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DISSERTATION

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Contributions from Diversity
Objectives and realities in a large international
project

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Abstract - English

This study explores the contributions from diversity to a large and complex management development project in the Egyptian telecommunication industry. At the same time it makes manifest how diversity in the form of different disciplines can contribute to others, in this case the fields of cultural anthropology and business.

Specifically, the research concentrates on the interaction of three stakeholder groups involved in this project, which are the interaction among project team members, the interaction between team members and programme participants and finally, the interaction with individuals external to the project.

The contribution this study makes to knowledge lies in the gap between the actual project objective, namely growing the business across the globe, which largely ignored any aspect of diversity, and the process of achieving this result, that is, the presence of diversity as elicited in interactions, which were one of the key contributors for the success of the project.

The methodology comprises a 2-step process, which is a) mainly a qualitative but also quantitative data analysis which included identifying patterns, coding meaningful repetitions, and labelling significant iterations. Completing this process several times led to the development of the new framework 'Three lenses of diversity', which consists of the lens of multiple identity; the lens of perception; and the environmental lens; and b) the application of the framework onto the interaction of the three stakeholder groups, captured in thick descriptions in order to identify the contributions from diversity. Findings are that diversity is not just there; it is a process, which is created from interaction. Diversity is generated from the dialogical relationship of multiple affiliations with belonging and othering under the influences from the external environment, and can so shape the success or failure in building relationship on complex projects.

Abstract - Deutsch

Diese Studie untersucht die 'Contributions from diversity' in einem Grossprojekt im Fachbereich Management development in der ägyptischen Telekommunikationsindustrie.

Gleichzeitig manifestiert die Arbeit, wie Diversität einen Beitrag zu anderen Disziplinen trägt, in diesem Fall die Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie zu Wirtschaft.

Besonderer Augenmerk liegt auf der Interaktion dreier Gruppen, nämlich die Interaktion unter den Projektmitgliedern, die Interaktion zwischen den Projektmitgliedern und den Teilnehmern des Telekommunikationsunternehmens, und die Interaktion mit Individuen, die nur peripher am Projekt beteiligt waren.

Die wissenschaftliche Leistung ist in der Widersprüchlichkeit zwischen dem eigentlichen Projektziel begründet, dem Unternehmenswachstum, welches jeden Anspruch an Diversität ignoriert und dem Prozess dieses Ziel zu erreichen, die aus den Interaktionen gewachsene Diversität, welche letztendlich wesentlich zum Projekterfolg beitrug.

Methodisch präsentiert die Arbeit einen 2-stufigen Prozess: a) die hauptsächlich qualitative teils auch quantitative Datenanalyse beinhaltet das Identifizieren von Mustern, Kodieren von bedeutungstragenden Wiederholungen, sowie die Benennung signifikanter Iterationen. Das Ergebnis der mehrfachen Wiederholung dieses Prozesses führte zur Entwicklung des Modells 'The three lenses of diversity', bestehend aus der 'Lens of multiple identity', der 'Lens of perception', und der 'Environmental lens'; b) die Anwendung dieses Modells, The three lenses of diversity auf die in dichter Beschreibung präsentierten Interaktionen der genannten drei Gruppen, um die 'Contributions from diversity' zu analysieren. Die Ergebnisse der Arbeit sind: Diversität existiert nicht per se, sie ist ein in einer Interaktion entstehender Prozess. Diversität entsteht aus der dialogischen Beziehung von 'multiple affiliations' mit 'belonging' und 'othering', welche wiederum unter der Auswirkung externer Einflüsse steht. Dieser Prozess entscheidet über Erfolg oder Misserfolg im Beziehungsaufbau im Rahmen von internationalen Grossprojekten.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. <i>Introduction</i>	11
1.1. Why this topic?.....	11
1.1.1. Globalisation and diversity	12
1.1.2. Hybrid of two worlds	15
1.1.3. The emergence of business anthropology	19
1.2. What 'culture' is in it.....	25
1.2.1. So what is culture then	26
1.2.2. Concepts of diversity	30
1.2.2.1. The business perspective.....	30
1.2.2.2. The anthropological perspective	32
1.2.2.3. 'The other'	36
1.3. The research framework.....	40
1.3.1. Introduction to the three lenses	40
1.3.2. The framework.....	41
1.3.2.1. The lens of multiple identity	41
1.3.2.2. The lens of perception	42
1.3.2.3. The environmental lens	44
1.4. Data and Methodology	45
1.4.1. Project overview	46
1.4.2. Methodology	48
2. <i>Identity constructions</i>	53
2.1. Introduction	53
2.2. Constructing identities	59
2.2.1. Where are the boxes?	59
2.2.2. Check-in.....	62
2.2.3. "Ana min nimsa".....	63
2.2.4. Pens.....	65
2.2.5. They are Muslims!	66
2.2.6. The family name	69
2.3. Discussion.....	71

2.4.	Conclusion	77
2.4.1.	Re-modelling existing mindsets.....	79
3.	<i>The multiple time and space factor</i>	83
3.1.	Introduction	83
3.2.	The manifestations of multiple time and space.....	85
3.2.1.	Spaces	86
3.2.2.	Getting there	88
3.2.3.	Dhuhr wa 'asr.....	93
3.2.4.	The time – space compression	96
3.3.	Discussion.....	103
3.4.	Conclusion	107
4.	<i>Calling the West</i>	109
4.1.	Introduction	109
4.2.	The approaches	110
4.2.1.	The photo gallery approach.....	110
4.2.2.	The model approach.....	114
4.2.3.	Case study and role-playing	117
4.2.4.	The business simulation	119
4.2.5.	The market place	121
4.3.	The packaging of the learning	123
4.3.1.	The materials	123
4.3.2.	Dress and appearance	125
4.3.3.	The implications of space on learning	127
4.4.	Discussion.....	129
4.5.	Conclusion and implications	135
5.	<i>From conflict to diversity</i>	139
5.1.	Introduction	139
5.2.	Intercultural issues.....	140
5.2.1.	The development of the industry	141
5.2.2.	The prominent solution	148

5.3.	The Live cases.....	152
5.3.1.	The exclamation marks	152
5.3.2.	Using the Cairo metro.....	154
5.3.3.	The absent photograph	155
5.3.4.	The Mobile phone	157
5.3.5.	Touch behaviour	158
5.4.	Discussion.....	159
5.5.	Conclusion and implications	165
6.	<i>The value debate</i>	169
6.1.	Introduction	169
6.2.	Core and context of the cooperation	170
6.2.1.	Values in organisations	170
6.2.2.	The business school development	174
6.2.3.	The two countries' common past.....	177
6.3.	The expression of values.....	180
6.3.1.	The value-based organisation	180
6.3.2.	The guide to performance drivers	182
6.3.3.	Personal performance drivers	184
6.3.1.	Overt display of values	185
6.3.2.	Covert display of values	186
6.4.	Discussion.....	188
6.5.	Conclusion	194
7.	<i>Conclusion</i>	199
7.1.	Introduction	199
7.2.	Findings from the application of the framework	199
7.2.1.	The lens of multiple identity	201
7.2.2.	The lens of perception	203
7.2.3.	The environmental lens	205
7.3.	Implications from findings	207
7.4.	Contributions from anthropology	210
7.4.1.	The new thought landscape	210

7.4.2.	Holistic view of culture in organisations	211
7.4.3.	Depth of findings	212
7.5.	Limitations and future research	213
7.6.	Anthropologists in organisations	214
8.	<i>Bibliography</i>	219
9.	<i>Appendix</i>	229
10.	<i>Curriculum Vitae</i>	235

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	Programme architecture with Large Group Events	47
Figure 2:	Research approach	49
Figure 3:	Multiple identities in encounters	80
Figure 4:	Traffic sign: Drive slowly	90
Figure 5:	The three lenses of diversity	200
Figure 6:	Additions to multiple identities in encounters	203

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. WHY THIS TOPIC?

The topic—contributions from diversity—has developed over the course of working on a large and complex project in the expert area of change management in the telecommunication industry in Egypt and the subsequent analysis and reflection upon it. The company is one of the world's leading mobile telecommunication organisations with a significant worldwide presence. Its headquarters are located in England. The company called for a worldwide development programme enabling employees to develop skills enabling them to grow the business across the globe. Local subsidiaries were in charge of the method and roll-out of this development programme. The Egyptian subsidiary located in Cairo selected a British business school as learning partner for this programme¹.

There are two larger topic areas inherent in the above short introductory description, which are a) globalisation and b) diversity. The earlier will be covered only briefly as numerous publications already fill libraries and bookstores. Nevertheless, it is essential to provide the reader with the necessary insights about the angle of globalisation, upon which this piece of research is based.

The other large topic area is diversity, about which fewer publications have made it to the market. Nevertheless, as diversity was one of the prime aspects of the project described above, contributing significantly to its success, it is necessary to examine the ways in which diversity delivered this contribution. This is particularly important in light of the fact that the decision-makers of the project never inquired into any aspects of diversity, far more were oblivious of them.

This introduction will provide a brief overview of the understanding of globalisation in which this piece of research is embedded. The business environment of the project and the hybrid role of the researcher (hybridity itself being a form of diversity) necessitates

¹ Detailed information regarding the programme follows in the section 1.3 Data and methodology.

a look into the key area of business anthropology including the understanding of culture relevant for this research. Having set the scene I will elaborate on the key concepts of diversity. This section will close with the framework for diagnosing diversity I have specifically developed for this study. Finally, I provide an overview of the data and material upon which this research is based followed by the applied methodology.

Ideally, anthropologists and business people alike will be able to use the frameworks and information from this one project to tap into the potential contributions from diversity in their own work.

1.1.1. GLOBALISATION AND DIVERSITY

Routinely observers of economic mechanisms give us the impression that the world is growing smaller. Indeed, we experience our lives in the global village by the people we meet and work with, the products we buy, the foods we eat, and the movies we watch. This development often leaves researchers and practitioners to claim that the world has dramatically changed towards homogenising systems and cultures. Marshal McLuhan's 'Global Village', the term Americanisation or McDonaldisation are but a few common notions supporting this perception².

However, cultural anthropology claims the reverse as expressed for example, by Dahlen:

“I would suggest that the treatment of culture in social and cultural anthropology, in cultural studies and in the intercultural field reflects different responses to that globalisation which is now commonly said to have compressed the world into a single space, in which people from different parts of the world have come into closer contact with each other than ever before. This process has generated a broad debate over whether globalisation will give rise to cultural heterogenisation or homogenisation.....³”

Recently, attentive followers of the volumes numerous published on globalisation will have observed a new trend in the globalisation debate; that is a more differentiated

² Appadurai 1996:29

³ Dahlen 1997:22

view about the broad debate. Rather than dividing globalisation into homogenisation as opposed to heterogenisation it divides into a) economic forces, that is the intensified exchange and competition justified by competitive pressures⁴ as opposed to b) multi-faceted processes whose essence extends beyond the economic rationale broadly incorporating the cultural and political processes⁵. Both seem inextricably linked to one another, however show little connection in literature. In fact, the division is treated as two separate subject matters all together, one largely ignoring the other. As illustrated shortly, the anthropological discipline seems to present yet another perspective, that it provides a more differentiated view on aspects of cultural heterogenisation nowadays tightly embedded in the products of globalisation.

This short exploration is essential to bring to light the position of this research project. This piece of research is one product of globalisation, as without the streamlined forms of today's organisations it would have never transpired. Yet within this homogenisation, working across national and organisational boundaries requires variety in approaches in achieving the goals of such a project. This is where diversity comes into play.

Hence, my thesis largely focuses on the social qualities in both the project itself as well as the inextricably linked bigger environment at large, that is, globalisation. By adopting an exploratory and qualitative approach, research will use a broad spectrum of data from this large and complex project in the telecoms sector. As diversity is inherent to this project, research results will demonstrate the contributions from diversity when undertaking work in a global context. Equally, it is essential to inquire into the aspects, that either foster or inhibit diversity. Much has been written about the value that diversity adds to global business. However, in this research, a newly defined framework is applied to one specific project. Ultimately, the broader application from these findings will be considered in the conclusion of the work.

This piece of research is specifically and purposely bound to the study of one specific project providing greatest possible accuracy of processing data gathered in the tradition of participant observation. This project is one representative work example of an anthropologist turned business consultant, namely myself, working globally on large

⁴ Drori, Meyer, Hwang 2006:8

⁵ Drori, Meyer, Hwang 2006:11

and complex management development and/or change projects⁶. It mirrors my long-term professional experience in working in a global context. Equally, it portrays my personal experience in living and working outside my first culture and undertaking a project in yet another, that is, Egypt.

The research will uniquely draw upon both anthropological and business management disciplines and, by this creative transdisciplinary cross-fertilization, ideally will supply new and highly relevant perspectives to either discipline. This triggers the question: Why of all disciplines mixing these two? In the business world people often do not know what anthropology is about, whilst anthropologists frequently display limited or no understanding about the business world.

Omnipresent catch phrases and key words such as 'business strategy formulation', 'anticipated change of organisational culture', or 'launch of our new product', all have one issue in common: it is people who bring these processes alive. The merging of the two is almost a logical one, as at the same time, the discipline of anthropology puts the human being into the centre of attention. Thus, the cooperation of the two must be a fruitful for identifying alternative perspectives and some new findings. In combining the two disciplines, my secondary aim is also to underline the often neglected value anthropological expertise can bring to the business field.

Because of the anticipated cross-fertilisation, this work aims to reach an academic and a business audience equally, both drawing to the valuable contributions that the discipline of cultural anthropology can offer. In particular, this addresses academics spending their time sharing knowledge from fieldwork in business consulting with students and colleagues at universities and business schools. Specifically, when addressing anthropologists, I aim to reach colleagues specialising in business anthropology and diversity issues. Similarly, it will be of interest to business consultants and decision-makers in organisations who deal with complex and diverse issues seeking some profound academic background in the area of culture and diversity studies. I do not believe the different views between these two groups generate a clash between different 'cultures', but much rather makes possible a process of creating interconnectedness coming from the perspective of different disciplines and hence creating newness.

⁶ Large usually referring to the number of individuals involved; and complex to the variety of topics and challenges included, objectives aspired, and multiple locations usually dispersed globally.

The reader group, purposely more broadly defined, is one of the microcosms of diversity, in which the reader mirrors aspects of the research, which 'hy-breeds' the connection between the global business world and the discipline of cultural anthropology at large.

Few will deny that the challenges of diversity have kept both worlds busy for quite some time, each for different reasons. Whilst anthropology took the more distant position of looking at cultural forms shaped by the flows of persons, finance, information, and ideologies the business world was pressed to stay open to diversity for reasons of competitive advantage and political correctness. Particularly in the latter, diversity has long been reduced to gender, seniority, and disability, finding expression in statements such as, 4% of our pilots are female, 6% of workforce is older than 60, 40% of our board members will have to be female⁷. These highly abridged portraits of the understanding of diversity as seen by anthropology as opposed to the understanding in the business world will be explored toward the end of this introduction.

The contribution to knowledge makes this research is twofold: a) it narrows the gap between the rather opposing views of the different disciplines; and b) it is a contribution to the region, which is underrepresented in the research tradition.

1.1.2. HYBRID OF TWO WORLDS

“Anthropologist should not study villages, but study in a village.”⁸

At this point, I take the liberty and creatively apply Geertz quotation to my hybrid position in two worlds. That is, the circumstance of being a cultural anthropologist by educational background, working in the role of business consultant in my profession. This hybrid function seems to be a unusual role given that cultural anthropologists tend

⁷ Selected examples from corporate websites

⁸ Geertz (1973) quoted in Alvesson 1993:120

to take over more of a researcher role in organisations than performing the actual business⁹.

Originally, the discipline of anthropology had a highly elitist touch, a discipline producing professionals grounded in the traditions and practices of Western middle-class academics¹⁰, usually holding a graduate or post-graduate degree. Their next-to-exclusive interest was vested in exotic 'others' aimed at the consumption by like-minded Western middle-class colleagues¹¹.

When I started studying cultural anthropology at the University of Vienna in the early 90s, this subject allowed and required students to engage with the traditional topics such as exotic continents and people. My original intention was to conduct field work, which for different reasons then did not materialise. Given the necessity of making a living and simultaneously financing studies I had the opportunity to look into various organisations in different roles in typically senior positions, although young in terms of age. In the role of footloose organisational visitor and boundary-crosser, I became increasingly preoccupied with the idea of 'how we do things around things around here', namely within a respective organisation. The integration of business consultancy expertise and anthropological knowledge has since then strongly focused on how people make sense of cultural idiosyncrasies impacting them, irrespective to what extent recipients have a notion of the process itself or a vocabulary for the same.

The endeavour of reconciling the dilemma between acquired business expertise and the then more traditionally oriented academic background led me to conduct a cross-disciplinary study (completed in 1997) in the largest Vienna hospitals exploring effects of intercultural communication among nurses. A certainly ground-breaking study at the Department of Cultural Anthropology.

Shortly before graduation I took the chance to spend a few summer months in Cairo for some more in-depth language acquisition and to gain some inside-out expertise in my regional specialisation, Islamic studies. When I first went back after quite some years in order to liaise with the client, it felt like returning to a place of great familiarity.

⁹ Baba 2001; Czarniawska 2004

¹⁰ Shore in Shore and Nugent 2002:4

¹¹ Shore in Shore and Nugent 2002:4

Overall, my leadership is in being a humanist in the business world. This comprises the cross-fertilisation among disciplines, accommodating those I have to come to master over the years, i. e. cultural anthropology, business disciplines such as strategy and finance, project management and IT, as well as consulting skills, of which all are reflected to a lesser or greater extent in this paper. In the context of the project, my leadership is reflected in the fact of a large and complex team following me to a place unknown to many of them at a time of great political uncertainty in the immediate neighbourhood in Lebanon. The latter requires a hands-on application of acquired skills and knowledge from listed disciplines, and nonetheless a great deal of emotional intelligence.¹²

The merging of the two disciplines is mirrored in the double role of business consultant and researcher in an organisational setting, which features equally advantages and disadvantages. Advantages are a) the possibility of participant observation over the entire period of the project; b) very good access to informants due to direct and continuous interaction with participants and stakeholders; c) informants' familiarity with their organisational site and neighbourhood; d) exhaustive opportunity for interviews and casual conversations with many different kinds of people directly or indirectly working for the client organisation.

In return, advantages may be seen as disadvantages. Drawbacks are the fact that a) the researcher in the role of consultant cannot look at a straightforward piece of participant observation; b) the double role does not necessarily ensure the continual movement between the distance of the observer and the proximity of the participant; c) throughout the project these positions were confused as the observer slipped into a hybrid role featuring many colourful hats such as of team leader, consultant, facilitator, and programme and client director and, finally, friend.

¹² Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the name of the set of skills, identified by social scientists John Mayer and Peter Salovey and made famous by Daniel Goleman. The skills can profoundly influence our ability to get along with other people and to thereby be successful in our professional and personal lives. Briefly, EQ has two sides to it: personal competencies and social competencies. The earlier including a) self-awareness (knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions) and b) self-management (managing emotions, emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals); the latter including c) social awareness (awareness of others' feelings, needs, and concerns) and d) relationship management (adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others). In Goleman 1995

Thinking this through further, the perspective of ethics and power require a short comment at this early stage of this study, indicating that I will resume elaborating on it later again. As Marcus states,

“But while modernist ethnography operates fully cognizant of the history of the political and economic circumstances in which identities have been formed , it is not explicitly around the trope of power, but of ethics, that is, the complex moral relationship of the observer to the observed, of the relevance of the observed’s situation to the situation of the observer’s own society, and ultimately the exploration of the critical purpose of contemporary ethnographic analysis”¹³.

Ethical issues of stepping in and out show parallels in both consulting and in anthropology, the difference being that consulting requires financial obligations from one of the parties against expected, often measurable outcomes and performance from the other, creating a tension between care, i. e. acting in the interest of the other, namely the client and the economics of the consulting unit¹⁴.

Finally, one more parallel of the two worlds is the handling of tacit knowledge. Traditionally, Western education and thus management has placed great emphasis on explicit, rational modes of analysis; and value is placed on logic, precision, and evidence. In reverse, tacit knowledge includes intuition, apprehension, and tacit ways of knowing¹⁵, in short 'the way we do things around here'. Experience is the key to acquiring tacit knowledge. It is socialised through imitation, practice, and observation; the latter being a specialist tool in anthropology.

Considerable effort is necessary to make tacit knowledge more widely available. At first it needs to be converted into explicit knowledge, that is, the process of articulation of concepts materialising in the shape of metaphors, analogies, concepts, hypotheses or models. Both, anthropology and consulting contribute to knowledge creation and knowledge dissemination by making tacit knowledge explicit and available to others by eliciting processes around organisational behaviour. Grounded in analysis and empirical research and presented in well-structured narrative it is often a combination of deduction and induction.

¹³ Marcus 1998:75

¹⁴ Block 2000:309

¹⁵ Nonaka and Takeuchi in Henry 2001:66ff

The course of this research will illustrate the close relationship of the two disciplines. Capturing findings in this paper will bring to light similarities and differences of the two, the analysis of which as a logical consequence will be positioned at the end of this writing. Nevertheless, it may be worthwhile taking Geertz's thinking one step further by asking 'Should consultants not just study organisations, but in organisations?'

I will leave the exploration of the role of consulting, i. e. internal consultants to other authors, however being 'inside' or 'outside' as well as ethical issues will be a significant part of the next section. Indeed, both subjects will be found throughout the chapters, essential themes when working globally. Before I take you onto that journey, I will take you on a short walk through more recent research relevant for organisational anthropology, hence of importance for this study. This is followed by a brief exploration about my understanding of 'culture' and its implications when working with and in organisations.

1.1.3.THE EMERGENCE OF BUSINESS ANTHROPOLOGY

Continuously and rather quietly anthropologists focus on the world of organisations, frequently adding value to perspectives on organisations, however without having found any ground-breaking resonance in the business world.

“Die Anthropologie hat zu Beginn des letzten Jahrhunderts einen wesentlichen Beitrag für die Managementlehre geleistet. Leider ist dies heute wenigen bewusst und die Anthropologie in Europa ist in diesem Feld auch sehr stumm. Dennoch hat es in den letzten Jahren wieder AnthropologInnen gegeben, die Forschung zu diesem Thema betrieben haben (u.a. Novak 1994; Wittel 1996; Diel-Khalil & Götz 1999; Wischmann 1999, Schein 2003; Jordan 2003; Wright 1994)¹⁶.

This section aims to provide the reader with a brief overview of recent approaches in the field of business anthropology. The selection of publications took place in accordance with its relevance for the current research.

¹⁶ Krawinkler 2008: 15

Historically important is the first visit of anthropology to industry in the human relation area at Hawthorne carried out by Mayo, Roethlisberger, and Dickson in the 1920s¹⁷. In terms of production and power relation studies the rise of Marxist scholarship in the 1970s, called the Manchester school, redirect the attention to ethnographic situations within a particular productions paradigm towards the interfolding between international and national regimes of capital accumulation, organisational structures, and shop floor socialities¹⁸.

The next hype of business anthropology took place in the 60s for three primarily economy-based reasons, which are a) the West began to form relationships with former colonised states; b) the United States increased economic and technical aid to Third World countries; and c) Japan and the OPEC countries achieved considerable economic success¹⁹. These economic development, raised the need to understand the mentality of 'the other side, greatly contributing to the first stage development of the 'culture shock industry'²⁰. One anthropologist, Edward Hall, unintentionally but certainly powerfully lead to the packaging of culture in the current Interculturalist industry. In his effort to present cultural understanding in an accessible form to non-academics²¹, Hall focused on micro-behaviour, such as space and time perceptions in different cultures, which to date is a commonly used intercultural approach. Interculturalist aspects are certainly relevant for this study and will form an integral part of chapter 05, however will not focus on different cultures treating them as fixed entities, but understanding them in social transaction.

Another relevant contribution in business anthropology is Harvey's work.²² She explores the relationship between three western modernist institutions: anthropology, the nation state and the universal exhibition. Her research's contribution to the current piece of work is the consideration of ways in which these institutions are linked, in particular the first two; how they are engaged in the objectification of culture, and how they have become objects of cultural theory themselves.

¹⁷ Jimenez 2007:15

¹⁸ Jimenez 2007:26

¹⁹ Dahlen 1997:11

²⁰ Hannerz 1996:9

²¹ Dahlen 1997:42

²² Harvey 1996:8

One of integral part of this study is how 'culture' is produced and put to work by the national and corporate participants, and to the relationship between the emergence of culture as a commodity and the way in which the concept is employed in contemporary cultural theory.

Organisational and anthropological cultures are the focus of the work of Smirchich and Van Maanen. As mentioned earlier, Smirchich will be of great importance for the current research in order to draw on the concept culture as something that *is*, or alternatively root methaphor, whereas Van Maanen will come into account with his work on researchers becoming immersed into the every day life of the observed, an herein the use of such techniques in organisational studies²³.

The notion of culture further explored by Wright pointing out that,

“An appreciation of the comparative and critical dimensions of anthropological analysis would show not only the extent to which 'culture' is itself a culturally situated category – 'double faceted', at once analytical and ethnographic – but also those things that culture does not explain²⁴.”

Culture in itself as a culturally situated category in the region of the culturally familiar is Wagner's focus of examination,

“.. a mode of analysis that draws on concepts which belong to the society or culture under study and cannot depend on the more usual appeal to concepts of difference and incommensurability or the provocation of culture shock²⁵.”

These concepts, also known as auto-anthropology, that is the anthropology carried out in the context which produced it²⁶, becomes relevant when examining the hybrid role of the researcher and the fact that the research was to a certain extent conducted in a region of the culturally familiar. This is grounded in the fact that the researcher spent some considerable time in Cairo and Egypt before conducting the current work.

On top of Harvey's perfect example for auto-anthropology on the Expo 1992 in Seville, I delivered another example of such research conducting a cross-disciplinary study in

²³ Van Maanen 1979 in Jimenez 2007:293

²⁴ Wright 1994:27

²⁵ Wagner 1975 in Harvey 1996:13

²⁶ Strathern 1987 in Harvey 1996:12

the largest Vienna hospitals²⁷ exploring effects of intercultural communication among nurses, which opened the ground for other researchers at the University of Vienna to look into the expert area of business or industrial anthropology.

Within business anthropology, by looking into the expert area of 'change management', Bate as the first anthropologist proclaims the innovative assumption that culture and in particular, organisational culture is the synonym for an organisation's strategy²⁸ thus the two terms 'culture' and 'strategy' could be used interchangeably.²⁹ Building on the field research on British Rail's Advanced Passenger Train, which he claims may go down in history as one of the most successful innovations ever to have failed³⁰, he develops a framework for cultural change, promoting the inextricable link between culture and strategy by defining four different approaches to implementing cultural change in organisations; a) the aggressive, b) the conciliative, c) the corrosive, and d) the indoctrinative approach³¹.

A non-anthropologist contributing greatly to the realm of the discipline is Alvesson from University of Gothenburg by offering an integrated and sophisticated overview of the various issues which a theory of organisational culture should address. The merit of his writing is in the clearly laid out difference between a holistic approach to culture versus culture in the role of instrument for performance management.

“In principle there are two broad answers. The first views organisational culture as a means of promoting more effective managerial action, whereas the second views culture as a point of entry for a broader understanding of and a critical reflection upon organisational life and work³².”

Senior executives in organisations would often view these two opposites as irreconcilable and even diametrically opposed. The relevance of this view is unquestionably high as the performance link is the starting point of the project and seems to be moving towards the culture as a holistic approach over the period of the work conducted.

²⁷ Abraham 1997

²⁸ Weick 1985:116

²⁹ Bate 1994:8

³⁰ Bate 1994:102

³¹ Bate 1994:211

³² Alvesson 1994:6

Alvesson understands the purpose of cultural studies as liberating human potential. They illuminate the obstacles of emancipation – ideas, values, and understanding of social arrangements that are generally thought of as natural but are in fact socially constructed and susceptible to change³³. Hence, the objective of cultural studies is to see beliefs, values, and understandings of social conditions in a new light and from a different perspective.

With my publication ‘Cross Cultural Training: Levi-Strauss for Managers?’ I aimed to introduce anthropological approaches to the business world by featuring the Geology model based on Levi-Strauss’ structuralist approach³⁴ to a wider business audience. After a short introduction of the model I examine the possible application of it in Cross Cultural/ Intercultural training in order to show the complexity of culture in a structured way.

Whilst the advantages of this model on a microlevel can be described as follows: to help trainees (a) understand that various culture bearing elements are not necessarily in hierarchic order, (b) understand that culture is not a closed system, (c) recognize more easily the reciprocal action of elements within a culture, (d) see the dynamic aspect of culture, (e) start with mutualities within a culture or among cultures rather than with differences³⁵, the benefit on a macrolevel would be that the language and the symbolic representation is closely aligned to executives’ usual communication style, hence overcoming some of the gaps between the academic and the business world, a challenge continuously encountered throughout the duration of the project, and mirrored in this writing.

An indispensable concept for the current piece of research is the one of thick multisite ethnography by Marcus, that is

“What multi-sited strategies of research offer is an opportunity to dislocate the ethnographer from the strong traditional filiation to just one group of subjects among whom fieldwork is done and instead to place her within and between groups in direct, or even indirect and blind, opposition. This is, to be sure, not a very comfortable position for the ethnographer, in which not taking sides is not an option, and in which deception and betrayal are everpresent possibilities. In each case, some form of

³³ Alvesson 1994:6

³⁴ Abraham 1999:1

³⁵ Abraham 1999:2

“circumstantial activism”, ... is necessary to give better access to these more complicated ambiguities of fieldwork ethics³⁶.”

