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ABSTRACT

A study investigated what kind of expectations former GDR (German Democratic Republic) journalism students have about their futures as journalists and what their general perceptions of journalism are. About 80 journalism students in their last semester at Leipzig University were administered surveys during the two days directly preceding the official (re)unification of Germany. A total of 58 students responded, but not all students answered all of the questions. Results indicated that (1) 83% of the students passed a one-year journalism trainee program at a media organization or had professional experience via journalism internship programs; (2) 63% of the students said they would choose to work in print media rather than television or radio; (3) the students were not very willing to work for non-political magazines; (4) 36 of the 58 students refused to respond when asked to indicate the main influence on their decision to study journalism; (5) the two classic models of journalists as "critic/controller" or as "educator" were the most important or played the biggest role for the students; and (6) 97% of the students felt that the possibility to apply individual abilities and individual expertise were very important, while compatibility of job and family life was more important for females than males. Findings suggest that after nearly a year of experience with the new society and the system of freedom of the press, the journalism students, perhaps more than ever, see their role as journalists as an altruistic one. (One table and 26 references are included.) (RS)

Coping with the new system:

Self-Assessment, Role-Definition and Professional Expectations of Journalism Students in former GDR after Democratization

By

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Coping with the new system.

Self-Assessment, Role-Definition and Professional Expectations of Journalism Students in former GDR after Democratization

(Abstract)

Eastern Europe is undergoing the transition from a totalitarian system to a democracy. In this process mass media play a very important role. For the most part, Western journalists and researchers so far had little interest in details of Eastern journalism and journalism training. Fundamentally, we still know nothing about how Eastern journalists think of their present role in society or of the old beliefs they still may have. Thus, we need to learn more about socialist journalism and the journalists themselves in order to keep from building new walls between us.

The aim of this survey was designed to find out what kind of expectations former GDR journalism students have about their futures as journalists and what their perceptions are of journalism in general. I wanted the results to reflect what differences in self-assessment, if any, exist between West German and East German journalism students. After one year of change, would the East German journalism students' answers still differ from what we know from surveys of Western students? What kind of differences, if any, would exist between Western journalists, who for generations have known the concept of freedom of the press, and Eastern journalists, who have just been given the chance to familiarize themselves with the concept?

Because all Eastern communist countries have been strongly influenced in all areas of social and political life by the Soviet Union, their educational and professional systems are quite similar. This is true in particular for journalism (see e.g. Dennis, 1990). Therefore East German journalism students can serve as an example of socialist journalism in general.

Coping with the new system.

Self-Assessment, Role-Definition and Professional Expectations of Journalism Students in former GDR after Democratization

In the beginning of the 21th century we must more than ever deal with the increasing complexity of our world. On the one hand, our world grows more and more complex. On the other hand, it seems to be smaller than ever. Wars far away affect our lives. Since environmental destruction or political movements do not stop at national borders, we will have to interact, communicate, and negotiate with our near and far neighbors in the world. Complexity has reached a new level and thus international exchange will reach a new dimension that has not been experienced in the past. In particular, the developments in Eastern Europe will be a complete new challenge for international communication, mass media, journalism, and professional communicators in general.

Eastern Europe is undergoing the transition from a totalitarian system to a democracy. In this process mass media play a very important role. Countries like Czechoslovakia and Poland have just begun to re-establish freedom of the press. For the republics of the former Soviet Union (CIS) this transition is even more difficult because freedom of the press has rarely existed in their history. Now at the end of our century, the Eastern print-media and electronic-media scene will change dramatically for the people and societies concerned. As state control ceases, former state-owned newspapers will be bought by commercial companies -- perhaps Western ones -- and a variety of new news papers may be founded in the near future. Sooner or later, the Eastern media scene will resemble the Western one, no matter what new ideas or creative concepts are being discussed there at present.

