What is lost and what is the major cultural differences between East and West Germany before and after Unification.

Author 1 - Yulia Zaslavskaya  
Supervisors: Author 2 - Jan Söffner  
Author 3 - Stefan Ihrig

MA Student of Haifa University, HCGES German and European Studies

Abstract: This paper is focusing on whether people felt the lack of Heimat before and after Germany's Unification. The life in the GDR and West Germany was so different. This paper explores the gap between two lives and the question whether Heimat was lost as everything was lost in GDR after Unification. How many little things could influence on GDR life's behavior. People were like zombie before and woke up after Unification. They never saw how life looks like, they were isolated but at some point they were not. They did know how to be happy, and to spend time together in peace.

Herr Lehmann movies also demonstrated the sense of socialization, being among some group of people, having friends and having fun.

Films Made Before the Fall of the Wall had a stronger impact on me to make the analyzes than the films after the wall. It influenced a lot on my perception of how poor people were and not happy before the Wall felt. The results were taken based on movies analyzes, books and articles. My own argumentation, research, comments, findings and critique was built on informative and emotional acceptance of the topic and its investigation.

My research shows the results of comparison between two major movies: Good Bye Lenin and Herr Lehmann, which represent East and West Germany in the immediate aftermath of the Fall of the Berlin Wall and Germany's Unification. The empirical data helps us to identify psychological behavior between people in East and West and their feeling of Heimat during that time 1989 and after 1990.

The results found in this paper demonstrates the difference on social level and political level. These two movies were chosen to be compared and analyzed in order to get the picture of West and East Germans through unexpectable time for everyone in united Germany after 30 years.

Except of these 2 main movies there were collected 50 movies about Eastern and Western life before and after Germany's Unification and more than half of them was also described and analyzed which makes this paper be unique with its novelty.

Keywords: cultural differences, unification, ostalgie, nostalgie

The sources of materials: This paper is going to explore movies which are connected to the topic of East and West life in Germany before and after Unification. In order to do so, I will focus on some of the most emblematic fiction films displaying the relations between East and West, and life in Berlin on either side of the Wall. These films are later on arranged in a list with short summaries, following a chronological order to give an idea how cinema has portrayed the 28 years during which the Berlin Wall divided the city. There two categories of movies on the Berlin Wall and the cinema. Part 1: Films made between 1961-1989. After August 1961, the Berlin Wall becomes a visual representation of the Iron Curtain, the barrier between Western countries and Eastern Europe under Soviet Union rule. In the 1960s, the Wall appears in the spy movie genre that portrays the political intrigues and secrets between East and West Europe during the Cold War. Below is a list of films contemporary to the period of the Berlin Wall. These movies are suggested for analyzing during the research.

In this paper I focus on the information extracted from the movies, taken from books and articles, analyzing specific statements concerning to the main issue of this thesis. This paper consist of the lines of argumentations of
the topic what is it Heimat for Eastern and Western Germans and the revolution in cultural perception before and after the unification of Germany.

The main issue or problem

The main problem in our research is that Germany was divided into two parts Eastern and Western. Before Unification 1990, and since 1989 the Fall of the Berlin Wall, Eastern and Western parts of Germany had their own cultural identity, which was both different from each other and at the same time multiple. The Eastern part of Germany, the GDR was very ideological and played a significant role of the effect from every day life. There people got used to the dark shadow of pressure from Stasi which was covered by curtain which is called the Wall, and restriction of free moving and manipulation on people's lives. The perspectives in East and West are still different. People in the former West are more happier and satisfied than those in the former East including the performance of Germany's democracy. People in the West are more optimistic and positive about the future. Attitude and Relationship towards EU are more positive in the former West. The paradox is why one nation has different cultural backgrounds. "Softer" strategies were later adopted, including espionage and the recruitment of informants in West Berlin’s political and administrative spheres. "The Stasi was quite familiar with West Berlin, but its activities considered the strong presence of Western counter-espionage and police," Jens Gieseke, a Stasi expert at the Center for Contemporary History in Potsdam, told DW. "Thus, it behaved with extreme caution."[34]. From cultural background to German identity, we have only one step. What is the main difference between Western and Eastern identity? The concept of identity that we suggest in this paper is: „Henri Tajfel's greatest contribution to psychology was social identity theory. Tajfel (1979) proposed that the groups (e.g. social class, family, football team etc.) which people belonged to were an important source of pride and self-esteem. Groups give us a sense of social identity: a sense of belonging to the social world. We divided the world into "them" and "us" based through a process of social categorization (i.e. we put people into social groups). Henri Tajfel proposed that stereotyping (i.e. putting people into groups and categories) is based on a normal cognitive process: the tendency to group things together. Another suggestion made by Bourdieu: "The state and institutions (as official authorities) can claim monopoly of the legitimate use of symbolic violence and guarantee certain states of affairs by imposing on someone what his identity is, but in a way that both expresses it to him and imposes it on him by expressing it in front of everyone (Bourdieu, 1992b, p. 121, 1996a,p.376).This implies the importance of the state as the central target of identity movements (e.g. with respect to the issue of same-sex marriages.[33]