Multi-sited fieldwork proves to be indispensable when looking into Baba’s findings. Her contribution stemming from the role of researcher on globally distributed teams offers helpful insights on terminology and key idiosyncrasies at a time when they had been on the market only for a few years.

A globally-distributed team (or GDT) is a work group whose members represent and are based in two or more nations or regions, yet must work interdependently to achieve a common purpose related to the firm’s global strategy.³⁷

GDT key idiosyncrasies are a) technology-supported communication; b) differentiation between core team (three and thirty members) and extended or full team (possibly hundreds); c) non-collated work place; d) multi-cultural and multi-functional³⁸.

One of her research focii apparently aims to feature the advantage of bringing such teams to globally oriented enterprises. By promoting this, she is one of the few anthropologists who contributes a very important piece of research in the greater topic area of diversity in organisations, namely specifically in teams, and hence will be of essential orientation to the current study.

An integral contribution to business anthropology is shown in the work of Czarniawska, a social and industrial psychologist at the University of Gothenburg, largely drawing on anthropological methods and frameworks. Her work on action nets capturing the never-ending flow of redistributive practices³⁹ as well as connected spatio-temporal qualities are of great importance for my research. Moreover, her work focuses strongly on the non-localised and the unbounded usually in organisational settings represented in a great variety of industries.

Yet another contribution to business anthropology is presented in the work of Appadurai and Hannerz, both of whom are not primarily business anthropologists,

³⁶ Marcus 1998:20

³⁷ Baba 2001:2

³⁸ Baba 2001:2

³⁹ Jimenez 2007:29

“Recent work in anthropology has done much to free us of the shackles of highly localised, boundary-oriented, holistic, primordialist images of cultural form and substance (Hannerz 1989; Marcus and Fisher 1986; Thornton 1988). But not very much has been put in their place, except somewhat larger if less mechanical versions of these images, as in Eric Wolf’s work on the relationship of Europe to the rest of the world (1982).⁴⁰”

This comprehensive overview provides you with an insight of research endeavours undertaken over last 80 years in the specialist area of business anthropology and related areas, temporarily ending with the meta-level contributions of two of the anthropologists I largely build my work upon. Both their work greatly circles around the issue of globalisation away from the restricted understanding of the latter being intensified exchange and competition in economic and sometimes military terms necessitated by competitive pressures. Instead, their emphasis lies on the cultural qualities of globalisation. My work, although situated in the world of business and money, also puts its focus upon.

Recent publications from both anthropology and non-anthropological disciplines debating the current and the future qualities of globalisation trigger the question: What are the unique knowledge contributions from anthropology, possibly leading to a necessary strategy formulation on “Quo vadis anthropology”.

1.2. WHAT ‘CULTURE’ IS IN IT

“There is an Indian story – at least I heard it as an Indian story – about an Englishman who, having been told that the world rested on a platform which rested on the back of an elephant which rested in turn on the back of a turtle, asked What did the turtles rest on? Another turtle. And that turtle? `Ah, Sahib, after that it is turtles all the way down`”⁴¹

The more you dive into the subject of culture in a complex project embedded in a complex environment the more complex it becomes. As Geertz says, cultural analysis is

⁴⁰ Appadurai 1996:46

⁴¹ Geertz 1973:29

intrinsically incomplete: “And, worse than that, the more deeply it goes the less complete it is”⁴².

1.2.1.SO WHAT IS CULTURE THEN

This section aims to explore how organisations approach the notion of culture and herewith draws the reader’s attention to the implication of ‘culture’ and ‘change’ for the present piece of research. Essentially, it will highlight the gap between the understandings of culture as seen by organisations versus the understanding of culture as seen by anthropologists. Whilst the former sees culture as one instrument among many, anthropology understands culture as the omnipresent source of all happenings.

Building on Geertz’s comments on complexity, more recent trends apparently developed in post-modern times and primarily proposed in business literature, attempt to make the reader believe that complex issues can be broken down into bullet point recipes often featuring ‘To Do’ lists. Being exposed to this mainstream of simplification, which tends to be a common call from the business world, “one would need to be conscious of the risks involved in drawing attention to complexity – especially in proposing that we, in fact, need to confront complexity head on, recognize it for what it is, and learn to work with it”⁴³. In contrast to the business world’s call for simplicity, the guiding maxim of the philosophy being proposed is that one should meet complexity with complexity, for which the discipline of cultural anthropology offers sufficient methods and frameworks. Thus, cultural anthropology can get into the role of complementary partner for challenges in the business arena by breaking down complexity into a comprehensible set of phenomena, hence without falling into the black and white trap of toxic assumptions.

The call for condensed and easily graspable concepts drip into the notion of organisational culture, which in broad terms often gets divided into dichotomies featuring two ends apart from each other as possible.

“Some theorists advance the view that organization be understood as cultures. They leave behind the view that a culture is something that an or-

⁴² Bate 1994:4

⁴³ Bate 1994:4

ganization *has*, in favor of the view that a culture is something an organization *is* (Smirchich 1981).⁴⁴

Business sources link the *is – has* dichotomy to the notions of ‘Organisational culture’ and ‘Corporate culture’. Characteristics typical to ‘Organisational culture’ are something a) that an organization **is**; b) describes the negotiated and shared meaning that emerge from social interaction; and c) that is created by a continuous process; of which senior managers are an integral part although not able to control it. On the contrary, the characteristics of ‘corporate culture’ are depicted as follows: a) is something that an organization **has**; b) is something that dominant members value; c) refers to senior managers’ values interpretation and preferred way of doing things; and finally d) can be treated as another variable that can be manipulated.

Bate⁴⁵ mentioned above builds on the 7S model⁴⁶, explaining the notion of *has* illustrating ‘culture’ as one component of an organisation, equal in status with other components such as ‘structure’; ‘systems’; ‘strategy’; ‘skills’; ‘staff’ etc.

Bate, a cultural anthropologist understands ‘culture’ as interchangeable to ‘strategy’.

“The important point, therefore is, is not *what* we study, but the different *way* we look at the organization: the task for the culture strategist is not to think *about* culture but to *think culturally*.⁴⁷”

Alvesson extends the *is – has* dichotomy to organisational performance arguing that the *has* approach understands culture as a tool or guiding concept for achieving effectiveness expressed in cultural phenomena such as symbols, rites, values, norms, etc.⁴⁸. In a less favourable way,

“the culture-performance link sees culture more as an obstacle of the economic rationality and effectiveness, and it then becomes a question of controlling culture so that it does not obstruct rational plans or intentions based, for example, on strategic thinking of financial criteria. In other words, this defensive interest in culture is motivated by a desire to avoid difficulties in companies due to the “negative” features of culture such as resistance to change and cultural conflicts. While the offensive view can

⁴⁴ Smirchich 1983 in: Jimenez 2007:255

⁴⁵ Bate 1994:10

⁴⁶ Peters and Waterman 1982 in Mullins 2002:860. See model in appendix.

⁴⁷ Bate 1994:14

⁴⁸ Alvesson 1993:06

be described as *tool view* of culture, the defensive view can be called a *trap view*⁴⁹.

Alvesson's translation of Smirchich's *is* approach is the assumption of a workplace as a rich, complex, holistic sum which will make it easier to appreciate both the positive and the negative features of organisational life and help to counteract the taken-for-granted beliefs and values which limit personal autonomy⁵⁰. Building a logical extension of this approach to popular business models, Kaplan's Balanced Scorecard⁵¹ would promote value creation through the Internal Business Processes. In this context one of the four perspectives is particularly relevant, i. e. Learning and Innovation. Organisational culture and its value creation including the earlier mentioned tacit knowledge could be introduced in the realm of 'Intangible Assets of Learning and Growth'⁵². However, the notion of organisational culture is not mentioned as such. Even beyond the expansion of high-tech companies and herein high-tech migrants⁵³, a general interest in societal culture issues has accompanied recent rapid cultural change in or associated with such areas as sex roles, sexuality, morality, prolongation of youth, internationalisation and immigration⁵⁴. Increased diversity and ambiguity may provoke a new interest of the subject of culture and cultural change in management and in organisational life.

"Beckerus, Edstroem et al. (1988) call attention to changes in production technology which allow for more flexible production patterns, a greater degree of market orientation, and changes in values and life-styles among employees and in society as tending to make corporate control more complicated and efforts to involve workers in the company more significant. While this does not necessarily lead to an interest in corporate culture, it creates a background for it. The emergence of new forms of organisation has also helped to make the cultural dimension more salient

⁵⁵ ."

Appadurai's 'grassroot' globalisation relies on a series of social forms which contests and questions the top-down actions of corporate capital and the nation-state system, and much more prefers strategies, visions, and horizons for globalisation on behalf of

⁴⁹ Alvesson 1993:06

⁵⁰ Alvesson 1993:06

⁵¹ Kaplan and Norton in Rutterford 1998:281. See model in appendix.

⁵² Kaplan and Norton in Rutterford 1998:281

⁵³ Abraham 2005:131

⁵⁴ Alvesson 1994:04

⁵⁵ Alvesson 1994:04

the poor, which he rephrases as 'globalisation from below'⁵⁶. Again, this translates to culture as a root metaphor from which people regardless if members of a nation-state or an organisation make meaning from interaction. Hannerz postulates that by saying that,

“... we must not lose sight of the fact that culture is the medium by which human beings interact. ...The organizational formula ideally, is that “I know, and I know that you know, and I know that you know that I know”.

Inarguably, this is based on another root metaphor statement by Geertz:

“There is no such thing as human nature independent of culture⁵⁷”.

Hannerz further emphasises that a) culture is learned; b) culture can only be grasped as a whole; and c) culture is packages of meanings and meaningful forms⁵⁸. In connection with this he understands globalisation as a matter of increasing long-distance interconnectedness⁵⁹.

The understanding of culture as a root metaphor and in particular, Hannerz's third emphasis will build the basis for the current research. This calls for a multi-sited ethnography,

“... now often associated with the wave of intellectual capital labelled postmodern, moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects and identities in diffuse time-space⁶⁰.”

It is the process of globalisation creating an emergent dimension calling for a connection among sites in multi-sited ethnography⁶¹. The emphasis on an emergent dimension on a multi- and metalevel demonstrates a clear link to Mintzberg's emergent strategy approach at organisational level⁶², which stands in contrast to Porter's proposition of intended strategy⁶³ as being fully reasonable communicating the intention that will be

⁵⁶ Appadurai 2001:3

⁵⁷ Geertz 1965:112 in Hannerz 1996:35

⁵⁸ Hannerz 1996:8

⁵⁹ Hannerz 1996:17

⁶⁰ Marcus 1998:83

⁶¹ Marcus 1998:83

⁶² Mintzberg in Segal-Horn, Susan 1998:21. See model in appendix.

⁶³ Porter in Mullins 2002:368. See model in appendix.

carried out. Characteristically, Mintzberg provides readers with one illustration of the emergent approach, however misses guidelines how to reach a result successfully. This again, is a clear illustration of the complexity of culture as a root metaphor.

1.2.2. CONCEPTS OF DIVERSITY

This section reviews the understanding of diversity as conceptualised in the academic business arena. This is followed by an overview of the understanding promoted by cultural anthropology including a short summary of literature from the Middle East and Egypt relevant for this work. Finally, I will guide you to my understanding of the notion of diversity deployed in this work; that is the ‘three lenses’ of diversity.

1.2.2.1. The business perspective

The publication industry of the academic business area offers numerous volumes on different aspects of diversity, thus, there is a great deal of diversity to the term itself. As this topic rose in popularity, that is the mid 20th century, diversity focused on women’s rights and civil rights at the national level. In the later 20th century the scope of the “strategic imperative to increase the representation of minorities and help achieve ethnicity and gender targets”⁶⁴ shifted from the national to the organisational, with organisations soon viewing equality as a cost factor⁶⁵.

In the light of the growing globalisation and its inherent interconnectedness of cooperation and interaction during the last decades of the 20th century, the academically oriented publications shifted focus from a legalistic approach to one of “valuing diversity⁶⁶”. This new orientation supposedly promotes two advantages for organisations. Firstly, to avoid harming the organisation’s reputation externally, and secondly to prevent internally rising costs caused by high interpersonal conflict and increased em-

⁶⁴ Burnett and Kettleborough 2007:102

⁶⁵ April and Shockley 2007:23

⁶⁶ April 2007:357

ployee turnover⁶⁷. Further, valuing diversity captures two aspects: a) diversity as competitive advantage by organisations' utilising a broad diversity to enhance the organisation's sensing capability for new market opportunities⁶⁸; and b) equal valuation and treatment for all in compliance with social justice and corporate social responsibility⁶⁹.

In the early 2000s the concept of inclusion first appeared on the scene. This concept describes the approach of "creating environments where all people can prosper and progress irrespective of race, colour, gender, physical ability, age, religion, sexual orientation, or belief"⁷⁰; and the "capability approach"⁷¹. With consumers of business literature frequently being in the role of business practitioners, including both the cosmopolitan employees and the representatives of strategic human resource management specialising in diversity management, the call for a 'quick fix' becomes more obvious.

Both the anticipated reduction and the call for a 'quick fix' result in a universalistic approach towards diversity proposed in the business literature. In this context, "universalism searches for sameness and similarity and tries to impose on all members of a class or universe the laws of their commonality"⁷². This approach towards diversity reduces individuals to one single identity requiring one consistent presentation of one's identity construction.

Similarly, literature about diversity in teams attempts to address complexity inherent to diversity, however there is a tendency to bring forward static concepts⁷³, which fail to address the dynamic aspect, and in particular, the focus on interaction, which is necessary to bring diversity to light.

This approach proposes representatives of diversity as entities with their own properties, suggesting clear boundaries depicted in simplified diagrams. They attempt to make the reader believe that diversity is measurable. It can be frequently observed in the business practice of quota presentation where diversity is used as a tool in order to

⁶⁷ Bennet-Alexander 2000:103

⁶⁸ April and Shockley 2007:56

⁶⁹ Appiah, 2005; Cornelius, 2002; Fukukawa et al., 2007

⁷⁰ Burnett and Kettleborough 2007:103

⁷¹ Gagnon and Cornelius 2002:32

⁷² Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 2000:14

⁷³ Gardenswartz and Rowe 2003:37

demonstrate legal compliance. This approach does not only lead to stereotyping and “self-fulfilling prophecies”⁷⁴; it hardly provides ground for ethical considerations of diversity issues.

Whilst the business literature has largely failed to address the topic of multiplicity of diversity, the academic literature predominantly from social science disciplines welcomes complexity and abundance of diversity.

1.2.2.2. The anthropological perspective

Diversity concepts from social sciences tend to look into the complexity and versatility of the subject matter, moreover research is typically beyond the limitations of organisational boundaries. In the light of the discussion exploring the ethics in identity, the recognition of multiple identities has been captured in a number of contributions from disciplines such as anthropology and philosophy. These disciplines typically feature concepts such as the “cultural make-up”⁷⁵; “plural identities”⁷⁶; and the “ethics of individuality”⁷⁷. Beyond these more microlevel aspects of diversity I will provide an overview on the more macrolevel aspects, greatly promoted by Appadurai, and finally the concept of ‘The other’, to which diversity is inherent. Manoeuvring the diversity discussion beyond the conservative concept of gender, age, and physical ability requires a dynamic approach allowing complexity and multiplicity.

Hannerz’s contribution to this debate was a significant one taking place as early as the mid 90s. The framework, first published in 1996 depicts a highly dynamic approach away from static notions of black or white, man or woman, old or young, management or worker towards a flow of relationships featuring a full spectrum of diversity. The framework is based on the assumption that diversity is already there⁷⁸ and that people’s identities are dynamic. In the original version the rather complex framework promotes altogether seven arguments for cultural diversity, among which you find four

⁷⁴ Merton 1948:195

⁷⁵ Hannerz 1996:58

⁷⁶ Sen 2006:29

⁷⁷ Appiah 2005:32

⁷⁸ Hannerz 1996:57

which are particularly relevant to this work: a) one's culture describing the assumption that people not only own a culture, but are rather owned by it. In many cases, one's own culture becomes transparent only when living and working and more generally, interacting in an environment other than one's own. Hannerz further equips people with the skill of remaking their cultural make-up⁷⁹; b) enjoying diversity, which refers to the value of the access to diversity and herein having the possibility to experience and enjoy diversity. Being positively oriented towards diversity one can seek it actively, in both synchronous or sequential exposure by drawing on other cultures⁸⁰, again by simultaneously mastering the own cultural make up; c) creative tensions, which need to be closely associated with enjoying diversity. These tensions, given positive friction, result in a generative cultural process whereas an absence of these tensions can doom creativity⁸¹ where there is a complete understanding of one another and hence a lack of positive friction; d) the ecology, which describes in what ways people have successfully managed to become part of their habitats. May the habitat be a rain forest, a steppe, or an Arctic sea or, as Hannerz refers to it, the spaceship Earth is the home we have to share⁸².

Hannerz's ecology aspect of diversity clearly promotes a more macro-aspect into the exploration of cultural diversity, to which I will draw in the discussion further below. Altogether, Hannerz's framework will be consulted again in the section when I will present the 'Three Lenses of diversity', the framework that this research is being based upon.

For a broader perspective it is now critical to point to Sen, a renowned economist and philosopher as well as Nobel Prize winner. Sen is one of the key promoters of 'plural identity' claiming that identity depends on the social context. Herein, the perception of the role one takes is a choice made in a context-specific way. This clearly points to the conflict arising between the concepts of 'belonging' and 'othering', to which I will go into more detail in the section 'The other'.

⁷⁹ Hannerz 1996:58

⁸⁰ Hannerz 1996: refers to "drawing on cultures" as one of the seven explicit arguments

⁸¹ Hannerz1996:61

⁸² Hannerz 1996:59

The macro-aspect of diversity clearly stretches Hannerz's 'ecology' primarily by expanding to meta-level considerations, that is largely the social qualities of globalisation. With this in mind, Appadurai 'scapes' will be a primary source for meta-level considerations, these "scapes" are a) ethnoscares as landscapes of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live in: tourists, immigrants, guest workers⁸³; b) mediascapes as image-centered, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality expressed by electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information: newspapers, magazines, television⁸⁴; c) technoscapes as the global configuration of technology crossing formerly impervious boundaries⁸⁵; d) financescapes⁸⁶ as disposition of global capital now mysteriously and rapidly moving: currency markets, stock exchanges, commodity speculations; and e) ideoscapes⁸⁷ as concentration of images highly political and often directly linked to state ideologies and their power interests: freedom, welfare rights, sovereignty, and democracy.

In this macro-level context, I understand flow as referring to things not fixed in their places, to mobility and expansion of many kinds, to globalisation along many kinds⁸⁸. Thinking in a transdisciplinary way this includes flow of capital, labour, commodities, information and knowledge, illustrating that this term is not created and owned by anthropologists, but utilised by many disciplines such as economists, demographers, researchers and other information brokers.

Flows can result in interconnectedness, however are also responsible for producing ruptures, which I, following Appadurai understand as points of 'disjunctures' and inner contradictions⁸⁹, within the flows of globalisation: they thus are perceived not as one homogeneous network, but as zones of tension, of connections and disconnections.

My understanding of rupture from this exploration is that rupture can be linked to a single dramatic and unprecedented moment, which causes an ongoing and iterative break

⁸³ Appadurai 1996:33

⁸⁴ Appadurai 1996:35

⁸⁵ Appadurai 1996:34

⁸⁶ Appadurai 1996:34

⁸⁷ Appadurai 1996:36

⁸⁸ Hannerz 1997:9

⁸⁹ Appadurai 2005:32

from formerly experienced meaningful forms, and by that can potentially create a new form of flow.

Reflecting on the dynamics of flow, ruptures, and interconnectedness is key to this macro ethnographic aspect of this research. This specifically aims at investigating the diversity aspect for the project's environment.

For clarity, I assign the diversity concept provided by Hannerz more to the micro-level issues, and the scapes concept to the macro-level. Nevertheless, my research journey will elicit that the boundaries of the two are never sharp, as idiosyncratic for this topic. This will be reflected in the mixed application of the concepts for the micro and macro-level.

I understand the packaging of both, the micro- and the macrolevel as an anthropologist's responsibility, ideally delivered by the means of thick and multi-sited ethnography⁹⁰. This request does not only secure the understanding of culture as a root metaphor helping to counterbalance to the culture-performance link approach favoured by senior managers in organisations. Far beyond just mirroring the Weltanschauung of this piece of research, it ought to be the prerequisite of modern research challenging the social qualities of globalisation altogether, incorporating Marcus and Fisher's call "to represent the embedding of richly described local cultural worlds in larger impersonal systems of political economy,"⁹¹ formulated back in 1986 when anthropology was still bound to more localised production. Meanwhile,

"... contemporary ethnography as a matter of "polymorphous engagements" – interacting with informants across a number of dispersed sites, but also doing fieldwork by telephone and email, collecting data eclectically in many different ways from a disparate array of sources, attending carefully to popular culture, and reading newspapers and official documents. Skills of synthesis may become more important than ever."⁹²

Hannerz's update of method and skills leads me to the mobile ethnography method, allowing an easier observation of the embeddedness of small-scale personal worlds in the large-scale "impersonal" world. This development does not quite answer the question of representation.

⁹⁰ Marcus 1998:119

⁹¹ Marcus and Fisher 1986 in Schwartzman 1993:45

⁹² Hannerz 2003:212

Debate on mobile ethnography has elicited a new term, namely jet plane ethnography,⁹³ indicating the quick hopping among sites. I wish to distance this research from the latter, and clearly position it in the realm of mobile ethnography allowing the in-depth study of multi-locale organisations in an anthropological mode.

1.2.2.3. 'The other'

The concept of 'the other' is critically important to the diversity discussion as it needs 'the other' to start the process of generating diversity. Luckily, cultural anthropology offers quite a number of contributions to this field. Nonetheless, I will specifically select approaches relevant to this research, firstly drawing to the complex moral relationship between the observer and the observed.

Researchers are usually expected to take the role of outsider, as someone seeking local knowledge and identified by lack of understanding⁹⁴. One topic inherent to all research efforts in this area is the question of ethics, applying equally for 'conservative' research conducted among the exotic 'other' and shared with specialist areas of business anthropology. Jordan supplies the example of an anthropologist helping with changing a job requirement asking if this could possibly lead to harm for the employee⁹⁵. She asks for similarities to the case of an anthropologist helping change production techniques in rural Guatemala. Potential intervention requires at first research method. In the case of organisation research, participant observation, that is, the gathering of data about the daily life and customs of people while participating⁹⁶, often means that the researcher assumes the role of an organisational member (or the other way round – an employee becomes a researcher). Czarniawska differentiates between the term 'participant observation', which does not include the case of 'direct observation'⁹⁷, i. e. a situation where the researcher is present as an observer, not as a

⁹³ Bate 1997 in Czarniawska 2007:536

⁹⁴ Harvey 1996:9

⁹⁵ Jordan 2003:61

⁹⁶ Jordan 2003:21

⁹⁷ Schwartzman 1993 in Czarniawska in Jimenez 2007:537

participant.⁹⁸ Based on my experience, the arbitrary differentiation between ‘participant’ and ‘direct’ may not be so clear when working in the hybrid role as situations are multi-faceted, researcher cannot be engaged in every single action, so partly direct observation is necessary or even unavoidable.

The role that Gingrich’s/Baumann’s ‘belonging’ or ‘othering’ plays in this switching between participation or observation will become more transparent in the subsequent chapters.

Anthropology has dwelt on this notion of ‘the other’ over centuries expressed in the placing of ‘the other’ in a distant time⁹⁹ and often space. This was later challenged by many authors concerned with writing and representation in anthropology. In the following paragraphs I am presenting a number of authors, who have worked on the subject matter, thus are relevant to my research.

Abu-Lughod, an anthropological writer presents the concept of culture as a ‘tool of making other’, one that created difference based on the constructed divide of the West and non-West.¹⁰⁰ Ingold, a Cambridge academic promotes a simple immersion into another landscape, that is, by joining reindeer herdsman in northern Finland. He claims that the immersion is sufficient to make a translation between cultures obliterate¹⁰¹. Linking this back to tacit knowledge usually acquired by experience leads me to the question of conversion to explicit knowledge and further to a sharing with a wider, in particular non-anthropologist audience.

Becoming one of them as experienced by the anthropologist Wikan, who conducted field work in Bali, among Muslims and Hindus, experienced a mutual understanding, built on resonance akin to empathy and sympathy¹⁰². She understands ‘resonance’ as a feeling-thinking understanding between people, looking more for similarities than for difference¹⁰³.

⁹⁸ Czarniawska in Jimenez 2007:537

⁹⁹ Boon 1982 in Dahlen 1997:166

¹⁰⁰ Abu-Lughod 1991:139 in Dahlen 1997:168

¹⁰¹ Hannerz 1996:32

¹⁰² Dahlen 1997:168

¹⁰³ Dahlen 1997:168

All three presented I understand come from the view, which can be defined as making or bridging the other. Whilst Abu-Lughod and Ingold make pronounced views on either notion, Wikan builds on mutuality, where I see a strong link to the earlier mentioned concept of emotional intelligence. Irrespective of being 'in' or 'out' at one particular moment, the researcher or consultant equally becomes the study object for 'the others'. On the specific project this was expressed by curiosity phrased in routine questions about one's home country, one's private life, one's life philosophy – as Egyptian managers perceived representatives from the British business school they as 'the other'.

Further to the fact that many of the representatives from the British business school presented a multi-sited life style, I also dwell on Hannerz's notion of the cosmopolitans¹⁰⁴. It explains both, a) the mindset that helps working with the diversity mosaic and b) it expands on additionally necessary skills of reflective awareness, which assist building relationships particularly when working on complex global projects as is the researched.

Hannerz's¹⁰⁵ understanding of cosmopolitans summarises as follows: a) it refers to a state of mind of managing meaning; b) it refers to individuals' orientation and their willingness to engage with the other by showing an intellectual and aesthetic openness; and c) the want to immerse oneself in other cultures, or in any case be free to do so. They want to be participants, or at least not want to be too readily identifiable within a crowd of participants, that is, of locals; which however may turn out to become "home plus" e. g. plus servants, plus sunshine, plus adventure approach.

The different views will be revisited throughout the chapters aiming to identify meaning for my study.

With a significant number of project members permanently living somewhere other than their home country, they are in the position of 'the other' at all times. Having been in this situation over the last few years, I have had the 'study objects' of anthropology around at all times, again respecting the fact that I am myself offering quite some ground for other people to do so. Becoming a part of one's habitat, the notion of otherness seems to dissolve because of our need for emotional involvement pushing

¹⁰⁴ Hannerz 1996:102

¹⁰⁵ Hannerz 1996:102

us towards mutuality, hence belonging. The concept of Gingrich/Baumann on 'belonging' – 'othering' will be of great contribution in the never-ending flow of redistributive practices¹⁰⁶ of the project presented by the means of thick description as actions proceed and changes occur at all time. Gingrich and Baumann's notion will be explained in fuller detail in the next session outlining the research framework and again in Chapter 02.

Altogether, the study of diversity is very much grounded in the US and European tradition with limited work from other parts of the world. In this regard it is critical to use some of the available sources, in particular from the Middle East and Egypt. In the light of these constraints I will primarily draw on work from Ali's publication on '*Islamic Perspectives on Management and Organization*'. In his work he links managerial and organisational matters as dominant in the Muslim world to their historical trajectory and specifically to religion.

Further, I will refer to the Egyptian academic and author Amin Galal who presents contemporary matters of modern Egypt in his work '*Whatever Else Happened to the Egyptians*'¹⁰⁷.

Another author I will draw upon is Golia¹⁰⁸, a long-time resident of Cairo whose book '*Cairo. City of Sand*' delivers an authentic portrayal of the city's contemporary reality and the ways its residents manage it.

Ghannam¹⁰⁹, Professor of Anthropology also offers research on the contemporary Cairo such as delivering life stories from individuals as well as perspectives from the city.

Ideally, the researcher or consultant is diverse him/herself – a hybrid, that is accommodating many different backgrounds and accommodating several cultures and yet featuring the right to his or her own culture¹¹⁰. Multiple identity, the environment, and finally 'the other' leads me to describe the research framework upon which the study is based.

¹⁰⁶ Jimenez 2007:29

¹⁰⁷ Amin 2003

¹⁰⁸ Golia 2004

¹⁰⁹ Ghannam 1999, 2002

¹¹⁰ Hannerz 1996:57

1.3. THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

This section presents the research framework, which was specifically developed for this study. Further to an introduction the components of the three lenses will be explained in detail.

1.3.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE THREE LENSES

Change is the only constant in general and was experienced as such by the individuals working on this project. For this reason, the framework used for this research needs to allow greatest possible flexibility incorporating change at any given point. It thus has to be dynamic rather than static.

Equally, as anthropology understands organisations as process rather than structures¹¹¹ the need for a dynamic framework becomes even more apparent. Change models from the various business disciplines often focus on systems and structures neglecting the individual affected by the changes nor do they offer any direction towards diversity. Thus, for this purpose they do not serve the necessary requirements.

Also, individuals in this change process need alternatives away from culture as homogeneous entity - an understanding prevalent in the anthropological discipline in the 40s or 50s¹¹² - in order to deal with modern multi-sited interconnectedness. Anthropology and other social science disciplines offer a number of approaches as outlined in the previous section. Hence, the framework developed for this research strongly builds on some of the concepts as outlined in the section 1.2.2.2 The anthropological perspective and 1.2.2.3 'The other'.

