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**Dialectical Spaces in the Global Public Sphere:
Media Memories across Generations**

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**Dialectical Spaces in the Global Public Sphere:
Media Memories Across Generations**

Foreword

A decade ago, CNN and MTV emerged as new types of 'global' players, initiating and supporting a new global transnational community of 'news junkies' and music cultures from New York, to Tokyo, to Buenos Aires and Los Angeles. Today, access to international news is not only available in many countries around the world, but international channels have multiplied and created 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983), affecting new political alliances, conventional journalism and - increasingly - national public spheres.

The following research report will discuss new issues of globalization and focus on the impact of media-related globalization processes on 'life-worlds' in various countries.

The Fellowship at the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, has allowed me to reconsider categories of communication theory in light of new globalization processes and develop a theoretical framework for further analysis. The intellectual atmosphere in this world-class environment has been tremendously inspiring. I thank Alex Jones, Nolan Bowie, Jonathan Moore, Richard Parker and Thomas Patterson of the Joan Shorenstein Center for providing me with this academic support. I also want to thank my co-fellows, Eytan Gilboa, Rick Kaplan, Paul Kelly and Matthew Storin for taking the time to discuss my work with me.

1. Introduction

Globalization and International Communication Theory

Whereas Marshall McLuhan's vision of the "global village," inspired by the strong influence of the dawning satellite age in the mid-sixties, was based on a homogeneous "extension of man" (McLuhan, 1964), the process of 'global' communication today is more complex - theoretical as well as practical.

McLuhan's vision of a "Global Village" was the first substantial attempt to analyze the profound impact of internationalization of cultural techniques on various dispersed societies, which are exposed to the same signals and messages. McLuhan's studies on the 'Gutenberg Galaxy' as well as his attempt to outline cultural coordinates of a 'Global

Village' are still today, almost forty years after they were first published, a starting point to our understanding of 'globalization'.

In McLuhan's time, the first satellites, launched by intergovernmental agencies, distributed 'live' images to news pools across oceans and provided an impressive new link between nations. The link, which in McLuhan's "the medium is the message" formula, inspired the vision of an unknown transformation of cultures and societies into a "global village," a new cultural space of 'sameness' and 'uniformity'. The notion of 'sameness' and 'conformity' inspired in the era of international political Cold War turbulence was a new *Zeitgeist* of perceiving the (political) world. Today, McLuhan's metaphor is subject to wide criticism of 'imperialism' and 'dominance,' and economical elitism (see WTO protests), because 'globalization' has assumed a different meaning in respect to the structural perception.

In recent decades, technological developments have triggered a new complexity and diversity of globalization, not only of a 'global culture', which is still today the central topic of the sociological globalization debate (see, for instance, Tomlinson, 1999), but also of *political* communication. Notions of a global 'public' sphere - a new dimension of the globalization process have gained a new awareness since September, 11, 2002. The 'global village' has been extended by new main- and side streets, which has allowed the distribution of diversified 'signals' within a new global communication space.

Firstly, the diversification of satellite technologies, such as C- and K-band satellites, and the increased bandwidth has expanded trans-continental and trans-regional content flows and has prompted the launch of fragmented globally operating political 'channels' in point-to-point as well as point-to-multipoint distribution modes. Today, around four hundred of the nine hundred satellites in orbit provide worldwide distribution of entertainment and political content. Conventional categories of 'foreign' and 'domestic' journalism, which were established in an era of 'inter-national' communication, are being transformed.

Second, the Internet, following Manuel Castells' (1996) argument, has increased the dynamics and complexity of the political globalization process and has created a new global "network society" *not* in McLuhan's sense of 'sameness' but rather in the sense of "Networked Individualism" (Castells, 2001). The Internet, thus viewed as a metaphor for a new global communication infrastructure, 'de-centralizes' the advanced globalization process and creates - in Castell's view - a "network of nodes," affecting the political identity of individuals within a new set of supra- and subnational coordinates.

It is somewhat surprising that communication theory has largely overlooked these important transformations of the international communication infrastructure as well as the related paradigm changes within the discourse of 'globalization'. International communication still leans heavily on the 'modern' paradigm of - in the original sense - inter-national communication, i.e. communication *between* nations in conjunction with a 'modern' role of the media within nation-states (see for instance, Tehranian, 1999, or Chen/Starosta, 2000).

