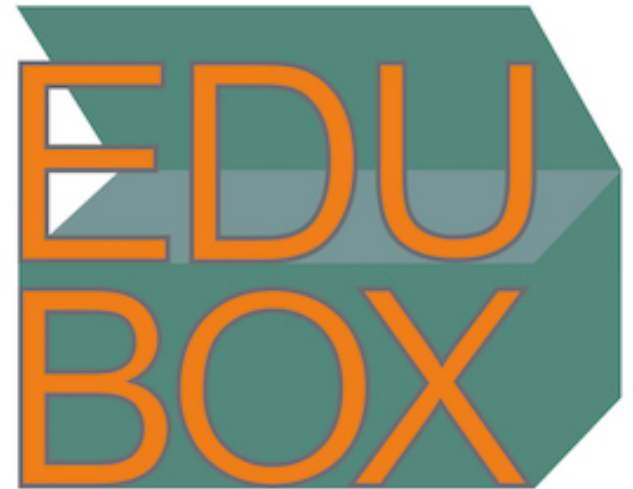


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# EduBox 01: Culture, a new perspective



CC BY-SA 4.0 „EduBoxes Logo“ Source: [Hans Limo Lechner](#) (2016)

Author: Prof. Dr. Adelheid Iken

Project: EduBoxes for Hamburg Open Online University ([www.hoou.de](http://www.hoou.de))



# INTRODUCTION TO EDUBOX 01

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The socio-cultural and economic features of globalisation have a strong influence on the practices of modern organisation and thus business communication and management.

More than ever before, managers and co-workers are networking and communicating at the intersection of diverse cultures. And yet, at the same time, cultures are undergoing rapid change, catalysed by new forms and means of communication.

These rapid changes have required us to review our understanding of culture as well as the tools we use to develop a common basis of understanding. Through these new tools and ways of viewing culture, we open up the possibility of not only solving issues that may arise from cross-cultural encounters but of actively developing synergies that can emerge from such interactions.

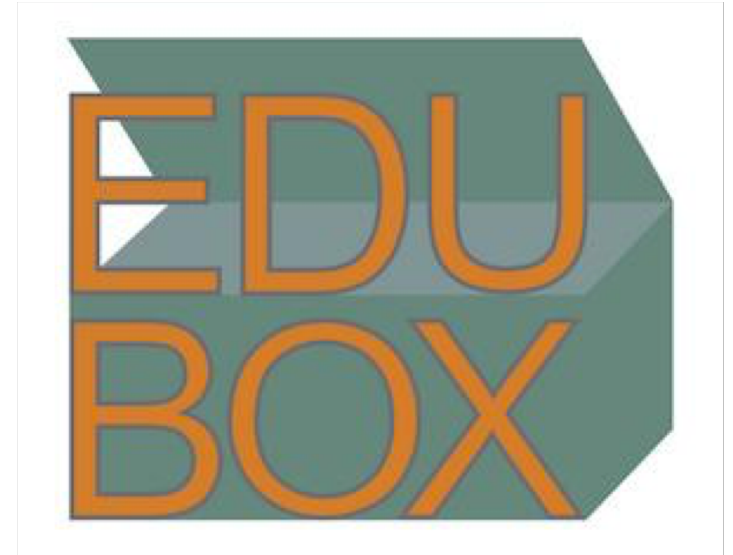
And that is precisely the objective of this EduBox.

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# EduBox 01: Culture, a new perspective

## Session 02: Multi-collectivity as a concept



Author: Prof. Dr. Adelheid Iken

Project: EduBoxes for Hamburg Open Online University (<http://www.hoou.de/>)



# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Introduction to Session 02

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One way of trying to understand the complexity and multifaceted nature of culture is by considering multi-collectivity. Introducing multi-collectivity as a concept and raising awareness of one's own membership of different collectives is the goal of this session.

# LEARNING OUTCOME

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Based on an open definition of culture, students identify multi-collectives and their characteristics

# OBJECTIVES

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At the end of the sessions, students will be able

- to explain the meaning and nature of multi-collectives
- to give reasons why considering multi-collectivity is important in today's world, and
- to characterise some of the collectives of which they are members

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Topics

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- Learning outcome
- Objectives
- Lead-in
- Multi-collectivity as a concept
  - The concept itself
  - Reasons to consider multi-collectivity
  - Membership of different collectives
- The common triangle
- Summary and reflection
- Assignment
- Sources

# LEAD-IN

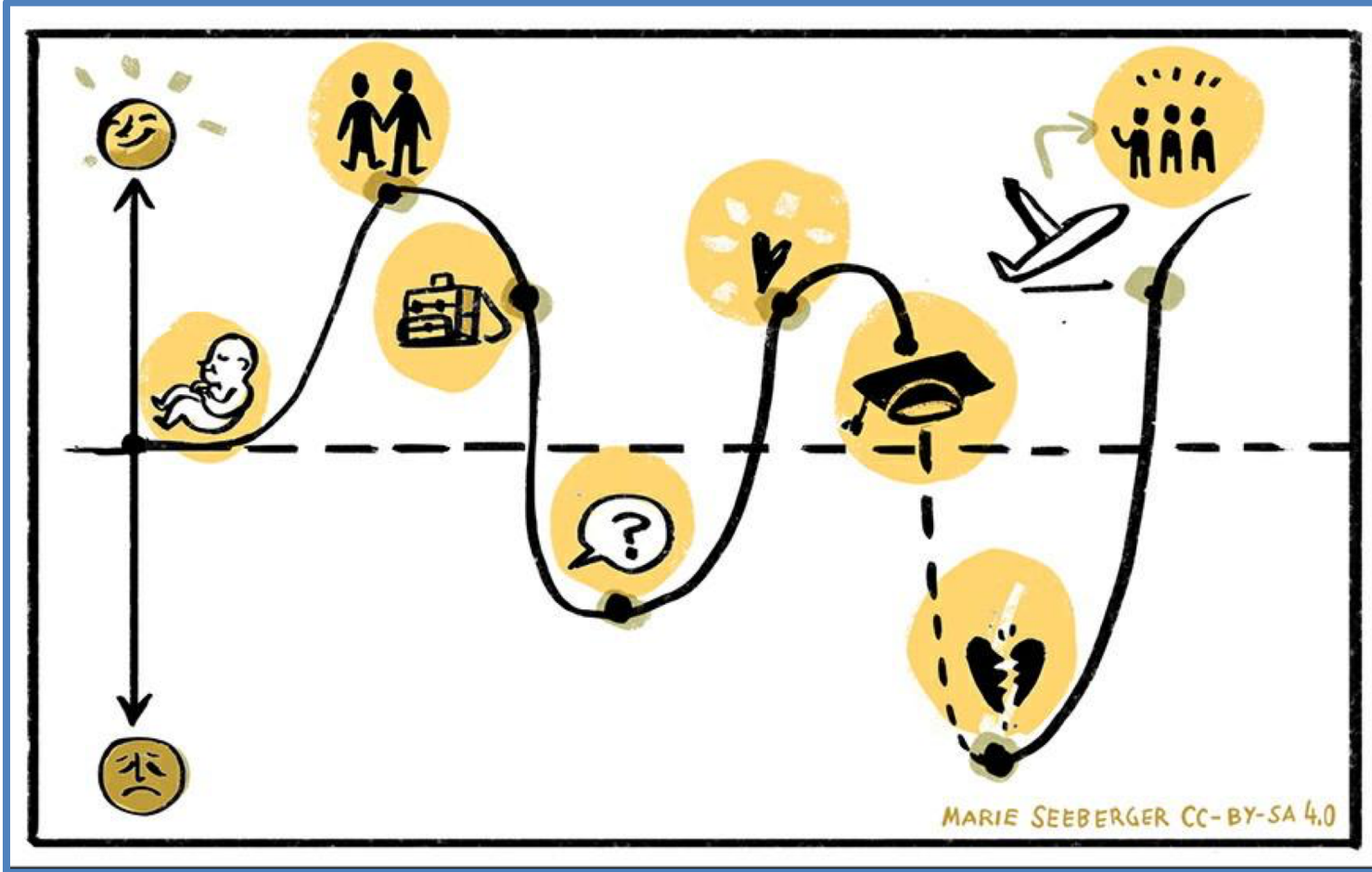
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- Take a piece of paper and draw your life journey starting from your early childhood until now. When doing so, think for example about people who influenced your upbringing, visits to countries which may have had a strong impact on you, books you read or institutions that had a strong impact on your life.
- Think about the specific knowledge, skills and cultural orientation emanating from this which may be valuable for this course and for working together.

