

MASS MEDIA AND MEMORY: THE COMMUNIST GDR IN TODAY'S COMMUNICATIVE MEMORY

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ABSTRACT *Using the example of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) the present study asks how mass media shape collective memory. How do reports in German media on the GDR affect communicative memory? To answer these questions, the present study is grounded in the theory of collective memory and relies on more than 20 focus groups in very different social settings. Today's mass media content on the GDR is almost always about dictatorship. This is why some East Germans do not find their picture of the past within the media and do not feel at home in reunited Germany, yet.*

KEYWORDS

COLLECTIVE MEMORY, COLLECTIVE IDENTITY, GDR, FOCUS GROUPS

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INTRODUCTION

Using the example of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the present paper asks how mass media shape communicative memory. The case of the GDR is of particular interest for two reasons. First of all, like Eastern Europe, Spain, and Portugal as well as South Africa and some parts of South America (i.e. Argentina, Brazil, and Chile) reunited Germany had to (re-) build its collective identity after a long period of dictatorship. As in the above named regions with communist, military, fascist or apartheid regimes, people see the past in different ways and invest them with different memories and ideas – at least as long as witnesses and former opponents are still alive. Remembering the moments of jubilation in 1989 at the Berlin Wall, today's rise of nostalgia in both the East and the West is quite surprising (Knabe, 2009). It goes without saying that the picture of every dictatorship is a battleground and that mass media play an important role in this fight which leads to the second reason for choosing the GDR as an example. In contrast to almost all other countries with similar experiences in the recent past, people who lived in the communist part of Germany are a minority in their now much larger homeland. After a public demand to rid professions of communist staff, an estimated one in two GDR journalists left the profession (Boyer, 2005: 195), research found that from the early 1990s, the GDR image in German media is about dictatorship almost exclusively (Meyen, 2013). How do those very homogenous media reports affect the communicative memory in different social settings?

To answer this question, following Jan Assmann (1995) and Aleida Assmann (1995), the present paper distinguishes between cultural memory as represented, for example, in the mass media and communicative memory. The communicative memory was collected in 27 focus groups in very different environments. The key outcome is the existence of a gap between cultural and communicative memory. Therefore, the idea that communicative memory gradually becomes media-based cultural memory, is considered too simple. On the contrary, at least in the GDR case, this is true only for the ones matching the ruling discourses of the time. Before going into the details of the research design and results, the next section outlines the appropriate theoretical framework.

COLLECTIVE MEMORY, MASS MEDIA, AND THE EXAMPLE OF THE GDR

There is no doubt that, from the end of the 1980s, the humanities and social sciences have faced a memory boom (Misztal, 2005: 1321). Although the numerous studies come from different disciplinary perspectives and although a wide variety of labels describing the phenomenon is available throughout the literature (Erlil and Nünning, 2005; Hirst and Echterhoff, 2008; Kansteiner, 2002; Szpunar, 2012: 1202; Zelizer, 1995; Zelizer, 2008), most approaches share two starting points. First, following Maurice Halbwachs (1925) they emphasize the social nature of memory and the role of everyday communication in that regard. Halbwachs' notion of *cadres sociaux* (social frames) claims that even the most personal memory is a collective one. Secondly, memory and remembering,

whether combined with the term collected, cultural, social, or collective (Szpunar, 2012: 1202), are evaluated since there is an obvious link to collective identity (Hall, 1999). It is the focus on identity that justifies memory research (Kansteiner, 2002: 184). According to Anthony Giddens (1991), to quote only one of the modern identity theorists, the self is neither something that is just given nor a collection of traits, but has to be reflexively made. Following Giddens, identity is to be found in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going. That means we have to integrate external events and representations into the ongoing story about ourselves. It is easy to see how memory and remembering are intertwined. Individual and collective experiences of the past are part of our identity, understood as the very personal story about us that we believe in, as are our interpretations of day-to-day interactions with family and friends. Consequently, as Piotr Szpunar (2012: 1202) put it, collective memory is more than a body of knowledge: it has to be reviewed and revised constantly and is, hence, processual (Zelizer, 1995).

