
Researching Interculturality and Intercultural Communication

An Overview

Check-In: Choose a picture for your background that describes best your actual state of mind!



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JENA Interkulturelle Wirtschaftskommunikation

Agenda

1. Interculturality and Intercultural Communication
2. Research Paradigms in Interculturality and Intercultural Communication
3. Methodological Approaches

Prof. Dr. Christoph Vatter ₂

Interculturality and Intercultural Communication



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Interculturality and Intercultural Communication – four major fields of research in cultural studies

- **Cross-cultural (comparative) studies**
- Intercultural interactions
- Cultural transfers
- Intercultural perceptions of otherness (othering / stereotypes...)

Vatter 2003, 2004

Comparing Cultures

Culture may also be presented as a normal distribution curve (bell curve).

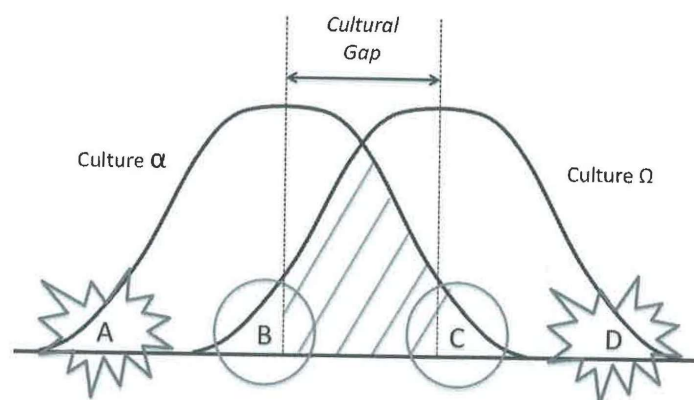


Fig. 1.7 – Culture as a normal distribution curve

Edward T. Hall (1945-1960), Pioneer of ICC Research



Space: proxemics (distance and space) and physical contact



Time: monochronic and polychronic understanding of time

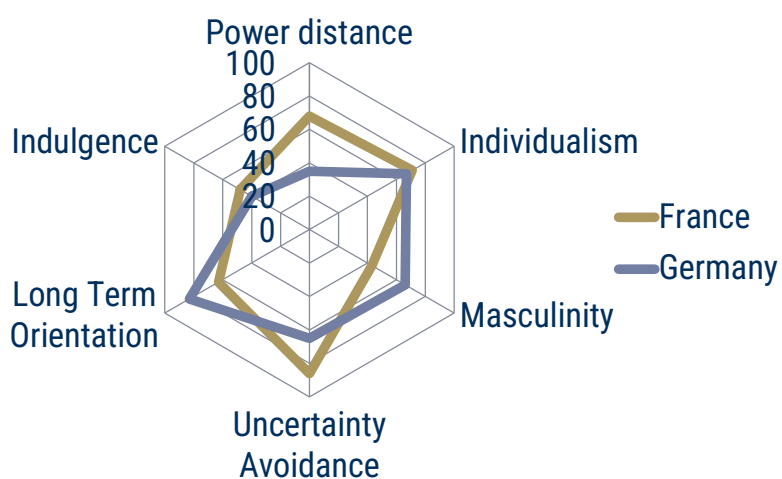


Context: explicit-direct and implicit-indirect communication



Photo courtesy of Kathryn Sorrells, 1998

Kulturprofile von Deutschland und Frankreich (nach Geert Hofstede)



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Cross-cultural vs. Intercultural approaches: B. Müller-Jacquier: *Linguistic Awareness of Cultures (LAC)*

- Criticism of „psychologization“ of cultural differences, especially in the (ab)use of cultural dimensions
- Inappropriate transfer of one's own cultural rules of communication to intercultural interaction and contexts
- How do cultural dimensions express themselves concretely in intercultural communication?
- Different rules of communication are seen as foreign activity and value orientation
- „discursive interculture“ as product of reciprocal processes of impact and adjustment performances

Cross-cultural and intercultural management

Cultural-comparative international management	Intercultural international management
Structure-oriented	Process-oriented
Synthesis / „best of both“	Synergy / „best of process“
Consensus, homogeneity	Diversity, cohesion
Controllable	Can be moderated

