How can global perspectives be taught and learned: 4.8.87
Global versus territorial thinking

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I. "Territorial Thinking" versus "Global Thinking"

Although many might agree theoretically upon the importance of global perspectives and global thinking, nevertheless our observation of human behavior and thinking patterns tells us differently. The great majority in fact does not act or think according to global perspectives. Therefore we have to ask ourselves the question: What makes it so difficult to perceive global issues in reality?, to think and act in terms of global perspectives practically? What kind of thinking does it require for the development of global perspectives?

Our answer would be that global thinking, and the development of global perspectives require the ability for decentering from "territorial thinking". The intellectual process of decentering from ones subjective thinking, what we call territorial thinking, has been described by Piaget in his concept of "decentralisation of thinking". And Piaget himself already stated, that only a certain percentage of adults reach a stage of intellectual development that enables them to decenter their thinking from subjective perspective which has been conditioned by their original socioethical background. This socioethical background of man we might compare to an intellectual homebase or "territory". From that point of view we have coined the term of "territorial thinking". In order to elaborate on our concept of "territorial thinking" further we will turn to the animal world for a moment.

According to McLean, a researcher on the physiological background of animal behavior, a certain number of typical behavior patterns can be observed in all higher animals including Homo sapiens. All of these behavior patterns fulfill a specific adaptive function in the survival strategy of the species. The specific behavior pattern we are interested in at this point is territorial behavior. Territorial behavior relates to the maintenance and aggressive defence of some sort of in-

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dividual space of an animal such as the nesting, feeding and hunting area. This aggressive defence of a territory results in a fight for dominance, which means the stronger animal will end up owning the territory. Under conditions of abundance of nesting possibilities, feeding or hunting grounds, established territories are usually being respected by newcomers even though the established animal might be weaker compared to the newcomer in a actual fight for dominance. Under condidion of overcrowdedness and therefore shortage of everything the stronger animal might expulse the weaker one from its nest or hunting area and thereby establishes his dominance. Such territorial behavior can also be observed in man and a long list of examples could be made from the history of mankind.

In contrast to animals, man in fact does not only have actual territories to defend such as a nesting area, like his house and his garden, or a feeding area like the fields of a farmer or a national territory such as the boundaries of a country, but also has functional territories to defend such as e.g. the professional area of a doctor, a lawyer, a businessman, a teacher, a craftsman etc.. Man can even defend areas of religious beliefs or political conviction thereby establishing religious territories and political territories. The aggressive defence of those latter territories has probably led to the most ferocious fights in history, namely the religious and ideological wars. In a modern society there are as many territories to be defended as there are roles and functions of individual human beings. This fact accounts for the numerous displays of territorial behavior in man.

In analogy to "territorial behavior" we coined the term of "territorial thinking". Man does not only have the possibility of different behavior patterns but also has the capacity for "simulated behavior patterns", normally called thinking. Referring again to Piaget, thinking is nothing else but simulated behavior. This might explain, why in mans thinking process analogous patterns reappear, as can be observed in the behavior patterns of animals and man. Therefore we would conclude that man is not only capable of territorial behavior but also capable of "territorial thinking". "Territorial thinking" is based on centralized thinking, thinking, that is centered on

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a specific sociocultural background, a "professional territory", a "religious" or "ethical territory", an "ethnic territory", or a broader "sociocultural territory" such as for example the western or the eastern culture. In our estimation it is the remaining within "territorial thinking" that prevents man from global thinking. For global thinking man needs to be able to decenter from his "geographical", "ethnical", "cultural" or "functional territory" in his thinking. This is a rather difficult process for individuals, since they are all conditioned by these "specific territories" from early on.
It is easy nowadays to leave ones own "national" or even "cultural territory" geographically within a matter of hours, but it is very difficult to leave ones own "cultural" and "ethnical territory" in ones habitual thinking pattern within that time. In order to be able to decenter from ones original "sociocultural territory" thinking whise, one needs time to learn to think in other "sociocultural territories", a learning process which takes time and can be rather painful.
In order to be able to develop global thinking one has to learn to think within many different "territories", a learning process that requires continuous decentering and recentering of ones own thinking.
Through the high amount of mobility of modern man, the transportation of his products and the communication of his concepts, from one geographical territory to an other, a lot of overlapping and interference of territories takes place. With this overlapping of different territories of all sorts, territorial fights can easily get started between the representatives of the different territories. These territorial fights can only be avoided if these individuals learn to decenter from their territory and develop global thinking. It is this continuous decentering from well established "conceptual territories" and consecutive recentering on broader new "conceptual territories" that develops global thinking in man. In global thinking the "conceptual territories" are not being destroyed in a fight for dominance of one concept over an other, the "conceptual territories" are being respected and left intact as separate "thinking units", they only get connected with each other into a larger, more comprehensive "conceptual territory" through

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the very process of decentering and recentering of thinking.