There is also a consensus that collective memory and remembering could not exist without media. This includes memory talks in families and photo albums, as well as history and story books, museums, and other physical representations of the past such as Pierre Nora's famous commemoration sites (Nora, 1996). However, quite surprisingly, modern mass media are hardly taken into consideration in memory research (Kansteiner, 2002; Zelizer, 2008) although there is evidence of journalists' agency in the memory shaping processes. Using generational labels in leading US newsmagazines, Carolyn Kitch (2003: 198), for example, showed that journalists "create cultural stereotypes" and define "groups, events and phenomena". For Barbie Zelizer, journalists "act as sleuths of the past" since the past "offers a point of comparison, an opportunity for analogy, an invitation to nostalgia and a redress to earlier events". However, "journalism is not often cited by scholars as an obvious source of memory work" (Zelizer, 2008: 80-82).

One of the reasons for this gap is memory studies' strong roots in academic disciplines that do not contain a focus on public communication, such as ancient history, sociology, and philosophy. It's not just Maurice Halbwachs or Pierre Nora who, conceptualizing their work on memory did not think of modern mass media. State-of-the-art research on that topic seems impossible without a reference to the German Egyptologists Aleida Assmann (1995) and Jan Assmann (1995) who use quite a different notion of media. In contrast to mainstream communication studies, here media are seen as memory stores and carriers of meaning only. In Assmanns' theory, media such as the pyramids of Egypt, the epics of Homer, the Bible, or canonical texts of national art and literature guarantee communication over long periods of time; far beyond a single person's lifetime. In this paradigm, the main media effect is on the quality of storage: How do societies with an oral tradition differ from those with a written one? Looking at Ancient Egypt or similar societies and events from very old times, it seems that it is not in fact necessary to include the memory shaping power of mass media. In those cases, cultural memory such as that represented in memorials, museums, books or files that survive the times has long become collective memory. Then, films, editorials, or magazine stories are indeed no more than media of circulation through large populations and cues evoking discussions on the covered events.

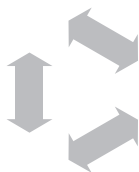
However, those conversations about historical periods are different from communicative memory. According to Aleida and Jan Assmann, communicative memory is grounded in wisdom and tied to interactions between the living and gradually becomes media-based cultural memory. Dealing with contemporary history, this approach is not broad enough and leaves out at least two critical points. First, communicative memory and cultural memory could exist side by side. While offenders, victims and witnesses of the above mentioned dictatorships are still alive, museums are already built and textbooks already written. The question is, whose memories become cultural memory?

Secondly, for communication research newspapers, magazines, and TV broadcasts are even more important memory agents. Covering the past, mass media do not just deliver memory cues (Aleida and Jan Assmann), cadres sociaux (social frames, Halbwachs), "sleuths to the past" (Zelizer), "facts", or a path to historical "knowledge". At the very same time, influencing both memory workers such as historians, politicians, museum staff, or teachers and "ordinary people" whether eyewitnesses or people born later, journalists take part in the battle about the power to define cultural memory (figure 1). That is especially true for key media which are an important source for the climate of opinion (Noelle-Neumann, 1993). Journalists select and frame events and agents according to both media logic (Altheide, 2004) and their very own role perceptions (Donsbach, 2008). The question is, how do those representations of the past influence both communicative memory and other media of cultural memory?

COMMUNICATIVE MEMORY

Family and friends: grandparents, parents, neighbors, peers

School and education: teachers, peers



MASS MEDIA

Key Media: *Der Spiegel*, *FAZ*, *Die Zeit* ...

Other Media (Print, Internet, TV ...)

ASSMANN'S MEDIA OF CULTURAL MEMORY

Academic literature

Museums, memorials, commemoration sites and events

Textbooks, novels ...

