

# The virtual second generation - On the negotiation of ethnicity in the Internet -



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# Structure



1. Research project
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3. 2nd generation Indians in Germany
4. What is special about theinder.net?
5. „Andere Deutsche“

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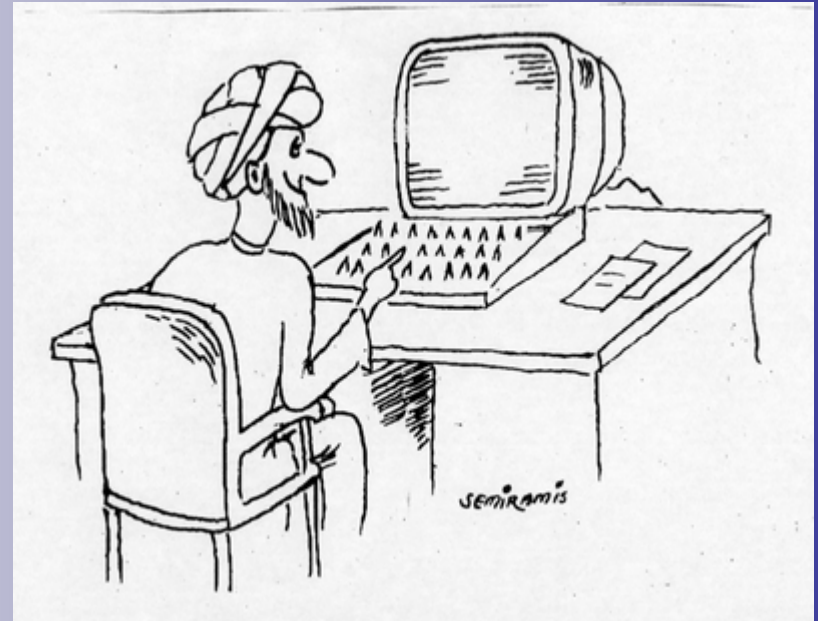
# Research project



- „The virtual second generation“
- field research: [www.theinder.net](http://www.theinder.net)
- funded by Volkswagenstiftung

# Summer 2000 in Germany

- politics:
  - discussion about „Green Card“ for IT specialists
  - campaign „Kinder statt Inder“
- internet:
  - courses in school and universities
  - young men experimenting with technology



# theinder.net goes online

- 3 young, male students of Indian origin
- exchange emails and cartoons
- have private websites
- decide to link them
- start theinder.net