LAC Criteria

1. Social Meaning/Lexicon
2. Speech Acts/Speech Act Sequences
3. Organisation of Conversation/Conventions of Discourse
4. Choice of Topic
5. Directness/Indirectness
6. Register
7. Paraverbal Factors
8. Non-verbal Means of Expression
9. Culture-specific Values/Attitudes
10. Culture-specific Behavior (including rituals) and Behavior Sequences

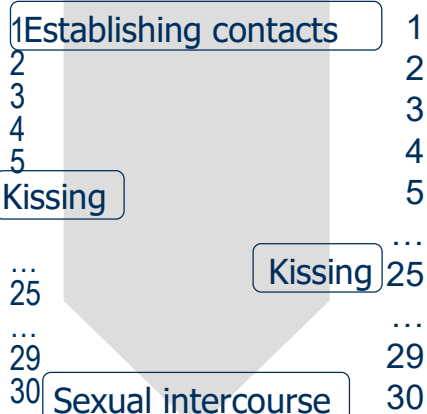
10.: Culture-specific Behavior

Behavior considered as being „german“	Avoided behavior considered as being german
Body and sounds: ▪ „germanic laryngeal sigh“ ▪ Blowing one's nose loudly	Conviviality and public sphere: ▪ Singing together in a group ▪ in a foreign country, showing to other Germans that you're German ▪ Talking to people in close proximity also without a reason (in the bus, in a café...) ▪ displaying strong emotions
Food and public sphere: ▪ „trading up“ of restaurant bills in public ▪ Eating on the street while walking	
	Work and leisure time: ▪ Working „in public“ at certain times (washing the car on sundays)

Stages of a relationship

Problems between American soldiers stationed in England while World War II and their British girlfriends...

USA Great Britain



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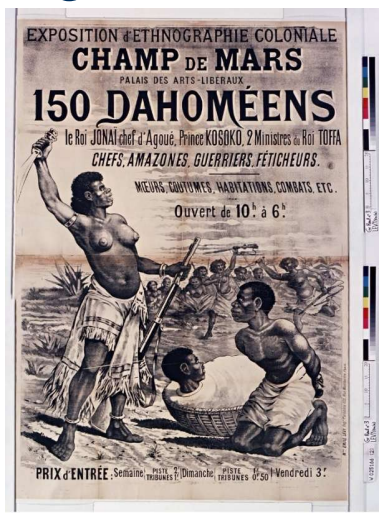
Vatter 2003, 2004

(Inter-)cultural Transfers

Transmission, mediation and reception of cultural artifacts (objects, discourses, practices, institutions) in other cultural spaces

Major researchers: Michel Espagne / Michael Werner; Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink; Matthias Middell

E.g. colonial exhibitions



Jardin d'acclimatation de Paris (1850; expositions de „Nubiens, Achantis, Hottentots, Somalis, Dahoméens » (1877-91))
L'Exposition coloniale de 1931