But after centuries with party- or government-controlled mass media, the principle of freedom of the press or freedom of the media market can not just be *established*. Horvat (1992) describes the difficulties as follows: "In Eastern Europe the entire system was changed, not only the ruling elites. Concepts which are familiar elsewhere, such as private property, enterprenurialism, banking system etc., are novelty in Eastern Europe. In this respect the democratization of the media differs the most from Asian or South American model, where the media, especially the print media, never left private or family hands. (...) In Eastern Europe, with scant tradition of private ownership and with the absence of financial resources and managerial skills, a smooth media transition is proving next to impossible." (p. 5)

As one result of the changes, in Eastern Europe a new system of journalism education and training is required. The Eastern countries themselves feel strongly about this necessity. Thus, Eastern Europe now seeks Western help, professional consulting, and an exchange of concepts and ideas. The West is happy to help with this process. First contacts have begun, especially in Europe where the two systems and the people living in them have always been very close to each other geographically. Some professionals have already visited colleagues or professional journalism groups in Eastern Europe or welcomed them in their countries. During the meetings one often realizes that despite the translator, we have some problems understanding each other. The problem is not with language. The problem is understanding completely different concepts of journalism, journalism's role and function, and the skills required. It is also a problem of understanding totally different systems of education in general, and journalism education in particular. For example, in a communist society, *any* aspect of individualism is looked upon as negative. And we should not forget that the decades of cold war have just ended. In the near future, we will still have to deal with people

in the East who have been raised with certain concepts about the "evil West". Honestly, haven't we in the West been raised in quite a similar manner, only with the picture reversed?

In this new situation, Eastern Europe needs Western help in a broader sense. Of course Eastern Europe needs financial aid and technical equipment, but perhaps more than anything else, it needs this know-how and consulting on the basis of *mutual understanding*. The differences between both systems even within one culture, like in Germany, cause a lot of misunderstandings. Very often it is the ignorance about the conditions of different socializations that leads to the frustrations on both sides. As a result of the lack of knowledge, both here and there, we deal with traditional and strong stereotypes. *Real mutual understanding* in the interaction between "East" and "West" requires one to know something more about the difficulties of long-term socialization in a totalitarian system suddenly meeting the unfamiliar values and rules of democracy. For the most part, Western journalists and researchers had little interest in details of Eastern journalism. Fundamentally, we still know nothing about how Eastern journalists think of their present role in society or of the old beliefs they still may have. Thus, we first of all need to learn more about socialist journalism and the journalists themselves in order to keep from building new walls between us. When the Berlin wall fell, Germans had a good opportunity to examine more closely the differences between the communist and the capitalist concepts for "everything", including journalism and mass media. West Germans had to accept that for East Germans, it was and still is painful to learn that their ideas and concepts are no longer valid and respected. This is no exception for journalists, who also have "old" values, standards, and ideas in their heads. These "old" values and knowledge about the "former system" can be benificial to the West. They cause Western society to question its own traditional concepts and values, which previously were thought of as the best in the world.

Aware of these problems, I conducted a survey of journalism students in Leipzig, East Germany in early October of 1990. This was about one year after the fall of the wall and just one day before reunification.

AIMS OF THE SURVEY

In the GDR, as in other socialist countries, journalism students were socialized in a totalitarian system and thus were taught to be good *socialist* journalists. Then, at the end of their journalism education the whole world changed. Because we seldom have the opportunity to do empirical research in the midst of revolutionary change, I took the chance and did a survey of journalism students in Leipzig, where the only university-level journalism program in the former GDR existed.[1] The aim of the survey was designed to find out what kind of expectations this group of GDR journalism students had about their future as journalists and what their perceptions were of journalism in general. I conducted this survey one year after the first so-called "Monday demonstrations", which took place in September of 1989 in the streets of Leipzig and which lead to the collapse of the GDR. I wanted the results to reflect what differences in self-assessment, if any, exist between West German and East German journalism students. After one year of change, would the East German journalism students' answers still differ from what we know from surveys of Western students? What *kind* of differences, if any, would exist between Western journalists, who for generations have known the concept of freedom of the press, and Eastern journalists, who have just been given the chance to familiarize themselves with the concept?