Still today, communication theory focuses primarily on 'Communication Imbalances' (see, for instance debates, initiated by the MacBride Report, UNESCO, 1980 now debated as 'Digital Divide' (Norris, 2001), 'Cultural Imperialism' (Schiller, 1976) and 'International Cultivation' (Morgan/Signorelli, 1990), now rephrased in conjunction with Cultural Studies in the context of a 'global' culture. Although these are important issues, globalization processes of media and the new complexity of the worldwide media infrastructure require new approaches.

The sociological discourse on globalization has already included notions of 'modernity' and 'postmodernity' (which radically reviews the role of the nation-state) and discovered new formats and patterns of 'interconnections' (Robertson, 1992: 2). Based on this discourse, identity, politics, religion and economy have been discussed in new global perspectives. However, communication theory (in the U.S. as well as in Europe) has rarely discussed the consequences of the paradigm change from 'modernity' to 'globalization.'

Proponents of a 'modern' globalization process, such as Anthony Giddens (1990) and Beck (1996) argue, for instance, that "globalization" is a de-constructive three-way process: "pulling away", "pushing down", and "squeezing sideways" (Giddens in Slevin, 2000:200). "Globalization 'pulls away', for example, in the sense that the powers once held by agencies of state or large economic organizations have been weakened by global developments. Globalization 'pushes down' in the sense that it creates new burdens and new options for local identities and interaction. Finally, globalization 'squeezes sideways' in that it reorders time and space, cutting across old boundaries and creating new horizontal alliances" (Slevin, 2000:200).

However, the new globalization approach, which is "intimately related to modernity and modernization, as well as to postmodernity and 'postmodernization'" and is concerned with "the concrete structuration of the world as a whole" (Robertson, 1990:20) could be an excellent starting point within communication theory in order to ask about the role the media play in the globalization process and in creating a global platform for "creating new horizontal alliances" and "interconnectedness" (Robertson, 1992).

Globalization and the Life-World: Dialectical Spaces

Whereas in the first satellite decade of the mid-sixties, the globalization process involved international program delivery *within* the media system (i.e. first 'live' images delivered to news pools of news agencies etc.), today's globalization process directly enters the 'life world' arena. 'Globalization' viewed from the paradigm of 'modernity' focuses on processes of 'inter-nationalization.' Globalization, viewed from the angle of the 'network' paradigm (Castells, 1996) unfolds new supra- and sub-national communication infrastructures, which also target the worldwide life-world arena.

I claim that these processes -within the political global space - de-balance conventional national public spheres, because they shape – on the individual level - political identities, notions of citizenship in a new political 'vacuum', *between* the 'global' and the 'local', *between* universal and particular contexts, between the *longitudes* and *latitudes* of a network infrastructure.

Although globalization processes have already been associated with a new 'vacuum,' Appadurai argued as early as 1990 that the central problem of globalization is the "dialectic tension" between cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity (see Chuang, 2000:29). Today's 'dialectic tension' affects life-worlds in a new way, and includes not only (pop-) cultural issues but also *political* processes.

In this advanced and complex stage of the current globalization process, the 'life-world universe' seems to become a new space of opposing supra- and sub-national polarized worldviews', which I describe - in conjunction with the terminology of political discourse - as '*dialectical*' spaces. Dialectical Spaces include the new 'gaps' between the local and the global and between the media as an increasing authentic world system and the surrounding culture. These also include conflicting world images distributed via supra- and sub-national 'network' modes, i.e. CNN and Al Jazeera, "China Today" and the BBC, "The Hindu" and "Pakistan Daily" and 'authentic' worldwide available newsgroups and individual homepage viewpoints. These dialectical spaces, which we have not yet begun to understand, increasingly impact public participation, notions of political identity and 'citizenship,' and the agendas and formats of political journalism within the global public sphere (see Volkmer, 2002).

The following research report will attempt to describe the variety of 'dialectical spaces' in the life-worlds of three generations in four countries. This research focuses on 'dialectical spaces' in view of political news memories, i.e. individual reconstructions of media-related news events. I argue that these reconstructions and biographical memories play an important role in the shaping of worldviews, political identity and political participation.

2. Methodological Approach

In order to understand this transformation of the public spheres from a life-world perspective, the international research project 'Global Media Generations' was initiated in 1999. The project has been developed as an internationally comparative research on 'news memories.'

Our study aims to highlight these processes in view of three generations in twelve countries, in order to define specific 'dialectical spaces' for each of these generations in relations to the perception of 'internationalization/globalization' of the life-world media environment and media related memories.

