
The Transformation of the Media System of the Former German Democratic Republic after the Reunification and its Effects on the Political Content of Newspapers

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ABSTRACT

■ Whereas the structure of the broadcasting system in the newly formed eastern states very much resembles the structure in the western states, the local and regional print media markets in the newly formed German states today still resemble the situation in the German Democratic Republic in that the dominating newspapers are the ones that already dominated before 1989. These papers were taken over by West German publishers in 1989. But the great majority of journalists working in the newly formed states today had already been working as journalists there before the Wall came down. However, a content analysis including 10 papers from the newly formed states and 10 from the West German states reveals only minor differences between papers from the eastern and the western parts of Germany. Journalists in the newly formed states were a bit more careful about voicing their opinions. Only the number of some political main actors and their evaluations differed to any great extent between eastern and western papers. ■

Key Words content analysis, Germany, media system, newspaper coverage, political contents

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Media and journalism in the former German Democratic Republic

The mass communication system in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was shaped according to the demands of the Marxist–Leninist press theory: in the GDR the media also had to be collective propaganda tools, collective agitation tools, as well as collective organizers, and they were required to follow the principle of partiality (Hüther, 1969). This system was introduced by the Soviet Union during the Occupation in postwar Germany from 1945 to 1949 (Baerns, 1988: 61). Broadcasting was centralized and integrated into governmental administration. Licensing and censorship was adopted as the GDR press system became established (Holzweißig, 1990: 367). Licences to publish newspapers were held by the state party, the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED), as well as by the mass organizations it controlled, the youth organization Freie Deutsche Jugend (FDJ), the labour union Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (FDGB), the sport organization Deutscher Turn- und Sportbund (DTSB) and the organization of the Sorbian minority 'Dovobina'. Besides these, licences were additionally only granted to the so-called Block Parties, which were required to follow the guidelines of the SED and which constituted, together with the SED and its mass organizations, the so-called Democratic Block (Tempel, 1987: 219–22). The Block Parties were the Christian Democrats 'Christlich Demokratische Union' (CDU), the National Democrats 'National-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands' (NDPD), the Liberal Party 'Liberal-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands' (LDPD) and the Farmers Party 'Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands' (DBD). Licences for the 550 (approximately) magazines in the GDR were also only granted to parties and mass organizations which accepted the leadership role of the SED (Rausch and Stammen, 1984: 102–8).

The structure of the printed press markets in the GDR had not changed significantly since the beginning of the 1950s (Geißler, 1986: 20). The circulation of the so-called district newspapers (Bezirkszeitungen) of the SED outside Berlin alone came to 50 percent of the total newspaper circulation in the GDR. The district newspapers were regional papers with a high circulation. Together with the two Berlin newspapers and the nationwide paper *Neues Deutschland*, the SED's papers came to 70 percent of the total circulation. Another 20 percent of the circulation fell to the papers of the mass organizations, whereas the remaining 10 percent fell to the papers of the Block Parties (Table 1).

Table 1 The newspapers in the GDR (1989)

<i>Publisher</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Circulation (in 1000)</i>
SED	<i>Neues Deutschland</i>	1094
(70% of the circulation)	<i>Berliner Zeitung</i>	394
	<i>BZ am Abend</i>	199
	14 district papers	4569
Mass organizations		
(21% of the circulation)		
FDJ	<i>Junge Welt</i>	1325
FDGB	<i>Tribüne</i>	409
DTSB	<i>Deutsches Sportecho</i>	182
Domovina	<i>Nova Doba</i>	1
Block Parties		
(9% of the circulation)		
CDU	6 papers	252
LDPD	5 papers	248
NDPD	9 papers	187
DBD	1 paper	92

Source: Wilke (1994: 225).

In the GDR, only those who proved to be reliable supporters of the SED and the state ideology could become journalists. All ongoing journalists had to receive a centralized, state-run education at the University of Leipzig, the School of Broadcasting or in comparable courses (Blaum, 1985). After completion of their university studies, journalists were appointed to their jobs by a commission of the Central Committee for Agitation and Propaganda of the SED (Kirkamm, 1992: 120). Journalists in the GDR were subjected to a number of constraints. The Secretary of the Central Committee of Agitation and Propaganda issued guidelines for the contents of all mass media. The departmental heads of the committee gave instructions to the chief editors of the 17 SED papers, the monopolist state-owned news agency Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst (ADN), as well as to the press office of the chairman of the Board of Ministers. From there, instructions were forwarded to television, radio and the remaining newspapers and magazines (Holzweißig, 1990: 366). Through these channels, the editors were also supplied with background information not intended for publication (Holzweißig, 1990: 368–70). Independent journalism was

also impossible for a couple of additional reasons: pictures and news could only be received from one agency, the ADN. Only *Neues Deutschland* and the state-owned broadcasters had a few of their own correspondents abroad (Wilke, 1994: 232). It was forbidden to make any editorial changes on material supplied by the ADN. Furthermore, the agency could issue instructions on how items should be placed and pictures be used (Holzweißig, 1990: 367). It was impossible for journalists to do any investigations on their own (Bahrman, 1990: 413). Taboo issues were listed in a special folder (Bahrman, 1990: 412).

