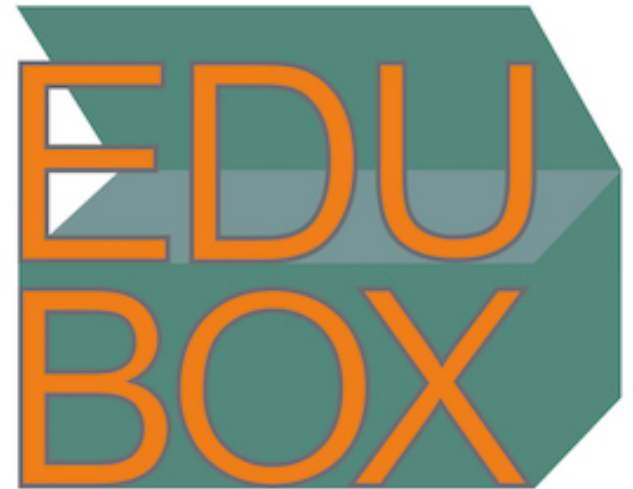

EduBox 01: Culture, a new perspective



[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)



INTRODUCTION TO EDUBOX 01

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

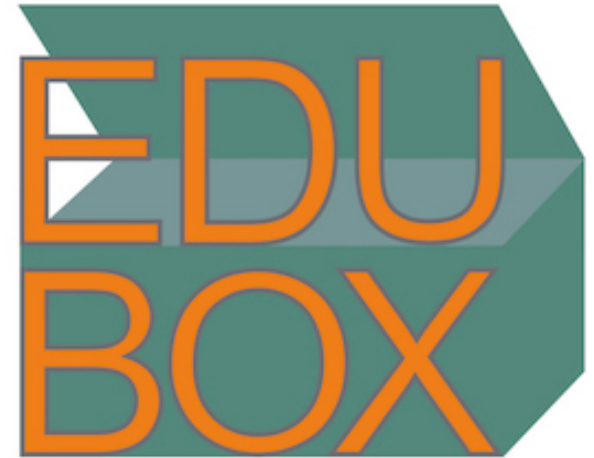
More than ever before, managers and co-workers are networking and communicating at the intersection of diverse cultures. And yet, at the same time, cultures are undergoing rapid change, catalysed by new forms and means of communication.

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.

EduBox 01: Culture, a new perspective

Session 03:
A culture reflexive approach to
the analysis of cross-cultural
interactions



Author: Prof. Dr. A. Iken with contributions by Prof. Dr. K. Nazarkiewicz
Project: EduBoxes for Hamburg Open Online University (www.hoou.de)



A CULTURE REFLEXIVE APPROACH

Introduction to Session 03


The concept of multi-collectivity is essential when trying to understand the complexity and multifaceted nature of intercultural encounters. As will be argued in this session, this approach needs to be complemented by an intercultural perspective as well as a contextual approach, which pays particular attention to power relationships.

The aim of this session is to introduce these three approaches, using the concept of cultural reflexivity as a tool to analyse intercultural encounters and apply them to different settings.

LEARNING OUTCOME

-  Students analyse cross-cultural situations while applying a culture reflexive approach

OBJECTIVES

- 
- At the end of the session, students will be able to:
- explain what we mean by cultural reflexivity
 - apply a culture-reflexive approach to the analysis of cross-cultural encounters, and
 - based on the findings make meaningful suggestions as to how to deal with the issue at stake

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE APPROACH

Topics

- Learning outcome
- Objectives
- Lead-in
- A culture reflexive analysis
 - Cultural reflexivity
 - Three perspectives of cultural reflexivity
 - Putting it into practice
 - Case studies
- Summary and reflection
- Home assignment
- Sources

LEAD-IN



What do you think?

- ‘...if a Chinese acquaintance is invited to a dinner party, how much of this invitee’s behaviour at that party can be attributed to the fact that he or she is Chinese, and how much to other factors, such as affiliations to a whole host of sub-cultures that could be professional, regional, gender-specific, generational, interest-group related or even a culture that simply relates to family, friends or the individual themselves?’ (Witchalls 2012, p.12; used by permission)

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Cultural reflexivity

- What do you associate with the term 'reflexivity' and more specifically 'cultural reflexivity'?

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Cultural reflexivity



A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Cultural reflexivity



- Activity 1:

Use a search engine to look for expressions and explanations linked to 'reflexivity' and note them down on a piece of paper.

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Cultural reflexivity

Following the entry in Wikipedia, the term reflexivity within sociology ... means an act of self-reference where examination or action "bends back on", refers to, and affects the entity instigating the action or examination. It commonly refers to the capacity of an agent to recognize forces of socialization and alter their place in the social structure (Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reflexivity_\(social_theory\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reflexivity_(social_theory)) (Accessed 18th September 2018))

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Cultural reflexivity

According to the online Cambridge Dictionary reflexivity refers to 'the fact of someone being able to examine his or her own feelings, reactions, and motives (= reasons for acting) and how these influence what he or she does or thinks in a situation...' (Cambridge University Press <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/reflexivity> (Accessed 22nd October 2018, used by permission))

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Cultural reflexivity

Pollner (1991:370) describes reflexivity as

“...an ‘unsettling,’ i.e., an insecurity regarding the basic assumptions, discourse and practises used in describing reality.”

