English For International Conferences
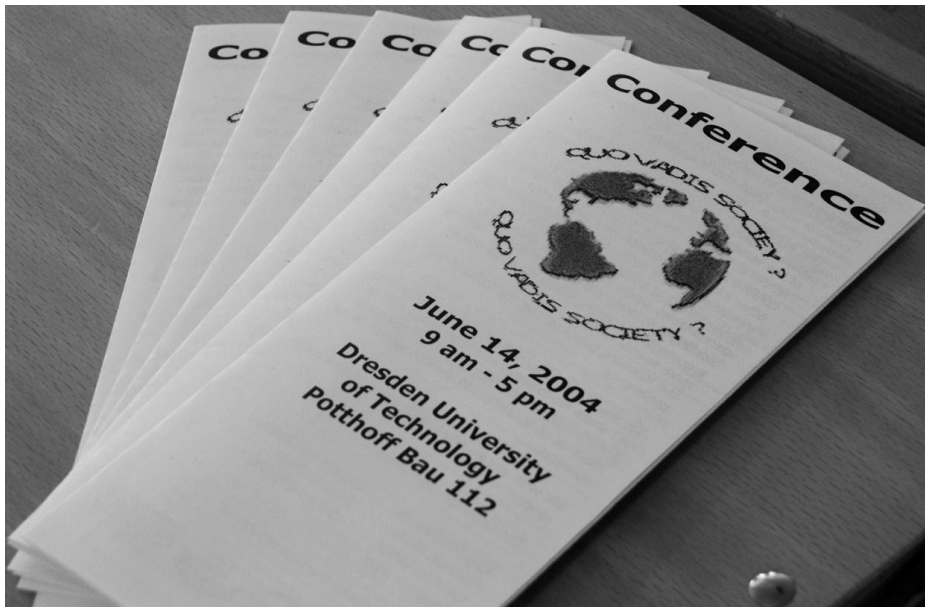
Quo Vadis, Society?

Proceedings of the English Conference EIC2004
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PREFACE

On June 14th, Dresden, a city of science and technology, of fine arts and baroque architecture and gateway between Western and Eastern Europe hosted students and faculty as Professor Thürmer's *English for International Concerences* seminar (EIC) delivered speeches important for everyone of us conscious of our profound international ties in the world today. Professor Thürmer, from the Department of German Studies, the Centre of Applied Linguistics at Dresden University of Technology, has designed EIC based on a constructivist perspective, one of whose beliefs include students' learning not in classrooms but in real world contexts, contexts rich in information and simulating situations which professionals graduating from TU Dresden would encounter. Among the seminar's presenters were representatives from several countries.

Since its foundation in 1828, Dresden University of Technology (DUT) has undergone tremendous transformations from being an engineering school to being a technology school of higher education and, finally, to being a full university as it is now. The possibility of the togetherness and cooperation of students both from the technical fields of science and the humanities within the framework of a multidisciplinary conference should be seen as an outstanding advantage of the wide spectre of courses offered at DUT. Some diciplines represented among our presenters included linguistics, teacher training, law, communications theory, English, American, French and Slavonic studies to information systems technology.

Quo vadis, society? created a platform to discuss serious issues for a working society. We dealt with problems such as the general decay of social values, general corruption, cultural diversity, and similar subjects. The topics of our conference were split into four sections.

- Intercultural Competence and Communication

- Social and Moral Values

- Media and Education in a Global World

- Political and Economic Aspects of Globalization

The keynote address, delivered by Prof. Charles Harker, made all participants conscious of their international ties and multiple perspectives. Speakers who were authors contributing papers published here, and conference participants, highlighted many challenging struggles facing today's society.

We hope you find that the following conference proceedings cater to your needs.

Quo Vadis, Society? Conference Report

The 3rd annual international conference of the seminar "*English for International Conferences*" took place at Dresden University of Technology on June 14th. Having decided upon the heading "QUO VADIS, SOCIETY", students discussed current issues of modern society.

Professor Charles Harker, from the faculty of architecture at Kent State University, opened the conference with his view on the relation of mankind and architecture. Having researched into the impact of the shape of objects on psychological aspects, he has created buildings by using nature as the basis of construction.

Participants of the seminar presented on the following topics: "Intercultural Competence and Communication", "Social and Moral Values", "Education", "The Role of Media" and "Political and Economic Aspects of Globalization".

Subsequently, discussions were held regarding social, political, and economic developments of our society. As a result, this conference stimulated the audience's critical perception and consideration of changes within our civilization.

With the kind support of "Gesellschaft von Freunden und Förderern der TUD e.V." and various others sponsors, a successful conference was realized and hopefully will be in following semesters.

Students during Discussion

How to create an international conference?

The 3rd annual international conference took place at Dresden University of Technology on June 14th. Under the heading "QUO VADIS, SOCIETY" the event was prepared and carried out within the seminar "*English for International Conferences*" by students from various fields of study. Students learned how to organize and how to hold a successful conference. This included presenting scientific outcomes, writing pre-conference abstracts and conference papers.

Prof. Charles Harker, from Kent State University, opened the conference with an impressive presentation on aspects of modern architecture and its relations to society and human beings. You would be as much amazed as the audience by his ideas of creating buildings which reflect forms that occur in nature.

Within the main topics "Intercultural Competence and Communication", "Social and Moral Values", "Education", "The Role of Media" and "Political and Economic Aspects of Globalization" our participants recited interesting presentations.

Furthermore, we discussed specific aspects regarding social, political, and economic developments of our society. This inspired the audience to consider critically its changes.

With the kind support of "Gesellschaft von Freunden und Förderern der TUD e.V." and various others sponsors, a successful conference could be realized. Hopefully, this will be continued in following semesters.

Keynote Speaker: Prof. Charles Harker

Acknowledgments to Our Keynote Speaker

During our conference, Quo Vadis, society? we had the privilege of listening to Charles Harker, Professor of Architecture at Kent State University, Ohio as he gave the keynote address. Those who miss his article here should not be disappointed, since he continues to participate in our university's academic community and can therefore be found among us. We include these acknowledgments as a poor, but sincere, replacement.

Professor Charles Harker is in many way an interesting personality. As an architect, he has designed several artistic buildings which have set precedents for those who follow his work. As a professor, he has been teaching architecture to students at several universities worldwide. Some, indeed, would call him a 'citizen of the world' because of his knowledge of multiple cultural perspectives: he is American-born, based at Kent State University, but he travels long distances between continents for professional reasons. He is Co-Director of the Florence Program, started by the School of Architecture and Environmental Design of Kent State. The program includes travels to Florence, Italy. With such intercultural expertise and academic insight into his profession, Professor Harker provided us the gift of an illuminating tone which permeated the remainder of our conference program. The topics of his speech included three international architectural projects which were designed to express sociocultural concerns of the world. Furthermore, he shared his experience in teaching students of architecture from Turkey, Italy and Germany.

Not only do we appreciate his agreeing to talk to us but also his contributing during our plenary discussions, all of which added a great deal of intercultural perspective both to the morning and afternoon part of our conference. Something else is worth adding: he had not planned to stay with us during the afternoon but, in the end, he chose to do so because of his sincere interest in interacting on an intellectual level with young minds. In one of his last contributions, he encouraged us to live as Europeans and continue the integration process toward a unified Europe.

His guest semester at the School of Architecture of our university is about to conclude. Nevertheless, he found the time to be at our conference and to contribute to it in a memorable way. We express our sincere thanks for his participation and his words in the name of the English for International Conferences seminar.

Contents

Intercultural Competence and Communication   1

Berit Grobba
Department of Linguistics, Literature and Cultural Studies
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Christin Scholz
Department of Linguistics, Literature and Cultural Studies
Dresden University of Technology

Social and Moral Values   8

Ute Pfeiffer
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Intercultural Competence

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Abstract

As a result of globalization, different cultures will move closer and economically relations will increase. The consequence will be more dialogs, meetings and negotiations with people from other countries and cultures. For avoiding misunderstandings and for successful communication and appropriate behaviour we need intercultural competence. It helps to perceive and understand other rules of communication, other values and behavioural patterns. The article will answer the following questions: What is intercultural competence? Why is it so important? How to learn it?

1 Introduction

The worldwide interrelationships of economy and industry, globalization tendencies as well as the European market mean that employees and citizens will be increasingly interacting and exchanging ideas and knowledge all over the globe. These developments lead to intercultural encounters which have to be managed and designed in work and learning, as well as in private life situations. For dealing with possible difficulties, uncertainties, prejudices and misunderstandings arising in such intercultural encounters, people need intercultural competence.But, how to get intercultural competence? In my last chapter i will present an idealised learning process.

2 What Is Intercultural Competence?

Although the term is in increasing use today, there is by no means agreement about what it is. People use this term with various meanings; while others prefer still other terms, such as global competence, international competence, multicultural competence, and so forth. A simple definition of intercultural competence might be: Intercultural competence is the result of intercultural learning and means the abilities to perform effectively and appropriately with members of another language-culture background on their terms.

Intercultural competence is a complex phenomenon with multiple components. These components are knowledge, attitudes, skills and awareness. The knowledge component consists of how much we know about the culture of the person with whom one is interacting. This includes some comprehension of the other's dominant cultural values and beliefs. The fundamental components of intercultural competence are the attitudes. Intercultural attitudes are curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and

belief about one's own. This means willingness to relativism one's own values, beliefs and behaviours, not to assume that they are the only possible and naturally correct ones, and to be able to see how they might look from the perspective of an outsider who has a different set of values, beliefs and behaviours. Therefore varieties of characteristics or traits are needed: like flexibility, openness, interest, empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, and suspending judgment, among others. Thirdly the skills component, consisting of comparison, of interpreting and relating, are crucial. This component means the ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own. Therefore skills of discovery and interaction are needed. That means the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills. Finally, it's important to realise, that one's own beliefs, values and behaviours are deeply embedded and can create reaction and rejection. Because of this unavoidable response, we need to become aware of our own values and how these influence our views of other people's values. Consequently, we need a critical awareness, an ability to evaluate on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries. Ultimately, proficiency in a second language is an important ability to communicate in a second or foreign language and very important for developing intercultural competence.

2.1   Why Is Intercultural Competence So Important?

The topic of intercultural competence became more and more important during the past years: globalization and worldwide contacts between companies, organizations and individuals need the ability to communicate in a successful way. Therefore intercultural competence is needed as the basic ability for any interaction. It is not only necessary to have social skills, but also to improve the sensitivity and understanding for other values, views, ways of living and thinking, as well as being self-conscious in transferring one's own values and views in a clear, but appropriate way. Consequently, intercultural competence helps to understand others. Additionally cultures can be different not only between continents or nations, but also within the same company or even family. Every human being has its own history, its own life and therefore also its own culture or rather cultural affiliation (geographical, ethnical, moral, ethical, religious, political, historical). Moreover culturally based differences in behaviour and understanding happen in the same country, even within the same organization, and obviously, in a particularly dramatic increase, in foreign countries. The complex situation of the global and increasingly saturated markets requires a clear distinction from competitors. At this juncture the correctly adapted balance about knowledge, sensitivity and self-consciousness decides between success and failure. Being able to convince and to build a mutually successful cooperation with different partners in different cultures is essential to confirm the uniqueness of an organization as well as a personality in global competitive surroundings. Not only knowledge about techniques and rules are needed, as misunderstandings and misinterpretations happen easily and correcting measures are hardly possible. Uniqueness of a company or organization is based on the personality of its representatives, managers and co-workers who are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses as well as their knowledge and experience about cultural differences. Conclusively intercultural competence is a key-qualification for the job as well as the everyday life.

3 How to Learn Intercultural Competence?

Intercultural competence can be exist already at a young age, or be developed and improved thanks to willpower and competence. Individuals, who are interested in solving the problems of misunderstandings arising in such intercultural encounters, and want to be understood by their counterparts, attend seminars, trainings or workshops, which include the educational objective intercultural competence.

Following, an idealised learning process will be presented. At first we should develop a general awareness of the complexity and misunderstandings of and within intercultural encounters. This leads to some kind of reflection and self-reflection. We recognise that there are alternative ways to handle a phenomenon and the personal alternative is just one possibility out of several others. At the same time we could check and compare our existing practice. Secondly we should recognise the influence of culture on "daily" behaviour and reactions. Therefore we have to develop situational adequate instruments for mindfully observation, mindfully listening, techniques to recognise for example the verbal and non-verbal cues in the interactions. On the basis of this information we are able to work out the identity needs and attitudes of other individuals and our own needs and attitudes in more detail. Thirdly we should experience positive and negative emotions within intercultural encounters. Consequently learning to develop strategies for avoiding or reducing misunderstandings is significant. The phase of experimenting with communication skills for achieving adequate and effective interaction behaviour is also necessary. Besides learning to experience negotiation processes and creating new expansive solutions could be an aim of such a learning process. Lust but not least it's essential to develop fun and interest in interacting with people from other cultures.

4 Conclusion

To sum it up it can be said that intercultural competence will gain in importance. Basic needs are sensitivity and self-consciousness: the understanding of other behaviours and ways of thinking as well as the ability to express one's own point of view in a transparent way with the aim to be understood and respected by staying flexible, being clear and transparent. Intercultural competence is one step to a successfully European market and a successfully world under the sign of globalization.

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Intercultural Competence as Key Qualification

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Abstract

In my article I want to show how important intercultural competence has become in our globalized world. Even though English has become the language on which important communication processes are based, knowing English as a foreign language does not automatically imply the knowledge on how to deal with Native English speakers. People nowadays need to improve their sensibility for foreign cultures, rituals and proceedings as well, in order to assure communication without major conflicts and misunderstandings.

1 Introduction

The rapid growth of intercultural contacts brings along an increasing number of problems when dealing with people from different cultural backgrounds. By providing several examples of German-American ("mis")communication, I want to illustrate the importance of intercultural competence and knowledge beyond grammar structures and vocabulary.

2 Communication Across Cultures

An interlinked world economy, global, telecommunication, increased travel, and the worldwide movement of workers "have brought people into contact like no time in world history"[1]. Since national boundaries are blurred because of the technological revolution, "the probability of encountering people from other cultures in our daily interactions is greater than ever before"[2]. But as we all know, different cultures have different systems of meaning, which confused people from different cultures and makes it difficult, if not impossible, for them to understand each other. Those cultural differences occur because cultures developed with different geographies, climates, economies, religions, histories, and lastly different value and belief systems. "Between any two cultures, thousands of potential differences exist, each fraught with opportunity for misunderstanding and confusion."[3] Previous research has largely concentrated on difficulties of verbal and nonverbal communication across cultures. Lim (2002) examined Bernstein's (1971) elaborated and restricted codes within families, showed attitudes towards rhetoric and speech in Eastern and Western cultures; explained high- and low-context communication in different countries, as well as the ambiguity and indirectness of messages. Andersen, Hecht,

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[1] Andersen, p. 89

[2] Andersen, p. 90

[3] Andersen, p. 90

Hoobler, and Smallwood (2002) demonstrated the impact of different nonverbal behavior on communication. They focused on the following "six primary dimensions of culture": immediacy (task-oriented vs. interpersonal oriented cultures); individualism and collectivism (how people live together: "alone, in families, or in tribes"); gender (masculine vs. feminine countries); power distance (distribution of "power, prestige, and wealth"); uncertainty avoidance ("value placed on risk and ambiguity")[4]; and high and low context messages (implicit vs. explicit). However, all these studies rather focus on different communicative features of the countries in the world. They illustrate in what way certain people tend to convey a particular kind of information and how their culture differs from the others. The aim of this paper is to describe real situations that can lead to difficulties and misunderstandings between a native German and a native American speaker. As I have personally gained the following cultural experiences that might not be true for all German-American relations, I want to apologize for a perhaps more generalized view on these issues than an objective one. I want to provide examples of German-American relations that focus on different rituals and routines of everyday life. Since people are usually not aware of the way they are acting because routines are so much automated that they become invisible for oneself, misunderstandings are likely to occur and might not be recognized as those immediately. Questions like: "Why did he/she just say/do that?" or "Did I say/do something wrong?" can appear then, when there is a problem resulting from the lack of knowledge on the other person's routines or behaviors. The consequences usually are that cultural misunderstandings are not made subject for discussion, but that speakers interpret the other person's behavior according to their own culture, which mostly results in misjudgment and misinterpretation of the other person. Whereas deficits in grammar structures and vocabulary can always be excused, lack of intercultural competence is likely to be interpreted by the other person as a bad attitude or inadequate personal behavior. Having personally experienced these problems, I want to focus on the following "German–American situations": a) Greetings b) The German Handshake c) Saying Goodbye

2.1   Greetings

The first and probably most important phrase when talking to an English speaking person is: "How are you?" But have you ever thought about the meaning of this phrase? A German (who is not familiar with English greeting conventions) might answer this question by telling the other person about he or she is feeling, for example: "So and so." Germans tend to be rather direct and they also like to complain, which is why they take the question "How are you?" literally. But as you know, the right answer to this question would have been: "Fine! How are you?" In this case, precise information on your feelings is not expected, nor do native English speakers expect the other person to believe that they are literally "fine". This short phrase simply has the function of establishing and affirming a relationship that exists between two or more people. This kind of politeness also assures a certain amount of distance, since you are not obliged to give detailed information on how you are feeling. For German speakers this phrase can imply difficulties because they are, first of all, not used to "lie" about the way they are feeling (since they take the question literally and might want to tell the other person that they are sick or extremely busy) and they may reject hearing the same answer (which, for them, "is not true anyways") over and over again. If we look at it the other way around, English speakers are not familiar with the "German way of complaining" either. Germans tend to mention the negative things about their lives first, in order to receive attention or pity from their partner. It also mediates trust between two people, since they want to show their

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[4]Andersen, p. 90-100

weakness. But for native English speakers, this can become very disturbing and demotivating since they do not know how to react in most cases.