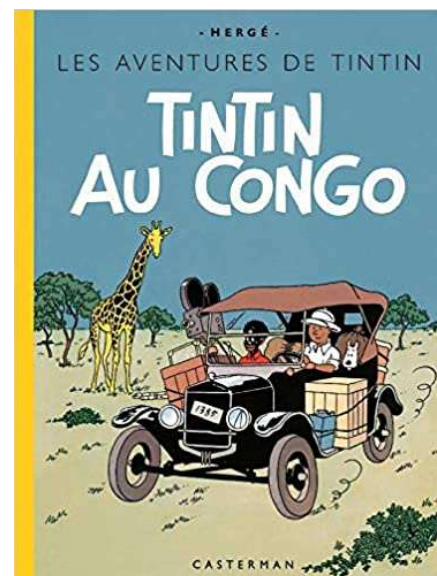


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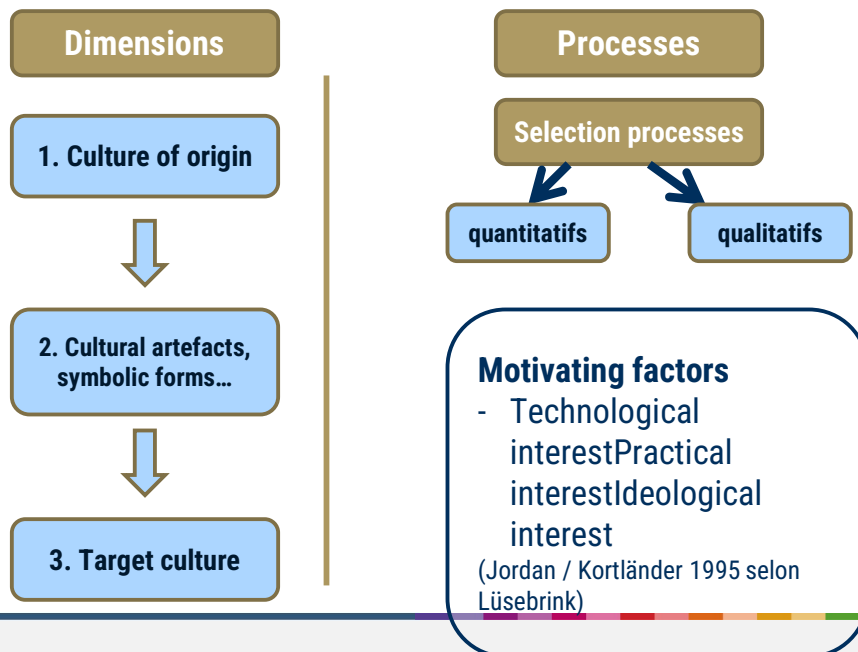
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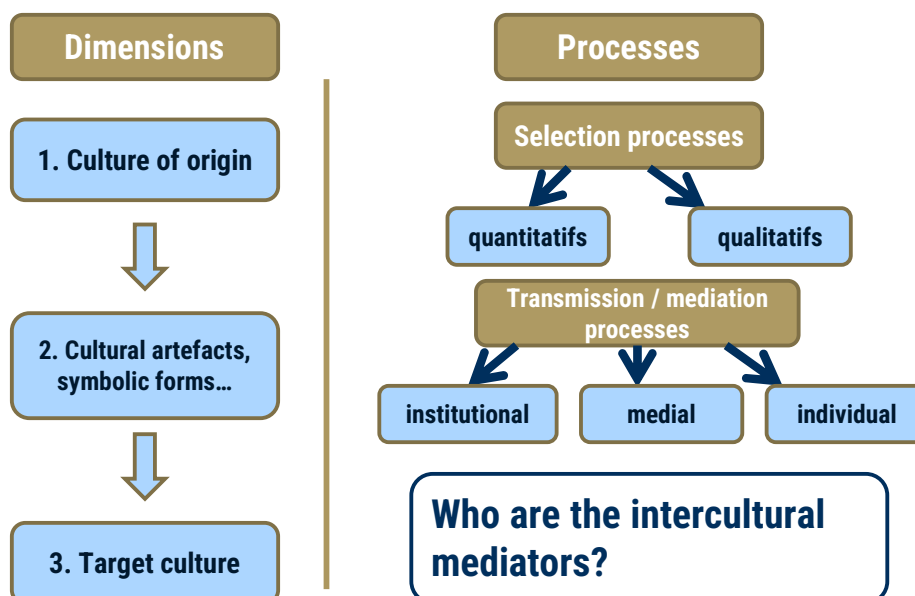




