

University of Tartu  
Department of Semiotics

Samantha Herrerías Durán

“Dynamics of Cultural Memory: Mediation of the Ayotzinapa case”

Master Thesis

Supervisor: Katre Pärn

Tartu  
2017

I have written the Master Thesis myself, independently. All of the other authors' texts, main viewpoints and all data from other resources have been referred to.

Author: Samantha Herrerías Durán .....  
(*signature*)

.....  
(*date*)

## Table of contents

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. CULTURAL MEMORY AND CULTURAL MEDIATION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 CULTURAL MEMORY .....	5
1.2 CULTURAL MEDIATION AND THE DYNAMICS OF CULTURAL MEMORY .....	13
<b>2. THE MEDIATION PROCESS OF THE AYOTZINAPA CASE .....</b>	<b>21</b>
2.1 THE EVENT: IGUALA ATTACKS AND DISAPPEARANCE OF THE STUDENTS.....	22
2.2 (RE)CONSTRUCTION OF THE AYOTZINAPA CASE .....	25
2.2.1 <i>Official narrative</i> .....	27
2.2.2 <i>Contra-narrative</i> .....	34
2.2.3 <i>Subversive narratives (created by the mass media)</i> .....	39
2.2.4 <i>Transversal narratives</i> .....	47
2.3 REMEDIATION IN THE AYOTZINAPA CASE.....	57
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>ANNEX 1 TIMELINE .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>ANNEX 2 PRESS RELEASE OF THE ANTI-MONUMENT.....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>ANNEX 3 IMAGES.....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>KOKKUVÕTE.....</b>	<b>91</b>

## Introduction

The aim of the study is to analyze how the concepts of remediation and resemiotization can be used in analysis of the dynamics of cultural memory of an event that took place in Guerrero, Mexico, during the night of September 26, and the first hours of the next day, September 27, 2014. It is unclear what happened; different versions have emerged since then. But in what they do agree is that six people were killed at the scene; one student was shot in the head and remains in coma, and 43 students are still missing; they were students from the Raul Isidro Burgos Normal School, in Ayotzinapa, also in Guerrero, Mexico.

As the process of cultural memory is related to the textuality and mediality; the key concepts of the research are 'remediation' by Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin, complemented by the work of Julie Hengst and Paul Prior; 'resemiotization' by Rick Iedema; and cultural memory provided by Boris Uspensky and Juri Lotman, Aleida and Jan Assmann, and approaches linking this concept with media, as the ones provided by Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney. Hence the study will be focused on how the dynamics of cultural memory works. After showing this, I will proceed with my analysis, guided by following research questions:

1. How do the dynamics of cultural memory work in the (mediation of) Ayotzinapa case?
2. What are the main narratives mediating the Ayotzinapa case and how are they mediating/(re)constructing the case?
3. What are the relations between the narratives - how do they remediate (and resemiotize) each other and thereby shape the cultural memory?
4. How is the Ayotzinapa case turned into site of memory and what is commemorated?



## Content Summary

The study starts with an overview of the work, which has two content parts. The first part is dedicated to set the theoretical framework about *cultural memory*, divided into two subchapters: “Cultural memory” and “Cultural mediation and the dynamics of cultural memory”. The second half will be focused on the analysis of the Ayotzinapa case in Mexico. This will be followed by the conclusion.

The first theoretical subchapter will start with a definition of culture to introduce the concept of ‘cultural memory’ and its relation to media. Firstly, this answers why one can say there is a cultural memory and how it works, making special emphasis on the work of the scholars from Tartu-Moscow School (TMS). Thus, this study is made from a semiotics perspective. Secondly, this sketches out the relation of cultural memory and mediality in order to delimit the topic of interest. The research will be focused on the creation of texts to mediate the case of Ayotzinapa missing student and also the way in which these texts are shaping cultural memory. As Jan Assmann (2008: 113) claims that cultural memory is not interested on “the past as such, as it is investigated and reconstructed by archaeologists and historians [...] but the past as it is remembered but as it is remembered”. Also, Rigney (2004) argues that memories are not tangible, in the sense that, they are not passing from one generation to another as happens with a concrete thing. Then, it is expected that in the course of time – or even from one medium to another, “the content of what is remembered will also change; that new images will be acquired and past images revised or abandoned in the light of subsequent events” (Rigney 2004: 367-8). Therefore, concepts as remediation and resemiotization are useful to approach the “presentness of memory”, and the semiotic processes related to the reconstruction of the past. Besides, in Rigney words “The term ‘cultural memory’ highlights the extent to which shared memories of the past are the product of mediation, textualization and acts of communication” (Rigney 2005: 14).

The next subchapter will be focused on the dynamics of cultural memory. As cultural memory is made by cultural texts, it is dynamic and relies on media to create meaning. On top of that, it is also about how the past will be remembered; its process is based on reconstruction. Also, the narratives created about specific sites of memory, as Nora calls them, are a second-order memory. That is, there is a reconstruction of the past by a third actor who is turning the

experience or the information about the event into a point of reference not only for his contemporaries but also to those born after them, a “metaphor for the fashioning of narratives about the past when those with direct experience of events die off. Sites of memory inevitably become sites of second-order memory” (Winter 2008: 62). Then these places or sites of memory are, according to Brockmeier “where people remember the memories of others and in this way re-appropriate” the memory (Brockmeier 2010: 12). In addition, one event can generate a discourse about itself and be represented through many media, so naturally, there are many narratives coexisting at the same time.

The chapter will then continue with the basic theoretical notions to understand how the mechanisms mentioned above are related with each other. Thus, the main issue is the autocommunicative aspect of culture, and what this largely implies for the multiple narratives. When culture acknowledges itself, it begins to create texts that can only be understood, and therefore mediated, on a particular space, a semiosphere. This semiotic mechanism should be considered as complex and dynamic. To study a case from a semiotic mediation perspective implies that there are texts and languages/media coexisting and interacting at the same time in culture. The concept of remediation helps to understand how these texts are connected to each other creating semiotic chains of activities. Nowadays, thanks to technological improvements, the media channels from which these texts are mediated and circulated make necessary the awareness of how the meaning-making process can be changed from one medium to another. On top of that, this process happens in a particular context under specific cultural code creating a discourse, such as in the Ayotzinapa case, thus shaping cultural memory.

The second part is dedicated to the analysis of the Ayotzinapa case. To be more specific, it analyzes the way in which cultural memory is constructed through the mediation and the remediation of the event (attacks), as well as in the construction of the case. Hence, the study differentiates between the *event*, what happened in Iguala, Guerrero, between the 26 and 27 of September of 2014, and the *case* of Ayotzinapa, that began with the mediation and remediation of the event and continues until now.

The aims of this chapter are to outline the context in which the event and case emerged, to present the event (attacks in Iguala), and ultimately, to analyze the relation between the narratives of the case, the remediation and resemiotization processes through different media materials (texts) in the shaping of cultural memory.

From the perspective of cultural mediation, the case can be divided into different layers. So far, almost two years after the event, we can identify four narrative versions: (1) the official version (provided by the Mexican government), (2) the contra-version (backed by international institutions), (3-4) the subversive and the transversal narrative (created by the mass media). All of these narratives were mediated by the mass media and represent the corpus of the case.

In addition, the Ayotzinapa case can be seen as not only as a mediation process, but also as remediation as it is created by several chains of semiotic production. These chains are material expressions of social, cultural and historical structures. For this study, this materiality is presented as a discourse, which is formed by several narratives that are coexisting in the same time and space. On top of that, the production of the texts related to the Ayotzinapa case, involves many levels of materiality, that is to say, the process of remediation allows seeing how many “pieces” from different texts create another one. This has a special impact on the meaning-making process, as the meanings are transposed from one context into another. After all, the whole process of cultural memory is based on selection of texts to create meaning.

# **1. Cultural Memory and cultural mediation**

## **1.1 Cultural Memory**

Whenever we think about memory, we tend to do it on a personal (individual) level, if we can recall our actions or even thoughts. We also, might think about our personal memories, those flashbacks that take us to our past. Thus when we refer to memory, it is necessary to mention the remembering act. Memory cannot be defined without that. Besides, personal memory cannot be analyzed in isolation. Culture is constantly shaping an individual's memories, knowledge and values. Therefore, it makes sense that we can also share memories as “cultural memory”. This chapter will be focused on the definition of cultural memory and its relation to media. Firstly, this examines why there is a cultural memory and how it works, making special emphasis on the work of the scholars from Tartu-Moscow School (TMS) to give this study a semiotic perspective. Secondly, this sketches out the relation of cultural memory and mediality in order to delimit the topic of interest.

In order to understand cultural memory, one should start with the concept of culture. For Lotman, *text* was the basic unit of culture. Tamm gives an overview on Lotman's understanding of culture (Tamm 2015: 130-131) saying that it includes not only a certain combination of semiotic systems (languages), but also the sum of all historically existent messages (texts). Thus,

central to Lotman's cultural theory is the notion of culture as a text or a sum of texts: "The semiotic universe may be regarded as the totality of individual texts and isolated languages as they relate to each other." (Lotman 2005: 208). The text is often seen only as a written message yet, according to TMS scholars, it can be created with different sign systems. It is not limited to words or natural languages.

According to Lotman, texts fulfill three principal functions (Lotman 1990: 11-18). The first one is focused on the process of communication, on the transmission of a message. The second is the creative function, in which the semiotic systems not only transmit existent messages but also are generators of new ones along with the codes to interpret them. And the third is the mnemonic function; it allows an integral meaning of the texts and provides continuity to each text in order to avoid a fragmented reading. "The text is not only the generator of new meanings, but also a condenser of cultural memory. A text has the capacity to preserve the memory of its previous contexts" (Lotman 1990: 18). In one sentence, it is the function that creates, preserves and reproduces information.

Thus culture is a social phenomenon that provides sense and order to the world around Man. Culture can be understood as a mechanism that creates sign systems to structure and assigns meaning to reality (Lotman & Uspensky 1978: 214-17). Furthermore, when we talk about mechanisms, there is an implication of dynamism in the translation of reality into texts that generate information and knowledge. In consequence, culture constitutes a kind of giant mechanism of text generation that constantly translates the surrounding world into cultural texts, thus contributing to the shaping of cultural memory:

The translation of a certain part of reality into one or another culture language, its conversion into a text, that is, into information fixed in a certain way, and the introduction of this information into collective memory—this is the sphere of everyday cultural activity [...] Only that which has been translated into a system of signs can be appropriated by memory; in this sense, the intellectual history of mankind can be regarded as a struggle for memory. (Lotman 1970: 215 in Tamm 2015: 130)

Since the text is the basic unit of culture and, as mentioned above, one of its functions is related to memory, it seems sometimes difficult to draw a line between culture and cultural memory. Also, to have a memory is not the same as being part of the cultural memory. Memory becomes cultural when it is shared by the community, that is, when it is collective and mediated through

shared texts. More importantly, cultural memory is not a static selective archive; it is a continuous process that goes on through time and space.

The view on *culture as memory* underlies the semiotic theory of Tartu-Moscow School, as is evident from *Theses on the Semiotic Study of Cultures* (Ivanov, et. al. 1973). Culture is the mechanism that stores information about society.

If we regard the collective as a more complexly organized individual, culture may be understood by analogy with the individual mechanism of memory, as a certain collective mechanism for the storage and processing of information. The semiotic structure of culture and the semiotic structure of memory are functionally uniform phenomena situated on different levels. (Ivanov, et. al. 1973: 68).

The scholars also highlight the fact that this proposition does not contradict the dynamism of culture. Being essentially a fixation of past experience, it may also act as a program to provide underlying structures and instructions for the creation of new texts. Nonetheless, there are certain considerations about seeing culture as the long-term memory of the community:

First a quantitative increase in the amount of knowledge—filling the various nodes of the culture’s hierarchic system with various texts. Second, redistribution in the structure of the nodes resulting in a change in the very notion of ‘a fact to be remembered’ [...] Third, forgetting. The conversion of a chain of facts into a text is invariably accompanied by a selection [...] since the selection of memorable facts is realized every time according to particular semiotic norms of the given culture [...] the text is not reality, but material for its reconstruction. (Lotman & Uspensky 1978: 215-16)

In addition, there is an aspect of culture argued by Lotman and Uspensky, which involves change that closely affects memory:

A change of culture (in particular, during epochs of social cataclysms) is usually accompanied by a sharp increase in the degree of semiotic behavior (which may be expressed by the changing of names and designations) [...] The introduction of new forms of behavior and the semiotic intensification of old forms can testify to a specific change in the type of culture. (Ibid, 211-12)

According to Tamm rapid cultural changes as a rule bring about a reorganization of cultural memory, including the generation of new codes which allow for old texts to be provided with new meanings: “Under the influence of new codes employed for deciphering texts stored in the cultural memory in times long past, a shift in the meaningful and meaningless elements of the text’s structure takes place” (Lotman 1985: 675; quoted in Tamm 2015:134).

On this, Lotman and Uspensky (1978) claim that this regulatory and integrative power results from the fact that culture has a natural ability of self-description and self-interpretation at the meta-level. Self-description enables culture to construct self-models and to include in its memory a concept of itself that ensures its structural unity and largely defines its characteristics as a reservoir of information.

According to Jan Assmann, memory gives us a certain awareness of selfhood that is the reason why it is linked to the concept of identity that is related to time: “Cultural memory is a form of collective memory, in the sense that it is shared by a number of people and that it conveys to these people a collective, that is, cultural, identity.” (Assmann J. 2008: 110). In addition, Assmann (Ibid, 109) proposes a very useful chart on the synthesis of time and identity materialized in memory. He distinguishes three levels: the first level is the *inner (neuro-mental) memory* in which time, as the term implies, is inner and subjective, and interacts with the inner self, seen as part of the individual memory. The second one is dedicated to the social level, where the *memory is communicative* and as its agents it has the social time and the social self, that is, the person as a carrier of social roles. The last level, is the *cultural memory*, in which time can be cultural, historical or mythical, focused on cultural identity and the ensuing cultural memory.

Sometimes it seems difficult to distinguish between communicative and cultural memory, as both are collective. One feature that may help to understand the difference between them is the role of institutions. Cultural memory, unlike communicative memory, relies on these institutions to be re-embodied:

Communicative memory is non-institutional; it is not supported by any institutions of learning, transmission, and interpretation; it is not cultivated by specialists and is not summoned or celebrated on special occasions; it is not formalized and stabilized by any forms of material symbolization; it lives in everyday interaction and communication and, for this very reason, has only a limited time depth which normally reaches no farther back than eighty years, the time span of three interacting generations. (Assmann J. 2008: 111)

Additionally, Jan Assmann makes an important annotation by claiming that things do not have memory of their own; they are just meaning carriers. There has to be “a material contact between a remembering mind and a reminding object”. If we take this to a social level, the symbolic relation becomes even more important: “groups, which of course, do not ‘have’ a memory tend to ‘make’ themselves one by means of things meant as reminders such as monuments, museums,

libraries, archives, and other mnemonic institutions” (Ibid, 111). This, in words of Jan Assmann, is what we call cultural memory.

Monuments, museums, libraries etc. might give an impression that cultural memory is a static archive. Yet Aleida Assmann (2008) argues that one should see cultural memory as a dynamic process where, on one side, something must be forgotten in order to make place for new information, and on the other side, there is a remembering part that in the cultural sphere requires institutions. “As forgetting, remembering also has an active and a passive side. The institutions of active memory preserve the past as present while the institutions of passive memory preserve the past as past. The tension between the pastness of the past and its presence is an important key to understanding the dynamics of cultural memory.” (Assmann A. 2008: 98)

Another key scholar who has worked on the cultural memory processes is Ann Rigney (2004) who explains why she prefers to stick with the term ‘cultural memory’ rather than the ‘collective’ or ‘social’ one. According to Rigney, cultural memory allows “an analysis of the artifacts and cultural processes through which shared memories are shaped and disseminated in the modern age” (Rigney 2004: 365). Moreover, Rigney mentions Jan Assmann’s work, claiming, “Communicative memory is gradually replaced by cultural memory” as the latter relies on the “memories of other people’s lives that have been mediated by texts and images: inherited” (Ibid, 367).

Scholars have proposed different typologies of cultural memory. Tamm (2015) refers to an important text in Russian, written by Lotman in 1985, “The Concept of Memory in Cultural Perspective”, in which Lotman suggested a provisional distinction between the two types of cultural memory: on one hand, *informative memory*, and on the other one, *creative memory*.

The first one is characterized by its focus on recording as precisely as possible the result of knowledge – the ‘final text’: “this type of memory is planar by nature, located in one temporal dimension and subject to the law of chronology. It evolves in the same direction with the flow of time, and is congruent with this flow” (Lotman 1985: 674 in Tamm 2015: 133).

In the second case, however, “the whole depth of texts” proves active: the result is no more important than the process of actualization of certain texts—and it is not governed by the formula “the newest is the most valuable”. Unlike informative cultural memory, creative cultural memory is not just pan-chronic, yet it is even opposed to time: “[It] preserves what once was as what



currently is. From the viewpoint of memory as a mechanism that works throughout its whole depth, the past is not past” (Ibid, 133).

Also, Tamm argues that “the dynamic of cultural memory is modeled by Lotman as primarily the interaction of codes and texts: creative memory generates not only new texts, but also new ways of interpreting and encoding them” (Ibid, 134). Moreover, the texts not only record information but also are capable of accumulating earlier interpretations of them, as well as of actualizing certain aspects of it at the cost of suppressing others.

Meanwhile, Aleida Assmann refers to “the actively circulated memory that keeps the past present as the canon and the passively stored memory that preserves the past as the archive.” (Assmann, A. 2008: 98). On one hand, for her the elements of the canon are marked by three qualities: selection, value, and duration. Selection presupposes decisions and power struggles; ascription of value endows these objects with an aura and a sacrosanct status; duration in cultural memory is the central aim of the procedure (Ibid, 100). According to Aleida Assmann, “the term ‘canon’ belongs to the history of religion; it is used there to refer to a text or a body of texts that is decreed to be sacred and must not be changed nor exchanged for any other text” (Ibid, 100). On the other hand, “the institutions of passive cultural memory are situated halfway between the canon and forgetting. The archive is the basis of what can be said in the future about the present when it will have become the past. Thus, it is part of cultural memory in the passive dimension of preservation. It stores materials in the intermediary state of “no longer” and “not yet,” deprived of their old existence and waiting for a new one.” (Ibid, 102-3)

The textuality of cultural memory brings about the question of role of various media in cultural memory. According to Ann Rigney (2004) cultural memory is a process of communication through media. On this Astrid Erll argues that “Cultural memory is constituted by a host of different media, operating within various symbolic systems: religious texts, historical painting, historiography, monuments [...] each of these media has its specific way of remembering and will leave its trace on the memory” (Erll 2008: 389).

Pierre Nora’s concept of *lieux de mémoire* proposes that they “are places, indeed, in the three senses of the word, symbolic and functional, but simultaneously in different degrees. Even a place of purely material appearance, as a deposit of archives, is only a place of memory if the imagination confers on it a symbolic aura.” (Nora 2008: 33). Thus, as previously stated in this chapter, cultural memory depends on certain materialization, a media, or as Nora argues, a *lieu de*

*mémoire* to stay alive. In addition, he considers the relation between place and time as one of the most important features that distinguishes them: “the most fundamental purpose of the *lieu de mémoire* is to stop time, to block the work of forgetting, to establish a state of things, to immortalize death, to materialize the immaterial [...] in order to capture a maximum amount of meaning in the fewest of signs” (Ibid, 34).

The interaction between media and cultural memory was taken to a different level by Laura Basu (2008) when she provides a reconceptualization of Nora’s term *lieux de mémoire*, in which media is no longer seen as a symptom of memory loss, but rather as resources that can provide a certain order to memory. Basu emphasizes that her interest is not to contradict Nora’s work, but to “to examine in more detail how exactly a memory site may form and evolve over time, and in particular how it may produce, organize and transmit meaning, in terms of the mediatization that are so essential to its existence.” (Basu 2008: 140). She proposes the concept of memory *dispositif* to analyse more complex mediations, arguing, “The term “*dispositif*”, often translated as “apparatus”, usually refers to a constellation of heterogeneous elements within a system” (Ibid, 141). The latter makes sense if one wants to analyze not a medium in isolation but rather as different kinds of media interacting within a process.

Basu (Ibid, 141) claims that thinking about a memory site as a *dispositif* allows us to move beyond looking at individual texts or media as they relate to cultural memory and to see a site of memory as being made up of a conglomeration of heterogeneous media texts, the specific relationships between which determining the nature and functions of the memory site at a given time.

Likewise, Rigney talks about written texts as “sites of memory” and monuments, as they “have a fixed character which allows them to play a role in recalling some person or event of yore and in bearing witness to them” (Rigney 2004: 383). Yet different from other kind of memorials, texts are not located in a particular site, “hence they may be recycled among various groups of readers living in different parts of the globe and at different historical moments. In this sense, texts are ‘portable’ monuments, which can be carried over into new situations.” (Ibid, 383) According to Rigney, when the literary practice is located in the cultural memory framework, there can be seen “the complex processes involved in the circulation of stories and the evolution of collective remembrance: both the convergence of remembrance on particular sites and the gradual erosion of those sites” (Rigney 2008: 352).

Thus cultural memory must be seen as something ‘alive’ in constant motion and not only as a static archive. On this, Ann Rigney (2005: 25) suggests that cultural memory must be seen “as something dynamic, as a result of recursive acts of remembrance, rather than as something like an unchanging and pre-given inheritance”. Even further, as Astrid Erll (2011: 11) proposes, “as the incessant wandering of carriers, media, contents, forms, and practices of memory, their continual ‘travels’ and ongoing transformations through time and space, across social, linguistic and political borders.” For her, memory travels as it has movement, “to be kept in motion, in order to ‘stay alive’, to have an impact both on individual minds and social formations. Such travel consists only partly in movement across and beyond territorial and social boundaries. On a more fundamental level, it is the ongoing exchange of information between individuals and the motion between minds and media which first of all generates collective memory” (Ibid, 12). Erll also argues that societies do not remember literally; but much of what is done to reconstruct a shared past bears some resemblance to the processes of individual memory, such as the selectivity and perceptivity inherent in the creation of versions of the past according to present knowledge and needs (Ibid, 5).