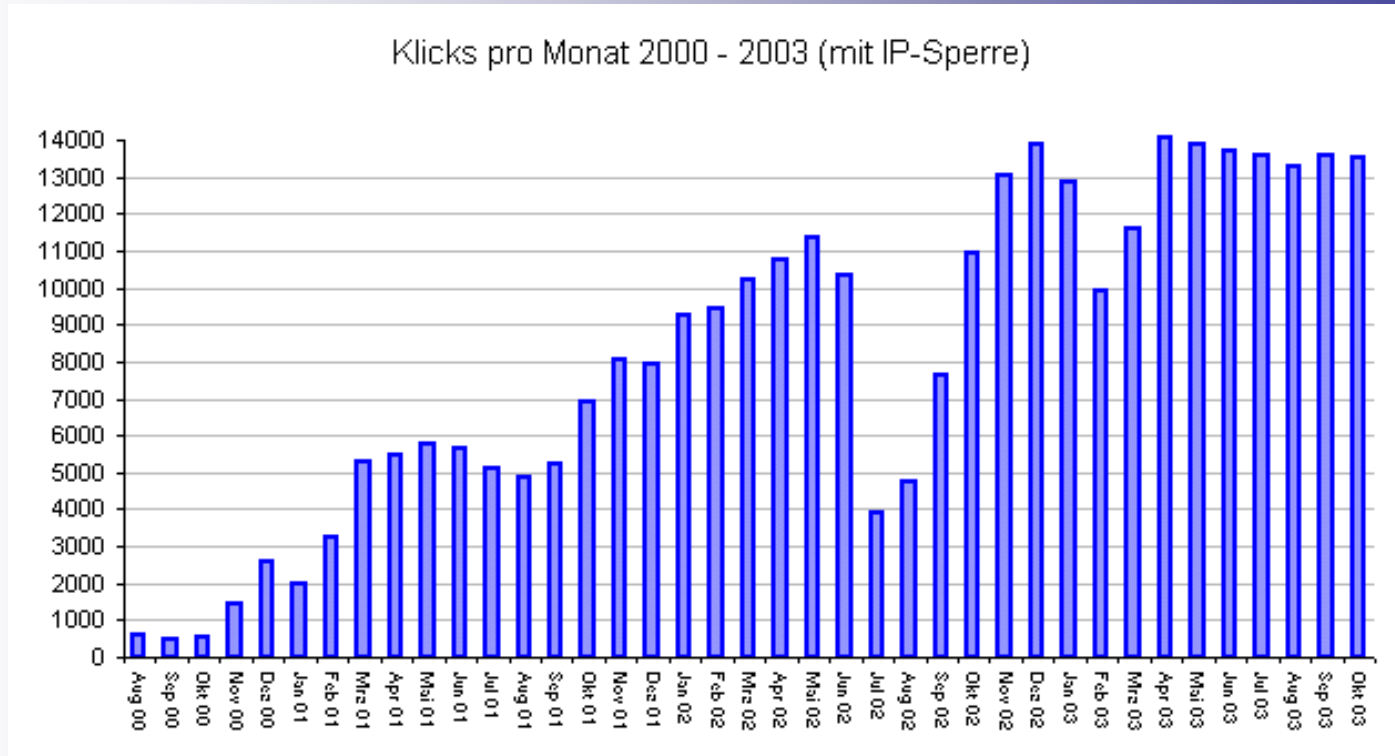
# Development of theinder.net

- advertisement among acquaintances
- new editors join



- presentation at networking seminar in Nov. 2000
  - expanding editorial team, more users, new contacts
- adding new features
  - content and technology
- organising offline activities

# Users of theinder.net



- server problems in summer 2002
- forum usage increases in beginning 2005



# Elements of theinder.net

- editorial content:
  - articles
  - list of events and reports
  - services
- interactive:
  - forum
  - chat
  - guest book (closed)

The screenshot displays the homepage of theinder.net, an Indian online portal in Germany. The header features the site's logo, navigation links (the project, members, fatafat fridge, chat, pinboard, forum, guestbook, contact, editorial, main page), and a banner for a 'mahanager lounge' event on Feb 05. A navigation menu on the left lists categories like news, business, culture, and sports. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'TOPICAL' with a 'press overview' and 'events' (Mahanagar Lounge); 'Entertainment' featuring an interview with singer Sneha Mistri; 'PORTFOLIO' with a 'Next dates' calendar; 'Events' for a charity concert; 'JEETO INAAM GEWINNSPIEL'; 'surftip of the month'; 'new GERMANY'; 'India on TV'; 'Music CD reviews 02/05'; and 'MEDIA FEEDBACK'. A search bar and a 'Go!' button are located at the bottom left. The footer includes contact information and a copyright notice for Urmila Goel.

# „Indians“ in Germany

- migration history:
  - before 1945: freedom fighters and students
  - 1950s and 1960s: single male students
  - 1960s and 1970s: Malayali nurses in groups
  - 1980s: Punjabi asylum seekers
  - 2000s: „IT-Indians“



- Statistics:
  - ca. 43,000 Indian citizens
  - ca. 17,500 PIO card holders

# Second generation Indians

- definition derived from field observation:
  - at least one parent from South Asia
  - no own decision to migrate from South Asia
  - socialised in Germany
- includes:
  - children from bi-national parents
  - adopted Indians
  - of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan origin

