

THE IMPACT AND EMBODIMENT OF WESTERN EXPERTISE IN THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE EASTERN GERMAN MEDIA AFTER 1990

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I think many of us recall the promises of western politicians in 1990 that eastern Europe could look forward to, in Helmut Kohl's terms, "flowering landscapes" fueled by infusions of western capital. Of course, by "capital investments" not only financial capital was meant, but also a more elusive commodity known as "intellectual capital" -- western social and economic Know-How that it was believed would transform eastern Europe from the top down. In fact, at least in Germany, professional knowledge-specialists like corporate consultants, development specialists, political organizers, media managers, and academic researchers were as much the invisible hands of social transformation as entrepreneurs were (comparatively, see Kennedy and Gianopolis 1993). As experts charged with evaluating the economic, political and social status quo in eastern Europe, these professional intellectuals' analyses and judgments often had a lasting impact in how and where western investments were made. Moreover, as consultants within eastern institutions, the authority of their western Know-How mediated and continues to mediate intra-institutional decision-making. When we think about the ambition to "westernize" the East, the impact of knowledge-specialists in postsocialist transition is often submerged due to a tendency to see them as faceless agents of western public or private sector interests. But when we award these professional intellectuals agency, group interests and social subjectivities of their own -- all of which may or may not be consonant with the powers they are supposed to serve -- the importation of western Know-How to the East in the 1990s becomes a more complex and fascinating sociological problem than the heralded model of a "bank transfer" of intellectual resources might suggest.

In this article, I would like to address this problem by balancing macro-level and micro-level insights into the social impact of western expertise in the restructuring of the eastern German media after 1990. For example, without taking into consideration the context of German unification processes, one could scarcely understand how and why western media experts brokered the transformation of journalistic practices in eastern German media institutions as quickly and as completely as they did. Yet, without complementary "micro-level" insights into intra-institutional negotiations of expert professional knowledge, we could scarcely tease out

of the press releases just how ambivalently western experts were received in some media institutions and how redundant elements of their vaunted western Know-How were taken to be.

By balancing these insights, I hope to question certain common assumptions about the place and role of western expert knowledge in postsocialist transitions. I will suggest that (1) the *a priori* assumption that eastern societies were lacking some vital native intellectual capital for "westernization" to occur and (2) the transparency of the solution that only itinerant experts could provide the requisite Know-How to westernize eastern professional and economic practices should be viewed as social-discursive phenomena unto themselves, or at least not taken at their face value. For example, we should ask what this dominant ideology of transferable "intellectual-capital" suggests for the resuscitation and sedimentation of East/West alterities in postsocialist Europe? Is expert knowledge a new idiom for the age-old dependency of the backwards East upon the progressive West? (Wolff 1994). Moreover, we must question "expert knowledge" itself in its self-advertisement as a commodity form.

My own research suggests that expertise is not only a procurable and securable "body" of professional proficiencies and knowledge, but also a relationship of jurisdiction and authority that is intersubjectively determined and reproduced. Although common wisdom suggests that western experts brought the intellectual equivalent of bricks and mortar to the East, the durability and exchangeability implied by the commodity metaphor at times seem to be more ideological than actual. We should ask instead whether the hard-won intimate systemic knowledge of a western specialist really retains its distinctive forms, optimality and even instrumental value in another context where economic, political and institutional relationships are exceedingly unsettled. Here, the ethnography of transition contexts offers us remarkable data for undermining the conception of expertise as the ownership and exercise of durable intellectual-capital. We need only look to the ubiquitous negotiations of cultural forms in postsocialist Europe to find hybrid practices and knowledges that are neither entirely western imports nor pre-1989 holdovers (see, for example, the studies collected in

Burawoy and Verdery 1999 and Berdahl, Bunzl, and Lampland 2000).

