficial staff should be a continuous task accompanying the process of cooperation. The detailed evaluation of current motives and moral values and their development, in every case, is necessary in order to adopt changing characteristics in tasks of leadership and counselling. These changes should be considered in the delegation of tasks and the calculation of future behaviour." (Hempel, 1967, p. 164)

It is clear that ideological motives for subversive work predominated in GDR daily life, especially in respect of the quoted investigation, despite material interests and threats having been reported. Nevertheless, some questions remain unanswered: why does a husband report about his wife, whom he loves, to the state-security? Is it right to presume that this SC's patriotic motivation was worth more to him than his love for his wife? Or was he trying to protect her from prospective "danger" in connection with his work as a SC? Greater depth into the disciplines of psychology and sociological and philosophical insights, it seems, would be necessary in order to answer these questions. The discussion concerning these disciplines must be handled separately.

Motivation for Espionage

The greatest imaginable freedom, in avoiding recruitment by the state-security, could only be had by citizens outside the GDR. In the FRG, the under-cover work was mostly controlled by the "Hauptverwaltung A" (HV A), the department of the state-security responsible for espionage. The research into motives leading to cooperation between a West-German and the HV A or within a feigned personal relationship with ulterior-motive, ought to have belonged, as already mentioned, to the most important aspects of the examination during recruitment. The HV A always assumed a collection of differing motives ("motivational structure"), which were subject to change, but its regulations still followed the usual schematic portrayal of the MfS. The nature of the "recruitment guidelines" had changed.

Considering the latest state of affairs in December 1988, the HV A had the following picture of its active sources and subversive collaborators in the FRG and in West-Berlin: 60 % had agreed to cooperate for reasons of "politically ideational conviction" and 27 % on materialistic grounds (Müller-Enbergs, 2011, pp. 134-138). In 7 % of the cases, the deciding factor first named, was personal affection for the contact-person. Less than 1% was recruited, according to the "questionnaire statistics", under threat. In addition, 4 % were recruited under "foreign-flag", which may be relevant concerning the personal relationship, but not necessarily concerning the motive (Müller-Enbergs, 2011, pp. 134-138). This information from the documents of the HV A hardly concurs with the reports made by dissidents and former SCs. According to Friedrich-Wilhelm Schlomann, the Ministry for the Defence of the Constitution of 1960, relying on known cases, assumed that 43 % of the SCs had collaborated under "threat", 34 % for "personal gain", 14 % for "ideological conviction" and 7 % from a "thirst for adventure" (Schlomann, 1984, p. 87). The former spokesman for the Ministry for the Defence of the Constitution, Richard Gerken, wrote, quoting "official sources", that 70 % of the East-German recruitments made in 1965 were due to "threats", 25 % in hope of "business prospects", 2 % after being "led astray" (under foreign-flag) and 3% based on "political motives" (Gerken, 1965, p. 61). The power of the statements in these analyses, however, is reduced in that only the findings of exposed subversives

were considered, who may have been persuaded to make favourable testimonies, credible to the officials. In this respect, the evaluation of these statements should be critical.

Non-material Motives

of "politically-ideological recruitment on the basis conviction" counted in the HV A as the main method in the '50s. It should have been voluntary, since this was seen as the safest basis for successful cooperation with the HV A. Even so, the scope for "conviction" was already so broad that it included non-Marxist orientated persons. It sufficed to correspond in part to stipulations in claiming "keeping the peace, fighting against atomic-death, against fascism or militarisation". The aim was, of course, to convince SCs motivated in this way, of the "superiority of the socialist position" (Müller-Enbergs, 2011, p. 301), as the subject was dropped in the new regulations of 2/68. Then the impression given by the student-movement, convincing in its negative stance to politics in capitalistic states, was accentuated, as well as the simple corroboration, "principally or part", with the "peace-politics" of the "socialistic camp" being brought to the fore (Müller-Enbergs, 2011, p. 359). At the last, in the final valid regulations of 2/79, all that was mentioned was "progressive political conviction", which included "all political opinions and stances" in which the "politics, institutions and representatives of the particular state were principally or partially rejected. The rejection could ("can") also express agreement, "principally or partially", with the politics of the socialist states. The expression "progressive conviction" embraced Marxist-Leninist, humanist through to apparently anti-imperialist attitudes. Further intentions accepted. were "love of peace, solidarity with oppressed peoples, patriotism and civil-democratic and humanistic efforts" (Müller-Enbergs, 2011, p. 57). The high number of SCs registered at the HV A on the grounds of "conviction", is considered to be unrealistic by the West-German office for the defence of the constitution. It seems this assessment should be reviewed. Indeed, the HV A did not assume, as did the West-German office, that the recruits acted out of "ideological corroboration (...) with the GDR-system" (Meier, 1992, p. 183). The argument that no material