The study will be focused on the textual mediation of the case of the Ayotzinapa missing students, enquiring into how these texts are shaping cultural memory. As Jan Assmann (2008: 113) suggests cultural memory is not interested on the past as such rather as it is remembered. Also, Rigney (2004) argues that memories are not tangible, in the sense that, they are not passing from one generation to another as it happens with a thing. Then, it is expected that in the course of time – or even from one medium to another, “the content of what is remembered will also change; that new images will be acquired and past images revised or abandoned in the light of subsequent events” (Rigney 2004: 367-8). Therefore, concepts as remediation and resemiotization are useful to approach the “presentness of memory”, and the semiotic processes related to the reconstruction of the past. Besides, in Rigney words, “The term ‘cultural memory’ highlights the extent to which shared memories of the past are the product of mediation, textualization and acts of communication” (Rigney 2005: 14). The next subchapter will be focused on the dynamics of cultural memory.

## 1.2 Cultural mediation and the dynamics of cultural memory

As it was introduced in the previous chapter, cultural memory is made by cultural texts; it is dynamic and relies on the role of media as a meaning creator allowing dynamism on the process of shaping cultural memory to create meaning. On top of that, it is also about how the past will be remembered; its process is based on reconstruction. Thus, the past is reconstructed by a third actor who is turning the experience or the information about the event into a point of reference not only for his contemporaries but also to those born after them, “metaphor for the fashioning of narratives about the past when those with direct experience of events die off. Sites of memory inevitably become sites of second-order memory” (Winter 2008: 62). Then these places or sites of memory are, according to Brockmeier “where people remember the memories of others and in this way re-appropriate a particular tradition” (Brockmeier 2010: 12). In addition, one event can generate a discourse about itself and be represented through various media and, of course, there are many narratives coexisting at the same time, which is why concepts as *remediation* and *resemiotization* are relevant for understanding how cultural memory is created and rooted in society. This chapter will be focused on how these mechanisms are related to each other.

First of all, as Lotman and Uspensky (1978: 215) explain, “text is not reality but material for its reconstruction”. So, fragments of reality make it into each text. Thus these texts do not only mediate reality, but through the process of mediation, they shape the way reality is remembered. Mediation is a way to interact with reality, as Denis McQuail explains:

[Mediation] it refers to the relaying of second-hand (or third party) versions of events and conditions which we cannot directly observe ourselves. Secondly, it refers to the efforts of other actors and institutions in society to contact us for their own purposes. This applies to politicians and governments, advertisers [...] it refers to the indifferent way in which we form our perceptions of groups of cultures to which we do not belong. (McQuail 1983: 203)

Thus, media can be seen as an instrument that helps humans to connect themselves with external objects or subjects. Also, it can be a carrier of several discourses in society. All of this is part of the process of the modelling of reality.

This is also why, for Torop, studies in semiotics of culture lead to the semiotics of mediation that “is based on comparative analysis of mediation processes, on typology of forms of mediation and on the subsequent complementary analysis of culture” (Torop 2012: 286). He argues that there is an implicit and explicit mediation and by studying the correlation of these forms it is the essence of semiotics of mediation:

For the essence of mediation stems from the different levels of conventionality that are created by the metalanguages, textual collections, discourses and media in the process of communication. Semiotics of media begins with semiotic mediation or with the conventionality of words in the signification of a given world, and ends with the culture of mediation where one and the same cultural language or one and the same text operates as a means of dialogue with oneself, as a means of communication with others, as part of a textual system or discourse, or as a transmedial phenomenon. (Ibid: 294)

Moreover, according to Rigney, memory sites are the result of a “selection process that has privileged some “figures of memory” above others” (Rigney 2008: 345). Besides, the acts of remembrance take place in different media and genres. That is why, for Rigney, “it is only through the mediation of cultural practices that figures of memory can acquire shape, meaning, and high profile within particular communities” (Ibid, 345).

The Ayotzinapa case has been represented again and again since it happened in press conferences and official reports, in different media—newspaper articles, magazines, TV and radio news, documentaries—in public manifestations on the streets of Mexico and all over the world, etc. From the perspective of cultural mediation, the case can be divided into different layers. First, the one related to the event itself. Second, when the event was mediated and reconstructed by the officials as well as public media. The last one is focused on the remediation and debates surrounding the reconstructions. Then, the analysis will be focused on the role of various media languages and the process of remediation in construal of various discourses of cultural memory.

According to Foucault (1969), the term discourse goes beyond the verbal field, by not seeing it as a phenomenon of expression, and becomes an act, and it is formed by a series of statements. For Foucault, it is a totality, a space of exteriority in which distinct sites are connected. Discourse is composed of signs that are used to designate things:

In the most general, and vaguest way, it denoted a group of verbal performances; and by discourse, then, I meant that which was produced (perhaps all that was produced) by the groups of signs. But I also meant a group of acts of formulation; a series of sentences or propositions [...] is constituted by a group of

sequences of signs, in so far as they are statements, that is, in so far as they can be assigned particular modalities of existence. (Foucault 1969: 120-1)

Besides, for Foucault every discourse has a discursive form, which is to say, the principle of dispersion and redistribution of statements that groups them into systems of formation. Hence, a discourse is the group of a limited number of statements that belong to the same discursive formation. On top of that, there are discursive practices that can be defined as “a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area, the conditions of operation of the enunciative function.” (Ibid, 131-2)

On the other hand, van Leeuwen (2005) states that the discourse is often used to denote an extended stretch of connected speech or writing, a “text”. For him discourses are resources for representation, knowledge about some aspect of reality: “They do not determine what we can say about a given aspect of reality, yet we cannot represent anything without them. We need them as frameworks for making sense of things” (van Leeuwen 2005: 95). According to van Leeuwen, discourse is linked to reality, “all discourses are modelled on social practices and that our understandings always derive from our doings. But discourses transform these practices in ways to safeguard the interests at stake in a given social context” (Ibid, 104). Similarly, Lotman and Uspensky said that the text is a reconstruction of reality according to norms of the given culture (1978: 216). Then, discourses are plural as there are different ways of making sense of the same aspect of reality. They exist through texts, through what has been said or written—and/or expressed by means of other semiotic modes. Even so, some texts have only few elements; the reason for this is because “knowledge is selective, and what it selects depends on the interests and purposes of the institutions that have fostered the knowledge” (van Leeuwen 2005: 109).

Moving forward, the discourse needs a medium to circulate. For J. Bolter and R. Grusin (2000) “all mediation is remediation [...] all current media function as remediators and that remediation offer us a means of interpreting the work of earlier media as well. Our culture conceives of each medium or constellation of media as it responds to, redeploys, competes with, and reforms other media.” (Bolter & Grusin 2000:55). Bolter and Grusin argue that remediation can be both explicitly and implicitly, and can be seen in different ways: first as the mediation of mediation, such as media commenting, reproducing or replacing each other; second as the inseparability of mediation and reality, which starts by assuming that all mediation are real, as

artifacts no as autonomous agents in our mediated culture; third, and finally, as reform, as the goal of remediation goal is to rehabilitate other media, also can be understood as a process to reform reality (Ibid, 55-56).

Bolter and Grusin's understanding of mediation concurs with the functioning of semiotic systems in the mechanism of culture, which is made by them, so to say, as there is heterogeneity of languages in it. "For the functioning of culture [...] A that a single isolated semiotic system [...] cannot constitute a culture—for this we need as a minimal mechanism a pair of correlated semiotic systems. The text in a natural language and the picture demonstrate the most usual system of two languages constituting the mechanism of culture." (Ivanov, et. al. 1973: 69-70). Thus, there is a coexistence of languages as part of the systems that are modeling the world.

According to Hengst and Prior (2010), the notion of remediation focuses on the semiotics means that are simultaneously play in any situated interaction, as well as the location of any interaction. That is the "convergence of particular tools, people, and environments, within historical trajectories that reach from the past into the present and project to near-and-long-term futures" (Hengst & Prior 2010:7). As a consequence, a remediation process implies several "temporal chains of semiotic production reception, representation and distribution" (Ibid, 7). It is an activity made by different actors: "Attention to remediation calls for careful tracing of semiotic activity across chains and for a subtle and precise vocabulary for practices of alignment as well as processes of transformation across media, genres, and events" (Ibid, 8). That is why the scholars claim, "the methodological tools for analysis of semiotic remediation have been developed in approaches that examine discourse, visual, and other sign systems and that study human activity" (Ibid, 16).

Cultural texts create cultural memory. There is a constant flow of information being translated into cultural texts. Also, in the process of cultural memory there is a correlation of texts, from a monument to a novel. "Semiotic remediation as practice then is fundamental to understanding the work of culture as well as communication; it calls on us to attend to the diverse ways that semiotic performances are re-represented and reused across modes, media, and chains of activity" (Ibid, 2). According to Astrid Erll, "Remediation is not restricted to icons and narratives, but can even choose actual media products and media technologies as its objects" (Erll 2008: 394). Therefore one should take into account that our current reality is grasped through media, and the same happens with memory. "The cultural mind is in many ways a medial mind.

It is the patterns derived from the media cultures we live in, especially (albeit often unintentionally) from fictions, that shape our idea of reality and our memories” (Ibid, 397). Thus the process of remembering memorable events is not homogenous and it goes through different communication channels. Yet it is important to mention the fact that sometimes the content—the storyline—can be the same or similar, and repeated many times.

The term “remediation” I refer to the fact that memorable events are usually represented again and again, over decades and centuries, in different media: in newspaper articles, photography [...] What is known about a war, a revolution, or any other event which has been turned into a site of memory, therefore, seems to refer not so much to what one might cautiously call the “actual events,” but instead to a canon of existent medial constructions, to the narratives and images circulating in a media culture [...] Remembered events are transmedial phenomena, that is, their representation is not tied to one specific medium. (Ibid, 392)

Hengst and Prior (2010) rely on the concept of habitus proposed by Bourdieu<sup>1</sup>, to claim that practice as much as discourse is always contextualized and contextualizing, and a theory of connection that accounts for the re-.

For what makes something a re-petition, a re-cognition, a re-play, a re-presentation, a re-use. A re cannot be re- because it involves simple relations of identity (that is, because it is the same thing again); instead, the relations that we define as re- [...] must emerge from some mix of indexical, iconic, and/or tropic mappings between events or between entities (Hengst & Prior 2010: 11).

For these authors, the real challenge is how to understand “repeated” not as a relation between identical identities or entities, but rather as a consequence of complex blends of indexicality, iconicity, and tropic projection. That, according to the scholars, will be possible only through an explanation of the re- and co-relations will “the semiotic recirculation of discourse practices across embodied action, material artifacts, and inner experience present for us a fully integrated framework for understanding individual and social development, the constitution of sociocultural orders, and the everyday working out of situated, mediated activity” (Ibid, 16). Following their logic, semiotic remediation as a discourse practice aims to connect the worlds of the inner semiosis to the chains of material activity.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Bourdieu, Pierre (1990). *The logic of practice*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.



To explore semiotic remediation, researchers should recognize the simultaneous, layered deployment of multiple semiotics (talk, gesture, artifact use and production, interaction with environmental structure): people are never just talking, just reading, just writing. It also means that researchers should look at semiotic trajectories and chains across time and place, recognizing both the need to understand semiotics as dispersed and mediated and the value of tracing out mediations. (Ibid, 19).

Moreover, Hengst and Prior (2010) claim that a semiotic remediation suggests attention to trajectories of material and discursive transformation and to achieve that, Rick Iedema's conceptualization of resemiotization integrates all these chained (re)materializations into a single historical trajectory. For Iedema there is a multi-semiotic complexity of the representations due to the increased of "ubiquity of sound, image, film, gesture, through TV, the computer and the internet" (Iedema 2003: 33). That represents a change in the semiotic landscape in which language should not be the center of all communication. Nowadays, there is a multi-semiotic complexity in the means to produce a practice or a representation. It should be noted that resemiotization also centers its attention in social construction, as materiality is linked to social practices.

Moreover, according to Iedema, resemiotization is particularly interested in "how materiality ('expression') serves to realize the social, cultural and historical structures, investments and circumstances of our time. In this way, resemiotization contributes to displacing analytical attention from discourse as structured meaning towards practice as material affordance" (Iedema 2003: 50). Thus, "resemiotization is about how meaning making shifts from context to context, from practice to practice, or from one stage of a practice to the next." (Ibid, 41). But the concept does not only deal with the reification of meanings.

For Iedema, resemiotization "is also manifest in what Bourdieu simply calls 'scheme transfer', a principle that creates homological patterns across different spheres of social life" (Iedema 2003: 43-4). This scheme transfer uses the polysemy of the symbols and follows a practical logic according to each area. That is to say whenever a storyline it is told in different media, it goes through a process of adaptation to the meaning carriers from each medium. Iedema puts this process into semiotics terms: "An important point to make here is that each resemiotization transposes meanings from one semiotic mode into one which is different. Each semiotic will have its own specific (systemic) constraints and affordance" (Ibid, 33). This transposition, according to Iedema, produces not exact likenesses, but represents a multi-channel

set of directions, so to say, a semiotic metaphor. Iedema, claims that “the kind of organizational process, where salient meanings’ realizations are rendered increasingly difficult to renegotiate and change, stabilizes specific meanings and in doing so resemiotizes those meanings into more durable manifestations” (Ibid, 35).

Furthermore, Ann Rigney proposes a typology to analyze the role of literary works in the performance of cultural memory (2008: 350-2). Rigney’s typology of memory functions concentrates on individual texts but her work can be seen as an example of how the process of resemiotization is linked to the shaping of cultural memory.

In her typology, she proposes five interrelated roles. Some of them can be applied to all fictional narratives, irrespective of medium, while other are particularly linked to literary works with recognized cultural value. The first role is called relay stations, as fictional narratives often build on or recycle earlier forms of remembrance, and they become relay stations in the circulation of memories. The next role focuses on stabilizers, as fictional narratives can provide a cultural frame for later recollections. Their sticking power as narratives and as aesthetics artifacts this works as a stabilizing factor in cultural remembrance. Moreover, according to Rigney, “the literary canon itself has also traditionally functioned as stabilizer of remembrance (Ibid, 350). The third role is for the catalysts; fictional narratives have a particular role to play in drawing attention to “new” topics or ones hitherto neglected in cultural remembrance. In these cases they are instrumental in establishing a topic as a socially relevant topic and in setting multiple acts of recollection relating to it. The fourth role is dedicated to the objects of recollection: literary texts do not just work as media of remembrance, but themselves become objects of recollection in other media and forms of expression. Finally, the calibrators: canonical literary ‘monuments’ also have a specific role to play as a benchmark for reflecting critically on dominant memorial practices.

Rigney’s typology also demonstrates that cultural memory is not accumulative. Whether as objects to be remembered or as stories to be revised, literary texts exemplify the fact that memorial dynamics do not just work in a linear or accumulative way. Instead, they progress through all sorts of loopings back to cultural products that are not simply media of memory (relay stations and catalysts) but also objects of recall and revision (Ibid, 352).

To conclude, the main issue revised in this chapter was the autocommunicative aspect of culture, and much of what this implies. This is to say, when culture acknowledges itself, it begins

to create texts that can only be understood and therefore mediated, on a particular space, a semiosphere. This semiotic mechanism should be considered as complex and dynamic. To study a case from a semiotic mediation perspective implies that there are texts and languages/media coexisting and interacting at the same time in culture. The concept of remediation helps to understand how these texts are connected to each other creating semiotic chains of activities. Nowadays, thanks to technological improvements in the media channels from which these texts are mediated and circulated, it is important to be aware of how the meaning-making process can be changed from one medium to another. On top of that, this process happens in a particular context under specific cultural code creating a discourse which shapes cultural memory, as will be examined in the Ayotzinapa case.

## 2. The mediation process of the Ayotzinapa case

“Many acts of remembrance converge, only stay alive as long as people consider it worthwhile to argue about their meaning” (Rigney 2008: 346)

---

This chapter will analyze how cultural memory is constructed through the mediation and the remediation processes of an event that took place in Guerrero, Mexico, during the night of September 26, and the first hours of the next day, September 27, 2014, as well as, in the construction of the case. It is unclear what happened; different versions have emerged since then. But what they do agree on is that six people were killed at the scene; one student was shot in the head and remains in coma, and 43 students are still missing; they were students from the *Escuela Normal Raul Isidro Burgos*, in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, Mexico.

Now, we will rely on Laura Basu’s (2008) concept of *memory dispositif*, which allows for analyzing individual texts or media as they relate to cultural memory, as well as the way in which a site of memory is being made up of a conglomeration of heterogeneous media texts. The study has been able to identify different narratives in the reconstruction of the case. As was previously stated, the mediation process refers to second-hand (or third party) versions of events and aspects that cannot be directly observed. Also, it refers to those efforts by other actors and institutions in society to share their discourses. On top of that, as the study focuses on the cultural memory, the analysis will have as its core the narratives mediated and remediated by institutions, such as government and journalistic media. Thus, the discourses of the families, classmates or friends, of the missing students will not be considered outside the journalistic mediation, as they would be otherwise better considered under communicative memory rather than the cultural one.

Hence, based on these criteria, materials (texts) have been selected with a view on their relevance to the reconstruction of the case (Annex 3, Fig. 1). These include those provided by the main institutions, such as the Mexican federal government, or the Interdisciplinary Group of

Independent Experts, or by investigative journalists. It has been found that the most remediated texts were those produced by the government and the independent experts.

In the case of the selection of the texts from the mass media, the criteria were the following: to identify texts about the case, mediated through different channels, TV, printed and online press and documentaries. This was done taking into account the mediums which have credibility in the Mexican context, that is, on one hand, those that reach more people and have been in circulation for a considerable amount of time, and on the other hand, those coming from new digital platforms that may not currently reach the same amount of people in Mexico, but have potential to reach larger audiences in the long-term, as the circulation is through internet. The final selection of the texts aims to keep a variety in the media channels, though, as the focus is on more traditional media, social media has been left out though the case was extensively remediated and discussed in these sphere.

It is important to mention that the current study differentiates between the *event*, what happened in Iguala, Guerrero, during the 26th and 27th of September of 2014, and the *case* of Ayotzinapa, that began with the mediation and remediation of the event and continues until now. With this in mind, the aims of this chapter are:

- To outline the context in which the event and case emerged.
- To present an overview of the event.
- To analyze the different narratives of the case, through different media materials (texts)
- To analyze the process of the remediation in the case

## **2.1 The event: Iguala attacks and disappearance of the students**

Mexico is largely known as a violent country, due to many factors, most of them related to drug cartels and the whole social dynamic produced around these. We can even talk about a *Narcoculture*. It is a country full of contrasts where you can find one of the richest men in the world living in its capital, at the same time, there are people living in extreme poverty. It is true that this is not a characteristic exclusive to Mexico. Yet, its history, its geographical location – connecting North with Central and South America, and as it was mentioned before, the *narco*

environment in which people live, generate a very particular atmosphere. Although the focus of this research is not the social and political issues of the country, all of these factors contribute to creating the arena in which the subject of our research—the Ayotzinapa case—was born.

Ayotzinapa is located in the Guerrero state (Annex 3, Fig. 2), which is a very important piece in the drug trafficking process, especially in the production and trafficking from Mexico to United States of America. Guerrero is divided into seven regions: *Costa Chica* [Small Coast], *Costa Grande* [Big Coast], *Norte* [Northern], *Centro* [Center], *Tierra Caliente* [Hot Land], *Acapulco*, and *Montaña* [Mountain] (Annex 3, Fig. 3).

In order to offer a general, yet complete, overview of the geopolitical context of the Ayotzinapa case, the study relies on the documentary *Mirar Morir.El Ejército en la noche de Iguala*.<sup>2</sup> The documentary was released on October 15, 2015. It is produced and written by the Mexican journalist, Témoris Grecko, and directed by her sister, Coizta Grecko.

The documentary claims that Guerrero is located in the ‘Poppy Pentagon’, formed by the municipals territories of Zihuatanejo, Altamirano, Tecpan, Acapulco, Chilpancingo, Iguala and Teloloapan. Since 2011, the poppy plant has become the most important illegal crop in Mexico. Thus, the Ayotzinapa case reflects the corruption of the Mexican state apparatus. Some even call it a *Narco-State*, as the state works closely with the drug cartels, protecting them and receiving money for it.

One example of this is what happened in Iguala, Guerrero. The mayor José Luis Abarca and his wife, Maria de Los Angeles Pineda, were involved with the drug cartel *Guerreros Unidos* and became their political patrons. The Pineda Villa family earned a place of seniority among the drug cartels in Guerrero. In 2000, they grew active in drug trafficking by working for the “Chapo Guzman’s cartel”<sup>3</sup> and later for the Beltran-Leyva Cartel<sup>4</sup>. And then they became independent,

---

<sup>2</sup> Trans. *Watching them die. The army in the night of Iguala*. The documentary also offers a reconstruction of the event, that is, the sequence of violent acts that took place during that night, and the routes taken by each bus, are described in a very clear way; supported by the testimonies of some students who were there, and survived that night. Particularly, the testimony made by Uriel Alonso, a second-year student, from the Normal Rural School Raúl Isidro Burgos that will be reviewed later in the chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Joaquín Guzmán Loera aka “El chapo”, the head of what is called The *Sinaloa Cartel*, a Mexican criminal organization whose activities are centered in drug trafficking.