This dynamic framework consists of 'Three lenses', through which the 'thick' descriptions from story-telling and participant observation are being 'filtered'. The three lenses are a) the lens of multiple identity; b) the lens of perception; and c) the environmental lens.

¹¹¹ Czarniawska 2003:118

¹¹² Dahlen 1997:24

Each lens can be imagined as a spherical concave lens, with surfaces depressed into the lens. In the physical sense of lens, a collimated beam of light, which passes through a concave lens diverges. Thus, a concave lens is also known as a diverging lens. The process of divergence is applied in this study. The three lenses can be imagined like concave lenses which diverge beams of light. Similarly, the lenses of diversity diverge encounters and interactions between individuals and groups into a kaleidoscope of diversity. Thus, the process of divergence provides an in-depth view of interactions, which otherwise might be interpreted in a different way.

The new framework for diversity emerged from viewing the abundant materials, which included identifying patterns, coding meaningful repetitions, labelling significant iterations as well as rerunning this process several times.

1.3.2. THE FRAMEWORK

1.3.2.1. The lens of multiple identity

This lens amalgamates two key concepts, firstly Hannerz's cultural make-up¹¹³ and secondly, Sen's plural identity sensitive to context¹¹⁴. This lens builds on the assumption that people not only own a culture; but are rather owned by it. In many cases, one's own culture becomes transparent only when living and working and more generally, interacting in an environment other than one's own. Viewing this cultural make-up as a continuum might hint at two opposite ends. At one end people may develop the skill of re-creating their cultural make-up, whilst at the other end of the continuum people might hold on to their original make-up.

At this point, Sen's plural identity merges into this lens claiming that identity depends on social context. Specifically, this means that individuals draw on selected affiliations of their cultural make-up in particular, when the context requires them to do so.

¹¹³ Hannerz 1996:58

¹¹⁴ Sen 2006:25

Sen illustrates as follows:

“For one thing, the importance of a particular identity will depend on the social context. For example, when going to a dinner, one’s identity as a vegetarian may be rather more crucial than one’s identity as a linguist, whereas the latter may be particularly important if one considers going to a lecture on linguistic studies. This variability does to nothing rehabilitate the assumption of singular affiliation, but it illustrates the need to see the role of choice in a context-specific way¹¹⁵.”

My working term for this lens is ‘multiple identity’ as individuals typically activate several affiliations simultaneously, given they are sensitive to the context in which they are interacting.

This lens allows the analysis of identity in different contexts, may it be the geographic or the national one. Also, it applies to the visible identity such as age and gender as well as the intangible identity such as knowledge transfer. In addition, it is process-oriented since the activation of single or multiple colours of the kaleidoscope of one’s identity is ever-changing and interesting and fruitful ground for analysis.

One result might be the creation of human cultural hybrids, who greatly enjoy diversity and actively seek it. Enjoying diversity may be the key to survival of the individual, the team and the organisation in order to cope with new situations.

Methodologically, this lens will be applied mostly to the cultural make-up of the individuals working on this project. Specifically, it will come into account when viewing potential changes in people’s identity presentation as a result of their interaction with others, given the context requires them to change.

1.3.2.2. The lens of perception

The lens of perception is critical as it refers to the ways we see others and likewise the ways we are seen by others. This process applies to individuals and groups equally. This 2-way process can lead to a) stereotyping and b) self-fulfilling prophecies. The first are by definition generalisations reached by individuals. They are a result of the general cognitive process of categorising. The main function is to simplify and systematise

¹¹⁵ Sen 2006:25

the abundance and complexity of the information received from the environment¹¹⁶. Stereotypes can become social when they are shared by large numbers of people within a group or entity¹¹⁷. Tajfel further refers to the finding¹¹⁸ that extreme events are more accessible to memory retrieval than are average instances. In this sense, negative behaviours of subcultures are likely to be over-represented in memory and judgement. Herein, it is worthwhile noting the difference between social categorisations, which are neutral and those, which are value-loaded¹¹⁹. Typically, if a group is endowed with strong value differential it might lead to self-fulfilling prophecy. Merton descriptions of self-fulfilling prophecy is as follows:

“The self-fulfilling prophecy is, in the beginning, a false definition of the situation evoking a new behaviour which makes the originally false conception become true. The specious validity of the self-fulfilling prophecy perpetuates a reign of error”¹²⁰.

Stereotypes, and as a result self-fulfilling prophecies, can lead to ‘belonging’ and ‘othering’, where the first refers to ascriptions connected with sameness whilst the second refers to ascriptions with difference. This aspect of the ‘lens of perception’ builds on Gingrich’s definition of belonging and othering as follows:

“... a working definition of such personal and collective identities as simultaneously including sameness and differing. These identities are multidimensional and contradictory, and they include power-related, dialogical ascriptions by selves and by others, which are processually configured, enacted and transformed by cognition, language, imagination, emotion, body and (additional forms of) agency.”¹²¹

In accordance with Gingrich’s definition, I wish to reinforce my understanding that othering and belonging are mutually constitutive components of identity, often promoting a seamless relationship between the two.

Being aware that stereotypes, self-fulfilling prophecies, and othering typically carry a negative connotation, I need to point out that representatives from subcultures mostly

¹¹⁶ Tajfel 1981 in Turner and Giles 1981:142

¹¹⁷ Tajfel 1981 in Turner and Giles 1981:147

¹¹⁸ Rothbart 1978: 237 in Turner and Giles 1981:153

¹¹⁹ Tajfel 1981 in Turner and Giles 1981:156

¹²⁰ Merton 1948:195

¹²¹ Gingrich in Gingrich/Baumann 2004:6

providing a minority voice in their surrounding mainstream can provoke a kind of positive friction. By this, they provoke new understanding and learning, bridging cultures, and synthesising them, which finally can lead to creativity and innovation.

In the diagnosis I will, again look at the interaction among individuals and groups and by this will identify the impact of perception on diversity. Specifically, the diagnosis will look at two aspects: firstly, in what ways does perception foster diversity and secondly, in what ways does perception impede diversity.

1.3.2.3. The environmental lens

This lens tightly builds on two key concepts. Both, Hannerz's diversity aspect of ecology and Appadurai's notion of 'scapes' will be primary sources for meta-level considerations necessary to identify the contributions from diversity emerging from the environment.

In Hannerz's terms ecology is the sum of all habitats. Ecology hence describes in what ways people have successfully managed to become part of their habitats, may it be a desert, a city or a newly urban development located outside the city in a desert.

Equally, Appadurai's 'scapes' will be key for the identification of diversity issues from the external environment. Specifically, I will draw on the following: a) ethnoscapas as landscapes of persons. The research focus will view those individuals shifting between the included worlds, i. e. locations in Europe and Egypt; b) mediascapas as image-centred, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality expressed by electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information will mainly find ground in the media of television¹²²; c) technoscapas as the global configuration of technology crossing formerly impervious boundaries will find substance in the specialist area of mobile telephony and its impact on social behaviour¹²³; and finally d) financescapas¹²⁴ as disposition of global capital now mysteriously and rapidly moving: currency markets, stock exchanges, commodity speculations will find limited account.

¹²² Appadurai 1996:35

¹²³ Appadurai 1996:34

¹²⁴ Appadurai 1996:34

Interactions will be filtered through this lens by investigating the impact of the environmental influences. This will bring to light the contributions from diversity to this project and its involved people.

The application will comprise three levels. These are individuals, teams and organisations featuring their unique dynamic and ever-changing habitats as well. For the individual it may be the office space and colleagues, for the team it may be the project partner's structures and systems, for the organisation their external stakeholders such as competitors, governments etc.

Further to the short description of the three lenses, the idiosyncrasies of the dynamic framework are as follow: a) all three lenses look into change over time which is inherent to the topic of diversity. The model looks into the present and the future; b) all three lenses can be explored with a given representation of people. Ideally, each lens will be investigated at an individual, team and organisational level; c) the boundaries of the three lenses are permeable, which allows the building of tight interrelationships among the three lenses. It is exactly these interrelationships inherent to organisations that are mirrored in these permeable lenses; d) the framework considers the micro and macro level of cultural diversity encouraging participants to rethink existing models and frameworks.

By this, former notions of culture as static or as national culture can be unfrozen. Space for new thinking and a new language will be created. Equally, it allows on focus on hybridity, that is the result from diversity, i. e. the newness coming from the variety.

1.4. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Having elicited aspects of culture and diversity relevant to this study, I now draw to how to tackle this piece of macro-ethnography. Firstly, I will provide an overview of the project followed by an explanation and an illustration of the methodology of the research. Finally, I present short outlines for each chapter.

1.4.1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project was a large and complex programme in the expert area of 'change management' in the telecommunication industry in Egypt. The UK corporation called for this worldwide implementation of performance drivers designed to support employees in developing skills to grow the business across the globe. This research is specifically about the project in Egypt, of which I, in the role of client director of a British business school was in charge.

The company is one of the world's leading mobile telecommunication organisations with a significant presence in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia Pacific and the United States. The company is a public limited company with headquarters in England and is listed on the London Stock Exchange.

The other organisation involved is a British business school. Business schools have experienced an unparalleled popularity over the last few decades. The need for professional managers along with a massive expansion of higher education led to a global explosion of professional management education throughout the twentieth century. In this capacity the business school won this project in MENA (Middle East and North Africa). More details regarding the development of business schools will be provided in chapter 06.

Performance drivers, in this context primarily referred to interpersonal skills, which were viewed as a tool for promoting more effective managerial interests and herein action, i. e. profitable growth. This approach disregarded that the earlier mentioned culture-performance link approach restricts organisational members' sovereignty.

In summary the project featured challenges as follows: a) Implementation of a number of performance drivers, referred to as PDs, embodied in skills such as communication, dealing with a complex environment, customer-orientation and more. The required performance driver skills were translated into workshop activities covering the topics entailed in the performance drivers. The workshop design contained creative and dynamic sessions requiring the active involvement of participants; b) The learning architecture featured a mixture of large group events and performance driver

workshops tightly knit into a compact schedule accommodating the greatest possible participant numbers (1600 managers) in shortest possible time (period of one year maximum). Workshops needed to be designed towards the needs of three managerial levels; large group events were intended to bridge the hierarchical gap among managerial levels. The design of the large and complex project took place in only two months development time across continents, including the period of Ramadan; the implementation over the period of 9 months; c) The target audience were senior managers across three levels; i. e. line managers, supervisors, shop managers across divisions and locations in Cairo and whole of Egypt.

Below illustration depicts the design details:



Figure 1: Programme architecture with Large Group Events

The programme was designed and delivered by an internationally dispersed team of 20 members from 10 different nationalities and diverse backgrounds employed by or associated with the British business school. Approximately 15 of these team members were the same throughout the duration of the project, the remaining members changed from time to time. As for terminology, in the study I refer to the individuals working on this as project team, which includes people from the business school and the client organisation. Specifically, I address a) the interaction among individuals from the business school, referred to as team members; b) the interaction between team members and programme participants, that is, the Egyptian managers. In this context team members are also referred to as facilitators as it describes their role most precisely; and c) the interaction captured as experienced in various communication situations with individuals external to the project, which are then specifically described.

The organisation was clearly interested in this research, however did finally decide not to be disclosed. As data is rich and information is often quite personal, names of people are changed for the protection of the key informers, however only to an extent in order not to distort the meaning or context.

1.4.2. METHODOLOGY

This inductive macro-ethnographic research dwells on rich data stemming from extensive fieldwork as illustrated earlier in the hybrid role of anthropologist and consultant simultaneously. First order findings, that is data presented from participant observation, lead into second order findings¹²⁵, that is, the re-interpretation from micro-level outcome. The second order level allows me to draw on a wider range of projects as described above. This study includes, without saying, the core of the local and the global, and therefore represents an appropriate example of analysing a macro-level process based on a specific project.

¹²⁵ Kriwet 1997:36

First order findings come from a wide range of sources such as interaction by writing, that is, mostly email communication; interaction by telling and more as illustrated below. Specifically, first order findings include following data: Participant observation from 316 days presence of team members in Cairo including myself; 27 semi-structured interviews from development days; 10 informal interviews with senior management; 4 feedback sessions from focus groups each comprising up to 8 participants; approx. 800 feedback forms from performance driver workshops completed by participants; approx. 55 workshop activities¹²⁶ building around performance drivers serving as basis for knowledge transfer; approx 547 emails from the project team as basis for conversational analysis, numerous stories from team members, participants, and individuals related but external to the project; approx. 35 follow-up interviews with the project team for data verification.

Further, the chart provides an overview of the ways I transgressed the first order findings to second order findings.

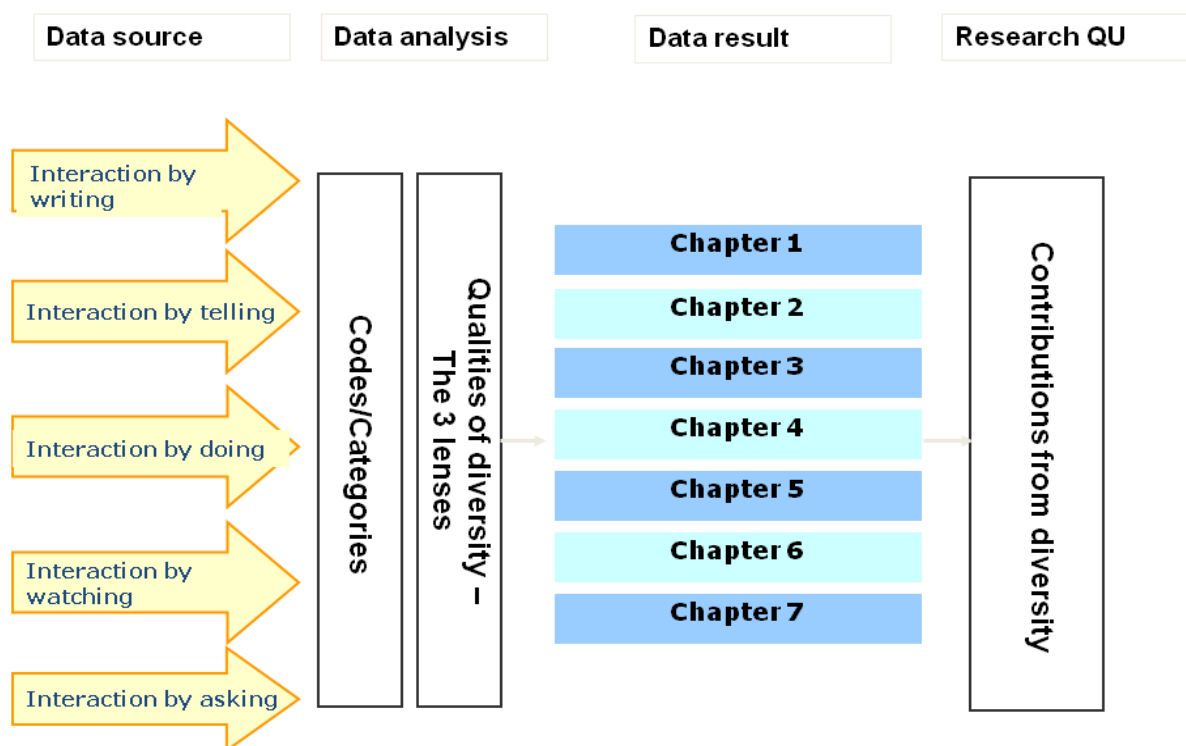


Figure 2: Research approach.

¹²⁶ Some of these activities are describe in detail in chapter 04

The available data was carefully reviewed, which included identifying patterns, coding meaningful repetitions, labelling significant iterations as well as rerunning this process several times.

As outlined at the beginning of the introduction chapter the research question examines the contributions from diversity. The contributions were identified by filtering the available data through the framework 'Three Lenses for diversity', which was one result of the data analysis and subsequently developed for this research.

Chapter 02 explores the identity construction of the individuals, who worked on the global complex project. The analysis of interaction as highlighted above brings to light the mosaic of diversity, and in what ways these individuals activated multiple affiliations of the mosaic in order to build relationships within and outside the project team. Multiple affiliations of identity construction are such as food/drink habits, gender, religion, language and also cover artefacts supporting identity creation. The analysis demonstrates the interconnectedness and interdependency among these multiple affiliations within the zone of tension of belonging and othering. The chapter concludes with a model derived from the analysis.

Chapter 03 focuses on multiple spacialities and temporalities with necessary references to religion and gender. Multiple spacialities and temporalities are idiosyncratic to working across boundaries on large and complex projects. Concretely, the chapter investigates the interaction among partly dispersed project teams members, which were subject to diverse notions of time and multiple spaces. The analysis focuses on the endeavours necessary to create connectivity. Equally, it presents the diversity necessary to think and handle multiple spacialities and temporalities required to deal with the complexity inherent to this project.

Chapter 04 'Calling the West' investigates the implications and suitability of using Western management and learning models in the target organisation. Firstly, it describes various learning approaches followed by the ways the teaching offerings were received by the participants, i. e. the Egyptian managers. Secondly, findings point to potential diversity in the learning as well as different needs in the design of learning material and the structure of its content. The result of the analysis brings to light the extent to which diversity is generated when people interact in learning settings.

Chapter 05 'From conflict to diversity' examines intercultural issues experienced on this global complex project. This chapter portrays a number of selected encounters between project members, which in the business world and the associated publications typically classify as intercultural issues and are largely viewed as disconnected from diversity. As these encounters (live cases) took place in a business environment I initially provide a short overview of current approaches towards intercultural issues in the business world. Once the context is provided, I capture the live cases, and then bridge them to diversity by viewing them through the three lenses of diversity as per research approach.

Chapter 06 'The ethical perspective' investigates the organisational values of the client organisation, which are expressed by behavioural guidelines. The analysis focuses on the various ways and methods the organisation uses to disseminate these clearly defined values within and outside the organisation. The analysis' result shows that the consistency of these value messages might contradict with the diversity people bring into this organisation.

Chapter 07 'Conclusion' captures the findings of 'Contributions from diversity'. Potential limitations of the research are summarised. Equally, future research questions this research has generated are formulated. Ultimately, the broader application from these findings will be considered in the conclusion of this chapter.

2. IDENTITY CONSTRUCTIONS

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to explore the kaleidoscope of diversity, which was brought to light in the process of working on the specific project. As diversity becomes apparent when a process is in place, I will specifically aim at these processes inherent to the interface between nodes. Specifically, these processes concentrate on the interaction among project team members, the interaction between team members and programme participants and finally, the interaction as experienced in various communication situations with individuals external to the project. The interaction among stakeholders serves as the core of the local, which accentuates the global; that is; the contextually relevant interpretation of findings on a macro-level process.

As laid out in the introduction chapter the exploration will be grounded in the analysis traditional to ethnographic research. Distinctively, for this chapter, this embraces a) the researcher's participant observations captured in thick descriptions; b) generalisations as expressed by project team members' and programme participants; c) reported incidents from programme participants; and d) reported interaction with representatives at the periphery of the project.

Some of the interaction will be illustrated by the use of discourse communication analysis, which traditionally reproduces dialogues as happened within the context as below example displays. Below conversation happened at the cashier in a large supermarket at the outskirts of Cairo and was reported by a programme participant in the course of a semi-structured interview. At the time of the dialogue he was in the role of husband who went shopping with this wife.

At the supermarket cashiers:

Wife: "He is a telecomer¹²⁷."

Husband: "How do you know?"

Wife: "Everything. Can't you see it? His posture. The way he looks around. As if he wanted to make sure that he is being seen. What he is wearing. How he is wearing it. The expression on his face. Just everything."

Husband: "She was right. I still don't know how she knew. By the time he pulled out his wallet to pay for his shopping, I saw the ID badge of our company. My wife, of course just smiled. I am still not sure how she knew."

Discourse communication includes different aspects beyond mere language use. This approach incorporates aspects from the topic-comment structures of sentences or paragraphs through the analysis of rambling conversations and jokes. Recently, it has been extended to literary discourse and whole fields of culture and symbolic systems¹²⁸. As for method applied in this chapter I will follow 'the broad range of everything which can be said or talked about or symbolised within a particular, recognizable domain'¹²⁹. From the broad range of data material available I selected conversations, which contain cues that reveal the identities underneath the presented communication. A subsequent analysis of the dialogue will highlight the implications that activate the kaleidoscope of diversity. The above example will be explored in the main section of this chapter.

This chapter's contribution to knowledge is twofold: a) it presents the constructions necessary to define and redefine one's identity in an ever-changing context; and b) herein impact the ways these individuals build relationships with one another.

The ingredients to one's identity construction are manifold as is the repertoire utilised by individuals interacting with one another. Selected examples from the versatile interaction among stakeholders on this global project will help reveal the ingredients of this process. Building on the research framework presented in the introduction chapter a

¹²⁷ A person working in telecoms.

¹²⁸ Scollon and Scollon 1995:5

¹²⁹ Scollon and Scollon 1995:5

further elaboration of theoretical concepts, relevant to this chapter will provide additional insights into the three lenses, i. e. the lens of multiple identity, the lens of perception, and finally the environmental lens.

The application of the lenses can be visualised as follows: the encounters will meet the lens equal to beam of light would meet a concave lens. As for the lens of multiple identities this process diverges the encounters from a narrow set of affiliations typically identified at first glance to a broader spectrum of affiliations.

Overall, this lens amalgamates two key concepts, firstly Hannerz's cultural make-up¹³⁰ and secondly, Sen's plural identity sensitive to context¹³¹. Both broad concepts help explain the variety of the mosaic of diversity, which includes many different aspects such as personal preferences, literacy, affluence, mobility, information and knowledge, organisational belonging, elites, organisational belonging, class, profession, employment, food habits, taste in music, social commitments and others. All these affiliations leave space to create one's mosaic of identity as highly transferable, not fixed in one place, and dwelling on the seamless relationship between contingent belonging or contingent othering.

For the lens of perception it is essential to quickly recapture the nature of the project and to understand the composition of the group of individuals explored in this research. As laid out at the beginning of this chapter the research aims at three subgroups, i. e. project team members, programme participants and finally, individuals and groups outside the immediate project team and participant groups. The group of project team members consisted of individuals from the business school and the client organisation, each presenting permanent and visiting members. The other two groups presented mostly changing representatives. Following the fact that some group members are changing leads to the question, „who is in and who is out?“

“Theories of self-identity and self-categorisation provide insights into the dynamics of cultural identity building processes involving inclusion and exclusion. According to social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981), groups construct a social reality through dividing the world into the “us” and “them”.”¹³²

¹³⁰ Hannerz 1996:58

¹³¹ Sen 2006:25

¹³² Soderberg 2003:64

In-groups tend to create a positive self-image and thereby boost their self-esteem. Herein, boundaries to other groups are being defined and re-defined as seen in the course of interaction among group members, not only through self-definition, but constructed through discourse and mutual negotiation, including both, self-definition and ascription by others.¹³³

'We' and 'them' are regarded as commonly experienced notions of identity creation, in particular at a national level are being produced and reproduced, transformed as well as deconstructed, discursively¹³⁴. This chapter will unlock the restriction of the often stressed national and argue that identity formation and negotiation in the researched group of individuals is far beyond the national and, findings will illustrate, driven by discourse and further to context.

When reflecting upon identity formation and negotiation, the notion of "stereotypes" requires some brief attention. Tajfel argues that stereotypes become meaningful only when supported by a larger number of individuals belonging to a group¹³⁵. As the individuals involved in this project kept changing with each having a diverse background, this argument may be questioned as depicted in the following selected interactions captured in incident descriptions. Triandis promotes two key arguments for the success of stereotypes becoming prominent, which are a) the degree of familiarity of the stereotyped group; and b) the amount and quality of the contact with the other group¹³⁶. Often, media and migration reinforce Triandis' findings. In the specific case of the researched global project, there did not seem to be any predefined stereotypes in the rhetoric of project members prior the start of the project. The stereotypes developed in the context of the doing, drawn to the specific context, thus were flexibly tweaked as needed and indispensable for the identity-construction of the individual working on the project. Generally, the process of constructing stereotypes seems to be a universal one while the constructed stereotypes are specific to context.

The relational aspect of identity-construction is being illustrated by a more in-depth exploration of 'Belonging' and 'Othering'. At first, a more general exploration will help

¹³³ Tajfel 1981 in Soderberg 2003:64

¹³⁴ Wodak 1999 in Soderberg 2003:65

¹³⁵ Tajfel 1981b in Abraham 1997:56

¹³⁶ Triandis 1977 in Abraham 1997:59

the reader identify the meaning of vocabulary followed by the illustration of specific examples provided by the project.

“One tendency discusses identity primarily, if not indeed exclusively, in terms of difference. This logic often overrates and essentialises “difference”. Sometimes, it represents identity only in terms of difference while at other times, it represents difference as something altogether external to identity. A fair share of the debates on “identity *and* difference” has more or less unwillingly become part of this first tendency.¹³⁷”

Selected interdisciplinary debates are strongly influenced by this tendency. Specifically, the large number of publications on intercultural issues, in particular in the business world, often utilise alterity and othering with the aim at increasing sales. I shall come back to this phenomenon in chapter 05, whereas the opposite of essentialising difference appears to crystallise as follows:

“A second tendency is oriented towards doing almost the opposite. It is inclined to criticise and condemn nearly any reference to difference/alterity/ other by denouncing it, more often than not in moralist terms. If othering and belonging are indeed mutually constitutive components of identity, then this second tendency is inclined to ignore “alterity” altogether. The outcome then may easily become one-sided towards a direction to the opposite of the first tendency, i. e. by putting too much of its emphasis upon belonging.¹³⁸”

Illustrating these two extreme tendencies was essential as I will draw on Gingrich and Baumann’s working definition as presented in the introduction chapter. Their understanding builds on the claim that othering and belonging are mutually constitutive components of identity. Building on this definition of personal and collective identities, the hypothesis for this research assumes the application of selected multiple affiliations does not only simultaneously includes sameness and differing, but promotes a seamless relationship between the two, a relationship of which the individual is often unaware. Briefly, I shall dwell on specific examples from the research illustrating plural affiliations and the effect of supposedly seamless relationship between sameness and differing as experienced in practice.

As this chapter focuses on individuals and groups and their continuous identity construction and reconstruction it is necessary to consider the impact this process has on the environment and, in turn, aspects the environment has on the process of identity

¹³⁷ Baumann, Gingrich 2004:4

¹³⁸ Gingrich in Gingrich/Baumann 2004:4

reconstruction. For this purpose Appadurai's notion of ethnoscaples and ideoscaples¹³⁹ will serve as essential ingredients of the environmental lens.

Idiosyncratic to the groups analysed in this chapter is that the social, territorial, and cultural reproduction of their group identities¹⁴⁰ is a fact. This idiosyncrasy is best reflected in the notion of ethnoscaples, i. e., the landscapes of group identity.

Another consideration is the continuous migration of some the groups researched and the regrouping in new locations, which requires a non-localised ethnography as presented in this study. With this in mind, another of Appadurai's notions, namely deterritorialisation will be of further concern.

“It seems impossible to study these new cosmopolitans fruitfully without analysing the transnational cultural flows within which they thrive, compete, and feed off one another in ways that defeat and confound many verities of the human sciences today. One such truth concerns the link between space, stability, and cultural reproduction. There is an urgent need to focus on the cultural dynamics of what is now called deterritorialisation.¹⁴¹”

Inherent to deterritorialisation is the ceaseless transfer of worldviews characteristic to individual's and group's regrouping and shifting in multiple places. In the light of this shifting process one more of the scapes come into account, i. e. the ideoscaples.

“These ideoscaples are composed of elements of the Enlightenment worldview, which consists of a chain of ideas, terms, and images, including *freedom, welfare, rights, sovereignty, representation*, and the master term *democracy*. The master narrative of Enlightenment (and its many variants in Britain, France, and the United States) was constructed with a certain internal logic and presupposed a certain relationship between reading, representation, and public sphere.¹⁴²”

It is human beings who are representatives of the reading, representation, and the public sphere who shifts between ideoscaples by global complex projects as presented in this study. With this contribution they ride the wave of globalisation, which leads to the question of the elitist aspect in their doing. These cosmopolitans shift between the local and the global. The interaction among themselves as well as their interaction with the locals in various locales serves as an ideal basis for this analysis.

¹³⁹ Appadurai 2005:35 ff

¹⁴⁰ Appadurai 2005:48

¹⁴¹ Appadurai 2005:49

¹⁴² Appadurai 2005:36

The working definition of elites for now is the one by Marcus, which will be tested against necessary adaptation in the course of this chapter:

“ ... elites can be characterised as those who occupy the most influential positions or roles in the important spheres of social life. They are typically incumbents: the leaders, rulers and decision-makers in any sector of society, or custodians of the machinery of policy making. Elites are thus “makers” or “shakers”: groups whose ‘cultural capital’ positions them above their fellow citizens and whose decisions crucially shape what happens in the wider society. Equally important, they are the groups that dominate what Elias (1978) called the ‘means of orientation’: people whose ideas and interests are hegemonic¹⁴³. ”

2.2. CONSTRUCTING IDENTITIES

In this section I present some selected encounters, which transpired in the course of working on this global complex project. The encounters demonstrate insights into the identity construction of the three groups researched, which will be further analysed in the discussion section.

