

Ostalgie

Ein besonderes Phänomen der ostdeutschen Transformationsgesellschaft

THOMAS AHBE

Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna

Abstract

Ostalgie: a phenomenon of the East-German transformation society

During the transformation of the European socialist party and planned economy towards democratic countries and capitalist economy, East Germany joined the Bundesrepublik. The typical internal conflict of an ex-socialist transformation society was overlaid in East-Germany by a conflict with another society, its ideology and convictions.

The new elites were mainly West-Germans. Most of the East-Germans didn't recognize themselves in the public debate about their past: their jobs, experiences and beliefs, even the products were missing or devalued. In March 1990 2/3 of the population felt «rather as Germans» than «East-Germans», but in 1992 it was clear that it was the opposite. The reaction to it was named Ostalgie: the feeling of looking back nostalgically at the past. The Ostalgie brought the marketing of old and new DDR-products and brands. In addition, even if the products of the traffic light industry, with DDR features, were no longer as powerful as in the past in the political dispute (because of the younger and more international costumers), they're still attributed to the Ostalgie: the starting point of a new debate on the variants of life in DDR.

Keywords: marketing; capitalism; mass media; communications gap; memory.