Development of the media after the Wall came down

The transition process of the media system had already begun before the Reunification on 3 October 1990. After Erich Honecker resigned as General Secretary of the SED in October 1989, the 'old' media cut their ties to the parties and mass organizations, created new publications and began cooperating with West German publishers. The markets in the GDR once and for all opened up for West German press products (Wilke, 1994: 237–9). In February 1990, the system of compulsory licences was abolished. This new and diverse development, however, soon regressed. Today the media markets in the five newly formed German states are once again in parts highly concentrated and very much resemble the structures of similar markets either in the former West Germany or the former GDR.

Relatively high diversity and decentralization characterize the development of the broadcast sector. The state-controlled television and radio organizations were closed down. Two new public broadcasting institutions (*Landesrundfunkanstalten*) were founded after the model of the public broadcasting system in the Federal Republic of Germany. Most of the states there have their own public broadcasting institutions, some have joint institutions. In the newly formed states, the Ostdeutscher Rundfunk Brandenburg (ORB) was founded as a public broadcasting institution for the state of Brandenburg, whereas the Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (MDR) was founded as a joint institution for Thüringia, Saxony and Saxe-Anhalt. Mecklenburg-Lower Pomerania joined the Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR), the existing institution of the West German states, Hamburg, Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein (Mast et al., 1994: 296–304). Only since 1992 have several successful private radio stations contributed to the diversity of the East German broadcasting scene (Holzer, 1994: 42). Additionally, the national television and

radio channels from the western states can be received in eastern Germany and have actually become quite popular.

The structure of the broadcasting system in the newly formed states very much resembles the structure in the western states. This structure creates some problems: tendencies towards concentration in the private sector are frequently criticized as are the public broadcasting institutions' high financial requirements. Furthermore, public broadcasting has the structural problem of becoming less distinguishable from private competitors as their programmes attempt to become more attractive for the mass audience (Schiwy, 1992: 42–6). The opportunity of following new directions was not seized when the new broadcasting system was established in eastern Germany.

The structure of the print sector differs from the structure in the western states. However, it therefore very much resembles the former GDR structure. Only a few publications that are important today have been created since the annihilation of the GDR. As opposed to broadcasting, the development was left almost completely to market forces. In this context, the National Trust Company (Treuhandanstalt) has been severely criticized (Holzer, 1994: 43).

This public institution was established to privatize or close down the companies inherited from the former GDR. The Trust Company treated press companies in the same way as they treated companies from other branches. It was neither their goal to avoid concentration nor to secure diversity. The trust company pursued purely economical goals such as selling quickly, securing jobs, guaranteeing high investments and having financially strong buyers. Under these circumstances, only the big West German publishers could be buyers (Schneider, 1992: 434).

Many of the magazines which were founded after the Wall came down were not successful, although there are a few exceptions (Bohrmann, 1995: 281). Most of the old GDR magazines were bought up by big West German publishers, and in many cases, were soon closed down (Röper, 1992: 416). Unlike West German TV, West German magazines are not very popular in eastern Germany. Special eastern issues of western magazines are relatively successful, however. The same goes for a few special eastern magazines which were founded by West German publishers (Schneider, 1992: 428, 429).

A particularly 'sad balance' must be drawn for the development of the daily newspaper press in the newly founded German states (Schneider, 1992: 428, 429). Only three of the original seven national newspapers have survived (Schütz, 1994a: 170). The regional and local markets are almost totally dominated by the former district papers of the SED (see

Table 2): their circulation accounts for more than 90 percent of the total circulation. The surviving newspapers of the former Block Parties now barely hold a 4 percent share of the total circulation. Of the 80 local newspapers founded after the Wall came down, only 14 were still existent by the end of 1993 with a total circulation share of exactly 5 percent (Schütz, 1994b: 35). Only one complete editorial office on the regional and local press level remains from all those founded after the Wall came down. In the meantime, it has been taken over by one of the former district newspapers (Schütz, 1994a: 171). The remaining newly founded papers are all local issues for the newly formed states, belonging to western papers which have their main editorial offices in the western states.

As a result of the previously described strategy of the Trust Company, only large West German publishers were financially capable of taking over the — circulation-wise — large East German newspapers. This has led to an even greater concentration in the German newspaper market. The old system of newspaper markets in eastern Germany has stabilized itself. The system is dominated by big regional newspapers with many additional side issues, high circulation and a large distribution area. The concentration in these regional markets is distinctively higher than in the western states: of the 20 largest subscription newspapers, 10 are from the newly formed German states, whereas, in comparison, only 41 of the 385 German newspaper publishers are situated in eastern Germany (Schütz, 1994b: 35).