▲ Figure 1.
Mass Media in Collective Memory's Production Processes

It is the unique constellation of different experiences that makes the GDR's representation in re-united Germany's collective memory so fascinating. Former communists, other supporters of the Eastern regime, their opponents, and the silent majority of people

who were indifferent back then, live not just side by side with their children and grandchildren who know the GDR only from hearsay, but also with West Germans which can be differentiated by generations and political camps as well as by their connections to the East. In other words, in the present case study we can compare eyewitnesses from both East and West, their offspring who should have access to the memories of parents and grandparents as well as to the mass media's representations from the past, and people who take their GDR image mainly from mass media, training institutions, and Assmanns' media of cultural memory.

Therefore, knowing mass media's meta-message (Meyen, 2013), it should be possible to get an idea on whether – and if so, how – media content shapes collective memory. Fortunately, there is a lot of research available on images, places, and the politics of GDR remembrance. Summarizing that literature as well as the public debates raised by the recommendations of an experts' commission in 2006 on how the topic should be dealt with in the future, the historian Martin Sabrow (2009: 18-20) distinguished three ideal GDR memory types:

1. Dictatorship, focused on oppression and its courageous overcoming in the peaceful revolution of 1989. In this remembrance mode, the notorious Stasi is more important than nursery care and kindergarten. Here, the GDR is all about offenders, victims, and resistance or, to put it differently, the GDR is the contrasting foil for the Western model emphasizing the rule of law, freedom, and democracy. It goes without saying that this memory type dominates the public space in Germany today (Sabrow, 2009: 18).
2. Arrangement, combining power and everyday world, talking about self-assertion under rough conditions, and, therefore, increasing East Germans' pride in surviving. According to Sabrow (2009: 19), this ideal memory type is very vivid in East Germany today.
3. Progress, starting with the Nazi period and the contrast between East and West after World War II, going to today's wars and the global financial crises and maintaining the idea of socialism as a legitimate alternative to capitalist societies. Not surprisingly, this memory type is especially cultivated by former GDR elites.

With minor exceptions, from the early 1990s on, media content on the GDR is very close to the dictatorship memory type as described by Sabrow (Meyen, 2013). This applies to the subjects (Stasi, missing freedom of travel, the state of lawlessness, economic mismanagement, doping, peaceful revolution), to the quoted agents (mostly victims of communism and protagonists from 1989 such as Marianne Birthler, Joachim Gauck, Wolf Biermann, Bärbel Bohley, or Markus Meckel; sometimes even as authors) as well as to the used language (metaphors for the GDR: cheese cover, prison, stale air, omnipresent terror represented by the octopus Stasi).

There is ample evidence that the GDR's public image is related to general political trends in reunified Germany. From this perspective, the memory construction process is serving those in power (Herf, 1997; Wolfrum, 2001; Müller, 2002). One might even go further and address the creation of collective memories to Nazism and communism by

conservative politicians since Chancellor Helmut Kohl took over in 1982. As far as the dissemination of appropriate images is concerned, there can be no doubt that key media such as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* or the news magazine *Der Spiegel* played a decisive role in this process. A highly emblematic example was Federal President Christian Wulff's 2010 speech commemorating the twentieth anniversary of re-unification. According to Wulff, Germans' joint remembrance of historical events consists of exactly two components – first, freedom bell's sound which could be heard 20 years ago and, second, all the resistant efforts against dictatorship. One day after the speech, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* published the complete text (Meyen, 2013: 74-75). However, the present paper does not explore the memory-power nexus but rather the effects of media reports on communicative memory. To put the GDR's mass media representation in a nutshell: even in nonpolitical articles with a GDR reference it is almost impossible to avoiding any hint of the Berlin Wall and the secret police. Against this background, the research question becomes more precise: What do the "memory consumers" (Kansteiner, 2002) from the various German memory communities do with the media content focusing on remembering the GDR almost solely as a dictatorship?