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Cultural reflexivity



- Fold your arms as you normally do
- Now fold your arms the opposite way

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Cultural reflexivity

Cultural reflexivity can be understood as the ability to recognize the existence of cultural diversity in general and one's own and other's membership in different collectives. It includes a subjective-process of self-conscious inquiry and introspection and the study of social behaviour and interaction with reference to different parameters.

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Cultural reflexivity

In practical terms cultural reflexivity means

- questioning the assumptions and beliefs underlying social actions and the impact of these actions, and
- analysing cross-cultural encounters from a variety of perspectives with the premise that
- such a process has the potential to maintain and transform social relations and the development of constructive cross-cultural dialogues.



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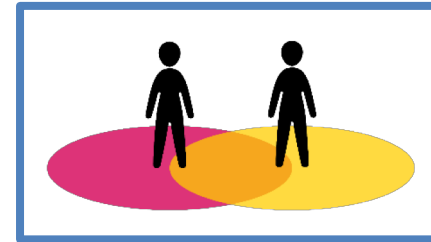


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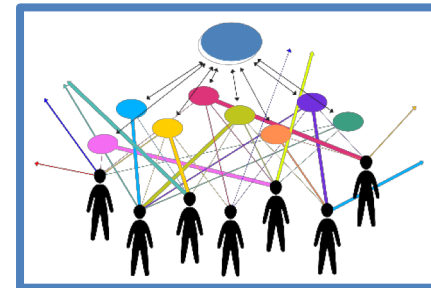
A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Three perspectives of cultural reflexivity

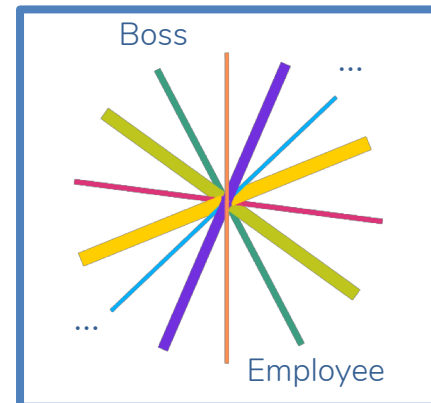
The intercultural perspective



The multi-collective perspective



The contextual and power reflexive perspective

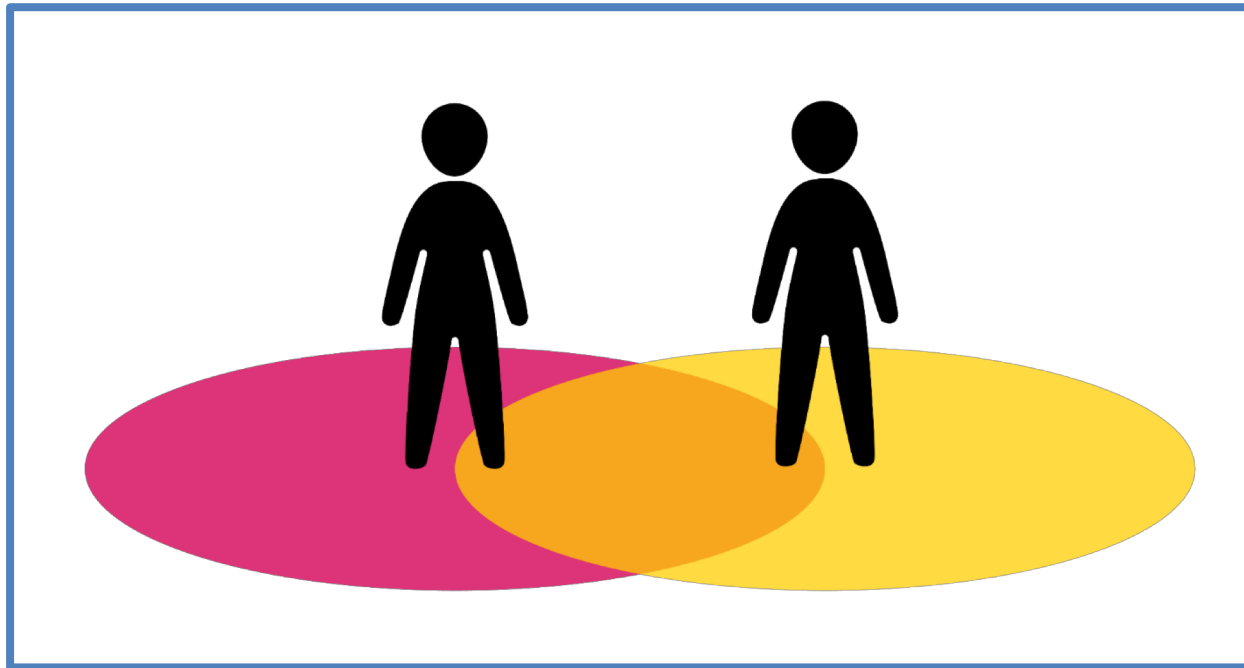


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A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Three perspectives of cultural reflexivity