The former GDR journalists stayed on with the GDR newspapers. The new owners of the 15 former SED district newspapers were bound by agreement to guarantee their employees' jobs (Schneider et al., 1993: 356). The developing editorial services of the newspapers and, in particular, the more or less neglected — in GDR times — local coverage increased the need for more staff (Schneider et al., 1993: 356). A high staff continuity was also conceded at the public television stations. It has

Table 2 Development of local and regional subscription newspapers in the newly formed states

	<i>Number of papers</i>			<i>Circulation (%)</i>		
	1989	1991	1993	1989	1991	1993
Former SED papers	15	15	15	91	90	92
Former Block Parties' papers	17	10	5	9	4	4
Newly founded papers	—	24	17	—	7	5

Sources: Schütz (1994a: 168–98), Schütz (1992: 74–103).

Table 3 The origins of journalists working in the newly formed states, according to the type of media (%) (1993)

<i>Type of media</i>	<i>Residence before 1989 in the GDR: already working as a journalist before the Wall came down (N = 357)</i>	<i>Residence before 1989 in the GDR: working as a journalist since 1990 or later (N = 120)</i>	<i>Residence before 1989 in the FRG (N = 108)</i>
Former SED district newspapers	71	20	9
All newspapers	61	22	17
Magazines	82	13	5
News agencies	50	14	36
Radio	54	24	22
Television	57	3	40

Source: Schneider et al. (1993: 359).

been estimated that of the original 9000 to 14,000 employees of the Deutsche Fernsehfunk (known as the Fernsehen der DDR up until March 1990), between 3500 and 5000 were further employed by the public broadcasting institutions MDR, ORB and NDR. Ninety percent of the staff at MDR and the Thuringian branches of the NDR came from GDR broadcasting (Mast et al., 1994: 336).

The results of a representative interview survey conducted in 1993 show that in the print media in particular, the percentage of journalists who had already worked in this area in the former GDR is quite high (Table 3). Altogether 585 journalists were chosen for the survey as a random sample with some quota regulations concerning the type of media and the size of the editorial staff (Mast et al., 1994: 356, 357).

The percentage of former GDR journalists working in the newspaper sector is above average. As Table 4 shows, more than half of the journalists in the newly formed states today work for former GDR newspapers alone.

The influence of the former GDR journalists has weakened in that the owners of the former GDR newspapers immediately installed West German publishing managers and, quite often, appointed West German journalists to lead the editorial offices at least temporarily (Schulz, 1995: 287). In the meantime, the percentage of West German journalists is

Table 4 Journalists working in the newly formed German states, according to the type of media (%) (1993)

<i>Type of media</i>	<i>Journalists in eastern Germany (N = 585)</i>
Former SED district newspapers	43
Other former GDR newspapers	10
New subscription newspapers	9
Tabloids	7
Magazines	9
Radio	13
Television	5
News agencies	4

Source: Schneider et al. (1994: 166).

Table 5 Origins of journalists employed in the newly formed German states, according to their positions (%) (1993)

<i>Position</i>	<i>Residence before 1989 in GDR (N = 477)</i>	<i>Residence before 1989 in FRG (N = 108)</i>
Editor-in-chief, deputy or comparable	72	28
Head of editorial department or deputy	82	18
Editors	84	16
Trainees	74	26
Total of journalists in eastern Germany	82	18

Source: Schneider et al. (1994: 169).

higher in leading positions than in positions on the lower levels of the editorial hierarchy. Compared to their colleagues from the east, however, they are also a minority in these leading positions (Table 5).

Almost half of the editors interviewed in the newly formed German states had completed their studies in journalism in Leipzig, another 10 percent at the advanced Technical College there (Schneider et al., 1993: 362). Exactly 50 percent had been trainees in the former GDR (Schneider et al., 1993: Table 8). It is thus understandable that Mast et al., by interviewing supervisors from editorial offices, staffing departments and company councils in the East German media, came to the conclusion that East German journalists had big deficits concerning news editing and investigation (50 expert interviews in 1992, see Mast et al., 1994: 241).

This was caused by the fact that, in the GDR, the journalists themselves had no opportunities to work with 'free' news or do investigations on their own. Mast et al. further say that even today, news is partly mixed with opinion (Mast et al., 1994: 434). They believe that the ingrained behavioural patterns of the East German journalists acquired through their GDR working experience could only be changed to a very limited extent through further training (Mast et al., 1994: 434).

In a later section I deal with the influence that this has had on the content of newspapers. But first, the differences between East German journalists' attitudes towards their profession and those of their West German colleagues will be discussed.

Differences between the professional and political attitudes of East and West German journalists

It seems quite plausible that the situation of journalism in the GDR could have led to East German journalists having extremely different opinions about their profession and politics to their West German colleagues. There is, however, no evidence of this. As a result of the above-mentioned survey of 477 East German journalists in 1993, which also included 989 West German journalists, Schneider et al. have found rather 'gradual' differences between eastern and western journalists (Schneider et al., 1993: 380). A couple of differences between both groups can be found, but they are 'not fundamental' (Schneider et al., 1993: 380). Also, these differences cannot be explained in terms of the professional socialization of East German journalists in the GDR, because journalists in the newly formed states today form a 'homogeneous group'. East Germans who had been working as journalists in the GDR even before the Wall came down, those who only started to work as journalists after that, and even those who came from western Germany after the Wall had come down have been shown to have very similar opinions. They form an even more homogeneous group than journalists from western Germany (Schneider et al., 1993: 380). Schneider et al. explain this in terms of the fact that 70 percent of all of the editors in eastern Germany work in newspapers, the large majority for the 15 former district papers. Results from western Germany also confirm that the type of medium in which journalists work very much determines their professional attitudes (Schneider et al., 1993: 380).