Because all Eastern communist countries have been strongly influenced in all areas of social and political life by the Soviet Union, their educational and professional systems are quite similar. This is true in particular for journalism (see e.g. Dennis, 1990). Therefore East German journalism students can serve as an example of socialist journalism in general.

RESEARCH ON JOURNALISTS: WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR

Research on journalists in general focuses on three questions: 1. Individual aspects of professional skills, behaviour, and roles. 2. Internal mechanisms of the media stystem, for example, the conditions in the process of selecting and producing news. 3. The images and knowledge journalists have about their audiences as well as their relationships to society in general. Most of the research we are familiar with so far deals with one or more of these questions.

One of the first and most well-known research projects on the sociology and professional organization of the American journalists is Leo Rosten's study on Washington correspondents (Rosten, 1937). British journalists were surveyed by Jeremy Tunstall in 1970 (Tunstall, 1970 and 1971). In Germany the first comprehensive journalist survey was conducted between 1973 and 1976 (Arbeitsgemeinschaft..., 1977). In the meantime we have quite a number of studies which compare journalism concepts of two nations, although the journalists studied were usually from two Western nations (Donsbach, 1982 and 1983; Köcher, 1986;). But there is little journalism reasearch based on broader international comparisons (see for example McLeod & Hawley, 1964). Although results of these few surveys show great international conformity concerning professional standards or values like

freedom of the press, considerable national differences exist concerning role definitions and the individual perceptions of the function of journalism.[2] There is evidence that German journalists, for example, differ from British and American in terms of self-assessment and role definition. German journalists, more than British, think of journalism as a political task (Donsbach, 1983) and are said to be "missionaries" (Köcher, 1986) rather than neutral mediators. There is some evidence that this distinction is valid also for a German-American comparison of roles and self-assessment of journalists (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986, pp. 137). But according to Langenbucher and Neufeldt (1988), German journalists' picture of themselves as opinion leaders has changed in the course of the last thirty years. This "old" picture is more and more following the American and British journalism patterns, although differences still exist.

While there are some national studies about expectations, views, and role definitions of journalism *students* (as a German example see Gruber, Koller & Rühl, 1974; American examples are Becker, Fruit & Caudill, 1987) only one study has compared journalism *students* from different countries. In 1987, students from 22 countries were interviewed in an international survey (see Sparks & Splichal, 1989; also Donsbach, 1990). Ten Third World countries, three (at that time) socialist countries[3], and nine Western industrialized countries[4] took part in the project. It concentrated on the attitudes of the students towards their future profession, their concepts of journalists' role in society, and their motives for becoming a journalist.

This international study found significant differences between role definitions and individual motives of journalism students in different countries. According to the findings, the students' motives fell into three major categories. To one group of students, the belief in their own ability and talent was far more important than extrinsic motives such as job market

or an "easy major". A second group valued most personal gratification, such as the chance to travel, to become well known or popular in the field or to earn good money. The third group of students named altruistic motives, such as changing society, influencing social or political processes, and exposing nuisances or scandals, as most important. Students' responses in Western industrialized countries and in India fell into the first or second group of motives more frequently than students' responses in socialist countries and Third World countries, (Donsbach, 1990, p. 412). Against expectations, differences did not exist between the students from different countries concerning altruistic motives. We can then conclude altruistic motives are a general and intercultural component of journalism students' conception and interpretation of their job.

In this international survey's questionnaire, the students also were asked their opinions on qualifications and abilities needed to be a good journalist. Answers to these questions have been interpreted as the students' individual definitions of journalistic roles. And again differences were found between the two major groups of students. Western and Indian students gave "ability to be critical" and "accuracy" as answers much more than students from Third World or socialist countries gave. "Objectivity" as a requirement for a good journalist appeared to be the same between the two groups, but in comaprison with other qualifications, "objectivity" was of less importance. But these results cannot be so simply evaluated. One must consider that "objectivity" is defined differently among the 22 countries, and that realization of objectivity also differs in these countries (Donsbach, 1990, p. 414).