With support from UNESCO's "Free Flow"-Division, Paris, the project has brought together colleagues from Argentina, Australia, Austria, China, Czech Republic,

Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, South Africa and the USA. The methodology of the project is based on current, more 'relativistic' globalization theory (as very briefly outlined above) and on Mannheim's phenomenological approach to "Sociology of Knowledge" (Mannheim, 1952). Based on these theoretical assumptions, the comparative analysis concentrates on childhood and youth news memories of three generations, each of which has experienced a very different era of the transformation process of the global public sphere during their politically "formative" (Mannheim, 1952) years.

The three generations, included in this international comparative research, are the following:

- the *'print/radio' generation*, born between 1924-1929 ("formative" years: 1935-1945)
- the *'black-and-white-television' generation*, born between 1954-1959 ("formative" years between 1965-1975)
- the *Internet generation*, born between 1979-1984 ("formative" years: 1989-1999)

Each cohort focus group (three in each country, one of each generation) has been asked to

- describe the media environment during their childhood/young youth
- recall media related events
- describe their memory of ten prompted national and international news events (put together by the project team)

All questions were strictly related to their "formative" late childhood and early teenage years.

Focus group sessions lasted around sixty to ninety minutes. The discussion has been taped and transcribed in the original language.

Since the project's goal is to access the subjective re-construction of 'news' and media related memory within the life-world of three generations, the qualitative method has been chosen. Qualitative research allows the expression of 'contextual' details and subjective 'logic.' This approach also provides insights into cultural differences and the specifics of media related 'meaning' within different societies.

The initial results offer interesting issues for further debates on the impact of global communication and the increasing influence of the "global network society," on worldviews and identities as well as on the 'history' of media technologies in various world regions.

Results also reveal - quite interestingly - worldwide generational specific perceptions and transnational collective 'meanings' of rituals and social aspects of media use *despite* the variety of cultures being included in our project. Results also show generational specific, but culturally diverse 'marker tags' of media-related events, and the intrusion of global news (and popular culture) into the symbolic infrastructure of local environments.

In my research at the Shorenstein Center, I have particularly studied these new 'dialectical spaces' in terms of 'Colonialization of the Life-World by Media,' 'Distance and Proximity' and selected 'News Topographies' in four countries: Australia, Germany, India and Mexico.

3. Interpretation of Focus Group Results

Colonialization of the 'Life-World' by Media

Oldest Cohort

In each of the selected countries, Australia, Germany, India and Mexico, the oldest age cohort, born between 1924-1929, has witnessed the transformation of family life through the first truly 'mass' media: print media, film, newsreel, and radio.

Of these four media technologies, the radio had the most profound impact on media related memory in all countries. This age cohort, indeed, witnessed the invention of the radio as a mass medium. Although not all families owned a radio set themselves, it 'colonized' family life in all four countries in very distinct - and culturally specific - ways.

In each country, listening to the radio was a 'social' event that affected family life. However, the particular mode of 'colonialization' was different.

In India, family and neighbors came together to listen and media reception was specifically perceived as being a 'social' activity within this generation (see Kumar, 2001:3). The radio and other media were not only used within the privacy of the family, but also shared with neighbors and friends.

In the perspective of the German focus group, to listen to the radio was primarily a family activity and, from a child's view, represented a 'negative' social space, associated with rejection and discipline. As one individual remarked in the German focus group: "both of my parents worked throughout the day. I looked forward to finally spending time with them in the evening. However, when we were gathered around the dinner table, my father turned the radio on and listened to the news. We all had to be silent and listen." The radio seemed to have 'colonized' the family communication space.

In Australia and Germany, the radio is furthermore memorized as a medium for adults, use was restricted for children and in some cases they were not even allowed to touch it. The radio has been perceived as a "beautiful" machinery, as one Australian remarks: "When my mother died we had a big AWA radio that was like a gothic window, it was that shape and about that high and . . . was sitting in the sitting room on the mantle piece it was narrow// enough to fit- (Slade, 2001:3).

In Mexico, the 'colonialization' of family life by the radio was different. Some families considered the radio as a “hazardous” medium (Hofman/Mass/Rivera, 2001:27) because of its political propaganda. As one individual remarks: "in my house, my dad did not want us to have a radio. We had music and records; but not radio, since he wanted to protect us from all news..."(Hofman/Mass/Rivera, 2001:27). All restrictions were completely off, however, as soon as the radio finally entered the household.

Film and the newsreel were relevant media for this cohort in Australia, Germany and Mexico. In India, movies were associated with ‘guilt’ in terms of the “economic condition” as well as “cultural restriction” (Kumar, 2001:3).