RESEARCH DESIGN

Communicative memory, as the name says, is created while talking with others (family members, neighbors, in school etc.). Following this theoretical idea, we used focus groups in order to ascertain the communicative memory of Germans today and the influence of mass media's coverage of the GDR on their image of the GDR. We conducted 27 focus groups in very different social settings. The selection procedure guarantees a sample including all major kinds of historical experiences (Table 1).

Therefore, we looked for people with personal memories of the Nazi era, people who were raised in the time of division, and youngsters who barely remember the fall of the Berlin wall. The other selection criteria (origin: East, West; gender; attitudes towards the regime before 1989 defined by social position or career) worked on the same principle. In most focus groups we had four to six participants. The interviewers were students who received an extensive training in a master's seminar at the University of Munich, including the GDR's history, German-German relationships, memory theory, and qualitative research. Those students were responsible for the recruitment as well. On condition that personal relationships to the interviewees are not allowed and according to quotas, they used their networks. Almost all of the 27 groups were highly homogeneous (i.g. four students born in East Germany or, to mention a second example, five West German men from the Bavarian countryside in their 50s). In some cases, we even had natural groups (existing in everyday lives).

Table 1. Focus group interviewees (n=122)

	Origin East	Move from East to West	Move from West to East	Origin West	Total
Women	18	17	1	24	60
Men	12	13	2	35	20
Abitur*	11	17	3	24	55
No Abitur*	19	13	-	35	67
30 and younger	6	10	3	15	34
31-50 years	7	12	-	18	37
51-70 years	6	7	-	20	33
71 plus	11	1	-	6	18
Total	30	30	3	59	122

* In Germany only those students who finish Gymnasium are allowed to take the final exam called Abitur which entitles them to enroll at University.

The topics of the interview guidelines are rooted in collective memory theory as well as in the ideas of mass media influence as outlined in previous chapter:

- >The image of the GDR before the wall came down (i.e. the interviewees' life stories);
- >The significance of the topic and the GDR's image today;
- >Perceived media representations (important movies, museums, lead articles, or books on the topic; recommendations for young people; criticism on so-called Ostalgie shows on private TV channels);
- >Other sources of cultural memory.

As for analyzing the focus groups, we followed a theory-driven approach which is different from any classically grounded theory and different from hermeneutics. Our procedure could best be described as 'theoretical coding', using our theoretical concept to interpret the qualitative data (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). The analytical categories were taken from both Michel Foucault's discourse analysis and Martin Sabrow's ideal memory types. Our way of analyzing qualitative data included six steps: (1) data management, (2) close reading, (3) describing and condensing the meanings, (4) classifying by coding the statements, (5) interpreting by contextualizing the statements and (6) representing the data (Cresswell, 2007: 156-157). Finally, we developed a portrait of each interviewee, using the theoretical categories and paying special attention to silences, contradictions, double entendres, metaphors and social desirability. Each interview was analyzed by both researchers and the respective interviewers and subsequently discussed. Finally, we compared the different portraits.

A typology has two aims: to describe different sorts of behavior, and by contrasting the types, to identify those factors that influence it. Before starting, we needed dimensions that could grasp the similarities and difference between types (Kluge, 2000). After the

theoretical coding of the interviews, we detected that the interviewees' GDR stories varied widely in terms of

>significance (How important the GDR topic is for the reflexive work on the story about ourselves?; Giddens, 1991) and

>GDR evaluation. While the dictatorship memory was present in every single focus group, the interviewees differed in terms of remembering arrangement and progress.

In the second step, we used the concept of attributed space (Lazarsfeld and Barton, 1951) to gain an overview of all the potential combinations of our dimensions and started sorting the interviewees' portraits. With each new portrait, we decided whether he/she was similar to any of the others sorted previously or whether he/she represented a completely new case in our attributed space. To obtain the second aim of a typology, we looked for positional, demographic and other lifestyle characteristics shared by the different types. Finally, we characterized the types, seeking to find appropriate names (Figure 2).