Donsbach, who directed the German part of this international project, focused on a comparison of the data between American, British, Canadian, and German students. Some differences were found between the group of American and Canadian students and the group of British and German students. German and British students were more likely than North-

American ones to cite altruistic motives for doing their jobs. In contrast, previous surveys by Donsbach (1983) showed a significant differences between how frequently British and German *editors* cited altruistic motives, which makes this new finding very interesting. According to the results of Donsbach's student survey, the boundary seems no longer to exist between the British and German "concept" but rather between the European and North-American one (Donsbach, 1990, p. 415).

In his work, Donsbach describes some problems of the international survey concerning the validity of answers given by Bulgarian, Polish, and Yugoslavian students. He points out that these students obviously had not been allowed to write their own opinion but rather had been forced to answer in a controlled manner. He argued, for example, the Bulgarian students said that they have complete freedom of the press in their country when obviously, because of the totalitarian regime, they couldn't. But couldn't it be that the Bulgarian students really meant what they wrote? Isn't it possible that they really believe that their country has complete freedom of the press? We should consider that these young people did not decide to become bakers, sales(wo)men or physicists in a socialist country but instead journalist in a socialist country. The interesting question behind these results is to what extent are the answers the result of coersion or of socialist socialization? Now, as democracy is on its way into the socialist countries of Eastern Europe, we have the opportunity to investigate and learn how strong socialist concepts of journalism still are.

JOURNALISM EDUCATION IN THE FORMER GDR -- SOME ESSENTIALS ABOUT SOCIALIST JOURNALISM EDUCATION

According to socialist ideology, "The Party" is the most advanced member of society. In the former GDR, as well as in other socialist countries, mass media played an important role in establishing and maintaining the omnipotence and all-embracing power of the communist party. Because journalism served as an important instrument for political guidance, journalists had to be functionaries of the communist party and the socialist state (see also Blaum, 1985, pp. 79, 98). Thus socialist journalists were taught that press was a collective system of spokes(wo)men for mediating between the omniscent, controlling socialist leaders and the, to some extent, ignorant members of society. Their job was to support the "good" socialist ideology by emphasizing its benefits and positive achievements and by concealing, or at least down playing, the problems. (see also Blaum, 1985, pp. 79-80, 100-112) With this point of view it is legitimate to protect the public from anti-socialist tendencies, even if it means dealing with dishonest messages. Journalists, of course, were aware of that and accepted their function. People who chosed to be journalists in these countries normally knew exactely what this would mean to them and it was necessary for them to be convinced of the concept.

Because of mass media's role in the socialist systems, specific requirements were necessary in journalism education. One of the most important qualifications for journalism students was their "active cooperation in shaping socialist society" and their "willingness to actively defend socialism" (Leszczensky & Filaretow, p. 16). This usually meant active membership in the communist party or the socialist youth organization "Freie Deutsche Jugend (FDJ)" (Free German Youth) (Blaum, 1985, p. 98). Thus journalism was not a "free

access" profession, as it is in Western societies, nor was journalism instruction available to every one.

While studying at the University, students often were already partial members of editorial staffs, working for newspapers, magazines or electronic media. This meant that the students already had permanent jobs as journalists when they finished their studies at the University and were never forced to find jobs by themselves. Everything was prepared for them. The recent political change has brought with it the freedom of jobseeking. As one can image, the new freedom in this respect is a burden which is causing severe problems.

The same is true for the economic situation of the students. As with every student in the GDR, journalism students did not have to worry about their financial situation. Education was free. Plus they received free housing and spending money. The amount of financial relief depended on the students' martial status and number of children. And again the new freedom is to the disadvantage of the students because it has, for the most part, brought an end to free housing and financial aid.

Before presenting the findings of the student survey from the "Section of Journalism" at Leipzig University, I will give some brief details about the survey, the method, the questionnaire, and the students.

THE SURVEY

The survey was administered during the two days directly preceeding the official (re)unification of Germany on the 3rd of October, 1990. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants of a guest lecture on the 1st and 2nd of October. They were given back

on the same day. The participants were male and female students in their last semester of study. Most of them were prepareing for their final examination at that time. In total, about 80 students received the questionnaire, and 58 of those students responded, although not all of the students answered all of the questions. This problem will be covered in more detail later in my report.