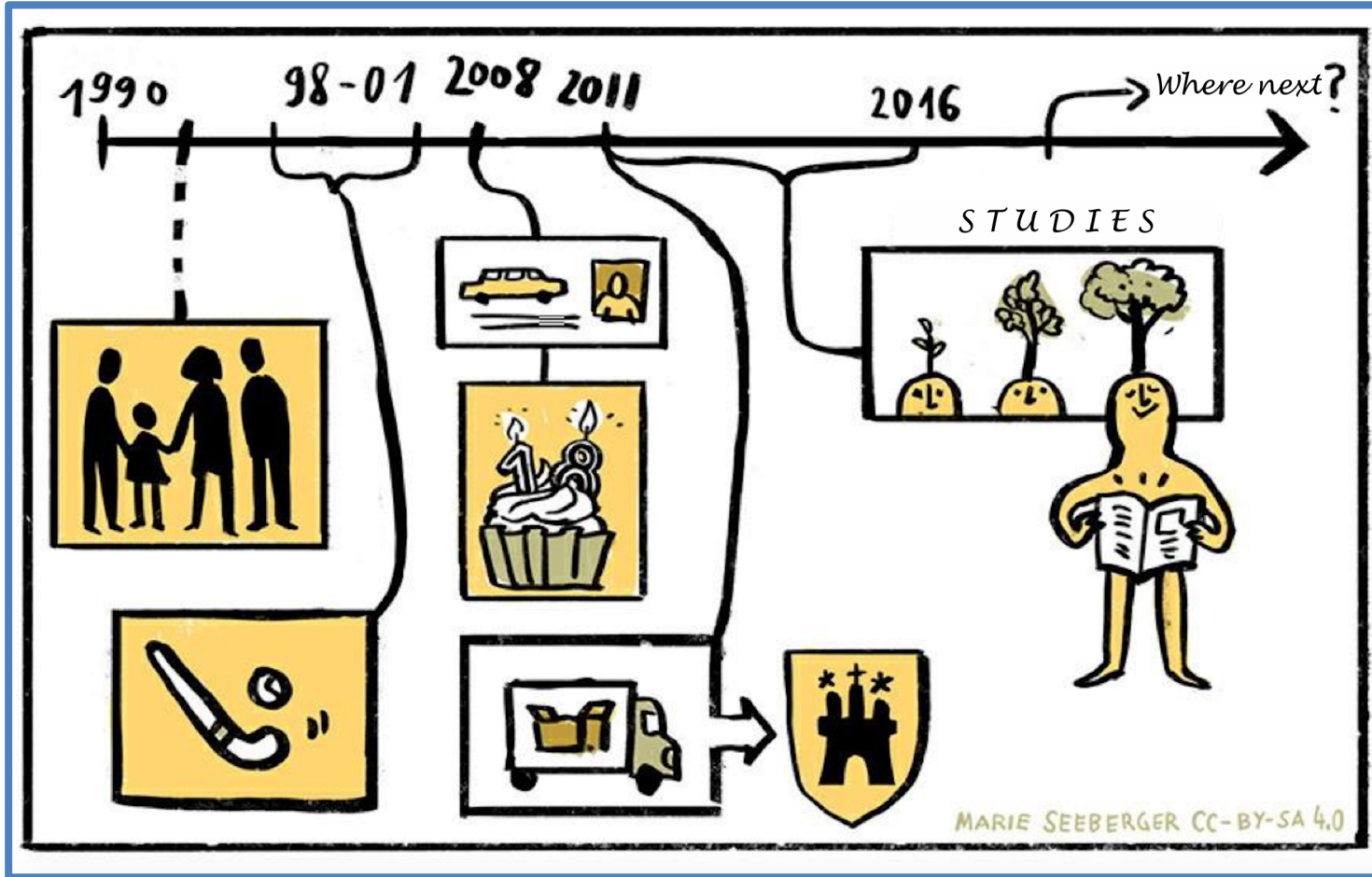


# LEAD-IN



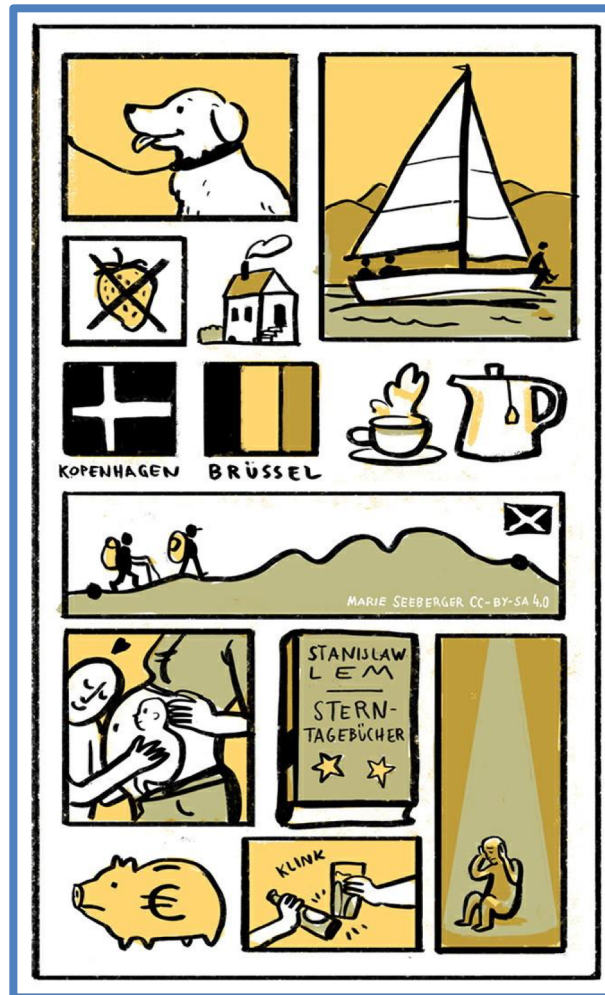
CC-BY-SA 4.0 Source: Marie Seeberger (2016)

# LEAD-IN



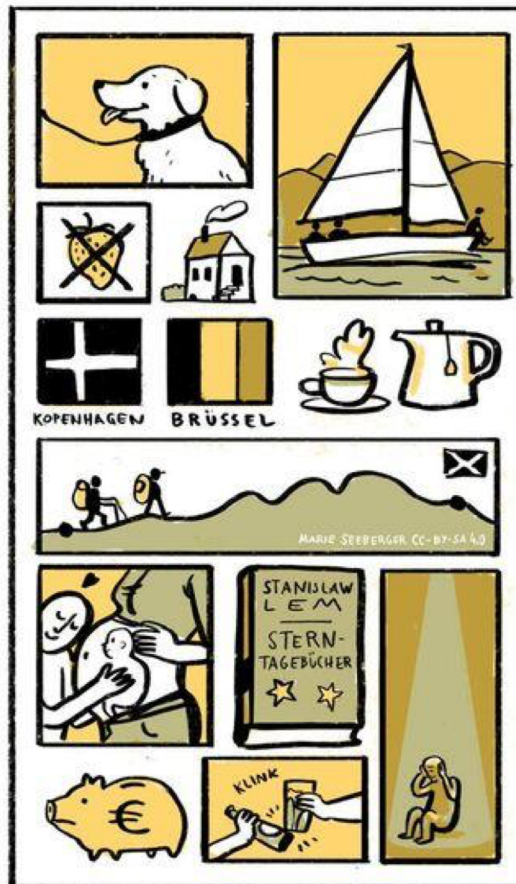
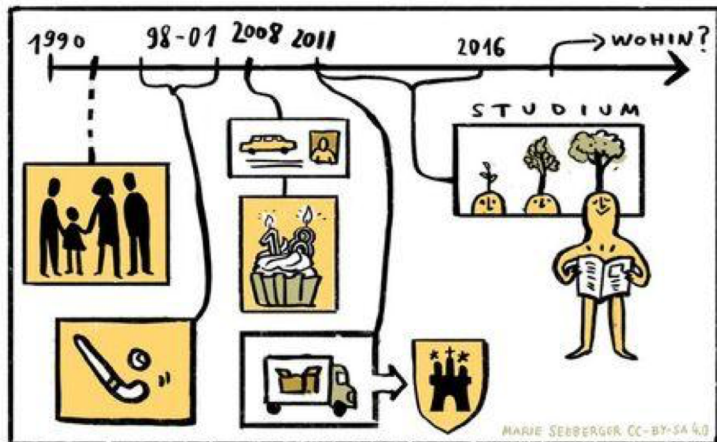
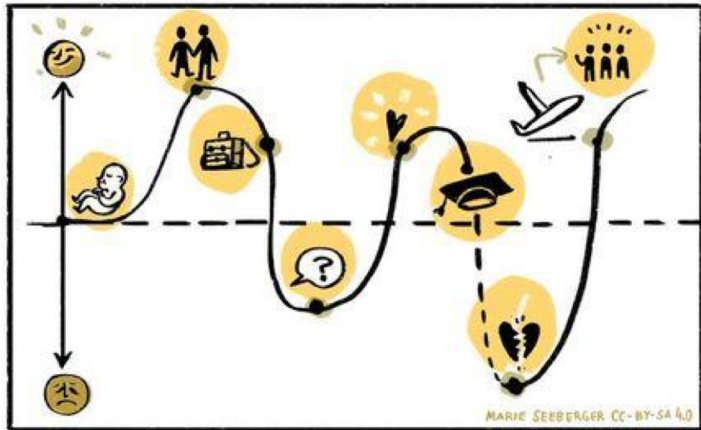
CC-BY-SA 4.0 Source: Marie Seeberger (2016)