MEDIAS' INFLUENCE ON GERMANY'S COMMUNICATIVE MEMORY OF THE GDR

The recruitment process already revealed a noticeable impact of the mass media's GDR image on communicative memory. A lot of potential interviewees had no desire to take part in the focus groups. The reasons they gave were quite similar and obviously rooted in the dictatorship media reports during the last 20 years: "Everything that can be said has already been said". However, the Germans are well aware of the public discourse of the past and have internalized at least parts of it. On the one hand, literally all participants, for example, reject the GDR sporting system and its stars and ascribe to journalism the task of keeping alive the dictatorship experience. So, all German memory communities praise the movie *The Lives of Others*, East Germans because of local stars like Ulrich Mühe and realistic everyday life representations and West Germans because, for many of them, the GDR and secrete police are almost the same. On the other hand, major media issues and agents such as the uprising from 1953, the Stasi documentation authority, and East German activists and intellectuals were at no point referred to. In other words: Germans do not necessarily want to speak about the GDR today since, this is an interpretation grounded in the present study's material as explained further below, communicative memory and cultural memory as represented in mass media as well as in museums (Benz, 2011), academic historiography (Sabrow et al., 2007), and movies (Ziegegeist, 2011) do not have a great deal in common. Not surprisingly, after finishing the focus groups, a lot of the interviewees applauded the research idea. Some of them even made an arrangement for a private chat on the progress memory type or about their personal lives. One example is a sports group consisting of five women between 50 and 60 from both East and West and meeting for ages where nobody knew the personal stories of the others. It is easy to assume that, among other representations of cultural GDR memory, mass media prevent discussions on such topics.

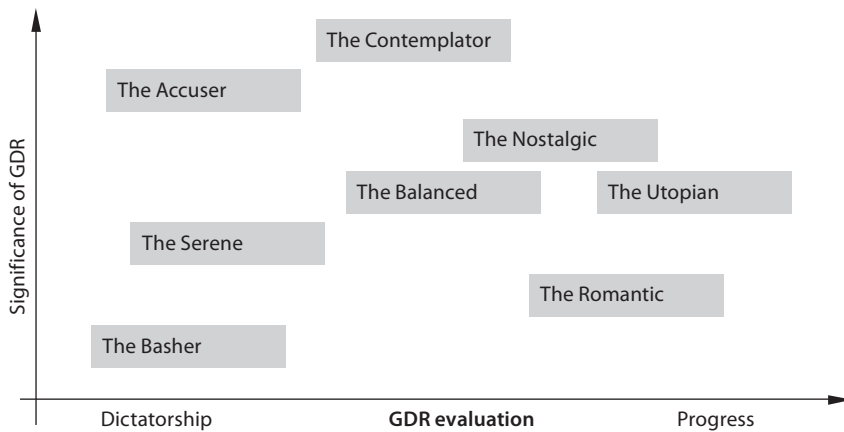
Nevertheless, personal experience and eyewitnesses shape communicative memory more than any ever recorded piece of cultural memory. While almost all West Germans immediately recalled GDR border controls, mandatory money exchange, the smell of two-stroke engines, crap food, and care packages for their relatives in the East, the interviewed East Germans painted a very positive picture of the past, even those who left the country in 1989 or before. Included are the school system (standardized until grade ten and not, as today, three-tier and varying from state to state), childcare in general (with leisure and holiday offerings and teachers who took care of the kids), women's promotion, and the social security net. As a woman, in her late 40s now, put it, "We had a freer life, after all. Happier and without worries." And a construction manager, 50, said, "It's just today that I like the idea of care and welfare. I'm fine with today, but that's no longer there". There are at least two possible explanations. First, East Germans fight for their biographies' value and, therefore, try to upgrade the GDR. A housewife, mid 50, said, "For me, kindergarten was no reprisal at all. I just haven't seen it as political education." Secondly, in reunified Germany, East Germans have experienced a loss of status. So, it's not the GDR they praise today but their better place in hierarchy back then. However, even the most positive GDR image is always qualified with a "but". As mass media have Stasi and Berlin Wall almost everywhere, the interviewees linked their talks to the communists' interests, oppression and missing freedom and, hence, to the dictatorship memory type. It is easy to see the mass media effect here again.