In keeping with the lines of the research question briefly described above, the questionnaire consisted of questions on self-assessment, career-planning, and future professional goals. It also asked questions on personal ideas and conceptions of journalism, and on personal motives for becoming a journalist. All questions concerning these topics were closed-ended questions. The students were asked to answer each statement on a scale between 1 ("highly agree/very important") and 5 ("totally disagree/totally unimportant"). In addition, the questionnaire contained demographic questions.

FINDINGS

1. Demography

Of the 58 students, 33 were female. On average, the students were 22 years old. Before studying journalism, 19% of them had had different vocational training or been practicing a profession other than journalism. Fourteen percent had not attended a university preparatory high school but instead were skilled workers before entering the university. In the former GDR, as in most socialist countries, it was possible to enter a university as a skilled worker without preparatory classes and without passing a final examination at the end of pre-college education.

In addition to their university-level education, most of the students (83%) had passed a one-year journalism trainee program at a media organization or had professional experience via journalism internship programs. Although a one-year journalism trainee program and internships were required by the university regulations (Karl-Marx-Universität, 1976, p. 127), obviously not all students had passed one.

2. Plans and goals for future fields of work in newspaper, magazine, television, or radio

Given the opportunity to decide between print media, television, or radio, 63% of the surveyed students said that they would choose to work in print media. Twenty-four percent aspired to a job in television and 13% would like to work as radio journalists. Concerning the rankorder of "print media - television - radio", former GDR students wishes for future employment didn't differ from Western students' wishes. But in a more detailed comparison with results from the international survey, former GDR students seem to have more in common with British students than with American and West German ones. While only about 47% of the West German and American students wish to work as newspaper or magazine journalist, 71% of the British ones do.

East German journalism students are not very willing to work for *non-political* magazines. They were asked to rate their preferences for working at a newspaper, a political magazine, a special interest magazine, a human interest magazine, in radio, television, Public Relations, or in a media management position (scale from 1 "would very much like" to 5 "would not at all like" to work for). "Newspaper" and "political magazine" received the most 1 and 2 rankings, with newspapers receiving 67% and political magazines 64%. Third place was not television or radio, but surprisingly Public Relations with 45% of the students

checking off 1 or 2 on the scale. After Public Relations came television (43%), then radio (41%). Special interest magazines came in only sixth (28%) followed by management positions (26%) and human interest magazines (19%).

A comparison with the international survey data again shows differences between East German students and American, British, and Canadian ones. Although the students in the international survey were not asked in which media or professional field they would most like to work, but in which "field of reporting", "beat", or "section", the results are still comparable to some extent. While East German students as well as West German ones like to work in the field of political reporting most and like to work in the field of human interest least, North American and British ones are more willing to work in the field of human interest than the Germans (Donsbach, 1990, p. 416).

3. Motives influencing the decision to become a journalist

Most of the 58 students (36) refused to answer the question "What mainly influenced your decision to study journalism?" This is quite astonishing. One can only speculate about their reasons for declining to answer. Probably, these students are not likely to have "neutral" motives for becoming a journalist, but political ones. Perhaps they had party-patrons or political sponsors who encouraged them to become journalists. This is plausible because journalism was not a profession to which access was free. As already mentioned above, not everybody who wanted to become a journalist could apply. Perhaps the students were not willing to let the West German research manager in on their real motives, which in the new system may no longer be "good" ones but "bad" ones. Nevertheless, they had the opportunity to check off other motives, such as "encouragement by friends" or "... by former teachers

and instructors". But perhaps these answers were still too close to the "real" or political motives, thus the students thought we would interprete their responses in a negative way. The whole question seemed to be very embarrassing for them.