The intercultural perspective



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A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Three perspectives of cultural reflexivity

The intercultural perspective

- Considers people as primarily belonging to one culture
- Anticipates a likelihood of 'culture clashes' when people from different cultures meet
- Has a tendency to generalise and perpetuate perceptions of differences
- Focuses on learning about the other culture and avoiding confrontation
- Is not usually aimed at finding commonalities and searching for synergy

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

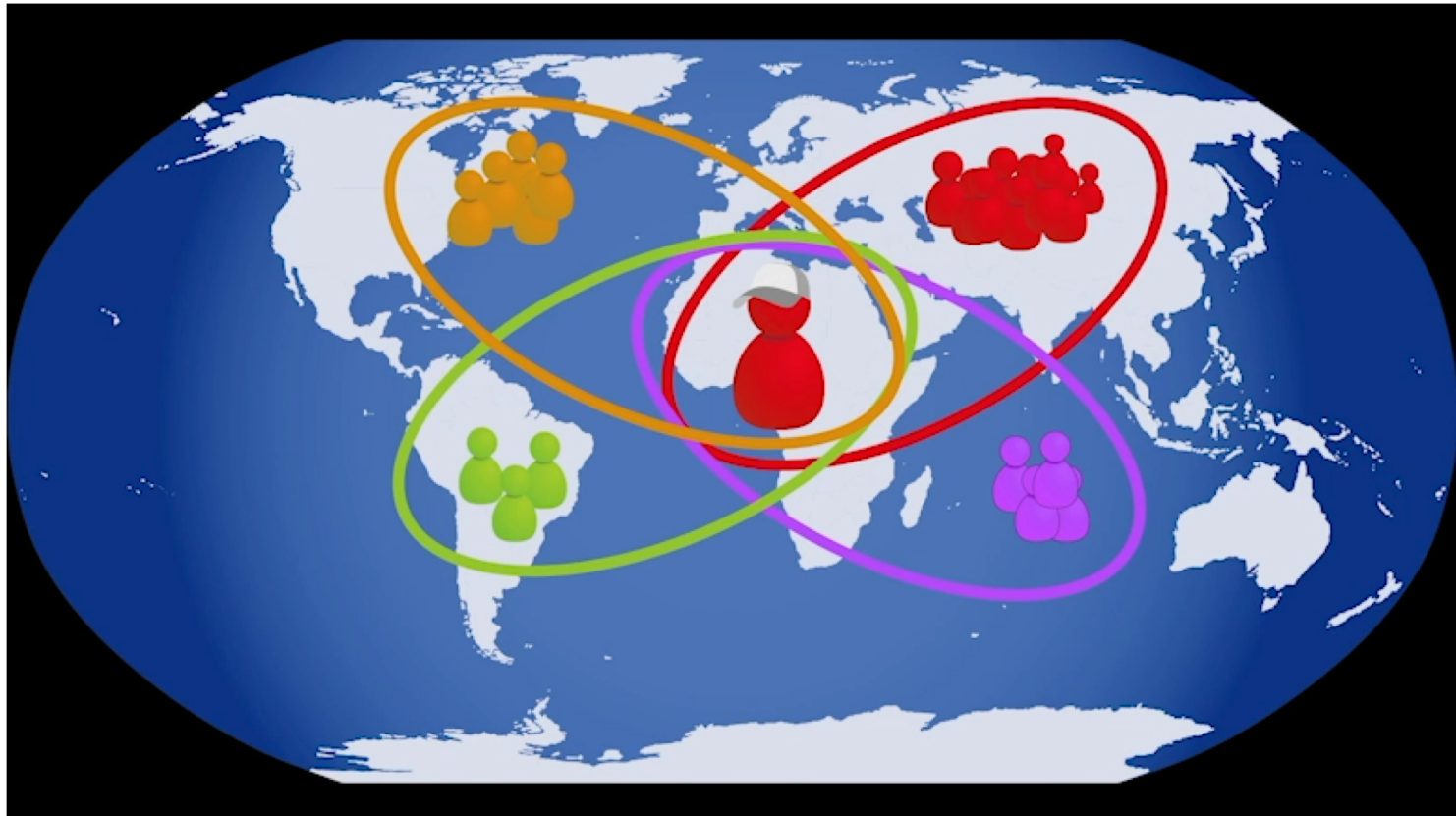
Three perspectives of cultural reflexivity



- Watch the following short YouTube video and note down how you would describe Emil as a cultural person

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Three perspectives of cultural reflexivity



CC BY 4.0 "Social relations towards a network approach." by Prof. Dr. Adelheid Iken, Peter Witzhalls, Jakob Kopczynski

Watch the video online: <https://www.podcampus.de/nodes/RrLPn>

Or watch/download it here: <https://blogs.hoou.de/eduboxes/eduboxes/edubox-01-session-01/session-03/>

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Three perspectives of cultural reflexivity

The 'multi-collective' perspective



Membership
based on...