This is known as in-group (us) and out-group (them). The central hypothesis of social identity theory is that group members of an in-group will seek to find negative aspects of an out-group, thus enhancing their self-image.“ [25]

The central Question

The central question in this paper is to clearly “what is lost”, how Germans identify the notion of „Heimat” and feeling at home, and what are the major cultural differences between East and West Germany before and after Germany's Unification.

„Some, writes Leonie Naughton, shared a concern «for the recognition and preservation of Heimat». An untranslatable term, Heimat refers to harmonious community life, the local, the mundane, the domestic. It is removed from history, from progress, suspended in cyclical time. It may refer to a geographical place of birth but also connotes the landscape, dialect, customs and traditions attached to that locality. Thus it has a strong emotional component, and evokes the sentimental content of one's childhood.“ [26, p.6]

„As a genre, the Heimat film dominated West German cinema of the 1950s. Such films expressed utopian yearnings, romanticized recollections of a bygone and nonhistorical past – simple, rustic, pristine and outside politics. They depicted Germany as a rural, provincial homeland with which all Germans could identify, concentrating on «untainted, politically naïve, and innocent Germans, and on regional dress, customs, speech and music. This no doubt appealed to the collective wish for harmony and security of the 10-14 million German-speaking immigrants who settled in West Germany after the war. It was no secret, writes film historian Anton Kaes, that such movies as in the 1950s, some early 1990s unification comedies offer consolation, compassion, and, in Leonie Naughton's phrase, «the prospect of reconciliation and inclusion for characters and, by extension, audiences». Bizarrely, some manage to portray the GDR as rural idyll. But the post-unification films that rediscover Heimat in the East have been written, directed and produced by West Germans. Eastern filmmakers
tend to eschew this approach. They are more likely to critically assess the consequences of unification. As Naughton observes, «the reclaiming of the east as Heimat is a western initiative and perspective to which eastern filmmakers addressing unification do not subscribe»." [26, p.6]

This issue is compelling to me as I want to understand deeply and find the answer to the following question what was lost in East and West Germany while living separately before Unification and after. In our research paper we are going to analyze movies of East and West culture before and after Germany's Unification and compare them.

In this research we are also exploring the notion of dwelling, feeling at home, social and cultural differences before the Fall of the Berlin Wall felt and after Unification being united as a one nation. Even though the physical Wall felt and Germany was united but the virtual Wall between two nations still stayed unbroken in cultural sense, metaphorically speaking.

The intended Audience is scholars.

In our research talking about two movies Goodbye Lenin and Herr Lehmann enlighten the subject of emotions and relationship. The attitudes towards Heimat and relationship between each other. Before we begin to talk about relationship in the family and among friends, it is necessary to give a definition of what is Emotions and Emotive.

"Emotive - Reddy argues that there is a phase for expressing emotions beyond language, the term "émotives" that he coined is explained by this example - “When I hear my self say something I automatically think about what I am saying and the process of thinking involves translation, So if I say that “I feel something” it is not a clear emotion because it has also a subjective translation, Reddy claims that “émotives” is the way to feel what one says that he feels in a more pure way.

Emotional regime (Brought by William Reddy) which you define as "The set of normative emotions and the official rituals, practices, andirés' that express and inculcate them; normally coincide with political regimes, prescribe the dominant norms of emotional life. As a concept, “emotional regime” probably works best for the modern period, with its state apparatuses of censorship, political and military monopolies, and economic control, It is a way to describe the effect that the regime has on the emotions of his subjects.

