Pre-Late Cretaceous shortening state of lithosphere (not to scale)

Late Cretaceous-Paleogene shortening and uplift weakens hanging walls of basement thrusts

Harz exhumation to possible steady state topographic load
GF / HF lower magnitude of exhumation
Possible NGB Late Cretaceous flexural basin

Weakened hanging wall material acts as purely vertical load on segment of lithosphere in footwall

Flexural and "tilted rigid block" behaviour of footwall segments