In Mexico, American popular culture was slowly transforming conventional role models and lifestyles, even in the oldest cohort. A process, which began in the other countries involved here only with the middle generation (see below). “The musical production of RCA, as well as the films produced in Hollywood during the decade of 1930 and 1940, had a great influence in this generation” (Hofman/Mass/Rivera, 2001:28). This process also transformed gender roles as a Mexican remarked: “transformation of women, it seems to me, is due ... to communication. Women stopped thinking that they were human being producers as communication broadened their horizon.” (Hofman/Mass/Rivera, 2001:28).

In Germany, film, like the radio, had an ‘educational’ propaganda role. Individuals in the German focus group recalled frequent visits to the movie theater, which offered special afternoon performances for children (in order to target children with political propaganda). Prior to films, exclusively German productions of the Nazi era, such as “Hitlerjunge Quex,” “Der Feind hoert mit,” “Standschuetze Bruggler”, newsreels with political news were shown, which also had a propaganda effect on children.

Middle Cohort

The focus group research indicates that the dominant media of this cohort were radio and television. However, within this age cultural differences existed.

In India the radio played a significant role. Television did not enter India as a 'mass medium' until this generation was already in the mid-teens. In Germany, Mexico and Australia, television emerged earlier as an important medium.

In India, the radio was primarily a medium of 'entertainment' for this age cohort. The Indian focus group, however, remembered political news primarily through print media. which were consumed within the family context. As Kumar states, "newspapers and magazines were not isolated individual experiences; rather, they were read aloud by a literate member of the family for the whole family" (Kumar, 2001, 11). The social context of media reception, already stated in the oldest cohort in relation to the radio, seems to continue across this generation and available media technologies. Besides the radio, newspapers and magazines were the dominant - and unrestricted - media in India

within this generation. As one group member states: "radio was merely an entertainment media. It was mainly the film songs and other related entertainment that come to my mind" (Kumar, 2001, 11).

In Mexico, Australia, and Germany, this generation was already exposed to the 'mass' medium television. In these three countries, television played a major role in the media environment of this generation. However, TV access was restricted, either by financial means (not every family could afford to purchase a TV set) or by cultural prejudice as being a distracting entertainment medium for instance in Germany.

In Mexico, television use was not restricted through family pressure, but was only accessible through small stores in the neighborhood. Children had to pay a few cents to watch television for a restricted time period. "And when money was insufficient, they would borrow it from the shopkeeper, on the condition that they would pay it back on Sundays, the day, on which children received their weekly allowance from their parents" (Hofman/Mass/Rivera, 2001, 18). As one member of the Mexican focus group states: "there was a kind of self constrain for TV, because our budget would not allow us to pay 20 cents daily in order to go and sit there. My parents gave me 30-50 cents every Sunday to buy candy..." (Hofman/Mass/Rivera, 2001, 18).

This cohort finally did experience the arrival of TV in their families. TV ownership was of social significance for the Mexican middle class: "we first got our television than our gas stove and refrigerator..." (Hofman/Mass/Rivera, 2001, 18). The television set was but also positioned in a very elaborate place in the household, ideally in the living room, where the entire family gathered to watch (this also applied to the other countries).

In Germany, as in Mexico and Australia, this generation experienced a new multi-media environment. Television, though restricted, had a high attractiveness and the allowed time to watch was clearly remembered. Books and print media were constantly consumed without restriction and the cinema occasionally provided escapism.

Within this cohort, media ownership already began to individualize. In the oldest generation almost all media, such as books, print media and the radio were shared (and mainly used in the 'public' family space, i.e. the living room). In this middle generation media were removed from the center space (i.e. living room) of family life, and entered newly established personal spaces. Parallel to this slowly emerging personal media environment, family media, however, still played a role. For instance, in Germany, the parents' records were played: "As a child, I have listened to my grandmother's records, and was quite fascinated. I listened to Hitler's speeches, Goebbels, Hess and whatever their names were. My grandfather has died in the World War and my grandmother still had all these records." (Volkmer, 2001, 6).

The German group clearly recalls 'the day', when television arrived in their families. Whereas television was restricted, radio and tape recorder were the first personal audio media, besides books, in this cohort. They listened to music stations (such as Radio

Luxemburg, a station, which aired the international charts on an AM station) in their bedrooms and taped pop songs on their tape recorders. In the oldest generation, children in the four countries listened to adult programs. In this middle generation not only did the individualization of media ownership began as did the production of children's and youth programs. Colonialization has therefore not only the meaning of 'intruding' the material space within the household, but also the cultural and symbolic space of generations within one family.