2.2.1. WHERE ARE THE BOXES?

The dialogue displayed below mirrors a situation, which literally happened prior to every programme throughout the entire project. The situation describes two team members searching for materials indispensable for conducting the performance driver workshops. These materials were packed in boxes at the business school in England and shipped to the client organisation in Egypt, which stored the received materials in a place adjacent to the seminar venue. The boxes included workbooks, handouts, psychometric tests, supporting materials such as coaching cards, balls, and binders and writing materials.

Team member 01: „Where are the boxes? “

Team member 02: „Hm, let us check behind the large video screen. Usually, a good guess. Last time we found a couple of things there.“

¹⁴³ Marcus 1983a:9 in Shore and Nugent 2002:4

Team member 01: „I have already. Bad luck. No sight of any newly arrived boxes.“

Team member 02: „What about the walk-in cabinets in the corners of the seminar rooms?“

Team member 01: „Ok, let’s spread out.“

Team member 02: „I found some stuff from the last module; it doesn’t seem to be what we are needing. I’ll go and join Jane in the next door room.“

Team member 01: „I have been on my knees for the last half an hour going through these boxes; there seem to be heaps of psychometrics for influencing and leading, but no stuff for change management. We should just once make the effort and count and label everything. This is quite messy. What are we going to do if we don’t find the required material for the next days? Empty hands may not look too good.“

Team member 02: „Have you been through that box? “

Team member 01: „Yes, I have. There is one more further back, maybe you could go through this one. “

Team member 02: „I did not expect so much physical exercise when I agreed to working on this assignment. Sometimes I wonder why I have all these academic degrees and then I end up on my knees ransacking boxes. Did I really fly 2,300 miles for this? And does this activity really require a visa in one’s passport? God, just another page wasted.“

This short dialogue illustrates the numerous experienced process of searching for material required to deliver work professionally. The material gets prepared, labelled, counted, and packed in boxes in one of the locales, that is, England and shipped to another, namely Egypt. This standard process is routinely executed to places all over the globe, whereas delivery problems were experienced frequently in Egypt. The standard process of shipping materials failed, not just once as illustrated in the above dialogue, but repeatedly. This resulted in time-consuming searches at the seminar venue at the start and at the end of long working days, which frequently lead to frustration and aggravation, often expressed by using certain stereotypes.

The material was needed to demonstrate a professional performance at a consistent level. As all team members were similarly affected by the absence of the material phrases such as “They (the Egyptians) never get it right, they are always late” were commonly spelled out. Occasionally, the situational stereotype was further developed to “They are always late with everything”.

All team members joined into the spiral for blaming the Egyptians for the non-functionality of things in Cairo. Irrespective of background and experience each of the team members contributed to this kind of conversation. Noticeably, the complaints grew stronger at times when team members were tired, stressed and exhausted. This situation caused the team members to specifically accuse the Egyptian Customs. At one point, the Egyptian client stated that we have to accept that the customs in Egypt is not the same as in Europe and as a result the delivery of boxes of materials would not necessarily be straight-forward.

It was a Sunday at 2300pm after a long strenuous working day¹⁴⁴, when we again faced delivering workshops with materials missing. With no assistance available in England at this time I started investigating the whereabouts of the boxes myself. With no help accessible at the business school the identification of the shipping number of the boxes turned out to be a major endeavour. I checked the yellow surface of the webpage of the courier company trying to navigate through the page identifying the line to insert the shipping number of the missing boxes. There was no feedback from the website. I had to wait until Monday late morning, Cairo time, until the programme manager was back in the office in England for further investigation. On a Sunday evening two hours were sunk into this endeavour.

The feedback we finally received was most surprising, questioning all stereotypes team members had ever brought up in reference to the missing boxes. The sought after material was stuck at Heathrow airport. Apparently, this was not bound to one single instance, but materials frequently got stuck in England.

The unexpected had happened. In times of stress and exhaustion the careful exploration and the capability for reflexivity went missing leading to the adoption of quick and ready-made stereotypes usually building on fault-finding based on national identities. A more detailed exploration of this example and its implications for identity creation will follow in the discussion section.

¹⁴⁴ The working week in Egypt starts on Sunday morning and goes through Thursday evening.

2.2.2. CHECK-IN

One identity-creating measure the team members introduced was the check-in procedure at the beginning each workshop. By placing a reception desk in front of the seminar rooms, equipped with blank nametags only featuring one number for the table allocation team members were able to engage in an early conversation with programme participants. This allowed us to explain the mix of large group events and parallel workshops and the swap within one day from one style to another and to invite them to write down their name on one of the pre-numbered stickers in either English or Arabic or both. Also, the team members invited them for a coffee prior the start of the day's programme. All of the team members, then in the role of facilitators wore a nametag, some written in Arabic¹⁴⁵, some in English. My Arabic handwriting, most likely the equivalent of an Arab child of roughly eight years raised quite some positive attention leading to numerous questions regarding my skills and knowledge. By this, we managed to build on selected shared traits, which are knowledge of script and knowledge of first names in Arabic.

The fact that in Arabic one writes only "long" vowels led to different suggestions how to spell my first name 'Priya' as I am commonly known – the combination "i-y-a" is a tricky one, the "p" is usually written as "b" or borrowed from Farsi, again a spot where my colleague originally from Iran comfortably merged into interaction with participants. People in the client organisation usually wrote their first names in English as soon as Westerners joined in, all of a sudden 'we' the Westerners, invited them to use Arabic script, a new experience after all. After the initial contact at the reception desk, which brought to light the fact that not all team members were English as the assumption was, programme participants either engaged in some informal conversations among themselves or simply proceeded to the assigned seminar room.

Again, affiliations - regardless whether immutable or acquired at some stage in life - can create both belonging and othering as the process is highly contextual to recipients and the overall situation.

¹⁴⁵ One of my colleagues originally from Iran and me produced handwritten tags for each team member/facilitator prior the programme start.

2.2.3. “ANA MIN NIMSA”¹⁴⁶

“’ismy Priya. ’ana min nimsa. ’ana nimsawiyya, wa’lakin al’an ’ana a’yš qarib min London. ’ahlan wa’sahlan henna fi ’ahira, we are from ... ¹⁴⁷”

This introduction at the beginning of work sessions typically delivered in a mish-mash of Arabic and English demonstrates sameness with first language Arabic speakers present in the room and in the same moment of creating positive emotionality for one group of people it creates othering for those not understanding nor speaking Arabic, but English only. Displaying language skills in Arabic is usually rare for non-native speakers and calls not only for admiration in respect to this skill. Much more it means appreciation and respect for first language speakers building on belonging and thus creating We-ness. Moreover, at the early stage of interaction references to Al-Fishawi¹⁴⁸, El-Baradei, and Naguib Mahfouz displayed inside knowledge about “them” contributing to this sense of taking over Egyptian identity for a few moments.

Further to some appreciative feedback regarding my place of origin I kept stressing that detail. In particular, senior managers in their 40s and 50s demonstrated political memory of the 1970s and 80s when Bruno Kreisky, the Austrian chancellor and Yasser Arafat undertook great efforts in addressing the crises in the region.

Another example greatly dwells on the affiliation of profession and type of association with one of the involved organisations. One of the team members has a dual citizenship; that is; British and American. Her place of residence is Vienna and she worked in the role of associate for the British business school. Among other languages she speaks German and American English. These features clearly bring forward a number of affiliations. In order to emphasize this diversity, she introduced herself to the team members by building on her British heritage by saying, “My father was British.” When introducing herself to the programme participants, she provided great clarity of her association with the British business school by spelling out her specific role of associate.

¹⁴⁶ „I am from Austria.“

¹⁴⁷ „My name is Priya. I am from Austria; I am Austrian, however currently live near London. We welcome you here in Cairo, ...“

¹⁴⁸ Famous coffee house in down town Cairo

Only after a couple of self-introductions, having been prompted by the team members employed at the British business school, she dropped spelling out her associate role. The suggestion was brought forward to demonstrate belonging to one of the organisations regardless the type of employment or association. Moreover it did not have any relevance to the programme participants after all.

Contingent to the programme context this team member and myself actively utilised belonging and othering by stepping into each other's heritage, nationality, and location of current residence, when working together. The following introduction to participants highlights the swap in roles:

“I am Helena, originally from America, however I am half British, and I live in the place where Priya originally comes from, however she does not live there anymore. She will tell you more about it.”

“As Helena said, I am Priya; I am originally from Vienna, but am now based in England. This means that Helena gets to drink the drinkable coffee as Vienna is a place known for its coffee houses.”

This playful handling of selected affiliations, which are essential elements of the team members' identity, triggered many joyful conversations leading to great learning about similar multiple affiliations of programme participants. In addition it elicited rich stories about friends and family living in Vienna from programme participants.

Identity can create flows by the means of communication for both, the very location where it takes place and across larger spatial boundaries, i. e. across a few thousand kilometres and via a number of speakers. May it be by email or over the phone, the news such as “I heard you were in al-Fishawi and had a mango juice” travelled fast.

Language in general appears to be one of the significant affiliations as the following incident of the importance of the role of Egyptian Arabic underpins. Noticeably, the location of the occurrence is geographically distant to the place where the language is spoken; the speakers involved come from geographically dispersed places.

I sat in the hotel lounge of a small downtown Stockholm business hotel, where I was joined by a couple of Arab men and women, who by appearance can be presumed to be business delegates. The seating arrangement did not allow one to ignore the conversation. In addition, one of the group members detected the name tag hand-written in Arabic attached to my laptop, which he used to initiate a conversation with me. My assumption on him being Egyptian turned out to be errant as soon as he explained that he came from Morocco.

I: "So why do you speak Egyptian Arabic?"

Man: "So we can understand each other. She is from Palestine, he is from Iraq, he is from Algeria, he is from Tunisia, and she is from Syria."

How do you know that I speak Egyptian?"

I: "I can understand most of it."

In this case Egyptian Arabic serves as an interconnecting force across a vast territory and across various nation-states. Egyptian Arabic is no standard national language and is often even viewed as inferior by speakers of classical Arabic. Nevertheless, it is used as a lingua franca across the Arab world. In the specific case the business delegates who were attending a water seminar and who represented geographical diversity from Morocco to Iraq used Egyptian as their lingua franca. In this capacity, it serves as a vehicle for creating belonging. The example illustrates the importance of Egyptian Arabic, which is one explanation why Egyptians take such pride in it and thus show great appreciation for individuals who make the effort of learning it.

2.2.4.PENS

Another identity-creating cultural commodity is a merchandising product, namely a company pen made available by the client organisation featuring the corporate colour and logo held in a futuristic and haptic design. Each workshop participant received one such pen at the beginning of the workshop together with the workbook and a writing pad. On several workshops after the first morning participants asked if more pens were available. Upon inquiry where the pens, which were handed out at the start of each workshop had gone, participants simply said that they did not know. As pens were scarce, this resulted in small groups of participants sharing one pen for the duration of the workshop. After the pattern of disappearing pens was uncovered the team members developed a coping strategy. At the beginning of each workshop they stated as follows: "We ask you to hold on to the pen until the end of programme". While coping with the shortage of pens team members' comments on their disappearance were along the line of "there must be a black hole somewhere in Cairo and it is now filled with pens". As with the non-durable nametags again, this highly desired status symbol

is one means to illustrate belonging with the highly educated, highly professionally skilled, and highly mobile individuals¹⁴⁹ of the world-wide managerial class, hence representative to the nerve-centre of world economy¹⁵⁰, for which Cairo certainly stands¹⁵¹.

2.2.5. THEY ARE MUSLIMS!

This section provides insights into some expressions of over-essentialising the affiliations of religion and gender in order to explain encounters, which had not been experienced until then.

Commonly, in business affairs the contract between the business partners includes a section of terms and conditions, which typically contains a detailed definition as to which expenses are covered. In this case, the client stated very clearly that consumed alcohol must not be included in any of the subsistence bills, but have to be paid by the team members themselves. My role required me to pass on this message to the team members. The following encounter illustrates how team members managed the client guidelines. The incident happened in a high-end restaurant in downtown Cairo where the senior manager in charge of the programme at client end had invited the team members for dinner.

“I prefer to have Mango juice”, the senior manager announced at the opening of the official dinner in the role of host. Everybody not only heard and understood the expression, but also adhered to the host’s guideline.

At this event each team member regardless of background and personal preference had a non-alcoholic drink with the dinner in order to express respect for the host’s personal preference. Nevertheless, subsequent to the dinner invitation the notion of ‘mango-juice’ became a running joke among the team members throughout the project duration and beyond. The joke spread across multiple locations, where team members worked and lived and was used in personal, telephone, and email communication. Equally, the joke took a number of creative spins as expressed in a conversation be-

¹⁴⁹ Hannerz 1996:129

¹⁵⁰ Friedmann and Wolff 1982:320 in Hannerz 1996:129

¹⁵¹ Hannerz 1996:128

tween two team members outside Egypt, “Oh, you are off to Mango-juice country; I hope it goes well.” The first part of the line indicates that Egypt was perceived as a non-alcohol consuming entity whereas the second part of the line refers to the programme and its quality of delivery.

Furthermore, individuals external to the project made further references to the consumption of non-alcoholic drinks in Egypt. Phrases expressed in places outside Egypt illustrate the process of over-essentialising the affiliation of religion for explaining something outside the own scope. Phrases were, “That is an Islamic country. One doesn't even get a drink there!” Beyond the fact that Egypt is not an Islamic country the statement displays the inextricable link in some individual's perception between the consumption of alcohol and religion.

In contrast to the stressed affiliation of religion, the following incident, which took place in the team member community is again a reference to alcohol consumption, nevertheless stresses different affiliations of identity.

“I like wine”, one team member stated in order to show participation in some of the team members' interest and to demonstrate knowledge in this area, although the team member was fully aware of interacting in a country with a predominantly Muslim population. Upon inquiry she explained her reason for this approach as follows: “As a woman I tried to establish a relationship with the men among the team, once we socialised in the restaurant. I believe to understand a bit about wine and clearly wanted demonstrate my knowledge with males who seemed to share the same interest.” This team member's observation of a selected group of team members consisting of Muslims and non-Muslims who routinely socialised over glass of wine and other alcoholic drinks in the restaurant and later in the day in the hotel bar helped her building sameness based on technical expertise. Activating this affiliation the female team member tried to establish belonging with some of the male counterparts.

Nonetheless aware of the external environment and herein certain limitations regarding the consumption of alcohol this team member activated very consciously the affiliations of gender and technical expertise.

Some of the team members did not consume alcohol independent of religious affiliation, if they were Sikh, Muslims or Christians and were made fun of by some of the team members who routinely consumed alcohol. The grouping between those who consumed alcohol versus those who did not drink grew even more obvious once the group of the non-alcohol consumers started looking into alternative recreational habits

different from the alcohol consumers who typically socialised at the bar in the evening. Alternative recreational habits included going to the gym or exploring Cairo for more educational purposes.

The divide between team members consuming alcohol versus those who did not became quite dominant to an extent to which other affiliations such as gender, age, appearance or nationality became unimportant.

Nevertheless, one observed strategy to bridge the gap was the activation of humour usually expressed by teasing the respective other group. In addition to the running joke of 'mango-juice' teasing and making fun of each other helped reconnecting with the other, a strategy often adopted in order to demonstrate close relationship¹⁵². In this specific case, humour served as a strategy to express belonging to the other attempting to override other affiliations in order to bridge gaps within the in-group of team members.

For project outsiders religion as an affiliation seemed to be the first eye-catcher when inquiring about the project. In contrast to project outsiders project insiders such as programme participants regularly overrode the affiliation of religion activating alternative affiliations as the following example demonstrates.

Mutual concerns regarding work-life-balance were expressed between female programme and female team members by activating affiliations such as combining work with a career focus and equally managing a private life. Typically, this subject matter was brought forward by younger Egyptian women addressing female team members in settings away from the formal groups; i.e. informal conversations during breaks. These conversations largely draw on shared traits among female team members and female programme participants around the accommodation of a work-life balance. This interest overcame some potential othering often ascribed to appearance, geography, climate and the importance of marital status. Once again, this questions the overly emphasized reliance on religion-based classification as the sole affiliation of identity aiming at the commonly shared perception of the inferior status of women in Muslim societies. Again, individuals external to the project would stress this perception as expressed in a conversation with me, "You are a woman. Isn't that difficult leading a project there?" or "Do you have to wear a headscarf down there?"

¹⁵² Schneider and Barsoux's 1993:293

2.2.6.THE FAMILY NAME

The following encounter displays the close line between the tangible, hence easily recognisable affiliation often yielding to commonly held stereotypes.

The short informal conversation took place in a pub outside London; a location which is known as a well-off English community. My conversation partner is a senior English business professional, who has a family name of Semitic origin.

Business professional: "So, you are working in Egypt now. Isn't that dangerous?"

I: "Why?"

Business professional: "Oh God, are you not afraid with a Semitic name like yours among all these Arabs."

I: "So what are you trying to say?"

Business professional: "It is dangerous. I wouldn't do that."¹⁵³

I: "Actually, it is the other way round. I have been harassed only here because of my family name whilst people in Cairo express appreciation by translating my name into 'Ibrahim; nor am I monolingual; nor do I come from a former colonial power."¹⁵⁴

At the time of the conversation I had already experienced a number of inquiries on commonly held views about a Semitic family name and its implication in the Egyptian environment. Therefore my reply included a number of stressed affiliations, which the conversation partner had not addressed overtly.

Building on Gingrich's definition of belonging and othering identifying identities as multidimensional and contradictory, processually configured, enacted and transformed, this short dialogue demonstrates this relation between belonging and othering in a condensed fashion. The family name issue dwells on the diversity mosaic utilising family heritage, religion, and ethnicity. In addition, work content across geographic boundaries necessitating the earlier mosaic elements to swap from othering to belonging and

¹⁵³ The professional has a Semitic family name.

¹⁵⁴ A former colonial power to Egypt

vice versa within one turn-taking¹⁵⁵ (that is, the way in which the two interlocutors coordinate whose turn it is to speak) is an ever-present aspect of almost all interactions.

Specifically, the business professional and I may share membership to one specific identity, but this becomes seamlessly a contrasting one¹⁵⁶, when plurality is added the by Egyptians “pulling” me towards an “Ibrahim” identity.

“The incitement to ignore all affiliation and loyalties other than those emanating from one restrictive identity can be deeply delusive and also contribute to social tension and violence¹⁵⁷.”

Leaving violence aside in this pub conversation, there are a number of potentially viable and relevant identities which are suitable and of importance in order to respond to the situation.

In the final turn-taking my response to the openly expressed fear further expands the kaleidoscope to language and history, both repeatedly and omnipresent impacting the identity creation process among the individuals working on this project. This is illustrated with more incidents captured throughout this work.

In contrast to awareness of plural affiliations, belonging and othering can be expressed openly as displayed by the following statement provided by one of the team members:

„Often, working overseas¹⁵⁸ includes participants from many countries. In Egypt almost everyone was Egyptian so we had to face company and national cultures, which were held by all participants.¹⁵⁹“

The illusion of owning or being owned by one single affiliation of the diversity mosaic narrows down richness:

“... there is a different kind of reductionism, which we may call “singular affiliation”, which takes the form of assuming that any person pre-eminently belongs, for all practical purposes, to one collectivity only – no more and no less¹⁶⁰.”

¹⁵⁵ Sacks H, Schegloff E. A., Jefferson G. (1974) in Ward, Al Bayyari 2008:Paper to be published

¹⁵⁶ Sen 2006:28

¹⁵⁷ Sen 2006:21

¹⁵⁸ The term „overseas“ when used in Great Britain refers to any location beyond the country’s shores. This includes e. g. Europe.

¹⁵⁹ One individual’s response to the question „ How does the Egypt experience compare with other overseas delivery you have undertaken?“

¹⁶⁰ Sen 2006:20

The assumed homogeneity expressed by the key informer may say more about the speaker than those spoken about, but features othering by simplifying ‘them’ by reducing existing variety to one language, which is Arabic, to one ethnic group, to one religion, to one geographical locale. It was mostly English first language speakers who applied this ‘unique boxing’ when referring to ‘the Egyptians’. At the same time, the people addressed tended to stress repeatedly their place of origin as an identity creating force in order to express either belonging with or othering from one another. Commonly brought forward expressions were, “I am from Upper Egypt¹⁶¹”; “I am from Alex¹⁶²”.

One more expression of boxing was the commonly stressed phrase of “down there”, again used by first language speakers when referring to places in the Middle East including Egypt. By drawing on one affiliation, in this specific case geography, speakers clearly stress othering by referring to “them” by using the word “down”. Irrespective of the intended geographic orientation towards south it implies potential inferiority.

“Where are the boxes” in the literal sense turned to be one of the catch-phrases at an early stage of this action net. The reference to the physical representation can be viewed as a metaphor for the “boxing” of individuals working on this action net. Boxing in this sense is the process of constructing social reality by assigning people to existing and commonly accepted categories, such as religion and gender. This will be explored in the following section.

2.3. DISCUSSION

This section will look at the encounters described in the section Constructing identities through the three lenses of diversity. Some of the encounters demonstrate the ways as to how one individual or group reduces the other individual or group to one exclusive affiliation such as the conversation on the family name shows.

By nature, individuals as presented in all three groups, i. e. the team members, the programme participants, and stakeholders external to the project are not restricted to

¹⁶¹ That is, the south of Egypt as opposed to Lower Egypt, i. e. the north of Egypt.

¹⁶² Short version of Alexandria.

belonging to one single identity, but to a great number of affiliations. This plural affiliation¹⁶³ Sen illustrates as follows:

“For one thing, the importance of a particular identity will depend on the social context. For example, when going to a dinner, one’s identity as a vegetarian may be rather more crucial than one’s identity as a linguist, whereas the latter may be particularly important if one considers going to a lecture on linguistic studies. This variability does nothing to rehabilitate the assumption of singular affiliation, but it illustrates the need to see the role of choice in a context-specific way¹⁶⁴.”

A strong awareness of one’s own plural affiliation or in Hannerz’s terminology the cultural make-up¹⁶⁵ is helpful in the process of breaking through stereotypes. In particular, the situational building and re-building of the composition of this make-up is essential when addressing potential shared views as the family name dialogue illustrates.

Individuals in the presented encounters were often subject to covertly and overtly expressed stereotypes. This will be dealt with in the section covering the lens of perception. As for the environmental lens the notion of ethnoscapes and ideoscapes will be of interest for the analysis.

Viewing the encounters through the **lens of multiple identity** explains the dominance of affiliations, which can be easily captured such as gender and religion as opposed to affiliations, which are more difficult to grasp. The dialogue on searching for the boxes reveals little about easily graspable or tangible affiliation of the participating individuals. Instead, it enforces the activity-based affiliation of doing something together with the action aiming at a positive result. The various searches for boxes served as an identity-creating activity, in which the boxes became an artefact filled with meaning typically expressed by ‘Where are the boxes?’ The connection between boxes and searches was taken to locales other than the programme space, namely to any location where team members reconnected who were involved in the various searches.

Equally, the encounters in the case of the shipped materials elicit the often essentialised “Egyptians” as a national characteristic as stated by Wodak as opposed to the large number of affiliations brought forward to work against this stereotype:

¹⁶³ Sen 2006:26

¹⁶⁴ Sen 2006:25

¹⁶⁵ Hannerz 1996:58

“According to our constructionist perspective on nationalist discourses, the frequently articulated ideas of specific national characteristics and attributes must be treated as ‘a mere stereotypical phantasmagoria’.”¹⁶⁶

The reduction to the national identity became irrelevant once the true whereabouts of the boxes were detected. In addition, the case brings forward the professional affiliation as presented in the general mistrust in customs officials.

Another identity-creating artefact is the nametag in the form of a small sticky piece of paper, which carried meaning beyond its physical presentation and intended use. Beyond the level of mere artefact showing first names, which allowed a personalised form of addressing the participants, the nametags turned to a symbol of meaning featuring a positive ascription. The cause of this transformation was connected to the capabilities displayed by some team members expressed in language and script command. These capabilities were surfaced as required by context and were assigned with positive ascriptions. Clearly, in any other context these capabilities would not have crystallized because of the absence of any immediate need. These context-sensitive affiliations loaded with positive ascriptions build some ability-based identity, which through combination with the artefact helped bridge the perceived divide between team members and participants.

The interactions at the check-in desk present a first shift from tangible identities to intangible identities. Tangible affiliations such as age, gender, appearance became less important to the advantage of the intangible identities such as the ability-based affiliation. This was reached through the activation of this affiliation by some careful consideration and planning.

The pens as representation of organisational identity exhibit yet another artefact filled with meaning. Team members took remaining pens, if any, to places in Europe where upon identification with the client organisation they triggered many conversations regarding the project. The exact whereabouts of the pens the programme participants took, are unknown. The assumption is that their disappearance is correlated to the fact that they are sought-after identity-creating instruments.

Affiliations in the vignette on ‘Ana min nimsa’ were nationality, language, place of origin and place of residence. These were actively applied and accompanied by visible affiliations such as age and gender. The additions on historical and political overlaps dem-

¹⁶⁶ Wodak 1999 in Soderberg 2003:66

onstrate that affiliations can emerge from interactions and can be applied situationally. Equally, the playful use of a colleague's affiliations demonstrates insight to the subject matter of multiple identities. Obviously, both team members had lived and worked outside their place of origin, which might have required them to reflect to some degree on their affiliations.

The various encounters captured in the section 'They are Muslims' contain a great number of affiliations. Interactions across all three groups, i. e. team members, programme participants, and stakeholders external to the project show however, an over-reliance on religion and gender. Seemingly, religion and gender serve as an all-encompassing and exclusive identity, often confrontationally ascribed to woman wearing a headscarf of one or the other form, which does not obliterate Muslim women from responsible choices in many spheres of life¹⁶⁷. Equally, religion gets equated with the abstinence from alcohol, which as demonstrated by some of the encounters, gets overpowered by personal preferences displayed by the individual. Clearly, the detailed analysis of multiple affiliations assists in dissolving commonly held stereotypes about Muslims and alcohol consumption.

In the case of the 'Family name' encounter selected affiliations are once more singled out in order to justify commonly held views about another group, which, in this case, the person had not even had exposure to.

Viewing the encounters through the **lens of perception** provides insight as to how belonging and othering are dialogically related by simultaneously being embedded in the immediate context. Also, this lens shows how stereotypes can generate self-fulfilling prophecies as the encounters related to the boxes demonstrate.

"They (the Egyptians) never get it right", expresses some defined othering. Consequently, the opposite view means, "we (the team members) always get it right". This positive self-image causes the other to adopt the role of 'the bad'. Further to Tajfel, stereotypes become meaningful only when supported by a larger number of individuals belonging to a group, which was the case at the business school once the story of the boxes had travelled all the way to Britain. As a result, the client behaved according to the team members' and business school's expectations, namely by accepting the blame. The client apologetically explained that things were slower in Egypt and "we are

¹⁶⁷ Sen 2006:14

not as efficient as you are” and accused the Egyptian customs of the mess. In some cases the boxes were stuck at the Egyptian customs. However, as the case illustrates they also got stuck at Heathrow airport. Thus, it can be argued that the team members and the client fell into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The encounters at the check-in showcase an artefact creating belonging versus othering. Firstly, the nametags served as a status symbol for participants. For the duration of the workshops they showed that they participated in a management development programme once they moved around the organisation’s premises. This label assigned them belonging to a certain hierarchical level, that is, senior management.

Equally, they helped bridging the potentially perceived divide between ‘us’, the team members and mostly Westerners, and ‘them’, the participants. The artefacts gave some of the team members the opportunity to demonstrate skills and knowledge at an early stage, which otherwise might not have surfaced until much later. This was essential for creating belonging at the first encounter based on establishing trust. This shared trait based on skills and knowledge, which helped create belonging with the participants simultaneously created difference or othering among the team members. Specifically, it created othering between those who did not demonstrate this capability as opposed to those who did.

Politics and history present affiliations, which can equally create belonging or othering. The participants’ activation of their political memory of the 1970s and 80s when Yasser Arafat Bruno and Kreisky undertook great efforts in addressing the crises in the region assisted in building belonging with those team members with a close association to Austria.

Othering from any association with ‘Britishness’ was a strategy expressed by purposely stating my place of origin, i. e. Vienna, and thus distancing myself from the former colonial power with all its problems¹⁶⁸ and memories linked to this period in history.

“The conflict between the priorities and demands of different identities can be significant both for contrasting and for noncontrasting categories. It is not so much that a person has to deny one identity to give priority to another, but rather that a person with plural identities has to decide, in case of conflict, on the relative importance of the different identities for the particular decision in question¹⁶⁹.”

¹⁶⁸ Sen 2006:85

¹⁶⁹ Sen 2006:29

In the specific situation there is no conflict in the sense of potential violence as in Sen's writing, but a potent conflict in the sense of creating belonging with the participants in the room whilst creating othering with other team members also present in the room. For members of the former colonial power witnessing the interaction with the representatives of the client organisation this clearly categorises as othering although we were from the same organisation representing the same interest.

Over-essentialising religion as in the 'They are Muslims' and 'The family name' cases causes othering to a great extent. The process of over-essentialising one affiliation limits the diversity spectrum twofold: a) other affiliations essential for one's identity construction are completely ignored, and b) it leads to stereotyping as openly expressed by the application of the mango juice phrase or by putting 'them' in the role of 'the dangerous'. The connection automatically made between religion and abstinence from alcohol over time lost its relevance within the team member group, however that change in perspective was never transferred to the participant group nor to individuals external to the project.