Nevertheless, some differences that could have an influence on working behaviour and media content can be found between eastern and

Table 6 Professional self-image: 'as what journalists should see themselves' (%)

<i>Role</i>	<i>West German journalists (N = 983)</i>	<i>East German journalists (N = 477)</i>
Neutral reporter	89	84
Voice of the people	64	71
Educator, pedagogue	13	25
Politician using alternative means	11	25

Source: Schönbach et al. (1994: 145).

Table 7 Attractions of journalism: 'what is appealing about my profession?' (%)

<i>Attractions of journalism</i>	<i>West German journalists (N = 983)</i>	<i>East German journalists (N = 477)</i>
Possibility to champion own values and ideals	49	81
Possibility to make public own beliefs	34	61
Possibility to influence political decisions	30	47

Source: Schönbach et al. (1994: 146).

western journalists. The great majority of journalists in the newly formed states, like those in the western states, adhere to the typical Western democratic ideal of the 'neutral reporter'. However, a large minority of East German journalists see their task as being that of an 'educator' and a 'politician using alternative means' (Table 6). These ideals were typical of journalism in the former GDR. The fact that journalists from eastern Germany appreciate the ability to be able to influence public opinion and political decisions much more frequently than their western colleagues also fits into this picture (Table 7). The political stance of journalists from the newly formed states is further to the left. They give a more negative rating to the ruling parties, the CDU, CSU (Christian Democrats) and FDP (Liberals), than their western colleagues do. The left-wing parties, SPD (Social Democrats) and Grüne (Ecologists), receive a significantly more positive evaluation by journalists from eastern Germany. The biggest difference can be seen for the PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism), the successor of the former state party SED. Although the East German journalists give the PDS a poor mark of -1.5, this is still much

Table 8 Evaluation of political parties

<i>Political party</i>	<i>West German journalists (N = 983)</i>	<i>East German journalists (N = 477)</i>
Means of evaluation		
CDU/CSU	-0.9	-1.2
FDP	-0.9	-0.8
SPD	+0.2	+0.4
Grüne/Bündnis 90	0.0	+0.7
PDS	-3.0	-1.5

Note: The scale goes from +5 'I think very highly of this party' to -5 'I think very poorly of this party'.

Source: Schönbach et al. (1994: 154).

better than the evaluation of -3 given by their colleagues from the west (Table 8).

Differences between the content of East German and West German newspapers

Obviously, one could suspect that the political coverage in media from the newly formed states differs from the coverage in the western states. The preceding discussion could lead us, for example, to suspect that the news in eastern Germany is likely to be opinionated and that the state ideology of the former GDR is still present in the opinion columns and editorials. On the other hand, it would also seem plausible to find that journalists in the newly formed states openly speak out their opinions less frequently than their western colleagues, since it was dangerous in the former GDR for journalists if their opinion did not fit in with the official policy. One could also suspect that news in eastern Germany is based on less thorough, less professional investigation. The following content analysis of East and West German subscription newspapers clarifies what differences really exist.

Plan of research

Twelve issues of 20 newspapers were analysed, including 10 papers from the newly formed states and 10 from the West German states.¹ Six issues were taken from the second week in July 1994 (11-17 July), another six from the second week in October of that same year (12-18 October). The

German national elections took place during the second week studied. The papers were selected according to the following criteria:

1. The five papers with the highest circulation were selected from both the newly formed states and from the western states.
2. From each of the newly formed states, at least one of the biggest papers was chosen.
3. As many papers as possible from the western states were chosen which had the same publisher and a similar circulation as an already chosen paper from eastern Germany.

In this way, seven matched pairs of papers from eastern and western Germany were included in the sample, as well as six more papers which could not be matched.² Due to the fact that the papers partly share the same owners and have comparable circulation rates, eventual differences to be found between their content could better be attributed to differences between journalism in the newly formed states and the western states.

All the pages of the newspaper were coded for length and theme. A detailed content analysis of single articles was only conducted for articles with a political main actor. Additionally, all articles which touched a particular selection of East/West German issues were coded. In this way, all of the political parts of a paper were coded in detail. The codes of the detailed analysis concerned the identification, origin, political function and evaluation of the three most important actors, the type of events and their locations, as well as the kind of political issues dealt with in each article. On average for all categories, the coding reliability of the eight coders amounted to .86.