Finally, the uncertainty of the intellectual-capital model underscores the urgency of investigating the social life of "western experts" and how they come to authorize the process of westernization. To my mind, the origin and maintenance of the role categories of the western expert and the eastern neophyte should become an explicit focus of attention. Through social and linguistic research on how expertise is claimed, negotiated and parodied in everyday contexts of institutional activity, we may come to see the legitimacy of western experts and the parvenu status of eastern professionals in more dynamic and relational terms.

Expertise, Professionalism, and the Politics of Restructuring the Eastern German Media after 1990

In this spirit, the first thing I will say about the impact of western expertise in the eastern German media is the caution that, in my own field research, I have found this longitudinal (i.e. East/West) paradigm of distinctions of knowledge and knowledge-making to be comfortable but often inaccurate (Boyer 2000a). I assumed that East and West German journalists would be differentially professionally capable when I went to do my fieldwork in eastern German media institutions in 1996 and 1997, but I found actual distinctions in expertise and proficiency more indexical than empirical by then. In retrospect, many routines and practices of eastern and western journalism were remarkably similar before 1989 although different ideals of editorial work, research, and representation were cultivated in the two media systems.

Yet, this paradigm of the western journalist as expert and the eastern journalist as neophyte has had lasting purchase in media institutions due to the broader politics of expertise in the German unification process. I will not go into detail here about the denial of East German expertise in other societal domains, but the general expectation of western elites that all former East German professional intellectuals undergo some form of "re-education" before being authenticated to practice in unified German society crystallized relations of eastern apprenticeship in most professions (see also De Nike 1997). The explicit language of transformation in eastern German media institutions between 1990 and 1994 focused on "bringing western journalistic Know-How to the East," thus on helping East Germans to learn the knowledge-making skills

and values of democratic journalism they were perceived to lack.

There was a sad irony in this for many East German journalists, because a real grass-roots revolution in the eastern German media occurred at the end of 1989, months before systematic western investment and involvement began in the East. Between November 1989 and January 1990, every single media institution in the GDR experienced some kind of internal coup where the middle and younger generations of journalists took advantage of the collapse of the party-state's media control apparatus to institute radical democratic reforms. Formerly taboo themes like the Stasi, the shortcomings of the planned economy, and the environment became immensely popular topics and journalists began to exercise critical investigative reporting skills long suppressed by the surveillance of the party's Department of Agitation and Propaganda.

But, this "socialist journalism experiment," in the derisive terms of one West German radio director was not initially recognized by most western journalists as an exercise of expertise in democratic journalism. When the eastern German print media was privatized in 1990 and 1991 and when eastern German radio and television production was placed under the aegis of the West German public broadcasting network in 1991 and 1992, earlier reforms were strategically downplayed or overlooked by the new western German media owners. There was a lingering Cold-War era vision in western public culture of East German journalists as opportunistic functionaries who would be incapable of genuine reform without re-education. Worse yet, East German journalists were deemed so fundamentally unprofessional, dogmatic, and ensconced in their GDR-era political patronage networks that re-education was predicted to be a long and perhaps prohibitively costly process.

Parenthetically, I should briefly address two inaccuracies in these assumptions. First, GDR journalists were actually more rigorously professionalized than their western counterparts who rarely receive formal training in journalistic practice (Boyle 1992). Second, intra-institutional politics in the western German media are also strongly influenced by party patronage networks, although this is a very taboo topic for professional discussion. The situation is clearest in regional public broadcasting where higher editorial positions are often distributed only to party members and then in rough proportion to the number of seats each party holds in the state parliament.