# LEAD-IN



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# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

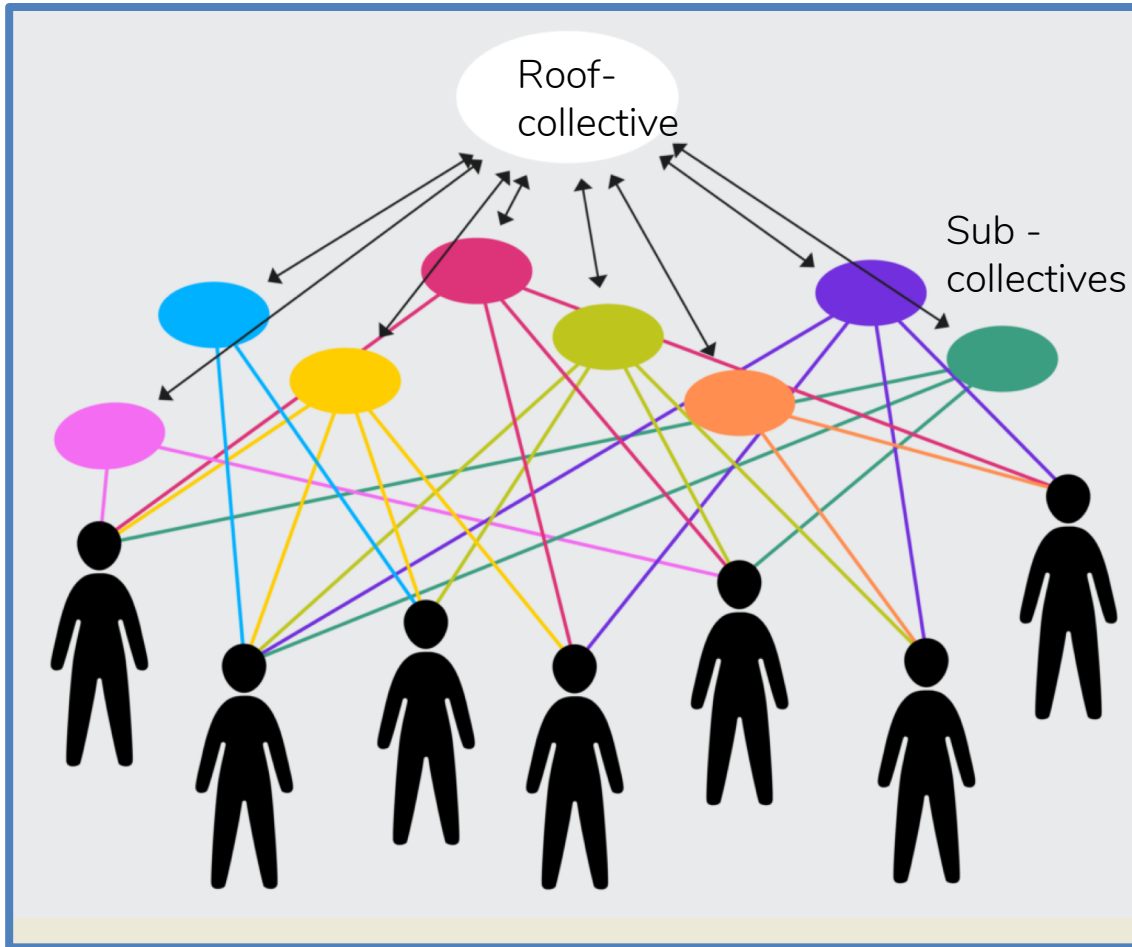
## The concept itself

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- Collectives refer to groups of people who share social habits
- Collectives can be linked to families, professions, sports, gender, experience, migration history and age, for example
- Collectives can have different sizes, a distinction can be made between roof and sub-collectives
- The smaller a collective is, the easier is it to carry out a 'thick description'
- We are all members of many different collectives

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## The concept itself



CC-BY-SA 4.0 Source: Julia Eitza (2017) based on Yildirim-Kranig, Y. 2014, p.212

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Reasons to consider multi-collectivity



CC BY-SA 4.0 „Germany“ Source: Adelheid Iken (2013)

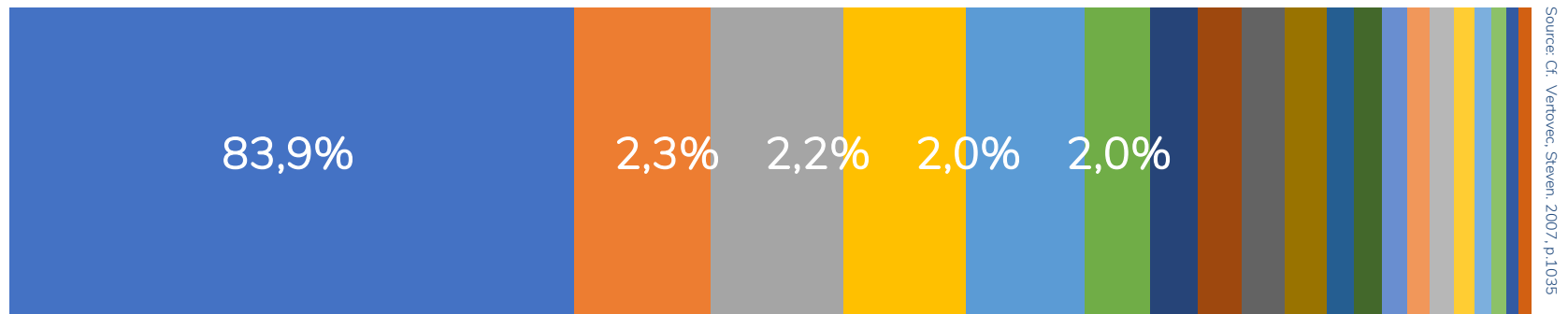


Growing cultural plurality  
within countries

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Reasons to consider multi-collectivity

Estimated number of speakers of top 20 languages in London, 2000



- English
- Hindi/Urdu
- Arabic
- Yoruba
- French
- Somali

- Panjabi
- Bengali & Sylheti
- English Creole
- Greek
- Akan (Twi & Fante)
- Tamil