Youngest Cohort

In the oldest and middle cohort at least some media were shared, such as radio in the oldest and TV in the middle cohort. Media are individually 'owned' in this youngest cohort. In fact, media consumption replaced social time within a family. As of the Mexican cohort remarked: "they never paid too much attention to us, everybody was always working; so we went to school, we were picked up, we got home and, in the afternoon, the only thing we wanted to do was watch TV, watch TV all day long" (Hofman/Mass/Rivera: 12).

In Germany privatized spaces and very specific and different children's media 'systems' were typical. The German cohort recalls a variety of different international, mainly U.S., cartoon and other characters, such as Tom&Jerry, but also local icons of children's culture, such as Benjamin Blümchen.

In Australia this generation has experienced the media as a "seamless web" (Slade, 2002, 3), tied together by characters and very specific, mainly (pop) cultural content. As an individual in the German focus group lists: "I own a TV set, a stereo set, a telephone, a mobile phone, one discman, one walkman and then we have also two more TV sets and two stereo sets. And, yes, I also have a computer. I think, that's it" (Rusch, 2001).

It seems that 'colonialization' transforms the sense of 'space' and 'time' as Slade observes, of the Australian focus group: "Many have a television set in the kitchen and each bedroom, and locate events in terms of where they were watching. So one youth says, "I was sitting on that lounge, right there. (laughter) On this seat and I was sitting down watching - I was flicking through, and I saw, um (JL Cohort 3, Australia)" (Slade, 2002,3).

Distance and Proximity

Oldest Cohort

Internationalization, the notion of 'distance' and 'proximity,' is not only a phenomenon of the 'Internet' age. The radio era generation created a first phase of 'internationalization.' However, the feeling of 'distance' and 'proximity' is quite different in the four countries.

In Germany, the radio represented the main medium of Nazi propaganda. For this reason, the medium itself became an ideological world. Although this oldest age cohort does not recall direct access to political propaganda in their childhood, they remember clearly the music, which was used daily as the eagle lead-in to the daily Wehrmacht report: Liszt's "Le Prelude" as well as the lead-in icon to the newsreel reports in movie theaters. Within this closed political news infrastructure, remembered events were not political, but rather 'human interest' stories, for instance sports events, those international events, which obviously passed the censorship. The male focus group members particularly recall details of a variety of sports events, which took place internationally but in which successful German champions participated, such as the famous German boxer of those days, Max Schmeling. As one individual recalls: "my father woke me up in the middle of the night and we went to an uncle to listen to the radio. The most fascinating thing for me as a child was to be woken up by my father in the middle of the night, and then to listen together. The tone was quite unclear and a lot of noise disturbed the reception...and then the imagination that this happened far away in New York, and we were able to listen live what was going on" (p.30/ML). This sporting event was one of the rare occasions when the Nazi propaganda system allowed a glimpse into the outside world. This German age cohort grew up in an otherwise closed news 'vacuum'. When US forces dropped leaflets after the capitulation, which read: "it will be over soon" this individual stated: "all of a sudden, the whole world opened up."

In Australia, the radio was primarily a medium for national affairs. However it also had a significant role as a communication channel for the 'mother country,' Great Britain. The dialectical space between 'distance' and 'proximity' was not too far apart, and viewed under a broad framework of Commonwealth values and culture.

Mexico, because of its proximity to the U.S. which allowed a new sense of 'distance' and 'proximity' within Mexico, but also in regards to the USA, seemed to experience a communication 'revolution,' As one Mexican recalls: "it was the time when the influence of communication exploded. It was then, when cars actually began to cross Mexico. Going to Acapulco was a two-day journey; there were no telephones, telegraph or highways in many places. Suddenly, communication began, and it began to change the people's mentality". Radio was, integrated into these new symbolic worlds of US movies and music. The family listened to radio novellas together and by doing this, shared the presented symbolic spaces, and shared the notion of 'distance'. Beyond this new 'symbolic' world influenced by US media, access to other countries, was only possible through amateur radio receivers: "we built the Receiver. At three in the morning, we were connected to see if we could hear Argentina, Spain, and Cuba. To us, that was a marvel..." Whereas the German cohort experienced a 'closed' ideological world, the Mexican cohort had access to cultural images, which were opposite to their own and had an impact on the society.

In India, the radio was also regarded as a centerpiece of the media world. However, in terms of 'distance' and 'proximity', it was perceived as a voice of the colonial government. Listening "was a social experience, associated with important political events, such as

“the end of World War II, Mahatma Gandhi’s assassination. Social experience meant: to listen with around ten other people, family and neighbors” (Kumar, 2001).