Anyhow -- when asked what primarly influenced their decision to study journalism, 22 students answered. All of these 22 students agreed that an interest in writing and creative opportunity followed by the opportunity to work independently, were of great importance. In this way, these students do not differ from North American, British or German ones (see Donsbach, 1990, p. 415). But "independence" as an extremely important motive is surprising. One should remember that these students applied for journaiism training in Leipzig *two or three years before* the political change. Then how could they have decided to become a journalist for reasons concerning "independence"? Again we have to speculate. One possibility is that these students thought of journalism as an independent profession because of their socialist socialization. They may still believe in socialism and may still have respect for its "accomplishments". Thus, they defined journalism as an independent profession in the way the socialist system defined it as an independent profession. Another possibility is that these students, who did not refuse to answer the question, were trying to prove their democratic sentiments. It seems perhaps the students wanted to show that they had already "learned their lesson", giving the answer that "independence in journalism" is the most important thing for them. A third possibility could be that as a result of the political change during the students' last years of journalism education, these students were confused and unsure about their professional future. The most important question in such a situation is "Will I have a chance in the new system despite the fact that I am considered to be a socialist jounalist?" In this situation, a lot of the students may have asked themselves whether they should continue their education and try to work as journalists, or whether they should change

educational paths completely. Thus the question could have been interpreted by the students in terms of their decisions about continuing or ending their journalism education. It may be that the students felt as if they made a second decision to study journalism and now they wanted to become journalists because it presents a new opportunity to work independently, which to them means to work in a system with freedom of the press.

Back now to other individual motives that influenced the East German students decision to study journalism. After "independence", the students placed importance on "influencing political public opinion". Fifteen of 21 students said that this was a "very important" or at least "important" motive for them in becoming a journalist. Compared with results from the international project, "political" motives seem to be much more important for journalism students from the former GDR than for West German, British, and North American students. The supposed "good labor market" or "good salary" were the two least important motives for East German students as well as for Western journalism students (Donsbach, 1990, p. 415). In addition, many students in my survey wrote "labor market is not good" or "salary in journalism is not good" next to the respective statements.

4. Self-Assessment on a Journalist's Roles and Tasks

In asking the students "How important are the following tasks for a journalist", they were presented 34 statements. These statements expressed opinions and professional ideas about what a journalist's role and task in society involves. Again the students had the opportunity to evaluate each of the statements on a scale from 1 ("very important") to 5 ("not important at all").

The items represented four classic role models: 1. The *critic or controller* of political and social processes. 2. The *protector* of and *educator* for cultural and social standards or values. 3. The *advocate* for underprivileged groups or individuals. 4. The *neutral mediator* between political/economic institutions and society.

For the East German journalism students, the most important task of a journalist is "to show the backgrounds of social conflicts". Ninety-seven percent of the students think that this is a very important or at least important responsibility. Quite similar to this self-assessment as an "enlightener" is the next statement, which is "to describe complex problems in a clear way". Ninety-four percent of the students think of this as a very important or important task.

For more than 90% of the students, "nudging the public into thought processes" (92%), "showing alternatives to political decisions" (91%) and "investigating the backgrounds of political decisions" (91%) are very important or at least important parts of a journalist's role. Three further statements show the East German journalism students' orientation to the journalist's role as a *watchdog* or *contoller* of the political elite. "To prevent the suppression of public scandals" was named by 88% of the students as important or very important, "to control political institutions" by 85%, and "to make complicated political dicisions intelligible" by 83%. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents see the journalist as a *neutral and objective mediator* ("to objectively and neutrally mediate information") and about 68% of them regard a journalist's role as an *advocate* ("to give underpriviledge groups a voice").

These results indicate that the first and second of the classic models of journalists as "critic/controller" or as "educator" are the most important or play the biggest role for Eastern journalism students. Surprisingly, the neutral mediator role came in only third place.

Contrary to the normal importance laid on the neutral and objective mediator role by Western journalism students *and* journalists (Donsbach, 1990, p. 422), the respondents in this survey find the "critic/controller" and "educator" role most important.