II. Generalized or universal thinking versus global thinking

One way of avoiding decentering from ones own thinking or conceptual territory and thereby also avoiding global thinking is, to enlarge that very territory and expand it over other territories. This expansion can take place on many different levels depending on the type of conceptual territory one is concerned with.
In order to explain what we mean by this expansive process of one conceptual territory over others we shall give some examples. The Christian way of thinking, which has mainly influenced our Western world over a long period of time, can certainly be considered as a conceptual territory. That "Christian territory" or philosophy was expanded over many other conceptual territories, religious and cultural ones all over the world. The original expansion was accomplished by religious crusaders, missionaries and Christian merchants. Later on the expansion of the Christian philosophy was taken over by the industrial world and thereby became even more powerful.
As a single nation in Europe, the British have probably been one of the most successful in expanding the Christian territory together with their own economical territory of trade and industrial production as well as their "language territory. As a consequence English has become the international language number one on this globe. Many of these expansive processes coming from the Western world of course have not been peaceful but caused awful territorial fights, since the different population did not always readily give up their territory.
Generalization of a language territory or a conceptual territory, be it reached through a peaceful expansion or expansive warfare, never replaces global thinking and therefore should not be confused with such.
As soon as a thinking pattern has been generalized, global thinking as we understand it, is supposedly no longer necessary. This might be true for easy issues. Yet, where complex "multiterritorial issues" such as e.g. polution are being addressed, global thinking is still required. A problem such as

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polution is being influenced from different geographical and industrial territories which might overlap different national territories, and therefore can only be dealt with successfully through cooperative strategies between the different territories or groups of interest of these territories. Such problem-solving strategies require a high degree of cooperative behavior and therefore necessitate true global thinking.
In nature we already find many examples of "global behavior" only to mention the social behavior of animals. Some social animals display an impressively high degree of cooperative behavior which makes them act in a perfectly global fashion. The only shortcoming animals have is that their cooperativeness is mainly determined genetically and therefore can only be changed minimally within a lifespan. Man in contrast seems to have less cooperative behavior that is determined genetically, therefore he has to be trained for more cooperative behavior in order to learn to think and act according to global perspectives. This leads us to the question of: what type of educations is needed in order to promote global thinking?

III. Education which promotes global thinking

1. Learning of global thinking within a group

As emphasized before global thinking requires decentralized thinking. In our opinion therefore decentralized thinking can be learned best through a learning experience within a group composed of different "conceptual territories as is the case in a multidisciplinary group. This multidisciplinary group should also have to perform a cooperative problemsolving task. Through this living-learning experience within a group of different "functional professional territories" or expertises each group member is forced to decenter from his "professional territory" if he wants to be able to communicate with the other members in order to carry out the cooperative task. Through this decentration of each group member from his own thinking and at the same time performing a cooperative problemsolving task, global thinking gets best promoted. Within multidisciplinary professional research teams at the present time global thinking is probably being promoted most readily but by far not enough. Even research activities often take place as very isolated

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activities highly influenced by territorial thinking and territorial fights.
The same learning experience for global thinking of course could take place within a group consisting of members from different political territories who also have a cooperative problemsolving task. But within such a group purely territorial thinking and behavior is even more likely to occur than in a group of different professionals.
Hence the low success rate of most political groups or meetings with cooperative tasks. They usually end up in endless territorial fights with some trying to gain territory over others.

Any kind of cooperative task performed by individuals of different conceptual territorial backgrounds in a team promotes global thinking. Consequently more multidisciplinary group learning situationes should be set up in all educational programms, if one wants to incourage the learning of global thinking.

2. Decentralization of education itself

As a logical consequence of the theories outlined above one has to say that any kind of education, that is controlled and organized centrally, prevents a learning process that promotes global thinking. Any kind of centrally organized education is first uniformed, then gets generalized by only promoting the expansion of one type of "conceptual territory" but never allowing for decentration of thinking necessary for global thinking. If we want to promote more global thinking we have to promote decentralization of education while keeping the different educational institutions in contact with each other and most beneficially let them perform some cooperative tasks once in a while rather than just be competitive.

IV. Conclusion

Global thinking is based on continuous decentration of "territorial thinking". Global thinking should not be confused with universal or generalized thinking. Global thinking requires decentration of thinking from one particular conceptual terri-

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tory while still connecting all the different types of conceptual territories with each other. Global thinking also does not stand in opposition to analytical linear thinking, but goes beyond it. Global thinking can very well be analytical, but it analyzes "the whole" according to different points of references with different conceptual models while still connecting these different conceptual models with each other into a global system rather than dichotomizing between the different conceptual models. The learning of global thinking can best be promoted by allowing a decentralization of education which then will lead again naturally to a cooperation between the different educational institutions. Thus we promote global thinking not by expanding and spreading one conceptual model or philosophy over any other way of life, but rather by promoting all types and ways of life with their respective philosophy so to speak while at the same time decentering constantly from these different philosophies and recentering again on a higher level of perspective. Thus global thinking promotes a process of coevolution of different conceptual models rather than territorial fights between them or expansion of one over all of them.

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