means changed hands in only the fewest cases, does not necessarily indicate the lack of non-materialistic motives, as will be discussed elsewhere.

The "significant" motive of the danger of war grew in strength with the stationing of mid-range missiles. The "most effective motive" for subversive work was still the Marxist-Leninist conviction. Karl-Wilhelm Fricke also assumes that the ideological component had increased in the eighties, in comparison to earlier years (Fricke, 1982, p. 150). The HV A plan included the extension of the Marxist-Leninist conviction, structurally incorporating the changeable nature of motives. Research was made, concerning the influence on the idea of socialism in SCs, for this purpose. Proven points of relevance were:

- "1. The search for possible points of corroboration;
- 2. To clarify the extent to which this corroboration is sufficient and dependable, for willingness and operative activities;
- 3. To clarify whether this corroboration can be developed or extended, and how:
- 4. The consideration of the level of manipulation." (*Instructional material*, 1987).

The HV A found another form of corroboration in the fifties, as the hope of a unified German state had not yet been relinquished. It even added "nationalistic" views to "politically-ideological conviction". In this type of recruitment, the interests of the "German nation" were emphasised. The "national pride" of these, mostly "civilian"-influenced individuals, was to be respected, and they were to be treated with care, but the "political training" should not be neglected (*Instructional material*, 1987, 11 f.). Due to the reduction in political tension and the prospect of two nations in the seventies, the "nationalist"-component faded into the background, whereas its importance "diverging reactionary convictions and interests", in the regulations of 2/79, clearly grew. Recruitments based on this motivation, though, were no longer possible in established partnerships, as they had been in the fifties, but only in relationships purposely set-up in order to extract information ("foreign-flag") (Müller-Enbergs, 2011, p. 301).

Considering Personal Gain

Material and personal interests were usually involved in ideologically motivated recruitments, as was established by the HV A. and plaved a definite role in the structure of collaborator motivation (Müller-Enbergs, 2011, p. 454). The HV A followed the assumption that, "imperialism" turns "all material and moral values into consumer products", which it intended to exploit in two ways, as stated in its regulations of 1/59. Either, there were people in "financial difficulty", or deliberately manipulated "material dependency". Despite the "great possibilities", these "grounds for recruitment" had the disadvantage of SCs, acquired in this way, being able to "change sides for more money". which was to be discouraged through the direct employment of "fistsecurity" (information intended to be used for blackmail). At the same time, further grounds for cooperation were to be achieved through "political training" (Günther, n. a. p. 100). Friedrich-Wilhelm Schlomann conjectured in the early '80s, that recruiting on an "economic basis" may have been a successful method, though not often used (Schlomann, 1984, p. 88).

The HV A stuck to its concept in the regulations 2/78 and 2/79, even if its importance seemed to be fading. Now, the main objective was to differentiate between aspirations to achieve social status and personal expectations. "Material interests" now stretched from "meeting reasonable needs" to "pronounced plans for personal profit and abnormal demands" (Müller-Enbergs, 2011, p. 360). Schlomann included advantages for prisoners and ailing relatives in the GDR, where relaxed entry-permit stipulations would help, as suggestions for personal interest (Schlomann, 1984, p. 88). The assessment of "material interests" as a motive, changed in the '80s, or at least, adapted to practical experience. They were now considered to be the "driving force" and accepted as a "primary motive", throughout (Müller-Enbergs, 2011, p. 579).