Emotional community (Brought by Barbara Rosenwein) The definition suggests that any social group with common interests and goals should qualify as an emotional community, Social groups within which people are animated by common or similar interests, values, and emotional styles. Emotional communities have different ways of incorporating (or not) the body in emotional expression. [2, p. 243]

Talking about Emotions in two movies, the materials where we have chosen for this paper, we have to claim that in Goodbye Lenin, East Germany's life the main idea is built in ideology and socialism. The sick woman expressed a lot of emotions during her routine with work and house, to that extend that she got a heart attack and that's why she was hospitalized. Strong GDR ideology and political way of lifestyle disturbed people to be emotionally calm. It is required many efforts to be politically active and hold a house, take care of the family and be strong individual at the same time. In another movie Herr Lehmann we see how the owner of the bar the best friend of Herr Lehmann because of his emotions he almost became crazy or even though schizophrenic. West life and East life in Germany were not so much the same but both had to experience many emotions and stress. Positive emotions of love and relationship as well as negative emotions because of political pression, both of them had an impact on the heroes.

Introduction

In this paper we are going to research the cultural differences between East and West Germany. What is lost, why and how before and after Unification. Whether feeling at home and Heimat were lost after the Fall of the Berlin wall? How people were ready to move to another part of Germany with any expectations of better life but with a lack of feeling at home territorially and psychologically.
The studies that do exist on GDR Heimat outline the ways in which the country's Socialist Unity Party (SED) officially engaged with the inherited discourse and redirected it. A continual tension existed between what historian Alon Confino best describes as "the two faces of the East German Heimat idea". One face represented the more generic, empty symbol of the security and beauty of home and natural landscape that drew upon past German representations of a timeless Heimat. The second, pointedly ideological, historicized the new Heimat as socialist, determined by class and by the workers ownership of the means of production. Confino argues that East Germany pursued this two-pronged strategy until the socialist dimension collapsed in 1989.

An additional feature of these two faces becomes apparent when looking at the portrayal of Heimat from the perspective of gender. Since the inception of modernism, Heimat had been associated with the heart and the home, traditionally female, domestic spaces. Heimat was something to be protected and fought for. The fatherland represented that which was political or governmental, a traditionally male, public space. As a "feminine" realm, Heimat coexisted with the fatherland in gendered symmetry (Confino 49). Yet the fatherland had failed; Allied forces had dismantled and divided it. There were now two, where there had been one. In East Germany, usage of the term "fatherland" was unfeasible due to its fascist connotations. The two faces of Heimat in East Germany took the place of the equilibrium between Heimat and fatherland. In the first, women play traditional roles. In the second, socialist Heimat, women take on the role of the socialist personality. This muscular female peasant/worker, who populated GDR cultural production, fought and sacrificed for socialism. She was modeled on the male prototype that occupied the public sphere. In order to become political, and specifically socialist, in East Germany, women had to take on the characteristics of their male count.

The emphasis on the natural contrasts with both the urban Heimat of the Berlin films and the predominance of human effort and the social in policy statements of the time. In 1955, Fritz Lange, the Minister of Culture, stressed that nature is important in a communist Heimat, but the individual stands at the center and changes nature through work (Riesenberger 327). Further K. Czok summarized ten years of heated discussions regarding Heimat in 1962:

-Heimat wird nicht als der natürliche, sondern vor allem als der soziale Lebensbereich verstanden; sie muss nicht identisch mit dem Geburtsort sein; [...]  

- Heimat ist nicht passiv, sondern aktiv; äußert sich "in der Mitarbeit beim Aufbau des Sozialismus der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik und in der Bereitschaft, unseren Arbeiter- und Bauern-Staat zu verteidigen (quoted in Riesenberger 328).