<sup>4</sup> The *Beltrán-Leyva Cartel* was a criminal organization established in Sinaloa, Mexico. Originally led by brothers Marcos Arturo, Alfredo Hector, Carlos Beltran Leyva, and the late Beltran Ivan Villarreal, they were commanders of the *Sinaloa Cartel*.

with their own mafia, the *Guerreros Unidos*. Two of the brothers of Angeles Pineda were killed in 2009, and the third, Salomon, was arrested in February 2015; he is considered by the PGR<sup>5</sup> as one of the leaders of the group. Abarca and Pineda were political allies of state governor Angel Aguirre and the senator Lázaro Mazón. The authorities have been investigating them since 2010. This incident is all the more relevant to our case given that the official version of what happened to the students provided by the federal government points to the local government as the perpetrator of the crime.

The event itself took place during the night of September 26, 2014, and the first hours of the next day. According to different mass media sources, a series of violent acts happened in Iguala, Guerrero, Mexico. After nightfall a group of roughly 100 students from the Ayotzinapa Normal School near Tixtla, Guerrero, entered the city of Iguala about 90 miles away from their campus (Annex 3, Fig. 4). They had travelled in two busses and picked up a third along the way. They wanted to commandeer<sup>6</sup> more buses to get to an upcoming demonstration in Mexico City, planned for October 2nd. They left the Iguala bus station in five busses at about 9.30 pm, heading back to their school in Ayotzinapa, to meet with the rest of the students. The original idea was to have enough buses for all the students travelling to Mexico City on the following days.

There are different versions of the events that transpired. Some media channels claimed that there was a shooting and an “unknown” armed group took some students who were passing by Iguala on two previously hijacked buses. Other said that during the rest of the night, municipal police and other armed men ambushed four of the buses, which meant that there was no sign of the fifth bus. Three of the buses were attacked together in the same location on two separate occasions about two hours apart. During the first attack, one of the students, Aldo Gutiérrez, was shot in the head, but did not die. The first attack ends with police detaining students from one of the buses and taking them away in police vehicles. The second attack took place after other students arrived at the scene to provide support. Two students were shot dead during the second

---

<sup>5</sup> It is the Federal Executive Branch in Mexico that is mainly responsible for investigating and prosecuting crimes of the federal order under the authority of the Attorney General of the Republic

<sup>6</sup> It is a common practice for students from Normal Rural Schools make arrangements with drivers of coach buses to travel to other cities. Usually, they get on the bus and if they arrive at an agreement with the driver, the passengers would be told to step out of the bus or alight at the next bus station. The students then use the buses to reach their destination, returning the buses when they return to the town. As it is a common practice, the bus lines and companies, do not usually press charges.

attack. One of the remaining two buses was attacked in another part of the city. All the students from that bus were detained by police. The fifth bus was also detained, apparently by federal police. The students were ordered off the vehicle at gunpoint but the police did not open fire. The driver was given a police escort to drive the bus away.

There are common points in the mass media accounts of what happened that night. For example, all agree that a lady who was a passenger in a taxi, a 15-year-old soccer player and a bus driver from a youth soccer team were killed. Three students were killed, including Julio César Mondragón, who was found with his facial skin and eyes removed. Aldo Gutiérrez who was shot in the head now still remains in a coma. In addition, forty-three students disappeared. These were first-year students preparing themselves to be schoolteachers at the Normal Rural School Raúl Isidro Burgo in Ayotzinapa, also in the Mexican state of Guerrero.

Since the event came to light, it has caught people's attention and has become part of agenda setting for local and international mass media. As commonly happens with the coverage of "hard news", the first bloody details were reported on the news. The (re)construction of the case had begun. Diverse narratives were produced and we will next focus on these.

Events do not "naturally" take the form of a story, meaning that whoever narrates events is in fact involved in actively shaping experience into an intelligible pattern with a beginning, middle, and end, and with an economy of antipathy and sympathy centered on particular human beings [...] all other forms of remembrance (monuments, commemorations, museums) derive their meaning from some narrating act of remembrance in which individual figures struggle, succumb, or survive. (Rigney 2008: 347)

## **2.2 (Re)construction of the Ayotzinapa case**

After the event and the first mediations of it emerged, the reconstruction of the case began. The timeline of the case can be found in Annex 1. This timeline is based on those created by Vice News<sup>7</sup> and Amnesty International<sup>8</sup> in 2015, and helps to identify its milestones, particularly those

---

<sup>7</sup>An international news corporation (Vice Media), created in 2013, based in New York City that has different bureaus worldwide. From the perspective of its contents, it is closer to chronicles of events and investigative journalism. Vice



related to the government's investigation that had a major impact on public opinion. It should be noted, that several timelines were produced. However, the above-mentioned sources give a more complete overview of the event and the case. Additionally, Vice News represents a journalistic source while Amnesty International gives a more official perspective.

It should also be pointed out that since April 2016, the official institutions have not announced major findings. However, around the commemoration date of the students's disappearance, several journalistic materials have been released, such as special issues in magazines, books, TV programs and documentaries. These materials rely, mainly, on the reports made by the Mexican government and the group of experts (GIEI).

Turning to the narratives created to reconstruct the case thus far, two years after the event, we can identify four narrative versions: (1) the official narrative (provided by the Mexican government), (2) the contra-narrative (backed by an international institutions), (3-4) the subversive and the transversal narratives (created by the mass media). All of these narratives were mediated by the mass media and represent the corpus of the case.

In a broader sense, we can say that the official side has tried to close the case, to fill the gaps in an objective way in order to stop talking about it. However, there are still unanswered questions and most importantly, there is a strong desire to know what happened to those forty-three students. The contra-narrative, like the official narrative, is a version provided by a governmental institution, but it acts as an alternative. Meanwhile, the subversive narratives aim to undermine the official narrative, in some cases by providing different hypotheses of what happened with the students, in other cases just by undermining the official narrative without proposing alternatives. Finally, the transversal narrative goes beyond the event, and its main focus is on the human beings involved or impacted by the event—the missing students and the people close to them. From the perspective of remembrance, some texts within these narratives focus on the commemoration of the event (the night of the attacks), while others commemorate the missing students.

---

News is not focused on the daily news. It is closer to the infotainment category. To visit the web site: <https://news.vice.com/es/about>

<sup>8</sup>A non-governmental organization founded in London in 1961, by the lawyer Peter Benenson. Amnesty main goal is to investigate and expose human right abuses. The organization has a *bureau* in many countries that is the case of Mexico. According to the organization what happened in Iguala led to one of the most alarming violations of human rights in recent Mexican history. To visit the web site: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/who-we-are/>

### 2.2.1 Official narrative

The narrative released by the government and disseminated by different mass media channels fits into the official category as it is created by the Federal Government, and its reports, conferences, statements, etc., are perceived as official. Its main goal is to reconstruct the event and with it, to know the faith of the missing students, from an objective perspective supported by the evidence, that is, with scientific facts. This narrative has been remediated in the mass media and by other official institutions.

During the first days after the attacks and disappearance, the local authorities were in charge of the investigation. However, on October 5, 2014, *la Procuraduría General de la República de México* (PGR) opened a federal investigation. Since that moment, several statements were made related to arrests and possible lines of investigation. Yet, the main press conferences occurred on November 7, 2014 and on January 27, 2015. These were held by the then Attorney General Jesús Murillo Karam, who was the head of the PGR and, during the second one Murillo was accompanied by Tomás Zerón, who was the head of the Criminal Investigation Agency<sup>9</sup>. Hence, the official narrative was reconstructed in the official report and was mediated to the public in those conferences, including the answers to press questions.

One of the main differences between the statements and the press conferences is the context in which they were generated. The first ones were made *on-the-go*, that is, the Attorney General was asked about the case in an ‘informal’ context, such as while he was leaving his office on a way to a meeting. On the other hand, the press conferences were official acts where the government requests the presence of the press in the PGR’s facilities, and supporting audiovisual materials have been prepared.

Regarding the content, during the first press conference on November 7 2014, Jesús Murillo Karam concluded that the forty-three students were taken from Iguala by local police members, who followed the orders of Iguala’s major Jose Luis Abarca, to Loma de Coyote (Pueblo Viejo) where members of *Guerrero Unidos* picked them up, to take them, finally, to a

---

<sup>9</sup>That belongs to the PGR

trash dump near the town of Cocula to be murdered, incinerated and their remains were thrown in garbage bags to the *Río San Juan*, near to Cocula.



Scheme 1. The reconstructed route of the missing students

The press conference remediated selectively various textual fragments gathered during the investigation. For instance, during the first conference Murillo never mentioned the students's statements, only those given by the detainees. He showed forensic pictures that according to the investigation were evidence of the murders. While he was narrating one of the detainee's statements, he said "where the students were deprived of life", instead of using words as "killed", "murdered". This might have been an attempt to reduce the social impact of the case, avoid the sensationalism. However, when the students are deprived of life, they are the subjects, while using the other words, the killers become the subjects of the discourse. Also, regarding the language, Murillo claimed, several times over the conference that he was sad, "this was something sad", "sad images", and even, when he refers to a meeting he had with the students's parents he repeated, "I feel sad. It was something really sad". He tried to be empathetic by showing his human side. He took this to another level, when after several questions he stated, "I'm tired"<sup>10</sup>. And the press conference ended there.

As for the materials remediated in that conference, something that stands out during the videos of the alleged killers' statements is that their faces are intentionally blurred and the location of the camera is not traditional one, it could even suggest that the detainee was not aware of it, or that the government did not want their faces to be seen (Annex 3, Fig.5) due to the bruises they had, as later the GIEI pointed out, in the second report that they released, in April, 2016. Along with the videos, different forensic photographs and local security footage are shown, to support and prove the version. The whole conference lasted a bit more than one hour.

As the Ayotzinapa case was already part of the agenda setting for national media, one of the principal Mexican public TV channels remediated the press conference on their Daily News

---

<sup>10</sup> A hash tag was created in social media in reference to this statement #YaMeCansé [#I'mTired]

and opinion-debate programs. One of these shows was *Tercer Grado*<sup>11</sup> and the program aired on November 19, 2014; they talked about the press conference mentioned above. The moderator of the debate was Leopoldo Gómez, who is the vice-president of the News Department of Televisa Network, the participants were journalists from various media (TV, radio, newspapers etc).

At the beginning of the show the moderator basically quotes the Attorney General Jesus Murillo Karam. But what is more interesting is that the main goal of the show was to back up this version. The journalists focused their attention on how well the investigation was carried out, referring many times to the videos showed during the conference. Some excerpts of the debate would illustrate this:

- Carlos Marín: By the way, what you see in the video and what the Attorney says. I think it's worth noting that Murillo Karam, in the questions and answers that were made, said that those are ministerial proceedings, [meaning] the lawyers were there, that is, everything is okay [legal] Because there was those who doubted that had ministerial procedural value and eventually, those things we saw, [as work] field, Man! When one of these guys, were taking [from]<sup>12</sup> top and legs, the boys were already dead.
- Leopoldo Gómez: In fact in the press conference there is a legend that says something like: ministerial statements in the presence of his lawyer.
- Carlos Marín: They are ministerial proceedings. With all [the] validity.
- Joaquín López Doriga: Which is very different from what we used to see, until recently. Where, there was a video of a detained interrogated by some police chief.
- Denisse Maerker: Finally, the question you (Leopoldo) were asking at the beginning, and beyond the facts narrated here and all. It has to do with whether it is credible or not credible, the credibility that is being given, it seems to me, not because I see it, but because there are even lawyers who have thrown other investigations, such as those of Acteal, in which they had to leave everyone out. They told me that they find [this] an impeccable investigation; it appears that there is no reason to question the narrative of the authorities. Hopefully no. Evidently, I understand that relatives want a scientific proof and not just based on testimonials. Indeed, the next arrests will be important to strengthen the hypothesis; I'm

---

<sup>11</sup> Produced by Televisa, a Mexican multimedia company founded in 1955. It operates and transmits 4 open channels in national DTT. It should be noted that several documentaries on Televisa's history have documented numerous cases of media bias, partisanship, and inaccurate information offered with the objective of weakening social movements and supporting autocratic policies.

<sup>12</sup> Excerpts of the debate retrieved on May 18, 2017, from <https://youtu.be/imODQen3Iqs>, translated by the present author

thinking about the head of Iguala's municipal police "El Gil". I think that [the version] is comprehensible, believable. I understand the position of the parents, though.

This can be considered as an example of the process of remediation/resemiotization in the case. The discourse from the report was mediated through a press conference, and then, some of the statements were presented on this TV program. Thus, the statements traveled from one context to another; from a conference to share the early findings of a criminal investigation to a TV program to praise the governments' work.

At the second conference, on January 27, 2015, the PGR only substantiated the same information by adding more details and audiovisual support, such as a reconstruction of the mass murder in the trash dump by the alleged murders. In other words, while the first conference was the condensed version of what happened, the second one was the detailed version, including pictures of all the persons that have been arrested so far.

Murillo claimed that the result of the investigation he conducted was the historic truth. In this conference, Murillo introduced Tomás Zerón who presented the progress in the investigation, such as the arrest of "El Cepillo", member of the *Guerreros Unidos*. Zerón also announced the main findings of specialized analysis conducted, such as those of biological, chemical, entomological and ballistic tests. After his speech, a video of about 25 minutes was shown, which reiterated what Zerón previously stated. This included interviews of the detainees, this time with the camera in a better position (Annex 3, Fig. 6), 3D animations, and tours of Cocula's trash dump made by a drone, forensic footage and photographs of the investigation. All of this is narrated by a male voice. What stands out in this narration is that it mentions the students's official statements, as well as the participation of the students during the attacks.

The video stated that the students went to Iguala by the orders of one of them, Bernardo Flores, "El cochiloco". It is also claimed that the students started the aggression that led to the first shooting. When the bus of the local soccer team was mentioned, according to this video, part of the official narrative, the police thought that the students were there and started to shoot, and when they realized their mistake, they called for help and ambulances arrived to the scene. This suggests that the police reacted to the students's attacks, and hence tries to play down on the police's responsibility. Moreover, during the re-enactment of the crime, one of the alleged killers claims that the students wore hoods and cellphones were hidden in their underwear. Once again,

the narration seeks to force the attention on the students's liability: the things they used during their activities, commandeering buses to go to Mexico City on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, which was an illegal practice yet not a crime since no formal complaint was made to the authorities. The video continues reinforcing the narrative with forensic material and the mug shots of the detainees, the civilians since the faces of the police members involved are not shown.

Different media channels covered the conference. One of those was *La Jornada*<sup>13</sup> that remediated, in an article published on January 28, 2015, some excerpts of the conference and claims made by Murillo Karam:

Undoubtedly (investigations lead) to conclude that the students were deprived of liberty and life, cremated and thrown into the San Juan River in that order. This is the historical truth of the facts, based on the evidence provided by science, as shown in the record, and has allowed criminal action against 99 persons involved, who have been arrested so far, and empowering the Public Prosecutor's Office, which requested the imposition of the maximal penalties for which the law provides (Castillo, 2015).

According to this statement there is a scientific conclusion that provided an answer to the main question: what happened to the forty-three students? Then, a logical question would be: is the case closed? Does the investigation continue? Or, as the main questions have apparently been answered, is there a point to keep the investigation going? The reporter from *La Jornada* asked this during the press conference, and the Attorney's answer was:

The Investigation must be closed, because the guilty ones have to be punished; "close" is perhaps not the right word while I have not arrested all the perpetrators. I cannot close it, that is to say, it is not the right word; but if you ask me, the elements that if the investigation has are sufficient to determine that there they were killed and cremated, I would say yes, and there is much evidence that in many other cases: there are four confessions, not one, of the perpetrators; there are confessions of the police who brought them there and handed them over to these people; there four of them fully identified (Castillo, 2015)

---

<sup>13</sup> A Mexican newspaper oA Mexican newspaper of national circulation, published daily in Mexico City, founded in 1984 by journalists who had left other press agencies in their fight for press freedom. It is characterized by its criticism of the Federal Government and support for left-wing causes and leftist governments in Latin America, contrasting with newspapers Mexican-oriented center like *El Universal* or *Reforma*.

Once again, he leaves no room for doubt. What he, as the spokesman of the main governmental agency in charge of the investigation, is saying is that what was presented during that conference, this version of the event is the only truth. As the authorities have sufficient evidence to determine it, perhaps, the only thing missing is to capture and to punish all the perpetrators of the crime.

As for the motive behind the crime, this version claims that the students were mistaken as part of a drug-trafficking gang, and captured by order of the Mayor of Iguala by the local police and handed to a rival group. About this Zerón Lucio declared the following:

During his stay in that city, one *hawk* (guard) of the *Guerreros Unidos* reported that a group of *contras* (members) of a rival group, *Los Rojos*, tried to take over the place (city main square) and warned the police of Iguala. In this context, former Mayor José Luis Abarca ordered to stop them, no matter what. The guys with uniform from the local police, pursued and shot them; they killed three of them and the driver of a bus carrying members of the football club *Avispones*, a player and a lady who was traveling in a taxi (...) [due to] the results that have been obtained, motive is consolidated, that matched with the version where the students were singled out by criminals to be part of the antagonistic group of organized crime in the region. That was why they were deprived of freedom, at first, and finally of life. The version that they were drug traffickers is transmitted from one level to another from the criminal groups that emerged from the leaders of the organization, including Jose Luis Abarca Vázquez, María de Los Angeles Pineda Villa (former mayor's wife) and Sidronio Casarrubias Salgado (former leader of the organization). (Castillo, 2015)

How is the truth-value of the official narrative constructed? One should be aware of the great impact on the case exerted by a press conference by the federal government. The Attorney General represents one of the main institutions of the country. The conference itself is a performance. The members of the press are the audience waiting for him to show up. Then he arrives; his dressing is formal and he stands in front of them, denoting a position of power. There is a time for his, or some other spokesman's speeches, and the press conference concludes with a round of questions and answers. As it is recorded and the reporters are taking notes, it will be remediated. The following days the media will talk about it. Even now, two years after the event, the press conferences can still be watched on the government's YouTube channel, where they have been uploaded. The solemn impression can still be sensed. It is an official act.

In addition, the official narrative was supported by an investigation, which means that it relies on scientific facts; there is no room for deductions based on emotions or suppositions, as

Murillo argued in the first conference: “The obligation of the authority is scientific identification. It forces us to keep open the investigation until we have plenitude in the evidence, to know exactly what happened”. That is the reason why the investigation relies on the result of the work of experts from several fields, as Zerón and Murillo mentioned, for that the visual evidence, to prove that everything they said has a solid argument.

During the second conference Murillo answered some critics who tried to question the narrative presented at the first conference. For instance, regarding the dimension of Cocula’s trash dump, the footage taken by a drone was shown, while he explained: “For those who think it is a small place”. He, with the technological support, refuted the critic with evidence supporting the official narrative. In addition, Murillo addressed the question of the absence of witnesses near the trash dump: “As you can see, there are no homes near to the place, that is why nobody saw anything”. For this narrative everything has to have material proof and legal substantiation.

Another striking point in the official narrative is that overall, the students were seen as a group, as mere numbers. There is a distance between them and the authorities. But Murillo shows empathy with the parents regarding their loss. The authority becomes the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, an outsider of the event, someone who is seeing and telling the facts without having been there. Murillo and Zerón are presented as factual mediators of the alleged killers’ confessions and the results of the specialist’s reports.

On top of that, by using the notions of “historic” and “truth”, the Attorney General endowed the version with the ability to transcend time and space. Since it is historical, it should not be questioned, it implies a certain “truth value”. Even more, seeing history is the narration and exposition of past events, it is worth keeping in the memory, collective or individual, to keep the official version frozen in time. Hence the words selected by the Attorney General were not innocent, and moreover, their connotation suggested that there is no space for another version. It is difficult to say if they were truly intentional. But this created, for sure, a bias of communication, backed by the authority that he embodies, presenting the version of the state.

Overall, one can say that this narrative commemorates the attacks and the fact that the crime has been solved following commendable effort by the Mexican government. From the perspective of cultural memory, it had the intention to be Aleida Assmann’s “canonical” text, or Lotman’s “informative memory”, in the sense that the narrative was the result of scientific knowledge that is expected not to change and is endowed with timelessness.



However, the text has been contested. The official report and press conferences held by the PGR, initially as relay stations in Rigney's language, became objects of recollection. Due to the types of performances they represented, the report and the press conference are to be remediated, recorded and stored to be consulted in the future. It has been built by other forms of acts of remembrance as police reports, witness's statements, footage, and pictures. It has become a collective point of reference especially for other institutions or the mass media. Nevertheless, in the process of remediation, the narrative has been questioned, fragmented into several pieces, relocated in different contexts and media. The press conferences act as stabilizers to fix the meaning of the written reports. But there is no longer one single meaning.

### ***2.2.2 Contra-narrative***

This narrative is represented by the report and press conferences produced by the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI) that led an alternative investigation to the one provided by the Mexican government. Its main characteristic is the human rights perspective to the case, which is not forced to offer any final result related to the location of the missing students. In short, this narrative was born from an investigation of the Mexican government's investigation. So, just as the government with their experts supporting the official narrative, the contra-narrative also employs a scientific language, pays attention to the facts and is supported by experts who are agents of an international institution.