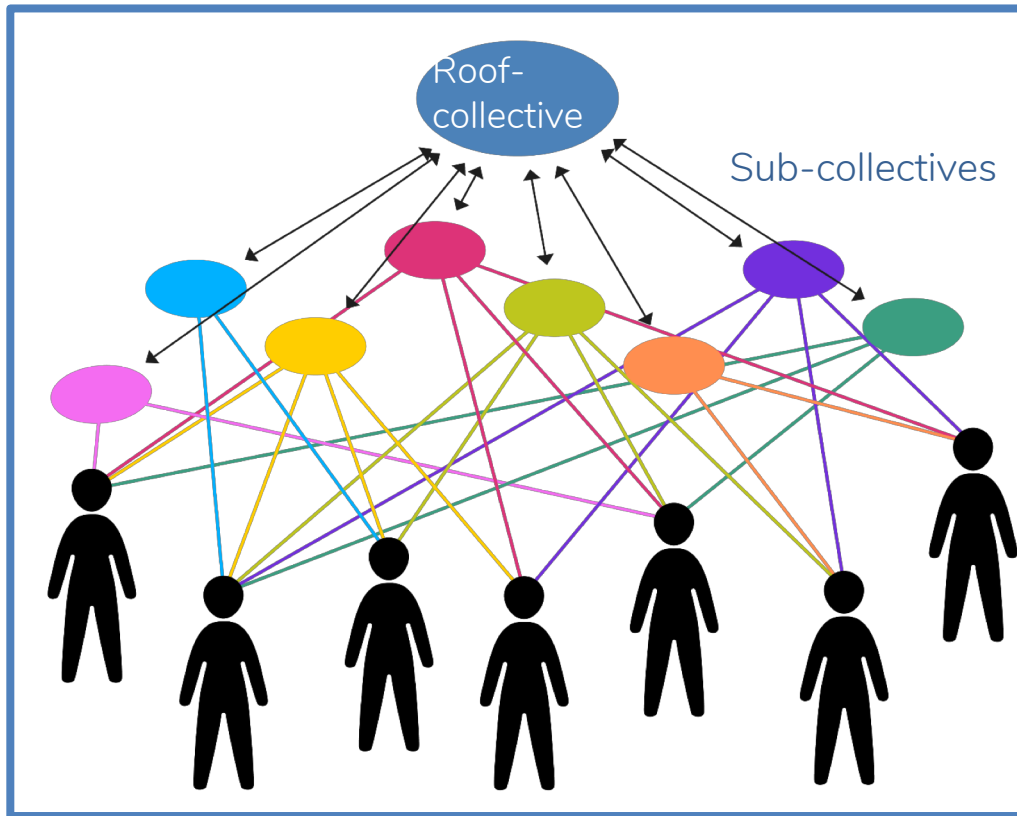
- Gender
- Study group
- Organisation
- Profession
- Football club
- Languages

[CC BY-SA 4.0](#) Source: [Julia Flitta](#) (2017) Based on Yildirim-Krannig, Yeliz 2014

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Three perspectives of cultural reflexivity