2.2   The German Handshake

Going to a minor family birthday party with my American friend, where 99% of the guests consisted of older, conservative, and traditional Germans, had made me aware of one of the most important cultural aspects of German rituals: The German handshake. Since my friend had not been familiar with all the guests (and was usually a little shy), he simply uttered a quiet but friendly "Hi" into the round when entering the room. Well, this was a fatal error as we later found out! After the party, my mother approached me to tell me how unfriendly and inappropriate it was for my friend to not shake everybody's hand. She also asked, if he did not feel comfortable there or if he did not like the family. But how was the poor guy supposed to know? Shaking 10 or more hands of people he has barely seen before in his life and whose language (Sächsisch) he could not understand? There we had my disappointed mother with her guests, my helpless friend with his English and myself in the middle to explain everything: "Shaking someone's hand means: Hi. I see you and I bear no arms and I don't have bad intentions. It is essential in order to establish and uphold a relationship to someone (just like "How are you?' "). Not shaking someone's hand can mean: "I do not like you." or "I do not want to talk to you." If you are in Germany, please shake hands!" My mother could hardly believe that people from America are not used to shaking hands in order to say "hello", which is why my friend did not consider it necessary either (she just thought he was unfriendly)!

2.3   Saying Goodbye

My last example is to picture the different ways of saying goodbye between Germans and Americans. Whenever I said goodbye to my American friend – it did not matter whether it was at the airport or at home – we would shake hands or hug and then walk into different directions. But as I liked my friend, I usually turned back around and waved at him while walking away. Well, he never did so. He simply proceeded walking without even noticing that I was stretching my arm to the limit. Then I thought to myself: "Why doesn't he do the same? Is he glad that we are finally parting? Did he forget about me that quickly? Am I not important enough?" All these questions came to my mind and I became sad because my actions simply did not receive an echo. I started to think about Americans as independent, self-conscious individuals whose ego and pride would be harmed by waving goodbye. Well, as usually, I was thinking and worrying too much. My friend later enlightened me by saying that: "In America, goodbye is goodbye. You never wave at anybody after you have said goodbye because it is simply not necessary. Nobody ever does it. Not when leaving for an hour, nor for a year."

3   Conclusion

These three examples were to show how easily one can get involved in cultural misunderstandings and misjudgments. Even though I just portrayed mini-situations, it is possible that major conflicts can arise out of these circumstances. For every person and culture has their own unique way of dealing with each other, everybody needs to gain the experience of making "cultural mistakes" like the ones I described. There will never be a rule book or recipe on how to avoid these conflicts. But the least everyone can do, is to expect misunderstandings and to be tolerant of different ways of communicating.

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Nostalgia's Role in Today's Society

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Abstract

In the good old days, people were more friendly and respectful, cities safer and cleaner, the weather was nicer, the grass greener and the music better. Truth or just the idealization of the past? In this article, it will be asked which role nostalgia plays in today's society and where we can find visible signs of its impact. Some explanations of the phenomena "nostalgia" will be presented and it will be discussed why we might talk about a "new nostalgia".

1   Introduction

Interestingly, nostalgia, often associated with some very distant black – and white past from the archives of history or said to be typical of older generations like these of our grandparents, plays a considerable role in today's society and becomes more and more widespread among younger generations. In this article, I will discuss three main points: First, to get ahead today is to go retro. Second, Nostalgia is a natural strategy for getting along with a constantly changing world. Third, the "new nostalgia" is widespread among young generations.

2   To Get Ahead Is to Go Retro

Regarding carefully the various aspects of our everyday cultural life including music, fashion, media, movie-industry etc., we will easily notice that all these fields are very much influenced by the so called retro–style. Some examples: many people listen to radio stations playing music of the 60s and 70s. On radio and television, a considerable number of advertisements for CD-collections with music of the 60s, 70s, 80s are broadcast. During the recent years, we have seen a great variety of TV–shows cherishing the memories of the past decades. Current fashion trends relive elements of the 80s. In many cities, bars and cafes are decorated in the style of the 70s. In the internet, a great deal of websites provide information and sell products of the 60s, 70s, 80s. "Everywhere you look, it seems that some era or other is being resuscitated and relived - it's the 80s now, it could be the 70s next month, and who knows, we might be looking back to the 90s before long", says Brendan O'Neil in his article *("Why nostalgia's not what it used to be")*. So, it is very understandable why O'Neil thinks that it seems the best way to get ahead today is to go retro.

However, the relaunch and revival of some fashion item, music trend, car, toy or fad from the 1950s, 60s, 70s or 80s would not exist if the retro–style was not so enormously popular among consumers. Obviously, nostalgia has become big business as people are very interested in buying or collecting these products. According to Birgit Gebhardt from the Trendbuero in

Hamburg retro-style functions as an 'emotional bus stop'. Retro–products are "time islands" making our life more understandable. The retro–trend simulates memory and hence satisfies a common yearning for the good old days by creating a counterpole to a constantly renewing.

3   Nostalgia Is A Natural Strategy of Getting Along With A Constantly Changing World

Buying retro–style products and having nostalgic feelings are evidently connected with our emotional and mental situation. But what does the word 'nostalgia' actually mean? Etymological it derives from ancient Greek and means literally homesickness. According to the explanation of the Cambridge International dictionary of English, nostalgia is a feeling of pleasure and sometimes slight sadness at the same time as you think about things that happened in the past. In his article, O'Neil gives two further definitions of nostalgia: The first one understands it as 'a severe and fatal form of melancholia' being associated with a sense of loss and confusion. Secondly, O'Neil quotes the Australian academic Tony Ryan regarding nostalgia as some kind of madness similar and related to the onset of senility. Comparing the various explanations, we see that the phenomena 'nostalgia' is judged as more or less harmful for our mental situation.

An interesting description of nostalgia, according to the article *"Nostalgia: Sehnsucht nach der guten alten Zeit"*, might be that it is a natural strategy of our psyche getting along with a constantly changing world. How is this to be understood? In our everyday life, we often feel a gap between these things we wish to achieve and those ones we have already achieved. We are facing emotional difficulties, we do not feel satisfied, secure, accepted etc. To compensate this difference and to balance our mental situation, our psyche uses three methods. First, we repress memories. Second, we gloss things over, i.e. like certain situations in the past. Third, we look back and remember the good old days. By looking back, we tend to overvalue the past and at the same time we devalue the present and the future. The past becomes a lost golden age when life was much simpler and nothing went wrong and the present becomes a cold wasteland without hope for the future.

Nevertheless, nostalgia or nostalgic feelings are quite natural and to a certain extent even a healthy strategy to balance a present emotional and mental uneasiness. By remembering positive and familiar events of our past, we gain positive energy as well as orientation to manage complicated or negative issues of our present situation.

4   "New Nostalgia" Is Widespread Among Young Generations.

Being a result of reflecting upon the past, the present and the future, the phenomena of nostalgia has always existed in the history of human beings; we know there was no past era when people did not dream about the good old days. As there is a special creative dynamic between the old and the new, to imitate or to recreate certain styles and designs of past decades or centuries or being inspired by them cannot be considered an invention of today's trend makers or designers. If we think of the art of the nineteenth century, particularly what concerns the styles of architecture and items of furniture, we will find many examples for the retro–style of these days, today usually well–known as neoclassicism, neo–baroque, neo–renaissance, neo–gothic or neo–rococo.

So, what is so interesting about the current retro–style, the retro–movement in many fields of people's life? Certainly, the most striking points are that the "new nostalgia" is most widespread

among younger generations, among people in their 20s, 30s, 40s and additionally, the time limit for getting nostalgic about bygone eras has become smaller.

Traditionally, nostalgia has been associated with older generations as they have a reason to be nostalgic knowing most of their life is behind them and they remember things being maybe 40 years ago. Hence, it differs considerable from the "new nostalgia" where people are relatively young and remember events that happened 10, 15, 20 years ago. Considering the TV–shows about the 90s, it seems quite clear that we are getting nostalgic for certain periods before long and probably we are losing a reasonable understanding of the past.

Some people say the interest in the recent decades among the younger generation is just harmless fun. People just want to cherish the memories of their childhood and teenage years. O'Neil quotes the academic Andrew Clacutt saying: "Pop Culture and the Erosion of Adulthood, young adult's obsession with their 80s childhood suggests they might feel uncertain about their own futures". According to Clacutt, the "new nostalgia" can be seen as a sign of underconfidence and of holding on to one's own childhood as a "comfort blanket" against the future.

Retro-fashion, retro-music help to support comfortable feelings because it just relaunches the positive aspects of a certain decade but does leave out the negative ones. Nevertheless, it might be allowed to ask whether the current retro-style is a design combining old with new elements, and thus creating something new or just indicates today's lack of inspiration among designers and customers. Having talked about the various "neo–styles" in the nineteenth century trying carefully to imitate the historical originals, it should be added that the German philosopher Nietzsche criticized them as a clear sign of a creative weakness in these days.

5   Conclusion

Certainly, we are living in a time with of great change. Often, the pace of change and renewal is overwhelming, we are facing many new complicated situations and we do not know how to deal with them. Coming to this point, we feel homesick for the good old days, we yearn for the positive events and situations that happened in our past because they are very familiar and comfortable for us.

But, everyone will agree that we are not the first generation having to deal with a constantly changing world. Life is dynamic and every generation is faced with new — positive or negative — situations. The reassuring thing about nostalgia and remembering the past is that we know already the outcome. The outcome of the present and the future — whether it might be positive or negative — is absolutely unknown but therefore open. Maybe we should perceive this fact not only as a risk but also as a chance.

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Crossness in Society – Reasons, Results, Changes, Positive Trends

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Abstract

The idea of this article is to consider what the causes of complaining can be, why are we still convinced of decay of social values and what we can do about it. The destructive and constructive sides of dissatisfaction will be shown.

As a counter-balance for bad mood in our society, there will be presented positive tendencies and changes that have happened in the past century, which move our world towards an ideal one.

The article will be subsumed by the question who can benefit from our bad mood and how it might be used against us.

1   Introduction

The results of latest surveys are that people are scared. It lackes on feeling of personal safety, satisfaction with work, trust to politician etc.. The mood in society is consistently falling down. And it might occur that today's world is the worst one ever existed. People have lost their trust in others, in public institutions and generally people do not believe in goodness, looking only for plots against them.

In this article I want to search for the reasons of this crossness in society, basing above all on the statistic reports showing people's concerns and declining trust in measures taken by politicians. This will be my starting point for further considerations of possible changing of this state to carry out and changes already intiated by society itself.

2   Current Situation

2.1   Reasons

As there was big progress in development of mass communication in the past century we have easy access to information from all over the world now. And this opportunity is widely used. Everyday, an average person spends 185 minutes on watching TV, 206 minutes on listening to the radio and 13 minutes on surfing in Internet[1]. As we are usually not able to prove information gotten, particularly from remote places of the world, we depend on mass media. I don't want

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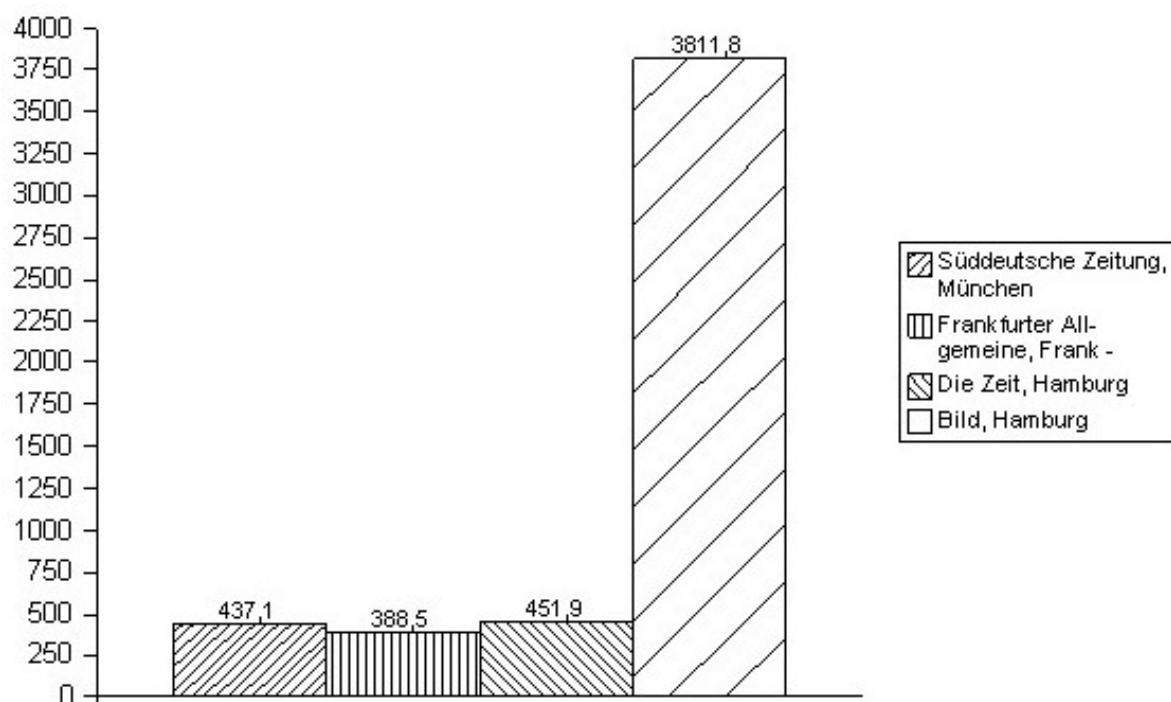[1]Source: "Studie Massenkommunikation"

Figure 1: Sold issues of German newspaper (in thousand). Striking imbalance between number of sold issues of tabloid and qualitative newspapers.[3]

to reproach press for being subjective or trying to distort the truth, as most of it is surely respectable. A bigger problem for me is an imbalance between the number of bad and good news. Every newspaper wants to be well sold and so it must fulfill the expectations of its readers. And it occurs to me that lots of people are looking forward to listening about catastrophes, murders and other crimes. They use it as a kind of confirmation of their negative image of world. It is very good presented in the number of sold issues per month of the biggest and most important german newspapers and magazines (Fig. 1).

The critique, remorselessly present in mass media, is also a part of political strategy. The parties, accusing one another of doing incompetent politic and leading the country into crisis, convey the feeling of dreadful state at present, which is actually strong exaggerated. The opposition tempts society to believe in fast improvement, which is always deceptive. It plays around with people's feelings and hopes only for its own business. And as soon as this truth is revealed, people get disappointed and feel being deceived. They eventually see that there is no chance to change their situation into positive. Let down, they get more and more disinterested in public life.

In Poland the mistrust to politicians is consistently rising. It deprives people of selfconfidence and hope. Figure 2 presents the answer of polish people to the question whether the situation in Poland are going to change into positive.

