



## Inter- and transcultural skills

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## Transcultural? Intercultural? (Welsch 2012)

- Transcultural networking and hybridisation of cultures due to globalisation, communication and transport networks
- Internal heterogeneity and internal differences are often more pronounced than external differences
- Internal transculturality facilitates the handling of external transculturality
- Interculturality focuses the communication/interaction and reciprocal exchange between different cultures and social groups
- Transculturality is based on a hybrid understanding of cultural identities, while interculturality is based on an understanding of diversity from exchange between different cultures
- Current shift from "intercultural" to "transcultural"

## Problems of intercultural encounters

When we meet a stranger, we use our "knowledge repertoire" for an initial assessment. In doing so, we often draw conclusions about characteristics of our counterpart that are not directly accessible, without being aware of them.



*"Perceptions become problematic because they are (mis)interpreted against the background of one's own language and culture and in particular negative interpretations are attributed to the foreign communication partner."*

*(Knapp, 1992, p.73)*

## Between understanding and confrontation

- *“Understanding between people from different cultures is only one variant of the general problem of understanding.”* (Wahrlich, 1991, p.25)

It is not the confrontation of people with different cultures that is the problem in itself, but the conditions under which migration takes place. Immigrants usually have low social status and few rights, which, together with a hostile host society, can lead to insults of self-confidence.

(see Kalpaka/Räthzel 1990)



## Intersectionality

- Multidimensional joins and overlays of differential orders and inequality dimensions





## Trans-/ intercultural skills

- Background knowledge regarding cultural differences as well as hybridization and internal heterogeneity of cultural contexts
- Curiosity, openness and interest in engage with other cultures, people and nations, flexibility
- Reflection of one's own cultural background
- Awareness of power asymmetries
- Empathy, the ability to put one another, and the recognition and correct interpretation of the feelings and needs of others
- Self-confidence, knowledge of one's own strengths, weaknesses and needs, emotional stability critical handling and reflection of one's own prejudices/stereotypes
- Appreciation of diversity, acceptance and respect
- Ambiguity tolerance, ability to deal with ambiguous situations



Rassismus + Dominanz

Ethnozentrisimus  
"Bei uns .....

Stereotype +  
Vorurteile

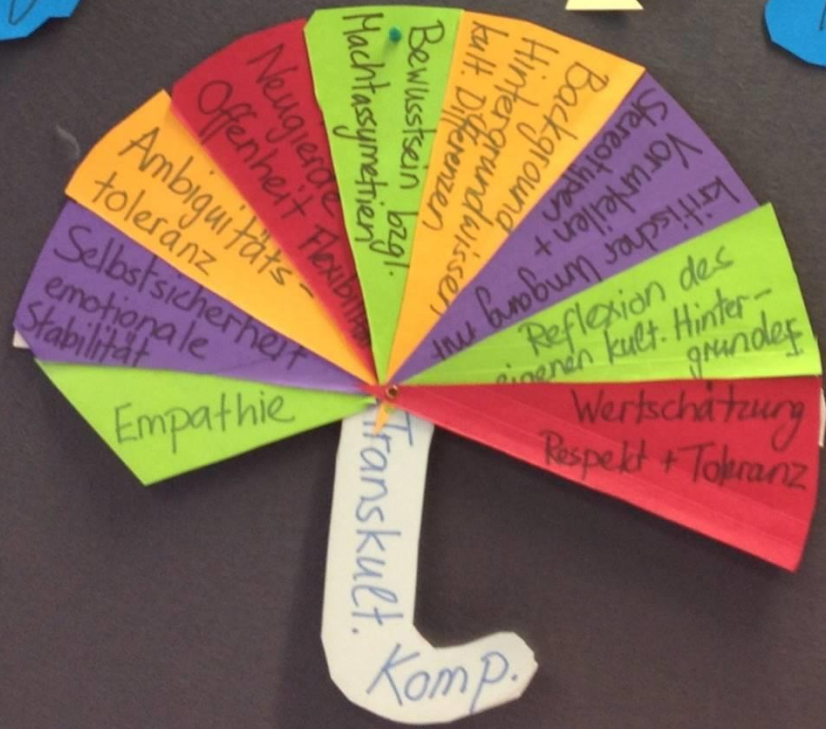
Kulturalisierungen

Fehlender Kontakt  
Distanz  
Verunsicherung

Angst  
Hass

Wir/Ihr -  
Denken  
\*\*\*

Monismus



# Ethnocentrism

**Definition:** The belief that one's own culture is superior to all others.  
View world from their own cultural viewpoint.



Grades of ethnocentrism:

- 1) Positive: you prefer your own culture over all others.
- 2) Negative: you believe your own culture is in the center of everything.
- 3) Extreme negative: you believe the values and norms of your own culture as most powerful and should be adopted by other cultures.



## Paternalism

Other lifestyles and behaviours can be unsettling for the host society, as they show them that it can be lived differently.

*"It is paternalistic and colonizing to prescribe the path of emancipation to immigrants, even if the prescribed goal is their emancipation. Submission to the emancipation of others remains submission."*

*(Kalpaka/Räthzel 1990:80)*



## The content of culture

*“I call culture the stock of knowledge from which the communication participants, by communicating about something in a world, provide themselves with interpretations.”*  
(Habermas, 1988, p.203)

- Language (verbal and non-verbal)
- Knowledge (everyday knowledge as traffic rules and social representations)
- Values and rules
- Symbols, rituals



## Culture – a complex concept



Collectives and their culture are heterogeneous and unlimited in themselves, because their members can also move in other collectives. As a result of the internal differentiation of a collective, the homogeneity and coherence of a culture is always only relative. People of the same collective can differ profoundly in their views in our pluriform societies (Hoffman 2015).

## Cultural scripts



- Intercultural irritations in intercultural encounters indicate that one's own value systems (norms, values, principles, etc.) have been violated. Therefore, the analysis of our cultural multiple affiliations is a helpful tool (speaks: to which cultural circles do I belong and what values do I stand for?) in order to become aware of one's own cultural standards or one's own cultural self-evidentness ("cultural scripts").
- Intercultural irritations are expressed through emotions such as anger, disappointment and fear, which can arise when looking at "foreign behavior". In addition to such negative conditions, there are of course also "positive irritations" that are constructive or based on stigmatization or culturalizations.



## The risk of cultural concepts (Hoffman 2015)

- Culturalization is the practice of understanding "culture" as an essential, central and determinant explanation for (individual) actions, attitudes, behaviors, conflicts or expressions.
- Cultural concepts are based on nations, ethnic origin, homogeneity coherences and static → **risk of essentialism**
- Geert Hofstede (2007) promotes cultural dimensions of collectivity-individualism, acceptance of power gap, uncertainty avoidance → **risk of determinism and reductionism**
- Differences in mentality are used as an explanation of behavior.



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