Motorization in the FRG and the GDR (1960–1990)

Abstract

In the last third of the 20th century, the number of cars increased more than six-fold in West Germany and fifteen-fold in the East. There was one car for every two people in the FRG, but only one car for every four in the GDR. East German cars were also of much lower quality.

Source

The Stock of Motor Vehicles

The total stock of motor vehicles (motorcycles, cars, vans, trucks, and tractors) in the territory of the former Federal Republic rose from 8 million in 1960 to 36.5 million in 1991. The number of passenger cars alone rose from almost 4.5 million to 31.3 million. This represents roughly a seven-fold increase over the last thirty-one years.

Inventory of Road Vehicles

Motor Vehicles, Territory of the Former Federal Republic

Year	Total (in thousands)	(of those) cars (in thousands)	(of those) trucks (in thousands)
1960	8,004	4,489	681
1970	16,783	13,941	1,028
1980	27,116	23,192	1,277
1985	30,618	25,845	1,281
1990	35,748	30,685	1,389
1991	36,529	31,322	1,440

Motor Vehicles, Territory of the Former GDR

Year	Total (in thousands)	(of those) cars (in thousands)	(of those) trucks (in thousands)
1960	1,426	313	119
1970	2,979	1,166	186
1980	4,612	2,678	234
1985	5,282	3,306	221
1990	6,903	4,817	264

In the former GDR there was also a clear rise in the number of motor vehicles (1960: 1.4 million; 1990: 6.9 million). The total stock of passenger cars grew from 0.3 million in 1960 to 4.8 million in 1990. In 1990 there were about 300 cars per 1,000 residents, compared with 500 cars per 1,000 residents in the territory of the former Federal Republic.

Between 1960 and 1990 a total of 64.5 million cars were newly registered in the territory of the former Federal Republic. The statistical average is two million cars per year. This average figure basically corresponds to the value for 1973. Since then, the figure was lower only in 1974. The number of registrations exceeded 3 million for passenger cars for the first time in 1990. This also explains the great

economic significance of the automobile industry.

Cars are mainly used for private purposes. This leads to more individual travel, with its diverse effects on the traffic situation in cities and on public transportation.

Source: Federal Office of Statistics, ed., *Datenreport 1992. Zahlen und Fakten über die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Bonn, 1992, pp. 376–77.

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Recommended Citation: Motorization in the FRG and the GDR (1960–1990), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/two-germanies-1961-1989/ghdi:document-844> [October 15, 2026].