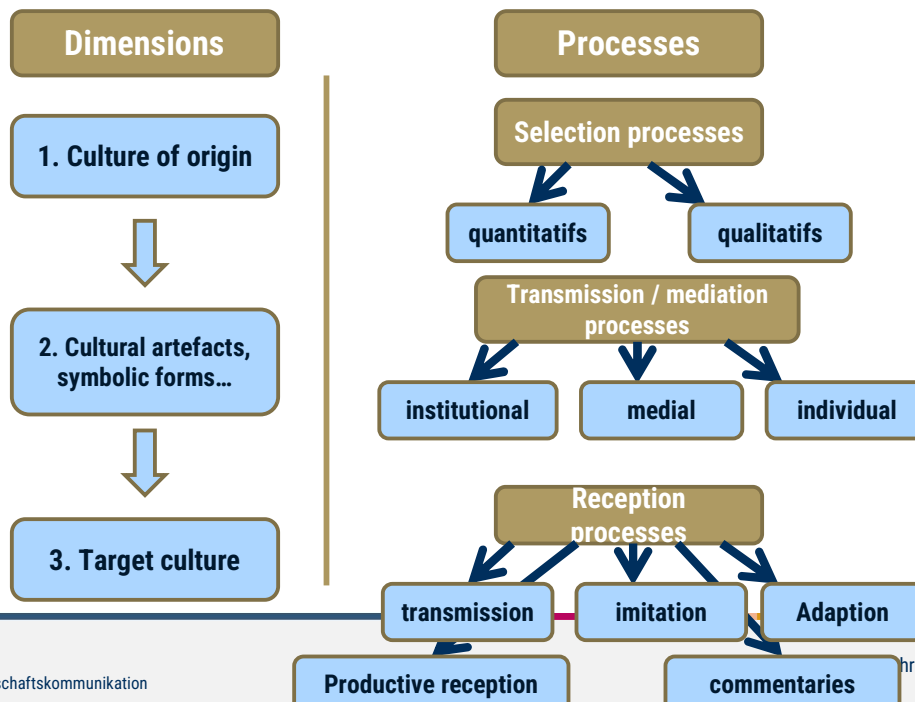
Cultural Transfers



Cultural Transfers



Cultural Transfers



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Processus de réception

Typologie	Exemples
Transmission	Series like <i>Game of Thrones</i> (in original version)
Imitation	Italo-Western
Cultural adaptation	Translations of books, commercials...
Commentaries	Pedagogical materials for language and intercultural learning, book reviews, film reviews...
Productive reception / Cultural appropriation	Bollywood (< Adaptations of occidental formats); <i>Heidi</i>

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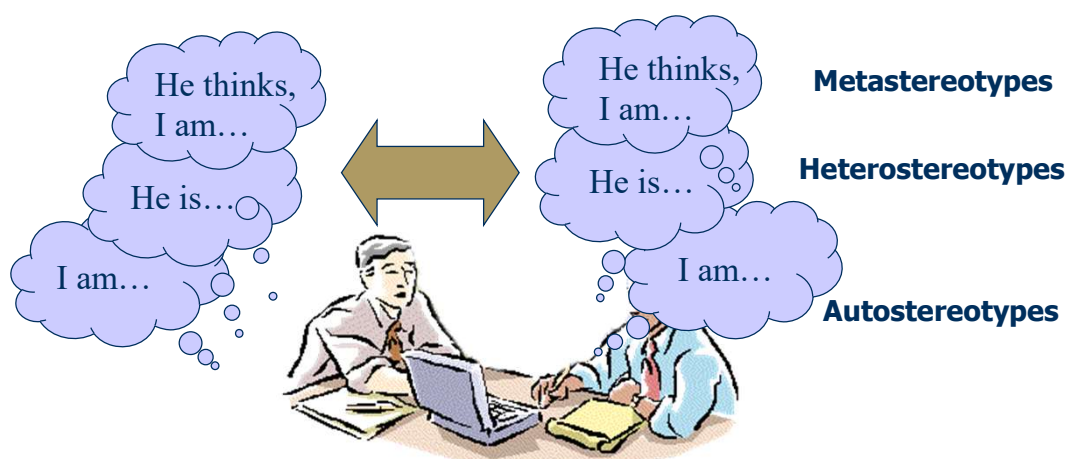
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Stereotypes in intercultural interactions



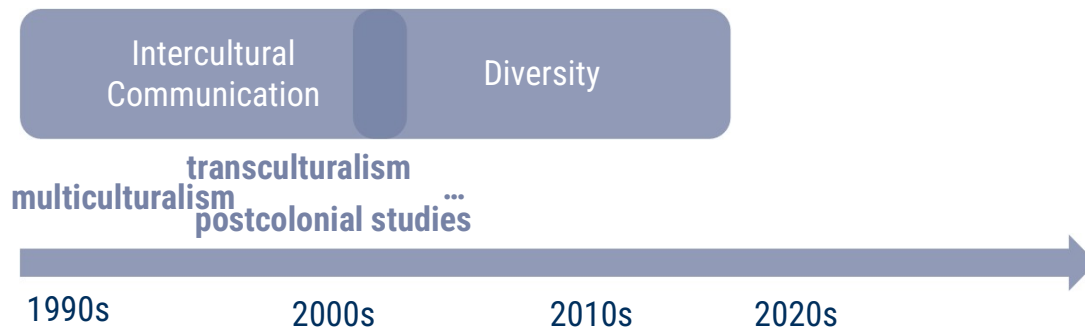
Beyond cultural studies...