Czok effectively disassociates Heimat from the individual's identification with natural space and replaces it with human/socialist interaction.” [18, pp.172-179]

Two movies, for instance: Good Bye Lenin and Herr Lehmann, two different perspectives and lifestyles that represent East and West Germanies way of life. The story we see in our research movie Good Bye Lenin where the mother, the sick woman plays an essential role and where the GDR was in special way demonstrated while her disease, by son during already united Germany. The sentimental part depicts the family values, how her son was carrying after his ill mother. The other aspect describes what is lost and the feeling of home. In this research we should find the consensus of following points: relationship between people, emotions, love, support, dedication, lie, friendship, family life, nostalgia, leisure time in the East Germany for example- visiting friends at their homes, and another view of Western Germany-going to bars. Some subjects have to be spoken about health, especially depression, daily habits for instance - drinking a lot in both films, furniture as part of life, dream, art, news-brainwashing in the East (how important it was for the main character in the movie Goodbye Lenin), neighborhood (How Neighbors supported each other in the East), daily life- bars, fighting- in the West.

Music, fashion, technology, and values—all are products of culture. But what do they mean? How do sociologists perceive and interpret culture based on these material and nonmaterial items? Let's finish our analysis of culture by reviewing them in the context of three theoretical perspectives: functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism.

Conflict theorists view social structure as inherently unequal, based on power differentials related to issues like class, gender, race, and age. For a conflict theorist, culture is seen as reinforcing issues of “privilege” for certain
groups based upon race, sex, class, and so on. Women strive for equality in a male-dominated society. Senior citizens struggle to protect their rights, their health care, and their independence from a younger generation of lawmakers. Advocacy groups such as the ACLU work to protect the rights of all races and ethnicities in the United States.

Inequalities exist within a culture’s value system. Therefore, a society’s cultural norms benefit some people but hurt others. Some norms, formal and informal, are practiced at the expense of others. Women were not allowed to vote in the United States until 1920. Gay and lesbian couples have been denied the right to marry in some states. Racism and bigotry are very much alive today. Although cultural diversity is supposedly valued in the United States, many people still frown upon interracial marriages. Same-sex marriages are banned in most states, and polygamy—common in some cultures—is unthinkable to most Americans.

At the core of conflict theory is the effect of economic production and materialism: dependence on technology in rich nations versus a lack of technology and education in poor nations. Conflict theorists believe that a society’s system of material production has an effect on the rest of culture. People who have less power also have less ability to adapt to cultural change. This view contrasts with the perspective of functionalism. In the U.S. culture of capitalism, to illustrate, we continue to strive toward the promise of the American dream, which perpetuates the belief that the wealthy deserve their privileges.

Symbolic interactionism is a sociological perspective that is most concerned with the face-to-face interactions between members of society. Interactionists see culture as being created and maintained by the ways people interact and in how individuals interpret each other's actions. Proponents of this theory conceptualize human interactions as a continuous process of deriving meaning from both objects in the environment and the actions of others. This is where the term symbolic comes into play. Every object and action has a symbolic meaning, and language serves as a means for people to represent and communicate their interpretations of these meanings to others. Those who believe in symbolic interactionism perceive culture as highly dynamic and fluid, as it is dependent on how meaning is interpreted and how individuals interact when conveying these meanings.

We began this paper by asking what culture is. Culture is comprised of all the practices, beliefs, and behaviors of a society. Because culture is learned, it includes how people think and express themselves. While we may like to consider ourselves individuals, we must acknowledge the impact of culture; we inherit thought language that shapes our perceptions and patterned behavior, including about issues of family and friends, and faith and politics.

To an extent, culture is a social comfort. After all, sharing a similar culture with others is precisely what defines societies. Nations would not exist if people did not coexist culturally. There could be no societies if people did not share heritage and language, and civilization would cease to function if people did not agree on similar values and systems of social control. Culture is preserved through transmission from one generation to the next, but it also evolves through processes of innovation, discovery, and cultural diffusion. We may be restricted by the confines of our own culture, but as humans we have the ability to question values and make conscious decisions. No better evidence of this freedom exists than the amount of cultural diversity within our own society and around the world. The more we study another culture, the better we become at understanding our own. [14]

In this paper we are going to find the gap of feeling homesick and lack of Heimat in Germany before and after Unification. Whether the feeling of home was lost after Germany’s Unification?! The evidence here is that German citizens couldn’t have the same feeling of home for instance from East Germany after Unification in West Germany. After moving to another part of the country they lost their feeling of home and it was very complicated to get used to a new way of life in more modern and technological. We are going to explore the Connection between people and their home, territory, lifestyle, same roads, buildings and dwelling.