In short, eastern professional inadequacy was largely assumed *a priori* by western media owners. And, as eastern German media institutions came under the control of western media elites, the grass-roots-elected eastern management were in all but a few cases immediately replaced by western editorial staffs who were given the task of bringing the eastern German media up to the "West German standard." The majority of my East German interviewees remembered that the new management came with clear prejudices about the skills and expertise of East German journalists. Marcus H., now a journalist at an eastern boulevard paper, winced as he recalled this period:

The West Germans came over here in 1990 with the opinion, let's be honest, that everything that happened in the East during the previous forty years was idiotic. The people were stupid. The structure was stupid. The newspaper business was in the hands of a bunch of reds who had absolutely no idea of how to do journalism right. This later proved itself to be a joke because some of the regional dailies pretty much carried on with few changes after 1990 and did very well for themselves and kept all of their readers, whereas some of these papers like the *Berliner Zeitung* where West Germans instituted one change after another lost thousands of readers. Anyway, what was happening here was that people were wandering around in ties and collars they didn't feel comfortable in because they didn't even know what the expectations for dress were anymore. And the West Germans were big mouths, knew everything better, and the East German journalists were totally on edge. Everything, even a ten line report they wrote was always wrong, they had to rewrite it. It was difficult for people to come to terms with this kind of treatment. Of course, there were many new things to learn and a new kind of precise boulevard journalism to adapt to. But frankly there was very little good will demonstrated by the new owners.

Dominic: *So it was kind of a student-teacher relationship?*

Worse than student-teacher, more like the dumb remedial schoolkid to the wise professor. It took a very long time to be accepted as a journalist.

Other eastern journalists recalled severe initial discipline and crash-courses in competitiveness as the new chief editors tried to disrupt what they saw as a socialist legacy of team orientation and to replace this with an emphasis on individual achievement. One journalist, Michael R.,

remembered his new chief editor waving a piece of paper in his face at a staff-meeting and shouting, "Your colleague over there has done this excellent work, now what are *you* going to do to prove *yourself*?!"

Within several months of taking over management of eastern German media institutions western managers typically overhauled their staffs. Although many overhauls were enacted in the name of profitability considerations, most West German managers explained to me that the owners were pressuring them to guarantee a "democratic orientation" in their newsrooms. To rationalize retention decisions, owners hired media consultants to administer questionnaires to the East German journalists which sought to quantify their past political actions, their present commitment to democratic principles and their professional credentials. When papers were laying off dozens of journalists a month, keeping one's job could hinge on a satisfactory response to a question like "Explain your understanding of democracy." In the recollection of most East German journalists, retention decisions had less to do with journalistic competence than with one's supposed "prior convictions" and with the elusive determination of one's "attitude" in the workplace about the changes being instituted by the western owners.

At a regional daily in Saxony, assistant chief editor Karl G. once lamented to me that the management of his paper had been too lenient in this process and thus had jeopardized the newspaper's role in re-orienting the eastern German public to western values:

You must understand our influence in this region. We have seventeen local editions! It's an enormous newspaper and in many areas we have no competition at all -- thus it is we alone who are educating public opinion. Very few of the GDR-era journalists have been let go here... Especially in our local offices where nothing has changed since before 1989. We have journalists out there many of whom have absolutely no idea of journalism or of anything else for that matter. That's a problem for us now. But one thing we have tried to do is to hire more younger East Germans and through internships to bring in more westerners as well, so that now every local office has one or two West Germans... This was a former communist party paper and all the old journalists had to be party members in order to work here. And it's often not clear how much people have changed, internally I mean, since that time.

Age, meanwhile, ran a close second in retention decisions to political profiling and virtually

every East German journalist over the age of fifty was deemed too corrupted by old habits to withstand re-training and encouraged instead to accept early retirement. By 1994, the number of journalists with experience working in East Germany was reduced by over half and by now fewer than a third are still employed.