The 'multi-collective' perspective

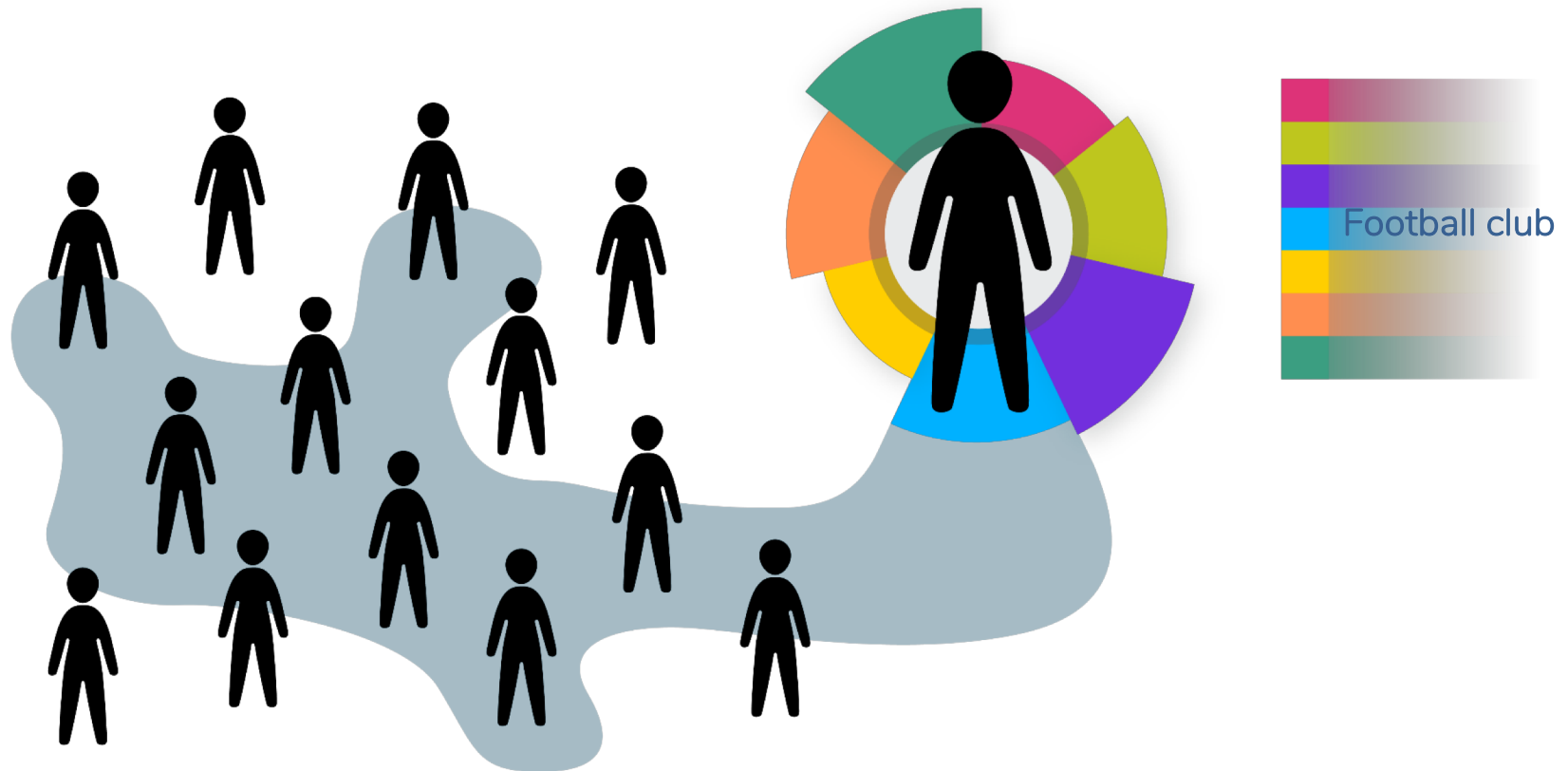


CC-BY-SA 4.0 Source: Julia Ehlert (2017) Based on Yildirim-Karangi, Yelitz 2014

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Three perspectives of cultural reflexivity

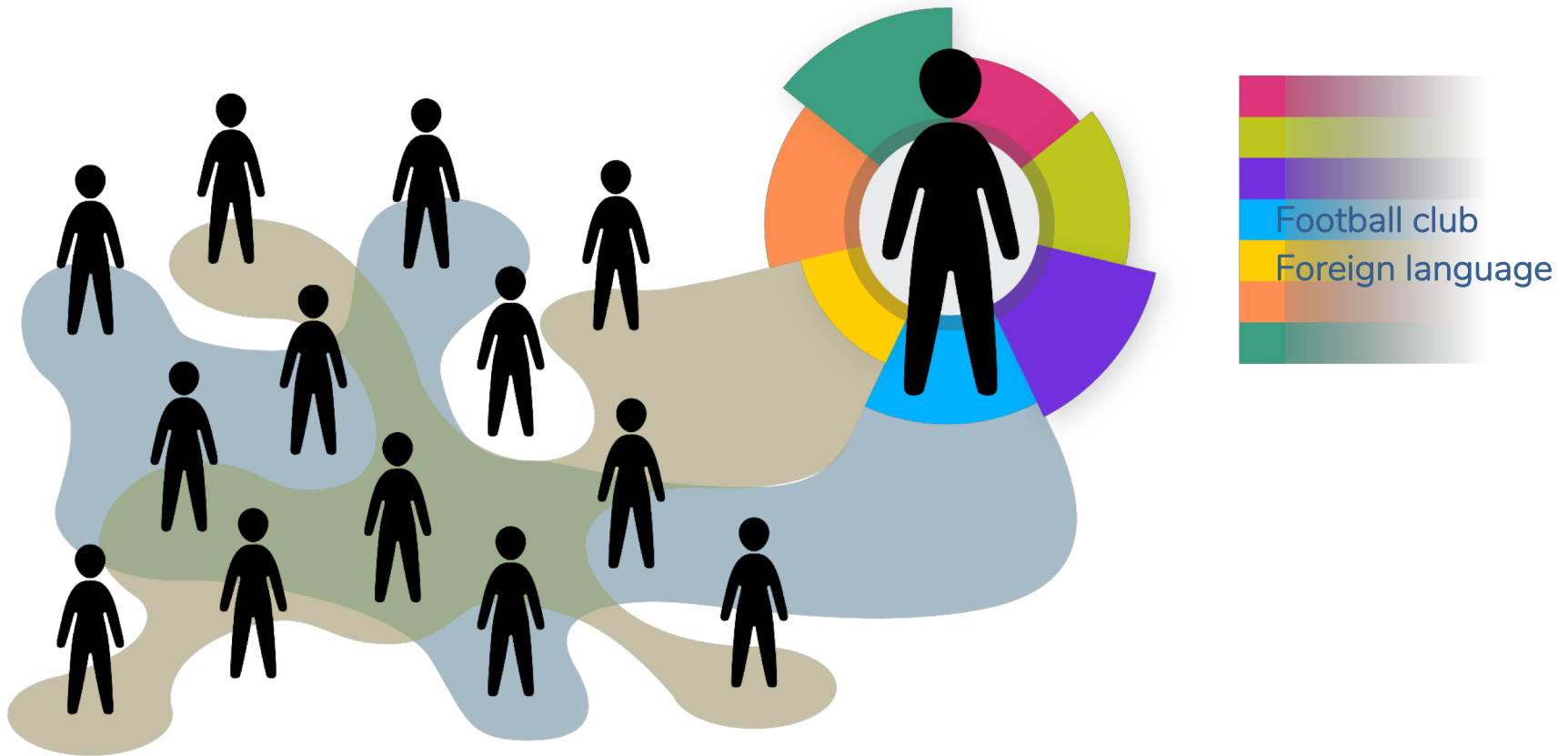
The 'multi-collective' perspective



A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Three perspectives of cultural reflexivity