- Cross-cultural psychology
- International Organizational Behavior
- Team Science
- International Management
- ...

From Intercultural Communication to Diversity ... and beyond?



From Intercultural Communication to Diversity ... and beyond?



Diversity

- Context: anti-diskrimination, „affirmative action“ (USA)
- Culture as one element in the complex and diverse mix of qualities that characterize a person
- Attempt to eliminate the „normal perspective“
- Example: Diversity Management

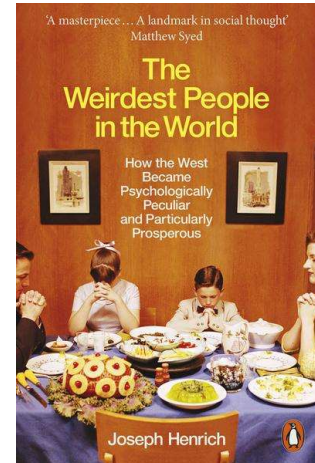
Core dimensions of DiM:

- Gender (sex)
- race/ethnicity/origin
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Physical abilities
- Religion

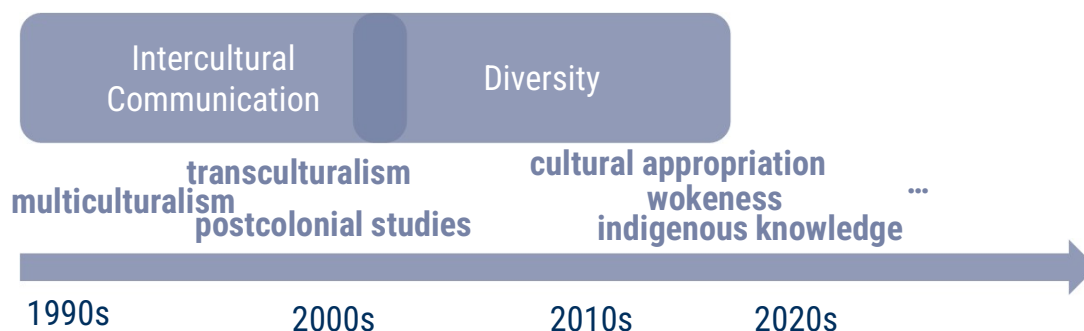
Questioning the „WEIRD“-Perspective

- WEIRD = **W**estern, **E**ducated, **I**ndustrialized, **R**ich, **D**emocratic
- Dominant group of participants in empirical research
- WEIRDs have determined basic assumptions about human behavior and psychology
- WEIRD = an often hidden „normal perspective“

- Thinking about cultural WEIRD) assumptions about culture and (intercultural) communication
- How does a change of perspectives change the understanding of ourselves (individually / group)?



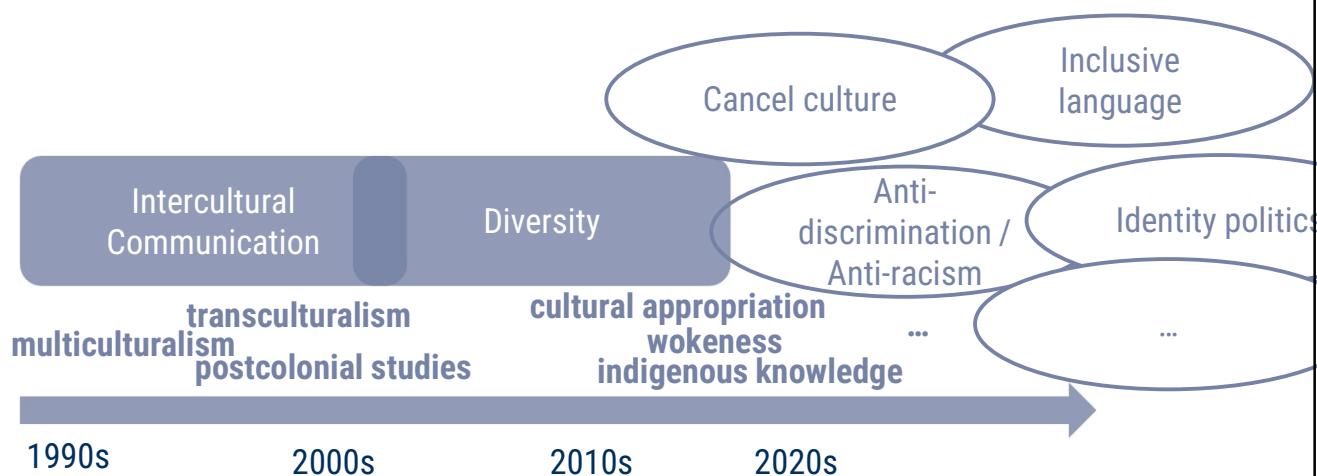
From Intercultural Communication to Diversity ... and beyond?