The findings should be compared more detailed with Donsbach's findings about West German journalism students in the international survey (Donsbach, 1990), although the statements and the questions asked were not totally identical.[5] It must also be considered that the number of respondents in both samples is different. Because no other data on West German journalism students is available, we should venture this comparison. Table 1 shows some remarkable differences between the "Western" concept of a journalist's role and the "Eastern" one.

Table 1: Self-Assesment of a Journalist's Role and Tasks: A comparison of West German and East German journalism students

	West German Students* (n=183) %	East German Students+ (n=58) %
"to critizise nuisances"	92	97
"to be a neutral reporter"	61	79
"to be aguardian of democracy"	61	69
"to be a mediator of new ideas"	59	91
"to be an advocate for the underprivileged"	52	69
"to be a spokesperson of the people"	46	66
"to entertain people"	38	59
"to advise people"	22	62
"to be a politician by other means"	6	50
"to be an 'educator'"	5	24

* Percentage of students indicating agreement that the given statement is part of a journalist's role.
+ Percentage of students indicating that the given statement is an "important" or "very important" responisbility for a journalist.

On of the most dramatic aspects of this comparison is the difference in importance placed on being a politician by other means between the East and West German students. Only 6% of the West German students indicated this as important to them, while 50% of the

East German students did. Another interesting difference between the two groups is the fact that in comparison to West German students, Eastern students are much more concerned with "advising" their audience. Along with this, East German students consider a large part of their responsibility to be to mediate new ideas (91%). For West German students, this is not one of the most important characteristics of a journalist's role.

5. *General* professional conditions and their importance for the students surveyed

According to the insecure and bad economic situation which is linked with the political change in former socialist countries, people in East Europe are very concerned about their personal future, job and income stability. In asking "How do you personally feel about the following listed *general* conditions with respect to how important each of them is for you to feel satisfied as a working person?", I expected the students' responses to reflect these insecurities. But the most important general condition for the students was the "possibility to apply individual abilities" and "individual expertise". Ninety-seven percent of the students marked this condition as very important or important for them. Even the second-most-often-named condition has nothing to do with economic security or personal financial situation: 76% of the students agree that the "possibility of team-work" is (very) important to them in feeling satisfied as a working journalist. "Salary" and "job reliability in terms of unemployment" only reach third and fourth place in the students order of importance of general conditions.

"Compatibility of job and family life" (66%) was more important to the students than "further career chances and promotion" (57%), "acknowledgment by colleagues" (51%) and "acknowledgment by supervisors" (20%). This was surprising and might be a result of the

large number of women (58%) in the survey. I checked this argument by splitting the data by gender and indeed I found differences between women and men. As expected "Compatibility of job and family life" was more important for women (77%) than for men (52%). But still this condition was more important for male students than "acknowledgment by colleagues" (48%). This probably would not be the case for Western male students, but we do not have any results to support this. While "further career chances and promotion" as well as "acknowledgment by colleagues" showed only little differences between male and female students, women take "acknowledgment by supervisors" to be much more important than men (9% vs. 32%). The same is true for "possibility of team-work".

6. Discussion

As I pointed out above, the lack of belief in objective truth was program for socialist journalism and therefore for socialist journalism education. Socialist journalists were taught that the press was a collective system of "spokesmen/-women" for mediating between the omniscent, controlling socialist leaders and the, to some extent, ignorant members of society. Their job was to support the "good" socialist ideology by emphasizing the benefits and positive achievements and by concealing, or at least down-playing, the problems. The students were taught that a journalist's job is the selection and distortion of facts which strongly support the welfare of the socialist society. Thus, journalists educated in former socialist countries bring with them different ideas and behaviors. That the respondents had had a certain period of time to become accustomed to the new system of journalism seems to have made little difference. After nearly a year of experience with the new society and the system of freedom of the press, the journalism students now, perhaps more than ever, see

their role as journalists as an altruistic one. Some of them may be overwhelmed by the new freedoms and the new system. They now think of supporting this system as an important part of their job. As in the old system, they again distinguish between facts which are in favor of the new system and those which are not.