The 'multi-collective' perspective



A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Three perspectives of cultural reflexivity

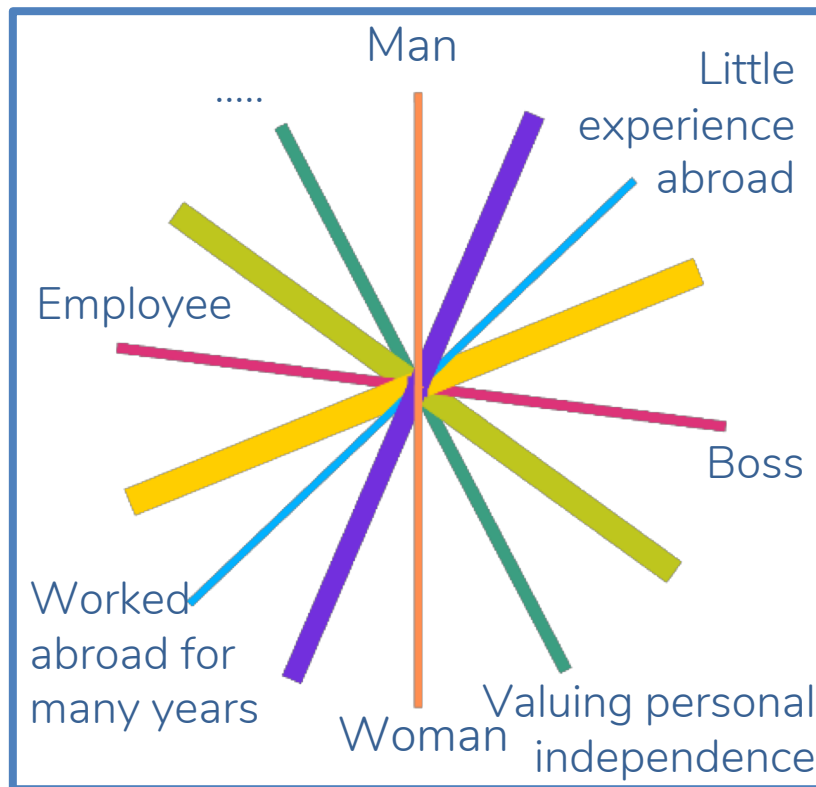
The multi-collective perspective

- Considers multiple cultural orientations and self-identification
- Has the potential to identify commonalities and common interests
- Provides a basis for establishing trust
- Requires self-reflection and openness from communication partners
- Requires time
- Facilitates relationship building

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Three perspectives of cultural reflexivity

The contextual and power related reflexive perspective



CC BY-SA 4.0 Source: Julia Eitner (2017) Based on Nazarkiewicz, Kirsten 2016a

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Three perspectives of cultural reflexivity

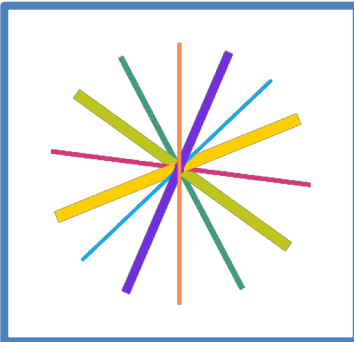
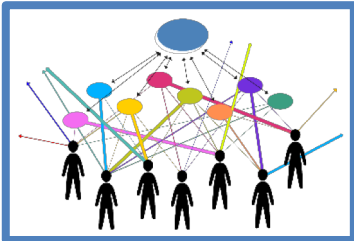
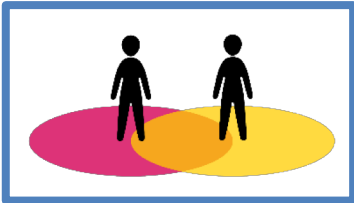
The contextual and power-reflexive perspective

- Acknowledges and supports the consideration of personal as well as situational aspects
- Considers in particular 'power' and asymmetrical power relations as an interfering factor
- Limits the problem of 'over-culturalisation'
- Shows potential limits of influence and interactions

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Three perspectives of cultural reflexivity

Which questions could be asked regarding the situation and those involved?



CC BY-SA 4.0 Source: Julia Fitts (2017) Illustrations based on Nazarkewicz, K. 2016a and Yildirim-Kraning, Y. 2014

- *The search for meaning:*
Which cultural factors could play a role?
- *The search for reciprocal effects and solutions:*
The membership of which sub-collectives and systems could be important and thus need consideration? What is it we don't know and how can we find a common solution?
- How are the privileges and opportunities to participate distributed in advance? Who has which privileges, what kind of power-relations are relevant? What are other important context factors worth considering?