Results

A total of 14,093 articles with a political main actor were found and coded in detail. Of these 7021 were published in the eastern newspapers and 7072 in the western newspapers. Articles in western papers are, on average, about 10 percent longer than articles in eastern papers. The average length is 25.9 column centimetres in western papers as compared to 23.8 in eastern papers.

A first glance at the content of the papers, however, shows only minor differences between the size proportions of sections in eastern papers and western papers (Figure 1). Western papers include slightly more coverage on economic and social issues. They also focus more on

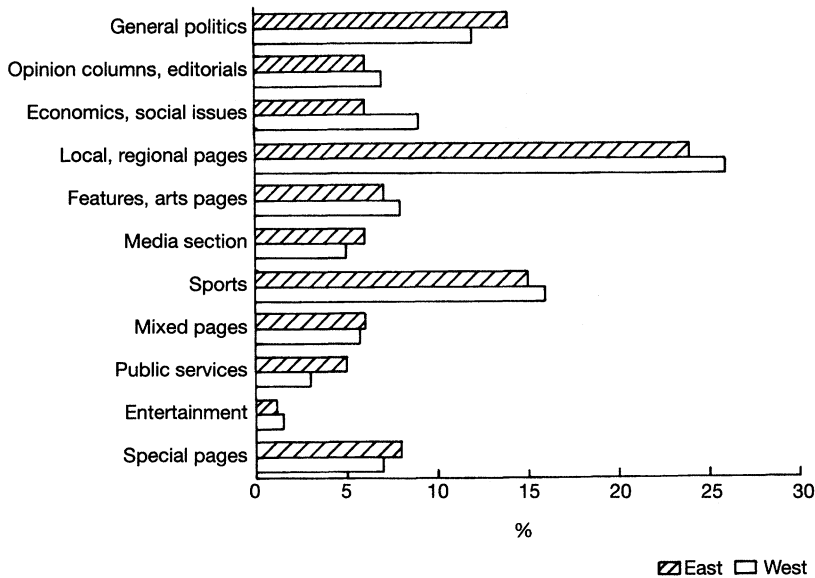


Figure 1 Sections of newspapers: average percentage of total newspaper space

regional or local issues, whereas the eastern papers focus more on general political issues and contain more public services.

Additionally, the proportional amounts of coverage of different regions of the world in the eastern and western papers differ only slightly (Figure 2). In both the eastern and western papers, coverage of foreign issues amounts to only around one-third of the total number of articles. This even includes articles about bilateral issues between Germany and other countries. The only big difference is that, naturally, papers from eastern Germany contain much more news about eastern Germany, whereas western papers contain much more news about western Germany. The proportional amounts of coverage of eastern Germany in eastern papers and of western Germany in western papers each exceeds one-third of all articles and are quite similar. Coverage of eastern Europe is only slightly higher in papers from eastern Germany and the same is true for the coverage of western Europe in papers from western Germany. Eastern papers contain slightly more coverage of the rest of the world, whereas western papers cover supranational issues to a slightly greater extent.

The proportional amounts of different stylistic types of articles were also quite similar in the eastern and western papers (Figure 3). The proportion of news is almost the same in both kinds of papers. Eastern

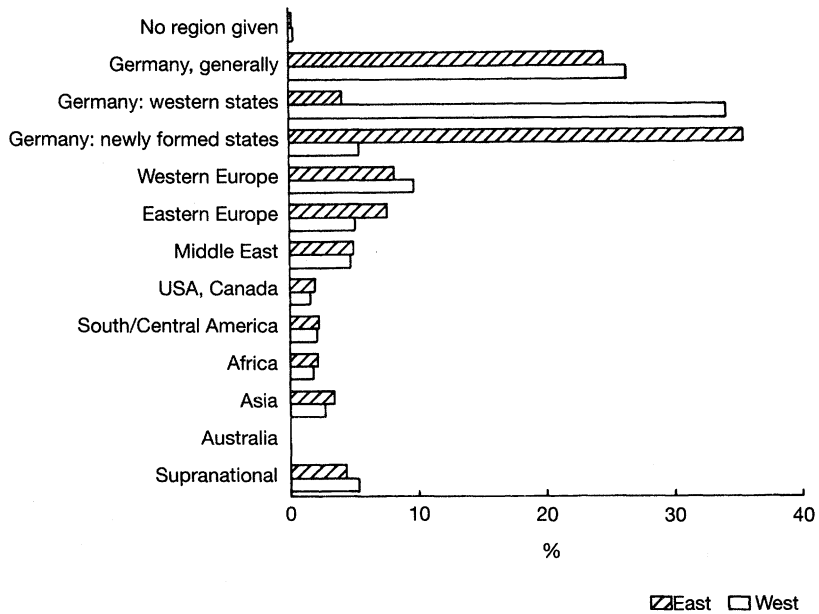


Figure 2 Regions covered by articles: average percentage in eastern and western newspapers