This research focused on finding a gap in feeling at home, whether the feeling of Heimat was lost after Germany's Unification in 1989, whether the socio life could be the same after Unification and moving to another nation. What has changed through that time on?

Alternatives: people could move from East Germany to West and got used to a new life without feeling dramatic changes and impact on their life.
Weakness: after Germany’s Unification the life of citizens was destroyed by real circumstances which provoked the willing to got back to a previous life which people got use to. The majority of two nations were very happy of the Fall of the Wall, but some of them were suffering of feeling homesick and the loss of Heimat.

This research will show how deep the socio status and feeling were scratched by the changing of life, of what does it mean to lose a Heimat. Whether The feeling of home was lost or not for West and East Germany’s citizens.

Results

This paper focused on the issue feeling the lack of Heimat after the Germany’s Unification in 1990. The major results were taken by comparison between two movies Good Bye Lenin and Herr Lehman. In the movie Good Bye Lenin we explored how the sick mother could have a heart attack again because of the huge change in lives after the Germany became united. Her son did all efforts in order to make an illusion that she continued to live in the GDR. The neighbors helped him to make this imagination by signing old socialistic songs, by bringing her the products and food from the GDR which were lost from the stores and it was extremely complicated to find the same products which were produced by the GDR and already were not in united Germany. Also they tried to wear old clothes that they used to and at the end of the day they tried to show her old News recorded by his son and his friend, in order to safe her health by given a vision of GDR life. It was so much important for her to continue to live in the GDR as 8 month she was in the coma during the Fall of the Berlin Wall. The doctors said if she begins to get nervous, she can die. At the end of the movie she died but not because of the bad conditions and reasons to be stressful, because it was time to leave her family and be happy on the heaven.

Films Made Before the Fall of the Wall had a stronger impact on me to make the analyzes than the films after the wall. It influenced a lot on my perception of how poor people were and not happy before the Wall felt. The results were taken based on movies analyzes, books and articles. My own argumentation, research, comments, findings and critique was built on informative and emotional acceptance of the topic and its investigation.

I wanted to know in my research whether the Heimat was lost after Germany's Unification, and I found out that Yes, it was lost. In this paper we are going to find the gap of feeling homesick and lack of Heimat in Germany before and after Unification. Whether the feeling of home was lost after Germany’s Unification?! The evidence here is that German citizens couldn't have the same feeling of home for instance from East Germany after Unification in West Germany. After moving to another part of the country they lost their feeling of home and it was very complicated to get used to a new way of life in more modern and technological. We are going to explore the Connection between people and their home, territory, lifestyle, same roads, buildings and dwelling.

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Surprisingly, someone claims that Ostalgie does not exist. I truly don't agree with Dominic Boyer’s statement. Ostalgie did exist and according to my research and movies analysis frankly saying Ostalgie is the feeling the lack of Heimat in Eastern Germany.

The GDR should be back, how long people can suffer by being there? Is the willing to move to the West only a utopia and a dreamed fantasy? On the other hand, people do feel nostalgic what makes an impact on their feeling the lack of Heimat. By the way coming back to our research question whether the Heimat was lost? Yes the
Ostalgie is exactly that feeling that the Heimat was lost as said: “Oh, she wants the GDR back.” and also the following statement: it is “symptomatic of a post-unification West German utopia that East Germans have a natural affinity to the past. So Heimat is only a past for Eastern Germans, therefore the conclusion is that they lost their Heimat!

The only one contradiction was found, that there is no cultural difference between East and West Germany, it is the one culture, the only difference is in mentality and socio-psychological behavior in the aspect of feeling the Heimat and its lack.

Conclusion

This research has definitely made a new impact on the Heimat’s philosophy, how Eastern and Western Germans experienced the lack of feeling their Heimat and at home being influenced by a plenty of changes in their nations before the Germany’s Unification and after. The study shows how deep the territory where they got used to live is important for them as well as nature, and architecture. The dwelling plays an essential role here. The movies watched by us will explain a statistical differentiation of people’s adaptation in the place where they had to move to and change their life at all. The Fall of The Berlin Wall was a crucial issue for the debate. The research explores to which extend German citizens were dependent on lifestyle they got used to have which is strongly connected to the feeling of home and the lack of Heimat.