The fact is you know, that just as the western system is selective, the eastern system was selective and basically selected the wrong kinds of people to do journalism according to western standards. I mean, you could say, that for fifty years East German journalists were paid *not* to tell people what was going on and there is a certain type of person who can accept that. So the West German owners were sweating, looking at all these passive guys in gray suits and wondering where the hell they were going to find people to write articles for their papers. They couldn't just bring in all West Germans. That would have looked like colonialism and, let's be honest, what western journalist who was any good at what he did would give up his job in the Rhineland to come to some stinkhole in the East and work for half the pay at a *Heimatzeitung* (local paper). No, they weren't crazy. I've said this before -- What you got from the West back then were a few young guys like me who didn't know anything, a few old sausages who had lost their creativity, and then a bunch of hacks who couldn't get any work in the West. Drunks, carpetbaggers, I've already told you the story about how the first paper I was at actually hired this guy who had formerly been an inmate at a lunatic asylum. Because he barged into the office in a flashy suit talking about how he knew everything, how he was ready for any assignment. And the chief editor could completely relate to that personality profile. A couple months later he was back in the asylum again. But better a lunatic than an East German, that was the motto back then.

New job openings were occupied by West German journalists and by younger East German journalists (age 30 or younger), who were deemed uncalcified by the functionary work of the old regime, and fit for apprenticeship as western journalists. My good friend Gregor watched these processes unfold in 1990 as a young West German who had come to help aid in the westernization of the East and had landed a job as a reporter for a start-up paper. Gregor said he felt that the West German managers were motivated by an instinctive uneasiness with eastern journalists who didn't talk like they expected journalists to talk, who didn't dress like they expected journalists to dress and who thus were marked as unprofessional from the start:

The Bifurcation of Expertise in Eastern Media Institutions and the Articulation of Nations and Regions

Gregor's connection of self-presentation to professional recognition underscores the fact that although the lack of "journalistic expertise" or the possession of the "wrong personality type" was the putatively value-free language of media restructuring, how one was recognized as having or not having expertise and a good attitude was mediated by a complex field of distinctions which had only a tenuous relationship to the possession of knowledge. As scholars of professionalism like Magali Sarfatti Larson suggest, expertise is not only an ideology of monopolizable knowledge, but also always a social relation of authority (1977; also, Abbott 1988). Both aspects of expertise, its embodied property-relations and power-relations, became readily apparent when western experts encountered eastern journalists within eastern German media institutions.

Even though initial conflicts were intense, both sides admitted that professional relations quickly normalized because of the productivity pressures of western journalism. This normalization process was doubtless also accelerated by the rapid release of any eastern journalist who voiced strong concerns about the market-capitalist model of the media. But even many of those who quietly found the democratic re-education redundant in fact welcomed western journalists for their expertise in areas of media-making that they recognized they were ill-prepared to manage on their own (for example, advertising and the use of computers and other digital technologies). However, it frustrated my East German interlocutors that technical knowledge was bundled with critical reasoning skills and personal initiative under the rubric of "western Know-How." They felt professionally and personally stung that critical thinking was implicitly attributed to any western journalist while their own critical opinions and knowledge were patronizingly determined to be nostalgic. Many of my eastern interlocutors had also recognized, as Gregor observed, that it was not the cream of the western media establishment who were coming to the East to "re-educate" them, but rather marginal professionals who were being sent to the proverbial bush to prove themselves or to farm them out.

By 1996, the politics of expertise had become silent. Working in any eastern newsroom in the late 90s, one rarely saw western authority openly exercised or heard East/West differences voiced publicly. Gradually, the more overt negotiations of

eastern and western professional skills and expertise resolved into a more latent normalization of difference. In fact, one hears almost universally on both sides that no one can tell who is who anymore and that heritage is only a crude index of professional competence. Yet, the self-reported collegiality of shared professional expertise is not quite as clear-cut as it pretends. The bible of German journalistic practice, the *ABCs of Journalism* (Mast 1994), a volume visible in nearly every journalist's office in Germany openly announces and codifies eastern differences in journalistic competence:

East German journalists differ, as a survey of Eastern German media organizations has shown, in their performance capabilities from their West German colleagues. There are deficits in their production of news-bulletins, in their research skills, and in their ability to think and act in a competitive fashion. The strengths of East German journalists lie in their superior regional knowledge as well as their familiarity with the people who live there and in a sensitive approach to their public. In opposition to the western journalists, who are said to be lone agents and individualists, eastern journalists are more compromise-oriented and integrate themselves more easily into teams. Journalists from the west, however, continue to significantly exceed their East German colleagues in specialized knowledge of functional mechanisms and institutions of a free political and economic system [81].