Overall, the encounters illustrate the seamless dialogical relationship between belonging and othering possible within one single interaction in the shortest possible time. Individuals in interaction greatly dwell on multiple affiliations of the diversity mosaic, that is age, politics, history, and citizenship, each one meaning belonging to one individual whilst othering to another.

Viewing the incidents through **the environmental lens** will highlight the interconnectedness between ethnoscaples and ideoscaples.

The boxes in their physical expression seem to be idiosyncratic for the non-physical forms of working on this project. The 'boxes' frequently ascribed to 'Egyptians', 'Austrians', 'English' and their respective ideas and images got dissolved over the course of this project and needed reconstruction in response to the ideas and images encountered in the environment. The boxes, which are a simple form for transporting goods adopted a new meaning once they kept going missing. As the physical boxes went missing or happened to be in another physical space, so did boxes of ascriptions and categorisations, which got dissolved when working on this global project.

As laid out earlier ideoscaples comprise images of freedom, welfare, and democracy. In regard to this project the addition of the image of professionalism appears reasonable. This image was one of the reasons why the Egyptian client decided to buy from a British business school, which clearly got disrupted once the material was not in its place.

The encounters at the check-in desks present a conscious cultural reproduction of group identity of members, who were temporarily deterritorialised. In the moment of the encounters the team members reconstructed their history, which was further narrated when back in England.

Both, the check-in situations and the 'Ana min nimsa' encounters illustrate the cultural heterogeneity of the team member group. They also reflect the individual's spatial unboundedness. As a result of the displayed cultural heterogeneity the Egyptian participants realised that the team members did not bring a set of homogenised ideas, terms, and images ascribed to Britain, but needed to reconstruct the images they had of the representatives of the business school.

The encounters captured in 'They are Muslims' illustrate the image of supposed freedom, which some team members expressed by carrying on drinking behaviours as typical to other project situations and independent from the environment. Equally, other team members did not suppose this image nor insist on it and reflected this by the cultural reproduction of their own subgroup identity. This practice reflects the interconnectedness between ethnoscaples and ideoscaples.

2.4. CONCLUSION

As illustrated in the above sections the creation and recreation of identity is based on the activation of selected affiliations available from the full range of the mosaic stones of one's cultural make-up. This recurring and ongoing series of actions supports the process of relationship building. As relationship building between representatives from the business school and the client organisation was critical for the success of the project, I will further highlight the mindset and the competencies necessary to achieve this.

Specifically, I dwell on Hannerz's notion of cosmopolitans¹⁷⁰ as portrayed in chapter one. It explains both, a) the mindset that supports work with the diversity mosaic and b) it expands on additionally necessary skills of reflective awareness, which assist build-

¹⁷⁰ Hannerz 1996:102

ing relationships particularly when working on complex global projects as is the researched.

Hannerz's¹⁷¹ understanding of cosmopolitans can be summarised as follows: a) it refers to a state of mind of managing meaning; b) it refers to individuals' orientation and their willingness to engage with the other by showing an intellectual and aesthetic openness; and c) the desire to immerse oneself in other cultures, or in any case be free to do so. They want to be participants in the local culture, or at least do not want to be too readily identifiable as outsiders, even though they situation might represent a "home plus" approach, e. g. plus servants, plus sunshine, plus adventure.

Whilst Hannerz builds greatly on the willingness to engage with others, I claim that mere willingness reduces the endeavour to a mere spirit of adventure.

Regarding the findings from this chapter I suggest some adaptations to Hannerz's notion. These are: a) changing into the role of participant is in many cases not possible because of the visibility of tangible affiliations; b) willingness to engage is only of limited assistance on a project, for example, when team members have to achieve one common goal and engagement and collaboration is required by external forces.

Beyond willingness to engage and immersion into the other culture I believe that it requires competence in activating selected multiple affiliations of one's identity construction in order to a) enter a state of readiness to find a way into a culture and build interconnectedness with the same or, conversely to, distance oneself consciously from the same; and by that b) display a carefully acquired and nurtured interpersonal skill in manoeuvring meaning of a particular system in a given context in the zone of tension between belonging and othering, which c) in turn necessitates an understanding in more than one language helping to abstract and manage meaning. Utilizing the cultural make-up by consciously adding, omitting or adapting as required and adequate to context certainly requires reflected awareness. With these contingencies in mind I suggest the term 'reflective cosmopolitans'.

Another frequently observed characteristic of cosmopolitans is the fact that global life occupies the majority of time and space of one's current life as opposed to local life¹⁷². At the time of the project quite a number of the team members lived and worked in a

¹⁷¹ Hannerz 1996:102

¹⁷² Tomlinson 1999:9

way that allowed and even welcomed the above competencies and idiosyncrasies. This mobility covered life and work in form of more a global than a local life¹⁷³ and the use of more than two languages; that is with an impressive number of cases up to four languages. Reportedly, this would be perceived as impressive by English first language speakers, who in great majority have not mastered to acquire a second language to an extent that it could serve as a means of communication. Marcus's¹⁷⁴ request for multilingual fieldwork had become a long-lasting reality for many of the project team. With this mind mobility and multilingualism became integral affiliations in the identity creation of team members, which produces a clear divide in this subgroup between those who were in as opposed to those who were out.

2.4.1. RE-MODELLING EXISTING MINDSETS

Subsequent to the findings in this chapter it necessitates re-tooling the existing mindsets and dominant approaches of identity construction. Re-tooling includes two fundamental changes, which are a) the static concepts of diversity that dominates primarily the business scene. This specifically addresses the approach that organisations pursue regarding diversity expressed by quota systems mostly based on gender and disability. Equally, it refers to models such as the Gardenswartz and Rowe model portrayed in chapter one; and b) as a result the over-reliance on visible identities such age or gender and the over-essentialised construction of national identity.

Reviewing the selected thick descriptions from the wide pool of available examples makes the interdependence of multiple affiliations in just one interaction clear. In addition, the encounters crystallise as to how deeply the various affiliations stressed are embedded in the dichotomy of belonging and othering. This in turn, necessitates a review of the definition of the mosaic of diversity utilised at the beginning of this chapter, which now based on the analysis of interactions makes clear the seamless connection of belonging and othering, producing an inextricable interdependence on one another. Further, the contingency to the external environment inherent to each individual situa-

¹⁷³ This is not to ignore the constraints this life style offers such as a reduced private life.

¹⁷⁴ Marcus 1998:85

tion becomes apparent, which can lead to a potential conflict with one or the other interacting individuals or groups. Also, we see the extent as to which the activation of certain affiliations is contextual as the example of the use of Arabic script showed, and thus requires continuous re-definition and re-constitution of permeable boundaries.

A significant contribution is the richness, which constitutes of the seamless connection of belonging and othering and the contingency and the high-contextuality. Concretely, this diversity contributed to the capability to build relationships between some of the individual and groups by a) activating certain affiliations in particular ability-based affiliations such as expertise in a technical sense, e.g. factual knowledge about Middle East history, Cairo local life style, knowledge in wine; and b) the situationally appropriate application of the ability-led affiliations. Specific to these affiliations is that they are acquired by the individuals, who display them.

The examination of encounters elicited a range of multiple affiliations. As this work addresses two audiences, namely anthropologists and business delegates I will 'translate' the findings from thick description into a format commonly used in the business world, that is a visual presentation.

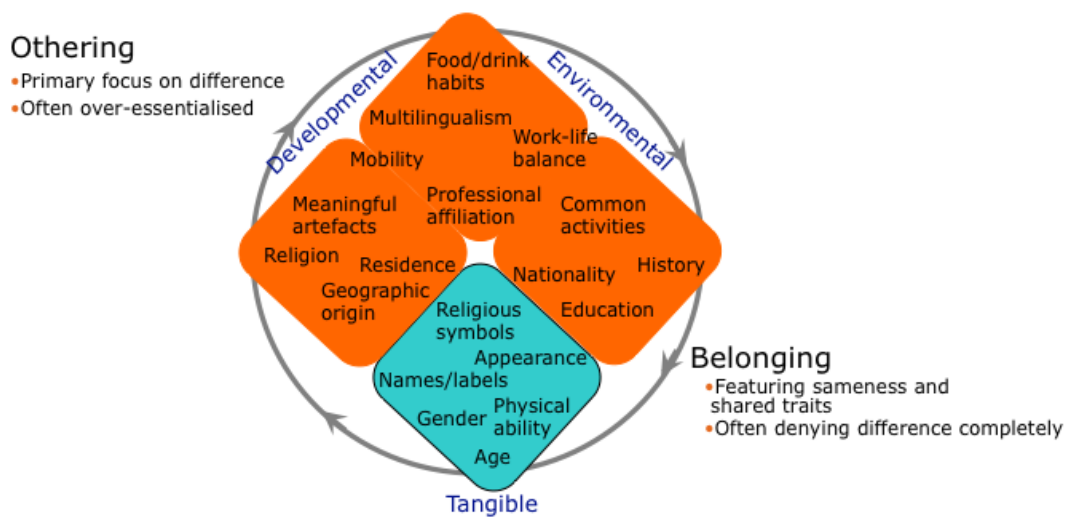


Figure 3: Multiple identities in encounters

The visual presentation is a result of the above discussion. The model is a composition of a combination of multiple affiliations, which are organised in two clusters: a) the cluster of tangible identity which largely consists of affiliations visible in encounters. These

are: gender, age, physical ability, and colour of skin; and b) the cluster of less tangible or intangible identity, which consists of developmental and environmental affiliations. Among these are history, religion, geographic origin, professional affiliation.

Visible affiliations are largely beyond the control of the individual, hence they are consistent over a person's life-time and usually have a powerful impact on people's perception about an individual and are largely overriding other affiliations in particular in first encounters.

Environmental and developmental affiliations are captured in one cluster in order to illustrate their interconnectedness. Some of the affiliations are either environmental, which means they are imposed on the individual, or developmental, which means they were acquired at one stage in life often due to context, so in turn are environmental. Some of them are external to our control; others can be influenced in one or the other way.

The model also illustrates the imbalance between tangible and less tangible affiliations. Further to the analysis of the various encounters notably the intangible affiliations override the tangible.

Diversity is best brought to light when a process is in place; that is when individuals interact. In such situations it is fairly unpredictable which of the pool of possible multiple affiliations an individual will draw upon for identity construction, even less predictable will be the reaction of the interaction partner.

The current presentation does certainly not reflect the full mosaic of possible affiliations, but features an impressive number, which were activated in the various encounters as shown in the thick descriptions. The affiliations present in an interaction such as the tangible affiliations and the additionally activated affiliations are largely context-dependent. This highlights the necessary continuous redefinition and reconstitution of permeable boundaries.

The intention of presenting the mosaic stones in a square format is to illustrate the change when the square starts rotating from belonging to othering or vice versa and thus turns to a circle.

The application of this model to other encounter situations would certainly elicit different affiliations. The context makes the mosaic swing back and forth or rotate between belonging and othering. These two features, namely the adaptability and the continuous motion convert the mosaic to a kaleidoscope. It is the nature of the kaleidoscope

changes every time there is some input of energy. Each time you turn the mosaic in order to illustrate the change from belonging to othering and vice versa the picture changes. Every time one interacts the kaleidoscope produces new pictures.

For this reason, we face continually shifting forms, shapes, patterns, and meanings by reflecting upon them from the viewpoint of either belonging or othering, or respectively the multi-faceted aspects in between belonging and othering. Organisations usually promote a narrow diversity concept in accordance with a universalistic approach featuring consistency in one's identity presentation. However, reflective cosmopolitans utilise multiple affiliations of the diversity kaleidoscope contingent to the situation and its context. This gap leads to the question to what extent organisations, by imposing an often out-dated diversity concept, constrict their cosmopolitan employees, who make an indispensable contribution to the organisation.

The particularistic identity construction as presented in this chapter appears to be irreconcilable to the universalistic one required by organisations. It stands in opposition to the strong self-awareness, which enables individuals to dwell on their cultural make-up and reshape it with each interaction.

Clearly, the experience individuals gained on this project will be taken forward to the next global project integrating new aspect of belonging and othering.

3. THE MULTIPLE TIME AND SPACE FACTOR

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter investigates the interconnectedness of time and space in a deterritorialised project. As presented in the introduction chapter findings are based on data from participatory observation, interviews and storytelling. In concrete terms, I investigate participants' interactions in relation to time and space and as to what elicits diversity, i.e. the dynamic spaces of overlap and interaction, as opposed to what might become an obstacle to diversity. Incidents are illustrated in thick description and are subsequently viewed through 'Three lenses of diversity'.

Reflexivity is key to raising awareness for these processes. Thus, the sequence of incidents in this chapter captured in thick descriptions follows the outcome of the data analysis; hence is outside the chronological order outlined in the project's masterplan.

Firstly, thick descriptions cover spaces important to this project. As the groups researched are dispersed over continents this characteristic, specific to this project, is one key contributor to diversity. Secondly, there is an analysis of the endeavours necessary to physically meet at the client site in Cairo. This part of the analysis covers the journey by participants and the journey by the team members. Thirdly, 'dhuhr wa 'asr' covers aspects of time management, in particular, the management of prayer breaks. The last part of the thick descriptions 'the time-space compression' discovers diverse aspects of working in the virtual space. The subsequent discussion section explores the question of the contributions from diversity. The framework 'The three lenses of diversity' consisting of the the lens of multiple affiliations, the lens of perception, and the environmental lens will be applied.

Cultural anthropology contributes concepts developed by Bate and Czarniawska, which help us to understand the notion of action net. In addition, the chapter mirrors Hannerz's call for multi-site fieldwork and builds on his understanding of flow and interconnectedness. Expanding on the diversity deriving from interconnectedness requires that we differentiate between embodied and response presence. The former

refers to physical presence whilst the latter refers to presence, which might not be visible to an observer¹⁷⁵.

Reflecting on the dynamics of interconnectedness as is key to this macro ethnography, I will also draw on Weick's¹⁷⁶ term of 'organising' as it contrasts with the notion of 'organisations'. 'Organising' never ceases, whereas 'organisations' captures processes that have come to an end. The working term of action net potentially employed in this research is used to indicate the dynamic aspects of organising and its apparently solid effects as for a moment, they seem unchangeably and 'organised-for-good'¹⁷⁷.

“A standard analysis begins with “actors” or “organisations”; an action net approach permits us to notice that these are the products rather than the sources of the organising – taking place within, enabled by and constitutive of an action net.”¹⁷⁸

In contrast to a network, in which actors make contacts, an action net assumes connections between actions, creating actors. Therefore, they differ from networks in terms of time and space coordinates¹⁷⁹ and need to be observed as being established and re-established.¹⁸⁰

One key idiosyncrasy of an action net is the lack of, or the different presentation of, its physical presence. The multi-layer connection of actions of which many in this project occur in diverse organisational fields such as airline industry, airport infrastructure, telecoms, and hotel accommodation. This diversity requires a differentiation between embodied, i. e. physical presence and response presence, such as in computer work, where the latter might not be captured by direct observation¹⁸¹ when actually happening in time and space, but is to a certain extent visible to a participant observer, namely myself.

To further illustrate the idiosyncrasies of an action net it is essential to initially understand that networks first require actors, which form a more or less formal network, and

¹⁷⁵ Knorr Cetina and Bruegger 2002 in Czarniawska 2007:786

¹⁷⁶ In Bate 1994:18

¹⁷⁷ Czarniawska in Jimenez 2007:532

¹⁷⁸ Czarniawska in Jimenez 2007:532

¹⁷⁹ Lindberg, Czarniawska 2006:294

¹⁸⁰ Czarniawska in Jimenez 2007:534

¹⁸¹ Schwartzman 1993:21

which consequently produce actions. Reversely, in an action net the actions will come first, followed by exchangeable actants.¹⁸²

An action net is part of processes in their transformation, not at their ends. It is constantly in motion; it is continuously newly created and forever being re-created; meanings and meaningful forms can become durable however in a dislocated and relocated spatial understanding.

Boundaries of 'organising' are constructed beyond legal requirements and confinements; they are redefined by the actants of the action net, thus are permeable, negotiable and different anew. Nonaka, a professor of international corporate strategy and best known for his work on knowledge management refers to this space as 'ba'¹⁸³, where information is interpreted to become knowledge. 'Ba' is based on interaction unifying physical space, virtual space such as email, and mental space such as shared ideals, again being highly contextual¹⁸⁴.

3.2. THE MANIFESTATIONS OF MULTIPLE TIME AND SPACE

This part of the chapter exhibits four manifestations of multiple time and space, which further to the data analysis seemed to impact the generation of diversity most significantly. These are a) spaces, which include two locales, namely the client site and the site of the British business school; b) getting there, which presents the endeavours of achieving embodied presence; c) dhuhr wa 'asr, the prayer breaks; and d) the time-space compression which includes the 'imagined' time and space.

¹⁸² Czarniawska in Jimenez 2007:532

¹⁸³ Nonaka, Toyama, Konno in Little, Quintas, and Ray 2002:49

¹⁸⁴ Nonaka, Toyama, Konno in Little, Quintas, and Ray 2002:49

3.2.1. SPACES

This section presents two locales, which significantly contributed to the creation of diversity, of which one is the British business school located in England, and the other is the site of the client organisation just outside Cairo.

The style of the descriptions aims to display the situations as authentically as possible and should allow the readers to immerse themselves in the atmosphere these locations generate. The portrayal of the space in England is purposely brief as only limited action took place there whilst the description of the space in Cairo is lengthier in order to illustrate the importance of that space in its role of the centre of most interactions.

As portrayed in the introduction chapter, one of three groups researched are the team members who deliver the programme and who represent the English business school. This group is connected with the image of the British business school, which is accommodated in an English castle located in surroundings where the phrase 'England at its best' applies fully. In this environment, time seems to have come to a halt; trees are lush and sway gently in the wind, deer graze on the golf course situated across from the old castle, and feeding rabbits welcome visitors when they enter the meticulously manicured garden displaying orderly blossoming flowers, which seem to seek scarce island sunshine.

The castle's pit stone appearance provides the visitor with a breath-taking first impression, standing there rock-solid across from a perfectly 'dompteured' green lawn. Upon entry the visitor is welcomed by a majestic staircase spanning three sides of the entrance hall, impressive paintings in subdued tones, and wooden doors whose handles poke into the eye of the individual who attempts to open them.

Offices spread over several primarily stone-brick buildings on campus-like grounds are partly cramped, partly generous. Carpets feature small busy patterns mired in numerous shades of red and brown; it is not a design that one could by any stretch of imagination label modernist, reductionist. It is in one of these offices where the following dialogue takes place as one of many in the course of the project.

"Tomorrow 1000 am conference call."

"What time zone". "England."

"Ok, who will be participating?" "Fatima, Mustafa, and the two of us."

"Ok. I will come to your office and we use one speaker-phone. Would you have a line set up for us?"

Replete with English countryside idyll this locality creates global economy on a daily basis by actively producing, implementing, servicing and reproducing projects for multinational corporations.

In contrast, the other space is the site of the client organisation located in one of the sought-after business compounds just outside Cairo. This heavily guarded business compound in the desert outside Cairo accommodates the organisation's headquarters in Egypt, which present two contemporary glass buildings, of which each is approximately eight floors and by that dominate the other buildings of the high-tech compound. Four silver columns approximately 15 meters high frame the main entrance of the main building. The buildings' facades covered in shaded glass with blue reflections mirror well looked after lawns, palm trees, and parked cars.

The entrance hall is spacious and occupies several floors in height at once. The floor and the reception desks are kept in light-coloured marble. Large size flat screens are mounted at random intervals in the elegantly furnished hall and the open areas throughout both buildings presenting state of the art interior design pieces inviting people to follow the 24 hour news in Arabic. Sofas and comfortable armchairs are spread in the open areas typically in subdued colours such grey and brown and the bright company colour. Each open space has one workstation with internet access. Also, there are a number of plants spread in the open space areas.

The office areas are open plan. Each employee is allocated workspace in the form of a small cubicle, which is bounded by shoulder-high separation walls. The colours of the furniture are grey whilst walls are largely held in a subdued mint green. Pictures and company catchphrases decorate the walls. Garbage cans with two different colours on the lids require managers and employees to separate garbage. Seminar rooms are presented as generous and elegantly decorated, featuring mahogany covered walls embracing roughly 400 square meters, which are covered with lush carpets in light and pleasant colours inviting a meander pattern in a colour-coordinated dark-red to spread on it, prompt the entering actants to sit on the luxurious surface much rather than on chairs and bean bags meticulously arranged over the room.

These descriptions capture two of many of the spaces team members incorporate in their work life. Implications on diversity will be explored in the discussion section.

3.2.2. GETTING THERE

This section describes the various ways necessary to achieve embodied presence. The first part covers the journeys from Cairo to Cairo, that is, the participants reaching the organisation premises.

0810 am Cairo time: minibuses arrive in front of the glittering building, stopping one behind the other, forming a 'bus snake', sleekly reflecting their exterior design in the glass front of the office buildings. As passengers disembark the buses, some of them chat, some of them are quiet and look rather tired. They clutter around meticulously manicured lawns accommodating palm tree rows guarding the building and offering scarce shade in the form of distorted palm tree shapes. The spotlessly smooth and shiny glass front offers spectacular scenery mirroring the sun's rays of the morning played back by the surrounding desert. These air-conditioned mini-buses had been on the road for more than one hour starting at the collection point near Midan al-Tahrir in downtown Cairo. By the time passengers reached the mini-bus, some of them had already travelled for more than one hour, often on non-air-conditioned and crowded public buses and vans serving as collective taxis. All passengers arrive at the same time. They enter the buildings one after the other, show their ID passes to the security control, and once at the desk log on to the IT system, and so change from passengers to employees.

I was never in the role of passenger; hence the following information is solely based on key informer reports on riding the bus. Some of them seemed to take the same seat on a daily basis given its availability. Others were looking for variety engaging in small talk with different colleagues, while some tried to catch a few more minutes of sleep.

The sense of familiarity of the day-to-day experience is mirrored in the rhetoric built around the doing of and being in it. I became witness of regularly held casual conversations featuring stories about the morning ride in elevators and at the coffee machine. Often, I was addressed and integrated into the conversation mainly in order to let off

steam about the experience. Sharing time and space on the mini-buses allowed individual travellers to learn what colleagues think of the experience itself, investigate how the external environment is being perceived, for example, newly opened supermarkets and apartment blocks along the roads travelled, and as a natural course, traffic issues. Additionally, it allowed employees to listen and explore work-related issues on performing tasks and solving problems. Bus rides were used for strategic career planning by networking with respective colleagues while getting to or back from work. Equally, riding the mini-bus added to one's status as it displayed a position in a highly esteemed organisation situated in a highly respected locality to individuals external to the company. Respect and appreciation expressed by sayings such as "Oh, you are working in Smart¹⁸⁵" were spelled out repeatedly, being a synonym for "You have made it!"

Like many urban centres Cairo has a traffic problem, which has its roots in the periods of Nasser and Sadat and their respective political orientations¹⁸⁶. Programme participants explained to me unsolicited why commuting was necessary. The common reason stated was "we want to live closer to the Nile, nobody wants to live in the desert", which pays tribute to the Nile as 'a lifeline of all being'¹⁸⁷.

Even without the distance overcome by each individual on a daily basis of the working week, Egyptian traffic has a few more surprises to offer, inflicted by the common rejection of traffic rules all year round resulting in numerous accidents causing a great many casualties due to overcrowded mini-buses used for public transport¹⁸⁸. Frequent heavy fog most often experienced early mornings in wintertime and the occasional sand storm need to be mentioned as additional challenges camouflaging any visibility.

¹⁸⁵ "Smart" is the common abbreviation for Smart Village. Founded in 2001, Smart Village represents the first fully operational Technology and Business Park in Egypt. It accommodates Multinational and Local Telecommunications and Information Technology Companies, Financial Institutions and Banks, together with Governmental Authorities on three Million square meters in the west of Cairo. The efficient mix of business services boosts the competitiveness and profitability of enterprises taking advantage of Fiber Optic Network, multi-source power supply, District cooling and Heating redundant network plant. Evenly, organizations in Smart Village Cairo, profits from world class standards amenities including Property Management & Maintenance, Event's Management, Transportation Services on 24/7 basis.

¹⁸⁶ The periods of Nasser and Sadat are covered in more detail in chapter 06.

¹⁸⁷ Golia 2004:28 ff.

¹⁸⁸ Burst tyres, speeding and defective road planning were amongst the causes of the other accidents, which are only the latest in a flood of crashes that claim the lives of an estimated 5-6000 people every year. Road accidents are the second most frequent cause of death in all Third World countries. In Egypt, for every 100 million kms driven, 43.2 people die, compared with 0.9 in Australia, for instance. Accident specialists maintain that more than 50 per cent of the victims are in their mid-20s, and that one-fifth of children between one and five-years-old who die in hospitals are accident victims. Financial losses caused by traffic accidents -- estimated at LE1 billion a year -- include damaged vehicles, health care, hospital fees and lost working hours. In Al-Ahram Weekly Online Issue 778/19-25 January 2006



Figure 4: Traffic sign: Drive slowly

In the light of the traffic statistics and the time consumed on Cairo roads the traffic sign frequently spotted and as shown above appears to be somewhat meaningless.

Looking beyond the physical dangers of commuting, which can lead to visible and tangible ruptures such as accidents, the much greater impact is caused by ruptures at a more intangible level, i. e. the time consumption of up to four hours impacting the private lives of the individuals travelling on the mini-buses.

“... modern places are increasingly phantasmagoric¹⁸⁹. The comforting, familiar character of the cultural settings we routinely move amongst conceals the impact on our day-to-day lives of the influences of distant social forces and processes.”¹⁹⁰

The rupture impacting the private life creates flow for the organisational life. The frequently stressed “Work-life balance” labelled in numerous publications in this context simply becomes absurd.

¹⁸⁹ Giddens in Tomlinson 1999:107

¹⁹⁰ Giddens in Tomlinson 1999:107

One could argue that the mini-buses are non-places¹⁹¹, i. e. places that are instrumental and contractual; a means of commuting originating in the practicality of reaching the uptown business quarter. In contrast, they can be viewed as anthropological places¹⁹², i. e. a place that serves as an integral part for socialising and connecting; and one that provides identity and memory linked to the organisation, binding its members to the company's places, the company history, its language and religion by the daily repetition of organic social interaction. In the context of networking and socialising, mini-buses are a vehicle for centralising meaning, constructed and negotiated in social interaction. The shared meaning built on the bus creates a sense of belonging to this group and clearly defines a boundary to others, namely those arriving in a private car.

So, the buses symbolise time and space not only as a contributor to flows and ruptures in reaching embodied presence, but are an integral part influencing organisational culture and people's lives in an unexpected way.

When mini-buses are the vehicle for centralising meaning for some of the individuals on the project, that is, the programme participants then for others it must be aircrafts. The following section gives a flavour of the achieving embodied presence by air journey.

Getting to Cairo from places in Europe typically started with flight bookings. The conversation as depicted below illustrates the reality of the actions:

Personal assistant: "I booked you a flight from LHR¹⁹³ to Cairo, Priya. I hope that works for you."

Myself: "I am afraid that I will have to travel from Sweden directly. Would you look up flights from Stockholm via Zurich or Vienna to Cairo and inform me about availability."

Today's reality also presents the procedures at airports, that is, the globalised elite gets stripped of their various electronic hand-helds and other paraphernalia symptomatic of 'the business man'¹⁹⁴. They shuffle in socks through the security control frame, holding up the flannel trousers hoping not to hear *the* beep to then finally 'dress' again by storing the preferred mobile phone in the preferred pocket, the other mobile phone in the

¹⁹¹ Auge in Tomlinson 1999:109

¹⁹² Tomlinson 1999:109

¹⁹³ London Heathrow

¹⁹⁴ This is linked to the observation that I am often the only woman in business class.

other pocket, the iPod in yet another pocket, reattaching the belt, relacing the shoes, pulling on the jacket, repacking the laptop bag, checking on the keys to finally proceed towards the duty-free area towards the gates.

This presents the today's globalised elite whereas in the past this selected group experienced some different practice:

“It was about fifty years ago that I first boarded an airplane. I still recall how passengers comported themselves in those days. We were “airline passengers”, a rare breed of earth denizen, aristocrats in every sense of the word, and we were treated as such by airline staff, stewardesses, and ticket agents alike.”¹⁹⁵

As a consequence of 9/11¹⁹⁶, flow and rupture are closely interconnected as demonstrated when entering the microcosm of embarking an aircraft aiming to transform spatial distance in less than 3.5 hours to spatial closeness. Space is presented in time not in kilometres or miles¹⁹⁷; it is supposed to add value to clients when spending 3.5 hours nicely compartmentalised into a starting and landing period, an eating period, and one period designated for the consumption of one movie most likely disconnected from the idiosyncrasies of the place of arrival. The creation of flow attempted by business travel is not only perceived as interruption by some passengers trying to gain some quiet time allocated to completing a load of work or simply relax; it is the airline industry's effort to sell exclusiveness of what has long become the ordinary.

Arriving at 0100 am at Cairo airport on a Sunday morning requires the bundling of my attention to find the proper conveyor band for luggage collection, asking myself “Where did I actually come from?” The slowing down speed inflicted by a traffic jam allows me to refamiliarise myself with overwhelming smells, omnipresent sounds, irresistible sights, the closeness of other cars to the one I am travelling in. Only a few hours later the sky appears in twilight, the sun is struggling through the damp morning air whilst the muezzin calls for the first prayer of the day, the Fajr, happening at the threshold of dawn and sunrise. The hotel complex lies still, the soccer field to the left is empty, in the background spreads the desert in the semi-dark, the only sound is the one of the muezzin.