Recurring to the statement that mass media are publicizing and selling only what we want to read I would make an assumption that people (with few exceptions) are permanent complainers. They can never be happy and always find the reasons to repine. It refers also to convictions of decay of social values. It has already started with establishing religion, states and other forms of

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[3]source: IVW IV/03
[4]source: Statistic Report of Center for Researches of Public Opinion: "Mood in society in April"
[5]source: Statistic Report of Center for Researches of Public Opinion:"Expectations and Concerns"
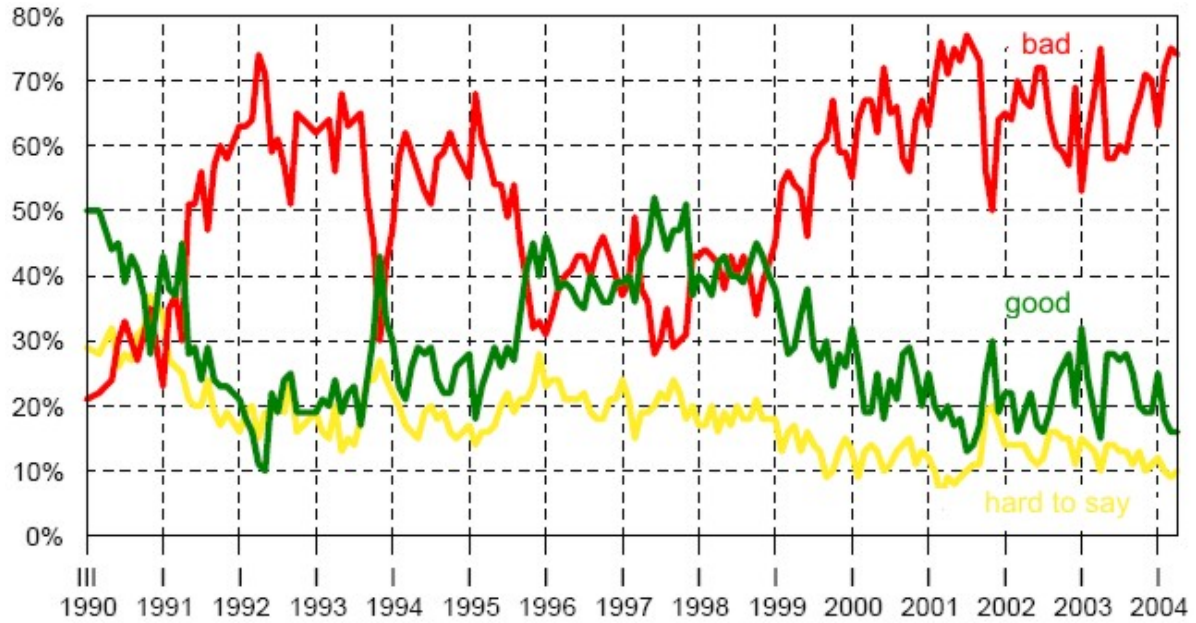
Figure 2: "In which direction goes the situation in Poland?"[4]

| age | things people are worried about | | | | | | |
| | financial situation | work | health | internal situation in country | war, terrorism | personal failures | not worried at all |
	in per cent						
18 - 24 years	25	32	21	3	1	11	12
25 - 34	30	36	27	3	2	3	11
35 - 44	34	41	28	2	1	0	9
45 - 54	37	37	29	4	1	1	6
55 - 64	37	19	33	5	3	0	14
65 and over	41	12	43	3	0	0	5

Figure 3: Concerns in Polish society[5]

collecitve thinking. Clergymen, statesmen, philosophers, they all tried to find the best solutions, the best model that would have done away with social problems. But all their drafts were merely ideal ones. Let just think about Immanuel Kant and his well-known concept of "Categorical Imperative". This model of ethics resumes entire obedience to our reason. It perscribes:

"Act so that the maxim may be capable of becoming a universal law for all rational beings."[6]

It means that we must set norms, axiomatic behaving patterns which will be true no matter of situation, leaving out our personal advantages or disadvantages. Hence, it would be thoroughly moral to hand over a member of our family to the justice if he commited a crime, even if it meant a death to him.

Of course, criticizing Kant's ethics and regarding it as stupidity would be utterly wrong. Kant as a theoretical philosopher made a great contribution to development of human thought. But trying to use theoretical philosphy as an applied one will always fail. Wantig to convert it we must simply omit some assumption, bearing in mind human nature.

Apart of it, of we consider the meaning of the word "ideal", it will be fairly obvious why all this postulates are mere mirages:

"ideal: 2. existing only in imagination or as an idea; not realistic and so not likely to be achieved [...]"[7]

From conceptual reasons we are not able to fulfill the tasks given. We can only attempt to get closer to the ideals. And this exactly makes people feel guilty. From the beginning on, they must struggle to achieve something unattainable. It confuses them and make complain. First about the authorities, than about their work and at least about noisy neighbors. Just because it is not like it should be, it is not the ideal version. But what I do not want to say is that we should give up. There is always some place for improvement. Ideals are only to give us the right direction, as they are drafted mostly for our sake. And they wanted to be achieved by people (that's why people complain, complain about this non-ideal situation). But they as a whole should not be our goal, just as a part we approach bit by bit.

2.2 Possible Changes

My proposals for changing present state go in different directions but they immediately target on the source of crossness trying to avoid it and not to fight against already existing.

The most natural and logical first step is to work with children. In a lot of countries education bases on criticizing. Focus is on the mistakes of students not on their acheivments or progress. It might awake abition and eagrness for improvment but on the other hand it does not let students be content of their own work expecting to get more. That's why teachers must appreciate not only the outcomes but also the struggles and amount of work invested by students.

I will go on to argue that your job should guarantee you dignified life especially on the material field. No matter what you are doing whether you are hairdresser, engineer or professor at university it cannot be that you have got a full-time-job and are not able to suppy your children. It is a sizable problem in East Europe where even if you made an effort and graduated from the university it would not ensure you a good (and under normal circumstances acceptable) remuneration while lots of frauds are well off.

This problem is also conected with my third idea. People must get a strong feeling that someone takes care of them. Public institutions must be there for the citizens and not the

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[6]Immanuel Kant: "Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Ethics"

[7]Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English

contrary. They must have something stable and reliable in their lifes. As well as law which should be on the side of victims not culprits, it must defence their rights. Plainness, clarity, unambiguity will induce trust in society. This applies to all parts of life.

2.3   Positive Trends in Modern Society

That complaining is not only our domain is fairly obvious. Immorality has always exsited, which is well shown for instance in "Macbeth" by William Shakespeare. But what has changed, are acts regarded as immoral. We are used to saying that the Middle Ages tended to have more severe and strict norms than today's ones. Noone would accuse a woman wearing skirts showing a little bit of naked leg of being immoral today. Surely, I find it pretty hard to value each epoch from our point of view because it inclines to be rather subjective, as we must do that according to our values. But some of them are still valid throughout all the times. As well as lots of negative ones like killing, torment etc. (of course this might have different meanings in each epoch). Our generations are considered to be more liberal. And in this freedom I see some positive tendencies for the whole society. More and more people don't want to be passive facing immorality. They are not scared to react on f.e. violence in the family, torment of war-prisoners. They are courage enough to say stop and fight against the iniquity so that any criminals cannot feel safe. Lot of people do not close their eyes any more pretending not to have seen anything in order to not being bothered. They become more and more aware of their rights and involved in social life. It should be the case above all in affluent societies. As the material needs are covered, the expectations toward humanitary are rising.

Somewhere changes will be hard to bring in. For instance in Poland where complaining is somehow inbuilt in people's mentality. Polish people often live in history and often feel deprived by it. This acrimony is deep ingrained and recures all the time in particular refering to present situation for example by making causeless demands.

Even this example shows that it is always important to take in account potential local differences. But it also does not exclude global needs on the field of eliminating human's bad mood.

3   Conclusion

People are never contented with current state. This dissatisfaction is an innate tendency to improvement and development. By complaining they express their will to progress and innovation. It must have been this tendency, which brought our culture and whole civilization at such high level. In so far, we cannot recognize complaining as a bad phenomenum.

But on the other hand, people often tend to exaggerate and subjectivize their own situation. In this meaning complaining is not constructive, as it distorts the real image of world.

Conveying people the feeling of misery often used as a mean of political and economic influence.

For it, the distinction between these both kinds of dissatisfaction is significant for understanding processes taking place in society. It should be also important for the people themselves in order to avoid being manipulated.

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Civil Courage - A Virtue to Be Learned!

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Abstract

With our society becoming increasingly multicultural, we face an ever-increasing higher conflict potential. Xenophobia often results in aggressive behaviour and violence against minorities even in public. It is our obligation to learn how to handle such conflicts with courage and to stand up and help fellow citizens in times of conflict. What civil courage means and how to deal with public conflict situations in an active way are topics to be discussed in this article.

1   Introduction

As we face our society becoming increasingly multicultural, we are also confronted with the phenomenon of xenophobia. Xenophobia is the 'strong dislike or distrust of foreigners'[1] and often results in aggressive behaviour and violence against minorities in public. As it is our obligation to handle such conflicts with courage and to help our fellow citizens, this paper aims at answering two questions: 1. What does civil courage mean? and 2. How can we deal with public conflict situations in an active way?

2   What Is Civil Courage?

Civil courage essentially describes a persons courage to speak out in the public sphere, as well as the readiness to stand up and help fellow citizens in times of need. Ones ability to judge and act upon civil courage comes when one clearly senses injustice. However, not every 'brave behaviour' can be called civil courage. One doesn't prove courage by just breaking taboos but rather by interfering in a conflict situation on the basis of a true and important aim that justifies the intervention. Therefore, civil courage should be understood as an *aimed courage*, which is a very necessary virtue in our everyday life.

3   How to Deal With Conflicts in Public?

As the familiar environment in most cities has changed rapidly in the past and will even change more in the future, we face a higher conflict potential. The new neighbours speaking a foreign language one doesn't understand, having strange traditions, wearing different clothes and the changing of the little corner shop into a kebab shop are just some of the changes influencing the familiar environment.

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[1]according to The Oxford Senior Dictionary

Figure 1: Prügelei

However, these kinds of changes frighten a lot of people and their fear can evoke conflicts very easily. For this reason we have the obligation to learn how to handle conflicts with courage.

One encounters many situations to test ones civil courage, but being courageous does also represent a certain danger. Fortunately, there do exist some helpful rules for living civil courage in our everyday life. Once the decision was made to act and not to be silent, one should take into consideration the following advices:

1. Get Prepared! In order to get prepared for a possible conflict situation in public, it is helpful to play the situation in the mind, this will help when one is confronted with a similar situation in reality.

2. Stay Calm! It is important to avoid panicking and to not move hastily, as this could provoke a reflex reaction of the opponent. In addition staying calm can also have a calming effect on others involved in the situation.

3. Get Active! Avoid a paralysis of fear! To do a small thing is better than to ignore the conflict or to think about possible heroic deeds. One should keep in mind, that every action - even if only addressing somebody - will change the situation and will prompt others to act as well.

4. Speak and Listen! It is recommendable to speak and listen to the opponent and not to threat or insult him, as this will result in even more aggression.

5. Get Help! If asking for help, it is more useful to directly address single persons instead of an anonymous crowd, as they won't feel directed at.

Obviously, the way one acts in public conflict situations depends a great deal on the personal background: for example own experiences with aggression and violence, the way the family dealt with conflicts during childhood, the own self confidence and many other factors. But with the help of the advices given earlier on, an active, non violent behaviour is learnable.

Civil courage is a topic of public concern and therefore worth being encouraged. A good example for trying to convince citizens to act upon civil courage is the campaign run by *gemeinsinn e.V.* in the year 2000. This association had posters designed by an advertising agency that remind the recipients of emergency exit signs while showing typical conflict situations in public with a white figure rushing to help.

4 Summary

Every generation has the duty to deal with conflicts and not to look away. As children are not born as racists or a right wing extremists, there are certain conditions in society that are responsible for making the child eventually become one. Since everyone belongs to the society, everyone should learn to handle the conflicts society produces. It won't be any help to relieve ones conscience by

giving the responsibility to politicians or parties. Rather should everybody ask himself for his own contribution, because the more citizens with civil courage a country has, the fewer heroes it will need.

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From Singularity to Singularity

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Abstract

Due to the widespread growth and the flexibility to adopt itself to geo-socio-cultural changes, English has become a global language. This article intends to show the transgression of English from being the language of cultural hegemony (singularity) to becoming the language of multicultural identification in the light of the world Englishes (plurality). However, my main focus is to show how New Englishes can encourage as well as threaten the chances of English to become the Global Common Language (singularity)

1   Introduction

Globalisation is probably the most significant socio-economic process affecting the world in the 21st Century. One of the significant issues connected to this process is a language which can function as a means of global communication. Among many options English has been considered the one that claims the status of a Global Language (See Crystal, 1997 [4]). However, this article does not attempt to argue the case of English as the only global language: the only endeavour, here, is to see the synchronic and diachronic growth of English from English-English to World Englishes and to ponder whether it can become Global English with one world standard.

2   Spread of English

English was initially known as the language spoken in England. This, in my view, is the singularity of English. Bauer(2002) observes that at the time of Elizabeth I (1553-1603) there were at most 7 million native speakers of English and few non-native speakers[2]. Later on, English spread all over the world including the American, African, Australian and Asian continents. Now, there are 104 countries (McArthur 1998) where English is used[10]. It has more than a billion speakers worldwide. English claims 377 million native speakers (Crystal 1997), many more speak it as a second language but most speak it as a foreign language[4]. This shows that, demographically, English has more users than any other language and it is the most widespread language in the world.

3   From Cultural Hegemony to Multicultural Identification

English, no doubt, spread as a result of exploitation and colonization. For a long time, the spread of English amounted to cultural hegemony. In many ex-colonies of Britain, English is still considered

as the language of an exclusive social elite. English has been constantly transgressing itself from the language of cultural dominance to a language that people learn to express their thoughts. According to Kachru (1985:222) its (English's) propensity for acquiring new identities, its power of assimilation, its adaptability to 'decolonisation' as a language, its provision of a flexible medium for literacy, and other types of creativity across languages and cultures have contributed to its continuous spread[8]. It provided the most scientific, technological and cross-cultural domains of knowledge. "Many successful African and Indian writers, whose works blend the elements from centre and periphery cultures and languages, aim to decolonise literature." (Chinweizu quoted in Phillipson 1992)[3].

4   Kachru's Concentric Circles

Kachru(1985) has visualised the spread of English around the world as three concentric circles-representing different ways in which the language has been acquired and is currently used.

The Inner Circle refers to the traditional historical and sociolinguistic bases of English in the areas where it's the primary language (native or 1st language). It includes England, Ireland, Scotland, United States, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. Even Ireland and Scotland can be included in this circle.

The Outer Circle comprises regions colonized by Britain; the spread of English in the non-native settings where the language has become part of the country's chief institutions and plays an important role as a 'Second Language' in a multilingual setting. This includes India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nigeria, Zambia, Ghana etc. The number of people who speak English as the 2nd language will exceed the number of native speakers, which may result in shifting the centre regarding language from the native speakers to the non-native speakers.
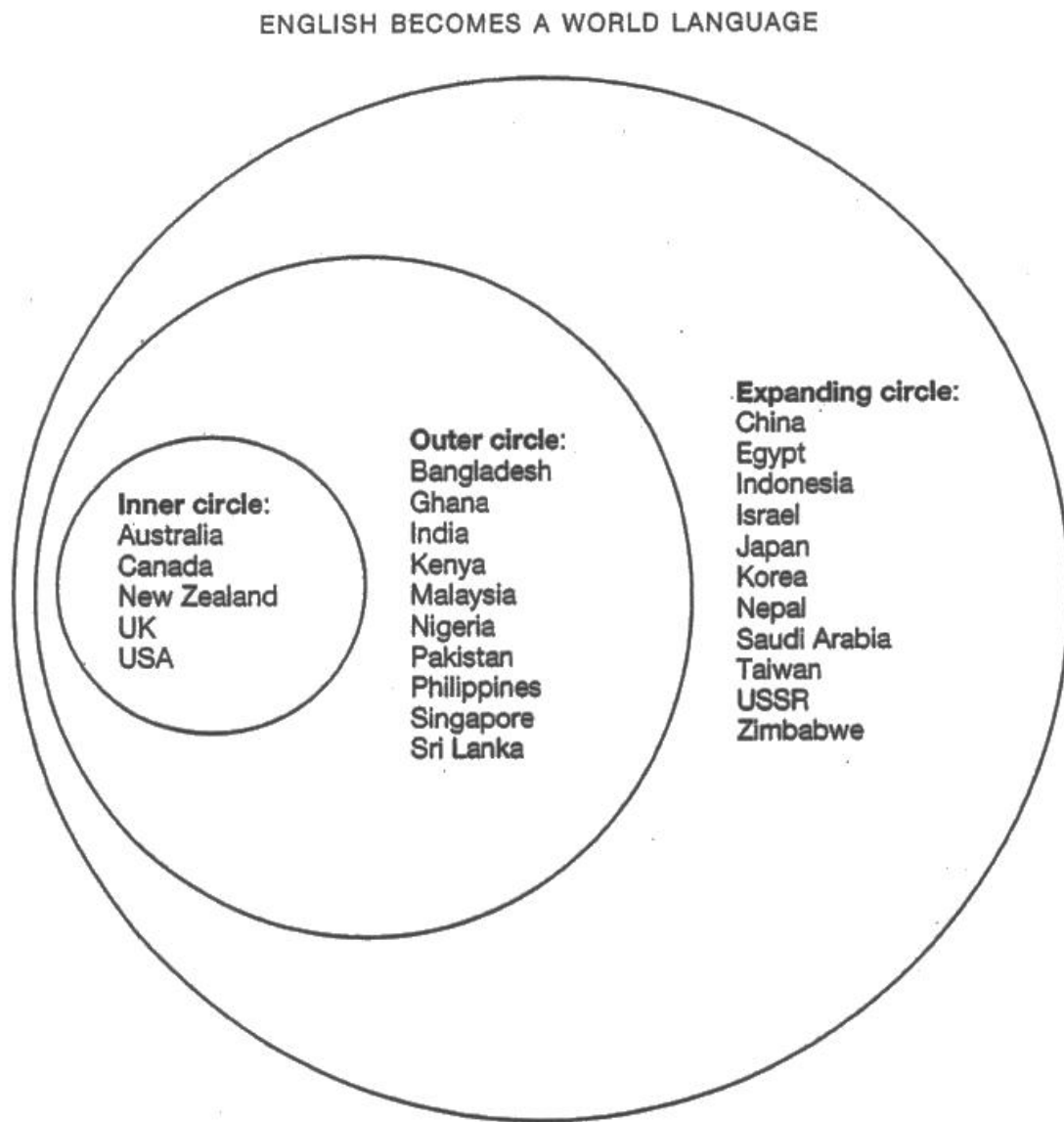
The Expanding Circle involves nations which recognize the importance of English as an international language, but they do not have the history of colonization; nor does English have any special status in their language policy. In these areas English is primarily a foreign language.