The distribution of financial assistance within the HV A was closely connected to its function. A project-manager could sign for 1.000 DM and the director of the HV A or his deputy, 10.000 DM. Where expenditure was expected to be returned, the manager could authorize up to 18.000 DM a year in costs, and the director and his first deputy over 24.000 DM.

Blackmail

In the regulations of the HV A, "blackmailing" into subversive-work was never mentioned. The theme was self-consciously referred to, as the "basis of compromising material" or the "will to make amends", defined as "abuse of situations in the life of certain persons, known to us, but unknown to the public, the employers and relatives, whose exposure could badly damage or hinder the professional and social status of these people. Such situations were as follows: the intended or suspected speciality of the MfS; criminal deeds, tax-evasion, embezzlement or "serious moral affaires". Occasionally, they were manipulated to reach the necessary "level of dependency" (Müller-Enbergs, 2011, p. 454).

In the '50s and '60s, some were put under "pressure" because of their NS-history ("earlier" "criminal" activity), which was generalised in the regulations of 2/68 as "will to make amends". This recruitment-reason assumed such a "bad conscience" in the recruit, that he would have the will to "appease his personal guilt" with subversive work (Müller-Enbergs, 2011, p. 360). Later, this variant was used to convert foreign agents. In the regulations of 2/79, this recruitment-reason faded into the background and was reduced to the context of discussions concerning dissidence (Müller-Enbergs, 2011, p. 489).

The attempt to convert foreign agents

Normally, the MfS first attempted recruitment of "agents of enemy secret-services" or "organisations against peace", who had a background in intelligence work (Müller-Enbergs, 2011, p. 302). The term "Überwerbung" (lit. across-recruitment), was used in connection with volunteers as well as persons specifically chosen by the MfS (Müller-Enbergs, 2011, p. 363). The prerequisite for an "Überwerbung" was a thorough examination of the candidate, in order to find or create situations which would tie him to the HV A, and which would be highly compromising if ever exposed. The candidate, therefore, should not have any "real alternative" to subversive-work. The consequences of refusal were to be made clear to him during the examination, but also, if he showed willingness to cooperate, he would be asked to deliver confirmable intelligence information to prove his "honesty", (and to

stock up on "fist-security"). Apart from this blackmailing method, the HV A regarded the material and personal interests of candidates with a "reactionary attitude", as characteristic in an "Überwerbung" (Müller-Enbergs, 2011, p. 625).

"Foreign-flag" – a feigned relationships to serve intelligencework

As the standing of "real socialism" deteriorated, the practised method of "malicious deception" of the SC through "foreign-flag" increased in importance. Although only about 60, 4 % of the West-German SCs counted by the HV A in 1987, were recruited in this way, it is assumed that this "art of mastery" had been extensively applied in the '70s and '80s. Indications are found in 36 such examinations in the "area of operations" in 1986. From the intended recruitments, 17, almost half, were to involve "foreign-flag" operations.

Conclusion

Apart from the differing levels of personal freedom, further motivating factors should be mentioned and closely examined. The structure of the SC motivation ought to be examined in its relation to professional or political sympathy or enmity to the state. The easiest procedure for the MfS, was to recruit targeted civil-servants. It was irrelevant how much time or effort was involved in subversive activities. The effort in serving at a secret address, taking incoming information to be passed on, is much less than the work of an agent hiding secret documents, photographing them, delivering the films and receiving and sending radio-messages. Presumably, the more effort the intelligencework involved, the more ideological the driving force had to be. From the documents, the impression is apparent that - depending on the personality of the SC – there were inhibitions concerning information in the reports. There was not much willingness to report about people in close relationship, but otherwise there was no problem. Lastly, as suggested above, there is an historical change in the motivational positions, just as there is in the individually changing motives. These themes are still to be discussed.

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