- Gujarati
- Turkish
- Cantonese
- Portuguese
- Spanisch
- Vietnamese

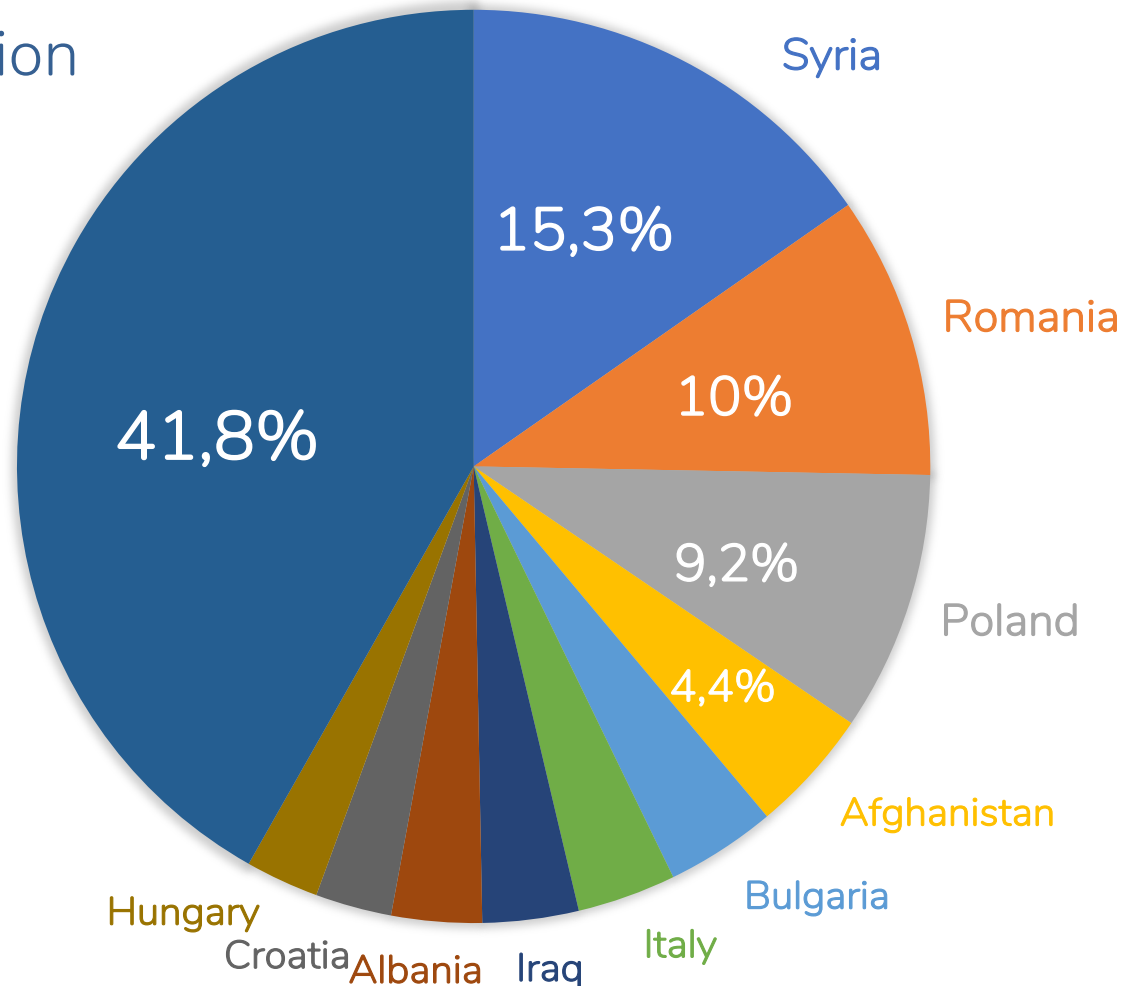


# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Reasons to consider multi-collectivity

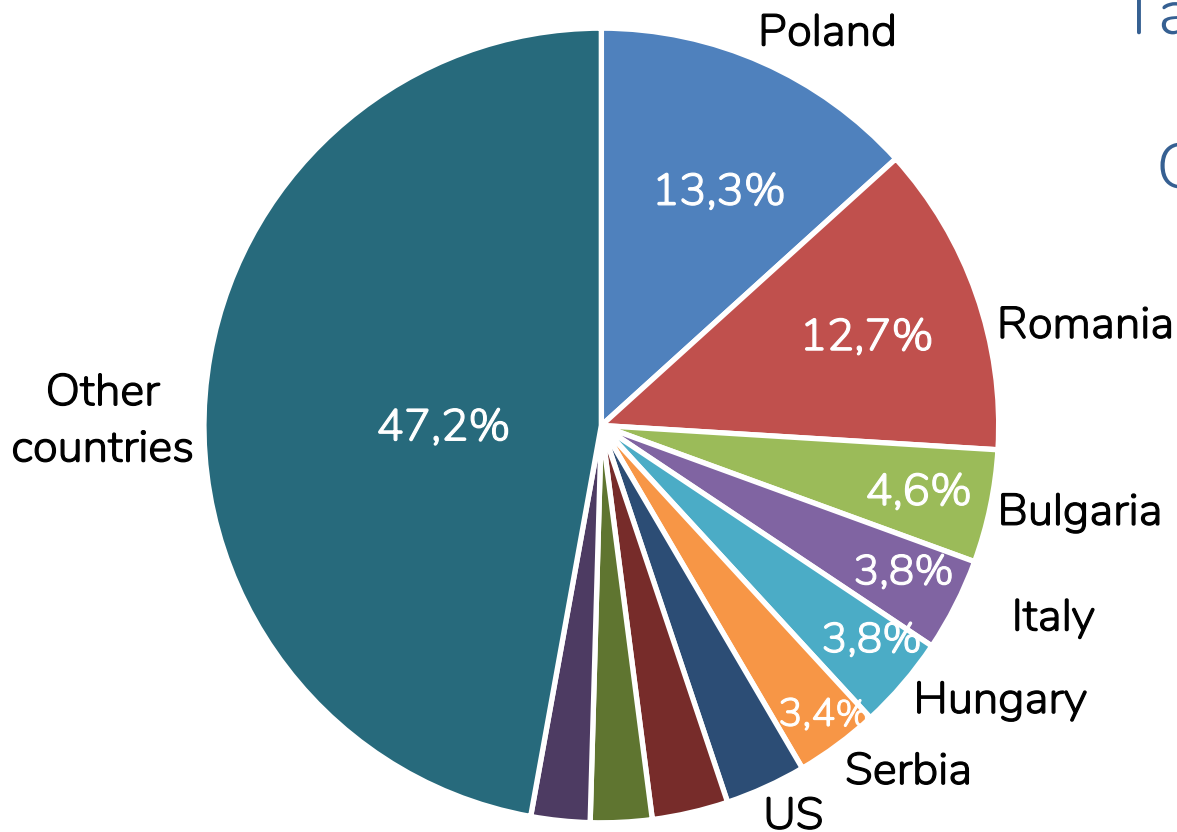
Countries of Immigration  
to Germany 2015

Other countries  
of origin



# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Reasons to consider multi-collectivity

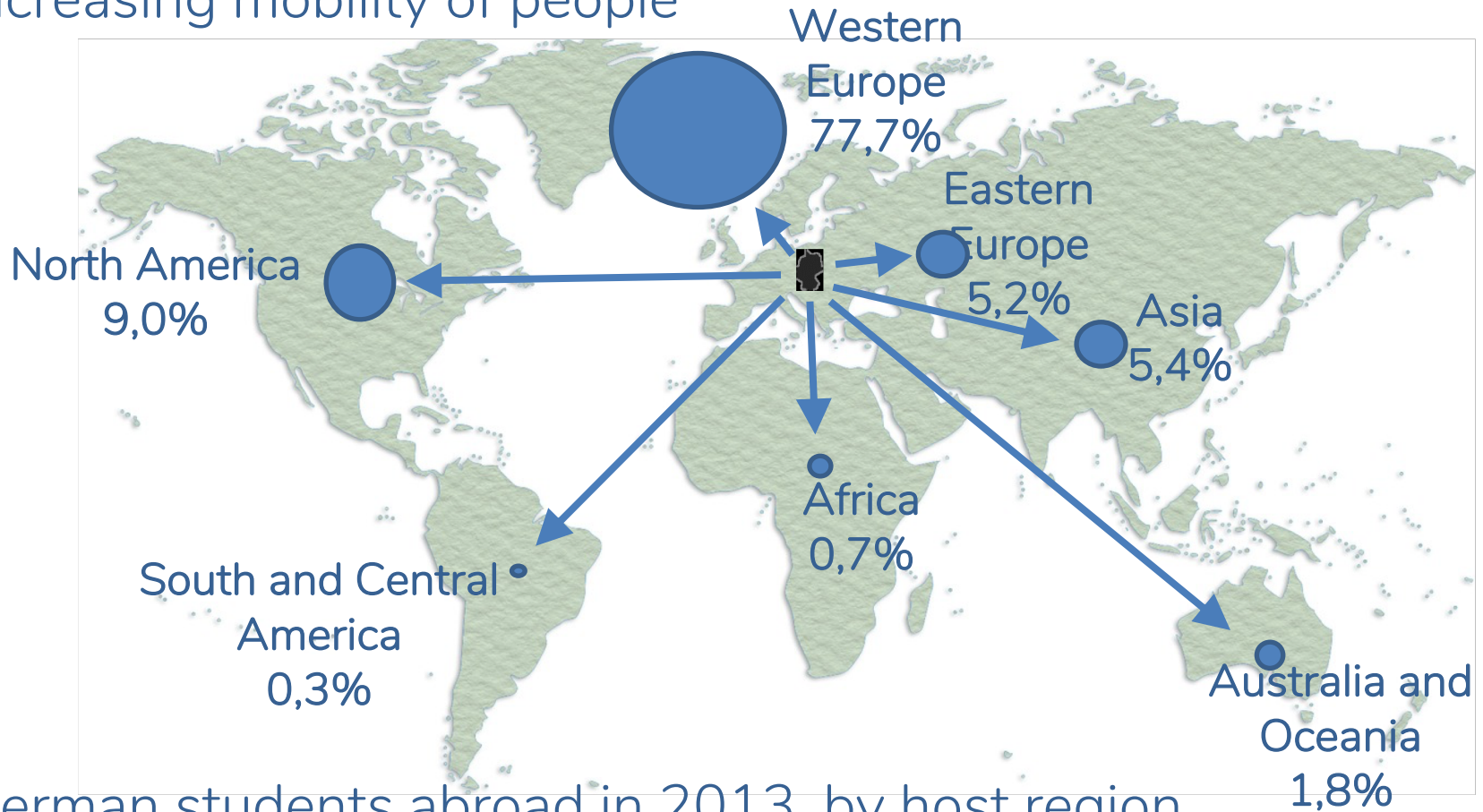


Target countries of people who left Germany in 2015

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Reasons to consider multi-collectivity