This account mirrors in softer focus the more brutal determinations of eastern alterity that characterized the years of intensive restructuring. Perhaps the publication of eastern provinciality in the codex of German journalistic practice is itself what makes it unnecessary to speak openly about East/West differences anymore. Eastern journalists are routinely lauded, and laud themselves, as being more team-oriented, sensitive to the needs of their publics and regionally knowledgeable -- unfortunately all these qualities become faint praise when one recognizes that mastery of elite areas of journalistic expertise like knowledge of western political systems and the formation of critical opinions are reserved exclusively for western journalists due to their socialization to competitive individuality.

Today, in the everyday division of journalistic labors at most eastern German media institutions, East German journalists are explicitly identified as locals who provide their institution with *Ostkompetenz* (eastern competence) while West German journalists are identified as cosmopolitan trans-locals, who provide national and international

knowledge as well as critical, analytical and comparative skills.

I was often told that East/West differentiation was no longer a daily phenomenon in the workplace as it once had been. But, several of my interviewees added that they had noticed that it was precisely in those moments when they exercised their critical reason in discussing unified German society that they were singled out for their easternness and unprofessionalism. For example, journalist Jochen K. described an encounter he said had rattled his faith in western meritocracy. When he first tried to demonstrate his editorial expertise to his very left-wing western newspaper, he was forced to undergo an impromptu political examination on his understanding of democracy before he was allowed to work on the Op/Ed page. He felt that his western colleagues presumed as a matter of course that any East German journalist would lack the appropriate critical and analytical skills for such work. Jochen K. further pointed out to me that all East German journalists faced an ironic double-bind where not to voice a critical opinion marked you as passive and lacking initiative, but then to voice a critical opinion meant you were a nostalgist for the state-socialist system. Jochen K. said he personally believed that East German journalists, as elites of a failed social system, had a special critical expertise for identifying the weaknesses, tensions, and duplicities within any social-political order. But, as another of my interviewees sighed, "None of the West Germans believe there is any point of comparison between their system and our old one."

I would argue, drawing here upon other research I have done on the relationship of intellectuals to what Ron Suny and Michael Kennedy have recently termed the "articulation of the nation" (1999), that the privileges of trans-local comparative expertise which western journalists categorically deny eastern journalists is not an arbitrary exercise of power. Rather, it is a defense of the principles of social distinction around which German intellectuals have organized themselves since the 18th century. From the time of Goethe and Schiller forward, German intellectuals have identified themselves as the trans-local *Kulturträger* (culture-bearers) of the German nation, as the articulators of the nation's central virtues and qualities and as the artisans of German *Volk* belonging (Boyer 2000). During the Cold War period, in both the GDR and the FRG, intellectuals laid reciprocal claims to the privilege of articulating the correct virtuous path for the German nation against the recidivistic efforts of their brethren on the other side of the Wall.

Thus, the negative image of the eastern professional intellectual as spirit-less functionary was requisite for defending the legitimacy of western intellectuals to privileged negotiation and articulation of a healthy German national culture. Since 1989, I would argue we have seen a modulation of the politics of intellectual legitimacy from the all-or-none East/West distinctions of the Cold War period to a division of knowledge labors and expert legitimacy modeled on the relationship of the nation to the region. East German journalists, like other eastern intellectuals, are treated as personifications of their regional public; they are encouraged to identify themselves with and to articulate a brand of regional eastern-ness which is increasingly tolerated if parodied in post-unification public culture. But it is the western intellectuals alone who, as the erstwhile victors of the Cold War, are now privileged to articulate the nation. Thus, whereas for an East German journalist to criticize reunified German society is seen as an indecent overstepping of his or her regional jurisdiction, for a West German journalist to venture forth criticism of the unified German social and political establishment is treated like the legitimacy of a parent to discipline his or her own child. In this sense, national expertise is not considered just a hard-won body of specialized skills and knowledge, but also an elementary principle of social distinction as a "western intellectual." National and critical expertise is folded into an intuitive and indexical knowledge of western intellectual self-hood that categorically prohibits intellectuals of "eastern origin" from participating as equals in the articulation and negotiation of unified German national culture. Meanwhile, while many of my eastern interlocutors admitted they would like to participate more actively in nationally-oriented reportage, most concluded their interviews with me by embracing their regional role as a perfectly natural function of their eastern subjectivity.