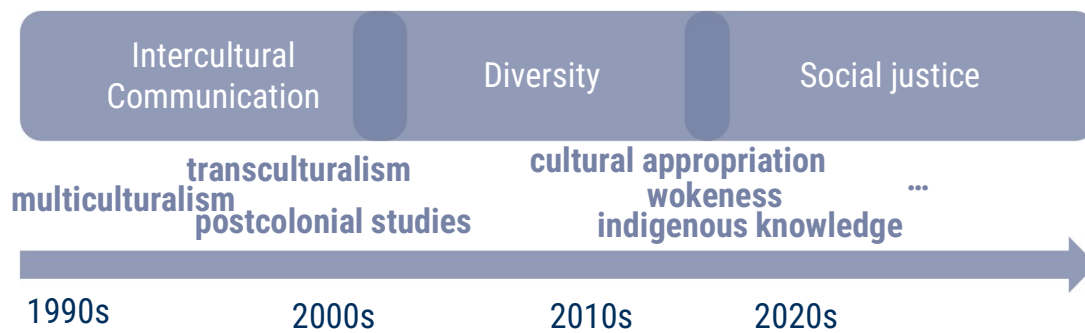
Going beyond traditional intercultural approaches

- „lebensweltliche natio-ethno-kulturelle Mehrfachzugehörigkeit [stellt] eine immer bedeutender werdende gesellschaftliche Realität dar“ (Mecheril 2011:49)
- „Interculturality 2.0“ (Stemmler 2011), „Hyperculturality“ (Han 2005), „Super Diversity“ (Vertovec 2007), „(Re-)Thinking (Inter-)Culturality“ (interculture journal 2016)
- Postcolonial and power sensitiv approaches, e.g. anti-racism, anti-discrimination, „critical whiteness“

From Intercultural Communication to Diversity ... and beyond?



From Intercultural Communication to Diversity ... and beyond?



Interculturality and Intercultural Communication as...

- ... an object of research.
- ... a perspective.

Herméneutique croisée – a useful concept in the EC2U-context



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Overview

TABLE 1
Prototypical Discursive Features of the Four Paradigms

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Positivist</i>	<i>Interpretivist</i>	<i>Postmodern</i>	<i>Critical</i>
Basic Goals	Law-like relationships among objects	Display regularities and shared meanings	Reclaim conflict	Unmask domination
Method	Nomothetic	Hermeneutics	Deconstruction, genealogy	Ideology critique
Problem Addressed	Inefficiency, disorder	Meaninglessness, illegitimacy	Marginalization	Domination, consent
Concern with Communication	Fidelity, influence	Group affirmation	Discursive closure	Misrecognition, distortion
Mood	Optimistic	Friendly	Playful	Suspicious
Social Fear	Disorder	Depersonalization	Totalization	Authority

Extracts from Deetz (1996, 199).