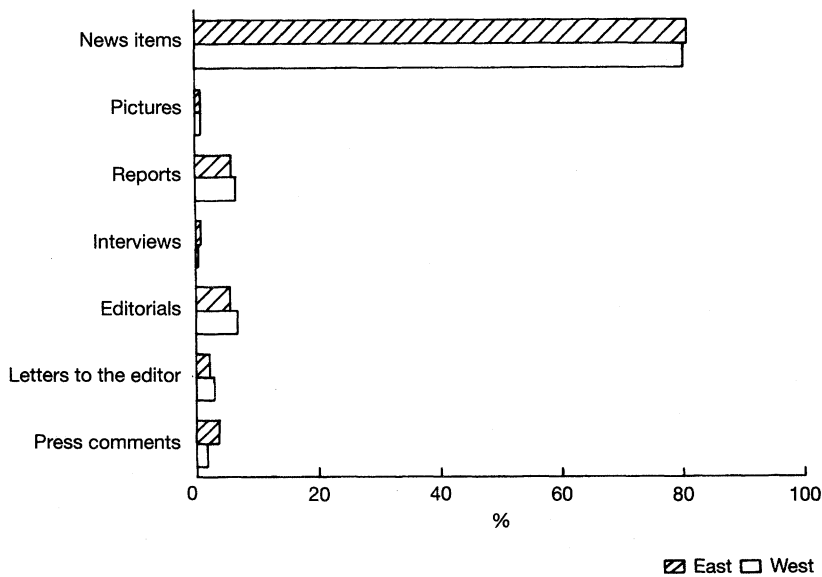


Figure 3 Types of articles: average percentage of articles per newspaper

Table 9 Evaluations of politicians: average percentage in eastern and western newspapers (%)

	<i>Total</i>	<i>News</i>	<i>Editorials</i>
Journalists			
Praise			
East	2.9	1.6	14.9
West	3.4	2.0	14.9
Criticism			
East	7.1	3.1	39.7
West	7.8	3.2	41.7
Quotations			
Praise			
East	3.8	3.7	4.6
West	3.9	4.3	1.4
Criticism			
East	13.1	13.6	10.3
West	15.7	16.8	9.2

Note: Based on coverage of 22,417 main actors in news items (east: 10,824, west: 11,593) and 1675 main actors in editorials (east: 744, west: 931).

papers publish fewer editorials than western papers, whereas they publish more press comments.

Obviously, the journalists in the newly formed states were more careful about voicing their own opinions and instead cited the opinions of colleagues. This also becomes apparent when one looks at the evaluations of the main actors of the articles. Whether a main actor was either praised or criticized by either the journalist or a source that was quoted by the journalist was coded in the study. Although Table 9 shows that the proportions in eastern and western papers are very similar, it also shows that papers in the newly formed states contain slightly fewer evaluations by journalists and by quoted sources. Also one finds that eastern and western journalists are very similar in that they give and cite much more criticism than praise. The news value of negativism is by now obviously just as important to journalists from the eastern parts of Germany as it is to journalists from the western parts.

The only big difference in Table 9 is that eastern journalists quote much more praise in editorials than their western colleagues. This is almost completely due to editorials on the local pages. In editorials from the general politics pages, the proportional amounts of journalistic praise are almost the same. The proportional amounts of evaluations in the news

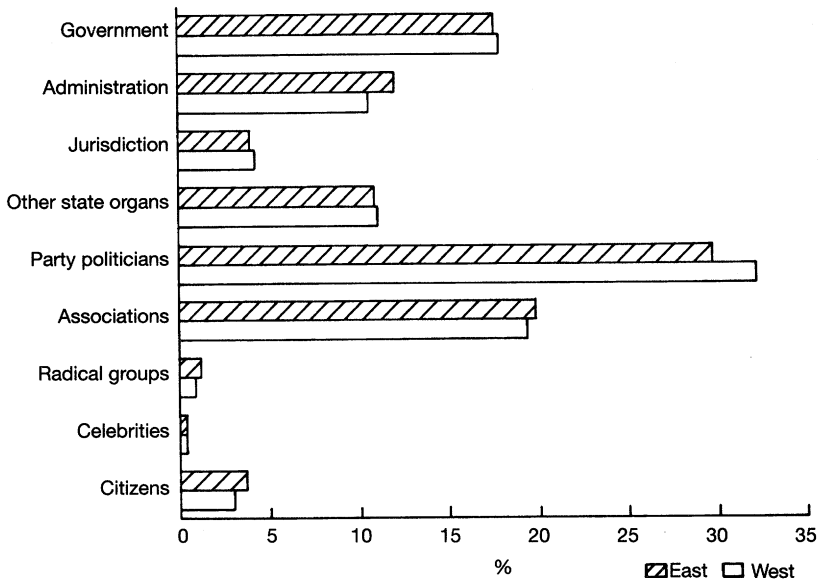


Figure 4 Percentage of actors affiliated with different political spheres in articles concerning domestic issues

are also very similar in the east and the west. Both eastern and western journalists violate the traditional norm of neutrality in that they themselves explicitly evaluate actors. It is remarkable though that the eastern journalists tend to violate the norm of neutrality slightly less often than their western colleagues.