Increasing mobility of people



German students abroad in 2013, by host region

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

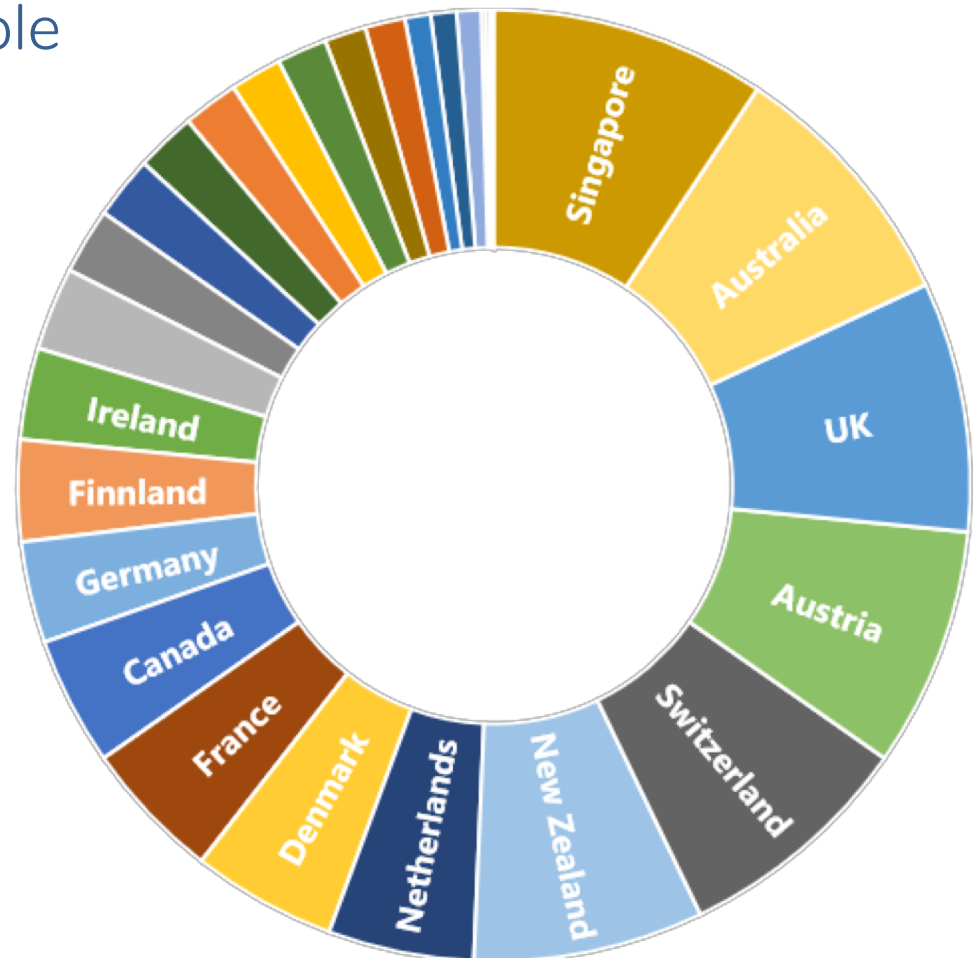
## Reasons to consider multi-collectivity

Increasing mobility of people

International students in  
selected host countries in 2013

Top 5 countries:

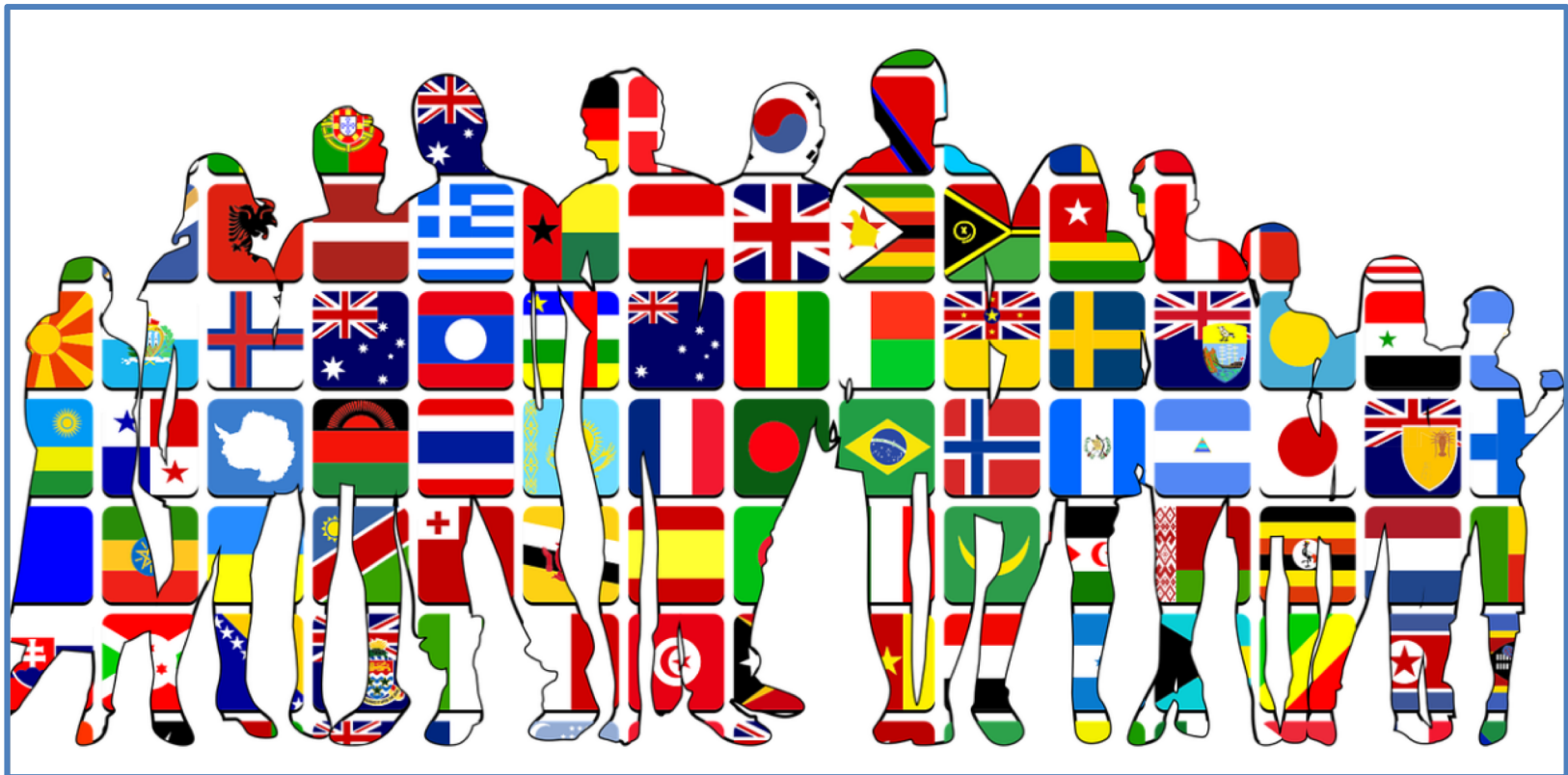
1. Singapore 19.2%
2. Australia 18.0%
3. UK 17.5%
4. Austria 16.8%
5. Switzerland 16.8%



# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Reasons to consider multi-collectivity

Increasing international and cross-cultural connections,  
family biographies and multi-rootedness