The Germans are not just well aware of mass media reports on the GDR, but also of the climate of opinion. Here, the best proof is delivered by the stories of those who left the country before the wall came down. According to the dictatorship memory type as represented by the media, it would have been easy to tell a victim's tale. Quite the contrary, the former refugees named personal and rather egoistic reasons for their move back then. Just two quotes from the material: "I was young, had really nothing to lose and was trying to give it a shot" (female clerk, in her mid-40s now); "Going West was much the fashion in those days. All my friends were already gone, and I was afraid of being the last one in the village" (bar-tender, same age).

To sum up the line of reasoning so far, first, Germans are well aware of mass media's meta-message of dictatorship. Therefore, secondly, indeed have an impact on communicative memory and (public) memory talks. Part of this is that many of the interviewees avoid media reports with GDR references since their very own narrative is rather different from the "official" one ("We were there back then and know what happened", veterinarian, 50). However, when the two memories (communicative and cultural) are in line, people could become literally addicted to corresponding media reports. That is especially true for former GDR opponents and their peers.

TYPOLOGY OF GDR IMAGES IN GERMANY

Communicative GDR memory depends not just on personal experiences before 1989, but also on the objective and subjective social situation today and, maybe even more, on personal contact with eyewitnesses and their offspring. To be a little more specific we constructed a typology first describing different GDR images and then, by contrasting the types, identifying factors that influence it.



▲ Figure 2.
Typology of GDR memories in Germany today

The Accuser

In Figure 2, this type is in the above left corner (high significance, negative GDR image). The accusers lived their lives in the GDR, but couldn't fully exploit their potentials because of political or personal reasons. Therefore, they would never put an end to that story and know all the respective media reports. Two examples are a visually impaired couple who could only become basket maker or masseur in the GDR. When someone in their focus group brought up one of the socialistic achievements, those two protested immediately and looked for counter examples. As a rule, the accusers are born before 1960. Today, they live in East and West. Some of them left the GDR before 1989 and some, like the couple, suffered while staying.

The Nostalgic

Although this type has a GDR background as well, the nostalgic is quite the opposite of the accuser. "The GDR was our fatherland", said a veterinarian, mid 40. "I had a sheltered childhood and didn't experience any reprisals". A focus group of five women, all between

40 and 50, even started with a glass of champagne and cheers to “the nice time we had a chance to participate in back then”. The nostalgic is born in ordinary GDR families between 1960 and 1980. When the wall came down, this type was just at the beginning. So, he or she did not experience the GDR’s career limits nor the social decline their parents’ generation had to face after 1990. On the contrary, the nostalgic got a fresh start. They know that today’s standard of living is much higher than socialism ever could have offered. Nevertheless, part of the re-start was the rejection of East Germans in the West. Therefore, the nostalgic is well aware of her origin and has developed pride in it.

The Contemplator

For this type, the GDR is a major identity part and, in that regard, more important than for the nostalgic and even the accuser who are on average the same age. In contrast to the latter type, the contemplators are in search of self-knowledge and, therefore, more reflexive. Their GDR image could best be described as ambivalent. The contemplators know the contents of the dictatorship memory. While some of them were part of GDR elites, other contemplators even suffered under socialism, whether in a responsible position in the GDR’s economy, as ordinary citizen and refugees before 1989 or as a regular visitor from the West who was in professional contact with the East during the 1980s. However, this type also sees, and this is the major difference to the accusers, a positive side to the GDR.