Others may still -- or now even more than ever -- have respect for the "accomplishments" of socialism, such as "social security" and "full employment". Thus, they too distinguish between "good" and "bad" facts, this time to support the old system. The concept is always the same -- to positively shape society. Given that obviously this is still valid for a lot of journalists or journalism students educated and socialized in socialist countries, it is no wonder that they are extremely willing to transport values.

The results of this survey are supported through Horvat's (1992) description and estimation of the present situation of "Media Democracy And Media Freedom In Eastern Europe": "Now that a politically objective and unbiased journalism could be the order of the day, many East European journalists are uncertain. Their role perception is tied to the past. (...) They want to become a mouthpiece for the people. They are familiar and comfortable with a partisan press, with party alignments, and with propaganda. For many the lack of official guidelines spell chaos and abandonment." (p. 12)

The big differences between women and men concerning *general* professional conditions and their importance for the students are very interesting. Probably these differences are valid not only for the special group of journalism students in this survey. There is great evidence that these differences generally exist between male and female journalists or journalism students. Despite the fact that Journalism is undergoing a "gender-switch" in Germany too (Fröhlich, 1990), we here still know very little about gender biased differences in journalism. In contrast to the United States, where experts speak of the "feminization" of

the whole communication profession in general and journalism in particular (see e.g. Creedon, 1989), the problem is not yet covered in Europe. In the former GDR, it was a general principle to represent women in all university subjects according to their quota of the population. Thus, the number of female freshmen increased from 34% in 1965 to 52% in 1986 (Leszczensky & Filaretow, 1990, p. 21). Journalism was a field in which more than 50% of enrollment was women.[6] At least this was the case till 1990. Knowing that in (West) Germany today more than 50% of the journalism students and more than 60% of the television and radio trainees are female (Fröhlich & Holtz-Bacha, 1992a and b; Fröhlich, 1992) we must now more than ever ask whether and to what extent "gender" biases our findings. Thus, the gender-differences of this survey should be verified by further journalist or journalism student surveys.

My study is only a glimpse into one aspect of the many professional changes colleagues in Eastern Europe are being faced with now. Despite the fact that communist East European countries all practiced Soviet-style journalism in education as well as in practice, and thus are comparable in many respects, the different cultures and press traditions of the numerous East European countries must be considered. This is especially important for future Western consulting concerning the diverse aspects of the press system such as the nature of ownership, communication or press laws, education, and professional ethics or standards.

Especially now, with the revolutionary process still going on in most East European countries, people are confronted with problems they never were confronted with before. They are threatened by unemployment and rising prices. Their living standard is lower than ever, and they have lost most of their social and political values. The new values democracy offers to them are not yet accepted overall as good ones. Instead, life seems to be disjointed. In this situation, East Europe is being required to establish a new society and to find new

values by using the Western world, which not long ago was an enemy, as a pattern. The people there are required to achieve all of this without loosing their identity as individuals. No wonder that a lot of East European journalists in this situation think of their role still differently from the way Western ones do. Horvat (1992) finally gives a last reason for these diffences: "Hardly any of the East European media players -- including politicians, publishers, editors, journalists and readers -- thought until recently that they were participants in a *business* venture. In Eastern Europe the press had never been considered a commercial enterprise, papers had never been bought and sold on the open market. This new phenomenon, the new social and economic order, gives rise to many contradictions in Eastern Europe with regard to the social function and democratization of the media." (p. 13) We should keep these circumstances in mind and should understand the special background when meeting or working together with our new colleagues from the East. This will make it much easier to establish and maintain a fruitful exchange.

NOTES

1. For detailled information about the former university-level journalism program in Leipzig see Blaum, 1985, pp. 87-100 and Grubitzsch, 1990.

2. For a more detailled overview of international comparison results, see Donsbach, 1981.

3. Bulgaria, Poland and Yugoslavia.

4. Including Germany, Great Britain and United States.

5. The question in the "West German" survey was: "How should a journalist in your opinion regard his task. How should one see himselve as a journalist? Please check the following statements depending on whether you agree or not."

6. In my survey 58% of the respondents were women.

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