On November 12, 2014, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH ) agreed on the terms of a tripartite agreement to be signed with the State of Mexico and with non-governmental organizations representing the students who were the victims of forced disappearance of Iguala and their families. Almost a week later, on November 18, in Washington, D.C., an addendum was signed in Mexico City that formalized the signing of a document expressing the will of the Mexican Government and the representatives of the missing students of Ayotzinapa. Thus, from this day, the Commission would appoint, as technical cooperation, an Interdisciplinary Group to search for the missing students, to investigate and propose appropriate punishment for those responsible, and to assist the relatives of the victims. The agreement established the main activities to be developed by GIEI. As stated on their official website, these would be developing plans for the search of the missing persons still alive, technical analysis of

the investigation to determine criminal liability and technical analysis of the Plan of Comprehensive Care for Victims of the events of 26 and 27 September 2014. The members of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts are: Carlos Martin Beristain, Angela Buitrago, Francisco Cox Vial, Claudia Paz y Paz and Alejandro Valencia Villa.

In the GIEI's official website there are some videos that are meant to present the experts and goals of their investigation, produced by Argos TV. The experts were interviewed, they talked about the case and shared their first thoughts on the case:

- Cox: Our purpose was simply to analyze the record... the evidence.
- Cox: The evidence will lead us to our conclusions.
- Buitrago: Suggestions for investigation, joint analysis against evaluations and assessments that have been done by the PGR.
- Beristain: Including a perspective from the victims, it is a central point for me in the research paper.
- Buitrago: Provide and continue to contribute to the process of how to investigate criminality of this nature
- Valencia: They [those responsible of the crime] dared to make 43 young men disappear with a very clear involvement with the people of the state
- Buitrago: What is the level of responsibility to be generated within a particular state within a given territory. We conferred a mandate so that we too can help in that search.
- Cox: Our voice was a request by the Mexican State, the victims and the Inter-American Commission.

Thus although the evaluation was requested by Mexican State, the aim of the experts was the critical evaluation of the official investigation with the aim of finding out what happened to the victims. On the case they claim:

- Marin: Over the case there are several mechanisms of impunity trying to cover what really happened. Sometimes there are elements turning aside the story.
- Valencia: That there are several types of shields, there are silences that apparently protected something or someone.

– Marin: putting all these elements together helps to have a global vision, not to see only partial elements. To see the impact of the 43 missing but also the impact of the people who were killed or tortured and have the dimension of what we are talking about.

– Cox: This may not please, it can be seen as partial, but that is what demonstrates the inconsistent statements, observation and scientific evidence itself.

– Valencia: And until you do not have evidence, more concrete, more factual, it cannot say one nor they are alive or they are dead. They are just missing..

– Valencia: The nodal point is where are the boys, what happened to those young men. That is the main question.

On January 30, 2015, the interdisciplinary group of experts started their work in Washington D.C.. By February 11 and 12, they had their first meeting with Mexican authorities and the representatives of the missing students of Ayotzinapa. The group released two reports: the first one on September 6, 2015 , and the second one on April 24, 2016. The underlying structure was to show characteristics of the facts and analysis of possible causes, that include the massive character of the attack and number of victims, level of aggression endured, and crime scenes of the various attacks.

- Complex and coordinated actions, time in which the action took place, the C4 (the surveillance central office) as a space for the coordination of information,
- Presence of agents from different security army forces who observe the attacks,
- Purpose of the attacks, (the fifth bus and the purpose of the attack),
- Non-protection of the normalistas against the attacks,
- Delays in the caring for victims, decision to carry out enforced disappearances,
- Fate of those who disappeared and the hypothesis of the burning corpses; it is impossible for the trash dump at Cocula to be the scene of the crime.

On the basis of information provided to them or otherwise obtained, the main findings of the GIEI investigation, were the following:

- Iguala was indeed a very important drug traffic hub. Certain buses were used to transport heroin and cocaine as well as the money obtained from this drug traffic between Iguala and the United States. That is to say, the business that was carried out in the town of Iguala could explain the extremely violent reaction and the massive character of the

attack, its duration in time and even the follow-up attack against the Los Avispones soccer team. This line of investigation, according to GIEI, has not been explored.

- Students and other witnesses testified to the presence of federal and army forces. As the army and police attacked the students, the disappearance of the students is a crime by the state.
- In the case, there is frequently a disconnection between the first part of the operation carried out by local police members, and the second part, in which supposedly that the normalistas who disappeared were handed over to mafia groups in order to make them disappear. This cannot nevertheless be attributed to this group as if all the actions did not belong to the same operation. In the official narrative of the facts provided in public appearances, and in the records of the investigation, this disconnection appears quite clearly, as if they were two different crime scenes in which the police and authorities involved did not have a say on the fate of the arrested students.
- The GIEI consulted several experts and concluded that the cremation of the disappeared students in the trash dump in Cocula was impossible.
- The investigation led by the government was not managed properly, as many witnesses were not interviewed on time, or some evidence was contaminated. Besides, according to the experts, the statements on which the official version relies on were made under torture. Hence they cannot be considered trustworthy.

Overall, the GIEI concluded:

For the GIEI all these circumstances and findings show both the insufficiencies in the investigation and the tasks that are still pending in order to provide the relatives of the victims and Mexico as a whole with the justice they are entitled to expect in this case, including an effective investigation of the different responsibilities and the elucidation of the fate of the 43 missing normalistas which, as we have indicated is still uncertain. (GIEI, 2015)

Thus the contra-narrative is in constant dialogue with the official narrative as its starting point is the official reports that were introduced at the press conferences. Hence, this narrative follows an objective logic as well as the official narrative, relies on police reports, evidence collected from

the scenes of the attacks and the alleged mass murder scene, studies made by several experts on different fields etc. In addition, the GIEI's investigation was mainly concerned with the re-evaluation of the evidence and conduct of the official investigation. For this reason, the work of the experts is a remediation and resemiotization of the previously gathered materials, alongside new materials as the students's testimonies and other evidence were collected. Yet, the conclusion was that the official narrative is inconsistent and the government should investigate different lines of inquiry that suggest other hypotheses of what happened to the students. The contra-narrative is not based on the statements of the alleged murderers, in contrast with the government's narrative. Moreover, for the experts, the testimonies of those who survived that night were as important as any other witness, like pedestrians or the bus drivers.

To sum up, the GIEI was not capable to offer a solid theory of what happened to the students, which remains a mystery. The experts, as it was expected, centered their attention the human rights violations and suggested some other lines of investigation that the government should follow.

The GIEI is sorry it cannot offer to the relatives, to the State and Mexican society, or to the whole world, a final diagnosis on what happened with the 43 disappeared normalistas. There are many difficulties that are pointed out in this report. This report, however, does include facts that the Group considers proven, and a few others that it considers proven that they did not take place or on which there is such controversy that their validity is questionable. (GIEI, 2015)

The result of their work has also been remediated by different media, particularly by the written press, which has turned the contra-narrative into a source for different subversive narratives. The contra-narrative remediated excerpts, key findings of the official narrative, including texts as police reports and testimonials. Thus, it turned the official narrative from a relay station to an object of recollection, according to Rigney's typology. Also, this narrative, in a certain way broke the stabilizing role of the press conferences. At the same time, this narrative became an object of recollection for the mass media. And, it can also be seen as catalyst, as it seek to bring the attention to new scenarios, reflecting the dominant practice. This narrative commemorates the attack yet, as it was written from a human rights perspective it seems to pay more attention to the students, those who were murdered and injured during the attacks and the ones that are missing.

Moreover, it can be said that the texts produced under this narrative attempt to change culture, as the GIEI aims to improve the way in which the Mexican government conducts the

criminal investigations by giving recommendations from the human rights perspective. As the reconstruction of the case from this narrative offers new codes and new ways of understanding, this can be linked to what Marek Tamm (2015) proposes about cultural changes as a way of reorganizing cultural memory, with new codes and new meanings.

### **2.2.3 Subversive narratives (created by the mass media)**

Subversive narratives are the ones that undermine the official narrative, and they come up with new lines of investigation with the aim to know what really happened that night. However, none of these offer any answer to the question of where the students are. In fact, for these narratives, this question has a second order priority. These narratives also have their shares of gaps and unanswered questions.

These narratives remediate the previous ones, both the official narrative and contra-narrative. Thus they also use experts's testimonials, which are mostly scientific. In addition, these narratives are focused on the reconstruction of the night of the disappearance. As in the case of the contra-narrative, the testimonials of students's who survived that night and those of other eye-witnesses are relevant. In contrast to the official narrative and contra-narrative, subversive narratives are not created by official institutions but by journalists. Unlike the contra-narrative, the attention is not centered on human rights violations either.

One of the first and most complete of the subversive narratives of what happened that night in Iguala is made by the Mexican weekly magazine *Proceso*, in the issue published on December 14, 2014, titled "*La verdadera noche de Iguala. Policías Federales y miembros del Ejército se unieron a los agentes municipales en la agresión del 26 de septiembre contra los normalistas de Ayotzinapa*". In the article – "La Historia No oficial" [The unofficial history] written by Anabel Hernández and Steve Fisher (2014), with the support of the Investigative Reporting Program of UC Berkeley, it is affirmed that the federal police was directly involved in the attack and disappearance of the students, and it was intended to suppress the school's ideology and political infrastructure, as the forty-three missing students were part of the *Comité de Lucha Estudiantil* [Student Action Committee] and ten of the victims were "political activists in training" from the *Comité de Orientación Política e Ideológica* (Political and Ideological Orientation Committee). The journalists had access to a report from the Guerrero State

Government in which it is established that agents of the local state and federal government monitored the students since they left their school in Ayotzinapa. The report also notes that since September 28, 2014, two days after the incident in Iguala, the General Public Prosecutor's office of Guerrero ordered the federal police to inform if their agents were involved in it, and asked for the personal entrance/departure check lists from the operations base and also demanded the number of the patrols and the armament used between the 24th and 28th of September. Besides this information, the journalists were able to get access to twelve videos recorded by the students with their phones during the incident. In one of the videos, the journalists claimed, the federal police is clearly seen. “The municipal police is leaving, the federals are staying, they will want to tease us”, is one of the warnings made by one of the students that can be heard on the recordings (Hernández & Fischer, 2014).

In the article it is argued that the acts by PGR demonstrate that at least five of the detainees, alleged members of the drug cartel *Guerreros Unidos*, who gave testimonies against the Iguala's mayor José Luis Abarca and police officers of Iguala and Cocula, were tortured by Marin and federal police members. Besides, Sidronio Casarrubias, whom the PGR pointed to as the leader of the *Guerreros Unidos*, confirmed in his testimony to be the brother of Mario Casarrubias, accused of drug dealing, but denied belonging to any criminal group. According to the PGR, it was Sidronio who confirmed that the students were dead, although he did not offer any evidence. Another detainee, Raúl Núñez Salgado, was accused by PGR of being the financial coordinator of the drug cartel, and it was claimed that he confessed to bribing Iguala's police and the mayor. In the report of “physical integrity” elaborated by the PGR it is established that Núñez presented more than 30 types of lesions before giving his declaration, including bruises and contusions (Proceso 2014: 8).

The journalists also referred to the press conference, on November 7, 2014, where Jesús Murillo Karam said that “the radio operator of the central police office of Iguala, David Hernández Cruz” was the one who declared that Abarca ordered the attack on the students. The researchers also obtained copies from the Monitoring Operative Services and Administrative Services, to show that there was no employee under that name working on that office.

The article follows the contra-narrative's lead in giving an important role to the surviving students's accounts of what happened that night. And this article is not an exception. Francisco Trinidad Chalma, one of the surviving students of the event in Iguala, is quoted: “municipal

policemen took my classmates out of the bus and held them on the left side of the bus. There were like 17 or 18 [students] and around 60 policemen. Apparently some classmates were injured, because they were on the ground”. Another student statement quoted was the one made by Omar García:

Obviously they were very skilled people; I have witnessed many shootings in many places. The army arrived quickly. Entered. They ‘cut’ cartridge, as if they were going against criminals, accused us that we were in the wrong place, and saying, “we were going to take everyone”, because we were criminals. He notes that they forced them to take off their shirts, checked if they brought guns, they took pictures and asked them their real names. “Do not want to give me false names because if you give me a false name, you will be never will found.” They said so, literally, says Omar. They were insinuating that we were going to disappear somewhere. (Fischer, Hernandez, 2014)

One more shocking and important detail part of this narrative is the involment of Mexican Army members. In the article it is mentioned that the defense secretary, Salvador Cienfuegos, stated before federal congressmen on November 13 that the 27th Infantry Battalion knew about the attack two hours after it happened. But, according to the weekly investigation, they were informed through C4 and battalion commands were there when everything happened. After the second attack, between 23:00 and 24:00, a captain who is known only by his last name, Crespo, from the 27th Infantry Battalion, arrived at the municipal police base with 12 more army members (Proceso 2014: 10).

As it was mentioned before, the documentary *Mirar Morir* offers a reconstruction of the event. According to it, the students decided to head north to the crossing road with Huitzico, and to the collection tollbooth number three at the entrance of Iguala. Along the way, eight students tried to take a bus from the bus line "Costa Line" at 20:15. The driver promised to cooperate if they would drop off the passengers before the end of Iguala. When they were at the terminal, the driver locked them in the bus. They called their classmates who were at the school with two buses “Estrella Dorada”. Security cameras at the bus terminal caught them when students arrived for their classmates. There, they took three buses: two "Costa Line” buses went down the street Gaelana heading north and the bus “Estrella Roja” went out the back door and headed south. Neither the students nor the drivers knew the city. Uriel Alonso, a student who survived that night, states:



They were shooting; hooded, wearing bulletproof vests. A patrol blocked our way. I was on the third bus. The Police was also at the back (of the convoy), we had been blocked. They started shooting. We got off the bus, we all ran. The bullets were meant to frighten us; falling up and down. Eventually, we said to the rest of our classmates, get on the bus, we mostly got into the first bus. We [the students from the second year] tried to remove the police cars, to free passage, throwing them stones. (Mirar Morir, 2015)

They finally managed to continue moving, and according to the experts from the GIEI, while they were advancing on the street Juan N. Alvarez, the shots were no longer in the air, and they were aimed at the buses. And according to the documents in the official file, through the C4, the state and federal police, as well as the army, were aware of the facts.

Uriel continues with his narration: “We were told to go to the *Periferico Norte* and turned to the right, to go to Chilpancingo — the state capital. So we did. Arriving at *Periferico Norte*, we all screamed of joy. That's when a patrol intersected with their trucks and prevented us from moving on. We stepped out from the buses. The police officers were gone from our sight. A classmate tried to move the truck, but he could not, because there were no keys in it. They—the police officers started shooting”. Another student, José Peralta adds to Uriel's testimony, “It is there when our classmate, Aldo Gutiérrez Solano, is shot on the head. He was trying to speak, he was drowning on his own blood, there was blood coming from his mouth”. Uriel continues, “That's when we shouted that we needed an ambulance”, referring to the videos that they recorded with their phones, in which it can be heard. Aldo can also be seen on the ground. “We called, the operator did not believe us, she thought it was a joke, that we were at a party outdoors because she could hear fireworks. My classmates from the second bus ran to the front to cover themselves. And those on the third bus were escorted off the bus, held upside down on the ground, being beaten.”

Grecco points out that the convoy was being attacked simultaneously from the front and back. From the “Estrella Dorada” bus 1568, a student comes out with a fire extinguisher trying to defend himself but was wounded in the hand. The students locked themselves in the bus but they were forced to get off with their arms raised and made to lie on the ground. Then, they were taken by six or seven patrols. On this, Uriel recalls, “We thought they were going to be arrest as other times. Fellow students from the first year were crying, and us, from the second year, told them, ‘Don't worry, they will be released tomorrow, as usual’. I remember a policeman totally dressed in black, even hooded (with the face covered) arrives and asks to talk with us. ‘We will

negotiate,’ he said. ‘We are going to take the buses and arrest all of you... as if nothing had happened.’ The message was clear, they wanted us to be taken, to disappear, in order to have no witnesses. We chose not to ‘negotiate’. He was upset and told us, ‘You have to leave. If you don’t leave, we will come later for you and you will regret having entered Iguala.’ He goes and gives a signal to his subordinates and they began to take our colleagues in the police cars”.

The documentary follows the route of the other bus, “Estrella Dorada” 1531, that reached the crossing between Huitzuco and Cocula. Patrols blocked its way, the passengers, mostly students, tried to escape but failed. Several were arrested. The vehicle which was left with flat tires and windows shattered by bullets. Five meters away, the remains of eight bloodstained shirts were found. According to the GIEI experts, there was a privileged witness of the facts, member of the military intelligence, who says in his statement to the PGR that this bus was intercepted by two municipal police patrols. The same person says that the students shouted, they were taken off the bus in handcuffs and thrown to the ground. A witness reports that the patrols took them in direction to Huitzuco, not Cocula. As for the “Estrella Roja” bus, Grecko claims that it went out from the back entrance of the bus station and managed to reach *Periferico Sur*, continued by the Acapulco highway. About 100 meters from where they had stopped, the bus was also forced to stop. Students escaped. It is unknown where they took the “Estrella Roja” bus. Later, a bus from the “Castro Tours” company went through the same road towards Acapulco. It was carrying a group of teenager from a local football team, the Hornets. At the exit to the town of Santa Teresa, armed civilians shot at the bus and other vehicles, killing three people.

Going back to the students travelling in a convoy, Uriel states, “We started calling our fellow classmates who were at the school, asking them to come, because a colleague was shot in the head and other were beaten. We also started putting stones next to the bullet shells”. Grecko continues with the narration by saying that teachers and students of Ayotzinapa, plus local journalists arrived to the scene, a press conference was improvised. Past midnight, men stepped out from several vehicles and opened fire. On this moment, Uriel adds, “They arrived while I was seeing my classmate David give an interview. The men were dressed in black, vests, boots, hoods, those no longer had police uniforms”. There, Daniel Solis Gallardo and Julio Cesar Ramirez Nava died. Edgar Andres Vargas was wounded in the face, and Julio César Mondragón was last seen trying to escape them.

The article and the documentary are calibrators, to use Rigney's (2008) terminology, in opposition to the official narrative and suggesting new lines of investigation, as well as those provided by the GIEI. It commemorates what happened during the attack, not what possibly happened to the students, focusing on the involvement of state agencies.

Another media channel focused on the inconsistencies of the government's version was *Animal Político*. In an article "3 descubrimientos clave de los expertos independientes vs. La "verdad histórica" de la PGR" published on September 7, 2015, they reported three main points discovered by the group of experts (GIEI) that, according to them, contradict what the government proposed. These are the following:

1. The impossible fire.
2. The fifth bus.
3. The military presence.

At first glance, the title of the article compares the two previous narratives. Yet, when the *historic truth* is written in quotations marks, it shows that the article questions the official narrative. Moreover, the text emphasizes the fact that Murillo is not longer head of the PGR. This can be seen as a suggestion that something went wrong during the investigation and he lost his job because of that.

In summary, it can be said that by remediating both, the official narrative as well as the contra-narrative, the article turns them into objects of recollection. It does not offer any new lines of investigation or new hypothesis, it just remediates what it has been already said. Moreover, it can be said that the way in which the texts are remediated in this narrative undermines the official narrative and gives more credibility to the contra-narrative. Once again, this narrative commemorates only the event and not on the whereabouts of the missing students. Furthermore, the article can be labeled as a catalyst, because it tries to draw the attention to new topics already mentioned by the contra-narrative and hence stabilizes its meaning. Yet, here is also where the process of resemiotization and remediation can be seen in a clear way. Since the text focuses only on specific points of the GIEI's report and press conferences, the original meaning changes. On top of that, presenting the points under the "versus" perspective invites the reader to take a stance, to decide who tells the truth and who is lying.

It is worth mentioning that during the anniversary of the students's disappearance there were public demonstrations in Mexico City, where people demanded for justice. Also, TV

programs and magazines dedicated special issues to the case. For example a TV program on political analysis, *Espiral*, aired on the public channel Once TV. On October 12, 2016, the show titled “A dos años de Ayotzinapa” was dedicated to the case. The format of the program was a discussion between four experts—two journalists, an attorney and a government speaker, moderated by the host, Ricardo Raphael. The host claimed that the main goal of the show was “to know where the investigation is at. We have legal representatives of parents, the authority from the Attorney General responsible for finding the truth, and journalists who have become critical voices and have thrown light to this critical episode.” He comments on the progress, “There is much we do not know, but every time we know more elements, slow like turtle steps, but certainly one day we will know the truth and hopefully sooner rather than later.” Thus according to Raphael, the truth has not seen the light. There is an open investigation going on to find out what happened to the students. One can say that the connecting thread of the show was the lack of trust from the students’s families, and more generally speaking, from the Mexican society, towards the authorities that have been investigating the case. The moderator sets the discussion, by saying that if the families and the authorities are not on the same page, it is because, on October 2014, there were a number of irregularities related to the particular acts that took place at the river San Juan, where according to one of the alleged executors the students’s remains were thrown.

According to the Mario Patrón—the attorney invited to the program, and the head of the *Centro Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Centro Prodh*, one of the important stages of the Ayotzinapa case was the participation of the GIEI. Among their recommendations was that there should be an internal investigation, because some illegal means were used during the investigation in regards to what happened at the Río San Juan and the torturing of the alleged executors. As for the regular dialogue between the parents of the missing students with their lawyers and the new Attorney General Arely Gómez, the August 18 deadline set by the PGR to inform parents of the resolution of the internal investigation was never respected. Hence, there are parents demanding explanation and resolution. Ricardo Raphael asked his panelists what happened at the Río San Juan, and a journalist, Témoris Grecko, answers, “One of the detainees said that the remains were found there, on October 29. However, thanks to a group of journalists who were in the area, we know that on October 28, Tomás Zerón, who was in charge of the investigation, took the detainee, to rehearse the presentation. Plus, the remains of Alexander

Mora were rigged, they came in a bag on October 28 when they supposedly were found on October 29.”