In Australia international news flow within the oldest generation was limited, due to technological limitations, or political ideology. However, *if* political news was remembered, it was highly explicit, and involved an almost “homogenous” collective meaning. Although the radio was perceived as the key medium, international events are in many cases remembered in pictorial images, such as detailed images of WWII: As one Australian states: “I can remember a picture of the front page of the Advertiser that I have never forgotten. It was a picture of an Australian airman with his hand tied behind his back beheaded by the Japanese”.

Middle Cohort

In Germany, Australia and Mexico, 'distance' and 'proximity' were defined through a distinct relation to the USA. In these countries, this cohort grew up with American mass media, which created a transnational youth culture, based on movies, TV programs, Disney cartoons and characters (such as "Fury" and "Lassie) as well as rock music, which was sometimes ‘translated’ and reformatted for local cultures. Categories of 'distance' and 'proximity' were reversing in this cohort. The U.S. media popular culture content provided 'proximity' and the indigenous culture provided notions of 'distance'.

The Vietnam War and the related student protests formed the political identity. These events created a new generational defining dialectical space between the so far experienced 'proximity' to the US and the 'distance' to the unfolding political conflict. As a member of the German focus group states: "I think I was twelve years or so... I thought it was just brutal, the police violence against protesting students. We have discussed all this during the family dinner, my father had a completely different opinion" (M/p.7).

This cohort has a much broader range of memories of international events than the oldest generation. Generation defining events in all countries involved were the moon landing, President Kennedy’s assassination, the Vietnam War and the OPEC crisis. These events, however, were ‘mediated’ by national mass media. Another observation of this generation is that international political news not only served as ‘information’ but also as a source in the process of defining an individual political identity - quite distinct from their parents.

In India, the radio was viewed as an entertainment medium for Indian programs. International events, however, were closely related to the Commonwealth affairs. In this context, the BBC was seen as a major source of international political news.

Youngest Cohort

In this cohort, not only media but also notions of 'distance' and 'proximity' seem to be highly individualized, where both definitions are based on personal preferences.

Typical for this generation is the statement of a Mexican: "I believe that you can identify much more with an Australian who is your age and who likes the music group you like, and who likes to ride a skate board like you, than your neighbor, who is Mexican, who is a guy that likes heavy metal rock ... you can identify much more with someone from another country who is your age and has ideas like you, than with a Mexican, who not because he is Mexican, he is automatically your friend."

Whereas, again, the Indian cohort has a very specific notion of 'distance' and 'proximity', which is tied to Indian events and its relation to Pakistan, in Australia, Germany and Mexico, these categories seem to be generational specific reversed: 'Proximity' does not necessarily relate to the local culture, but to familiar 'mediated' characters, personalities and events.

News Topographies

Oldest Cohort

Overall, it can be stated, that World War II dominates the 'news' memory of the oldest generation in Australia and Germany, the Indian focus group recalls primarily national political events and the Mexican group those events that are related to political tensions with the United States.

If events are recalled, they are recalled in great detail. Whereas news memories in the youngest generation are primarily associated with the media, news memories in the oldest generation are strongly associated with social circumstances and - this observation applies to all four countries - tend to trigger elaborate descriptions, not so much of the media related memories but of the social context.

One reason for this detailed recall of 'structural' news memory might be that national or regional political news events often affected the immediate life-world context of this generation. An example is a recollection of a member of the Indian focus group: "He recalled vividly the page layout of the Lokshati (a Marathi daily) which carried the news about the bomb explosion during a prayer-meeting led by Gandhi... He also remembered the tense situation in his hometown when Gandhi was arrested during the 'Quit India' movement. He recalled, how pamphlets were widely distributed" (Kumar, 2001:7). The German group also has very vivid memory of their immediate social circumstances in conjunction with important political events. One member described at length the social context when she heard of the death of Hindenburg in 1934: "My first media related memory is the death of Hindenburg, all the lowered flags, people had to hang outside their houses, I have had never seen anything scary like that. I just returned home with my caretaker. My parents had traveled to Leipzig for some days. The caretaker's name was Christel and I asked 'What is going on?' All these lowered dark flags made me curious,

that something important has happened. And I asked Christel 'What has happened?' And she said 'Hindenburg has died'. Of course I did not have a clue, who Hindenburg was, but the whole atmosphere made me quite sad. Not so much that he had died, but that my parents were not there when all this happened and I was left alone with the caretaker." (DS/31).

Because of Germany's location at the center of relevant political events, the memory was related less to the media, than to life-world contexts.