4.1   Plurality of English

The spread of English in all these circles has led itself to the plurality. English is not one uniform language spoken all over the world any more. The native varieties — with approximately 377 million speakers (Inner Circle) — split into British English, American English, Australian English, South African English, Hiberno English, New Zealand English, whereas the outer circle (approximately 375 million L2 speakers) has non-native varieties such as Indian English, Nigerian English, Ghanaian English. It is the Outer Circle which is open to the expansion as the countries in the Expanding Circle (approximately 750 million FL speakers) might shift towards the Outer Circle (see David Graddol, 2002:10)[7]

4.2   The New Englishes

The term 'New Englishes' is used for the varieties which have developed in the Outer Circle, have been transplanted and, therefore, can be called 'Diaspora Varieties'. In a linguistic and historical sense, these varieties are not new. They are called so because it is only recently that they have been linguistically and literature-wise recognized and institutionalised, although they have a long history of acculturation in geographical, cultural and linguistic contexts different from the English of the Inner Circle.[16]

ENGLISH BECOMES A WORLD LANGUAGE

Expanding circle:
China
Egypt
Indonesia
Israel
Japan
Korea
Nepal
Saudi Arabia
Taiwan
USSR
Zimbabwe

Outer circle:
Bangladesh
Ghana
India
Kenya
Malaysia
Nigeria
Pakistan
Philippines
Singapore
Sri Lanka

Inner circle:
Australia
Canada
New Zealand
UK
USA

Kachru's concentric circles of English

5   The Question of Standard

This scenario seems quite promising for English to stand the chance of becoming a global language but, at the same time, it questions the uniformity of standard which a common global language requires.

The above model of Englishes by McArthur (1998) [10] represents the standard native and non-native Englishes as well as the standardizing non-native Englishes.

Even if Standard British English or Standard American (U.S.) English have been used as the model varieties in the curriculum of English as a Second or Foreign Language, a change is taking place due to the influence of Standard non-native varieties of English. Standards in the other native and non-native Englishes are moving away from Standard British English in terms of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Nigeria makes a good illustration of a nation with its own English, giving rise to Standard Nigerian English. They don't ask other English speaking nations any more what Standard English is (See Gilsford, J. 2002)[5].

Indian English is another example of a variety in the process of standardization. There exists a Standard (General) Indian English Pronunciation System (Bansal/Harrison 1991)[1] which has a few distinct consonants, vowels and vowel glides which are different from Standard British or American English. Shaw Philip et al. (2003)[12] found the verb complemetation pattern in Indian Standard English to be distinct form that of Standard British English.

Gilsford (2002) points out that it is not only the linguistic aspects which distinguish these varieties, but also the pragmatic or the cultural aspects. He mentions that "different Englishes may not have American Conversation Conventions. The topics and styles for small talks in the U.S. might give offence in France or Japan. To Arabs, U.S. Conversation can seem brusquely and unenthusiastic. To Americans, German and Swiss people sometimes seem brusquely inconsiderate of 'Face' "[5].

This leads us to think whether or not English will reach the singularity in the form of a Global English with uniformity and common standard from this complex plurality. According to Strevens (Kachru 1992)[14] the ELT industry may play an important role in maintaining an international standard. But one can not ignore that the 2nd langugage countries are likely to develop their own curricula material and teaching resources which they seek to export to neighbouring countries. For instance, the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad, India is working towards the same direction.

Crystal (1997) provides a sketch of World Standard Spoken English (WSSE) model in a couple of pages[4] and Quirk (1985) gives a model of Nuclear English, 'identifying and exploiting redundancy within the code of Standard English'[11]. Crystal also predicts that American English will be the greatest influence on the development of Global English. Making such predictions and models, however, is too early an attempt. Moreover, ignoring the growing influence of other Englishes, by no means, will be helpful for the expected singularity of English as a global language. Kachru (1985), on the contrary, suggests that the international English as a Global Language community should no longer be regarded as ? 'norm-dependent' but 'norm-developing' and ultimately the 'norm-providing.'[8]

Approximately 80% of the interactions in which English is used as a foreign language or 2nd language take place without the presence of a native speaker. Moreover, 'native speakers as much as non-native speakers need help when using English to interact internationally. There is no room for Chauvinism.' (Smith, 1983)[13] In such case, accepting or proposing Standard British or American English may be seen as a way of imposing imperial hegemony on the new Englishes which may be termed as 'colonisation of new Englishes'.

INTERNATIONAL VARIETIES OF ENGLISH
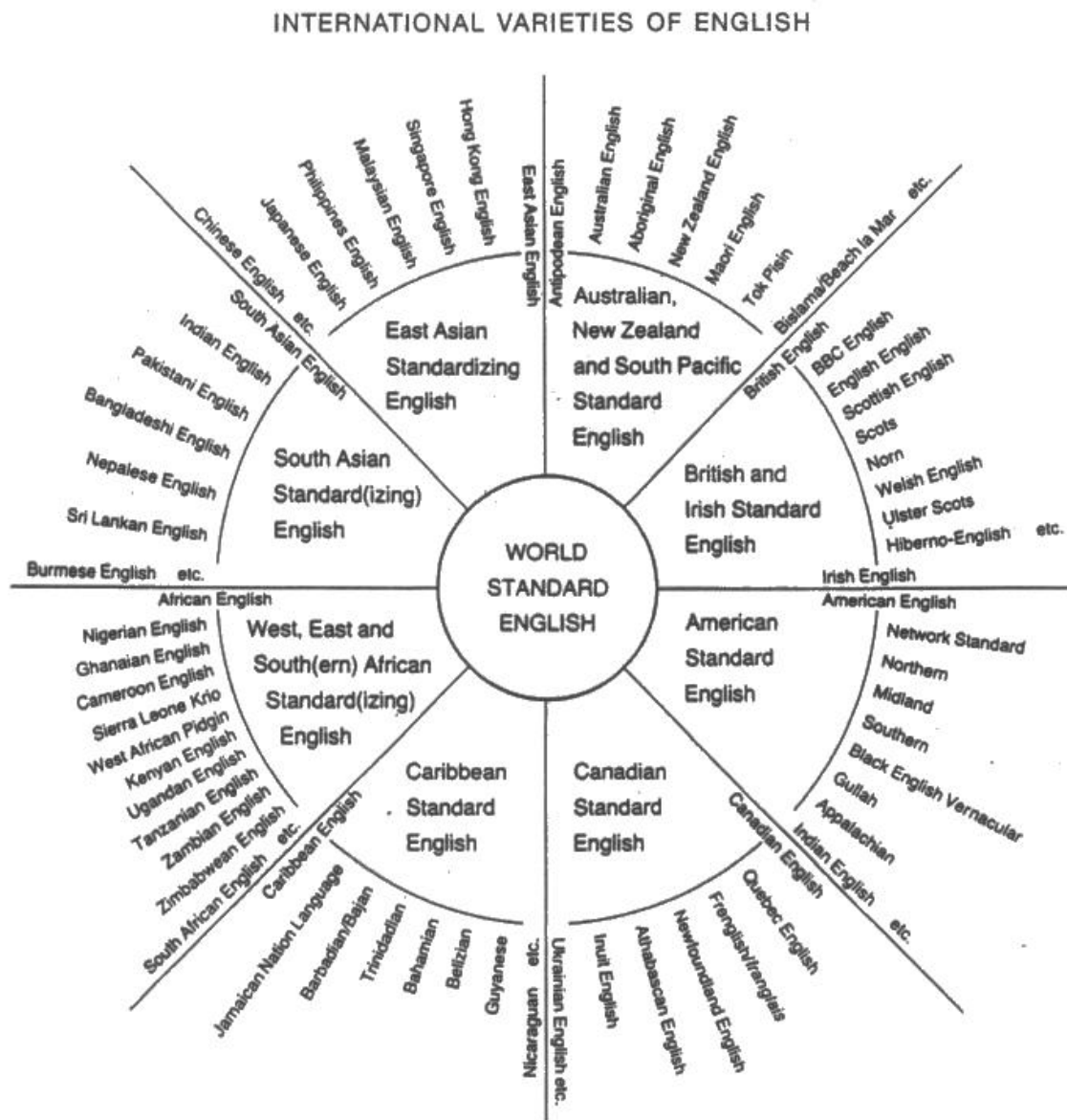
McArthur's model of Englishes

6 Conclusion

If English has to be considered as the global language with a single standard in the light of the growth of various standard varieties of world Englishes and their relative significance in the process of globalisation, then the approaches by Quirk and Crystal, which view Standard Global English without any consideration of world Englishes, need to be avoided. Instead, the amalgamation of world Englishes, taking the international intelligibility and communicative purposes into consideration, may bring the desired/expected singularity in the standard of English as a global language. This, no dout, will remain a utopian idea until such an amalgamation is reached.

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Linguistic Suppression: The Influence of Anglicisms on German Language

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Abstract

Words like "manager" or "email", are used in German on a daily basis. Appearing on the service sector, the health sector and in the media they have changed today's use of German language dramatically, especially the youth within which is the society of tomorrow. The replacement of German terminology has been a historical development. Anglicisms have positive and negative effects. Still, one has to differenciate bewteen different age groups of people which understand and use English terms to variing extends.

1 Changing Societies

Living in the 21th century demands of people to keep up with constant changes in lifestyle. One is asked to think, work and live faster than ever. Thus there is hardly any time for asking questions concerning the how and the why we live the way we are living. Fashion, Media, Sports and Hightech are parts of our lives and we are either adjusting to or rejecting certain trends. Functioning as major roles in human communication, they all have in common that they implicitly express people's lifes. A lot more important and by most of the society taken for granted is the explicit expression of oneself through language - a set of symbols helping each individual culture to achieve a better understanding. Language has also always been subject to linguistic transition due to historical events and cultural influences. The German language has let other dominant languages influence itself for centuries.

1.1 Historical Reasons

Before the 19th century, France was the cultural capitol of the world and therefore many words in the German language derive from French. With the industrial revoultion starting in Great Britain in the 19th century and England becoming the greatest colonial power in the world, British English became more and more influencial to other languages. So called Anglicisms, which are English words or phrases that are in common use in other languages than English, started to replace or work as an addition to German terminology. American English came into account with the U.S. starting to dominate the global economy, science and technology.

2   Perceiving The Effect of Anglicisms

Nowadays we live with a flodd of Anglicisms all around us. Sometimes we are not even aware of using them anymore. Words like "marketing", "training", "corporate identity" are used on a daily basis. But why do we not translate these words or do we not have German terms for them? Most of the times, Anglicisms come with British or American inventions that are introduced to the global market without renaming the products. We also use Anglicisms because they are specific, exact, short, modern and difficult to translate into one German word. English words mainly appear through advertising, the economy, fashion, information technology and the sports and health industries. They are taught in schools but more often learnt throughout the media. That is were the disadvantages of Anglicisms come in. Because the majority of those Germans who are older than 29 years has little or no knowledge of English language. Only young people in the age of 15 to 20 years count more people with a good amount of English language competence than young people with little knowledge. The datas which are based on a survey that was done with 194 Germans, show that no participant older than 29 had a good amount of English language competence. An historical event that definetely supported this development was the unification of Germany that marked the beginning of English being the first foreign language learnt in schools. Thus we have to distinguish between different age groups which accept, understand and use Anglicisms to different extends. It is a lot more difficult for older people to read today's newspapers and magazines which are the meltingpots for English words and German language. Watching the news or simply going shopping may cause language problems and inhibit people from feeling home in their own country. But is not the variety of different countries and cultures what makes Europe so charming? Or will we all one day be a global village with one language. The development of a language for everyone, the so called Esperanto, was not very successful and Esperanto is not spoken at all. That shows that people want to keep their cultural identity and are very precautious of other languages influencing their own language. The effect of Anglicisms is perceived very differently depending on what part of life is actually influenced. In a study, done with around 200 Germans, the question was asked whether these people feel postive or negative about the English influence on certain fields of life such as politics, economics, leisure and German language. Participants were strongly against the use of English terms that occurred through politics. Which is regarding to the current political situation in the Middle East and the involment of the U.S. in Iraq, no surprise. People subconsciously express their antipathy towards any military operation by neglecting English terminolgy. The survey also brought up the fact that eventhough we highly appriciate economical inventions and investments coming from the U.S. or other English speaking countries, Germans feel quiete negative about the lack of translation. Understandable, especially if one keeps in mind that Germany itself was once a leading economical power. But in the long term it is definetely more effective to have one language to communicate with on the global market. A problem that we have today and will have in the future remains. It is not enough to know a language - the key to other countries is cultural competence and awareness. Leisure activities are part of cultural identity and momentarely flodded by new inventions that improve people's private lifes. Therefore the use of Anglicisms is judged very positively on this sector. Germans glady try out new free time activities, e.g. kite–surfing or snowboarding, for which no one hesitates to use the proper English term instead of trying to translate these words. The survey also elaborated the general feeling people have about German language. Again, the majority of surveyed people felt negative about the influence of Anglicisms. Due to missing English competence people are shy to use English terms. People stated they sometimes feel uncertain of the correct use of an English word at the right time. Of course if you look at the word "snowboard", it is fairly easy for people with almost no English to find out when to use it. But a phrase like "corporate identity" means a lot more and contains several single items which have to be known for correct usage. Younger people show a lot less problems with communicating in other languages or using terms from other languages in

German. They are less scared and open–minded towards English influence. Young people even force the replacement of what to them seems like old fashioned German by "cool" sounding English terms. Wanted or unwanted, already young children do get in touch with English labels on clothing or toys carrying English names. Children of today, grow up with the so called americanization process that effects not just Germany. The americanization process does not just mean a transition in language but also in certain habits, clothing, food, music etc. . But the transition of language is slower and happens over a longer period of time. The final negative effect of the loss of German terminology may not yet be foreseeable but already visable. Researching this topic leads to the conclucion that Anglicisms, their origin and their usage result out of a historical and cultural developments which Germans have always been very open for. Nowadays we do have a tremendous influence of English terms and phrases which are used by all members of society no matter at what age. Anglicisms may help the globalization process by making communication easier. Therefore they built inter– and intracultural bridges that lead to a better understanding. But for people with no command of English, Anglicisms may rather be a barrier than a bridge. Furthermore the missing competence will support the misusage of English terms and together with the loss of German terminology result in the decline of the value of German language. This makes the majority of Germans worry and evokes a negative feeling about Anglicisms. But as long as there are no restrictions concerning the amount or type of Anglicisms, we will count more and more Anglicisms that we use on a daily basis and lose more and more German words which no one seems to care enough about to protect them.

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The 21st Century: An Era of Challenges for Working Mothers

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Abstract

Today now than ever women seem able to pursue careers previously reserved for men. Some would say that currently women enjoy an Era of opportunity. However, working mothers are still confronted with a lack of childcare support and inflexible work hours, which compels many women today to re-evaluate the nature of modern prejudices against working mothers in particular. The article will analyze why women are choosing to wait to have children and how women's decisions to wait affect modern society.

