

A partner from the leaf

Marriage announcements of the GDR as a source of sociological research

The history of the newspaper advertisement as a phenomenon of mass communication goes back to the Middle Ages. It was closely linked to the invention of book printing and had its origins in the intention to distribute the printed books as widely as possible. For the display of the present - also called an advertisement - it is important that the messages or advertising messages it contains do not belong to the editorial part of the so-called advertisement media (newspapers, magazines, magazines, books, etc.), but that they are always in the interest of a client (persons, groups of people or state or social institutions).

Building on this, a research group was set up at IFAD Berlin, whose task initially consisted of examining marriage rates in the GDR magazines *Wochenpost* "and" *Das Magazin* "for their productivity as a source for social research as part of the studies and studies on social change.

The expectation hypothesis was based on the consideration: If more or less private interests determine the respective advertisement content, then these must also allow conclusions to be drawn about the private persons behind the advertisements and private living conditions, social framework conditions and their impact on individual preferences, if so it's private ads. And there were also large numbers of private advertisements in the GDR press - from the announcement of special family events (death, marriage, birth), or personal projects to facilitate them (e.g. job applications, sales, barter deals) and in the form of more or less extensively worded marriage or partnership announcements.

Issue 38 of the IFAD edition now contains an extensive data set, an equally detailed and stimulating collection of examples and a first qualitative assessment of the source material. This publication can be seen as a promising start to further, in-depth analyzes. Because the data set of a total of 7,271 individual advertisements - 3,219 male and 4,052 female, which were analyzed from a sociological point of view, has the potential to soon develop into a data store that will reflect everyday reality and everyday mentality of a lost republic.