¹⁹⁵ Amin 2004:3

¹⁹⁶ Appadurai 2001:16. The 9/11 event will be explored in more detail in Chapter 04.

¹⁹⁷ Tomlinson 1999:4

“sabah al-hir, ya Priya.”
“sabah an-nur, ya Hassan.”¹⁹⁸

0815 am at the hotel near the work site: We were back in the game and only a few kilometres away from the glittering buildings - ready to go.

3.2.3. DHUHR WA ‘ASR¹⁹⁹

As we have seen in the former section team members and participants overcame great distances in order to achieve embodied presence as required by the client organisation site. This section now explores the implications on time and space as yielded by the Muslim prayers, which were inextricably linked to the use of mobile phones and became an integral challenge of the programme management. The following background story from the client organisation helps illustrating the actual programme and its respective series of workshops.

The earlier mentioned large size flat screens mounted in the elegant marble halls invited employees to stop and followed the latest development in the then ongoing Lebanon crisis. Mobile phones kept ringing ceaselessly prompting owners to answer promptly, yet taking time to express concerns about the observed on the screen and herein their worries about friends and family members located in the war-ridden Middle East state. Returning from the virtual visit a 360 miles east, employees stopped at their open plan office in the next-door building, which distance allowed more phone calls. The quick visit served to liaise with colleagues who happen to be there at the same time. Later, on the way to the canteen, situated again in the other building people stopped for a comfort break. Even in the facilities you heard, from selected toilet cabins, ring tones in different styles, which people felt obliged to terminate by answering the call.

This short background story gives a flavour of the necessary motion in order to overcome distances on the site with the simultaneous utilisation of one gadget that became

¹⁹⁸ “Good morning, Priya.”

“Good morning, Hassan.” (reply version)

¹⁹⁹ Noon and Late Afternoon

idiosyncratic for the whole programme, that is, the mobile phone. By the time people manage to reconvene in the seminar room, 25 minutes past the agreed starting time individuals had physically moved over a number of locations with their attention being dispersed over numerous spaces often a few thousand miles away.

One of many observed incidents that greatly impact the interaction among participants and even more so between participants and team members other than space was time. Specifically, this found expression in the handling of breaks, comprising several forms such as comfort breaks, lunch breaks and in particular prayer breaks.

Some of the non-Muslims among the team members, who were not familiar with the practice of prayer breaks perceived these breaks as alienating and unusual, interrupting the flow of the working day unnecessarily. The result of this perception has created repetitive and often-circular discussions consuming a considerable time and space whilst in the process of 'organising'. Conversations did not only include rhetoric of astonishment and alienation, but equally contained the search for solutions for handling the issue.

One team member spelled out the following:

"I expected some cultural differences in the perception of time and punctuality and was not disappointed."

Below there is an excerpt from an e-mail of one of the team members to other team members on the subject matter:

"There has been some difficulty getting started punctually or even moderately punctually. I made some random notes on things that help based on comments from participants and colleagues. Timings of sessions may change; prayer breaks will dictate timing. Participants will come and go as they please."

For background, the structure of the working day is organised by two out of altogether five Muslim prayers, that is dhuhr (noon) and 'asr (late afternoon). These two prayers represent only a glimpse of the entire complexity illustrating as to how this organises the day and which evokes a sometimes abrupt interruption and complete transformation of the business day prompting activities of men and women into a certain way. Dhuhr is the time for the prayer between the declining of the sun and 'asr, that is, when the shadow of something is twice its own length. 'asr is the time for the prayer immediately after the last time limit of dhuhr until (just before) the sunset. As indicated the timing is closely related to the movement of the sun resulting in a continuous change of

prayer breaks and herein impacting on the working day. Prayer, the second pillar in Islam, is a fundamental piece in Muslim life. It is the physical demonstration of devoutness that expresses unitedness regardless of where you are on this planet. Sites become connected by belief.

Yet in the project practice, praying was a moment of transition and rupture, bringing participants together and yet separating them by gender-specific privacy, openly expressed, in particular by women. The workshop settings were abruptly altered by the adoption of a new rhythm. The prayer breaks were usually initiated by the muezzin's call of "allahu akbar" echoing from a few dispersed mobile phones vibrating on various tables in the seminar room. As a result some participants left the seminar room, some stayed. Participant feedback and participant observation assisted the team members with some insights pertaining to dealing with space in this matter. Often, women would leave the room to occupy a smaller syndicate room for prayers. The larger group of male prayers would stay in the main seminar room to perform their prayers; others would use the time to make phone calls, chat with each other, simply roam around, go for a smoke in the outside smoking area, or pick up a coffee.

According to the rules of clausturation female Muslim prayers would, in the odd scenario of staying in the main seminar room ask all males to leave, equipping me with the privilege to stay in the room. Reversely, male prayers did not seem to mind female presence in the room as long as they did not move between them and the qiblah²⁰⁰ whilst praying²⁰¹.

The rhythm of the prayer breaks ensures the flow of the maintenance of the symbolic order, and herein its properties defined by the time consumed to recite raka'as²⁰², to organise oneself by space required according to the rules of clausturation, and by the mental mode to reconvene cognitively and physically in order to resume with business matters. This flow is not only accepted but welcomed allowing individuals to connect with spirituality during a busy working day providing them with the opportunity to remind themselves of the essence of existence. However, from the point of view of some of the

²⁰⁰ Qiblah is the direction to which the Muslims turn in order to perform their prayer. It is towards the Ka'bah in Mekkah, whose direction is usually indicated in hotel rooms. Alternatively, when travelling Muslims sometimes use a compass for orientation.

²⁰¹ Female team members inquired into this practice as they needed the room for preparing the next session.

²⁰² Prayer units

non-Muslim team members breaks in general, but prayer breaks in particular, were perceived as a nuisance, primarily to the fact that participants hardly returned on time, or worse, sometimes never showed up again.

Ultimately a solution was found by in reducing the number of breaks and prayer breaks and coordinating them more accurately, organising them in accordance with the prayer times effective in Cairo at that time²⁰³. Depending on the perspective breaking and re-convening, and herein punctuality can be viewed as rupture or as flow. Nevertheless, it is essential to not only understand the management of breaks and in particular prayer breaks on a cognitive level in order to manage time and space implications, but to develop deeper understanding about the subject matter. The diversity deriving from the time and space implication will be investigated in the discussion section.

3.2.4. THE TIME – SPACE COMPRESSION

This sections aims to explore the interconnectedness across multiple time and space during the design phase of the project, which means that planning and thinking at large is based on assumptions, imagination, and finally on dreaming.

Characteristic for this project was that only 20% of the overall project time was utilised in form of embodied time, requiring physical presence for interaction whereas 80% of time consisted of response presence²⁰⁴. The latter was hardly visible to individuals external to the project and greatly, but not exclusively, consumed time during the design phase.

In the early days of the programme design the uneven distribution of time allocated to embodied time as opposed to response time was still unclear. Some of the team members even considered relocation to Cairo, based on the assumption that embodied presence would be of great importance. This idea, however, was dropped quickly, due to the absence of the necessary resources that relocation typically requires.

²⁰³ Consulting www.islamicfinder.com proved to be of assistance to investigate concrete timings and thus align the day's structure accordingly.

²⁰⁴ The body of calculation is based on the overall time spent on this project, translated into consultant days and expressed in percentile.

In hindsight, the privileged position of reflexivity and introspection allows to recognising the extent to which sites are connected with one another. They are connected in such ways that the relationships established and formulated prior to the embodied presence became more important than the embodied presence itself; as otherwise the embodied presence would never materialise. Establishing the translocal connection is a porous endeavour with unclear ends, which even with good intentions and careful planning is difficult to define unless doing it and being in it. Local bundles²⁰⁵ of sitedness are power locales with their own pull factors; in the specific cases the pull factors are stronger on client locale with the number of actants being bigger there and herein commitment to working hours stronger.

At a later stage of the design phase, the consideration of a potential relocation of some of the key team members turned out to be correct as it would have been more practical to meet needs to fulfil presence time. Nevertheless, presence time was achieved only by the mobility of team members.

One of the many challenges during the design phase is the visualisation of time and space across boundaries and geographic locales as presented with a few selected examples. The alignment across time and space is illustrated in the following dialogue between the programme manager, located in an office at the business school in England and the travelling programme director.

Programme manager: “We would need another meeting²⁰⁶ regarding re-scheduling. Would tomorrow between 1500 and 1700 suit you?”

Programme director: “That would be after COB²⁰⁷. Not sure, if the client and the other team members would be available then. We need to bring this forward ideally 2 hours.”

Programme manager: “Sorry can’t do. I will be in a meeting then. How about the day after tomorrow?”

Director: “Friday?”²⁰⁸

Programme manager: “Ah, right. I forgot. Then we have to postpone until next week.”

Director: “I guess so, however Ramadan is starting then, meaning we need to accommodate the concall early morning as working time during Ramadan is until lunch time.”

²⁰⁵ Hannerz 2003:206

²⁰⁶ Synonym for conference call

²⁰⁷ COB stands for Close of Business day

²⁰⁸ The working week in Cairo takes from Sunday to Thursday.

Programme manager: "I can come in half an hour early on Monday, so we can start as early as 0830."

Director: "That will be alright. That will be 1130 local time, and for me 0930."

Programme manager: "Oh, where are you?"

Director: "Zagreb."

As illustrated in this short dialogue, inappropriate time allocation was typical at the start of the design phase. This transformed into more accurate information further into the project. As illustrated, thinking the 'imagined' was similarly needed to align a conference call across boundaries.

As portrayed in chapter 01 the programme design consisted of a series of workshops in combination with large group events. Similar to setting up conference calls, it was necessary for the planning and the organising of workshops and large group events to not only think imagined time but also to incorporate the visualisation of spatial prerequisites. The design required multi-purpose rooms, that were, three adjacent rooms, which could be connected by opening the separating walls. The initial programme design included a smooth transition from smaller group interventions to large group events. Only later in the design stage it became clear that this spatial transition as per programme design was impossible due to the infrastructure of the seminar venue. A one-hour time investment was necessary for the space transformation, a necessary time slot, which needed to be included into the design. Again, this required some considerable time investment for reworking the original plan. Some the logistics breaks could be coordinated in accordance with the prayer breaks earlier described, depending on the exact timing of the prayer breaks.

For the team members working on the project design it was essential to be able to imagine the local space at the client site. Electronically mediated images and symbols of representation, which illustrated the seminar venue, office spaces, and the office buildings helped the team members, who had not been to Cairo then to gain a better understanding of the local setup and the connected organisational culture and its symbols, for example, company values printed on office walls in Arabic and English.

Responsiveness to time and space issues are illustrated in the following description. The catch phrase 'To Cairo in less than two hours' does not refer to travel time but to the time invested, namely two hours to extricate on key actant from existing commitments in order to make him available to travel to Cairo. This intervention at very short

notice was necessary is one example to be to handle continuous changes throughout the project.

Changing workshop content on short notice, rescheduling sessions, different time formats altogether, cancellations three weeks before actual date, all of this has a major impact on several actants' availability, competing with actants' working time allocated on another project, all clear rupture at many ends established in response presence with a final impact on presence time. Clearly, those changes had little or no impact on the extent of presence time but difference was shown in dates, changed, for example from one week to another. Reversely, the impact was greatly shown on the extent of response time, which many actants involved: Re-establishing flow found expression in resource allocation seeking those with necessary capabilities to deliver the work required. One consequence of the changes was the necessity of longer term-stays for some of the key actants, which in the perception of many was at large a rupture for the quality of life, leading them to extricate themselves from existing commitments.

On the interpersonal level, rupture is expressed by aggravation over continuous changes resulting in a lack of trust, although reliance on another is named a critical success factor by actants. Aggravation expressed by one actant is shown as follows:

“... they don't seem to understand the nature of our business world, where people schedule their work well in advance (up to a year in advance in some cases) and expect schedules to be kept to.”

In conclusion, one can state that the section about response time is fairly brief in comparison to thick descriptions of embodied time, e. g. bus rides, prayer breaks, although most of time was spent in response presence. This clearly mirrors the challenge with response presence idiosyncratic for all global projects; that is the difficulty to put the intangible and the 'non-experientable' into thick descriptions.

Frequent feedback as reported by key individuals shows that the comfort zone within response time is often found in the critical period of time difference normally at two to three hours depending on the location of other actants and an abridged working week due to the Egyptian working week lasting from Sunday to Thursday. Those two to three hours usually starting early afternoon and Friday were usually used for reflection, planning and reworking.

One other important insight is that embodied presence can only be reached by prior response presence as illustrated consuming a significantly larger proportion of overall time. Further expanding on Appadurai's notion of 'ideoscapes'²⁰⁹, I call this space 'brainscapes', an addition aiming to describe the wealth of knowledge created in non-defined deterritorialised physical places and non-physical spaces, and greatly contributing to the successful materialisation of global projects. Only at a much later stage in such projects, if necessary at all, physical vehicles of deterritorialisation and interconnectedness such air carriers and mini-buses gain significance, namely for transforming response presence into embodied presence, and materialising the latter in one place.

The earlier mentioned 'ba' is not space bound either, nor is it reduced to communities of practice, but features on-line networks, documentation, and databases as well as, in the specific case of Seven Eleven, Japan extensive on-the-job training or the 'burabura shain' the 'walking around employee'²¹⁰. Nevertheless, the 'ba' disregards the richness of diversity from places and spaces.

The above paragraphs explored the shrinking of physical distances, of which one is within and outside Cairo, and the other is over a distance of a few thousand kilometres.

The following descriptions display implications once the time-space-compression in the response presence had been accomplished.

As outlined in the introduction chapter the learning architecture featured a mixture of large group events and performance driver workshops. This type of design was chosen in order to accommodate the greatest possible participant numbers in shortest possible time. These large group events (LGE) took place at the beginning and at the end of each workshop, and were intended to bridge the hierarchical, departmental and the knowledge gap among employees in the client organisation. Subsequent to a number of adaptations it was agreed between the design team and the client that the LGEs should last roughly two hours, intended to create interconnectedness among individuals representing diverse hierarchies, departments, company locations, and different professional backgrounds. Also, the design presented to the client showed a clear plan of networking initiatives and other practical exercises suitable for a large group.

²⁰⁹ These are "building blocks," as Appadurai suggests, of contemporary imagined worlds. An alternative spatial rendering of the present, one that is not "fixed" as a typical landscape might be, but which are of various, disjunctive sizes, amorphous, and flowing. In Appadurai 1996:33

²¹⁰ Nonaka, Toyama, Konno in Little, Quintas, and Ray 2002:52

On the LGEs team members welcomed participants²¹¹, they provided them with the programme objectives and the programme overview, and invited them to create connections by the means of speed-networking and other interventions suitable for this number of individuals. After the duration of two hours individuals then reconvened in smaller groups according to topic covering the performance driver and hierarchy level.

After the project launch decision-makers argued to reduce the duration for Large Group Events from an initial 2 hours to 90 minutes to once more, reduce the duration 45 minutes at an even later stage. The reduction of roughly 63% of the total time leads to ruptures at many ends.

One such rupture turned out to be the abrupt ending of informal speed-networking conversations, whose termination was necessary due to time constraints. These fruitful conversations helped build new contacts and move existing ones beyond the connections based on tangible affiliations of the diversity kaleidoscope.

The time and space reserved for the creation of interconnectedness and its termination finally lead to multilateral objection. Specifically, this time-space-compression in embodied presence was perceived as negative from the perspective of the two groups; that were; the participants and the team members. Participants from different hierarchical levels objected to the limited possibility to connect with other participants. Equally, the team members expressed irritation in relation to the effort invested response presence, which resulted in a comprehensive agenda of the LGEs for the two hours assigned. Clearly, the reduction in time assigned to the LGEs required more reworking during the embodied presence, mainly in Cairo.

The meticulously planned agenda for the two hour session needed to be replaced by flexible formats, thus 'chronos', the Greek god of time, measuring mechanical intervals²¹² was entirely substituted by 'kairos', the Greek god of the right time recognising time by jumping, slowing down, omitting longer periods, and dwelling on others²¹³. The dominant master plan, or in the team members' terminology 'running order', an expression of chronological time was made non-existent. Instead, redesigning wherever pos-

²¹¹ See details in chapter 02. Details on practical exercises and their implications will follow in chapter 04.

²¹² Czarniawska in Jimenez 2007:528

²¹³ Czarniawska in Jimenez 2007:528

sible at 'the right time', temporal autonomy for an action or a system²¹⁴, hence kairotic time ruled team members' lives as one of them expressed in utter exhaustion:

"In the hotel in Cairo we talk about what we are learning at breakfast and when we get back in the evening and at lunch in the company. We have had conference calls and meetings²¹⁵. Evenings are lost to wash-up sessions and planning next LGEs. This is entirely exhausting – one week sessions are pretty demanding on your time and energy levels specially as dealing with three groups of up to 30 individually and up to 270 individuals collectively."²¹⁶

Further to the manifold changes in timing in relation to the LGEs the client requested yet another expression of 'organising' in kairotic. Initially, the client wanted to invite participants to two of the six performance driver workshops. Subsequent to the positive feedback of the first few workshops the client changed this guideline and invited participants to all six performance driver workshops on a voluntary basis. This resulted in participants attending many more LGEs, which in turn required reworking the content of the LGEs in order to avoid too many unintended repetitions.

This rather unexpected change encouraged greater interconnectedness among participants, at the same time it prompted even greater rupture with the initial design of the LGEs. It required the continuous redesign of the redesign of the design, leading to a number of double-loop processes.

In kairotic organising change is the only constant. On the project this included the changing starting times, changing times of breaks, the shortening of sessions, or change of design altogether. However, a chronologically organised running order serves as a guideline in order to ensure consistency between different sessions across the programme. In the larger context of creating interconnectedness, chronological timetables and running orders can show effect only when designed to provide orientation allowing kairotic timing to occur.

In seeking a workable solution which accommodated flight itineraries, family interests, and personal needs, the client and the team members agreed to start each programme on day one of the working week, that was, Sunday after lunchtime – rather than Sunday morning. The Sunday morning was mostly used for making adaptations in re-

²¹⁴ Czarniawska in Jimenez 2007:528

²¹⁵ With people dispersed in other locales.

²¹⁶ One team member expressing exhaustion

sponse to newly introduced changes. This format allowed working through rest of the week until Thursday COB. As idiosyncrasies of this project were diverse, so were the approaches within the setting, necessary to make it work. Nevertheless, leaving one actant expressing his frustration about the kairotic understanding as follows:

“Culturally, there is a tendency for low level disruption, although this is not deliberate. Constant chatter, walking out to make or receive calls and poor time keeping, all make it difficult to keep sessions on track. A major triumph is getting them to turn off their ring tones.”

The thick descriptions illustrated the time-space-compression on this project. I will now turn to the discussion of the manifestations of multiple time and space.

3.3. DISCUSSION

The discussion reviews the manifestation of multiple time and space by viewing the thick descriptions through the three lenses of diversity. This process teases out the contributions from diversity. The first lens applied is the **lens of multiple identity**.

Dominant affiliations identified in the thick descriptions are locations, means of transport, project identity, and time management. There seems to be an explicit identification of the client’s employees with the organisation site, that is, a modern site featuring contemporary architecture, situated in a high-tech business quarter in the desert outside Cairo. The identification with the organisational site of the team members, that is, the traditional English castle, appears to be more diffuse as a significant number of the team members is geographically dispersed across Europe, in some cases mirroring a more distant relationship (e.g., that of associate) with the business school. In addition to the geographic dispersion, the business purpose of the organisation, that is, state-of-the-art management education stands in opposition to the traditional space. Working across boundaries obviously enhances the identity – purpose link more than the identity – location link.

The various means of transport used to achieve embodied presence are similarly identity-creating as the locations. Further to the thick descriptions this aims at travel by mini-bus and airplane. Air travel provides some additional status such as business class travel, visits to the business lounges, and other fringes related to this type of

travel. Associated symbols like frequent flyer cards, luggage tags indicating the elite status were used to illustrate this type of identity. Equally, references to air travel experiences in informal conversations indicated the status. For cosmopolitans²¹⁷, a considerable part of their life-time is packaged around the complex process of air travel and so becomes their social reality. A significant part of the social interaction is located in public and semi-public places of convenience and necessity. These include airport transfers in limousines with connected conversations to the driver; queues at the security check with the connected stripping of gadgets from the hand luggage; at the coffee machine in the lounge; at the announcement board when searching for the gate. These spaces present a significant contribution to the production and the reproduction of the globalised elite.

The mini-buses used by the majority of the Egyptian participants are similarly identity-creating vehicles; however a more differentiated message assigned. The external environment would associate employees working for a multi-national company. However, in the organisation there is a differentiation between those employees who arrive by mini-bus as opposed to those who arrive by car, which is mostly a company car and so indicates an even higher senior status. The affiliation of work-life balance, which obviously comes into account, has already been addressed in the chapter 02.

Further to the management of breaks the following affiliations become relevant in the presented interactions, which are religion, time management and punctuality, and hierarchy. Prayer breaks were certainly one of the tangible representations of religion and illustrated hierarchy further to the management of the prayers. Religion as an affiliation will be further dealt with in the following chapters.

Time management was one of the most stressed intangible affiliations throughout the project. As is idiosyncratic to intangible affiliations it took some learning time in order to deal more effectively with the individual preferences regarding the time management. The more tangible expression of time management was punctuality.

The tangible and intangible affiliations listed so far certainly contribute to a project identity, in particular, for the team members and a few key representatives from the client organisation who worked closely with the team members. This identity made it even as far as the business school, where colleagues who were not involved in the project used

²¹⁷ Hannerz 1996:104

labels, which consisted mainly of the client name, in order to address the team members who worked on the project.

As a next step in the discussion of contributions from diversity I apply the **lens of perception**, whose key concepts are stereotypes, self-fulfilling prophecies, and the concept of belonging and othering.

Pertaining to the portrayed spaces perception seemed strongly shaped by national stereotypes. This was shown by repeatedly expressed astonishment by the team members about the contemporary style of the client site. Some team members' assumptions based on concepts typically linked to developing countries such as the lack of infrastructure, hygiene standards, and up-to-date-technology. Team members who based their assumptions about the client on this misperception quickly had to rework their perception to meet reality. Participants' perception about the British business school was confirmed once they saw a photo of the location, which in turn led to the assumption that all team members were British (also see chapter 02). Thus, each group need to reconstruct their respective stereotypes about the other.

The lens of perception comes strongly into account when examining the thick descriptions of getting there and the time-space compression. The shared meaning built while riding the mini-buses creates a sense of belonging to this group and clearly defines a boundary to others, namely those arriving in a private car. Equally, the team members achieving embodied presence created their own shared identity as cosmopolitans, which again contributed to the othering between them and the participants. The identity construction of these groups is no longer derived from the idiosyncrasies of shared meaning from localised places, but from the experienced time-space compression from the process of achieving embodied presence. This corresponds with the cosmopolitans who developed belonging further to the experience of the increased use of electronic media during response presence. At the same time they developed some pronounced othering with friends and family who managed their lives in the localised space and so lacked understanding of the cosmopolitan experience.

Belonging and othering further to the affiliation of religion happens to be recurring topic in this study. Prayer breaks, in particular, caused some pronounced othering as the display was public and team members were usually asked to leave for reasons of privacy. In connection with the prayer breaks the issue of punctuality came into account, which perpetuated othering. The irritation of team members as illustrated in the thick descriptions highlights the delicacy of this issue. Self-fulfilling prophecies do not appear

further to the analysis as there surfaced no expectancy – behaviour link from the examined descriptions.

Finally, I will view the experience of multiple time and space through **the environmental lens**. Regarding spaces the notion of ideoscapes seems to apply as each of the locations are inextricably linked with chains of ideas, images, and terms connected to the old Europe and Middle East and North Africa, specifically Egypt in the role of economically developing country. Yet another element of ideoscapes presents the time-space compression experienced by the groups working on this project, predominantly qualified in response presence. This compression is largely connected to the mediascapes, that is, the distribution of electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information, and which, in the tradition of response presence aims electronically mediated means of synchronous and non-synchronous ways of communication²¹⁸. “Thinking” the other location requires 'time-space compression'²¹⁹, a sense of dramatically reducing distance in your imagination in order to be able to plan the unplannable. The strategy of using both emails and concalls is stating the obvious.

The focus of this study is not on the project's financial implication. Nevertheless, further to the time-space compression financescapes as disposition of moving global capital is of importance. Manufacturing capital advances global economic features like hypermobility and time-space compression, of which both are not self-generative²²⁰. They are the process of the actions created by the individuals working on this project, the latter acquiring an 'actorial' identity from these actions²²¹. They are produced and reproduced by individuals physically and virtually moving back and forth, by mini-bus, car, airplane, or in the virtual space. These activities contributed to cash flow movements on a global scale. At the micro-level the individual contributors, some facing tedious journeys on jammed desert roads, may be more concerned with jams and traffic signs. Those being subjected to air travel may be irritated about security controls and worried about delays. Frequently observed in this study, often these actants were unaware of their contribution to global finance flows, to which many were entirely beyond the individual's control as a result of the interconnectedness of financescapes²²², that is the disposition

²¹⁸ Details of electronically-mediated communication will be further explored in chapter 05.

²¹⁹ Harvey 1989 in Tomlinson 1999:3

²²⁰ Sassen 2001:262

²²¹ Lindberg, Carniawska 2006:294

²²² Appadurai 1996:34

of global capital sometimes mysteriously and yet rapidly moving: currency markets, stock exchanges, and commodity speculations.

3.4. CONCLUSION

The discussion of the thick descriptions highlighted a number of critical contributions from the diversity inherent to this project. Equally, a number of findings were clearly an obstacle to any further diversity generation.

Regarding to the lens of multiple affiliations the vehicles of transport and the locations transformed to identity-creating artefacts. They largely dispense contributions from their demonstrated diversity as does the newly created project identity.

As for the locations the mindset about time and space spoke to the national culture? stereotypes? by recalling the past. However, the study's excavation shows that the national is a time that looks to the past, that is, the traditional perception of England and Egypt, and inheriting this as future.²²³ Only the encounters helped breaking through the obsolete perceptions.

As portrayed at the beginning of this chapter the notion of action nets captures the never-ending flow of redistributive practices²²⁴ including changing team members and participants. Equally, it explains the spatio-temporal qualities of diversity inherent to multi-site fieldwork. Clearly, the findings show the project team is an action net generating 'organising'²²⁵ with its specific 'actorial identity', which presents a form of diversity in itself.

Senior management's intention to establish the mini-bus system was certainly justified by the necessity of shipping workforce back and forth, which categorises this service as one of the characteristics of the organisation's 'Has-culture'²²⁶. However, as an anthro-

²²³ Sassen 2001:269

²²⁴ Jimenez 2007:29

²²⁵ Nevertheless, for clarity in this study I will refer to groups researched as indicated in the introduction chapter.

²²⁶ Smirchich 1983 in: Jimenez 2007:255

pologist, I understand this transportation service as an integral part of 'Is-culture'²²⁷, a generative process in the form of mobile vehicles that shapes meaning. The process of the action net as a set of meanings constructed and negotiated in social interaction implies that the social reality of time and space inherent to the action net is continuously created, recreated and changed, and thus is an Is-culture, and so generates diversity.

Regarding the lens of perception and the environmental lens the analysis showed that stereotyping, belonging and othering reciprocal with ideoscapes and mediascapes came into play, whereas the time-space compression can be referred to as 'ba' with a corresponding actorial identity.

The findings are critical to the application to future projects, in particular, the balance of embodied versus response presence, the breaking through stereotypes, and the belonging established in the virtual 'ba'.

²²⁷ Smirchich 1983 in: Jimenez 2007:255

4. CALLING THE WEST

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Firms in countries in transition such as Egypt tend to “call the West” when undertaking work in the specialist field of strategy and management development. Typically, they cooperate with business schools and consulting firms featuring a Western management approach with specific models and frameworks.

This chapter aims to investigate the implications of using such frameworks in the modern business world in a country in transition, that is; Egypt. In the following sections I will investigate the suitability of standardised models and approaches; I look more qualitatively at successful and less successful applications of the models and frameworks used in the target environment. Specifically, I investigate the method of photo gallery and the model approach used for facilitating aspects of communication; the method of case-study and role-playing for working on aspects of teamwork and leadership, and the method of business simulation and market place used for facilitating sessions on managing change. Furthermore, the packaging of the learning will be key to the investigation.

Each of the approaches discussed was facilitated a minimum of ten times usually by two facilitators²²⁸, each time with up to thirty participants. Feedback was collected in written and verbal form. The section on the packaging of the learning was primarily derived from participant observation during large group events with up to ninety participants in the room.

In the following section I firstly describe the various approaches followed by the ways the teaching offerings were received by the participants. Secondly, findings will point to potential diversity in the learning as well as different needs in the design of learning material and the structure of its content, hence the suitability of using such models.

²²⁸ Facilitators are team members in the role of workshop presenters.

From the result of the analysis I will draw a conclusion to what extent diversity is brought to light from the people's interactions in these learning settings.

The frequently observed collaboration between UK and US based business schools and consulting firms in Egypt and other parts of the Middle East appear to have three causes helping illustrate the context of this cooperation. Firstly, the recently experienced popularity of the business school model over the last few decades described in more detail in chapter 06; secondly, the close historical ties between the UK and Egypt; and thirdly, the fact that a large number of headquarters of Egyptian organisations are in the US and the UK.