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Putting things into practice

The complaint – a critical event

A job applicant with a North African migrant background complained to his case worker's superior at the State Employment Agency that her clothing was too revealing.

The tops with spaghetti straps that she wore on hot summer days were inappropriate from his Muslim point of view.

What is your spontaneous reaction and position?
You have two minutes to think about it.

(Source: Cf. Nazarkiewicz, Kirsten 2016, p.25 translated)



CC-BY-SA 4.0 „Woman“ Source Adelheid Iken (2017)

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Putting things into practice

The complaint from the intercultural perspective or with a 'natural worldview'.

- Confusion because two people from different countries meet
- Anticipated differences in value systems and value based interpretation. The concept of honour and sexual ethics linked to this meets individualistic, self-determined and pragmatic clothing style
- Readiness to observe and practice non-judgmental recognition of cultural factors that influence behaviour

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Putting things into practice

The complaint from a multi-collective perspective considers a multitude of viewpoints:

- The concrete situation shows two people meeting in a public service institution
- A multitude of systems and collectives are involved:
 - Organisational culture with etiquette rules and conventions in business life
 - Various role constellations such as service provider via customer; an expert and a lay person
 - Various memberships in sub-collectives such as based on gender, profession, language
- Central to clarifying self- and other expectations and using knowledge for the development of multiple hypothesis

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Putting things into practice

The contextual and power-reflexive perspective

- Consideration of macro-influences, pre-distributed social inequalities and powerful asymmetries
- Social positioning and differences in ability to participate in the example:
 - Member of a dominant culture <-> person with a migrant background
 - Holder of a permanent job <-> job searcher in a meritocracy
 - Diversity category gender: man <-> woman
 - Skin colour
- Further opportunities to participate: education, language skills...?
- From a contextual perspective the question would be linked to the state of intercultural competence of the organisation or its intercultural openness and policy of inclusion