Raphael further asks the panelists what would be needed to reestablish the trust between the parents and the authorities. Melissa del Pozo, the other journalist on the panel, claims, “First of all they [the authorities] should admit that they were wrong, to clean up and rectify the wounds. They did not accept that they were wrong with the ‘historical truth’”. Témoris Grecko adds that the government’s investigation should go beyond the ‘Coculization’ of the case, and put attention to other lines of investigation. Meanwhile, Patrón gives a more precise opinion to rebuild the trust between both parties:

There are two key elements to building trust:

1. Stop encapsulating Ayotzinapa in terms of municipality, it is kind of *macro* criminality; state and federal authorities must determine degrees of responsibility.
2. Determine the students’s location. The PGR stated during the context of the second anniversary: “to exhaust all lines of investigation and find the students”. Thus, the PGR implicitly admits that the students were not in Cocula.

They were not cremated with their cell phones and today there is a relevant work related to the cell phones that had to be done during the first 3 weeks.

No doubt that the municipal police were involved, as the group of experts has claimed, the students were not in a single group, there were at least two groups with two or three routes of disappearance.

*Espiral* is one of a kind in establishing a new meaning to the Ayotzinapa case, one oriented towards the future, trying to reconcile the parties involved (parents and government). Thus, this text can be seen, from Rigney’s typology, as a catalyst within the subversive narratives, as it is trying to offer new ways to approach the current situation, and in addition, to place the role of the journalists in it.

A general overview of the subversive narratives gives an impression that their main goal is to contradict the official narrative by looking for inconstancies and mistakes in the government’s investigation. Thus, they keep remediating the official and contra-narratives that have as main goal the reconstruction of the event.

Moreover, the texts under the subversive narratives can be considered part of the “creative memory” as Lotman proposed, since for them the past is not past; rather it is something that continues in the present, that is why the production of the texts continues. They can be seen as a “calibrators” of the official narrative, according to Rigney (2008) presenting new facts, such as using the “canon”, it remediates the mediation of the official.

#### **2.2.4 Transversal narratives**

Besides the narratives focused only on the event and the case, some media channels focused their efforts on talking about the human beings, the forty-three students, giving them a name, a story, a family. They focused on the human side of the story, thus in these narratives empathy has a very important role. We can take various demonstrations of solidarity on the streets and commemoration acts or monuments dedicated to the 43 missing students also as part of these narratives. These are considered transversal since they can start before the event and last up to the current days. These narratives commemorate the students; give priority to them and the families rather than to the reconstruction of what happened in Iguala.

For instance, a journalists’ collective was created shortly after the event, called *Ojos de Perro*<sup>14</sup>. Although they have a political stance, assuming that the state was involved in the attacks and the disappearance of the students. Moreover, they suggest the existence of more cases like Ayotzinapa. They launched the video *Ayotzinapa: los padres* [Ayotzinapa: the parents] on its YouTube channel, a couple of days before Christmas 2014. The length of the video is not more than three minutes. In the video the viewer can see some of the students’ relatives, mostly parents, being interviewed one by one. The intention is to compare the last Christmas with the one about to come. That is a great example of a transversal narrative. It starts by showing what looks like a “massive altar”: school chairs for each student with their pictures on them, candles,

---

<sup>14</sup> Lit. Trans. Dog eyes. The collective describes itself as “a group of communicators with the intention of collaborating in the effort to build a country that functions as a country, in which the rights of individuals, communities and social groups are fully respected; Where crimes are punished and the powerful one are submitted to the limits and obligations established by the Constitution and laws. A country in which justice, freedom and the law are for all [...] we get together after the tragedy of Iguala. Where the forces of the State colluded with criminals to murder and disappear citizens” <https://www.facebook.com/ojosdeperrovsalimpunidad/>

some posters in the back, along with a flat screen, it seems to be a schoolyard. It was filmed at night, which creates a gloomy atmosphere.

The video goes from happiness to sadness, from the past to the present (and near future) by sharing the feelings of parents and relatives from last Christmas in contrast with this one.

-A year ago and the years before that, our family was together.

-A year ago we spent a happy time with the family [...]

-I spent it happy with my sons, because we were together and had a simple dinner.

Then, the contrast begins. The names of the persons on frame appear along with their relative's picture.

-It is going to be a sad Christmas without him, and his fellows.

-My son is not here... and only the memories remain [...]

-In my home there is not going to be any Christmas because I always have the memory of my son [...]

-It is going to be hard to get it back to normal, as it was before [...]

The video ends with the parents asking for help and support from the society, not to be forgotten by them.

-We want as parents to ask all the society, to help us, to support us

-We demand justice [...]

-We wish you a Merry Christmas and don't forget about us

The protagonists of the video are the parents, by sharing their feelings and the impact that the disappearance of the students has had in their lives. However, it seems that their intention is that the society and the government do not forget about their children, the students. Moreover, not only about them, as human beings, but the crime, the violent acts in Iguala. From Ann Rigney's perspective the video is a "catalyst" since it tries to bring the attention to them, the parents and relatives, since they are not the ones missing, yet they are the ones who are searching for their

children and suffering by their absence. Besides, the transversal narratives created a discourse of justice, for the parents and for the missing students. So, what articulates the resemiotization of these narratives is the sense of justice.

An interesting thing about all of the representations of the case that seems relevant to mention it here, as part of the transversal narratives, is the use of the pictures of the students (Annex 3, Fig. 7). Since they disappeared, the pictures shown by the mass media, and even used during the protests by their relatives and the Mexican society, are exactly the same. There are official pictures, so to say, probably made for official documents, such as diplomas or identity cards. The students are photographed on a frontal plane, with white shirts or dark jackets and a tie. All of them, except one, Bernardo Flores “*El Chociloco*”, who appears with casual T-shirt and from a different angle. Sometimes the pictures are presented in their color version, but most of the times are shown in their black and white version (Annex 3, Figs. 8-9). This can be analyzed from different perspectives, such as social and economical background, for instance, as they came from poor community, they did not have more personal or more recent pictures. But, outside of the case, the students became characters. Over almost three years since the students disappeared the same pictures have been used, there has been a consistency that allows the audience to link the pictures with the case. The pictures not only represent the persons, but rather the whole Ayotzinapa case, they’ve become a site of memory. For example, there was a campaign organized by a group of illustrators to take these pictures and turn them into illustrations<sup>15</sup>. In their website they claim:

To give face to those we needed to see was a task that the project itself came to assume unintentionally, as the days went by and the collaborations of illustrators in social networks added by hundreds. The result is a mosaic of faces that somehow contributed to the memory, a bench of portraits whose intention weighed the human gesture as the truly artistic, and a continuous claim. [...] <sup>16</sup>

Thus, in the transversal narratives can be found intentional acts of remembrance that commemorate the students. This example of the pictures allows to perceive the motion of cultural memory, from a picture to an illustration—a remediation of a mediation, relocated into different context, from an official document, to a sign of fight, used in a street protest, or an act of

---

<sup>15</sup> The illustrations are available here: <http://ilustradoresconayotzinapa.tumblr.com/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.ilustradoresconayotzinapa.org/>



remembrance on social media (Annex 3, Fig. 10). The meaning of the pictures, the students' faces, changed at the moment they became mediatized. The Ayotzinapa case itself is a site of memory that keeps producing texts.

Furthermore, one could say that the peak of the media coverage of the case was the first year, especially until the early part of 2015. During this period of time a great amount the texts related to the students were produced: short films, illustrations, magazine and newspaper articles about the missing students, and interviews with students who survived that night and the relatives of the one's disappeared. It is interesting to see that in some of the texts there is a kind of need to present a social, political and geographical context in which the students used to live.

Another example of these narratives is the short film *Guerrero: The Monster in the mountains*, a project made by the photographer Matt Black and produced by *The New Yorker*<sup>17</sup>, it was published in its digital version, on March 26, 2015. The short film starts with white words on a black background, as an introduction to the topic: what, when and where happened. It also mentions that only one student's remains have been identified. Then, still, in words, establishes the context: "Guerrero is the second-poorest and most violent state of the country". All the photography of the film is black and white. The first sequence has a narration by voice of a woman, apparently the mom of one of the missing students, reading a letter to her son, in which she tells the pain that she is feeling due to his absence. And why his son wanted to go that particular school. Also, there are some excerpts of an interview with the director of the center of Human Rights of 'the mountain'<sup>18</sup>. He basically, explains how "in Guerrero, the tragedy of this violent Mexico is condensed", and claims that in that particular zone the poverty is too severe, that "There is an unfair fight. The giant of the repressive state against the poor population." Another interview is with one of the volunteers who participated in the search of the missing students. He emphasizes that during the search they found many clandestine graves, remains that have been there for many years, and provides details on the condition in which they were found: "people bound at their wrists, bound at their feet", and so on. He also claims, that the volunteers are not looking for criminals: "We just want to recover the bodies of our family members..."

---

<sup>17</sup>An American weekly magazine covers a variety of topics, from politic and social issues to technology and entertainment. That is why it can be classified as an infotainment medium

<sup>18</sup>One of Guerrero's regions.

To continue with the emotive discourse, the short film goes back to the mom of two of the students missing who says: “I just can’t believe it. I blame myself because I encouraged my boys to go to that school. Imagine the thing that man [The Attorney General, Jesús Murillo Karam] said, that they were burned, that they were chopped up. God has helped me a lot. But I know that my boys are alive” Again, the mom who is reading a letter speaks “Finally, son, I want to tell you that your hometown is looking for you. We live with the hope of seeing you again”. The mom remediates Murillo’s statements from the press conferences – what had remained in her memory was, apparently, the way in which the students were killed and what the killers did to their bodies. She did not mention anything “scientific” or formal, such as the evidence found or the pictures that were shown at the conferences, rather the whole act, as it has an emotional meaning to her. Unlike Murillo and Zerón, she had a relationship with one of the students, and to imagine what happened to him has a different impact on her. This emotional connection can be seen as a something that works on favor for the commemoration of the students as persons rather than simply as victims or agents of violent acts, as the PGR pointed out, by stressing their illegal activities. But, at the same time, it stays only on an emotional level, that in some cases cannot create a connection with all the members of the audience, as they are outsiders to the family, or they do not the student.

Also, *VICE News* released in their digital version a documentary, a special journalistic investigation, on November 28, 2014, titled *The Missing 43: Mexico’s Disappeared Students*. In this documentary, Daniel Hernández, narrator and interviewer, goes to Ayotzinapa, to the school where the students used to attend to classes, and talks with some of the students who were in Iguala during the night of September 26, the last persons who claimed to have seen the forty-three students alive. The film seeks to inform about what happened that night of September in 2014 from the perspective of the students and Human Rights activists. Yet one could say that the main goal of the entire documentary is not the latter one; rather it aims to focus on the lives of the forty-three students – the way they used to live before everything took place – and to show the impact of their absence on their families, friends, classmates and teachers, hometown and perhaps on the whole country.

The film also suggests that the State has chased the students of the Normal Rural School of Ayotzinapa for a long time, and that this time was not an exception. By giving the historical and social background of the school, a political stand is set in the documentary. The documentary

subtly suggests that students were used to sought conflict at any provocation, because it was part of their formation as a students and activists. Yet, it follows the contra-narrative by assuming that students were victims that could not defend themselves. As well, outlines the lives of the students before the disappearance by giving details of their way of living and personal backgrounds. This ideally creates an emotional bond with the viewer.

In addition to various documentaries, there were also the demonstrations of support. The first claiming for justice on the Mexican streets was on October 8, 2014. It was called the “National March for Ayotzinapa”, that day in different cities of Mexico people met and walk on the main streets, to support the students’ families and to ask for answers from the Mexican government. *Animal Politico* covered the march in Mexico City, and published the following (Animal Politico, 2014):

According to the numbers provided by the Public Security Secretariat of the Federal District (SSPDF), some 15,000 people participated in the march from the Angel of Independence to the capital Zocalo, who demanded that the federal and Guerrero authorities investigate the whereabouts of the youth and find them alive.

In a press release distributed during the march - which was carried out without visible police custody - students of the Normal Rural School "Raúl Isidro Burgos" demanded five points:

- \* Presentation of 43 missing comrades alive.
- \* Punishment of those responsible for intellectual and material extrajudicial killing of our three fallen comrades.
- \* Political trial and dismissal of the mayor of Iguala, José Luis Abarca Velázquez.
- \* Follow-up to the impeachment and punishment of the governor of Guerrero Ángel Aguirre Rivero
- \* Punishment of the Secretary of Public Security of the city of Iguala, Felipe Flores Velázquez.

Additionally, for this text, it was important to underline the presence of the relatives and classmates of the missing students.

The march led by the relatives of the 43 students of the Normal Ayotzinapa who remain missing, arrived at the Zocalo, where, however, they could not settle because the square is occupied by White tents and fences of the Book Fair. In a temple placed between the Supreme Court of Justice and the Government Building of

the Federal District, next to the National Palace, a meeting was held headed by relatives and companions of the disappeared. "With bullets, that's how we have to pay students with peasant families, while governments [local and federal] do not take responsibility," said one of Ayotzinapa's normal students. Another student exclaimed, "We can not allow one more dead, nor one more dead normalist!" (Ibid)

The Mexican newspaper *El Universal*<sup>19</sup> published something as well, on its web page. What stands out it is the mention to some slogans from the protest.

At the march, protesters carried fabrics and banners with slogans that read, "Now, it is now essential to present the students alive and punish of the guilty." Another one, "Punishment to the killers and quick solution", and people were shouting "because the color of blood is never forgotten" and a banner with the following legend: "September combative, Ayotzinapa is standing " (Sánchez, 2014)

After the first massive demonstrations of support to the missing students' families, the students community in Mexico City organized an Interuniversity assembly on October 10, 2014. The students from the main universities of the country met to establish their political stance in the Ayotzinapa case. Additionally, they agreed to do the first "Day of Global Action for Ayotzinapa", which had as main goal to show their disagreement with the possible participation of military and police forces, that is, the state, in the disappearance of students. Another goal is to demand justice and the appearance of students alive. One of the main characteristics of these days is the use of hashtags<sup>20</sup> in social media being the principal #AccionGlobalPorAyotzinapa. This could be to reach more people or to catch the attention of people outside Mexico.

Once again *El Universal* covered the actions on the specialized website *Red Política*, which focuses exclusively on political issues, and published an article about the actions, under the headline "*#VivosLos43Día de Acción Global por Ayotzinapa*"<sup>21</sup> and the summary was, "Protests are expected in Brazil, Argentina, Guatemala, Chile, Bolivia, London and in several states of the Mexican Republic; In several schools and faculties of the UNAM<sup>22</sup> there will be work stoppages in solidarity with families of the disappeared." (Red Política, 2014). These days

---

<sup>19</sup> A Mexican newspaper of national circulation founded in 1916. It is one of the newspapers of greater circulation. It was founded with the objective of spread the postulates emanating from the Mexican Revolution at the beginning of the Constituent Congress.

<sup>20</sup> A hashtag is a type of label or metadata tag used on social network and microblogging services which makes it easier for users to find messages with a specific theme or content

<sup>21</sup> Lit. Trans. "*#AliveThe43 Call for Global Action Day for Ayotzinapa*"

<sup>22</sup> The National Autonomous University of Mexico. The main public university of the country.

of global action have continued on the commemoration date of the students' disappearance. The media has covered them, mentioning the principal actions.

Besides the public demonstrations by different sectors of society, another relevant action that happened in Mexico was the placement of the "anti-monument" in one of the main avenues of Mexico City, on April 26, of 2015. About the placement *Proceso*, published on its website, the following:

Citizens installed this afternoon the work of the Committee +43 - civil society organization - at the corner of Reforma and Avenida Juárez, to commemorate the seven months of the criminal police action in Iguala the night of last September 26. [...] The work was inaugurated with a count until the number 43 that ended with the cry of "Justice". Parents of the students declared that the number 43 means to them "the struggle to find them alive." "This number is one of resistance and we must continue to fight so that what happened in Iguala is not forgotten," said a spokesman for relatives. [...] "Do not abandon us," urged the mother of Benjamin Ascencio Bautista asking "that those who have children continue to accompany us.", "It is an act of dignity and a call to justice," said one of the installers of the play, "so that acts against humanity in this country will not continue. (Tourliere, M. 2015)

This excerpt shows perfectly the human side of the case. How for the students' families and a sector of the Mexican society the case is not closed, and there has to be a public reminder of it. They claim for justice and the support of the society. Besides, the text suggests that the families have been through a lot trying to find their relatives and they are asking for help. Moreover, by saying: "Do not abandon us", as in the video produced by *Ojos de Perro*, shows the fear to be alone in their fight for answers and justice. The sentence even shows the fear to the oblivion, that at some point people will forget the case, and the location of the students.

Another outlet covering the placement of the anti-monument was the Spanish newspaper *El País*<sup>23</sup>, on its website published an article, the synthesis of it, claims that "The relatives of the 'Iguala case' placed in the most symbolic avenue of Mexico City a sculpture with the number of victims: 43" The article collects a series of short interviews of different people, from one of the minds behind the anti-monument to some pedestrians who were passing the place, and it mentions the press release<sup>24</sup> that accompanies the placement. It is a long excerpt yet relevant,

---

<sup>23</sup> The Spanish newspaper founded in 1976. It has a global edition that is why it has a bureau in Mexico City, and has a considerable circulation, especially its online version.

<sup>24</sup> Added to this research as Annex 2

since it shows the opinion of the people plus the impression of a foreigner, the reporter, who is Spanish.

The citizens wonder (rather demand that it does not happen) if the government of Mexico City will remove the statue because it is not official. Will it be allowed to remain in the middle of this important street, in such a visible point, two red numbers of three meters high that remember that massacre that has exposed so much the problems of the State to guarantee the security of its citizens? [...]

- Why does the sculpture put more 43 and not less than 43?

"Because they're alive for us," says Martinhelli, clutching his heart. Although the government has claimed that the students were murdered, in the public opinion of a country as suspicious of the official versions as Mexico, the doubts remain.

Then there is a tortilla seller on a bicycle. Jorge Alberto Paisa, 24 years old. [...]

-Do you know what it represents?"

"Well, not to start."

-It's for the 43 of Ayotzinapa.

"Ah, the 43. [...] All right, for justice to be done. I have not seen that the Government giving a solution. They have done nothing to find them."

-Do you think they're alive or dead?

"I think they must be alive. They must have kept them locked down somewhere..." [...]

Two young people who are about to cross the street say: "It's good to remember that it has not been solved," says Brenda Valentin, 29, about the same as the tortilla seller said. With her is Jesus Iniesta, 22 years old, says: "As in this country everything stays in a monument and apart from that things do not happen". Besides: "And the numbers are very mold, right? They are very straight..."

And an architect who goes by there, Manuel Suárez, 27, says he thinks it's great to call attention to the issue: "That people who are aware of the situation inform others. I would like this to stay here forever. "

Pedestrian Isaac Lopez, 43, stops at the traffic light. He wears a navy blue suit and a light blue tie. You look clerical. Not exactly that. Not knowing yet his job, we asked him about the matter. He replies: "It seems to me a way of expressing nonconformity. If I were in their place, I would probably do the same."

-And what is your job?

"I'm a police officer in the PGR. [...]"

-And you think the investigation was good?"

"What can I tell you? As a citizen, then no. As a public servant I do not know, because I did not carry out the investigation."

Finally we spoke with José Mújica, who has come to this area of the city to sign the extension of a savings account. José Mújica is 96 years old. [...]

-Yes. How do you see it?

"Well, it has two meanings. One, the memory of affection. The other ... Well the truth is that they died man ...But it is always good to remember."

Before leaving, Mújica asks a question

"Look, but you're from Spain. Why the love for the 43, if you are from Spain? (De Llano, 2015)

The anti-monument is the only monument placed to commemorate the missing students. There are some other demonstrations of support or remembrance in the public space, such as, street art, or the crosses and altars placed where the students were killed the night when the forty-three students disappeared. Moreover, the number 43 has become a symbol of the case. It can be said that after what happened in Iguala, the meaning of the number changed, for most of the people, it is related to the students

Overall, some of the texts belonging to this narrative only remediate the event (attacks) mostly from the survivors' perspective. Also, some texts remediate the official narrative, in particular to refer to the possible murder of the students, from the parents perspective, what means that for them is shocking to know that their children were killed, and burned. This was one of the main statements from the press conference offered by the Mexican government, and has been remediated since then. And how, this narrative affects the families emotionally. However, the transversal narratives seem to be separated from the rest of the narratives, since these narratives go beyond the 'fight' to know what 'really' happened that night in Iguala and they try to bring people's attention to other topics: the economical background of the students, social issues in Guerrero, the way in which the lives of those close to 43 students, and even, Mexican society in general, changed after their disappearance. That is why, some of the texts can be considered as hyped, since they seem to focus on the misfortune and victimization of the students and their relatives.

As well, the texts with this type of narrative are very diverse in content. Yet, they can be classified as "catalytic" texts in Rigney terms, since they seek to bring people's attention to the students and their lives previous the event in Iguala. It can be considered as "creative memory" as Lotman proposed, as for these narratives the past is not past; rather it is something that continues in the present, that is why, the production of the texts continues.

### **2.3 Remediation in the Ayotzinapa case**

It is interesting to notice that in the process of shaping cultural memory, there are some texts travelling from one context to another, more durable than others, those that become, in Rigney (2004) terms, portable monuments. Since the majority of the texts analyzed come from journalistic mediations, it should be noted that the circulation of the journalistic texts has changed. The traditional channels, as TV, radio and printed versions, are not enough. Nowadays, most of the journalistic mediums have an on-line version. As a consequence, the circulation of their contents happens through Internet, to be more specific, through social media and platforms as YouTube, in which, the texts can be consulted several times as it works as a virtual archive, regardless the geographical location. Not only the way in which we communicate has changed, also the way in which cultural memory is (re)constructed, (re)mediated and archived.