All three aspects certainly motivated the Egyptian client to seek a British partner, which after the tender process finally resulted in a close collaboration between the two organisations, the British business school and the Egyptian client organisation working towards one common project goal. Background to the three causes and their inherent ethical issues will be explored in detail in Chapter 06 'The value debate'.

4.2. THE APPROACHES

4.2.1. THE PHOTO GALLERY APPROACH

The gallery approach was used in numerous sessions throughout the programmes with a special focus on communication. By selecting the gallery method facilitators aimed to set up an interactive session wishing a) to introduce the topic of communication in general, and b) to understand the group's perspective on communication skills. The set-up invited participants to browse through the exhibition-like gallery presenting photos of 49 individuals. The selection of mainly portrait photos contained well-known men and women from politics, business, sports, and science from all around the world from the past and the present. Photos of great communicators selected by the facilitators were: Bill Gates, Kofi Annan, Condoleezza Rice, Michael Schumacher, Yasser Arafat, Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher, India Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Anwar as-

Sadat, Mahatma Gandhi, Rudy Giuliani, Jack Welch, Richard Branson, Boutros Boutros Ghali, Christopher Gent, Michael Dell, Bill Clinton, Vladimir Putin, Angela Merkel, Jacques Chirac, Lakhshmi Mittal, Mother Teresa, Donald Trump, Stelios Ioannou, Anita Roddick, David Beckham, Martin Luther King, John F. Kennedy, Oprah Winfrey, Steve Jobs, Mikhail Gorbachev, Princess of Wales, Hosni Mubarak, Nelson Mandela, Stephen Hawking, Abdul Aziz al Ghurair, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Segolene Royal, Albert Einstein, James Bond, Jose Mourinho, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Mohamed Al-Baradei, Magdi Yacoub, Hatshepsut, Suzanne Mubarak, Bill Hewlett, Andrew Flintoff.

With maximum 30 participants in a spacious room, facilitators provided them with the opportunity to browse through the exhibition-like gallery of photos to then involve in a discussion building on the following two questions: a) Why are these people up here? and b) What makes or made them great communicators? Based on feedback from roughly twenty workshops great communicators most commonly brought forward were: Bill Clinton, Suzanne Mubarak, Oprah, Sadat, and Mohamed El-Baradei.

The following paragraphs will provide insight how and why these people were selected. Firstly, I describe the process of selection and then refer to Bill Clinton at greater length, as he is the person most frequently selected, occupying most of the discussion time in these sessions. This is followed by some shorter elaboration on the other more frequently chosen communicators.

Upon setup and briefing of the activity participants got up from their table groups and browsed through the photos displayed on large metaplan boards. Initially, participants explored the content of the boards individually to then gather with other participants in smaller groups in front of the metaplan boards. In group discussions conducted in colloquial Arabic they identified who some of the individuals in the photos were. This was a necessary first step as some of the characters on the photos were not commonly known to the Egyptian participants such as Andrew Flintoff, Christopher Gent, Michael Dell, Rudy Giuliani, Anita Roddick, Segolene Royal, Steve Jobs, and Bill Hewlett. In often high-pitched group discussions with individuals speaking simultaneously, participants concluded that the former president of the United States is very clear in his communication and has a vision beyond his own interest. They found that it was certainly impressive “what he did for our people”, and that he managed to connect representatives of Palestine and Israel. “He took on leadership in the region”.

Whilst workshop facilitators presented only a portrait of the former president of the United States, participants referred to another photograph on which one can see Clinton in the centre behind Rabin and Arafat shaking hands spanning his arms onto both their shoulders to indicate an embrace. For background information this photo was taken during the Oslo Treaty meetings. The latter officially known as the Declaration of Principles was a milestone in the Israeli-Palestine conflict, where for the first time Palestinian representatives received acknowledgement of the right to exist. It was the first time in history that Israeli officials and delegates from Palestine met in a face-to-face meeting. Savir, one of the Israeli chief negotiators in the process:

„ ... on September 13, 1993, the mutual recognition received its most dramatic expression on the South Lawn of the White House, when, at 10:00am, after Shimon Peres – for Israel – and Abu Mazen – for the PLO (as added in handwriting minutes before the ceremony) - had signed the Declaration of Principles. Then President Clinton drew together two men no one expected ever to see standing together: Yitzhak Rabin and Yassir Arafat. They clasped hands in what surely must be the most photographed handshake in history. ... But the importance the world ascribed to the touch of these two hands was an expression of the magic embedded in the solution of one of the most complex and emotional conflicts of them all and the hope it planted in hearts the world over.²²⁹“

One other frequently selected great communicator was Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, the Egyptian president's wife. The First Lady of Egypt is half Egyptian and half Welsh, a graduate of the American University of Cairo and is among many other functions the founder and president of the Women's International Peace Movement. In the plenary discussions participants paid particular attention to her role in promoting charity work and hosting charity events. According to participants in this capacity "she is doing many good things". Often, participants would refer to her as "Lady Di of Egypt". Less frequently, participants spelled out that her approach was opposite to her husband's, whereas the meaning of the notion of "opposite" was not spelled out in any greater detail. Other participants listening to the conversation cautioned the speakers to be careful with such statements.

Another Egyptian personality, Mohamed El- Baradei was named as a great communicator with high frequency. Mr. El-Baradei is a former Egyptian diplomat who held a series of high-level positions in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), an inter-

²²⁹ Savir 1998:77

governmental organisation under the auspices of the United Nations. There he served three terms in the role of director general.

In the debrief participants would explain that “Mr. El-Baradei was Egyptian and that he held an important role in an important international organisation”, namely the IAEA. They pointed out that “he had a critical role for the Egyptian nation as he represented the country in this highly esteemed leadership role in this important organisation. They informed the facilitators that “he received the Nobel Peace Prize” for his efforts in peace making.

One characteristic that participants repeatedly spelled out was that “he speaks his mind”. Upon inquiry of the meaning of “speaking his mind” participants referred to the fact that Mr. El-Baradei told the UN Security council in March 2003 that documents purporting to show that Iraq had tried to acquire uranium from Niger were not authentic.

Also, some participants turned to me pointing out that “he was based where you originally come from²³⁰” whilst they turned to some of the other facilitators informing them that “some of his family was based in London”.

The fourth person assigned to be a great communicator was Oprah Winfrey. As per plenary discussions the American talk show host takes on leadership by addressing unpopular topics, brings people together, connecting and reconnecting people who had lost contact, shows emotions in public and demonstrates empathy with her guests.

For full reference it is vital to mention that in the course of the discussions with and among participant the Prophet was recognised as a great communicator and leader. Simultaneously, they explained to the Western facilitators that a photo couldn't be shown.

Noticeably, the lead questions on communication opened up a lively discussion strongly linking communication with leadership and usually conducted in the local Arabic dialect. In plenary discussion participants presented stories about the individuals' achievements, typically pointing to the indispensable contribution to the region and its people of the specific person. Contributions would cover both, political and social efforts such as delivered by Bill Clinton and Suzanne Mubarak. Significantly, all identified individuals were attributed with special leadership skills. Typically, the debrief elicited a discussion on the indispensable link between communication and leadership.

²³⁰ The headquarters of the IAEA is in Vienna

The diverse mix of Western and regional personalities in the gallery invited the participants to share rich stories. The initial topic of communication was taken to a next level; that was leadership. The method encouraged participants to manoeuvre the discussion to a content relevant to them and leading it in accordance with the values from a regional perspective. Distinctively, this perspective includes a high sense of belonging and meaning.

The method consistently received very positive feedback in both verbal and written formats.

4.2.2. THE MODEL APPROACH

One other approach is the model approach, which typically requires facilitators to present a model, with which participants then experiment. Specifically, the selected model is called the Ladder of Inference based on a tool created by Chris Argyris²³¹, an American business theorist as well as well-known professor and thought leader on learning organisations. This model helps a) realising when communication is incomplete and b) eliciting which deep-seated beliefs or assumptions are interfering with participants' communication. Moreover, this tool offers a technique for getting the missing information and by both, having this awareness and applying the technique to communicate more clearly and appropriately. Specifically, the model examines how we select data from our surroundings, make meaning and act - therefore it looks at how our assumptions influence our actions, for full reference pls see the appendix.

For illustration one of the facilitators states as follows:

“My favourite example on this topic is the Left-Hand Column exercise, where you write what you said in a difficult conversation in the right-hand column and what you were thinking in the left-hand column. Then you consider what was keeping you from saying what you were thinking, what effect expressing your thoughts might have had, and how you might be able to express them constructively in the future. This is a very useful exercise in Austria, especially in Vienna, where people often don't speak openly about what is on their minds.”

²³¹ Argyris 1990:88

Taking Chris Argyris's background into account it needs to be assumed that this tool was developed in the American context known to be low-context culture²³² idiosyncratic for its open and expressive communication style by spelling out details at great length and providing all the necessary background information²³³. Whilst Golia offers an insight how the environment of the Egyptian high-context culture infuses language and lives,

“Wishful speaking is one of Cairene dissimulation, an acquired skill that acts as a natural defence. Feeling is channelled into formula, formula into abstraction rendering Cairene modes of expression at once seductive, heartfelt and oblique. Dissimulation is the lesson of forced intimacy; ‘proximity’ in the words of the Sufi Ibn al-Arabi ‘can be as great a veil as distance’. However social at being, the human needs space and occasionally peace, precious commodities associated here with wealth. In its absence, people build inner rooms, buffer zones, places of greater ease and freedom.”²³⁴

The team developing the programme content was wondering about the appropriateness of the model approach and potential examples provided when presenting the ladder of inference. Specifically, team members who know Arabic or have lived in a high-context culture featuring indirect speech as stated in the above quote raised the discussion on the suitability of the model in the Cairene context. One of the team members stated her concern in one of the learning reviews as follows:

“One big concern I had was using the ladder of Inference, which lays bare the ways in which we select data and add meaning to it, in an Egyptian setting. I thought this tool, which I find terrifically helpful because it helps get this process out into the open, would be too “American” in the sense that it becomes necessary to talk about every bit of process and leave nothing hidden.”²³⁵

Upon using this tool with approximately 300 participants it became transparent that the presentation of the model and the corresponding activity that invited participants to experiment with it “has actually been a big hit with most groups.”²³⁶

²³² Hall 1966 in Dahlen 1997:108

²³³ Hampden-Turner 2000:124

²³⁴ Golia 2004:139

²³⁵ A team member

²³⁶ A team member

The suitability of this model was demonstrated primarily in two ways. These are a) insights expressed by participants further to the experimentation part of the model and b) comments in the written feedback.

Insights from participants were such as,

“...that our problem is more that we speak without thinking and wish later that we could take something back.”

This insight was immediately used to demonstrate how behaviour could be changed as one facilitator states,

“Then we talk about what they could put in the left-hand column or re-phrase what is in the right-hand column.”²³⁷

Also, participants were encouraged to conduct the exercises in first language, that is colloquial Arabic. They stated that

„it helped us greatly as we bring out emotionality far more than conducting this in a second language.“

In the written feedback participants positioned the Ladder in the section of *Most useful* and *New tool* most frequently. Less than 1% of the feedback comments were in the section *Least useful* saying that the tool was too theoretical or not useful. For illustration below are some anonymised comments:

- Ladder – we climb every day through communication with others
- Picking different data will lead to different results.
- The most useful element was the ladder because starting from now I know why I take many ‘strange’ action and wrong ones – it’s a matter of wrong choice of data
- Ladder activity, because it can be applied immediately in our business
- Using the pretty ladder
- Ladder of influence, how to think & inquire before taking action
- Use the ladder in all my actions
- Walking up & down the ladder.
- Ladder of influence because it makes me understand my self and feelings more

²³⁷ A team member

4.2.3. CASE STUDY AND ROLE-PLAYING

The programme designers decided to use the method of various real life case studies in order to consolidate the learning on communication, leadership and change and allow the participants to put their learning into practice. The emotional content of the case is important as case teaching is about stimulating debate, which makes the 'real life' aspect critical to win participants' interest. The selected case study combines a number of different methods, i. e. group discussions, watching a video, presentation of results and plenary discussion. One of the selected cases included role-playing. One of the case studies I wish to elaborate on is the case study known as the Sharif case with the formal title of "The group that exploded"²³⁸. Its content portrays a multicultural team working towards a common objective. The characters present some diversity such as nationality, age, gender, and diversity in experience. These aspects of diversity are clearly highlighted in the text of the case study by using bullet points introducing each individual briefly, that is

- Brigitte, a young Austrian woman (one year's experience at the company)
- Rafet, a Turkish man (new to Austria and the company)
- Sharif, a young Egyptian man (new to the company but with several years' experience living in Austria)
- Mansur, a Lebanese man (with many years' experience living and working in Austria)
- Jeff, a U.S. American man (with several years' experience in Austria and the company)

The key question asked was: "Examine the team conflict and the reasons behind the communication difficulties." More specifically, participants needed to analyse what can go wrong in team communication, what the role of the supervisor was, and finally generate ideas of how to communicate difficult messages. Also, participants were invited to role-play the characters.

In the workshops participants read the short case study and could ask questions in order to ensure understanding of the content. The facilitators then assigned one of the five roles to one of the table groups of approximately six participants usually seating one or two female participants per table group. In table group discussion participants identified challenges in the case study presented and answered the key questions.

²³⁸ Written by Elisabeth Cassels-Brown 2007. For full reference see appendix.

In general, participants completed the task without objecting. Table group discussions were typically held in Arabic in a calm way.

The method of role-playing was met with tremendous resistance in putting themselves into somebody else's shoes. Verbal feedback upon the resistance was for example "we do not want to make fools of ourselves"; "this does not seem to be any fun". This feedback seemed to be similar among the first few groups, which finally resulted in dropping the method of role-playing altogether.

One single incident needs special attention in this analysis. At one instance one participant in an all men table group who seemed to be speaking for his whole table looked sceptical upon reading the content of case study, saying "This is insulting to the Egyptians. I refuse working on this."

One of the facilitators responded by saying,

"I disagree, I think the American manager came off worse as an example of true cultural insensitivity."

The facilitator's comment broke the ice and the participant then actually persuaded his table to do the analysis as instructed and afterwards said he learned a lot from it.

This one incident was the only time when diversity was addressed. Clearly, the discussion was based on national identity and the interpretation of the presentation of the Egyptian team member was seen as negative and the more extended discussion led to a discussion on the relationship between the West and the Arab World with a reference to 9/11. Only, the facilitator's intervention prevented a further discussion of political calibre.

In all other groups diversity was of no concern neither in a positive or a negative way, but the activity was merely focused on aspects of communication and teamwork as was the intended use of the case study.

Pertaining to the method of case study this seems to have been highly suitable as per written feedback of participants. This case study in particular as well as other case studies received high marks and were appreciated with further comments where sections in the feedback form would allow.

Feedback from facilitators showed that the session turned out to be facilitation-intensive. This included answering a lot of questions as participants were not quite certain what was expected of them. Also, facilitators reported that they found it challenging

to walk participants through the thought process. They stated that they needed to talk to each person or table groups in order to explain the process in great detail and to provide lots of examples.

4.2.4. THE BUSINESS SIMULATION

With many different types of business simulations available stretching from sophisticated web-based tools to more simple 'games', careful selection of the appropriate method was found to be critical to the successful transfer of learning. For the specialist topic of 'Managing change' the design team selected a ball game that helps to illustrate standard processes in an organisation. Equally, as in business life it introduces emergent change throughout the simulation such as performance improvement requested by the customer and pressures due to competitor issues. The leading question in the simulation is how to increase performance under pressure.

The detailed description below was taken from one specific group, nevertheless is representative for all other groups using this activity. Typically, there were two facilitators with up to 30 participants in the room.

Participants stood in a large circle in the room and were given the following instructions:

„The task is to throw a tennis ball from one person to another person in the circle. All stations must be participating in random order. It is important to remember the order of throwing the ball and to throw precisely and catch precisely. One of us (facilitator) will capture two criteria on a flipchart: The number of failures, or quality control and the time for one round in number of seconds it takes to make a full round. Failure means the ball touches the floor, or the ball goes to the wrong person.“

The facilitators encouraged the group to try a first round, which was usually accompanied by great laughter. During the second and the third round facilitators encouraged the group to speed up. One of the two facilitators kept the time and failure record on the flipchart. In the fourth round the facilitators added two additional balls into the game now inviting the group to do the same task. Additionally, the facilitator pointed out that the three balls needed to be used in the right order as it otherwise records as a failure. The introduction of the two additional balls was usually accompanied by a combination

of more laughter and some complaints saying how difficult this would be. The groups again played three rounds with the three balls whilst one of the facilitators encouraged them to work faster and the other wrote down time and failures.

After the three rounds with the three balls the facilitator informed the group:

“As your customer, I am satisfied with what you do, but I expect some performance improvements. X seconds with Y mistakes is a bit too little.
“What do you think you can offer me?”

A discussion among participants started first in English with individuals bringing forward a number of improvements such as moving more closely together in order to shorten the throwing distance or rolling the ball across the room to the other person or changing positions. Several speakers spoke at one time with the discussion drifting into Arabic. Some of the speakers would then carry on in English to be drawn into some parallel discussions held by other participants in Arabic.

The facilitator took the offers communicated in English and did not comment on them. Strictly, the facilitator just pointed out that there is time pressure and that they need to adhere to the rules.

After one round participants again started to discuss how the process could be speeded up, with some participants suggesting once more to change positions. Again, the facilitator pointed out that they need to adhere to the rules. Discussion were high-pitched, speakers spoke simultaneous and mostly Arabic and only switched to English when attempting to involve the facilitators.

After the next round the facilitator interrupted the group and said, “there is an offer from the Middle East saying that the competitor would be ready to do the same service with guaranteed zero mistakes and under seven seconds. If you want to stay in the ‘game’ think what you can do.”

Comments from participants were, “That’s what they always say; so let them do it; they are lying; it is impossible”. This was followed by an animated discussion in English and Arabic finally resulting in participants changing positions in order to speed up the process. After two or three rounds the competitor’s benchmark was achieved.

In general, participant feedback confirmed the suitability of the activity in various ways. Firstly, participants enjoyed the simulation. At the interpersonal level the simulation required high-involvement from each participant. Demonstrated behaviours during the course of the simulation have an immediate impact on the outcome of the objective. Secondly, from the organisational perspective, participants stated that the simulation

authentically mirrors the processes and dynamics in the internal and external environment.

For more detailed illustration, in the debrief discussion participants stated they found the activity highly helpful. Although being a simple game, a lot of learning can be drawn from it. Firstly, they were surprised that “It can be done!” and “it is down to us to make the change even if the change is imposed on us from the external environment”. Other key insights from this activity were that change can be something positive or can at least have a positive impact and that change was something continuous.

This type of simulation is practical and down-to-earth, inviting participants to seek and try out new ideas. It is designed for individuals who enjoy problem solving and decision-making quickly as was demonstrated repeatedly across various groups.

Instructions are highly specific which helps practitioners to overcome any potential dislike for insufficient information. Reflection rounds between ball game rounds supported participants by standing back and gathering data without lengthy discussion, yet allowing some planned action for the round to come.

Those groups who have experienced this type of simulation clearly displayed a preference for the application of learned practices, the direct translation into the own organisational practice and the application to the immediate business environment followed the simulations naturally.

It might be worthwhile noting that this approach has been used with a great number of groups from other client organisations. Observations have shown that groups with a predominantly German-speaking audience tended to follow rules as given by the facilitators more strictly. In many cases the displayed adherence to rules necessitated up to ten rounds to achieve the anticipated result.

4.2.5. THE MARKET PLACE

The market place was presented by the means of metaplan boards for each of the four features of the SWOT analysis, where SWOT stands for strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Pre-printed posters were hung onto the metaplan boards inviting

participants in small working groups to walk from one station to the next where they could capture their findings of the strategic analysis.

The SWOT model organises the strategic analysis into four areas, i.e. strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the organisation. Whilst strengths and weaknesses are distinctive internal characteristics, opportunities and threats are features of the business environment. Strengths and opportunities both impact the organisational performance positively by contributing to the business goals, whereas weaknesses and threats clearly impede the organisation's achievements.

The method of market place features small working groups, allows participants to move from one topic area to the next and concludes with a plenary discussion. With the selected content, participants needed to analyse internal and external organisational key features, both from the past and the future.

Participants did not favour the content area as the analysis was perceived tedious and too detail-oriented; nevertheless they appreciated the approach of market place. Debrief and feedback showed clear preference towards activities inquiring into future scenarios such as sculpturing the future. Participants showed great enthusiasm for developing metaphors "Visualising the organisation in 2 years time", using the entire interior equipment for illustrating future images of the organisation and its environment.

The participant feedback indicated that this exercise contained too much theory whilst practical guidelines for application were absent; things that are not related to immediate needs. The key learning from this exercise would be that the combination of method and content is important when designing and facilitating workshops in this particular environment: whilst the combination of market place with the SWOT analysis failed as it was perceived as too descriptive, the approach of simulation was welcome as it allowed participants to manoeuvre the content to interpersonal behaviours, clearly putting one's own action into the centre of the learning rather than analysing somebody else's undertaking.

Putting this approach into a bigger context it might be helpful to depict that groups with a predominantly German-speaking audience shows a pronounced preference for the analytical approach irrespective if facilitated by the means of market place or in a mere model approach.

4.3. THE PACKAGING OF THE LEARNING

This section provides insights from the packaging of the learning. Firstly, I will focus on materials, which were used during workshop sessions. This is followed by an analysis of the “packaging” of dress and finally, I will present a few selected examples from the learning environment such as the learning space and its appropriate use in this context.

4.3.1. THE MATERIALS

During the development of the project the design team together with the client clarified the style and the use of the materials employed during the programme. The development team suggested binders whose layout would feature both logos, the one of the client organisation and the one of business school. The binder would be placed on the tables prior to the start of the workshop and be designed for different usage, that is a) background information already placed in the binders and b) allocated space for hand-outs, which are given to participants during the workshop sessions.

The client’s feedback was that “they expected something more state-of-the-art featuring some latest multi-media tools”. Ready-made booklets with a glossy touch would be standard and participants would expect this to be delivered with a programme. Specifications on structure and layout were provided.

The first draft of workbooks largely met the client’s expectations. With a few amendments in reference to design such as landscape format rather than portrait, spiral-binding, and some colour adjustments the workbooks were ready for printing. The final result can be described as follows:

A stylish booklet containing approximately 20 pages with a title page presenting the title of the respective workshop, company logos and a line for the participant’s name. The visual support shows rounded triangles and squares with rounded corners of different

colours. The following page presents the component skills each again shown in a triangle. The component skill describes the performance driver skill in more details such as “Is clear and concise when talking and writing”.

This is followed by pages, of which each one is designed for one activity. Each page features boxes serving to write up insights and learning per activity. Referring back to the exercise on Great communicators this means that one page contains two boxes, one asking for “Who do you feel are the best communicators (from the photographs or from your own experience)?” and the other one asking “Why? What makes a great communicator?” The boxes show plenty of lines for the participants to write up their comments.

The final pages of the booklet allow one page for notes, one page for the feedback form and a back page with company information and an abbreviation of the specific level and number of the workshop.

As this design allows no space for theoretical input, the design team suggested to the client to produce separate CDs containing additional background information. This was accepted and welcomed and clearly met some of the request on multi-media tools. In addition, the design team advocated eco-bags made from fabric, which should accommodate all materials to be handed to participants. This proposition was turned down as not being elegant enough.

As for appearance the materials were designed towards the client’s expectation with some clear disadvantage in making use of the materials during the workshop time. Firstly, participants were hesitant to write into the workbooks, nor were some of the participants willing to take time for writing up findings in the assigned sections. Secondly, the time pressure due to the very condensed workshop contents did often not allow enough time to make full use of the workbooks.

Thirdly, the prescribed sections, boxes, and lines allowed only little flexibility in workshop facilitation. It limited facilitators to indulge in discussions with participants respectively encourage them for some in-depth discussions among participants. Otherwise the time pressure would have necessitated to skipping some topics and activities, which would have become apparent in the evaluation sheet. The evaluation sheet was written up per activity and bound the facilitator to delivering each activity as prescribed in the workshop design.

Basically, the appearance of a glitzy and more elegant workbook came at the expense of the flow of workshop sessions.

4.3.2. DRESS AND APPEARANCE

In this section I explore the dress and appearance of the participants and briefly link the findings to the way facilitators used to dress and the feedback the Westerner's team received upon its appearance.

It is important to note that the written invitations to the programme did not contain any indication on dress and attire as opposed to other programmes where clients often provide directions as to preferred dress code for workshops. Typical labels would be 'casual' or 'business casual'. There was no explicit exploration between the decision makers within the client organisation and the design team upon the design of the programme invitation; merely the assumption was that participants would quickly go to their office prior to programme start, during lunch break, and after the end of workshop.

In the following I describe the dress that participants demonstrated during workshops. Based on the recent paragraph it can be assumed that the shown styles are representative for business situations altogether.

The description derives from participant observation and a photo analysis from photos taken during several workshops with different activities.

Most men wear flannel or cotton trousers with a shirt and a jacket, fewer men wear suits. Hardly anyone wears a tie. Dominant colours are beige, brown, and blue. Shirts come in light colours. Alternative to jackets, occasionally one can see sweaters on top of shirts. Fewer men wear a white T-shirt covered by a sweater. Only few wear a black leather jacket, only rarely one can observe very casual clothes such as a sweater with a hood. Eventually, you see men with glasses designed in bright colours typically featuring the latest model shape.

All men have the hair cut short and well groomed. Some have well-looked-after beards; more do not have any beard. No moustaches have been detected. All men wear a wristwatch. In summary, the dominant style can be described as business casual in common business colours.

Most women wear skirts down to the ankle with a more loose top covering the hips. Some women wear a double headscarf some made from a silky material, some made

from crepe cotton with needles holding the scarf in place. Occasionally, a small bit of textile from the undershirt with a made-to-fit-the-head hood would be visible. These undershirts are made from highly elastic textile; brands featuring a mix of Egyptian cotton with Licra are available locally. The fixing of the scarf would allow a bit of hair to be visible. The majority of women who wear a headscarf of one or the other type do not wear any make-up.

Some other women wear tops with a high cut and no headscarf, nevertheless would bind back the hair or pin it up. Some fewer women wear make-up displaying bright red lip-stick, earrings, and sunglasses on top of their heads. All of them wear tops with long sleeves, not one woman was seen with short sleeves or a sleeveless shirt. Colours of both tops and bottoms are versatile and range from bright yellow, orange, red to more subtle colours such as beige, brown, blue and black. Beyond the mentioned earrings jewellery tends to be a typical feature when it comes to dress and appearance. Altogether, the dominant style can be labelled “Egyptian business casual” presenting fashion that allows the body to be covered properly and yet allowing the shape to be somewhat visible.

The mix of Western and local dress was reflected by the facilitators working on the programme. This by no means indicates that in particular the female facilitators indulged in copying the local style.

Male facilitators typically wore business casual as described above and by this mirrored the local style. Female facilitators would typically wear tops with sleeves and business trousers. Dresses and skirts would cover the knee. Oral feedback from participants in reference to dress and appearance was positive. Positive feedback turned into compliments when female facilitators showed some closeness to local dress by, for example, wearing a skirt or a scarf wrapped to appear as a skirt on top of trousers.

The positive verbal feedback provided by the Egyptian participants demonstrates suitability in reference to the appearance of the non-Egyptian facilitators. No examples of negative feedback were collected throughout the course of the programme.

4.3.3. THE IMPLICATIONS OF SPACE ON LEARNING

In this section, at first I describe the learning environment such as the seminar rooms and the set up. This is followed by the description of some behaviour shown in the interaction among participants during workshop activities, again coming from participant observation and visual anthropology, i. e. photo analysis. Finally, I summarise the learning of the learning the facilitators experienced throughout the duration of the programme.

The building where the programme workshops take place is a contemporary glass building. Upon entering one is presented with a generous reception hall, marble floors and walls. The interior decoration is held in company colours. Also, you see plenty of plants, which mirror the green impression from the outside-pampered lawns surrounding the building in the middle of the desert. Flat screens showing the 24-hour news show of Al-Gazeera as well as internet islands are ubiquitous.

The seminar rooms seem to be a continuation of the first impression. All of them are laid out with heavy exclusive carpets framed with meander patterns and wooden separating walls laced with rich ornaments. Equally, all of them are equipped with state-of-the-art technical equipment, flipcharts, whiteboards and screens. Generously equipped toolboxes, pre-printed posters and charts are available. All the design including posters and charts are kept in company colours.

Tables are either high or low and covered with white tablecloth accompanied by colour-coordinated chairs or big pillows also known as beanbags that would invite participants to sit on the floor. The curtains would typically be drawn with the rooms airconditioned at 16 degrees Celsius.

In reference to some selected interaction among participants, observations stem from large group events when all three hierarchical levels congregate. For the first networking session participants were invited “to meet as many new colleagues you can within five minutes.”

In the room there was a casual atmosphere. Idiosyncratic were many smiling faces, lots of laughter, and open hand gestures while talking. There was no direct eye contact

when shaking hands; individuals tend to stand closely to one another in the room. This behaviour pertains to both, men and women; no gender-specific differences can be observed.

Yet, with the majority of the participants being male, a few gender-specific observations are worthwhile being mentioned. Whilst standing closely to one another, women tend to keep a slightly bigger distance to male colleagues compared to female colleagues. When joining a group of men, women do not merge into the circle men are building, but rather sideways. Women tend to mingle in dense crowd of men laughing and chatting together; and at the same time appear to build their own groups more to the periphery of the room. At one point, a man joins a group of women. Whilst sitting and working on a table group activity one can rarely see a table with women outnumbering male colleagues at the same table.