The tension between the traditional, timeless pan-German Heimat and the reality of a divided Germany in the various screenplay drafts proved to be politically insurmountable.

50 Movies were suggested for the research and the analysis. All of them are strongly connected to the topic - The Fall of the Berlin Wall and the life of citizens before and after Unification. The movies are presented in a chronological order and will be selected into few groups according to methodological process. This paper stresses out that something was lost and will be found during the research. To give the answer what exactly was lost gives an opportunity to understand deeply how German citizens experienced their life living withing the Wall and Beyond. Whether this Wall was a physical notion or also a mental and psychological one will be proved or unproved in this research.

In this paper we research the cultural gap between West and East Germany before and after Germany’s Unification. We tried to find the answer to the question whether the Heimat and the feeling of Heimat was lost. By comparing two movies Good Bye Lenin and Herr Lehmann we found out how much does the difference between feeling at home in West and East was not same at all, how much meaning does the feeling of Ostalgie and Nostalgie play in that context:

“I want to go home” - said the mother. The wish to be at home is always stronger in any cases. The person who feels being at home is happier than that who needs it. Every time in every situation our nature of human being will require home. Being at home means to feel comfort and satisfaction. The only question is where is her home? In the GDR or already in united Germany. This is a rhetorical question which is the main one of our research. To answer to this question we have to underline and make the emphasize that the home for her was definitely the GDR and the socialistic regime. Her house with old, not bright with new brands furniture, old GDR products from the store, which was already impossible to find in the stores of united Germany. Neighborhood was also important as part of feeling at home at the same time to listen to the socialistic songs and watching News about politic in the GDR. In this paper we managed to find the answer to our research question, what is Heimat.

Talking about same question in the second movie of Herr Lehmann I have to emphasize that the ideology in this movie doesn’t represent the same idea of the movie Good Bye Lenin. West Germany has another vision of life and its style. Herr Lehmann was lying to his parents about his job position, the parents more aristocratic and the relationship between them not so much close. All his friends are from bar where he daily drinks beer and his routine is not so much different and colorful even though it was in East Germany. What is surprisingly contradict to the stereotype that the life in West Germany is more active and diverse. But East Germans know how to make fun together with their neighbors and relatives. Also we see that in Good Bye Lenin the whole family lives together, but in Herr Lehman we see more individualistic lifestyle. Our characters live alone and not within a family which gives a vision of personal comfort zone and identity. In the movie Good Bye Lenin we also noticed
the time spending more at home, and homesick, but in Herr Lehman the life is going mostly outside. The house is not so important to feel at home, the question is where to spend the night and not really enjoy from being at home during the day. This is exactly the cultural differences between two sides East and West Germany. Two angles of one point. In West Germany we see more rudeness, people are not so nice and polite as we can argue the people in East Germany. Main characters of Herr Lehmann movie are very direct and arrogant. In the Good Bye Lenin movie there is another perspective. People are more polite and friendly. But the question of Friendship in Herr Lehman movie also takes an essential part. It is worth to have less friends and be satisfied with them as it was by Herr Lehman. In Good Bye Lenin we explore more networking within neighborhood. One more aspect it is worth to be underlined is a reading. Both in East and West Germany people keen on reading. Reading part opens their soul, and develops their mental skills. But in West Germany people prefer to read less according to Herr Lehmann movie and our own observation. They prefer hanging out, having fun and communication face to face.

As the conclusion I would like to sum up the primary features of the paper, they are: emotionality of Heimat, the disbalance in feeling home after Germany's Unification from Eastern part, the criticizing the GDR governmental way of power and hipper control of social life, the elimination of what is called "I am", instead of "We are", by those I mean "Wir sind ein Volk". From individual angle to community, from narrowness to globalization and generalization. In the proceed work we found out how strong Eastern Germans wanted to leave the GDR and move to the West, and how Western people were welcoming and helpful by greeting Eastern Germans after Unification. We discovered all pain and inner cultural discomfort by Germans before and after the Fall of the Wall. The cultural perception of feeling Heimat by our results finds on the first place after histori
cal and political issues. The most important thing is how people feel and their level of life within or beyond the comfort zone which was ruined by political power in those times.

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