This can be seen in the way in which the journalistic contents presented to the audience has become more visual. The news networks have learned to present the news with visual resources, not as an option, rather as a compulsory part of the text. To exemplify this, there are micro and short films, or even documentaries. That can be also translated as an attempt to reach younger audiences, who do not read newspapers and rather learn about the news on their timelines in social media.

Hence, the way in which the discourse is created cannot be seen only as a structure of meaning; statements grouped to communicate something. The discourse must be seen also as “a practice as material affordance” (Iedema 2003: 50). Therefore, the material expression allows realizing the social, cultural and historical structures, as well as the investments and circumstances in which we live.

Consequently, the Ayotzinapa is not only a process of mediation, but also that of remediation, created by several chains of semiotic production. These chains were presented as narratives in the previous chapter. However, in this subchapter the relation between them will be viewed from the perspective of remediation. Firstly, it must be specified, as it was already mentioned, that for this study remediation does not focus on the implications of changing technologies from one semiotic artifact into another, but rather on how these material representations (texts) are chained to another and how the meaning making process can be



affected from one text to another. This process goes beyond acts of repetition, as there is always a selection of certain abstracts or elements from one text to another, creating a new texts, and meanings. Thus, the subchapter's focus will be on the material side of the selective reconstruction of the discourse of the case. After all, the whole process of cultural memory is based on selection.

In order to make the analysis more clear, in this subchapter the same texts are grouped into different clusters. The first one includes the texts produced by the Mexican government and international institutions (GIEI); those presented by the written press; the ones aired on TV and the documentaries and short films. All of these have an explicit connection, in the sense that one text refers to another one, or even several ones. Yet, there is a cluster dedicated to "commemoration acts", in which remediation is implicit, since the texts do not mention other texts directly, but are consequence of previous remediations at the same time themselves are remediation acts. Here, one can find the street protests and the placement of the antimonument, as well as a video where the parents of the students compared the Christmas previous the disappearance and their current one. To illustrate this, there is a map (Annex 3, Fig. 11) and scheme (Annex 3, Fig. 12) illustrating these relations.

As it can be seen, the while the texts produced by the Mexican government do nit refer to texts produced by other agents, they are the ones that are remediated more by the rest of the texts. That is to say that the other texts refer to the ones created by the government, either just to take it as a reference, a starting point, or to contest it, as the ones produced by the GIEI or the mass media. The same happens with the ones created by the GIEI. This may be due to the fact that governmental and international institutions back up these two sources, ergo, the texts produced by them are official *per se*, worth to be spread, to be remediated. In addition, they focused their attention to the investigation of a criminal case, with everything that this involves, such as scientific specialists, who use a specific language; there is a need to use multimedia resources, to share the evidence, etc.

Both, PGR and GIEI texts (press conferences and reports) are themselves remediations of previously gathered materials, audiovisually and textually stored evidence. In other words, each report presented during the press conferences was made by testimonials, police reports, and multimedia resources, such as, videos from security cameras and material provided by the press. At this level, the main differences between both of them, is that the GIEI used the footage recorded by the students and that the investigation had a human rights perspective. Hence the

main goal of the GIEI was to offer considerations to the Mexican government to improve the investigation. Besides, the GIEI was not forced to answer, as the PGR was, as to what happened with the missing students.

Yet the government did not publicly respond to the claims made by GIEI, except for one instance. During PGR's press conference in January 27, 2015<sup>25</sup>, Murillo Karam and Zerón presented videos of the testimonials of the alleged killers of the students, one of those was Agustín García Reyes, who claimed he threw the ashes into garbage bags to the *San Juan* River (Annex 3, Figs. 13, 14). Apparently just a few hours after his confession he was taken to the place to recreate what happened that night, this was also recorded and presented during the press conference. According to the PGR and the press, this happened on October 29, 2015, in Guerrero. As near to the scene some members of the press were waiting to be allowed to take some shots of the place, they filmed this tour of the alleged murderer and the federal authorities. This material was shared with the GIEI and presented by them during their second and last press conference in April 24, 2016<sup>26</sup> as a edited video to undermine the PGR's narrative, by showing Tomás Zerón, head of the criminal agency of the PGR, at Cocula, walking around the area with the alleged suspects of the murder and burning of the missing students. There was also more PGR staff, and police and army forces in the area. The GIEI claimed that in the video one can noticed how evidence was taken from the area, even though according to the case file there was not evidence taken on that particular day. In addition, the experts suggested that Zerón would not have to have been there. As mentioned, the PGR was not responding to or remediating the texts, besides the ones produced during its own investigation. Except for this instance, the PGR answered to GIEI's criticism in another press conference<sup>27</sup>, just a few days after the GIEI's press conference. Tomás Zerón, explained why he was there, he backed up his version with official documents and even mentioned a constitutional article that supports his presence in the area. And, he highlighted the inconsistencies on the video showed by the GIEI, related to time and dates of the video. Zerón concluded his conference by saying: "Nothing better than the proof to counterbalance the speculation". Once again, one can see how important for these two institutions is the 'proof'

---

<sup>25</sup> Number 9 in our timeline (Fig.1)

<sup>26</sup> Number 19 in our timeline (Fig. 1)

<sup>27</sup> Number 21 in our timeline (Fig. 1)

category, to present something material in their discourse. Yet PGR did not comment any other criticism or proposals made by GIEI about the investigation.

The previously mentioned instance is a great example of the remediation process in the case, as it shows the direct connection between the two texts, on top of that, it also demonstrates the importance of the visual materials in creating meaning and supporting each narrative. The same video is used in different contexts as part of similar, yet different discourses. In other words, while the PGR used the video to offer evidence of its investigation, and endowed the version presented during the press conference with a realistic elements, such as being in the scenes of the murder and disposal of the remains, the GIEI used the video, or fragments of it, to undermine the version proposed by the PGR. As they not only presented a sort of “behind the scenes” of the PGR’s video, as more material of the exactly same day was shown in its video, to suggest that the PGR did not show everything what happened during the tour, to create doubts about PGR’s legitimacy.

Another level of the chain can be found after the press conferences, when the mass media refer to what was said during the conferences, that is what happens with the TV program *Tercer Grado*<sup>28</sup> where the anchors discuss the first PGR conference, as well with the article by *Aristegui Noticias*<sup>29</sup>, where they specifically talk about the second GIEI’s report. And there are texts created by written press in which the focus is on a particular statement made in the press conference, as in the article by *La Jornada*<sup>30</sup> that is connected to the PGR’s conference by claiming that the *Guerreros Unidos* killed the students or what the magazine *Proceso* did in the article *La verdadera noche de Iguala*<sup>31</sup>.

Also, there is the instances of the mass media remediating both, PGR and GIEI discourses and even confronting them, as *Animal Político*<sup>32</sup>, in which the publications establishes three main discoveries made by the GIEI against the “historical truth” proposed by the government. Again, the publications is not taking the entire reports nor conferences, rather some excerpts, or statements from them, in order to create another text. It is worth to mention, that all of these remediations spin around what happened the night of the event, and the (re)construction of the

---

<sup>28</sup> Number 5 in our timeline (Fig.1)

<sup>29</sup> Number 20 in our timeline (Fig.1)

<sup>30</sup> Number 10 in our timeline (Fig.1)

<sup>31</sup> Number 7 in our timeline (Fig.1)

<sup>32</sup> Number 15 in our timeline (Fig.1)

case, that is, the criminal investigation. So, the attention is focused on where, how and by whom, happened to the students.

The case of the documentaries and short films is quite different, as they are telling a story, the texts not only talked about the missing students, but also mentioned several social problems in the area where the attack took place, as well, as where the students' school is located. Thus, the narrative of these texts placed the case into a violent social context. Besides, these texts are multimodal; the resources for the meaning making process are more diverse than those used by the written press. The audience is able to hear the voices and see the gestures from those who were interviewed, and see the places where the event that lead to the disappearance of the students took place.

On top of that, in the documentary produced by VICE News<sup>33</sup>, footage from Iguala local press was used, to show the first images from the attack, as well as the material recorded by the students, collected by the researchers from Berkeley University and *Proceso*; another footage used by VICE was the one taken by the parents of the students during a meeting with the president Enrique Peña Nieto, to which the press did not have access. All of this material, along with interviews, tours around Guerrero, and footage from the protests in Mexico City, endowed the text with the characteristics to be considered as a documentary, as the intention is to create a sense of reality, to share something that happened supported by "evidence".

The *Mirar Morir*<sup>34</sup> can be considered as the best example of how remediation works, as the text used excerpts from the press conferences by PGR and GIEI (Annex 3, Figs. 15, 16), the footage from the shooting recorded by the students (Annex 3, Fig. 17), diverse material by the press and the documentary even shows some official documents (Annex 3, Figs. 18-20) about them. It is interesting how parts of these documents are presented highlighted while the narrator is commenting that particular excerpt, as the rest of the document appears blurred. Again, all of this is to create a sense reality. Also, one should remember that this documentary was released a year after the event, while the one created by VICE, was presented just a few months after the disappearance of the students. That is, *Mirar Morir* had access to key materials of the case, the press conferences by the government and the GIEI. Similarly, in the TV program *Espiral* that was

---

<sup>33</sup> Number 6 in our timeline (Fig.1)

<sup>34</sup> Number 18 in our timeline (Fig.1)

aired two years after the event, there were more texts to remediate by then than there was in the beginning. One should also mention the perspective of time that creates some kind of cooling of the case; the protests on the streets were not longer frequent or tumultuous. By now the production of new texts about the case happens only near to the commemoration date, September 26.

This leads us to the commemoration acts, such as the video where the relatives were interviewed, the protests and the antimonument in Mexico City. As it was already established, the texts about these acts are in a way an implicit remediation, as they do not refer directly to any other text, in other words, they do not remediate the original media, such as images, footage, statements, but in a certain way they translated into their own words. There is an appropriation of the discourse. That is why they are a part semiosphere of the case. These texts reached another level of materiality, from the event, the (re)construction of the case, a discourse of the 43 on the mass media to the protests and the antimonument on the Mexican streets. It can be said, that the discourse was taken out of the institutions to the streets, yet the mass media still talked about these demonstrations, those are texts used in this study. This can be linked, what Iedema (2001) argues about the construction of ‘facts’ “the transposition into increasingly durable and propagative semiotics, such as architectural design, and even the organization of our spatial environment [...] the ‘fact construction’ is shown here to extend from face-to-face talk to the ways in which we produce the structures that constitute and produce our social space” (Iedema 2001: 25). For Iedema, the organization process resemiotizes the meanings into more durable manifestations.



Scheme 2. Remediation of the discourse

Therefore, the role of remediation in the creation of the cultural memory of Ayotzinapa case is to connect the processes of mediation, in order to create a chain of semiotic activities. In other words, there are semiotic means interacting simultaneously during the mediatization of the case, this interaction happens thanks to the diverse material activity, the collection of texts about the

case. As Rigney (2008) points out how these materials become themselves an objects of recollection. They are connected in different levels, internally through footage, photographs and statements, which are placed from one context to another; then, the next level is the relation between the texts (a collection of the previous ones), how they refer to each other, to create new texts; following by the implicit remediation, in which, as a result of the previous chains of remediation, other texts emerged, trying to commemorate what happened to the students, to demand justice and claiming not to forget or forgive. All of them create the discourse as a structure of meaning and as a practice with material affordance, of the case shaping the cultural memory. As the memory functions as a *dispositif* of heterogeneous texts, that have a dialogue between them. For example, a source text can be a “stabilizer”, according to Rigney’s typology, yet for other texts can be an “object of recollection”, or a “catalyst”, depending on the moment and context of the remediation and of course the contents of the source text.

## Conclusion

To summarize, culture is formed by texts. These can be made by different sign systems, not only by words. In addition, a text not only generates meanings, but it also condenses cultural memory. Thus, culture is a social phenomenon that provides sense. And cultural memory is a continuous process that goes on through time and space, is shared by the community and mediated through texts. According to Ann Rigney (2004) cultural memory is a process of communication through media. In addition, as Jan Assmann (2008) argues, this type of memory relies on institutions to be re-embodied, so the mediated texts must come from institutions to be part of the cultural memory.

Moreover, cultural memory must be seen as something ‘alive’ in constant motion. First, by nature, its process demands a selection between what will be remembered and what will be forgotten. Second, as Astrid Erll (2011) proposes, cultural memory has movement. It travels, from territorial to social boundaries, from one media channel to another, contents, forms, practices, etc. Also, Erll argues that societies do not remember literally; but much of what is done to reconstruct a shared past bears some resemblance to the processes of individual memory (2011:5). Hence, cultural memory is a reconstruction process made by a conglomeration of heterogeneous media texts. Also, Ann Rigney (2004) claims that these texts cannot be located in a particular fixed site, and that can be carried into new situations, to be turned into portable monuments.

Hence, the (re)construction of the Ayotzinapa case was built by different texts, creating different narratives of the case. Almost two years after the event, we can identify four narratives: (1) the official narrative (provided by the Mexican government), (2) the contra-narrative (backed by an international institutions), (3-4) the subversive and the transversal narrative (created by the mass media).

An interesting aspect of the reconstruction of the case is how the event was called or remembered in the different narratives: “The Iguala/Ayotzinapa case” for the government and the

GIEI, as their investigations were focused on those places where the attacks took place and where the students were. Meanwhile, for some media channels represented in the subversive and for the transversal narratives it was called “The case of the 43 missing students”, as those narratives centered their attention on the students and the fact that they were missing. Thus, it can be considered that there are many sites of memory that emerged from the event.

The material representations (texts) are linked to one another and the meaning making process can be affected from one text to another. This process goes beyond repetition acts, as there is always a selection of certain abstracts or elements in the process of creating a new text, and hence, new meaning. Consequently, the Ayotzinapa case is not only a mediation process, but also a remediation one as several chains of semiotic production create it. The mediations of the Iguala attack and the disappearance of the students have turned Ayotzinapa into a dynamic site of memory, where different narratives and meanings exist side by side, intersect and converge.

These narratives are connected at different levels, internally through footage, photographs and statements, which are placed from one context to another. The next level is then the relation between the texts (a collection of the previous ones), how they make reference to each other to create new texts; following by the implicit remediation, in which, as a result of the previous chains of remediation, other texts emerged, whether to commemorate what happened to the students, or to demand justice claiming not to forgive or forget. All of these create the discourse as a structure of meaning and as a practice with material affordance, of the case shaping cultural memory as memory functions as a dispositif of heterogeneous texts that enter into dialogue with one another. For example, a source text can be a stabilizer, according to Rigney’s typology, yet for other texts it can be an object of recollection, or a catalyst, depending on the moment and context of the remediation and of course the contents of the source text.

In a broader sense, we can say that the official side has tried to close the case, to fill the gaps in an objective way in order to stop talking about it. With reference to Lotman on the distinction between informative and creative memory, we can say that the official narrative is closer to the functioning of informative memory, as “this type of memory is planar by nature, located in one temporal dimension and subject to the law of chronology. It evolves in the same direction with the flow of time, and is congruent with this flow” (Lotman 1985: 674 through Tamm 2015: 133). In addition, it can be seen as the canon, a passive memory. According to



Aleida Assmann, it is the type of memory “that preserves the past as the archive” (Assmann A., 2008: 98).

Meanwhile, from the perspective of the other narratives, the official narrative is not enough and the case is not closed as there are still unanswered questions, in particular, what happened with those forty-three students. The main goal of these narratives seems to be to contradict the government’s version, not necessary by creating a new narrative of the event, but just by taking apart the official version, finding the gaps or mistakes in it with few media channels proposing a new narrative of the event. In Lotman’s terms these narratives are more of creative cultural memory, where the whole depth of texts proves to be active. The result is no more important than the process of actualization of certain texts—and it is not governed by the formula “the newest is the most valuable” (Lotman 1985: 674-5 through Tamm 2015: 133). Unlike informative cultural memory, creative cultural memory is not just panchronic, but is opposed to time: “It preserves what once was as what currently is. From the viewpoint of memory as a mechanism that works throughout its whole depth, the past is not past” (Ibid, 133). Here the production of texts continues as it is considered as the “actively circulated memory that keeps the past as present” (Assmann, A. 2008: 98). However, this differentiation seems hard to make, mainly due to the process of remediation. Aleida Assmann’s typology is not sufficient to deal with this kind of dynamic phenomena, as she dealt with more, so to say, static issues of memory.

It is to be remembered that the official narrative did not intend to enter into dialogue with other narratives. However, this happened when other narratives used it as an object of recollection to build their own texts. Hence, the official narrative cannot be set on just one temporal dimension either since it is relocated into several timeframes and contexts. Moreover, the production of the texts has been continued. Thus the separation between the two types of memory suggested by Lotman seems to be impossible to draw as both exist at the same time and keep being remediated. Consequently, these notions should be revised, to add extra notions that fit better into the current times, where most of the cultural process involved several platforms of communication, media channels and digital devices. In other words, the contexts in which the informative and the creative processes occur have changed, as well, as the texts they produce.

The monumental texts and agents of the cultural memory, as Rigney calls them, are digital now, moving around through the Internet, digitalization has amplified their portability. This has an

impact on the way cultural memory is shaped, since as both Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney claim, the process is alive and relies on media to stay in motion. And if these change, the whole process does as well. During the study, different materials were analyzed. Most of them were found on digital platforms; even the government finds digital content necessary. Access to information has been democratized in that it is more readily accessible to a larger group of people.

Furthermore, the remediation process that is essential to the recollection of the past *per se* gives rise to more versions now, since the production of the texts follows the logic of the ‘mass-production’ that appeared in a transition context where conflict was the main obstacle in the communication field. “The mass media (a plural form) refer to the organized means of communicating openly, at a distance, and to many in a short space of time.” (McQuail 1983: 25-6). The main feature of mass media is to for maximum reach with the relation between sender and receiver being one-directional.

The Ayotzinapa case became a site of memory in a mass and globalized context, with the local Mexican culture and its social and political particularities rendering the case more complex. Even within those mentioned in this study, we can understand how reconstruction of the case is controversial. With the Mexican government known for its corruption and hence not sufficiently trustworthy, it is certain that the official narrative would be contested by agents outside the government. New meanings are created, new narratives are created. This is what keeps Ayotzinapa alive.

## REFERENCES

- Amnesty International 2015. *La desapariciónforzada de los estudiantes de Ayotzinapa. Linea del tiempo*. September 23, 2015. Mexico. Available: <https://www.amnesty.org/es/latest/news/2015/09/mexico-ayotzinapa-student-s-enforced-disappearance-timeline> Last visited 18th of May 2017.
- Animal Politico 2014. Ya no podemospermitirni un muertomás! Marchan en México y el mundopor normalistas desaparecidos. *Animal Politico*, October 8, 2014. Available: <http://www.animalpolitico.com/2014/10/marchan-en-la-ciudad-de-mexico-por-los-normalistas-de-ayotzinapa/> Last visited 18th of May 2017.
- Assmann, Aleida 2008. Canon and Archive. In: Erll, Astrid; Nünning, Ansgar (eds.) *Media and Cultural Memory. Cultural Memory Studies. An international and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Berlin & New York: de Gruyter, 85-96.
- Assmann, Jan 2008. Communicative and Cultural Memory. In: Erll, Astrid; Nünning, Ansgar (eds.), *Media and Cultural Memory. Cultural Memory Studies. An international and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Berlin & New York: de Gruyter, 109-118.
- Basu, Laura 2009. Towards a Memory Dispositif: Truth, Myth, and the Ned Kelly lieu de mémoire, 1890-1930. In: Erll, Astrid; Nünning Ansgar (eds.) *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory. Media and Cultural Memory. Cultural Memory Studies. An international and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Berlin & New York: de Gruyter, 139-156.
- Bolter, Jay David; Grusin, Richard 2000. Mediation and Remediation. In: *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. The MIT Press, 52-62.