1 Introduction

In the 21st century, mothers in the paid labour force should be the norm.During the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, the largest proportion of married women entering the work force were older women.In the 1960s a new pattern emerged: young married mothers of school-age children began to enter the paid labour force.By 1980, almost two thirds of women with children between 6 and 18 were employed.

2 Challenges for Working Mothers

Nowadays most women are employed to supplement the family income, to support themselves and their families, or to gain personal fulfilment.It is obvious that many families redefine their standard of living once they get accustomed to a second income, and often the mother's income is used to provide for a second car, a second home, more frequent vacations, and better education for children.The decision for a mother to be employed can be filled with uncertainty, guilt, and frustration, especially for the mother of young children who needs to find affordable child care.It is a fact, that in an era of labour where it should be normal for a woman to enter the working market, mothers are confronted with many problems.The German law states that every child should have the right to obtain a kindergarten place.Unfortunately, the law is a far cry from reality.In Germany, many kindergartens are closing down to safe money and employees. If you are a mother and have the wish to attend the labour force it is a fact that you have to wait up to a year to obtain a kindergarten place. Besides these political problems there are still social prejudices towards working mothers in our society.Mothers are still confronted with the accusation of being a "BAD MOTHER" by going to their work and deporting their children from morning until late afternoon into the kindergarten. Would it not be more useful to invest money for establishing new kindergartens instead of wasting

our taxes on ridiculous investments? Should not working mothers be accepted as equal people attending the working market instead of making them feel guilty?

Let us take a closer look at the situation of kindergarten places in Germany.According to the Federal Office of Statistics there has been a dramatical decrease of kindergartens institutions in East Germany.While in west of Germany kindergarten facilities are rising from 1.7 mio to 2.3 mio they declined in East Germany since 1990.Between 1991 and 2002 up to 9,500 institutions like kindergartens and crèches closed down.This is a loss of 500,000 places for children in the East of Germany. The elimination of kindergartens leads to the situation of saving money but it is also combined with a significant decrease in birth rate.In 1984, a total of 1.36 million children were born in the whole of Germany while the figure for 2000 was only 771.000[1]. Nowadays, women are postponing the age at which they bear their first child, allowing them to obtain more education, which increases their employment opportunities.Educational opportunities are increasing, and many women are delaying marriage and childbirth in order to pursue a career. This situation might be called a vicious circle.On the one hand women are bearing fewer and fewer children to fulfil their dream of a career and therefore the birth rate is falling and kindergartens are closing down.On the other hand women who want to have both children and a career have to wait up to a year to obtain a kindergarten place.These difficulties have been aggravated by new law which has been brought out two years ago.A woman is only allowed to get a kindergarten place if she has a full-time job.But you only get a job if you have a kindergarten place already.Combined with the problems of getting a kindergarten place, this confusing law is one of the reasons for the decrease in birth rate.The average rate of childbearing at the moment is 1.3% and if there is no improve in this situation Germany will end up with a senior citizen society.According to the Federal Ministry of Statistics, in the year 2050 the share of under 20 year olds will probably have fallen to 15% and the proportion of seniors will have risen to between 38% and 40%[2]. Apart from the political situation another important challenge for working mothers is the social attitude toward employed mothers.As women's roles have changed throughout history, so have ideas about whether mothers should be gainfully employed.When women had to work in the fields, there was not much worry about whether their children needed them at home.At the time of the Industrial Revolution, when men were employed away from home, a women's place was viewed to be in the home with the children.Mothers were viewed as having primary responsibility for the home and the children, and the idea that mothers love was the best for the children's development in society's view of the family.At the end of the 19th century, scientific studies about the developing child abounded.The early 1900s witnessed scientists as Sigmund Freud who came forth to tell mothers how to provide the optimal care for their children.The child was to be put ahead of all the mother's own personal concerns and duties.The social attitude was one of a woman's place in the home with her child.Women who had the desire to pursue a higher education or careers were social misfits, especially if they had young children.It was the idea that mothers and their infants needed immediate and sustained physical contact in order to a successful child raising. Even today, the belief that a certain degree of mother-infant separation will lead to less than optimal development is still held by some researches.The following questions are still typically asked, especially in the western Germany: What happens when very young children spend a large proportion of their time outside their own home, without their mothers? Do they experience an environment that will allow their intellectual development to proceed on a healthy track? For East Germans, these questions arise very rarely since they are used to daily care institutions but parents from the West are confronted with new styles of kindergarten facilities.Normally a kindergarten closes down at 12 o'clock in western parts and not at 4.30 o'clock as in East Germany.Some researchers have concluded that extended day-care experience beginning early in life can be regarded as a risk factor for unhealthy infant-parent attachments.Although researchers have documented that infants

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[1]Federal Ministry of Statistics
[2]Federal Ministry of Statistics

with substantial out-of-home day-care experiences sometimes behaved avoidantly and maintained greater distance from their mothers, this finding does not hold across a wide range of studies.It is necessary to mention the research given by Ross Thompson (1991) who has shown that the quality of the infant care is of vital importance to the child's development[3].We should keep in mind that there is still no evidence whether the development of a child is more successful when the mother stays at home.Of course we all know that especially for a new born baby the best conditions of development are to have a close contact with the mother.But a child at the age of two can be absolutely satisfied in a kindergarten.What are the good reasons for a child to attend a kindergarten? First of all children are helped to increase their language skills and to expand their understanding of the world.Secondly, a good centre provides appropriate and sufficient equipment and plays materials and makes them readily available.Thirdly, children learn to have a regular day, eating lunch together, having their midday sleep etc..

3   Conclusion

Therefore, it is alarming that there are still prejudices towards working mothers even today: According to all these researches, kindergartens facilities are mostly very well organized and of good quality for the development of each child.Women should not feel guilty if they have to work or guilty if they desire to work or depressed if the have to go on welfare to support their children nor upset if they can not afford high-quality childcare. Beside these social prejudices women are daily facing a lack of support.Working mothers rushing home from work, collecting their children from day care facilities still have to take care of the household responsibilities when they get home.Moreover, working mothers are still confronted with inflexible work hours.Department stores are now open until Saturday evening and the government was even intending to open them on Sundays as well.Therefore, a babysitter has to be hired if there is no grandmother or father to mind the children.All these can prove how frustrating it can be for a working mother. There is, however, still a growing trend for mothers entering or returning to the work force and in the next decades employment for mothers of young children will clearly show that it becomes the norm.Although social attitudes regarding working mothers are not as negative as they were many decades ago, attitudes have not caught up with the reality of combining work and family.Mothers still have to face negative attitudes from family members and society combined with the lack of a truly supportive set of social policies such as day-care support.Many mothers are feeling guilty, stressed, and apprehensive about their multiple roles.So, the dilemma that faces the employed mother in Germany is real and complex. First of all, society needs to give up their prejudices towards working mothers. The 21st century is an era where both men as well as women should have the right to attend the labour market.These stereotypes of employed mothers being "BAD MOTHERS" should belong to the past.There is no evidence that a woman being a housewife and a mother at the same time is of better qualities.An early entrance to kindergarten institution can be of great advantage for each child. Secondly, German politicians have to be aware of all the disadvantages of closing down kindergarten facilities.As it is written in our law every child has the right to get a kindergarten place but if we are cutting down on all possibilities it will be difficult to fulfil this principle.Moreover, infant care is both the most expensive and the least available, additional governmental attention needs to be focused on this concern.More efforts need to be directed at making infant care more affordable for lower income groups.Only a small percentage of families can afford the costs of infant care.Public policies need to step in, especially as a means of support for lower income families.As it was mentioned at the beginning of this article there is a massive waste of our taxes.According to the "Schwarzbuch der Steuernzahler" 30 mio Euro was wasted in 2003.If the money of taxpayer was not spend for needles vacations for politicians or

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[3]Lerner J., Working Women and their Families,California 1994

excessive building subsidies there would be money left to establish new kindergarten facilities.The employed-mother family is not going to disappear; it has to be recognized as a part of this culture, and dealt with in the most beneficial way for all parties concerned.Besides policies, the society's attitude has to change towards working mothers by not letting them feel in the wrong so that the birth rate would increase and Germany would not end up with a senior citizen society.

Just A Cup of Coffee? Or: Coffee's Importance in International Trade

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Abstract

When having a cup of coffee every morning, one may consider international trade a distant issue. However, coffee figures as the most important trading product right after crude oil and as a source of livelihood for millions of people in the so called "Third World". In this presentation the presenter will analyze coffee in an attempt to exemplify the importance of fair trade in modern society.

1 Introduction

In this paper the question of the importance of fair trade in modern society will be discussed. First of all there will be given an introduction in international coffee trade and the consequences for the producers (and consumers). This will lead directly to the questions: "Why fair trade?" and "How does fair trade work?", which will be answered in the second part.

2 About Coffee

Coffee is the most important trading product worldwide after crude oil[1]. Growing these crops is the source of livelihood for millions of people in the so called "Third World", where coffee is produced; however the consumption takes place predominantly here in the industrialized nations. To give an example, in Germany each person on average drinks 800 cups of coffee per year, which makes coffee the most favourite drink in this country. Consumption,however, is stagnating - where at the same time in more and more countries coffee is being produced. By now there are about 70 coffee-producing countries. This has led to a sales crisis and the decline of the international market price. This market price has been dropping since January 1999, and since the middle of 2000 the costs of production have no longer been covered. The producers try to counteract by intensifying the production of coffee to balance the slide in prices, but this only leads to lower prices (and poorer quality of coffee). This price collapse has heavy consequences for the producers, especially for the small farmers- who grow 70 % of the coffee shrubs in the world. They cannot stand the continuing loss of income financially. However, a greater number of bigger plants are concerned as well. Often

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[1]see: Misereor(Aachen) und Brot für die Welt (Stuttgart) für TransFair (Köln) - Verein zur Förderung des Fairen Handels mit der "Dritten Welt" e.V. (Hrsg.): Kaffee. Materialien für Bildungsarbeit und Aktionen, Aachen 2003.p.6
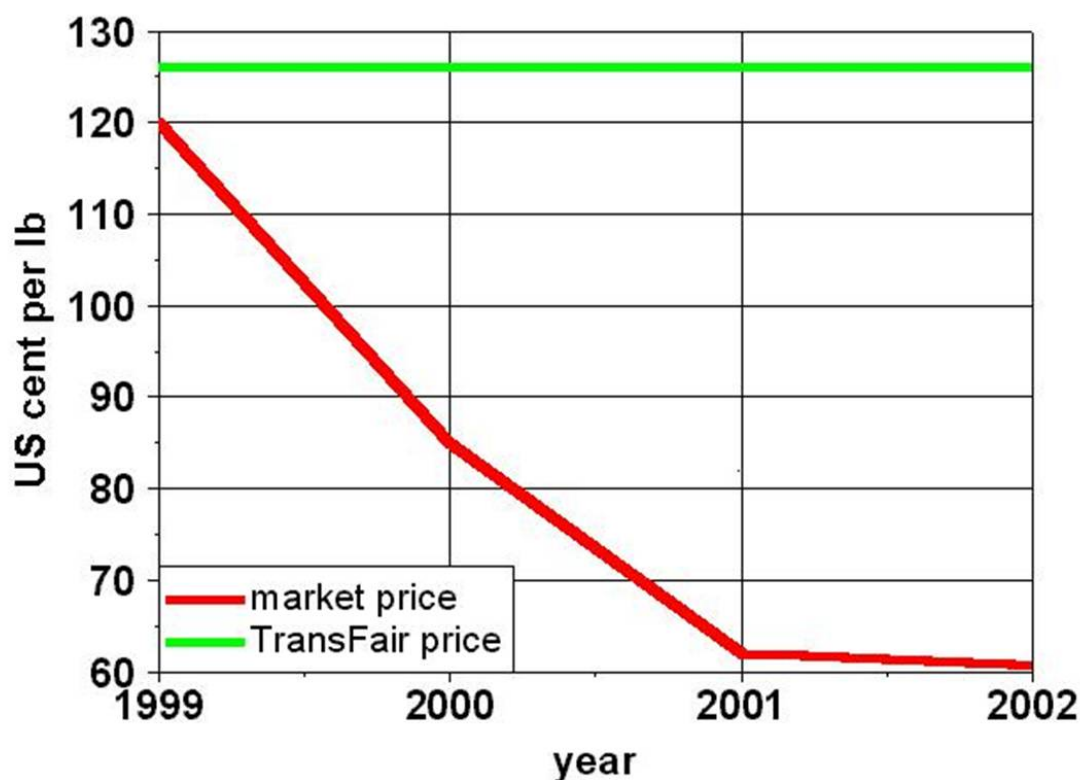
Figure 1: Development of the market price of coffee (Other Mild Arabicas) in New York

farmers lose everything they have[2]. In many coffee cultivating countries like Mexico, Columbia, Nicaragua and in the African countries people in the coffee regions are reduced to poverty. In Nicaragua, a country where the whole economy depends on coffee trade, 90% of the agricultural labourers have to be dismissed and the coffee export revenues dropped to 30% because of the decline of the coffee price[3]. Usually the migrant and plantation workers are excluded from social welfare and legally fixed working conditions. They are losing their jobs, leaving their land to move to the slums of the big cities. That means that the few social progresses made in the rural areas are in danger to break down. There is no money left for infrastructure, education, health system etc.

As it is shown in figure 1, the official market price of coffee has been reduced to the half within the last few years.

Here the fair trade organisation TransFair offers a steady price to the producers which is more than twice as much as the regular market price. But what is fair trade, how do these fair trade organisations like TransFair work?

3   About Fair Trade

Coffee is not the only product which is produced in developing countries but consumed in the industrial countries. It concerns products like tea, chocolate, cocoa, bananas etc. as well. The

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[2]see: Misereor(Aachen) und Brot für die Welt (Stuttgart) für TransFair (Köln) - Verein zur Förderung des Fairen Handels mit der "Dritten Welt" e.V. (Hrsg.): Kaffee. Materialien für Bildungsarbeit und Aktionen, Aachen 2003.p.11

[3]see: www.transfair.org

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problem is that often the working (and living) conditions are horrible. People are badly paid, they are depending on middlemen and do usually have no right to join a union, and as it is shown by the example of coffee before, the market price often drops below the costs of production but at the same time the value of machinery, fertilisers etc. increases substantially. To avoid the catastrophic consequences, fair trade organisations and initiatives have been founded. Fair trade guarantees a better deal to producers. It supports producers and their families in Africa, Asia and Latin America. To reach this, fixed prices, which are higher than the level of the international market, are paid. Direct trade, prefinancing and long-term delivery relationships are made possible. Because of this, many families are able to improve their income by their own power and there is still money left for social projects like schools, medical supply etc.

TransFair is a fine example of a fair trade organisation. It is a non-profit-making association which is supported by about 40 institutions from fields like development policy, church, women, consumer protection, education and social security as well as the European Union, the federal government, parties and many dedicated people[4]. As an independent initiative, TransFair does not trade the products itself, but it labels fair traded goods. TransFair and other fair trade organisations are working together under the umbrella organisation "Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International" (FLO), which has been founded in 1997 and unites 17 national initiatives. FLO acts as a certification body, which sets fair trade standards (for traders and producers) and controls the compliance of these criteria. Besides this, FLO is doing lobby work on an international level and secures communication between the national labelling organisations.

The fair trade standards for traders stipulate that they have to:

- pay a price to producers that covers the costs of sustainable production and living
- pay a premium that producers can invest in development
- make partial advance payments when requested by producers
- sign contracts that allow for long-term planning and sustainable production practices
- have to pay an additional premium of 15 US-cents/lb for organically certified coffee

Producing cooperatives can be certified if they fulfil the following criteria:

- they are independent and controlled democratically
- management and administration are transparent so that members are able to control finances and measures
- when seasonal workers are employed, social minimum standards (no forced labour and child labour; equal payment; no discrimination of sex, race, religion,...) have to be fulfilled
- besides this, organic minimum standards (integrated plantation; obligation for rain forest protection; gradual replacement of pesticides and mineral fertiliser by using organic products; no genetically modified material;...) have to be accepted

Since FLO is a labelling organisation, it awards a label to products which fulfil these internationally recognised standards of fair trade. The certification label functions first of all as eye catcher, which means it is supposed to attract consumers attention, and secondly as a guarantee to the consumer that fair trade standards are fulfilled. In 2003 the label has been internationally standardised and is now awarded to products which come from ca. 300 farmer's cooperatives and plantations, which includes about 800,000 farmers and workers.

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[4]see: www.transfair.org

Figure 2: left: The old TransFair label, right: the new internationally standardised label

To return to coffee and TransFair, if traders and import merchants want to mark their goods with the TransFair label, they have to pay a licence fee of 0.22 Euro per kg raw coffee to TransFair. This money is used for organising fair trade, coaching and controlling of its contracting party as well as education and public relations. Besides this a part of the licence fee goes directly towards the FLO.