The Utopian

In our sample, this is a rather small type consisting of interviewees who are somewhat younger as the types described so far. Some of the utopians are born in the West like the well-paid journalist Thomas, 40, who was very interested in GDR literature in the late 1980s. To this day he likes works by Heiner Müller and Christa Wolf as well as the cultural support given by those in power back then and other parts of the communist ideal. The East Germans belonging to this type are younger and were introduced to the issue by their parents who would probably belong to the accusers or the contemplators. As a kid, the student Simon, in his mid-20s, for example, got a lot of Stasi stories. So, he knows about dictatorship, and the GDR is important for his self-identity. However, in the focus group he talked more about parts of the progress memory type such as childcare, the social safety net and the promotion of women.

The Romantic

This type is close to the utopians in age (40 and younger), GDR evaluation (more progress than dictatorship) and origin (from both East and West), but the topic is less important for them. Those romantics who are born in the East are probably the children of a nostalgic. Lars, at the beginning of a career in the West, said, “I have very little personal memory. It’s not my issue at all but I’m interested in the socialist utopias. They had full employment, natural food and things like that.” At the end of the interview, obviously knowing the climate of opinion as represented in the mass media, some of the East born romantics even apologized for praising the GDR too much. The romantics from the West have a different history: almost no GDR contact before 1989, a job in the East after the

wall came down, and dissatisfaction with the ruling system today. "East Germany was like Albania or North Korea back then" said Georg, a theater director in his early 40s. "Austria and Switzerland were much closer to me." Today, Georg works in East Germany. Therefore, he not only knows the communicative memories of the nostalgic, the contemplator, and the utopian but also criticizes the public debate in the West.

The Basher

Without exception, this type being very close to the ideal dictatorship memory type is from West Germany and has little contact to and no interest in people from East Germany. The younger interviewees belonging to this type almost sound like an editorial of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* warning of nostalgia and arguing with Nazi parallels. The student Christoph could not even stand a relationship with a girl from the East since she was a kind of romantic or utopian and they always fought about it. The older ones have not just a negative image of the GDR but of East Germans in general. "I was not really thrilled in 1989" said Uwe, a factory worker in his 40s who has never gone to the Eastern part of his country to this very day. His workmate Manfred said, "The Easterners had these big cars right from the beginning, and they came here to get our jobs. It was immediately clear to me that it couldn't go on as it had before. Just look at the money. We pay and pay and pay, and they don't stop crying." People like Manfred link today's economic problems as well as their personal loss of status to the end of communism.

The Serene

As the basher, this type has an origin in the West and a rather negative GDR image but in contrast to the type described above, here the issue is more important since it is of biographical significance. The serene is older than the basher. Therefore, most of them have personal memories of the old united Germany and no concerns about job market competition from the East. A good example is a couple that went to the East Berlin Christmas market during all those years with two Germanys. Today, those two remember both the border controls and the pleasures of 1989.

The Balanced

This type is twofold. Those balanced who are East born, left the GDR before the wall came down. Although the escape from the country is still an identity-forming and very emotional memory, interviewees such as the former downhill racer Annette, in her mid-40s now, and the coeval clerk Katrin, praise their childhood and the GDR's social achievements today. So do the balanced from the West who, on the one hand, remember arduous trips to the "prison" in the 1980s (Matthias, a social worker, 50) but, on the other one, still like the socialist ideal and blame their Western fellows acting like "colonial masters" in the East in the early 1990s (Petra, an educator, early 50s) as well as the mass media's GDR image. Their children would probably belong to the romantics or the utopians. Additionally, it is no coincidence that the two just quoted balanced work in social professions. There, a proximity to communist ideas is more likely than in the social setting that the basher or the serene are rooted in.