- Brockmeier J. 2010. After the archive: Remapping memory. *Culture and Psychology*, SAGE Publications, 16 (1): 5-35.
- Byers, Dylan 2014. Vice News, where video works. *Politico*, February 26, 2014. Available: <http://www.politico.com/blogs/media/2014/02/vice-news-where-video-works-184058> Last visited 18th of May 2017.
- Castillo G., Gustavo. 2015. Guerreros Unidos asesinó a los 43 normalistas: Murillo. *La Jornada*, January 28, 2015. Available: <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2015/01/28/politica/002n1pol> Last visited 18th of May 2017.
- De Llano, Luis 2015. El 'antimonumento' de Ayotzinapa. *El País*, April 28, 2014. Available: [http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/04/27/actualidad/1430156045\\_589942.html](http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/04/27/actualidad/1430156045_589942.html) Last visited 18th of May 2017.
- Erll, Astrid 2008. Literature, Film and the Medially of cultural memory. In: Erll, Astrid; Nünning, Ansgar (eds.) *Media and Cultural Memory. Cultural Memory Studies. An international and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Berlin & New York: de Gruyter, 389-397.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2011. Travelling Memory. *Parallax*, 17:4, 4-18.
- Fischer, Steve; Hernández, Anabel 2014. La historia no oficial. In: *Proceso. La verdadera noche de Iguala*, December 14, 2014, No. 1989, Mexico.
- Foucault, Michel 2012[1969]. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London-New York: Routledge.
- GIEI 2015. *Informe Ayotzinapa I. Investigación y primeras conclusiones de las desapariciones y homicidios de los normalistas de Ayotzinapa*. Available: <http://prensagieiayotzi.wixsite.com/giei-ayotzinapa/informe> Last visited 18th of May 2017.
- Grusin, Richard A. 2004. Premediation. In: *Criticism*, Vol. 46 (1). Wayne State University Press, 17-39.
- Hengst, Julie; Prior, Paul (eds.) (2010). *Exploring Semiotic Remediation as Discourse Practice*. Introduction. US: Palgrave Macmillan, 1-24
- Iedema, Rick 2001. Resemiotization. In: *Semiotica* 137-1/4, Walter de Gruyter: 23-39.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2003. Multimodality, resemiotization: extending the analysis of discourse as multi-semiotic practice. In: *Visual Communication*. SAGE Publications Vol. 2 (1): 29-57

- Ivanov, V., et al. 1998[1973]. *Theses on the semiotic study of cultures*. Tartu: Tartu University Press.
- Lotman, J.; Uspensky 1978[1971]. On the Semiotic Mechanism of Culture. Trans. G. Mihaychuk, *New Literary History* 9/2: 211-232.
- Lotman, J. 1990a. Three functions of the text. In: *Universe of the Mind. A Semiotic Theory of Culture*. London: Tauris, 11-19.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1990b. Rhetoric as a mechanism for meaning-generation. In: *Universe of the Mind. A Semiotic Theory of Culture*. London: Tauris. 36-53
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. On the semiosphere. In: *Sign Systems Studies*, 33(1): 215-239.
- Martínez, R. París; Roldán, Nayeli, 2015. 3 descubrimientos clave de los expertos independientes vs. la "verdad histórica" de la PGR. *Animal Político*, September 7, 2014. México. Available: <http://www.animalpolitico.com/2015/09/tres-descubrimientos-clave-de-los-expertos-independientes-que-refutan-la-verdad-historica-de-pgr/> Last visited 18th of May 2017.
- McQuail, Denis 2010[1983]. *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*, UK: SAGE.
- Mulder, Arjen 2006. Media. In: *Theory Culture Society*, vol. 23. TCS Centre, Nottingham Trent University: SAGE, 289-296.
- Nora, Pierre 2008. *Pierre Nora en Lieux de mémoire*. Montevideo, Uruguay: Trilce.
- Red Política, 2014. #VivosLos43 Convocan a Día de Acción Global por Ayotzinapa. El Universal/Red Política, October 22, 2014. Available: <http://www.redpolitica.mx/nacion/vivoslos43-convocan-dia-de-accion-global-por-ayotzinapa> Last visited 18th of May 2017.
- Rigney, Ann 2004. Portable Monuments: Literature, Cultural Memory and the Case of Jeanie Deans. *Poetics*, 32 (2): 361-396.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. Plenitude, scarcity and the circulation of cultural memory. In: *Journal of European Studies*, 35 (1/2): 11-28.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2008. The Dynamics of Remembrance: Texts Between Monumentality and Morphing. In: Astrid Erll & Ansgar Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies; An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 345-353.

- Sánchez, Gustavo 2016. Último informe del GIEI sobre Ayotzinapa (Documento). *Aristegui Noticias*, April 26, 2016. Mexico City, Mexico. Available: <http://aristeginoticias.com/2404/mexico/ultimo-informe-del-giei-sobre-ayotzinapa-documento/> Last visited 18th of May 2017.
- Sánchez, Julián 2014. Realizan mitin en el Zócalo por caso Ayotzinapa. *El Universal*, October 8, 2014. Available: <http://archivo.eluniversal.com.mx/ciudad-metropoli/2014/arriba-marcha-por-normalistas-al-zocalo-1044578.html> Last visited 18th of May 2017.
- Tamm, Marek 2015. Semiotic Theory of Cultural Memory: In the Company of Juri Lotman. In: Kattago, Siobhan (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Memory Studies*, UK: Ashgate, 127-142.
- Torop, Peeter 2012. Semiotics of mediation: Theses. In: *Sign Systems Studies*, 40 (3/4). University of Tartu Press: 547-555
- Tourliere, Mathieu 2015. Colocan en el Paseo de la Reforma “antimonumento” en memoria de los 43. *Proceso*, April 26, 2015. Available: <http://www.proceso.com.mx/402430/colocan-en-el-paseo-de-la-reforma-antimonumento-en-memoria-de-los-43> Last visited 18th of May 2017.
- Van Leeuwen, Theo 2005. *Introducing Social Semiotics*. Routledge. London-NY
- VICE NEWS, 2015. *Ayotzinapa: A Timeline of the Mass Disappearance That Has Shaken Mexico*. Vice News, September 25, 2015. Available: <https://news.vice.com/article/ayotzinapa-a-timeline-of-the-mass-disappearance-that-has-shaken-mexico>
- Winter, Jay 2008. Sites of memory and the shadow of war. In: Erll, Astrid; Nünning, Ansgar (eds.), *Cultural memory studies: An international and interdisciplinary handbook*. Berlin & New York: de Gruyter, 61-74.

## Media sources

- GIEI. *Video del 28 de octubre de 2014*. Uploaded on April 24, 2016. Available: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3wuz7S3S9urenJwM2tYYjNiY2c/view> Last visited 18th of May 2017.

Gobierno de la República. *Conferencia de Prensa, Caso Ayotzinapa*. Posted on YouTube on January 27, 2015. Available: <https://youtu.be/rDiPRlOgwt8> Last visited 18th of May 2017.

Gobierno de la República. *Conferencia de Prensa, del Procurador Jesús Murillo Karam*. Posted on YouTube on November 7, 2014. Available: <https://youtu.be/QNcfdHUiP8c> Last visited 18th of May 2017.

Grecko, Témoris. *Mirar Morir*. Release date: 18<sup>th</sup> of October 2015. Mexico.

New Yorker. *Guerrero: The Monster in the Mountains*. Posted on YouTube on March 26, 2015. Available: <https://youtu.be/Yq7IGqGAcX4> Last visited 18th of May 2017.

Noticieros Televisa. *Tercer Grado: Masacre de Iguala, México*. Program aired on November 19, 2014. Available: <https://youtu.be/imODQen3Iqs> Last visited 18th of May 2017.

Ojos de Perro. *Ayotzinapa: los padres*. Posted on YouTube on December 22, 2014. Available: <https://youtu.be/3iR8tP2n0t8>

Pinoteau, Quentin (Producer); Once TV. *Espiral: A dos años de Ayotzinapa*. Program aired on October 12, 2016. Available: <https://youtu.be/vvKeek4tmLc> Last visited 18th of May 2017.

Procuraduría General de la República. *Mensaje a medios de Tomás Zerón de Lucio*. Posted on YouTube on April 27, 2016. Available: <https://youtu.be/-xLeKgSi3sg> Last visited 18th of May 2017.

Tejemedios. *Informe Ayotzinapa II GIEI*. Posted on YouTube on April 24, 2016. Available: <https://youtu.be/G34-Hk8lvOg> Last visited 18th of May 2017.

Castillo Rafael (Producer); Vice News. *The Missing 43: Mexico's Disappeared Students*. Posted on YouTube on November 28, 2014. Available: <https://youtu.be/0jt-urgNN3A> Last visited 18th of May 2017.

## **ANNEX 1 Timeline**

It starts with the night of the attacks and when the students disappeared. Then, continues with the next day after the event, on September 27, 2014, when in addition to the 5 victims discovered in the station, the body of a sixth confirmed victim of the attack was discovered. Julio Cesar Mondragon is found with his facial skin and eyes removed. During the same day, survivors of the attacks together with other people attempt to locate the missing students. The final count of 43 disappeared students was established.

The next day, the Guerrero state authorities arrested 22 Iguala municipal police officers in connection with the attacks. On the last days of September and the first days of October, in the middle of a mediatization of the event, a speculation emerged. Apparently, Iguala's Mayor José Luis Abarca, had ordered the attack to keep the students away from an event downtown that promoted the political ambitions of his wife, María de los Angeles Pineda. After requesting a 30-day leave of absence the mayor is nowhere to be found.

On October 3, 2014, the state authorities claimed that they have located several mass graves in the hills just outside Iguala, suggesting that the remains could be the missing students. The federal attorney general took over the investigation, and accepts a request made by the parents of the students to allow the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team, or EAAF, to accompany the investigation as the independent forensic investigators. At this point, Ayotzinapa now called 'the case' by the mass media and hence identified by the public, was on the level of media hype.

On October 6, the president of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto, gave an official statement for the first time about the case: "The Mexican society and the families of the young students who are sadly missing, are accurately demanding the clarification of the facts and that justice is done".



Two days after his statement, on October 8, the first large-scale demonstration against the Iguala attacks and the disappearance of the students took place in Mexico City. Ayotzinapa students were the ones leading the march.

On October 17, the attorney general Jesús Murillo Karam announced the arrest of Sidronio Casarrubias Salgado, the alleged leader of the *Guerreros Unidos* cartel, allegedly involved in the disappearance of the students. And, by the 22nd of October, he confirmed that the mayor of Iguala and his wife, who were fugitives at that moment, directly ordered the attack against the students. Few days later, they were arrested in Mexico City.

On October 29, the families of the students had the first meeting in Mexico City with the president. According to VICE News, the meeting lasted five hours and ends inconclusively for the parents, who declare that they remain frustrated and disappointed.

The first week of November, on the 5<sup>th</sup>, another massive demonstration for the Ayotzinapa students happened in Mexico City. The call for the resignation of the president Peña Nieto appeared with the traditional chants demanding the return of the missing students alive.

On November 7, Attorney General said on a press conference<sup>35</sup> that the investigation has concluded that the missing students were almost certainly killed by the cartel *Guerreros Unidos* and incinerated in a remote rubbish dump outside of Cocula, Guerrero. He claimed the cartel operatives collected the ashes and bone fragments in a plastic bags and dumped them in a nearby river from where some were later recovered by investigators. He, also mentioned that Mexico does not have the capacity to analyze the remains and that they will be sent to a specialist lab in Innsbruck, Austria, in the hope that DNA can still be extracted.

On December 6, the specialist forensic lab in Innsbruck identified DNA belonging to Alexander Mora, one of the 43 missing students. The next day, Murillo Karam said that this identification backs the official version. After announcement of this result, the Argentine Forensic team released a statement accepting the validity of the identification, but expressing their doubts about government's investigation. Months later, on February 7, 2015, the team published a report highlighting inconsistencies with the government's handling of the case. By the end of February the Attorney General Jesús Murillo Karam is removed from his job.

---

<sup>35</sup> This conference will be analyzed later on the chapter.

On April 8, the testimonies of two bus drivers were received by the federal authorities into the case, for the first time, following a recommendation made by the independent experts appointed by the Inter-American Commission to evaluate the research.

An important action, although unrelated to the investigation, happened on April 26. Parents and supporters mark the seven-month anniversary of the disappearance of the 43 students by setting up an unofficial<sup>36</sup> monument in Mexico City, on one of the most important avenues, Reforma, in the shape of a +43. It has become one of the landmarks of the city.

A special group of experts is assembled by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to pick over the government's investigation. On September 6, the group released a report, that happens to be the main text of the contra-narrative, on the Ayotzinapa case, rejecting the possibility that the students were incinerated in Cocula as "scientifically impossible", and urged the governmental investigation to explore the hypothesis that the police who attacked the students were actually more interested in the busses they were travelling in. The experts said that there is evidence suggesting the students had unwittingly commandeered a bus with heroin or money hidden inside it.

The last days of July, between the 29th and 30th, the clothes found at the crime scene, where the shootings occurred and the students disappeared, are finally analyzed, following the recommendation of the independent experts. Besides, the experts from the specialized lab in Innsbruck say they have data pointing to a possible DNA match with another student, Jhosivani Guerrero de la Cruz.

On September 17, 2015, Gildardo López Astudilo, the alleged leader of the *Guerreros Unidos* gang was detained. Also, experts from the specialized lab in Innsbruck, where remains recovered from the river were sent for study, say they have data pointing to a possible DNA match with Jhosivani Guerrero de la Cruz. However, it is not high enough to be considered a positive identification.

The last milestone taken from VICE News timeline happened on September 24 when the president Peña Nieto met for the second time with the families of the missing students. According to VICE News, the parents demanded that he should set up a special investigative unit with international support with a task of stepping up the search for their children and investigating the

---

<sup>36</sup> Since it was not supported either by the local or by the federal government.

officials who, they believed, had deliberately manipulated the government's investigation so far. The government said it is going to create an office for a special prosecutor to investigate disappearances in general.

As it has been mentioned above, The Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts<sup>37</sup> was created by Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, it has as main goal to provide international technical assistance from the perspective of human rights for the investigation of the forced disappearance of forty-three students from the Normal Rural School Raul Isidro Burgos, in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero. On April 26, 2016, they released their last report on the case, before Mexican government decided not to continue working with them and did not renew their mandate. One of the media channels covering the press conference where the five experts presented the report was *Aristegui Noticias [News]*<sup>38</sup>, led by one of the most prestigious and influential Mexican news presenter, Carmen Aristegui. They refer to themselves as a group of journalists and Internet-social media specialists, who have presence on different platforms such as radio, TV (cable) and written press. On an article published on their web site, on April 2016, besides publishing the full report, it is mentioned, that: “the experts, once again, discarded the scenario that the students were incinerated in Cocula, and claimed that the investigation of the scenario it is still open.” (Sánchez, Gustavo, 2016)

---

<sup>37</sup>GIEI the acronym in Spanish

<sup>38</sup> A group of professionals of journalism .The project combines the diverse experiences of those who realize it. Some of us have developed in other media - such as radio, television and print media. This journalists are considered left wing.

## ANNEX 2 Press Release of the Anti-monument<sup>39</sup>

To civil society and the national and international media,

Today, April 26, 2015, seven months after the forced disappearance of the 43 *normalistas* of the Rural Normal School Isidro Burgos de Ayotzinapa and the murder of six more people, we decided to install in the crossing of *Paseo de la Reforma* and *Bucareli*, the Anti-monument +43.

If a Monument refers to an event from the past that needs to be grasped (Latin momentum means "remembrance"), the project +43 is the construction of an Anti-monument because it does not aim to perpetuate the "remembrance, but to alter the perception that a fact is immovable. +43 is defined as a permanent protest of claim and justice to the State in the public space. +43 wants to be a 'wake-up call' to passers-by who cross the area daily.

It is an anti-monument because it is a transgression and a claim to the State that wants to forget - and wants us to forget! - The terrible reality of daily violence to which he himself submits us and has claimed the lives of more than 150,000 people and has disappeared more than 30 thousand +43. What is even worse is that every day the number of people killed and disappeared increases, under the total impunity and responsibility of the Mexican State.

*Paseo de la Reforma* is the most important avenue for the monumental memory of fundamental facts that have marked the history of Mexico, starting with the Column of Independence.

We demand from the authorities respect for this symbol of resistance for memory and justice against the normalization of violence and the strategy of forgetfulness that have fomented impunity.

+43 is an Anti-monument because it is destined to be withdrawn on the day that the State clarifies the more than 150 thousand homicides and present with life to the and more than 30 thousand +43 disappeared.

In the name of the parents of the *normalistas* of Ayotzinapa they sign:

---

<sup>39</sup>. Retrieved from: <http://nuestraaparenterendicion.com/index.php/biblioteca/colaboraciones/item/2782-comunicado-antimonumento-%2043> Last visited in 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2017

BernabéAbraján Gaspar, Felipe de la Cruz Sandoval and Melitón Ortega Carlos

Commission+43

## ANNEX 3 IMAGES

Fig. 1 Timeline of texts analyzed

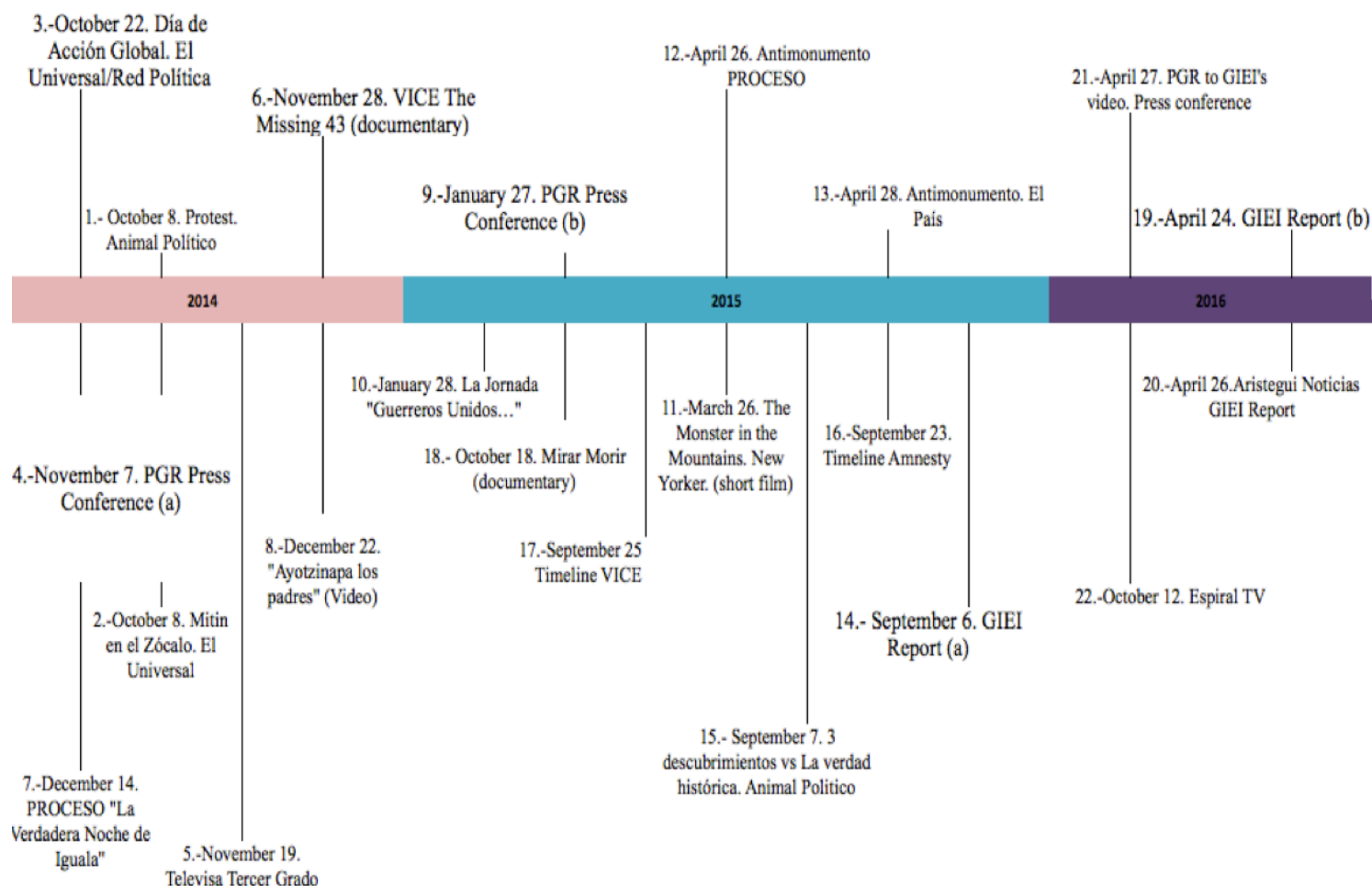


Fig. 2 Map of Guerrero



Fig. 3 Map of the regions in Guerrero



Fig. 4 Map of the location of the main towns from Guerrero related to the case

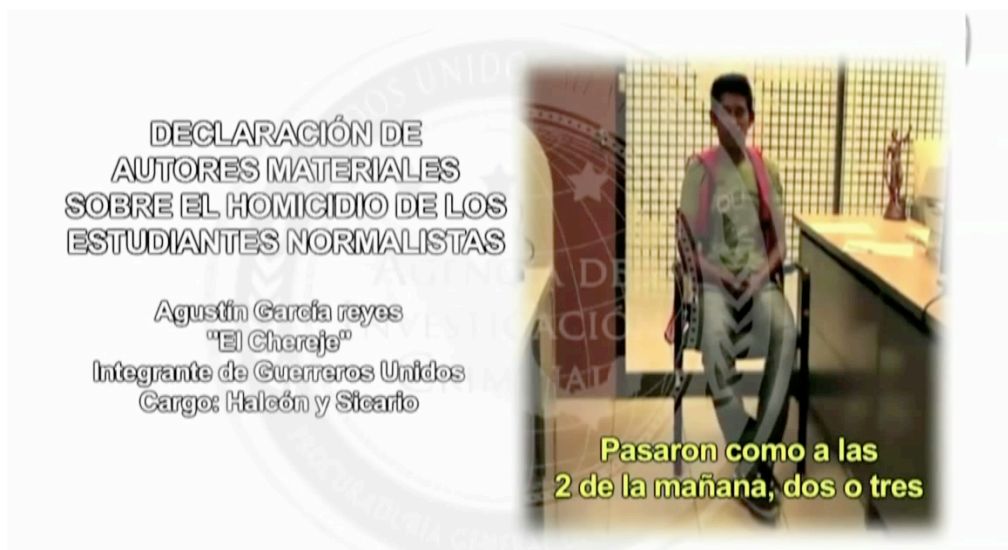


Fig. 5. Testimony, the location of the camera.