Who the objects of evaluations were and how they were evaluated are important questions concerning public actors, especially those representing the institutions of the Federal Republic of Germany. Figure 4 shows that the amounts of coverage of actors from different political spheres are highly similar in eastern and western papers.

If one looks at the evaluation of these actors, some differences can be found, although the overall picture is pretty much the same in both eastern and western papers (Figure 5). The evaluations of actors belonging to the government, administration or jurisdiction have a stronger bias towards the negative in the eastern papers. The difference between the amounts of criticism and praise of these actors is higher in the eastern papers. The opposite is true for all other actors (except those from radical groups). This can be explained in terms of the disappointment felt by large parts of the population in the newly formed states which was caused by the economic and social problems after the Reunification. This could have led to a more negative attitude of journalists towards state officials

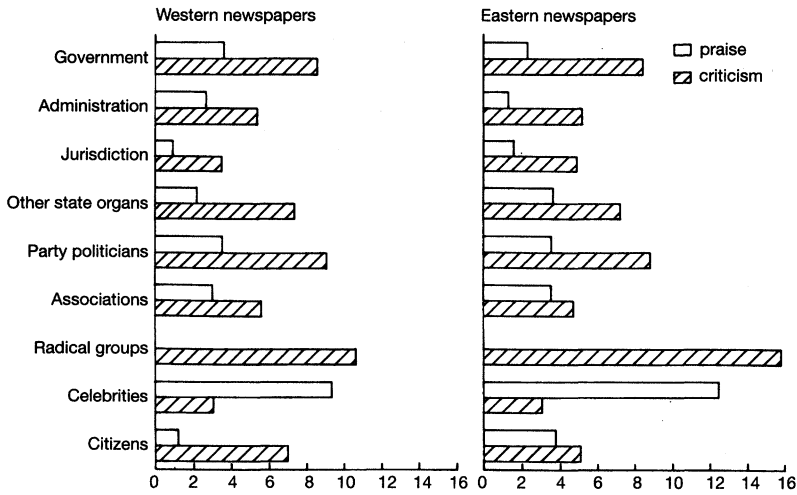
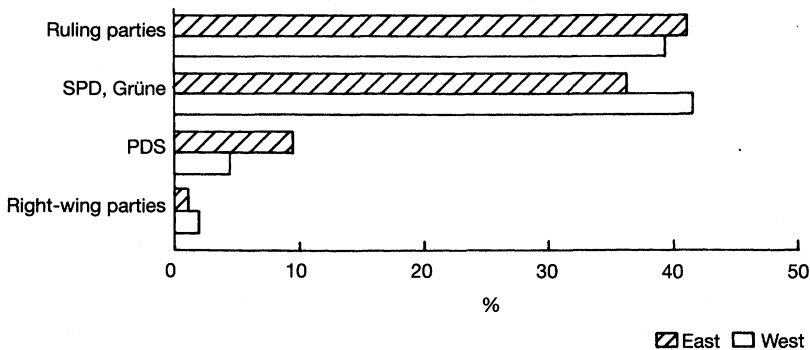


Figure 5 Evaluations of actors affiliated with different political spheres in articles concerning domestic issues: average percentage in eastern and western newspapers, based on the number of references to each type of actor



Note: Based on 5830 main actors who were assigned to political parties by journalists (east: 2679, west: 3151).

Figure 6 Party affiliations of the main actors (%)

who could be held responsible. Accordingly, the much larger percentage of positive and smaller percentage of negative evaluations of citizens in eastern papers could be explained by the fact that the citizens of the newly formed states had to suffer much more from the economic problems following the Reunification.

If one looks at the party affiliations of the actors, some larger differences between eastern and western newspapers can finally be found.

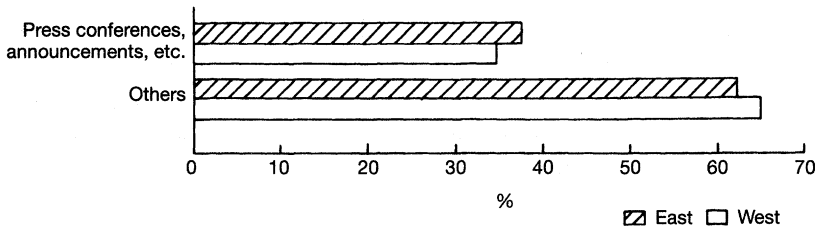
Table 10 Evaluations of politicians from different political parties: average percentage in eastern and western newspapers

	<i>Ruling parties</i>	<i>SPD/Grüne</i>	<i>PDS</i>
Journalists			
Praise			
East	1.8	2.5	10.6
West	4.6	4.6	1.4
Criticism			
East	9.2	8.2	6.1
West	8.8	9.8	9.4
Quotations			
Praise			
East	2.5	2.5	3.0
West	2.9	3.3	2.8
Criticism			
East	16.6	14.1	17.0
West	15.1	18.2	19.9

Note: Based on 2360 main actors assigned by journalists to ruling parties (east: 1111, west: 1249), 2292 assigned to SPD/Grüne (east: 264, west: 141), and 405 assigned to PDS (east: 264, west: 141).