4 Conclusion

To draw a conclusion, it can be said that fair trade plays an important role in our world, especially for people in the developing countries. Development agencies recognised that consumers can have a huge impact on the situation for producers by buying fair traded products, which are nowadays available even in supermarkets. Paying a realistic price of ca. seven Euros for a packet of coffee with the fair trade label on it instead of three Euro for the "normal" one makes a big difference. Maybe not that much for people who live in industrialized nations but definitely for the people in countries where many goods we consume here everyday come from. So when you enjoy your next cup of coffee, you may remember the farmer's role in bringing this beloved product to you.

References

[1] http://www.transfair.org

[2] http://www.fairtrade.org.uk

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Can't We Still Learn Something From TV? - Media and Its Impact on Society

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Abstract

Watching TV causes violent behaviour and less awareness of social values. This is the ordinary opinion on media and its influence on social life. What about a different, more positive approach to media? This article will consider in what ways shows like Friends or Sex and the City may have a positive impact on social life by helping us to understand that being divorced and remaining single are valid lifestyles in a modern society.

1   General Remarks on Social Changes

There have been several changes within society during the past decades. Next to fine arts, media is a more popular means to convey **changes of social values**. Critics have claimed that media only has a negative impact on society since it can cause violent behaviour of children and the loss of social values and relationships. However, there are still positive aspects of media which this article tries to work out. Being an activity that people usually do alone, Watching TV seems to separate people from each other. Hence, the phenomenon of **individualisation** has appeared. Studies have shown that an increasing number of people watch TV alone and even members of a family prefer watching the same TV program on their own in different rooms of the household.

2   Communication Research and Media Studies

Since the invention of TV, communication researchers, sociologists and psychologists have examined its impact on influence on people's social behaviour. During the 50's of the last century scientists have focussed on the **media production side** by claiming that TV producers are the active part in influencing the audience. They tried to find answers to the question: "What do media do to people?". Nowadays, research has shifted to a **consumption-centred** approach. In its main focus lies the audience as the active part. Answers to "What do people do with media?" are tried to be found. The audience is seen as an active community which uses media with a certain goal in mind and in order to solve personal problems. Media use can be seen as social action.
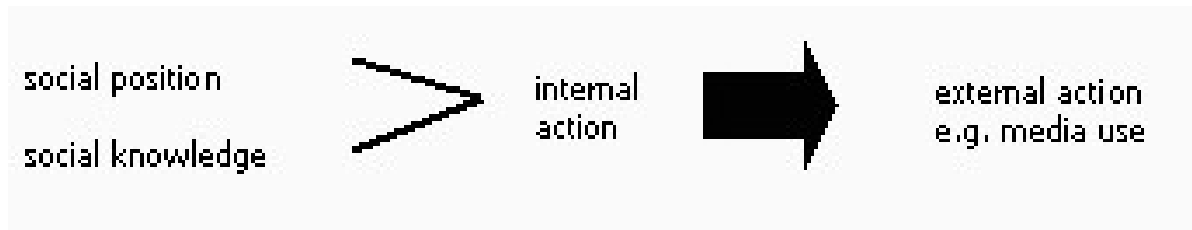
Figure 1: process of a social action

2.1   Media Use as Social Action

Within the perspective of an audience-centred approach towards media, scientists like Karsten Renckstorf[1] describe the relation of the audience to mass media – how they choose and use media, which is seen as a competitor to other forms of needs satisfaction. Media use is part of everyday meaningful social action which means the action takes place in a certain context given by society. Therefore, if media use is described as social action, it can help solve social problems. By realising a social action, people try to position themselves within society (Do things look better or worse for me personally compared to others?) and with the help of a certain social knowledge, which is given by people's culture and acquired during socialisation, one can define and interpret the situation. After the situation has been understood and external action, e.g. the use of media, can be taken place (see Fig 1). Generally speaking, people do not react to a certain object or situation, but they consciously act with it.

According to Friedrich Krotz[2], media use is one of the forms of communication, namely **parasocial interaction** which is defined as a one-sided interaction characterised by a lack of reciprocity and mutual development of the interacting partners because the whole communication is controlled by the performer of the interaction. The performer can be either the producer or the consumer according to a media-centred or audience-centred approach respectively. A second type of communication is the **interpersonal interaction**, which sometimes is seen as the actual communicative and social action. Traditionally, interpersonal communication is face–to–face with regards to the reciprocity which is the capability of human beings to take over the perspective of their communicative partners. **Pseudosocial Interaction** as the third form of Krotz's classification of communication is related to artificial intelligence since it describes the communication between human beings and software.

2.2   Media Communication Research

Furthermore, a selection of studies on media influence will be introduced in the following. Dutch communication researchers have examined social activities of co-viewers when watching TV[3]. One of the questionnaires was related to **program selection**. As a result, the study showed that when men and women live together, it is in most of the cases the man who decides what to watch. In contrast to this, women decide more often what to watch when they live in a single household rather than in a partnership (see Fig 2).

Furthermore, the scientists asked the participants of the study if they could agree with the statement *"I watch TV to feel less alone"*. 24,5 % of all questioned people living alone agreed with the above statement, whereas only 8 % of the persons who lived together with their partners or children have experienced this feeling before.

Interestingly enough, a further study showed that the more people lived in a household, the

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[1]Karsten Renckstorf is Professor of Communication at the University of Nijmengen in the Netherlands
[2]Dr. Friedrich Krotz is employed at the German Hans Bredow Institut für Rundfunk und Fernsehen
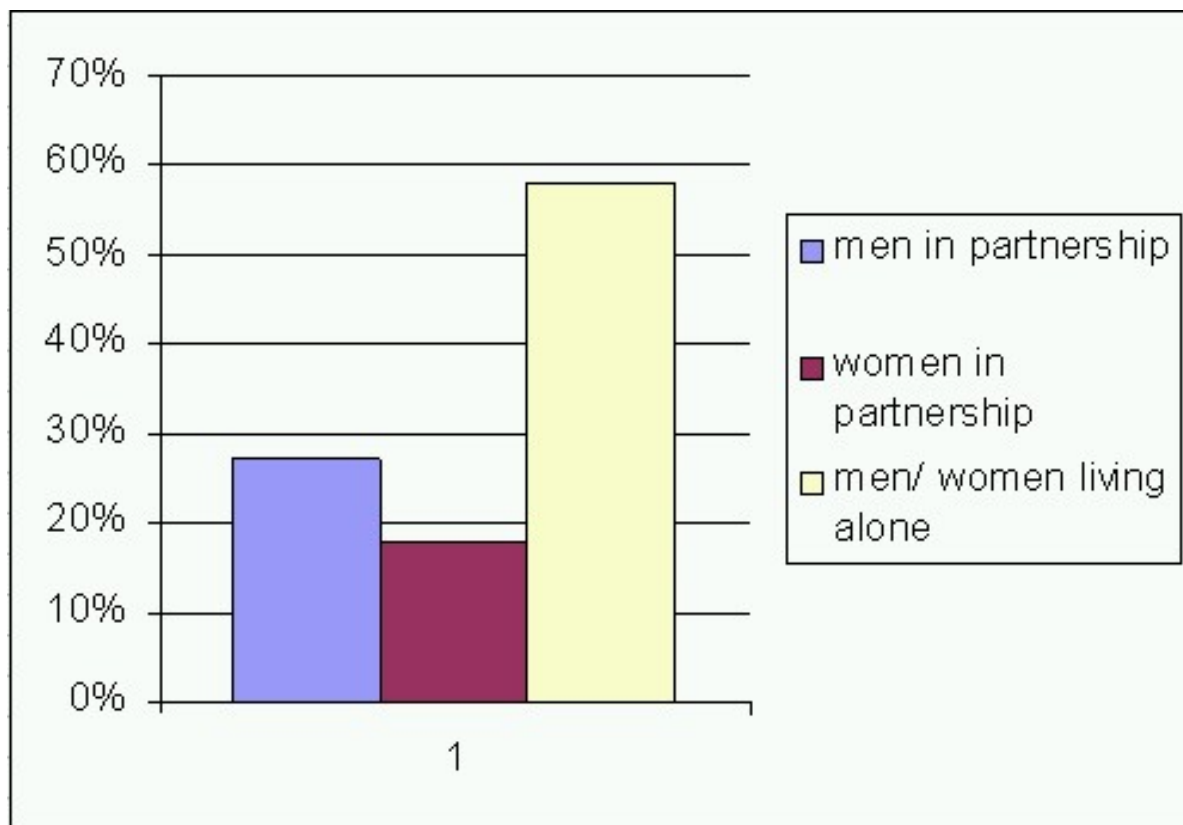[3]see Mutsaers, W. "Television viewing as social action" taken from [2]

Figure 2: men tend to have the power over the remote control

more impoverished the viewing behaviour of the family became. Large family tend to watch foreign channels, religious programs or classical music less often than people living alone.

Besides the theoretical perspective on the purpose and influence of media proved by various studies, there still is one purpose of media which is clearly obvious and cannot be denied. Media and especially TV has always had an entertaining purpose in order to provide the so-called 'popular pleasure' which is "defined by immediate and sensual forms of enjoyment"[4]. In this perspective, TV can help people to release from demands of society.

3 Case Study I: 'Friends'

With reference to the article "Reconsidering Friends" by James Poniewozik published in the TIME magazine, the American sitcom will be analysed if there really is some positive impact of TV shows on people's social attitudes. First of all, one has to consider that the sitcom was merely produced to be 'nice and funny'. The content is intentionally forgettable rather than socially important. Furthermore, it does not convey a romanticised image of family as shows like Bill Cosby did. 'Friends' seem to substitute a real family by relationships and friendships. It conveys that being divorced and remaining single for lifetime have become valid forms of lifestyle in a modern society and that there is no need to be afraid of living such lifestyle: "Being part of Gen X [...] mean[s] there was a good chance that your family was screwed up and that you feared it had damaged you"[5] Finally, the show wants to be rather liked than respected as it underestimates itself. As a result, the audience

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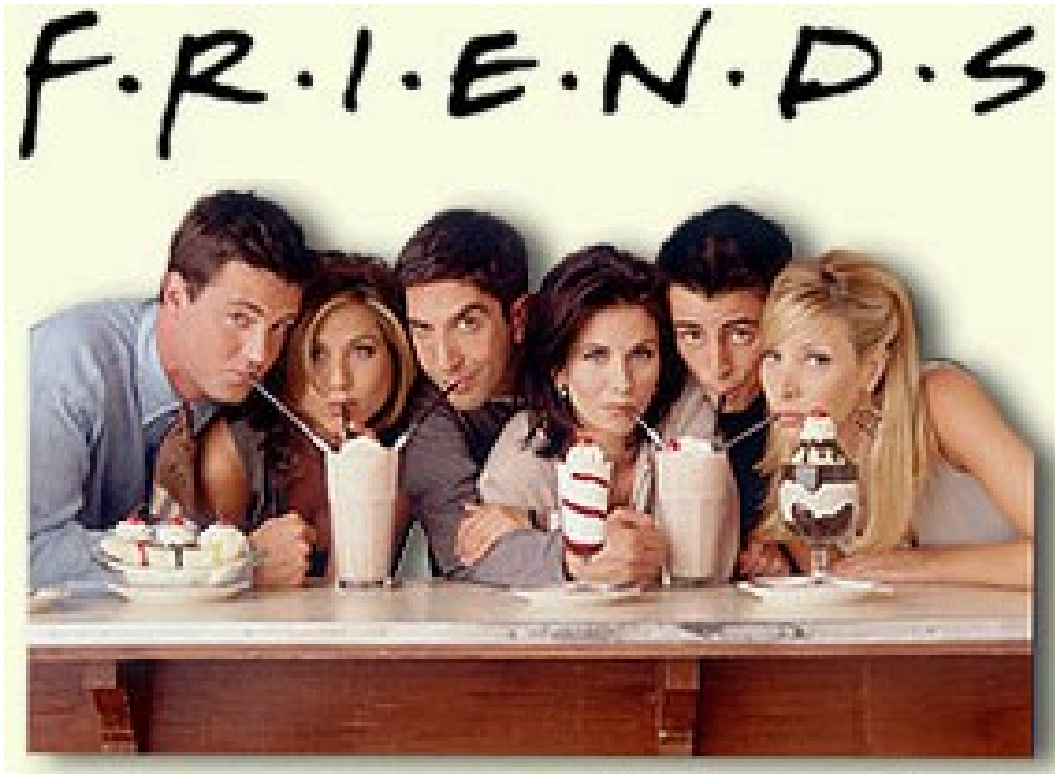
[4]taken from [4]

[5]taken from [1]

Figure 3: American sitcom 'Friends' wants to be liked

also underestimates it and has no great expectations of it.

4   Case Study II: 'Sex and the City'

This American sitcom about four single women in their mid-thirties also wants to be entertaining in the first place. However, it still conveys changes within society. The development of individualisation goes hand in hand with another social phenomenon: the **urban societies**. Modern individuals living in big metropolises like New York tend to live isolated from a societal frame with only few obligations to their fellows. Members of an urban society have less time for their friends and relatives and sometimes TV is seen as a chance to avoid unliked social contacts. However, when observing viewing activity among young women, one could conclude that because watching TV has become a social activity, there is less individualisation within society. Sitcoms like 'Friends' and 'Sex and the City' made women to watch the shows together in a social surrounding.

5   Conclusion

This article has tried to show further dimensions of understanding media and its impact on society. Various studies and research has been undertaken on negative effects of media use and one can say without a doubt that there is a considerably negative impact of TV when especially children overuse it and overestimate its importance. However, this article intended to show a few positive influences TV can have on people's social behaviour and it might be a motivation for further research of the positive sides of mass media.

Figure 4: urban societies in American sitcom 'Sex and the City'

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Television in Everyday Life: Impacts and Influences

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Abstract

How are communication technologies used and made sense of in local settings such as households and the urban neighbourhood? What position has television come to occupy in people´s day-to-day lifes and social relationships? It helps to construct new arrangements of time, space and place in a culture with globalising tendencies. The cultural significance of television as an object of consumption has become a norm of life and influences many aspects of our life individually and interpersonally.

1 Introduction

Everyday life is a total of routines, actions and reactions repeated day after day. Medias play an important role in everyday life. Television for example as a "view into the world" became a member of the family, all over the globe. In my article I want to explore a broad range of the most fundamental questions in media and cultural studies, as well as opening new avenues and areas of debate. It focuses on issues of gender, identity, new technologies and change in everyday life by observing the television habits in American households. It can be recognised that television may be the most popular leisure activity, but everyday life is more powerful than the media. By doing so, this article will present an exciting picture of the complex relationship between mass media and people´s everyday life.

2 The Role of Television in American Households

Since more than 40 years, television as an object of consumption is playing a very important role in the United States of America. It opened the households up to electronically mediated public worlds. A recent study reveals the different watching habits of television of people all over the world. It shows that American people spend in general 40 % of their free time (about 240 minutes) per day on watching TV[1]. That means, that they sit nearly four hours a day in front of the screen. In contrast to the USA, people in Sweden spend only two hours a day on watching television. The following example should underline this enormous role that television occupies nowadays in American households. Therefore, it deals with the typical use of television and its cultural significance in everyday life. In doing so, it is also my intention to highlight the way in which an object like

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[1] taken from: www.tvturnoff.org/healthgroups

satellite TV gets embedded in the practices and structures of American households. The chosen example presents a common American family that lives about five kilometres away from the centre of a bigger city. The neighbourhood in this so called suburban area has a mixed population, that consists of skilled blue-collar workers and middle-class professionals. The television screen in these families is often situated on a central place in the house – the living room. Usually you can also find a lot of technical goods around the TV set like two or more video recorders, a hifi-system as well as a satellite receiver. Even the children in these families posses an own television set in their room. Through that, they can watch television programmes independently from their parents. Concerning the different habits of watching TV, it can be observed that male consumers often prefer programmes on sport channels while women are used to watch the evening soap operas. Also remarkable is that husbands usually get their way in disputes over the acquisition and use of media technologies[2]. In contrast to them, wifes often only control decisions in the domain of interior decoration[3]. After having given a short impression of the use of television in middle-class households, the question how communication technologies are embedded in the interpersonal dynamics and power relations of life in the private sphere will be investigated. The act of turning on the television can signify very different things. On the one hand it can mean: **I want to watch this**. But on the other hand it can signify as well: **I would like to see and hear nothing**. In the second case, television is used as an excuse for not communicating with other family members. That means, that television is seen as an *substitute for communication.*

3   Media Consumption and Gender

The question of gender plays also a very important role in this case because it represents a significant variable in the majority of domestic cultures. Typical of male consumers is that the control and selection of television programmes lies often in their hands. Female consumers, like mothers, are only the least influential family members in this regard. Moreover, men express the desire to watch quietly and attentively television whereas women combine viewing habits with domestic activities like ironing, sewing and cooking. The researcher found out that the television remote control device used to switch channels was a potent symbol of patriarchal power in these families. In this example, which contains homes where men had the symbolic power to control programme choice, even the content of meals in these households was often determined by masculine tastes. Whereas feminine culinary preferences were less conservative (because wifes were willing to try out new flavours and foreign dishes) but the husbands´ demands for so called proper meals limited what was served up at the dining table. These different habits of consumption between man and woman can even create communication barriers be separating family members in different room with own TV sets. Actually, television is said to contribute to bring people together be sharing information which may be true on a large scale. But in fact, television can disturb social interaction by creating isolation.