Fig. 6. Testimony and the location of the camera II



he

Fig. 7. The students' official pictures



Fig. 8. The pictures used during the protests





Fig. 9. The pictures used during the protests



Fig. 10. Illustration of one of the students face used as a profile picture on Facebook



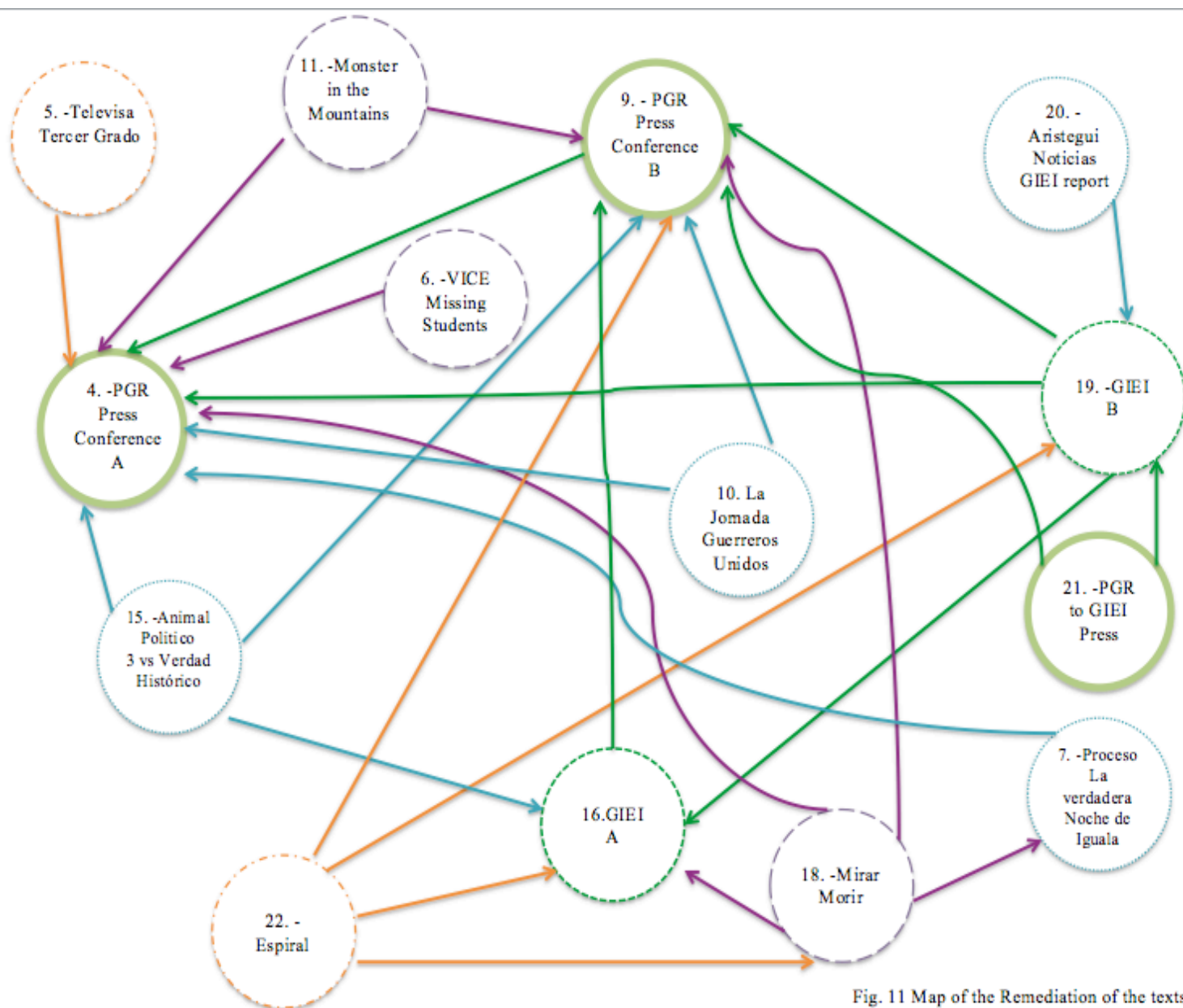


Fig. 11 Map of the Remediation of the texts

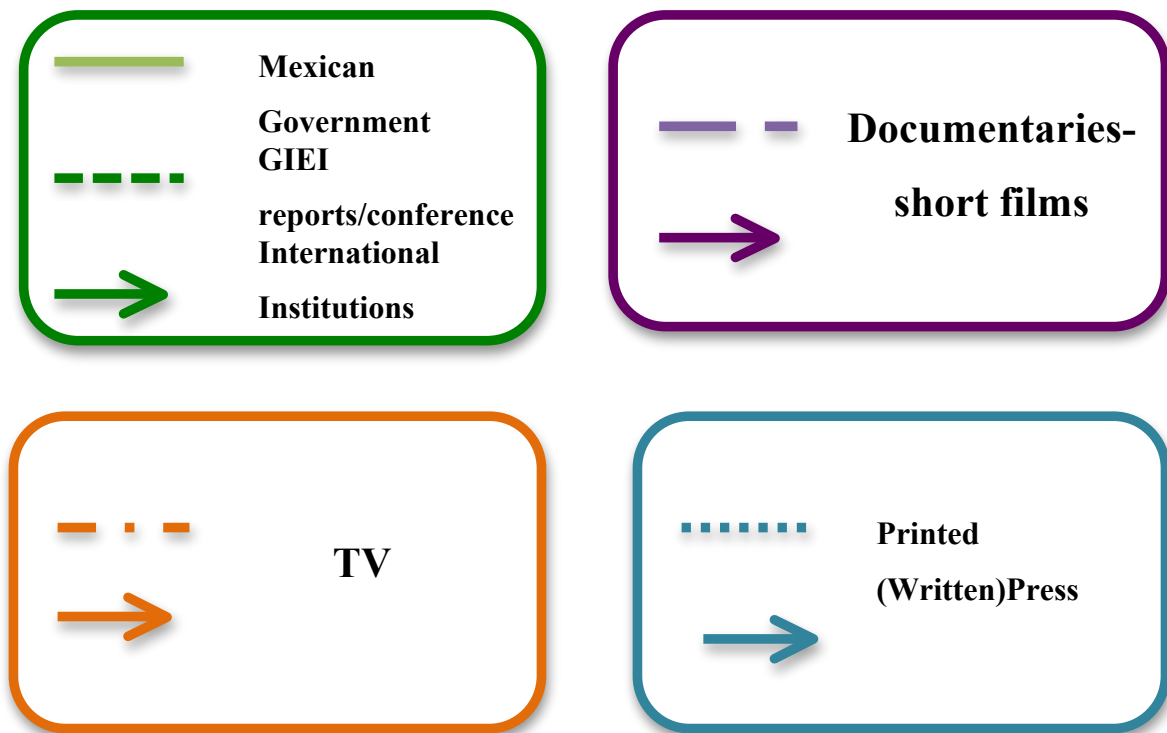


Fig. 12 Texts of commemoration acts

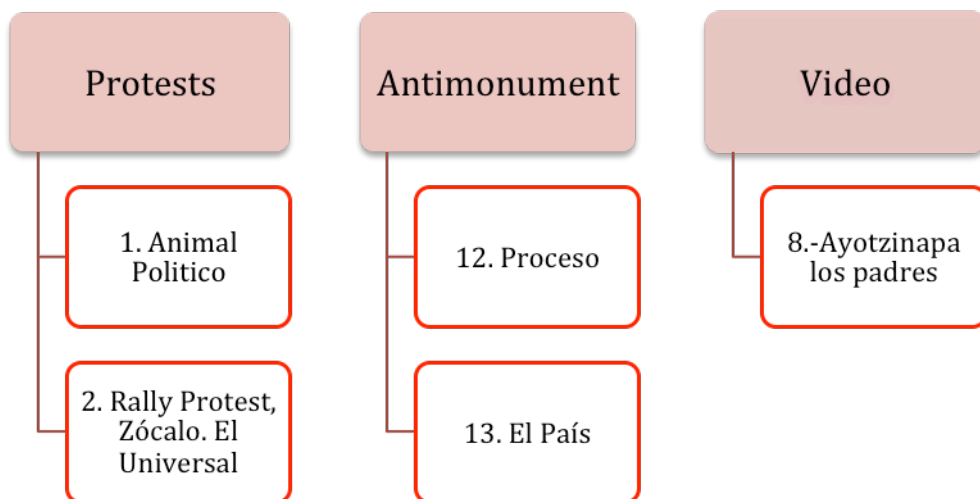


Fig. 13 The testimony of Agustín García Reyes, in which he claims where are the remains of the students

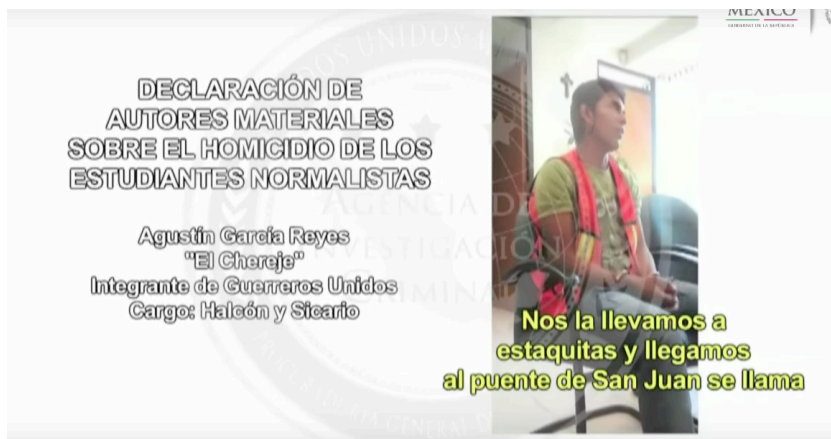


Fig. 14. Screenshot from the video presented by the PGR of the tour in Rio San Juan



Fig. 15 Screenshot of the press conference by the PGR presented in the documentary *Mirar Morir*



Fig. 16 Screenshot of the press conference by the GIEI presented in the documentary *Mirar Morir*





Fig.17 Footage of the shooting filmed by the students, remediated in the documentary *Mirar Morir*



Fig.18 Official documented related to the burning of the students shown in *Mirar Morir*

para los cálculos de lo que es necesario para la cremación a los niveles de los restos enviados a Innsbruck, el perito dejó de lado estas modificaciones que se debieran considerar, de manera tal que la tabla que elaboró, y que aquí se incluye, está basada en el cálculo más conservador y favorable a la hipótesis.

Nº de cuerpos	Madera [kg] (mínimo)	Neumáticos [kg] (mínimo)	Diésel [kg] (mínimo)	Duración de quemado [horas]
1	700	310	310	12
43	30,100	13,330	13,330	60

Estimados de carga combustible y duración del incendio.  
La duración del incendio se calcula asumiendo, de manera conservadora, que la tasa de consumo de la madera se mantiene constante.

Ahora bien, el Dr. Torero llama la atención sobre el siguiente aspecto con relación a los tiempos y carga de combustible para lograr la cremación. "Es importante recalcar que al tomar los valores conservadores uno establece el menor fuego para el proceso de



Fig. 19 Official Document in *Mirar Morir*

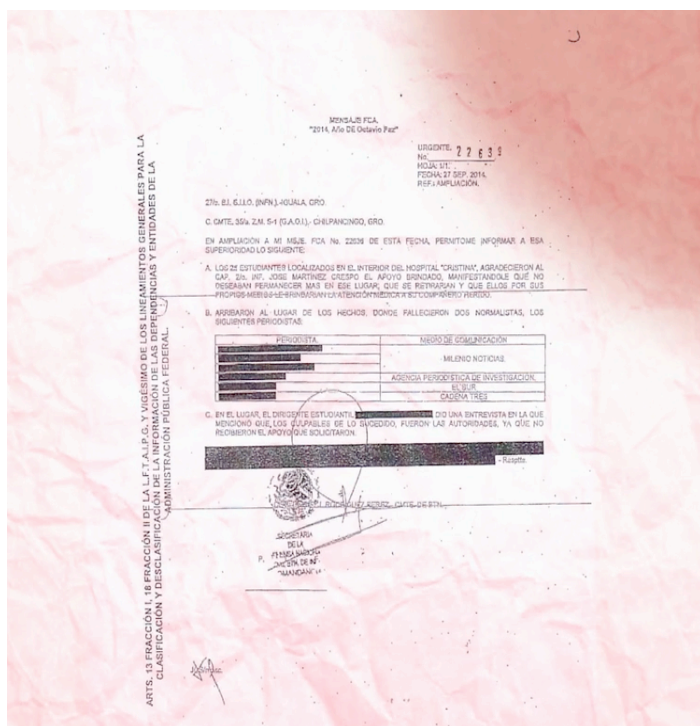
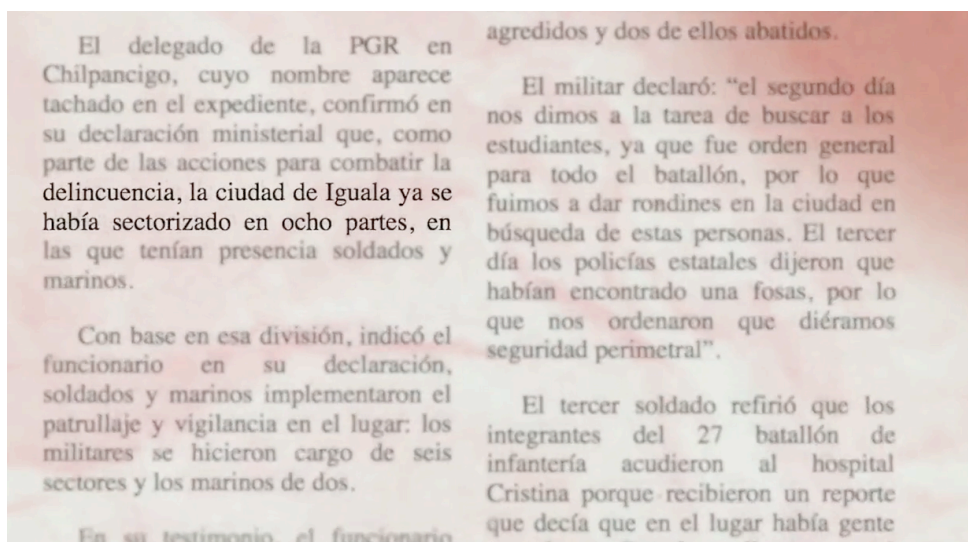


Fig.20 Document blurred shown in *Mirar Morir*



## Kokkuvõte

### Kultuurimälu dünaamika: Ayotzinapa juhtumi vahendamine meedias

Käesoleva uurimustöö eesmärgiks on analüüsida ülevahendamise ja ülesemiotiseerimise kontseptsioonide kasutatavust Mehhikos, Guerrero osariigis Igualas 2014. aasta 26. septembri õhtul ja ööl vastu 27. septembrit toimunud sündmuse kultuurimälu talletumise dünaamika uurimisel. Senini ei teata, mis tol ööl tegelikult juhtus. Sündmuse – rünnaku – toimumise järel on esile kerkinud erinevaid versioone. Need versioonid jagavad peamiseks vaid teadaolevaid fakte: sündmuskohal said surma kuus inimest, üht tudengit tulistati pähe ja ta on endiselt koomas ning 43 tudengit jäid teadmata kadunuks. Tegemist oli Guerreros, Ayotzinapas asuva Raul Isadoro Burgose kooli tudengitega.

Kuna kultuurimälu toimimine on seotud tekstuaalsuse ja vahendamisega, on siinse uurimuse võtmemõisteteks Jay Bolteri ja Richard Grusini poolt kasutusele võetud 'ülevahendamine', mida täiendatakse Julie Hengsti ja Paul Priori käsitlesega, Rick Iedema poolt välja pakutud 'ülesemiotiseerimine' ning Boris Uspenski, Juri Lotmani, Aleida ja Jan Assmanni töödest lähtuv 'kultuurimälu', mida omakorda täiendatakse Astrid Erlli ja Ann Rigney käsitlestega, mis seovad selle mõiste meediaga. Nii on uurimuse tähelepanukeskmes see, milles seisneb ja kuidas toimib kultuurimälu dünaamika. Nende mõistete ja teemade tutvustamise järel jätkub töö analüüsiva osaga, mis lähtub järgmistest uurimisküsimustest:

1. Kuidas toimib kultuurimälu dünaamika Ayotzinapa juhtumi vahendamise käigus?
2. Millised on Ayotzinapa juhtumi vahendamisel kasutatud peamised narratiivid ja kuidas need juhtumit vahendavad ja (re)konstrueerivad?
3. Millised on nende narratiivide vahelised suhted, st nendevahelised ülevahendamise (ja – semiotiseerimise) protsessid ja kuidas need kultuurimälu mõjutavad?

4. Kuidas sai Ayotzinapa juhtumist mäletamiskoht (*lieu de mémoire*) ja mida selle kaudu mäle(s)tatakse?

Uurimustöö koosneb kahest osast. Esimene osa on pühendatud *kultuurimälu* käsitlemise teoreetilisele raamistule ning jaguneb omakorda kaheks alapeatükiks: “Kultuurimälu” ja “Kultuuriline vahendamine ning kultuurimälu dünaamika”. Töö teine osa keskendub Ayotzinapa juhtumi vahendamise analüüsile. Nendele osadele järel esitatakse järeldused.

Nagu öeldud, on töö teise peatüki sisuks Ayotzinapa juhtumi analüüs. Täpsemalt uuritakse viisi, kuidas sündmuse (rännaku) ja juhtumi vahendamise ja ülevahendamise käigus kultuurimälu konstrueeritakse. Seega eristatakse töös *sündmust*, mis toimus Igualas, Guerrero osariigis 2014. aasta 26. ja 27. septembri vahel, ning Ayotzinapa *juhtumit*, mis algas sündmuse vahendamise ja ülevahendamisega ja kestab tänaseni.

Teise peatüki eesmärgiks on tutvustada konteksti, milles see sündmus ning juhtum aset leidsid, anda ülevaade sündmusest (Iguala rünnakust) ja analüüsida juhtumi raames esitatud narratiive ja nendevahelisi suhteid – ülevahendamise ja –semiotiseerimise protsesse –, mille kaudu erinevad meediatekstid kultuurimälu kujundavad.

Kultuurilise vahendamise vaatepunktist on juhtum jaotatav erinevateks kihtideks. Täna, pea kaks aastat peale sündmust, on eristatavad neli narratiivi: (1) ametlik narratiiv (Mehhiko valitsuse loodud), (2) kontra-narratiiv (rahvusvahelise uurimiserühma loodud), (3-4) subversiivsed ja transversiivsed narratiivid (loodud erinevate meediainstitutsioonide poolt). Kõikide nende narratiivide vahendajaks on (massi)meedia ning need meediatekstid ja -materjalid moodustavad ka uuritava tekstikorpuse.

Ayotzinapa juhtum ei ole üksnes toimunud sündmuse vahendamise protsess, vaid ka ülevahendamise protsess, kuivõrd sellega on seotud erinevad semiootilised loomeahelad. Need ahelad on sotsiaalsete, kultuuriliste ja ajalooliste struktuuride materiaalseks väljenduseks. Nii on Iguala rünnak ja tudengite kadumine muutnud Ayotzinapa dünaamiliseks mäletamiskohaks, kus erinevad narratiivid ja tähendused eksisteerivad kõrvuti, ristuvad ja lõimuvad.

Need narratiivid on omavahel seotud erinevatel tasanditel: sisemine, seotud ühest kontekstist teise rändavate videomaterjalide, fotode, ütluste jne kaudu; seejärel üksteisele viitavate, uutele tekstidele lähtekohaks olevate tekstide (ja tekstikogumite) vaheliste seoste kaudu; viimaks väljendudes ka implitsiitse ülevahendamise kaudu tekstides ja tegevustes, mis, eelnevatest

vahendamisaktidest teadlikuna, püüavad mälestada ja meeles pidada tudengeid, nõuavad õiglust kadunutele, nende peredele ja lähedastele. Kõik need kokku loovad juhtumit ümbritseva ja kultuurimälu kujundava diskursuse – materiaalselt võimaldatud tähendusstruktuuri ja praktika –, kuivõrd mälu toimib erinevate, omavahel dialoogis olevate tekstide *seadeldisena* (*dispositif*). Nii võib Rigney tüpoloogiale toetudes olla alliktekst näiteks sündmuse vaatepunktist mälu ‘stabiliseerija’, ent teiste tekstide jaoks muutuda sõltuvalt ülevahendamise hetkest, kontekstist ning loomulikult ka teksti sisust ise ‘mäletamise objektiks’ või ‘katalüseerijaks’. Lõppeks põhineb kultuurimälu valikuprotsessil, mille eesmärgiks on luua tähendusi.

Tänapäeval on need monumentaalsed tekstid ja kultuurimälu agendid, nagu Rigney neid nimetab, suurel määral digitaalsed, internetis ringlevad, ning digiteerimine on võimendanud nende portatiivsust. Sellel on mõju ka kultuurimälu kujundamise viisile, sest, nagu Erll ja Rigney osutavad, kultuurimälu on elav ja liikuv ning see liikuvus toetub meediale. Meedia muutudes muutub ka kogu kultuurimälu toimimise protsess.

Ayotzinapa juhtum muutus mäletamiskohaks massilisel ja globaalsel tasandil. Rolli mängivad ka Mehhiko kultuuri sotsiaalsed ja poliitilised iseärad, mis juhtumit komplitseerisid. Käesolevasse uurimusse kaasatud korpuse vaatepunktist on sündmuse rekonstrueerimise protsess olnud vastuoluline, kuna Mehhiko valitsusasutused ei ole olnud nendega seotud korruptsioonijuhtumite tõttu piisavalt “usaldusväärsed”. See on tinginud ka mõneti ootuspäraselt ametliku narratiivi vaidlustamise valitsusväliste agentide poolt. See hoiab ka Ayotsinapa mälestuse elus.

## **Non-exclusive licence to reproduce thesis and make thesis public**

I, Samantha Herrerías Durán

*(author's name)*

(Date of birth: 30.09.1989)

1. Herewith grant the University of Tartu a free permit (non-exclusive licence) to:

1.1.Reproduce, for the purpose of preservation and making available to the public, including for addition to the DSpace digital archives until expiry of the term of validity of the copyright, and

1.2.Make available to the public via the web environment of the University of Tartu, including via the DSpace digital archives until expiry of the term of validity of the copyright,

“Dynamics of Cultural Memory: Mediation of the Ayotzinapa case”

*(title of thesis)*

Supervised by Katre Pärn

2. I am aware of the fact that the author retains these rights.

3. I certify that granting the non-exclusive licence does not infringe the intellectual property rights or rights arising from the Personal Data Protection Act.

**Tartu, 22.05.2017**