Compared to the western papers, almost twice as many main actors in the eastern papers belong to the PDS, the successor to the former State Party SED (Figure 6). This is obviously related to the fact that the eastern papers contain significantly less coverage of the other important opposition parties, the SPD and the Grüne. The proportion of actors from the ruling parties (Christian Democrats and Liberals) is even greater in eastern papers than in western papers. The difference is more apparent in editorials, where in eastern papers around 17 percent of the mentioned party affiliations are related to the PDS, as compared to only 7 percent in the western papers. In the local pages, the western papers almost never mention PDS actors (1% of party affiliations), whereas in the eastern papers, over 10 percent of the affiliated actors belong to the PDS.

The PDS not only gets more attention, it is also more positively evaluated in papers from the newly formed states (Table 10). Compared to their colleagues from the western states, journalists from the east praise politicians belonging to the PDS about eight times more, but criticize them less. At the same time, they praise the ruling parties as well as the other opposition parties, SPD and Grüne, only half as much. Similar, though not particularly strong, patterns can be found in quotes: the



Note: Based on 12,188 news items (east: 6033, west: 6155).

Figure 7 Amount of routine media events (%)

papers from the newly formed states contain more praise and less criticism of the PDS, but less praise and more criticism of the ruling parties than the papers from the western states.

What can we infer from the fact that the PDS is more intensively covered and evaluated much more positively in the papers from the newly formed states? The differences in the papers' coverage relate to the differences of opinion between citizens of eastern and western Germany. The PDS is a very popular party in eastern Germany: almost 20 percent of the population in the newly formed states gave their vote to the PDS in the national elections in 1994; in the western states, only 1 percent did (Falter and Klein, 1994: 22). Compared to this, the PDS was even underrepresented in the eastern papers' coverage.

Finally, not only in terms of the contents of coverage, but also in terms of the events from which the coverage originated, eastern and western papers were very similar. The amount of coverage of routine media events, for example press releases, press conferences and announcements, can be seen as an indicator of the thoroughness of investigation: the more journalists rely only on routine media events, the more they depend on what their sources are willing to reveal. The amount of routine coverage is high in papers from both areas of Germany (Figure 7). However, the eastern papers also covered a higher percentage of easy-to-cover routine events compared with the western papers. The difference is significant, although it is small.

Conclusion

Whereas the structure of the broadcasting system in the newly formed states very much resembles the structure in the western states, the local and regional print media markets in the newly formed German states today still resemble the situation in the former GDR in that the dominating newspapers are the same ones that dominated before 1989.

A vast majority of journalists working in the newly formed states today had already been working as journalists there before the Wall came down. Their professional socialization took place in the socialist media system of the GDR. However, their professional attitudes seem to deviate much less than expected from those of their colleagues working in the West German states.

The content analysis presented above also reveals only minor differences between papers from the eastern and the western parts of Germany. Only small differences between the proportional amounts of thematic sections and regions of coverage in eastern papers and western papers could be found. Journalists in the newly formed states were a bit more careful about voicing their opinions and cited the opinions of colleagues instead. Only the numbers of main actors and their evaluations differed to any great extent between eastern and western papers. The evaluations of actors from the government, administration and jurisdiction was slightly more negative in eastern papers. The PDS, the successor party of the former state party SED, was much more positively evaluated and was covered more intensively in the newly formed states. However, this also correlates with the East German populace's party preferences.

To summarize, it is quite remarkable how similar the papers in both regions of Germany are. The reasons for this can, on the one hand, be seen in the fact that western managers and editors-in-chief were installed by the West German publishers who took over the papers after 1989. On the other hand, the opinions and behaviour patterns of journalists from the newly formed states seem to be influenced more by their current situation than by their professional socialization before 1989.

Notes

1. This content analysis was conducted at the Department for Communication and Political Science at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg. The project was led by Winfried Schulz and Stefan Hanke.
2. The newspapers are as follows (circulation given in brackets, same bold letters indicate same publishers). Western Germany: *Westdeutsche Allgemeine* (621,000) **D**; *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (403,000), *Rheinische Post* (344,000), *Hamburger Abendblatt* (306,000), *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger* (284,000) **B**; *Die Rheinpfalz* (243,000) **A**; *Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* (206,000) **C**; *Saarbrücker Zeitung* (180,000) **F**; *Lübecker Nachrichten* (114,000) **E**; *Südwestpressel* *Schwäbische Donauzeitung* (106,000) **G**. Eastern Germany: *Freie Presse* (501,000) **A**; *Mitteldeutsche Zeitung* (439,000) **B**; *Sächsische Zeitung* (428,000), *Volksstimme* (331,000), *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (302,000) **C**; *Thüringer Allgemeine*

(298,000) D; *Ostsee-Zeitung* (222,000) E; *Lausitzer Rundschau* (215,000) F; *Märkische Oderzeitung* (172,000) G; *Neues Deutschland* (80,000).

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