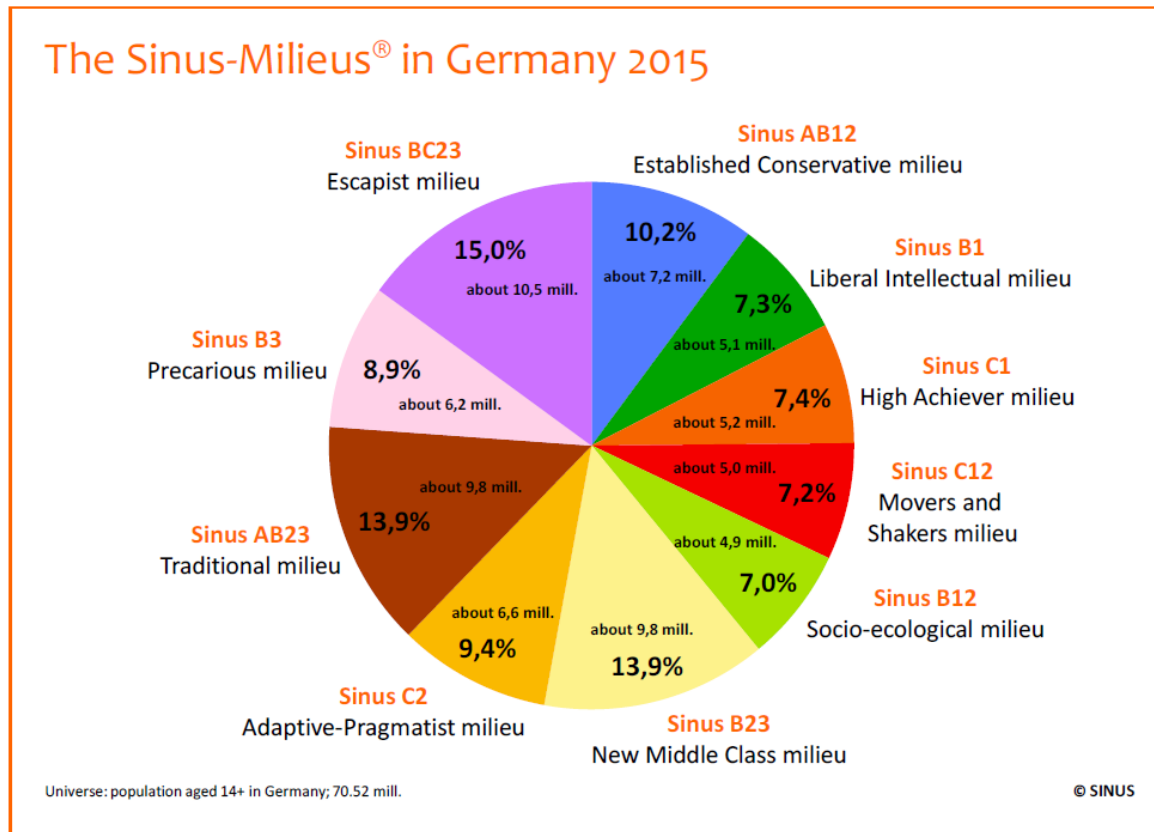


CC0 Source: pixabay

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Reasons to consider multi-collectivity

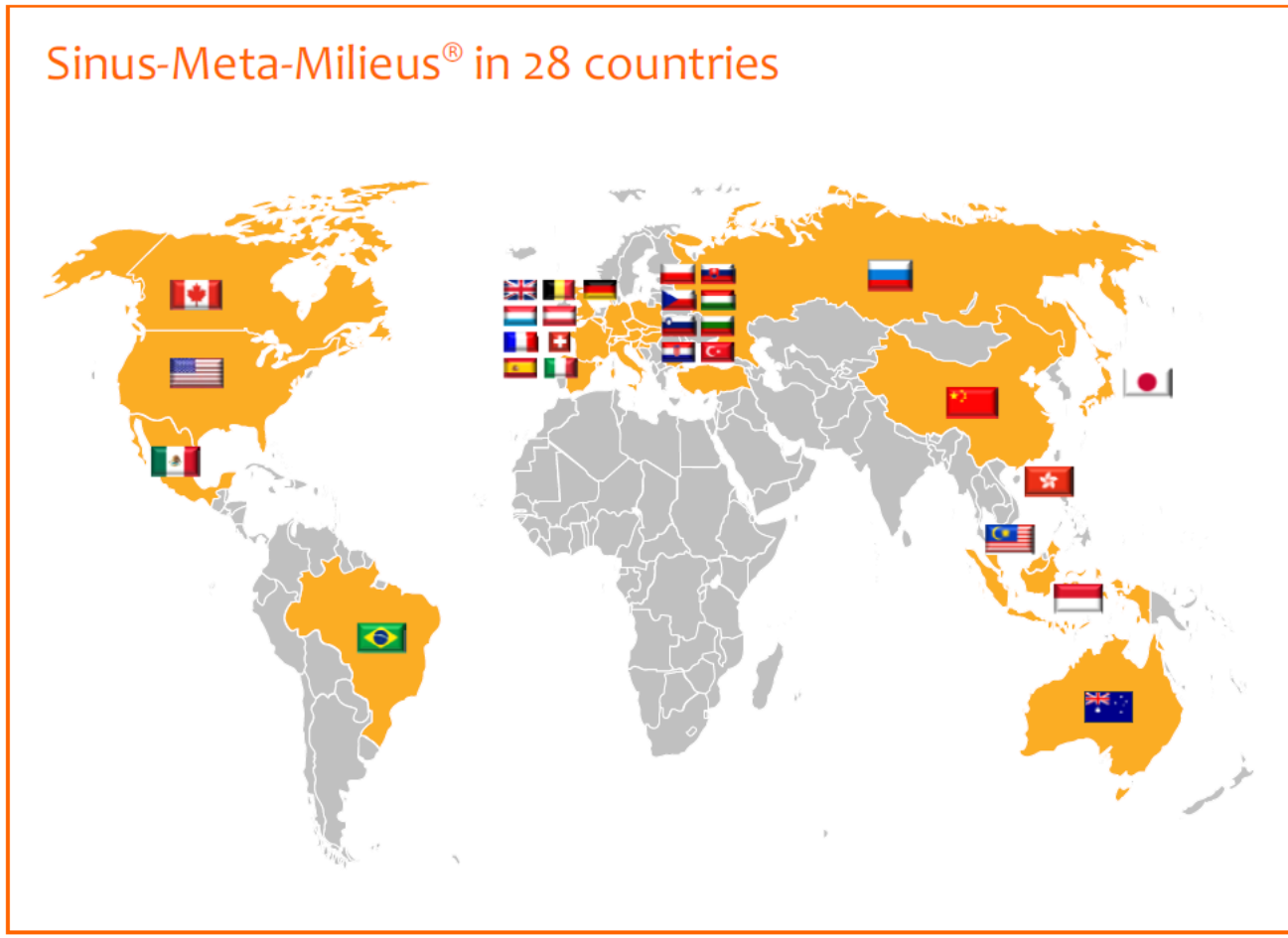
Diversity of lifestyles and milieus within countries



Source: SINUS-Institut 2015; Information on Sinus-Milieus, p. 13; used by permission

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Reasons to consider multi-collectivity

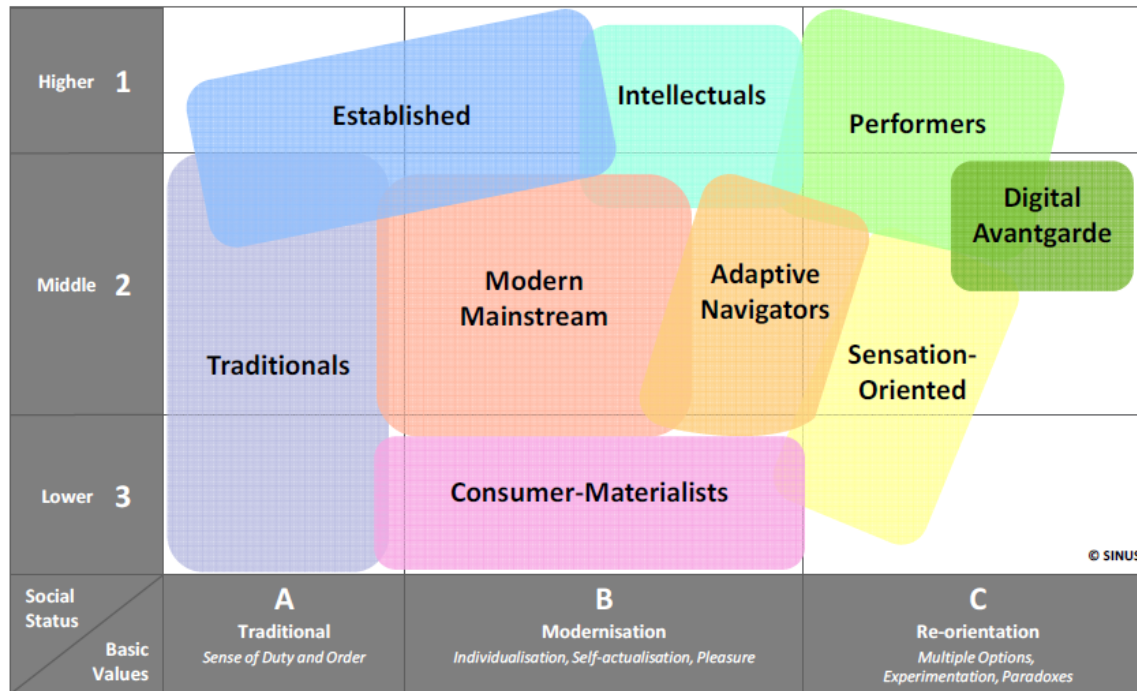


Source: SINUS-Institut 2015; [Information on Sinus-Milieus](#), p.22, used by permission