In Australia, war related 'news' had a strong impact because of strong pictorial and other media-induced images. As one Australian recalled: "Oh, I can remember a picture on the front page of the *Advertiser* that I have never forgotten. It was a picture of an Australian airman with his hands tied behind his back, who was beheaded by the Japanese' (H, Cohort A, Australia)."

In Mexico, WWII related events were viewed from the distance. One Mexican remarked: we went to the movies two or three times a week. We were very interested in War adventures, in action... We watched the great stories of the atomic bomb, the end of the War, the beginning of the War in Abyssinia. All those stories were very vivid to me.. (Hofman/Mass/Rivera, 2001:33)."

Middle Cohort

In this middle cohort, media-related political memories are less explicit and collective. Whereas the oldest generation in India mainly recalled national events, international news 'events' were just as relevant to the middle cohort.

When memories are recalled, however, they are associated not only with life-world or social circumstances as is the case in the oldest generation, but seem to refer to - what I would describe as - 'a cross-media reference': to other programs, print media or radio, which seemed to have reinforced the memory and the importance of the event. Whereas in the oldest generation, life-world impressions provided the contextual atmosphere, which then reinforced memory, the media themselves seem to take this role for the middle cohort.

As can be observed in the Australian cohort, the memory of events is vague:

M I can remember quite a few from the Vietnam War, but not only the War but also the anti-war protests in North America, the Kent State University things. Those images are very strong.

C Can you remember the context of that memory, I mean, where, where you saw them? -

M -the napalm

R //The napalm

Others unidentifiable//Yeah, the napalm kid

//Yeah. (Cohort 2, Australia) (Slade, 2001).

It can be argued, that this middle cohort has a strong collective memory of a small number of international subjects, which are remembered not so much in terms of social and cultural perspectives, but for their media -related aspects:

One Indian stated: "International events? Especially, I remember Vietnam. Watergate, of course, but not much, but then I followed it up later on the BBC, when they telecast it just before the Clinton scandal; they had carried a series of shows on TV, as to how Watergate took place" (Kumar, 2001:15).

For this cohort, the political generational 'defining' events include the moon landing, Kennedy's assassination, the Middle East conflict (including the terrorist attacks during the 1972 Olympics in Munich) and Vietnam. This generation grew up in a multi-media environment, but not in a multi-*channel* environment. So these events, aired 'live' on public service TV had instantaneously a 'meaning' of importance, which also created a certain cross-media 'atmosphere'. As one German remembers the Kennedy assassination: "For instance, I remember a neighbor shouting 'Kennedy is dead. Kennedy is dead.' I was quite young and had the feeling of a catastrophe, which went on for days."

Youngest Cohort

The younger generation shares almost no collective memories, except for spectacular events, such as OJ Simpson's trial, the Clinton-Lewinsky affair and Princess Diana's death.

Whereas in the middle cohort, collective images were recalled by the reaction of their social context to media-related images, in this generation, the cross-media reference, the 'mediation' of events, seems to be complete: images of the above mentioned 'events' are recalled in an almost identical 'iconographic' terminology. The Gulf War is recalled as a fragmented pictorial image, which reflecting the simplistic and special -effect-type media coverage. The Gulf War is remembered as "tanks in the desert" by the German group "firing missiles" by the Indian cohort and the name of Saddam Hussein.

'News' seems to be integrated into an overall entertainment flow, as just another 'entertainment' format, as one Australian states,

- B I listen to the radio all the time.
- C So, you get news that way?
- B Yep.
- C On the hour or half hour or whatever?
- B Yep.
- C And what do you listen to?
- B Triple J
- C They do news every...

- B Every hour
- C Every hour. How long? A couple of minutes?
- B Three to five minutes, I suppose.(Cohort 3, Australia/Slade, 2001:9)

Media memories rarely trigger interaction within the social context. The only event, in this generation, which has - at least some - relation to social interaction, was Princess Diana's death. An example is this description by a German participant: "Ok, Lady Di. I don't know, I was lying in bed and my mother came rushing in - 'the woman is dead!' I couldn't believe it and then also Rammstein, these airplane crashes during an air show. I remember it clearly. We sat in front of the TV and they have shown all the pictures, I remember that."

Despite depoliticised 'news,' the social environment serves to 'politicise' events among this age cohort. Referring to the Gulf War a member of the Indian focus group remarked: "I was in Class IX or X. In the modern history class, they said that the USA had followed the policy of the policeman, a big stick policy" (Kumar, 2001:23).