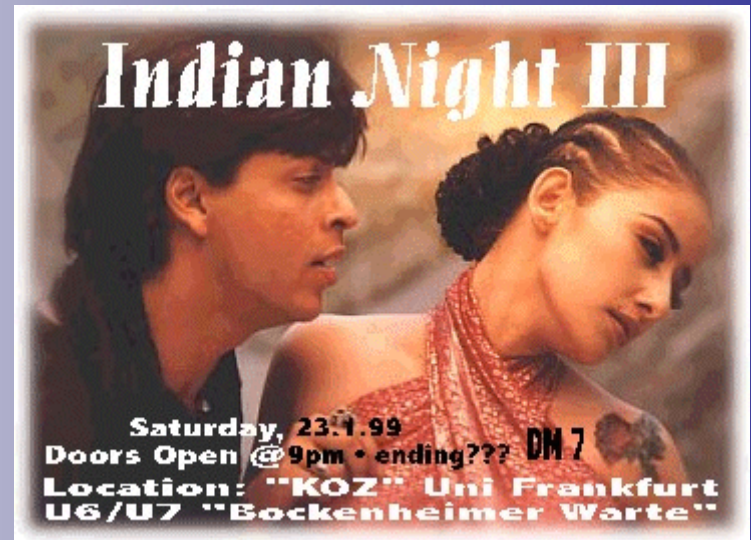
# Particularities of second generation Indians in Germany



- from economically and socially well established families
- high level of education
- scattered throughout Germany
- little ethnic infrastructure

# Spaces of the second generation

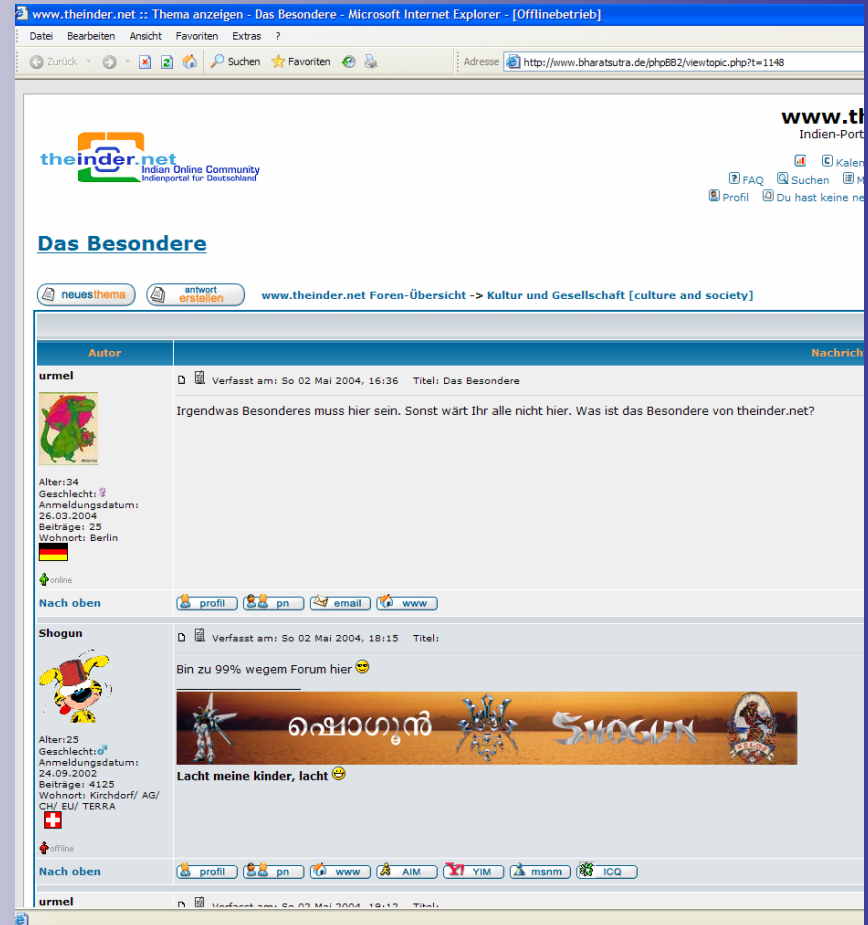
- within the spaces of the parents:
  - seminars, journals, societies
- self-organised:
  - seminars since the middle of the 1990s
  - parties since the late 1990s
  - internet portals since 2000





# Field research

- more than 60 narrative interviews
  - with editors, users, non-users, community activists, journalists, ...
- observation of portal
  - in particular forum
- questions in forum



# What is special about theinder.net?

- *„es ist das erste Indienportal hier in Deutschland halt, für den deutschsprachigen Raum“*
- from interview with party organiser, April 2004