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

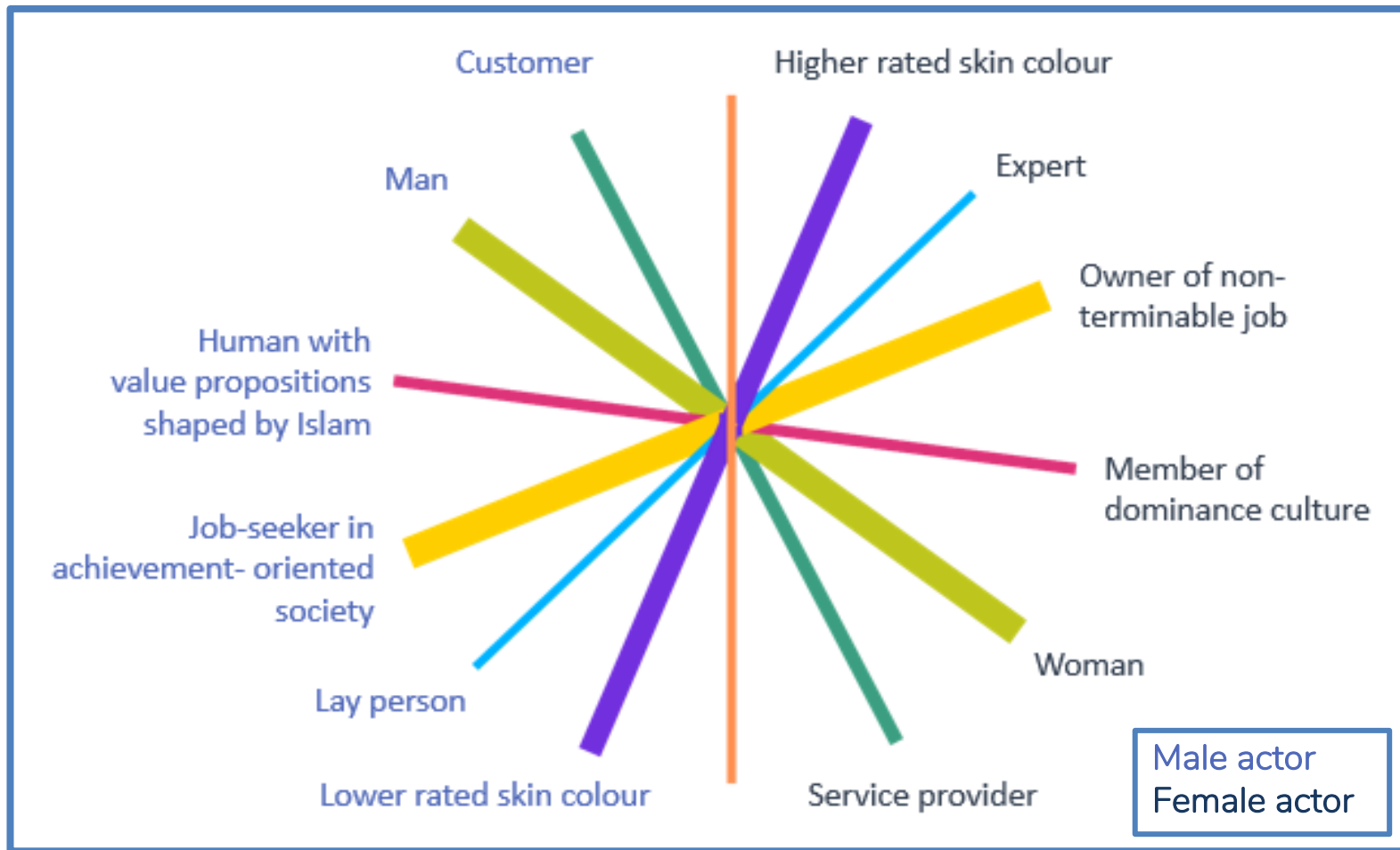
Putting things into practice

Now the different parts of the three perspectives can be fanned out
How could this look like?

- Man-woman
-

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

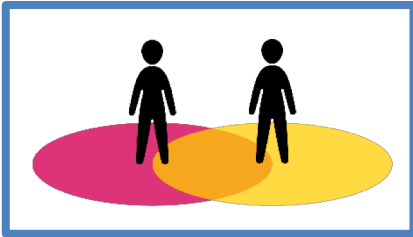
Putting things into practice



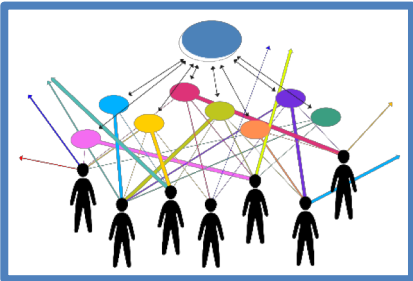
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A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Putting things into practice



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Illustrations based on Nazarkiewicz, K. 2016a and Yildirim-Kranig, Y. 2014



- Consideration of intercultural and culture-specific knowledge
- Multi-perspective solution oriented view
- Consideration of macro influence on identity factors and interactions

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Case studies



- Read the quote again. Does your answer differ now compared to the beginning of the session and if yes, how?
 - ‘...if a Chinese acquaintance is invited to a dinner party, how much of this invitee’s behaviour at that party can be attributed to the fact that he or she is Chinese, and how much to other factors, such as affiliations to a whole host of sub-cultures that could be professional, regional, gender-specific, generational, interest-group related or even a culture that simply relates to family, friends or the individual themselves?’ (Witchalls 2012, p.12; used by permission)
 - In pairs, share what you noted down as your immediate reaction and compare these with the results of the analysis based on the culture reflective approach
 - Discuss the benefits of a culture reflexive approach using the case
-

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Case studies



You are an intern in an international company and are asked to put together a portfolio for your boss who is going to Buenos Aires as he wants to meet potential new clients. You have an afternoon to accomplish this.

- What would you do and which of the three approaches would you focus on and why?
- What would be possible shortcomings and potentials of the approach chosen?

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Case studies



You have only been with the company for two years, but because of your own international experience you are asked to lead a new team which is truly international. Some of the team members are located in New York, others in London, Mumbai and Bangalore.

- What would be key aspects to consider and questions to ask when leading this team and working together? Answer this question with reference to the three perspectives of the culture-reflexive approach.

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Case studies



You are working in an office with staff from different cultural backgrounds and realise that many conflicts between them and your boss emerge due to misunderstandings.

- Applying a culture-reflexive approach what requires attention and why? What would you want to know from the staff in order to develop a common understanding?

A CULTURE REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

Case studies



You are a sales manager and need to summon one of your employees of Russian decent. You have heard that he is attracting many Russian customers to the shop who, although they have brought orders, have also caused a sustained disturbance to both employees and other customers through their appearance.

It is your job to find a solution. How would you go about this using a culture-reflexive approach?

SUMMARY AND REFLECTION

Summary

- A culture-reflexive approach has the ability to capture the complexity of culture, its multi-faceted nature and dynamics and the inclusion of important contextual aspects in the overall analysis.
- It is thus acknowledged that in intercultural encounters people meet whose behaviour is influenced by many different factors.
- Using a culture-reflexive approach is an important starting point for 'creating culture together' or in other words, developing a common basis for communication.

SUMMARY AND REFLECTION

Reflection



- What are different elements of a culture reflective approach and what could be the stumbling blocks when applying the approach in day to day interactions?
- Think about a situation you have experienced in which a culturally-reflexive approach could have helped you to develop a basis for common meaning and knowledge.
- What are the vital skills required in order to apply a culturally reflexive approach?

ASSIGNMENT



- Assignment 1:
Read the case study by Peter Witchalls 'Made in Germany (or India?)' In: *interculturejournal* 14 (24): 67-76
<http://www.interculture-journal.com/index.php/icj/article/view/243/347>
- Analyse the issues using a culture reflexive approach.

ASSIGNMENT



- Assignment 2:
Read the case study by Prof. Jasmin Mahadevan and based on a culture reflexive analysis discuss possible solutions to solve the conflict.

ASSIGNMENT



- Assignment 3:
Read the case study by Prof. Javier Montiel 'Identity in an international research centre' and carry out the tasks as outlined on the worksheet.

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