The Embodiment of Differential Expertise and the Testimony of the Professional's Body

Eastern German journalists' "embrace" of their appurtenant professional subjectivity has not come, however, without a legacy of frustration and resistance. As noted above, the oral politics of differential expertise have largely been silenced in the newsrooms of the eastern German media. However, I noticed in my interviews that a critical dialogue with the accredited narratives of professional inequity emerged in a corporeal register of somatic effects and gestures like recoil, docility, physical trembling, and shifting postures. Like Breuer and Freud's hysteric patients (1955), the bodies of my eastern interlocutors appeared to be

taking over a creative agency denied their voices, articulating a critical knowledge of the politics of expertise in the eastern German media against the desired serenity of the postsocialist normalization process.

Normally, during my interviews with eastern German journalists, bodily and intellectual calm prevailed. We sat most often in their offices, drinking coffee and talking informally. My interview partners would usually, after they had determined that I was not interested in evaluating their political convictions, that I was not going to be asking any questions along the lines of "how did you justify to yourself working as a propagandist for a criminal regime?" began to sink back into their chairs, knotting their fingers behind their heads, ruminating thoughtfully over my questions about their past and present practice of journalism. Then, the conversation would invariably reach the topic of current East/West relations in newsrooms and I would ask whether there was still a lingering professional prejudice on the part of owners and senior management against journalists of eastern origin. Suddenly, in a majority of my interviews, the dialogue reached a strange and awkward pause. My interlocutor's breathing and pulse would almost visibly quicken and before verbalizing a response, the relaxed and splayed body of seconds before would retract, like a pill-bug, back into a position of readiness and wariness. Then, when the vocal reply emerged it came quickly and formulaically, recited almost like an incantation, "No, no," I was told in most cases, "these kinds of East/West differences and tensions which were present in the beginning are no longer important. We've grown to know and to respect one another as colleagues. Journalists have no time for these kinds of animosities." Where the voice exhibited appropriate discipline and restraint, the body continued to register unease and anxiety.

Outside of the one-on-one interviews I encountered a range of somatic responses among eastern journalists that appeared to be prompted by discourse on East/West professional difference. This occurred most often in situations where I was speaking with a mixed group of both eastern and western journalists. In one case, while a western chief editor was describing the legitimate need to cleanse the German public sphere of "unapologetic Stalinists," I could see his eastern assistant out of the corner of my eye fidgeting uncomfortably in his chair. On two or three occasions his mouth opened as though to verbalize a response to his colleague but no sound issued forth. Even when I gently prompted him, "Do you tend to see this along similar lines?," the assistant chief only shrugged and said that

selbstverständlich (of course) personnel changes had to be made in keeping with the new expectations of the media. Yet it was only when the subject of the conversation shifted away from East/West difference that his body returned to its former posture of calm.

In another case, two colleagues who had become romantically involved since 1989 lunched with me together at an eastern German public radio station. Without so much as an ironic glance in his partner's direction, Rudolf, a West German journalist in his early 50s explained to me that eastern journalists were still often hampered by a wooden and clumsy style of expression:

The East German style of writing is older, more clunky, and precise-sounding than the German used in the western media. For example, an East German might write, '*die neuen Vorschriften wurden von den Arbeitern zur Anwendung gebracht*' [the new regulations were placed into application by the workers]. That sentence contains errors like the unnecessary use of a passive construction and an improper use of the noun 'workers' for this context. A West German would write instead, '*Die Mitarbeiter wanden die neuen Vorschriften an*' [the employees applied the new regulations]. The East German variant is really an older form of German, it sounds like the German of the Third Reich which was then adopted into party-German in East Germany.