4   Conclusion

With the flip of a switch we can bring the world into our homes. With television, we can tune in to wholesome entertainment, helpful news, and educational, uplifting, and informative programs. But TV can also bring an influence - sometimes subtle, sometimes not so subtle - that can destroy whatever spirit of unity and righteousness we may be trying to encourage in our lives. The days are long past when we could consider TV to be an innocent, innocuous part of daily life or a casual

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[2]Moores 2002, 71
[3]Moores 2002, 71

baby-sitter. It is a powerful, persuasive teacher and a primary companion for children, many of whom spend more time in front of the TV than in school. Considering that some members of the average family watch more than five hours TV per day, it is not surprising that contemporary research indicates that human development and behaviour are affected by television to a degree far exceeding earlier judgments.

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Media in a Changing Global Culture

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Abstract

What are the consequences of mass media globalization and how do they contribute to social changes?With electronic Media, instantaneous communication and interaction can be carried out over far distances.However, Global Media have led to a series of developments that might be more a cause for concern than a source of hope

1   Introduction

Since the late 1980's, a new agenda for research on the relationship between media and society has gradually emerged.Revolutionary changes in the former Soviet Union, in Eastern Europe as well as the Gulf War were the first and prominent indicators of major changes in the media and in society, too. The way these events unfolded also related the feeling that the developments in national and international politics were somehow connected to changes within the media sector. Especially the news media not only reported on the social changes, but in a way were a part of them – to the extend that the media influenced certain key decisions or paths of development. As an example, phrases like 'television revolution' and 'media war' were used to describe the breakdown of communism and the war in Iraq. During the 1990's, broadcast news expanded to the entire day providing continuous updates from the early morning to the late night. Being confronted with this media – presence, I want to consider the consequences of mass media globalization and their contribution to social changes.

2   MassMedia and Globalization

Since the late 1960's, the mass media have moved steadily to becoming truly global. However, the consequences of global media are marked by contradiction, some developments seem likely to produce positive changes, some seem a cause for alarm. The globalization agenda changed the focus on a nation of the media: Today, a nation is one among other social entieties defined e.g. by cultural, economic or political characteristics, religion etc. all of which transcend national borders. One possibility to show how the communication media contribute to globalization is the distinction between three different aspects: 1.Media as channels of communication, 2.Media as messengers of a world beyond the local and 3.Media as providers of a new social infrastructure. As channels of communication, electronic media have been a necessary condition for the globalization: Without the development of the telephone, radio, tv or the internet, the globalization of industry, finance, military etc. would not have taken place the way it did. The global scope of the stock market, the

development of high-tech warfare capabilities with global reach all rely on the communication media to coordinate their activities in real-time across huge distances. Therefore, the media are in a large extend responsible for the key-feature of globalization: the increased interconnectedness of social institutions and actors. Due to the media, globalization becomes a psychological reality, because the availability of the media makes it obvious for any culture that it is not alone. Finally, the power and independence of the mass media not only bring cultures together, they also cause problems for even the mightiest nations. As an example, the public sometimes demands political action that surpasses or contradicts the power of nations. In the Vietnam war, the public opinion on the war changed from an administration – supporting attitude to an anti - war protest reaction due to the immense tv – coverage. Furthermore, the deep impact of the media on human beings leads to the result that cultures cannot develop independently anymore, being forced to a constant comparison with other cultures that dominate the media.

3   Media and Cultural Imperialism

In order to focus on concrete media products shaping the culture of other nations, I want to use music as an example. Walking into a major music store nowadays, one finds thousands of CDs divided into at least a dozen categories like classical, jazz, pop etc. and even more subcategories. This diversity covers an underlying reality: Just six megacorporations dominate the world's popular music industry, namely *Warner, Bertelsmann, EMI, Polygram* and *Sony.* These 'big six' distribute 95% of all music carried by record stores in the United States and over half of the music of European record stores.[1] This fact illustrates one of the ironies when it comes to globalization of the mass media: While the distribution of media products constantly spread out constantly, the ownership and control of media production are centralized. Because of this kind of imperialism, the media products emanating from the west, the wealthiest nations and especially the United States can shape the cultures of other nations. Giants like *Time - Warner - AOL, Disney or Bill Gates* are undeniable icons of globalization and internationally known examples of global market domination. Regarding this reality, the link between ownership and media content becomes obvious. The values and images of western society are unavoidably embedded in their media products. It is hard to deny the profound impact which the U. S. culture has had on german culture - just to mention rap music that is so popular right now and results in a special way to dress and even in a special youth language. Another example are the American soap operas like *Friends, Roseanne* etc. that dominate the german ones and bring us near the American way of everyday - life. The impact on a local culture can be devastating if it is continuously covered by another culture. "The idea of cultures losing their identities is perhaps what critics fear most. If music, literature, film and television become globally mass produced and homogenized - like so many standardized *McDonald's* restaurants strewn across the international cultural landscape - then the world as a whole loses".[2] The connection between Media and Global Culture is a topic that concerns all of us and in my opinion, everyone should think now and then about how far one is influenced by the media and the cultures dominating them.

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Privacy in the Information Society

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Abstract

The increasing power and availability of information technology does not only allow people to communicate more efficiently, but also introduces new possibilities of surveillance and profiling. Many people are not aware of the resulting dangers.

In this article the threats that information society has on privacy will be revealed. Furthermore, common arguments against data protection will be invalidated and possiblilties to protect one's online privacy will be provided.

1   Introduction

In the late 19th century Louis D. Brandeis referred to privacy as "The right to be let alone".[1] Society has evolved since then and so has the definition of privacy. Today it is commonly understood as the right to have control over one's personal information and data.[2] Therefore privacy depends on data protection.

However, it is often heared that data protection laws should be relaxed.[3][4] A lot of people are not interested in the topic of privacy and data protection as long as they are not directly affected. The aim of this article is to stress the importance of data protection and privacy with special regard to the threats that arise from information technology.

2   The Right to Privacy

In Germany there is the "Right on informational self-determination". It originates from the so-called "census decision" of the Federal Constitutional Court of 1983. It basically protects the individual from unlimited inquiry, storage, usage and distribution of his personal data.[5]

This is similar to the European Convention on Human Rights in which is written that "Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence"[1]

3   Why Data Is Being Collected

The reasons for collecting data are many. Data is needed for national administrational purposes such as raising taxes, providing social welfare or computing statistics. Law enforcement authorities require it for criminal prosecution. But personal data is also used for economic purposes. Banks

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[1]Article 8, European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

and insurances depend highly on information about their current or potential customers. Another field in which personal data is very valuable is marketing, businesses are interested in knowing who might want to buy their products or services.

4 Threats to Privacy

Collecting data has been practised for many years. Data protection laws, which regulate that no more data than necessary must be collected and stored, prevented abuse. But the ever increasing power and interconnectivity of modern computers introduce new threats to privacy.

Computers make it easier to collect and lookup data, little or no extra effort is required. This might entice to store more information than needed. Furthermore, the interconnexion of computers enables the combination of multiple data sources and the creation of new knowledge, which has never been intended to be held by one single instance, be it a person, a company or an authority.

As an example, imagine that a travel agency knows that person P travels to Thailand regularly and will continue to do so in the future. The medical records of P state that he has suffered from sexually transmitted deseases two times. The combination of these information is likely to be disadvantageous for P when effecting a health insurance, because he will be treated as a risk patient who will have to pay higher contributions.

Another thing to consider is the internet. While it allows efficient communication, it also introduces new surveillance possibilities. Whenever a website is visited, the website's owner is able to log the user's IP address.[2] If illegal content has been viewed or forbidden opinions have been published, police can force the website's owner to hand out the visitor's IP address. It is also usual to eavesdrop internet communication as it flows, for example EMail or instant messaging. In any case it is possible to determine the IP address. Having the IP address, it is easy to find out the perpetrator's Internet Service Provider (ISP) from whom name and address of the delinquent can be obtained. This is very efficient when investigating internet crimes, the actual procedure is regulated by laws to prevent abuse. But there were cases in which illegal measures have been taken to obtain special data records.

A prominent example is the anonymizing service JAP. JAP acts as a "man in the middle" and therefore offers the possibility to surf the internet anonymously. The user's actual IP is only visible to JAP, but not to the website's owner, who only sees the IP of JAP. JAP itself does not log users' activities, making it impossible to draw conclusions on the persons visiting a webpage or posting comments. In 2003 JAP was ordered by the Federal Bureau of Criminal Investigation to implement a surveillance function which monitors access to a specific website. The corresponding court order was based on inappropriate paragraphs, therefore objection has been filed. The objection was successful, but the notification was delayed by more than a month, officially due to "technical reasons". In the meantime, an access to the monitored website has been recorded. The Federal Bureau of Criminal Investigation confiscated that record. This action was also not compliant with law, therefore JAP successfully filed another objection and the confiscated record had to be deleted. While the achievement of JAP proves that data protection is possible in Germany, the illegal proceeding of police and courts is something to be worried about, because private persons or smaller businesses do not have the funds nor the experience to defend themselves successfully before court.[6]

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[2]IP address: the unique number under which a computer communicates over the internet.

5   Importance of Data Protection

Many people are not aware of the importance of data protection. In this section four selective statements which argue against privacy and data protection are chosen and proven wrong. The arguments concern both data protection in general and online privacy.

- I have nothing to hide.
  This is the argument produced most often. The cause might be that people are not aware of what they are actually saying. Every person has something to hide, examples are personal letters, the contents of private talk, information concerning finances or health, but also very private things such as sexual preferences.
  What people actually want to express is probably that they would not need to take special actions to hide their identity, because they do not consider themselves interesting enough to be observed nor do not they participate in criminal actions.

- I am not interesting enough and I'm not doing anything criminal.
  While one may be not interesting at the moment, this can change soon. Attracting interest is very easy. Becoming a celebrity, being a scientist doing research in an important field, participating in politics or working in an association are only few ways to become interesting without being a criminal.
  Sometimes it is not even necessary to be important in any way. Foreigners visiting the United States are checked thoroughly. In October 2003 a woman was arrested, because she seemed suspicious to the airport security officer. He had access to the Amazon customer database and discovered that the woman liked books about second languages.[7][8] She was not allowed to enter the United States.
  Another thing to consider is old or wrong data. Hard disks and other storage media are very cheap, so it is not necessary to delete old data in order to make space for new one. However, the use of old data is likely to lead to inaccurate or even wrong conclusions.
  Imagine, for example, that a person P had serious financial problems in the past years which are now solved. Company C knows about these problems, but their information is outdated and P is still considered not credit-worthy. C would not want to do business with P, which would be an absolutely unnecessary disadvantage. This is not only an academic example, false or out of date information are a real problem.[9]
  The German Schufa[3] is an official organization that keeps records on the credit rating of German citizens. The delivery of old information that damage people's credit rating is not unusual.[10] A consolation might be in this special case, that the existence of the Schufa is known and that everybody has the right to view his records and, if they are false, to have them corrected. Nonetheless, it causes unblameable persons unnecessary aggravations.

- Privacy and data protection restricts the police.
  It is often claimed that law enforcement authorities need access to more data in order to efficiently fulfil their tasks. After September 11, 2001 they were given more rights and more information, but there was no significant increase in the number of solved cases. It is not more information that is necessary, but better techniques to analyze existing information. While computers are fast, they are not intelligent enough to draw good conclusions from the raw data they are provided with. As fundamental data is already available to the authorities, any extra information is likely to be irrelevant for the actual case. But the amount of data to be analyzed increases, which would both raise the time needed to solve the case and detract from really important conclusions.[11][12] As more data does not seem to have substantial advantages, there is no need to constrict harmless citicens' privacy. Aside from that, more cumulated data means a higher damage if abused.

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[3]Association for the protection of the covering of credits

6   Ensuring Online Privacy

While it is not possible and probably not reasonable to be completely anonymous, one should still take care about privacy. An easy step to start is changing one's online behaviour. Many people expose themselves more than necessary.

- Anonymous surfing
  There are services that allow to hide the IP addresses of their users. A drawback is, that using those services usually results in slower connection speeds, but that does not outweigh the advantage of staying unrecognized when visiting the WWW. A well known anonymizing service is JAP, which has already been mentioned in section 4.

- Encrypting EMail
  On its way through the internet an EMail is being read multiple times. There are intelligence facilities, Echelon being the most prominent, that scan mails for keywords and prepare them for further manual processing.[13][14] Make it difficult for strangers to read your private correspondence and use encryption.

- Keep your data private
  Using anonymization and encryption is futile if you give away your personal data voluntarily. An example are lotteries that promise expensive prices without collecting stakes. All one has to do is providing detailed personal information. While the chances of winning are virtually nonexistent, the personal data is sold to advertising businesses. One does not only give away more than one gets back in return, the personal information in connection with the EMail address is also used for customised advertisement (spam).
  Similarly, one should only register for necessary and trustworthy services. It should be considered to leave optional fields blank during the registration process.
  Another important measure is deleting internet cookies regularly. Cookies are small text files that websites can store on the user's computer. They are necessary to keep track of the current status of an online transaction or to access an internet service account (for example webmail) without typing the password on every visit. Unfortunately, the concept of cookies has been abused by advertising companies, DoubleClick being the most famous. Whenever one visits a website that displays advertisement banners which come from the advertisment company, this advertisment company is able to read and write a cookie. That way it is possible to track users across multiple websites and create profiles which contain surfing behaviour and preferences. If a user is registered at a service which is a partner of the advertiser, it is even possible to assign the collected profile to that specific person.

7   Conclusions

While personal data is vital for countries, authorities and businesses to function, the wrong use of that data can have serious impacts on the affected citizens' lives. Therefore laws or regulations on data protection exist in many countries, but constant supervision of the compliance of these laws is necessary, as information technology makes it easy and attactive to collect more data than allowed. Citizens who are worried about the use of their personal data have both technical and legal possibilities to ensure protection of their data, but further education is needed to make more people aware of the necessity of privacy.

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Illiteracy Despite Compulsory Education

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Abstract

More than 800 million people worldwide are illiterate. A problem that only affects developing countries? Far from it! It is estimated that between four to seven million adults in Germany have little or no reading, writing and numeracy skills. The fear of discovery and social stigmatisation often means that illiterate people become outsiders in society. Who are these people and what is done to help them?

1 Illiteracy Despite Compulsory Education?

More than 800 million people worldwide are illiterate. Two-thirds of them are women. A problem that only affects developing countries? Far from it! Known as "functionally illiterate", these are people in Germany whose reading and writing skills are insufficient to meet the challenges of an information society. It's hard to imagine, but it's true: compulsory education and illiteracy might seem at first to be mutually exclusive, but the reality is quite different. There are no precise statistics on the true scale of the problem. After all, who would willingly admit that they cannot understand a train timetable or decipher the instructions on household appliances, and that the information in a medicine packet is a closed book to them? There is only few reliable data - the *Bundesverband Alphabetisierung e.V.*. estimates that there are about four million functionally illiterate adults in Germany[1]. Who are these people? And what are the forms of illiteracy in Germany? The term "illiteracy" is relative. An industrial nation inevitably needs its citizens to have better reading and writing skills than the standard required in a developing country. Yet even in Germany, changing social needs can result in functional illiteracy. Until the 1970s, there were still many niches - in small family firms, for example - where people with little or no reading and writing skills could make a living. With the introduction of computer technology in almost every area of working life, it is almost impossible nowadays to find a bolt-hole where no literacy skills are required. The main form of illiteracy in Germany is "functional illiteracy". This means people who can hardly read and write despite attending school for years. With avoidance strategies - the classic is "I've forgotten my glasses" - and sometimes with help from people they have confided in, they try to cope with the practical challenges of daily life as best they can. A specific form of functional illiteracy is "secondary illiteracy". This is due to a lack of practice: people who are secondary illiterate are persons who have learned to read and write but have lost these skills because they do not use them in later (working) life. While some people who have emotional or mental problems never attended school are known as "total illiterates". This form of primary illiteracy is almost non-existent in Germany.