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Paradigm approach

Positivism	Interpretative Approaches	Postmodern Approaches	Critical Approaches
„Works in the positivist paradigm aim to explain intercultural situations pragmatically. They identify the effects of national cultures on management as a central problem. This problem is usually investigated using methods from quantitative research, such as questionnaires.“	„Works in the interpretative paradigm, on the other hand, aims to facilitate intercultural interactions. To this end, the focus is on identifying cultural meanings in work contexts. Qualitative methods, such as ethnography, serve as instruments for research.“	„Works in the postmodern paradigm highlight cultural diversity, point to constructions of culture in management and mostly make use of narrative research methods, as well as discourse analysis and deconstruction.“	„Works in the critical paradigm aim to unmask dominance under the guise of "culture" and problematize the reproduction of power inequalities through cultural differences. Research methods include critical discourse analysis and critical ethnography.“

Barmeyer/Großkopf 2023, 73; Romani 2018
Translation: CV

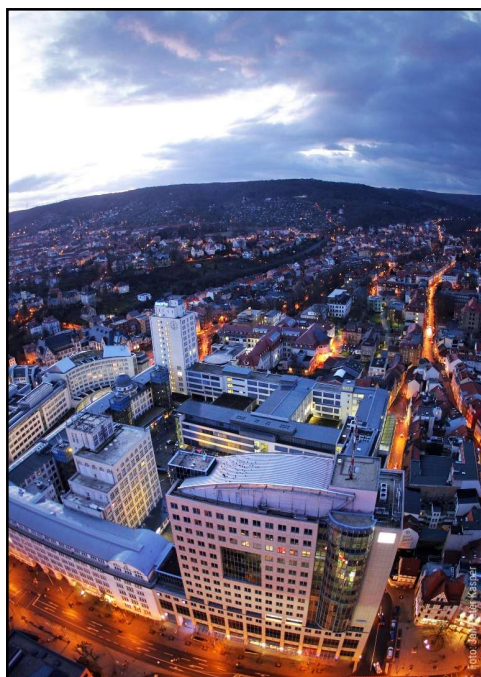
What different research and practical perspectives result from the respective approaches?

Find an example for each of the four approaches - e.g. with regard to a possible topic for an MA thesis!

What can the different paradigms achieve?

TABLE 2
Four Paradigms in Cross-Cultural Management

	<i>Positivist</i>	<i>Interpretive</i>	<i>Postmodern</i>	<i>Critical</i>
Agenda	Efficiency of cross-cultural situations	Ease of intercultural interactions and misunderstandings	Assertion of the multiplicity and flexibility of culture	Unmask domination done under the cover of 'culture'
Typical Concern	Impact of national culture on management practices	Identification of cultural meanings used at work	Discursive or narrative constructions of culture in management practices	(re)production of power inequalities with the use of "cultural differences" in management
Distinctive Investigation Method	Large-scale quantitative studies and questionnaires	In-depth qualitative method, ethnography, and idiographic studies	Narrative, discourse analysis, genealogy, and deconstruction	Critical discourse analysis and critical ethnography
Distinctive Contributions to CCM	Setting the agenda of culture in management, measurability and comparability of cultures, impact on management	Emic and local knowledge, context-rich understanding of interactions	Cultural dimension frameworks and cultural differences as narrative construction, performativity of language	Hidden power structures at play in our approach to culture and cultural differences



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Methodological Approaches in Intercultural Research: Main characteristics

	Ontology	Epistemology	Axiology
Social scientific approaches	World that can be studied systematically	Objects exist independently from the observer, quantitative methods	Finding the truth, accordance between studied phenomena and theoretical concept; best control of variables possible
Interpretive approaches	Observer and observed co-create meaning	Interest in situational and contextual meaning, multiple truths, qualitative methods	How do actors interpret the studied phenomena? Constant re-interpretation
Critical approaches	Power differences at the base of social transactions	Social/positional power determines what is considered knowledge	How do actors interpret the studied phenomena? reducing class imbalances and other forms of oppression

Oetzel, Pant, Rao 2016

Methodological Approaches in Intercultural Research: Methods

Approaches	Social scientific	Interpretive	Critical
Methods (examples)	Survey questionnaire, experimental design, content analysis	Ethnography of communication, Interviews, text analysis, close reading...	Postcolonial ethnography, Critical discourse analysis

What could be possible topics or contributions from your disciplinary perspectives (mainly humanities / language and literature)?

Oetzel, Pant, Rao 2016

Check-out

What's your main take-away from this session?



—
Vielen Dank
für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit!