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Reasons to consider multi-collectivity

### Sinus-Meta-Milieus<sup>®</sup> for established markets



Source: SINUS-Institut 2015, [Information on Sinus-Milieus](#), p.23; used by permission



# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Reasons to consider multi-collectivity

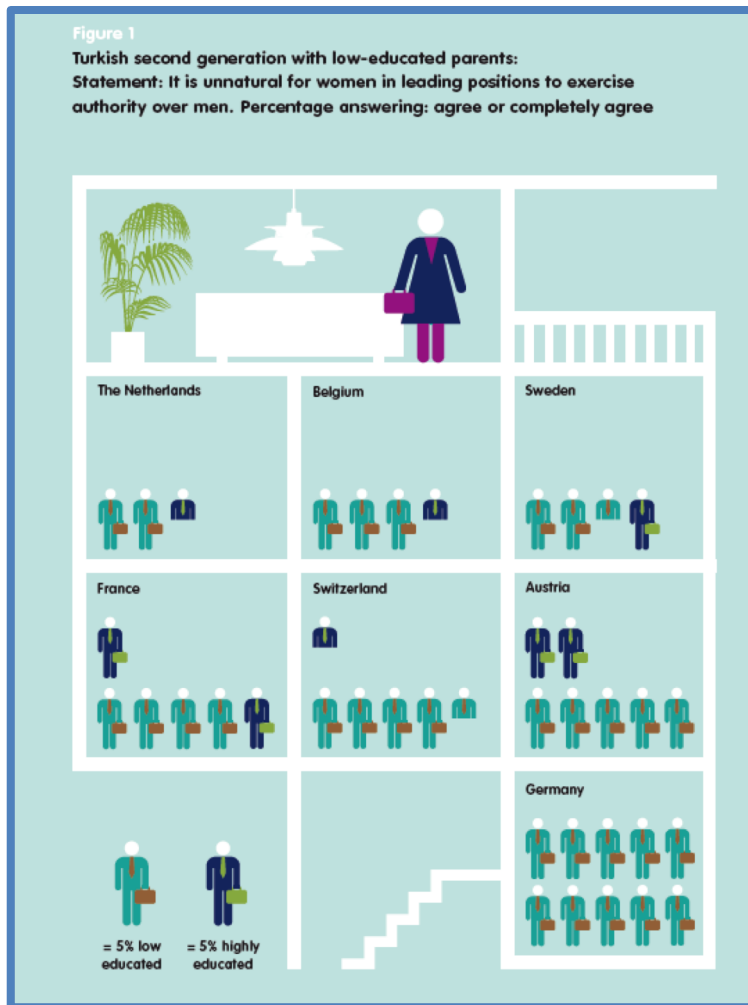
Culture relates to groups of people



CC BY-SA 4.0, Barcelona, Source: Adelheid Ken (2008)

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Reasons to consider multi-collectivity



CC BY Source: Schneider, Jens; Crui, Maurice & Frans Lelie. 2015. Generation Mix. Die superdiverse Zukunft unserer Städte und was wir daraus machen. Münster: Waxmann [www.waxmann.com/buch/3182](http://www.waxmann.com/buch/3182) Infographic by A. Vlasblom van Zaana (Amsterdam); used by permission

### Developing an open mind for commonalities

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Reasons to consider multi-collectivity



CC BY Source: Schneider, Jens; Crul, Maurice & Frans Leslie 2015. Generation Mix: Die superdiverse Zukunft unserer Städte und was wir daraus machen. Münster: Waxmann. [www.waxmann.com/buch/3182](http://www.waxmann.com/buch/3182). Infographic by [www.vonZappa.com/standard/](http://www.vonZappa.com/standard/) used by permission

### Developing an open mind for commonalities

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Reasons to consider multi-collectivity

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‘Creolisation’ where the mixing of cultural elements leads to something new



# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Reasons to consider multi-collectivity

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### Super-diversity

- Linked to:
  - An unprecedented level of diversity
  - The need to acknowledge more variables
  - The greater speed, scale and spread of diversity
  - The re-ordering of society in economic, social and cultural perspective, and
  - The normalisation of diversity in everyday life

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Reasons to consider multi-collectivity

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The concept of multi-collectivity acknowledges

- an unprecedented level of diversity;
- the many dynamics and challenges linked to the growing cultural pluralism within societies and multifaceted identities;
- the complexity and multiple, cross-cutting categories of 'difference'
- the collectively shared in contrast to individual identities

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Reasons to consider multi-collectivity

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### The concept of multi-collectivity

- is an antidote to categorising people according to nationality
- considers individual differences and self-identification
- requires re-tooling regarding cross-cultural communication
- requires a rethinking of concepts and approaches commonly used in cross-cultural interaction

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Membership of different collectives

Different collectives you may be a member of:

- Cultural heritage
- Languages you speak
- The countries you know a lot about
- Age
- Professional status
- Membership of a sports club
- Love for classical music
- The study course you chose
- The cultural elements you have adopted
- Personal background

• .....

• .....



# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## Membership of different collectives

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Look back at the 'journey of life' activity you did at the beginning of the session. Use this as a basis to identify the different sub-collectives you are a member of.

For each of the sub-collectives that you belong to, please note down in a few sentences what is typical about them or what characterises them.

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## The common triangle

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The common triangle refers to:

- a summary of things we share and where we differ
- differences and commonalities which influence interactions at work, during leisure time and in other social encounters

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## The common triangle

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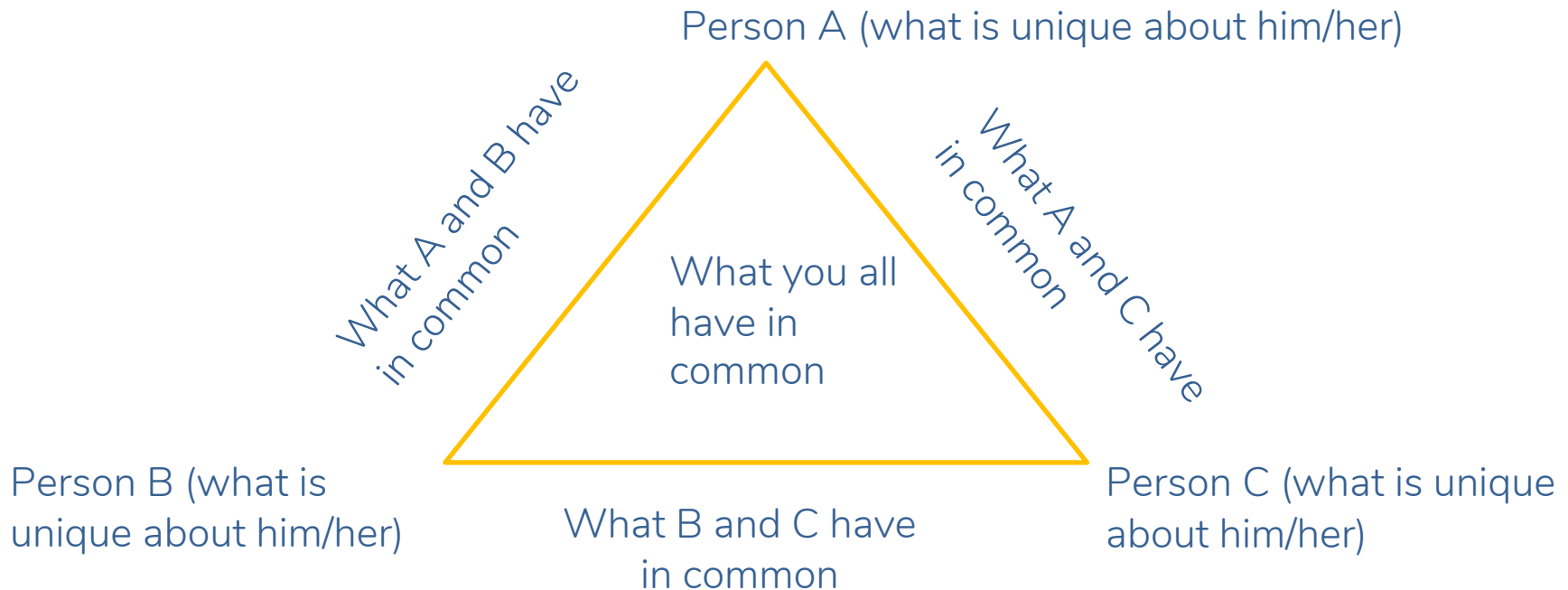
- Imagine that you are expected to work together in a team of three
- What elements do you consider to be vital when you want to work together (e.g. personal characteristics, cultural and situational variables)?
  - List about ten of these using the information from your life journey and the analysis of your membership of different collectives.
  - Get together in groups of three and in turn explain the items you have chosen.
  - Discuss and try to establish a common meaning for these.
  - Search for commonalities and differences among the three of you. These may be found between person A and B, B and C or A and C only. Also take note of things you all share and those which are unique to one person.
  - Use the results to develop a common triangle.
-

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## The common triangle



Sit together in a team of three and develop a common ground triangle.



# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## The common triangle

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Choose one of the following tasks

- Develop a plan for the end of term celebration
- Develop ideas for the introduction of a new deodorant for men
- Prepare for the introduction of a new intern into the company

You have 20 minutes for the task and are expected to use your knowledge from common triangle to do so

Be ready to present your ideas on a flipchart (5 min)

# MULTI-COLLECTIVITY AS A CONCEPT

## The common triangle

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How can the result of this exercise help you to work well together and benefit from each other's experiences and knowledge?

Where do you have to negotiate common rules of interaction?

# SUMMARY AND REFLECTION

## Summary

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In a context of growing diversity due to factors such as people's increasing mobility, exposure to different lifestyles, and the integration of cultural elements into one's daily life, we need to do justice to the complexity of our social and cultural world. The concept of multi-collectivity has that potential.

By acknowledging membership of different roof and sub-collectives, it is possible to see cultures as entities whose members belong to a variety of collectives. Such collectives may be made up of people sharing a certain interest, locality, social status, profession, and gender to name but a few.

Recognizing that people are members of many and at times very different collectives means that searching for commonalities where one may anticipate differences and thus develop a common ground for understanding can be very fruitful.

# SUMMARY AND REFLECTION

## Reflection

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- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jD8tjhVO1Tc>
  - Watch the YouTube 'All that we share' and use the content to argue why a multi-collective approach is able to deal with the complexity of identities and to find a common ground for interaction that we can use for social and work encounters.
  - What are the parameters that are used to differentiate groups?
  - Which ones would you consider to be of particular relevance in a work-context?
  - How can the understanding of multi-collectivity be used when dealing with cross cultural challenges?
-



# SUMMARY AND REFLECTION

## Reflection

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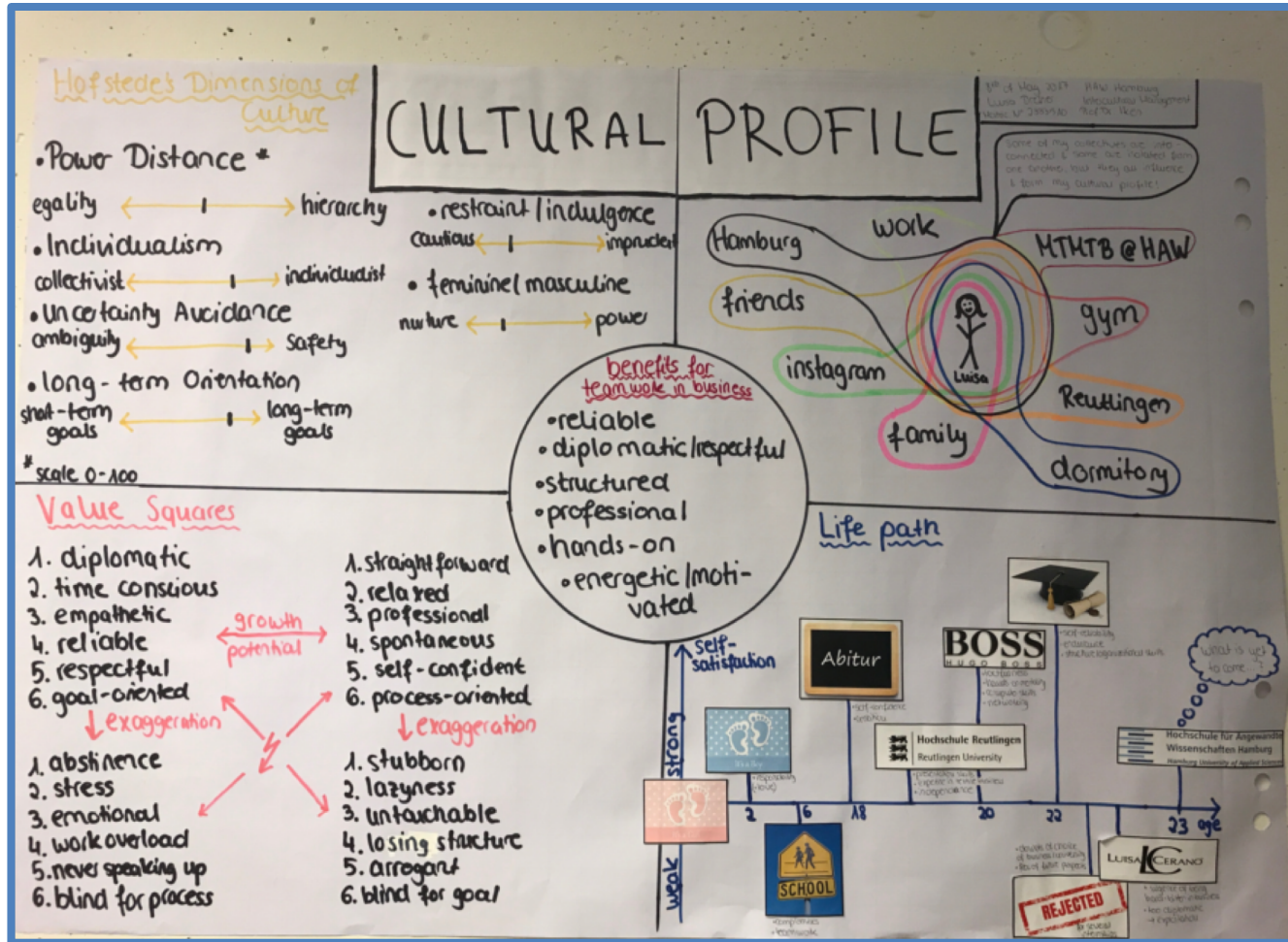


The illustration on the following slide shows the life path and cultural profile of a student.

- Use this profile to identify several collectives the student is a member of and compare it with your own cultural profile
- Where do you find commonalities and differences?
- How could knowing about these help you when working together?
- What are the benefits of such an approach if you wish to work together?

# SUMMARY AND REFLECTION

## Reflection



CC BY-SA 4.0 „Cultural Profile“ Source: Adelhheid Iken

# SUMMARY AND REFLECTION

## Reflection

### How intercultural issues influenced my life and personality

I grew up and spent my childhood in Hamburg and studied there until I was 21 years old.

My grandmother lives in Spain and my whole life I spent a lot of time there, I went to live and study in Barcelona in 2012, I spent there almost 2 years.

My mother's family is from the UK and we still maintain some English cultural habits.

2012 and 2013 I visited Brazil to learn about the culture and life there. Many situations I experienced there influenced me a lot and my way of thinking.

#### Individualism / Collectivism

Based on my upbringing and my sport I have learned at an early age to prioritize family, community and that the weaker need support. I live according to these principles. During my studies and work I sadly had to learn that most other people think differently and act accordingly. This is an intercultural problem, especially in the fashion industry (exploitation of workers, animals and environment).

#### Feminine / Masculine

I have studied fashion design and I have worked in the fashion industry where there is an overhang on women. Although there is equality, the majority of successful individuals are men.

#### Uncertainty Avoidance

I always felt very comfortable to change my way of working when I joined a new group in another country because it was very interesting for me. But it was not always easy because one had to adjust to a different work pace and work attitude.

#### Time perspective

I think all of these perspectives are very important. I need to think and work on the past as well, because it is the way how I came to my current point of view. I need to know what I want to do and become in the future. This is how I know on what I have to work on now. But the most important time perspective for me is the present, because if I want to do something, I only can do now, not in the past and not in the future.

#### Power Distance

For me it is not so important where I work or with who I work. The most important thing for me are my values. It does not matter in which country or company I am. The values of FAIR TRADE and respectful treatment of human beings, the environment and animals are my guide.

# ASSIGNMENT

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- Assignment 1:  
Read the biographical notes and analyse the personal journey from a multi-collective perspective
- Where, why and how do you think the membership of these collectives may influence the person's personal cultural orientation?
- What type of specific resources such as knowledge, talents, experiences is the writer likely to possess due to his/her membership of different collectives?

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