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[1]Doebert, Hubertus, p. 8

Regarding East Germany, "Officially, there was no illiteracy in the GDR. People with reading and writing deficits were - similar to the situation in the West - integrated in professional life, associations and groups of mutually supportive members. Thus, they did not emerge as a special group. But after the regime change, the gradual evolution that finally lead to a rise of the new illiteracy in the West occurred at higher pace in the new *Länder, so that the phenomenon of functional illiteracy became noticeable here, too*"[2]. It was only in the late 1970s illiteracy was rediscovered as a social and individual problem. Until then, illiterate people had simply been ignored or were given full personal responsibility for their lack of skills. Then, growing competition on the job market lead to an increased demand for qualification. Jobs that did not require literacy skills became rare. Emphasis shifted more and more towards functional illiteracy.

2   Who Is Affected and What Can Be Done?

Unfavourable circumstances - such as an unhappy combination of individual, family, social and educational factors - can easily lead to failure at school, and illiteracy may be the outcome. Nor does this only affect children from socially weak or immigrant families. If parents do not read, their children will see no reason to do so. A home with no books or cultural interests but with state-of-the-art high-tech equipment and no time to talk can result in poor communication and a form of benign neglect. Promoting language and communication skills among preschool children is especially important. Studies have shown that nowadays, one child in four suffers from delayed language development, while a quarter of German teenagers leave school with poor reading and writing skills. That is the alarming finding of the PISA study. A number of elements can be identified for increasing the risk of staying - or becoming - functionally illiterate. Formal schooling shows built-in structural threats. The educational, social and economic background of the family holds big responsibility, as do ethnic origin, and to some extent gender. The impact of a unfavourable circumstances was already briefly described above. German compulsory schooling is defined in terms of duration, not in terms of achieved learning results or certified qualification. Thus, "Having accomplished compulsory schooling is no indicator of the learning level the pupils have reached. There are learners who leave school with inadequate basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills. These are pupils who entered formal schooling under unfavorable learning conditions and a difficult learning environment in their families. Learning is strained by parental neglect and lack of interest, or other factors like economic hardship and a wrecked family. On the other hand, parents who wish to support their children's learning get only few assistance from schools. Learning at standardized pace and without the adaptation of learning materials, speed and methods to the respective possibilities of the child can lead to failing at school, and to the development of a negative self-image. Functional illiteracy is additionally strengthened through avoiding situations that demand literacy skills"[3]. A survey undertaken in 1990 attempted to find characteristic causes for illiteracy in Germany, drawing on a West-Berlin sample. The main findings comprise that many functional illiterates had experienced psycho-social hardship experienced within family, negative experiences in and a lack of developing literacy skills in formal schooling, and few use of reading and writing skills in their social environment. Once their initial deficits were not met during the first two years of schooling, the interviewed found it close to impossible to reintegrate into the formal education system Doebert, p. 21ff. "The basement for reading and writing skills are laid in the first two classes. If later the necessity emerges to start from the beginning, and to do this calmly, formal schooling rarely provides further support. One might say that the only offer formal schooling provides is to repeat the class, to do everything again, right from the start, and in the same speed. [...] Many families cannot afford to pay for private

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[2]Doebert, Hubertus, p. 28
[3]Doebert, Hubertus, p. 41

tutors or the support of a coaching institute"[4].

3 Literacy Infrastructure and Mass Media Activities

The most important contributors and main providers of adult literacy and basic education training are the *Volkshochschulen* and their umbrella organization, the *German Adult Education Association*(Deutscher Volkshochschul Verband - DVV). In 1978 the first literacy courses at a *Volkshochschule*were offered in Bremen. Later, they became the main providers of adult literacy courses, covering about 20.000 people per year (Doebert, Hubertus, p. 12). Regarding research, teacher training and material development, the *Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung* (German Institute for Adult Education - DIE) played an important role since 1982 and was awarded a UNESCO prize in 1985. While *Volkshochschulen*rely on funding provided by the respective Länder, others depend mainly on donations and participation fees. To conclude there are different models to organize these. There are *Volkshochschulen* that offer literacy courses for free. Others charge a small registration fee. In the cases where course fees are charged, there are usually reduced prices for jobless or for people living on social security. Courses must not be too expensive since many of their attendants belong to lower income groups or are unemployed. But the most important issue is to have these people who are affected to join these courses. For the most - the "coming out" is the worst since they carry that fear of humiliation and discrimination with them. A current set of multimedia advertising and advisory was issued by the *Bundesverband Alphabetisierung e.V.* . t consists of spots shown in cinemas and TV *Schreib Dich nicht ab! Lern Lesen und Schreiben* - Don't write you off! Learn to Read and Write! in combination with a service telephone number (Alfa-Telefon). In 2000 about 1.300 calls were made. In the year 2002 5.353 calls were received (Bundesverband Alphabetisierung e.V). Motivation is the key word in this issue. These projects help to motivate people to learn reading and writing and make the fact clearer that illiteracy is not a taboo subject anymore.

4 Summary

Functional illiteracy is seen as a poverty risk, it is argued that illiterates might end up depending on the state's social system (due to increasing of unemployment); and in the long run, illiteracy weakens national competitiveness on global markets because of too low productivity, accidents and errors due to illiteracy. Economic consideration is one of the major driving forces behind activities for fighting functional illiteracy. Thus, one finds a multitude of bodies active in German adult education but we should not forget to address the crucial characteristics of the German education system - the strong correlation that exists between literacy skills and social origin. Considering schools to be the most important institution for illiteracy prevention. One should call for necessary adjustments like increasing teacher training, the need to strengthen the topic of illiteracy within teacher training and strengthening for illiteracy prevention in the Kindergarten and primary school. In my point of view, prevention is the key to functional illiteracy in Germany.

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Will Europe Be More Innovative? Deliberations with the Lisbon Strategy.

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Abstract

In recent years there has been a vast discussion on the optimal education system. It is the core of the Lisbon Strategy and one of EU priorities and aims to make Europe the most knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth and concentrated on technological innovations. In this paper we try to focus on the influence of education reforms on technological innovations, by underlining its most promising or questionable concepts, and emphasizing most notable innovations factors and statistics. We will try to defend the statement, that the Lisbon Strategy and similar conception still have many drawbacks, making Europe less competitive in this field.

1 Introduction

Innovations are considered as very important factor of the economy which indicates its progress and strength. They have a direct influence on the quality and length of human life. The European Union has recognized those impacts and has established an aim to become the most innovative country in the world. In this paper, we will try to show that although EU acts from noble motives, their accomplishment is doubtful. We will try to prove that the goals where set imprecisely and the efforts were directed in the wrong way.

The history shows that innovative countries and cultures develop faster and last longer at a lower cost. Good examples would be a Sumerian, Egyptian and Babylonian civilizations which ruled in ancient times and influenced their neighbors by means of developed culture and novel "technologies". It is generally known and accepted that the old continent, Europe, rich in educated scientist has always influenced the world lots. The innovations was often associated with power and development [5].

That is the reason, why there always has been a competition between countries in this area. Today, the situation is very much alike. Highly developed countries take part in the "science" race, in which the amount of innovations or publications are regarded as one of the factors, indicating the country's strength.

Among many human virtues inspiring innovations two are very important: curiosity and freedom in the research. Curiosity is the impulse that lets the human explore fields, which have not been explored yet and follow new ideas in different fields, with no limitations (freedom). Most of innovations resulted in unexpectedness, they were not planned at all. They were a result of an accident, coincidence or simple curiosity. In the past mainly those produced the majority of innovations,

which we consider as most valuable today, like antibiotics, transistor or a bulb.

Today those factors are barely remembered. We are living in times of so called "engineer's logic". People behave more according to some regulations and codified instructions than own ingenuity and management. They believe that every problem we are faced with has a definable and applicable solution. There is a belief that everything can be planned, so do the innovations. This feeling gives us a feeling of security, but also silences the spirit of the quest of things novel.

The European Union has noticed how important the innovations are and has come up with few solutions, namely the Lisbon Strategy and 6th Framework Programme, which will be shortly described in the next section. In the second section we deliberate with the goals and methods of EU Strategy. The third consist of conclusions.

1.1   The Actual State

The Europe Union's priority is to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. This very ambitious goal was set in 2000 in Lisbon by EU Council. The strategy launched a program for next 10 years and was aimed to set the conditions for improved investments in knowledge and innovations with the help of five main instruments [1]:

1. Strengthen the Value of Enterprise

2. Achieve an efficient and open Internal Market

3. Endorse competition on equal terms and lower taxes

   - Promote free competition

   - Reduce taxes on enterprise and labor

4. Create a competitive labor market

   - Promote more and better jobs

   - Modernize labor market laws

   - Improve the conditions for higher education

5. Promote long-term growth and a dynamic economy

   - Strengthen Public Finance

   - Stimulate research and technological renewal

   - Support innovation

   Those ambitious plans contradict the problems EU has been facing for many years:

- 40% of the research of Europe's largest companies takes place outside the Union

- five researchers per thousand working people compared to eight in the United States and nine in Japan

- low average level of high-tech patents (28 per million inhabitants comparing to 58 per million inhabitants in USA)

- low public expenditure on education: around 5 % and total expenditure on R & D around 1.9 % (measured as a share of GDP)

- Brain drain problem; the researches go abroad to USA, Japan for different reasons: mainly because of better payment and better working conditions

Percentage of those aged 22 who have successfully completed
at least upper secondary education (ISCED 3), 2002
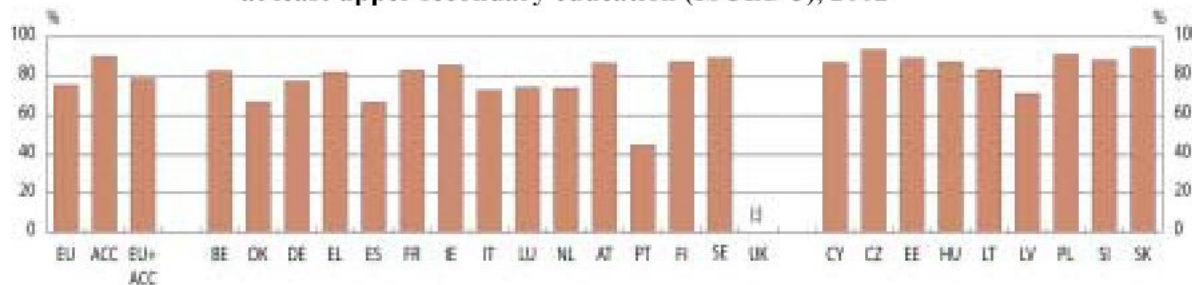
BE	DK	DE	EL	ES	FR	IE	IT	LU	NL	AT	PT	FI	SE	UK
82.6	66.8	77.4	82.1	66.6	82.9	85.6	72.9	74.2	73.9	86.5	44.9	87.3	89.3	(:)

EU	ACC	EU + ACC			CY	CZ	EE	HU	LT	LV	PL	SI	SK
75.4	90.1	78.7			86.9	93.4	89.2	87.2	83.5	71.2	91.0	88.1	94.6

Data source: Eurostat, Labour force survey, 2002.
Additional note : UK is not included. A definition of upper secondary school competion has still to be agreed

- ICT spending has risen significantly since the mid-1990s even if it has remained below that in the United States and does not seem to have brought about a similar or uniform boost to EU productivity
- high costs of obtaining a patent ($48000 comparing to $10000 in USA and $15000 in Japan)

The 6th Framework Programm was constructed as the main instrument in the Lisbon Strategy for funding research with the budget of 13 billion (bln) EUR, while 12 bln EUR is being allocated in 7 key research areas: genomics and biotechnology for health, nanotechnologies and nanoscience, information society technologies, sustainable development, economic and social sciences, food safety and aeronautics and space.

2 Deliberations

Authors do not agree the Lisbon Strategy supported by 6th Framework Programme is sufficient to achieve the above mentioned goals. Those instruments, if implemented, will of course stimulate innovations to some extent but their impact will be either little than expected or disappointing. There are several drawbacks we would like to point out now.

First, the Lisbon Strategy concept of knowledge-based and information society basically has already been put to action to some extent. At least 90% of pupils finished secondary school, 30% of graduates finished the university in the filled essential for the EU development, namely hard science (compare to two figures below). However, the same amount of graduates is in the USA, where the innovation factors are higher. It means, this factor doesn't really influence innovations.

Second, In the author's opinion, planning of innovations, where it is believed to get some remarkable results, is questionable. In the 60's and 70's there were already research projects which aimed to find a cure for cancer. There was a common opinion that a cure for cancer was just a matter of time. The others predicted that building a computer with Artificial Intelligence was a matter of few years. Now the similar promises are made today, similar projects are founded by 6th Framework Programme, like "Genome-based Therapeutic Drugs for Depression", "AIDS vaccines", or "Better Treatment in Oncology".

Graduates in mathematics, science and technology (ISCED 5A, 5B and 6) as percentage of all graduates (ISCED 5A, 5B and 6), 2000
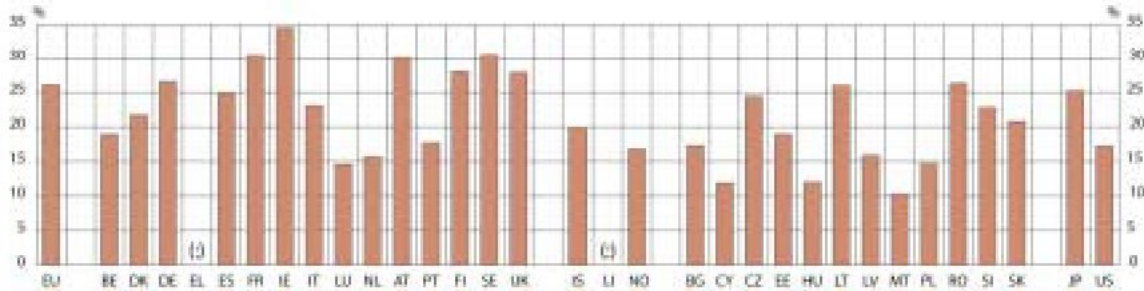
EU		BE	DK	DE	EL	ES	FR	IE	IT	LU	NL	AT	PT	FI	SE	UK
26.1		18.9	21.7	26.6	(:)	25	30.5	34.5	23.1	14.6	15.7	30.1	17.7	28.0	30.6	27.9

IS	LI	NO	BG	CY	CZ	EE	HU	LT	LV	MT	PL	RO	SI	SK	JP	US
19.7	(:)	16.8	17.3	11.9	24.4	18.9	12.0	26.0	15.9	10.3	14.7	26.3	22.8	20.8	25.2	17.2

Data source: Eurostat, UOE, 2000.

The other issue, which holds the research back is the bureaucracy. Right now scientist complain that in order to obtain the financial support they have to fill with the enormous amount of paperwork. They barely have time to make the research.

Four, what the Union suggests is the uniform and common education. In our opinion this model prevents from shaping of many important talents. Imagine what happens with the job market, if 70% of the population has a university degree. To attain a job one has to be more competitive than others, which means longer education and later job-start. In order to be more competitive one would have to do a second master or Ph.D. thesis, which could be followed by job at the age of thirty or even more.

What decision-makers and politician seem to forget is the social aspect of education. Definitely more effort should be put into shaping such character traits like courage, honor, brevity, responsibility, and empathy. People should be taught how to perceive the complexity of issues, how to formulate balanced judgments, resist indoctrination and be able to cooperate. Moreover, direct teacher-student interaction should play the main role in the education.
Last but not least, the exposure to experiences of other circle cultures is also an important element. Students should spend a period of time away from home, and then come back to one's own circle [6].

3   Conclusions

In this paper we have tried to summarize the actual state of innovations in European Union as well as to deliberate with its actual strategies and plans aiming to change the weak performance in this area. We strongly believe there are no solutions solving the problem entirely. But still it would be possible to stimulate innovations, by providing more diverse education and more spontaneity and freedom for researches. In this paper, we presented the current state of the art in the field of innovations in the European Union. We tried to stress the weak points of the Lisbon Strategy and 6th Framework Programme by means of argumentation and comparison with USA and Japan. We do not want the reader to draw only negative conclusions from programs that EU offers and implements. Our main aim was to give him a different point of view on generally accepted ideas and raise few doubts.

Because we believe, the innovation develop more effective, when a little bit of chaos and disor-

ganizations plays a "small" key-role, we would like to conclude with the sentence done by the world authority of space travel, Werner von Braun: *"the Basic research is what I am doing when I don't know what I am doing"*.

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