Throughout his monologue, Rudolf's partner Katrina had a strangely dissociated look on her face and her torso stiffened as she held herself very still. But when Rudolf connected professional 'easterness' to the legacy of Nazism, she began visibly trembling, and produced a strained smile perhaps to lighten the significance of Rudolf's judgment. Meanwhile, Rudolf, apparently somewhat pleased at the analogy, continued on in this vein to explain other typically "East German" professional deficiencies such as a lack of flexibility and limited creative imagination while Katrina's head wilted slowly into her hands as she stared silently into her coffee cup.

In a very explicit way, within everyday professional discourse in eastern German media institutions, the identity of professional fraternity is meant to supersede the axis of East/West differentiation. The public expression of East/West logic is commonly reported (by westerners) to be a non-professional, indeed a vulgar resource for interpretation, classification and judgment. So, even though there is an intimate knowledge of eastern professional difference circulating in every eastern media institution and even though it is generally known that this knowledge of difference is utilized to justify denying eastern colleagues high-status

journalistic work, there is a rigorous code of silence applied to oral discourse on East/West difference within the workplace in the name of cosmopolitanism and professional fraternity. As we have already heard, in practice this is not a two-way street and several eastern journalists told me privately that the code of silence creates a powerful double-bind for those identified as being "East German journalists." Say nothing critical and you are typed as a passive and unimaginative easterner with no professional initiative. But, participate as western journalists do in critical discourse about unified German society and you are then cast as a *Jammerossi*, a whiny nostalgist for the comforts of a totalitarian regime. This double-bind which forces intimate knowledge of eastern alterity to remain unspoken helps to explain the evolution of the eastern journalist's body as an instrument for expressing frustration with, and a certain inchoate resistance to, the social construction of eastern otherness and deficiency.

Conclusion

With eastern journalists' oral acknowledgment of their provinciality and with the reduction of critical discourse on the bifurcation of expertise to a corporeal register, the contemporary situation in the eastern German media permits western management to at long last charitably praise the eastern-ness of their employees. One young chief editor, thirty years old, almost a caricature of the power-*Wessi* with a brilliant yellow tie and a cell phone in one hand and cup of coffee in the other leaned across his desk to me and said: "You know, I thought I knew everything when I came here. I was prepared for the worst, for a lack of skills, you know the whole routine. But then I realized what wonderful resources these people are and how much I can learn from them. How do I know how the closing of factory X is going to resonate with people out here? I don't! I don't share their *Befindlichkeiten* (senses of belonging). So I've learned just a tremendous amount from them and in turn I hope I've taught them how we do things in the West. They seem happy about it. We're all happy in this building."

Of course, this happy reciprocity of expertise from West to East and back again may seem somewhat residual to us by now given the stereotyping, the layoffs, the forced retirements and the normalization of subaltern status for eastern journalists that preceded it. Most eastern journalists *who survived the trials of westernization* seemed to me more relieved than happy.

As a final word, Germany seems to me an extreme case for studying the social impact of

expertise because nowhere else in eastern Europe was there a western state that regarded an eastern state's territory and population as a captive province. Nowhere else were the flows of experts and expertise so quickly unleashed and so thoroughly saturated. And, nowhere else was a third-way hybridization of western paradigms rejected so conclusively. But, still, certain basic inequities of East/West flows of experts and expertise seem more widespread. So, the next step is likely a comparative one, especially if we are seeking a general model of the place of western expertise in postsocialist transitions. The question remains: What is distinctively "western" about western expertise in the various transition contexts with which we are familiar?

Notes

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