„the first Indian portal in Germany“

# Unique in Germany

- statements from interviews:
  - no comparable internet portal
  - in German language
  - offering broad range of information
  - and means of interaction
  - professional appearance
  - from second generation for second generation



# Familiarity

- theinder.net provides
- an own space on own terms, in the own language
- dealing with issues of interest
- for „Andere Deutsche“



# „Andere Deutsche“

- Paul Mecheril (1997):
- people who have been socialised mainly in Germany
- and have experienced that they do not conform to the image of the „standard German“
- due to social and bodily attributes
- as their ancestors are supposed to come from a different culture

# Experience of „Andere Deutsche“

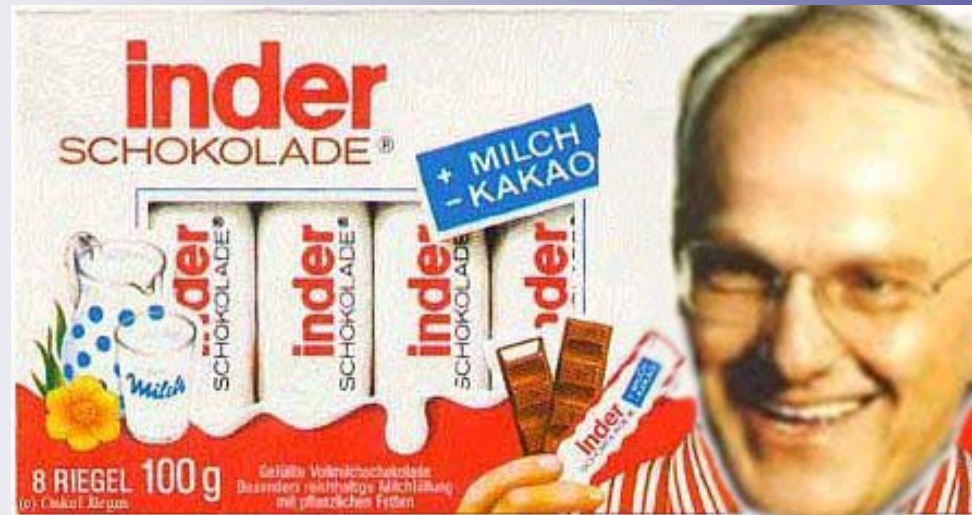
- doubly different
  - from host society
  - from parents
- experience familiarity with others like themselves
- need for own spaces on their own terms

# Spaces in Germany

- hardly physical spaces as
  - geographically scattered
  - no organised Indian community
- internet provides virtual space to
  - get to know others
  - learn about activities
  - discuss with others
  - network
- virtual and physical spaces develop together

The screenshot shows the website [www.theinder.net](http://www.theinder.net) in a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser. The page is titled "Indien Portal für Deutschland" and features a navigation menu with links like "das projekt", "mitglieder", "kühlschrank", "chat", "pinwand", "forum", "gästebuch", "kontakt", "editorial", and "startseite". A search bar is located at the top left. The main content area is titled "Veranstaltungskalender | Parties und Treffen | indische Filme | Konzerte | Seminare und Vorträge | Spezial | Archiv | Forum". A sidebar on the left contains a search bar and a list of categories: "nachrichten und medien", "wirtschaft", "land und leute", "kultur und gesellschaft", "bildung und wissenschaft", "computer und internet", "sport", "presse", "ereignisse", "unterhaltung", "frauen", "humor", "glanzlichter", "asian underground sektion", "reisen und flüge buchen", "restaurant- und ladenführer". The main content area features a "Veranstaltungskalender" for February to April 2005, listing various events such as "03.-04.02. Kultur: 'Sonia Sabri Company' in Düsseldorf", "04.-10.02. Kino: 'Shabd' in ganz Deutschland", and "05.02. Party: 'Mahanagar Lounge (Benefiz)' in Köln". A sidebar on the right contains a "Rückblick: Nightlife in Bielefeld" and a "Vorschau: Desi Soul trifft Soul FM in Köln". The bottom of the page shows a Windows taskbar with the Start button and several open applications.

# Thank you!



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