Influencing factors

Communicative GDR memory depends on five main factors: personal experiences before 1989, closely related to this, age, origin (East or West), today's personal social situation, and last but not least personal contacts to eyewitnesses and their offspring. For interviewees born in the GDR, the issue is still highly significant (accuser and nostalgic vs. serene and basher). Depending on both their relationship with the regime back then and today's social position, some of them emphasize socialist ideals more than others (nostalgic and contemplator vs. accuser and balanced). Those interviewees from the West who were already adults in 1989 differ in both their contacts back then and nowadays (basher vs. serene, balanced, and contemplator). Of particular interest, and in line with Assmanns' definition of communicative memory, is the fact that the GDR image is given to the next generation. While kids of bashers who do not leave their environment of origin become bashers as well, nostalgics, balanced, and contemplators raised romantics and utopians. Not surprisingly, the offspring have less addiction to the issue than their parents.

CONCLUSION

Using the GDR example, the present paper asked how mass media shape collective memory. The consequences of the very homogenous GDR mass media coverage for communicative memory are obvious. It's not just that some East Germans do not find their picture of the past within the media and do not feel at home in reunited Germany, yet. Even worse, Germans avoid talking about this part of their collective identity. Here, we have a mass media effect beyond any concrete content. Although the meta-message of dictatorship memory is well known all over the country, the conclusions differ in both parts of it. While West Germans don't have a great need for further clarification given by their fellows from the other side, East Germans avoid the issue since they do not want to be recognized as those coming from a state of lawlessness ruled by the Stasi. To put it in another way, today's social status of East Germans in reunified Germany is closely linked to the public image of the past. That's why media reports on missing freedom of travel, economic mismanagement, or doping concern them personally.

However, the typology of GDR images as presented in previous chapter shows the importance of personal contacts. Of course, communicative memory is a question of family transmission, but also of relationships and talks with neighbors, visitors, and even strangers. If it is true that mass media influence these encounters, they share responsibility for Germany's divided collective memory. Comparing, for example, bashers and nostalgics, the country seems far away from a shared collective identity as well. Additionally, how the GDR is remembered today is not just a matter of origin (although some types are clearly rooted in the East and others in the West) and age but also of the fight for status. As the focus groups showed, the origin from the East is still a feature that could be used in that fight since the climate of opinion as presented in key media is very clear about black and white.

For collective memory theory, there is another important result. The present study delivers evidence for a gap between cultural and communicative memory. Therefore, the idea is too simple that, as Aleida and Jan Assmann assume, communicative memory gradually becomes media-based cultural memory. On the contrary, at least in the GDR case, this is true just for a certain part of the living (bashers, serenes, and accusers) matching the ruling discourses of the time. Knowing the loss of appeal and importance of the issue to the next generations, as seen with in the romantic and utopian categories among participants, the memories of arrangement and, even more, progress, will disappear in a few decades.

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MEDIJI I PAMĆENJE: KOMUNISTIČKI DDR U DANAŠNJEM KOMUNIKACIJSKOM PAMĆENJU

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SAŽETAK Koristeći primjer Njemačke Demokratske Republike (njem. *Deutsche Demokratische Republik, DDR*), ovo istraživanje ispituje na koji način masovni mediji oblikuju kolektivno pamćenje, odnosno kako izvještavanje njemačkih medija o DDR-u utječe na komunikacijsko pamćenje. Kako bi se dobili odgovori na postavljena istraživačka pitanja, studija se temelji na teoriji o kolektivnom pamćenju te se oslanja na više od dvadeset fokus-grupa provedenih u različitim socijalnim okruženjima. Danas masovni mediji pri izvještavanju o DDR-u gotovo uvijek spominju diktaturu. To je razlog što dio istočnih Nijemaca ne pronalazi svoju sliku prošlosti u medijima te se još uvijek ne osjeća kao kod kuće u ujedinjenoj Njemačkoj.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

KOLEKTIVNO PAMĆENJE, KOLEKTIVNI IDENTITET, DDR, FOKUS-GRUPE

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