4. Dialectical Spaces in the Global Public Sphere **Discussion and Conclusions**

Although the study was not based on 'representative' data, the results provide insight into the complexity of the life-world universe and the integration of international media into the life-world logic. The qualitative approach brings 'subjective' viewpoints and impressions to the surface. By this method, it is possible to reproduce subjective perspectives, as opposed to 'representative' and 'objective' quantitative research.

Qualitative interpretation is, however, quite complex and requires, particularly in an international comparative project, in-depth knowledge of cultural specifics. This was provided by the participation of colleagues from the nations involved.

Given the internationalization and globalization of news media, it could be argued, that collective memory shapes worldwide communities and political action and also affects generational identities. As Mannheim argues "It is of considerable importance for the formation of the consciousness which experiences happen to make those all-important 'first impressions', 'childhood experiences' - and which follow to form the second, third, and other 'strata'. Early impressions tend to coalesce into a natural view of the world. All later experiences then tend to receive their meaning from this original set"(Mannheim, 1951:298). Based on this concept, 'first impressions' and 'childhood experiences' form a generational 'entelechy', a common worldview.

This generational specific 'worldview' through media can be defined within the four countries involved:

Whereas in the oldest generation in each of the countries, cultural, national and social memories strongly affected to recollected media events, this is not the case in the

youngest generation. In the oldest generation, the social and cultural context defines the 'mediated' impression. Parents reproduced their family roles in relation to the media, controlling access and interpreting 'events'.

In the middle generation, media begin to colonize 'private' and 'symbolic' spaces through, for instance, newly established children's programming as well as youth music culture. Media begin to 'mediate' meaning and importance, and act as 'marker tags'. The youngest seem to define their individual social context through the media perspective.

Although the nations in the study are quite different in their political and economical status (in terms of the World Bank definitions, they represent 'industrial', 'transitional,' and 'developing' countries), it is amazing to see, how the media, despite these political, economical as well as cultural differences, establish a globalization process. The comparison of the three generations allows observation of the transformation of social family environments and individual 'material' as well as 'symbolic' spaces by media. In the oldest generation, the 'world' was represented through international and 'foreign' journalism, and, in the case of Mexico, foreign, (US) entertainment. In the middle generation, a new process of internationalization can be observed. International events, such as the moon landing and Kennedy's assassination were aired 'live' around the world producing a first international or 'global' collective memory. In the youngest generation, the convergence of media seem to form a constant flow of 'noise', of news, icons, characters across various platforms, from television sets to game boys. Content genres, news and, furthermore, entertainment seem to merge into a diffuse mass of symbols and images. The individualization of media ownership as well as the increasing diversity of fragmented content seems, indeed, to reflect Castells' paradigm of the network society. The articulation of memories in the youngest generation from all countries also reflects these processes.

One could argue that that the youngest generation's political knowledge and their participation in a 'global public sphere' are problematic. However, one could also argue, that in the youngest generation the media shape 'worldviews', not only locally and globally, but also in terms of 'analog' and 'digital' knowledge. Whereas the oldest generations revealed 'analog' knowledge, defined their worldviews according to national and cultural specifics, and described media-related memories in great details. The youngest generation shares a great variety of superficial media-related knowledge, when asked to describe this in-depth, they hardly know contexts and facts and use a somewhat 'universal' code. They describe these memories in exactly the same words and clear-cut, highly defined digital terms, as the Gulf War example showed

Although issues of 'collective' memory have been discussed in social sciences for quite some time (see for instance, Middleton/Edwards, 1990), only a few studies have focussed on the general issue of 'news' memory, in conjunction with a cross-cultural 'reception' analysis. Jensen's and Mancini's (1998) study is an exception.

Jensen's and Mancini's research focused on the reconstruction of recent news ¹, 'news media' being understood as "sources of meaning that help to orient the distributed

localized action of action of citizens, which, in the aggregate, constitutes political and other social institutions" (Jensen, 1998, 16). Our study also considers news (and news media) as a source of meaning, which is, however, closely tied into the symbolic life-world universe.

Based on this assumption, and given the transformation of the 'global village' to a 'network society' in recent years, the life-world universe has been 'colonized' by (news) media with the consequence that the parameters of the 'construction of meaning' (or the en-coding and de-coding process) have changed. As Bommers and Wright remark: "Memory has a texture which is both social and historic: it exists in the world rather than in people's heads, finding its basis in conversation, cultural forms, personal relations, the structure and appearance of places and, most fundamentally ... in relation to ideologies which work to establish a consensus view of both the past and the form of personal experience which are significant and memorable" (Anderson, 2001:21).

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Research Papers

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¹ The research method was a combined approach of content analysis and qualitative household interviews. In each of the seven countries involved, 10-15 households were included.