Proximity and touch behaviour becomes critical when conducting activities that includes holding on to each other such as one of the communication exercises known as 'leading the blind'. In this activity, one person is supposed to lead a colleague wearing a blind-fold through the room. As a consequence of the behaviours described above, facilitators invited participants to team up with a person of the same sex.

The mobile phone was usually placed in one hand while interacting with others. When seated around a table, mobile phones sat on the tables next to car and office keys as well as note pads. Whilst clapping hands the mobile phone was usually being held in one hand.

When working in table groups of mostly six to seven participants per table, it was noticeable that group discussions tended to be livelier once one or two women were at this table. All men tables often being a result of the significant majority of men, discussions tended to be more subdued and results often less rich.

The mix of genders on table groups did not offend individuals, but enhances discussions and exchange of thoughts, hence the flow of input and knowledge creation. The setup of table groups seems to meet the needs of women as, "Women tend to be volu-

ble in small and more intimate groups”²³⁹, whilst they tend to be more “taciturn in large and more public situations”²⁴⁰, as confirmed by below observations.

Whilst presenting results from a flipchart, men preferably stood next to the flipchart with one arm holding on to it connecting with the medium. Also, men would frequently hold one hand on the next chair’s backrest whilst talking or listening. In opposition to the more outgoing behaviour of men, women repeatedly stood behind their chair whilst presenting results to the plenary.

One other observation applying to men and women was the preference of working on the floor, which would typically result in putting flipchart paper on floor, writing up results whilst kneeling on the floor. This condensed illustration is representative to what was observed during many other activities.

4.4. DISCUSSION

Teaching and facilitating is clearly interaction-oriented and in this capacity it serves a pool for analysis of potential findings, which either demonstrate the creation or the hindrance of diversity of both, content and method. In this section I view the above-described learning incidents through the three lenses of diversity, which are the lens of multiple identities, the lens of perception, and finally the environmental lens.

In reference to the **lens of multiple identities** there are a number of findings, which I organise by the taxonomy presented in the introduction chapter of tangible and intangible identity.

Firstly, national identity was named with great frequency. Examples are the discussion about Mr. El-Baradei and the importance of his national identity in the light of his inter-

²³⁹ Scollon and Scollon 2001:256

²⁴⁰ Scollon and Scollon 2001:256

national career. His national identity was expressed with pride when speaking about his achievements in a field greatly impacting the world's sustainability.

Clinton's national identity was explicitly spelled out by interpreting his interests beyond national constraints. Again, national identity was pronounced by translating the royal British charity performer Lady Diana into the Egyptian equivalent of charity performer Mrs. Mubarak. The majority of the selected great communicators' national identity is somehow linked to Egypt except for the example of Oprah Winfrey.

Further to the model 'Multiple identities in encounters' presented in chapter 02 national identity qualifies as intangible affiliation as in most cases this type of identity is not obvious except for public figures. In the light of tangible identity quite a significant number of identities were not mentioned such as age, family background, marital status that are necessary to make a career as discussed in the workshops and described in the above sections.

Secondly, in the light of multiple identities of diversity there are a number of examples of intangible diversity, which I summarise in the following paragraph. As per earlier definition, intangible identity comprises aspects of identity that are more complex to define and to translate into quantifiable units, such as knowledge transfer.

The ladder of inference displays diversity in communication altogether; that is the similarities and differences in a dialogue contrasting what a speaker says as opposed to what the listener understands and vice versa. Apparently, these similarities and differences are closely related to people's background and experience. Significantly, the activity of ladder application was identified as a very helpful tool to understand one-self and others, again inextricably linked to people's multiple identities, yet in the discussions was not labelled as such.

The simulation featured by the means of a ball game not only triggered high involvement by the individual participant. Also, it displayed the versatility in approaching partly unexpected challenges and thus problem-solving. The repertoire included holding on to existing ways of doing things and improving by primarily speeding up the known approach versus adopting new ideas which had not been probed before.

As per Sen's definition this requires sensitivity to context, that is to the groups and the instructions provided by the facilitators, which in turn require activating a number of

intangible affiliations such in-group mobility, the physical manifestation such as swapping places and the hierarchical manifestation by challenging existing ideas.

As a next step in the discussion of contributions from diversity I apply the **lens of perception**, whose key concepts are stereotypes, self-fulfilling prophecies, and the concept of belonging and othering.

Pertaining to the photo gallery approach perception seems strongly based on belonging. This refers to the fact that the majority of the selected great communicators had, in one or the other way, made a considerable contribution to the Egyptian community. As a consequence, this left a positive impact on the local people.

In the eyes of the participants, Bill Clinton and Mr. El-Baradei delivered an indispensable contribution to peace making whilst Mrs. Mubarak put her energy into social welfare. Again, belonging was expressed by linking and connecting people with one another. This was the case with Oprah specifically and more indirectly with Mr. El-Baradei when spelling out commonalities in reference to locations and potential common contacts in Vienna and London.

The lens of perception comes strongly into place when examining the Sharif case. As demonstrated in the above section, the debrief showed how strongly one's own cultural repertoire, specifically the national and the religious identity impacted the understanding of case study. For the lens of perception it is critical to recall that further to Tajfel extreme events²⁴¹ are more accessible to memory retrieval than are average instances; 9/11 might be viewed as such. In this context and in particular in the subsequent rhetoric on "war against terrorism" capturing the event, negative behaviours of subcultures are likely to be over-represented in memory and judgement. In the light of the case study, some of the participants, thus the representatives of the subculture accused the Western facilitators of offending the Egyptians by using a case study that portrays the Egyptian team member in an unfavourable light.

Only an in-depth discussion between facilitators and some of the participants could dissolve the heavily value-loaded view of the role of the Egyptian. This was feasible only by manoeuvring the discussion away from values and perception towards aspects of group dynamics and leadership, the latter clearly neglected by the American team

²⁴¹ Rothbart 1978: 237 in Turner and Giles 1981:153

leader. Again, belonging and othering was clearly expressed in this emotionally loaded discussion by the use of „You from the West“ versus „We Muslims“.

In reference to dress and appearance Egyptian participants quite frequently expressed positive feedback in reference to the appearance of Western facilitators. This indicates that self-fulfilling prophecies clearly did not materialise; that is the assumption of sloppy and inappropriate clothing often demonstrated by Westerners travelling to Egypt and the Middle East evoking potential resistance. Even if the variety in dress and appearance might be a contribution from diversity, in this case it might be viewed as adverse to diversity as in the business environment it hardly generates new approaches towards clothing.

As these negative assumptions were eliminated by Western facilitators mirroring local styles in an acceptable way; variety, hence diversity was actually minimised. Nevertheless, one could argue that diversity was created in this group of people anew due to the shift in perception from an originally rather negative view to a more positive one.

In the light of perception the implications that space and its management has on displayed behaviours need some attention. As space and more specifically proximity can be easily observed and even acknowledged in measurable units, they would typically qualify as contributions from tangible diversity. Nevertheless, the more tacit behaviours inherent to space and proximity are less tangible and often subject to perception. This inextricable link between tangible, intangible and perception is captured in the following, that is, the gender issue was raised a number of times prior the programme start among Western facilitators. Questions aimed at the number of women participating on the programme and potential caution that should be paid to the fact of working with women in “that region”. As per incident descriptions observations made were very similar compared to workshop groups in, for example, Europe. The gender distribution as well as the displayed speaking time, both is comparable to groups facilitated in Germany and other European countries. Conversely, the gender mix at table groups resulting in livelier discussion contributed to new ideas of problem solving and conflict resolution.

The lens of perception through which the Western facilitators viewed the subject was clearly belonging and othering simultaneously; that is sameness by gender and differing by the assumed inequality assigned to women in the “Arab world”. The issue of

touch behaviour elicited in the earlier descriptions will be covered in chapter five in full detail.

Now the discussion moves to the third lens, **the environmental lens**, by viewing some of the incidents that have already been examined in the light of the two other lenses through capturing aspects from the environment. Equally, I look at some of the incidents that have not yet been investigated through the lenses of diversity. The ecological lens focuses on the influences coming from the habitat and, in addition on the various 'scapes' that seem to have an impact on the described incidents.

Once more, I address the photo gallery approach in this part of the three lenses of diversity as the approaches towards learning seem to be influenced by the external environment. Referring back to the incident described it can be noted that the topic presented, i. e. communication was taken to another level, namely leadership. By the means of lively discussions, participants manoeuvred the topic of communication to a metalevel, specifically which was leadership. Actively synthesising communication and leadership might indicate that participants enjoy learning most when they can relate the learning to personal beliefs and values as well as situations and experiences. In addition, the approach invites possibilities and visions of what could be encouraging exploration, brainstorming, and building on diverse ideas. At this point, it might be worthwhile considering expanding the definition of ideoscapes²⁴² as a concentration of images highly political and often directly linked to state ideologies and their power interests to the ideoscape of learning. As per the above finding, this would encompass preferred styles toward learning, of which the described one allows a non-limiting and visionary preference of the way certain individuals learn.

In order to enhance this addition to the current definition of ideoscape, let me draw your attention once more to the workbook matter. Workbooks as requested by client's guidelines and formats inhibited diversity such as tolerating any deviations from the planned workshop content and assigned order of topics. This inhibited both participants and facilitators in opening new topics and discussions, which in turn might have brought richness and insights for each individual and for existing challenges to be solved.

²⁴² Appadurai 1996:36

Another significant example was the approach of market place and simulation, at content level both aiming at managing change, yet facilitated by different methods. The participant feedback indicated that the market place exercise contained too much theory, when practical guidelines for application were absent; and issues addressed were not related to immediate needs. The key learning from this exercise would be that the combination of method and content is important when working with these groups in this particular environment. Whilst the combination of market place with the analysis of the SWOT model failed due to being too descriptive, the approach of simulation was welcomed as it allowed participants to manoeuvre the challenges to interpersonal issues, in particular what they as individuals can do to make a difference. Only upon their initiative was the content discussion geared toward the competitor issues current in their immediate environment. Also, debrief and feedback showed clear preference towards activities inquiring into future scenarios such as sculpturing the future. Participants showed great enthusiasm for developing metaphors “Visualising the organisation in two years time”, using the entire interior equipment of the workshop room for illustrating future images of the organisation and its environment. This finding appears to be in accordance with the above, which demonstrates a preference towards a visionary and non-limiting style of learning.

Another ideoscape that needs a more detailed exploration is the contribution of peace-making and welfare demonstrated by the identified great communicators. These achievements are not simply viewed as fads or trends, but are in accordance with the values from an Islamic perspective. Precisely, these are a) a high sense of belonging, meaning “those who show a higher sense of belonging to this *umma* normally display a higher involvement in the affairs of the society and are inclined, more than others, to champion societal causes²⁴³”; and b) a high dissatisfaction with the present affairs given they appear unsatisfactory or inconsistent with their perception of the interest of society so require some changes to the status quo²⁴⁴.

The ability to communicate in English at the demonstrated fluency level as well as the displayed fluency of cultural specific knowledge such as Oprah Winfrey can well be ascribed to the concept of mediascapes. The electronic capabilities that produce and disseminate information mainly grounded in the media of television provide the neces-

²⁴³ Abbas, 2007:155

²⁴⁴ Abbas 2007:156

sary platform for this fluency. Mediascapes again provide an explanation for the extent of the experienced impact that 9/11 had even at a case study level.

Looking at the ecological lens necessitates a quick preview to the role of some of the stakeholders in the organisation, specifically the decision-makers responsible for the programme. Their impact on workshop design and facilitation was significant and primarily expressed by monitoring evaluation sheets, resulting in the limitation of any potential deviation from the agreed design per workshop, thus any potential newness coming from discussions. This will be addressed in more detail in chapter 06.

4.5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The conclusions drawn in this chapter are to recognise that diversity is not a stand-alone product, but that diversity with its versatile aspects is a result from events and interactions taking place at these events. Altogether, the interaction of different stakeholders provides ground for diversity creation, which as a result from the above discussion can be confirmed for learning situations.

The lens of multiple identities is currently organised in affiliations more towards tangible identity and affiliations more towards intangible identity. Clearly, tangible identities receive more attention than intangible ones, as the definition tends to be less specific, which as a result challenges participants to verbalise topics that cover intangible identities. Nevertheless, intangible identities might need some further specifications, as some of the affiliations seem to show some specific characteristics. These are affiliations that can be developed over time such as in-group mobility and readiness to adopt new ideas.

The lens of perception demonstrates that commonalities identified between groups seem to bridge divides even as strong as self-fulfilling prophecies. As some observations have shown, similarities between groups on this programme and groups in a European context are evident. In this context commonalities can be viewed as adverse to the creation of newness, hence adverse to diversity.

The ecological lens of diversity provides insight into the impact that our environment most likely has on the ways we conceptualise things, and thus the way we wish to learn. This specific learning environment features a two-way process, which not only entitles but invites the learners to provide feedback on content, methods, and process. This essential feedback was of great significance in eliciting this aspect of diversity and might deserve more attention in future learning settings in order to extricate critical information about preferred learning styles.

In light of the feedback provided, the findings of the learning incidents captured in the first part of this chapter indicate some diversity in learning styles. Further work focusing on this one aspect of diversity would need to be undertaken to substantiate these findings, ideally again within in a large organisation within Egypt as well as other countries within the Middle East. This approach would provide the necessary data helping to underpin the findings in this chapter.

Additionally, given the absence of any quantitative assessment models specifically designed for the idiosyncrasies of the diversity of learning this might be considered an area for future research.

Moving on from pointing to necessary future research it is now time to deal with the actual programme design and delivery, upon whose data this research is based.

The work in the learning environment certainly provided for new ways of looking at these models and their potential application, which leads to the question as to what extent this diversity is picked up and utilised. Contributions from diversity in a learning environment can only be utilised when they are firstly understood, secondly taken into account in the design phase and thirdly acknowledged in the delivery of sessions and workshops. In order to utilise contributions from diversity it is necessary to tailor learning programmes.

Tailoring is critical to the success of management development programmes as demonstrated in the specific case within Egypt, which can be presumed to be the case for other places. Tailoring includes the learning approaches such that they appeal to different preferences in learning styles, the design of learning materials, and the avoidance of heavy theoretical content.

So, when calling the West there is responsibility from both vendors, may it be a consulting firm or, as in this case, a business school, and the client alike to ensure this tailoring is happening. This requires vendors and clients working in real partnership,

building a sound working relationship based on trust that allows the identification of real needs, strategically designed learning methodologies, which are carefully piloted with a representative sample of participants. From current findings however, I suggest that offerings from the West are being accepted rather than negotiated and adapted to local needs.

5. FROM CONFLICT TO DIVERSITY

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The chapter aims to investigate the specialist area of intercultural matters, which are inherent to diversity, however in literature and practice are typically treated as two subjects disconnected from one another. Both, research and literature seem to focus on either topic, largely ignoring the interconnectedness they demonstrate.

Equally in practice, diversity and intercultural management tend to be disconnected, the latter often narrowed down to cross-cultural management. In cross-cultural management representatives of “the other side” are often reduced to gender and ethnicity out of the pool of multiple affiliations. Often they are put in the role of recipient in the context of “Doing business with ...” most frequently featuring a national culture.

This chapter portrays a number of selected live cases, which in the business world and the associated publications typically classify as intercultural issues stand alone from diversity matters. As these live cases took place in a business environment I initially provide the reader with a short overview of current approaches towards intercultural issues in the business world. Once the context is provided, I capture the live cases, and then then continue bridging them to diversity, by viewing them through the three lenses of diversity as per research approach.

Finally, I conclude this chapter by proposing that intercultural issues can be resolved by viewing them through the three lenses of diversity and allowing space to integrating the learning from the contributions of diversity.

Findings illustrate that the intercultural industry and its products impede learning from encounters rather than creating new options, thus the need arises to recommend some ways forward to move the classical intercultural formats to current ones that enable learning from encounters emergent to the flow of projects and so foster learning from diversity.

5.2. INTERCULTURAL ISSUES

This section is called intercultural issues primarily for two reasons. The first reason is that literature labels encounters in settings such as present in this study as such. The second reason is that the group of facilitators referred to them using this label under the likely influence of the first. The terminology was used typically when encountering an unfamiliar situation and herein an often inexplicable phenomenon.

The assumption of intercultural issues to happen whilst working on this programme was expressed at an early stage, namely at the start of the design phase upon identification of the potential human resources. The individuals who expressed interest in working on this project and were then selected for the assignment in Cairo consisted of two groups, which were a) the faculty of the business school and b) closely connected associates. Representatives of both groups had no or little working experience in this region.

During both, the design phase of the programme as well as throughout the early delivery phase the most frequently asked questions were “What can I do wrong out there?” and specifically female facilitators would in addition, ask “What am I supposed to wear?”

Whilst the first question implies that there must be potential gender-independent problems emerging, the second questions specifically aims at the images of the dress code known from Muslim countries and typically reinforced by certain media presentation.

With this in mind I will organise this section into two parts, which are a) the emergence of the interculturalist industry and b) the widely accepted approaches proposed by this industry.

Both sections, “The development of the industry” as well as “The prominent solution” are by no means a full coverage of the complexity of this industry. Nevertheless, a brief overview is necessary as the industry seems to dominate the individual’s perception of ‘the other’ significantly even prior the start of the development of the programme. As context precedes the actual events I wish to mirror this sequence in the written format by first starting to capture the context and continue with the actual live cases.

Before looking into a more detailed content discussion I anticipate clarifying the terminology of „intercultural“ as opposed to „cross-cultural“. These two terms tend to find

interchangeable use lacking clarity in both, definition and application. One of the definitions of „cross-cultural“ is as follows:

„It is important to make a distinction between cross-cultural and intercultural (communication). Nevertheless, boundaries are fuzzy and a critical review of publications illustrates, that writers and researchers use the two terms interchangeably. Cross-cultural (communication) refers to comparing communication and behaviours of different groups when considered abstractly or when members of different groups are directly engaged with each other, i. e. two groups of different national identity.“²⁴⁵.

As opposed to the definition of “intercultural” as follows:

„Intercultural (communication) refers to people in social interaction with each other (not upon conceived differences between members of different groups).“²⁴⁶

As this study obviously refers to people in social interaction I will continue using the term ‘intercultural’ as I have done so far, nevertheless will apply the term ‘cross-cultural’ where necessary to context and further to quotes.

5.2.1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDUSTRY

As captured in the introduction chapter the emergence of business anthropology took place as early as in the 20ies of the last century coming to a high in the 60s for three primarily economy-based reasons. These were a) the West began to form relationships with former colonised states; b) the United States increased economic and technical aid to Third World countries; and c) the economic success of Japan and the OPEC countries²⁴⁷. The economic development raised the need to understand the mentality of “the other side”, greatly contributing to the first stage development of the “culture shock industry²⁴⁸”. Whilst a number of anthropologists such as the earlier mentioned Edward Hall was one of the lead figures in business anthropology, a parallel industry became

²⁴⁵ Scollon and Scollon 1995:13

²⁴⁶ Scollon and Scollon 1995:13

²⁴⁷ Dahlen 1997:11

²⁴⁸ Hannerz 1996:9

increasingly popular, namely the Interculturalists, whose aim was to package culture suitable for the needs of the business world. The offering of the interculturalists to their target groups would be largely the assorting of different cultures in the form of entities, who in turn would engage in social transaction.

Looking back in the history of the intercultural industry it is essential to present three main streams, which emerged over the last six centuries with the industry in place. I will capture the three streams in the section below, whereby the two first streams are still labelled “cross-cultural” and whilst the third one as per self-definition is called “intercultural”.

The first stream emerged in the 1960s when the intercultural industry became increasingly popular with the continuous expansion of the international business community and herein an increase of migration. In the United States organisations such as the Peace Corps and various missionary organisations sent greater numbers of people to overseas destinations²⁴⁹. Cushner and Brislin argue that

“the theoretical field of cross-cultural psychology and the applied field of cross cultural or intercultural training have both continued to grow in response to these circumstances²⁵⁰.”

One of the methods they developed has increasingly become popular, known as the culture assimilator. The culture assimilator features a critical-incident approach. These incidents are captured in short vignettes presenting examples of culture clashes between individuals from different groups, who in their interaction intend to pursue a common goal²⁵¹.

This publication on the culture assimilator presents a number of incidents from the Middle East without any further specification such as geographic location. The one exception takes place in Saudi Arabia, again with no further specification and is presented below. The short description is followed by selection of alternative suggestions prompting the reader to select the best possible explanation.

²⁴⁹ Cushner, Brislin 1996:1

²⁵⁰ Cushner, Brislin 1996:1

²⁵¹ Cushner, Brislin 1996:13

Opening a Medical Office²⁵²

Dr. Tom McDivern, a physician from New York City, was offered a 2-year assignment to practice medicine in a growing urban centre in Saudi Arabia. Many of the residents in the area he was assigned to were recent immigrants from the much smaller outlying rural areas. Because Western medicine was relatively unknown to many of these people, one of Dr. McDivern's main responsibilities was to introduce himself and his services to those in the community. A meeting at a local school was organised for that specific purpose. Many people turned out, and Tom's presentation went well. Some local residents also presented their experiences with Western medicine so that other could understand the value of using his services. Some of Tom's office staff were also present to make appointments for those interested in seeing him when his doors opened a week later. The meeting was an obvious success; his opening day was booked solid.

When that day finally arrived, Tom was anxious to greet his first patients. Thirty minutes had passed, however, and neither of his first two patients had arrived. Tom began to worry about the future of his practice as he wondered where his patients were.

What was the major cause of Tom's worries?

- Although in Tom's mind and by his standards his presentation was a success, people actually only made appointments so as not to hurt his feelings. They really had no intentions of using his services, as modern medicine is so foreign to their past experiences.
- Given the time lag between sign-up and the actual day of their appointments, people had time to rethink their decisions. They had just changed their minds.
- Views concerning units of time differ between Arabs and Americans. Whereas Tom believed his patients were very late, the Arabs patients could still arrive and consider themselves to be on time.
- Tom's patients were seeing their own traditional healers from their own culture; after that, they could go on to see the new doctor.

Further to each incident the reader is then provided with rationales for alternative explanations, which also indicates the best answer.

Until the mid-80s the culture assimilator was developed for specific groups with particular needs. The incidents of the culture-specific assimilator were designed to prepare

²⁵² Cushner, Brislin 1996:160

individuals from one cultural group for interaction with people from another specific group²⁵³.

Around this time Brislin developed the culture-general assimilator largely based on a rich and diverse body of research identifying similarities in people's experiences despite the wide range of roles they had and the many different countries in which they lived²⁵⁴.

In the 80s and 90s a great number of 'culture clash' publications²⁵⁵ with the aim to explaining how to achieve better results when doing business with "the other" appeared on the market. Justifying the need for these publications necessitated authors to point to the problem as one example depicts below:

"Cultural diversity is not something that is going to go away tomorrow, enabling us to plan our strategies on the assumption of mutual understanding."

This early development of this industry raised the need to understand the mentality of "the other side" by regularly pointing to the difficulties connected to that, thus greatly contributing to the first stage development of the "culture shock industry"²⁵⁶.

The use of 'othering' serves as the key assumption for more or less developed research in the field and is reflected in almost all publications, one of them being Richard Lewis 'When cultures collide'.

In the introduction the concept of 'othering' is embedded within the boundaries of various nation-states, which are then labelled as national characteristics. Disconcertingly, the author claims that 'national characteristics' is treading a minefield of inaccurate assessment and surprising exception"²⁵⁷. Nevertheless, he keeps carrying on with this concept over 300 pages.

Idiosyncratic to these publications are the following two facts that a) it would appear to be an advantage of the conception of culture as something with its own properties,

²⁵³ Cushner, Brislin 1996:13

²⁵⁴ Cushner, Brislin 1996:25

²⁵⁵ Dahlen 1997:13

²⁵⁶ Hannerz 1996:9

²⁵⁷ Lewis 1999:3

rather tangible, bounded, atemporal, and internally homogeneous²⁵⁸; and b) that cultures need to be categorised in order to become manageable, i. e. “the several hundred national and regional cultures of the world can roughly be categorised into three groups”²⁵⁹.

Further to this clarification of the understanding of culture usually a list of cultural characteristics organised by nationalities is offered. As this study takes place in Egypt I selected a taster²⁶⁰ regionally most closely labelled as Middle East:

- The West sees Arab society as one, which is in decline, propped up temporarily by oil revenues. The Arabs, by contrast, are very conscious that their civilisation once led the world and believe they are capable of doing so again (in a moral sense).
- Arabs move around less than westerners, therefore they are more conservative.
- Arabs stand or sit much closer to their interlocutors than does a westerner. It is normal to breathe on them and touch them frequently.
- Pork is taboo to Arabs, unlike in the West.

The repertoire of this type of publications are further enhanced by literature presenting one country or region such “Understanding the Arabs²⁶¹”, “Don’t they know it is Friday²⁶²”, frequently offering more thick descriptions, nevertheless still presenting a range of stereotypes.

The conception of culture as something with its own properties as a tangible and internally homogeneous entity is promoted not only in specialist publications, but equally used in student textbooks such as the one below on organisational behaviour:

“Behaviour is any form of human action. For example, based on their culture, Middle Easterners stand closer together (a behaviour) than do North Americans, whereas Japanese stand farther apart than do either North Americans or Middle Easterners. Latin Americans touch each other more frequently during business negotiations than do

²⁵⁸ Dahlen 1997:178

²⁵⁹ Lewis 1996:36

²⁶⁰ Lewis 1996:334 ff.

²⁶¹ Nydell 1996

²⁶² Williams 1998

North Americans, and both touch more frequently than do Japanese. People's behaviour is defined by their culture²⁶³."

The second stream organises culture by dimensions, which was introduced by Geert Hofstede. His definition of culture is 'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another'²⁶⁴.

Geert Hofstede's work has become common knowledge not only among people related to the intercultural field, but to a wider community such as individuals who have been on some management development programme in the role of participants or facilitators. The latter includes the facilitators having worked on this project, whose vocabulary distinctively showed signs of the Hofstede concept, thus must have been familiarised with his concept at one point in their careers. Nonetheless, it is significant to note, that this knowledge has not necessarily been transferred by reading Hofstede's publication "Culture's consequences"²⁶⁵, but by reading articles about it and by having attended conferences where different speakers presented this concept²⁶⁶.

Hofstede's now widely known concept stems from data gathered from a survey on work-related values conducted between 1967 and 1973, in which 88,000 employees from across IBM took part. The derived data were processed by factor analysis and results were presented in a four-field diagram²⁶⁷. A number of publications were extracted from the base findings. In brief, the four dimensions are²⁶⁸: a) The dimension of Power Distance, which describes dependency relations in society; b) Uncertainty avoidance, which refers to the anxiety people have towards the future, and that humans have tried to cope with it technology, law, and religion; c) Individualism, which describes the relationship between the individual and the collective pointing to examples that in some societies people live in nuclear families whilst others live in tribal units based on kinship; and d) Masculinity, which refers to assertiveness as opposed to femininity which refers to nurturing. Along these dimensions Hofstede ranks forty national cultures from high to low.

²⁶³ Adler 2002:18

²⁶⁴ Hofstede 1980 in Lewis 1996:25

²⁶⁵ Hofstede 1980

²⁶⁶ Dahlen 1997:63

²⁶⁷ Dahlen 1997:109

²⁶⁸ Hofstede 1980:11

Another popular concept based on dimensions is Charles Hampden-Turner and Fons Trompenaars' study published in "Building cross-cultural competence. How to create wealth from conflicting values". They identified seven dimensions from the results of questionnaires, which presented the respondents with a straight choice between universal rules versus particular exceptions, individual advantages versus community responsibilities, specific versus diffuse criteria of judgement, and mores²⁶⁹.

The Trompenaars and Hampden Turner study²⁷⁰ has identified seven dimensions on which the values of diverse cultures vary. These concepts are highly abstract terms, deliberately so as the authors claim that we seek to include a large number of "family resemblances" beneath each bifurcation. These "families" are: a) Human Relationships comprising Universalism vs. Particularism, which seeks to discover whether one's prime allegiance is to rules and rule-bound classifications, or to exceptional, unique circumstances; Individualism vs. Communitarianism, which measures the extent to which managers see the individual employee and shareholder as paramount, his or her development, enrichment, fulfillment, or to what extent the corporation, customers and the wider group should be the beneficiaries of all personal efforts; Specific vs. diffuse, which measures the tendency to analyze, reduce and break down the field of experience, or to synthesize, augment and construct experience; Neutral vs. affective, which concerns the legitimacy of showing or controlling emotions while at work; Achieved status vs. ascribed status, which is about why status is conferred on people. Is this because they have achieved, or because of what they "are", i. e. human beings, male, of good background; b) Time comprising Sequential time vs. Synchronous time, which has to do whether one sees time as passing in a sequence, or coming around again and again; and c) Nature again covering only one dimension which is Inner-directed vs. outer-directed which concerns the "locus of control". Is it inside each of us, or outside in our environments to which we must adapt.

Even though based on the dimension concept this study present a ground-breaking perspective as it is applicable to any kind of situation beyond the national concept, may it be private, organisational, or public.

This approach is enhanced by the development of the dilemma theory, which clearly distances this approach from an either-or dichotomy toward a reconciliation of a conflict

²⁶⁹ Hampden-Turner, C. M.; Trompenaars, F. 2000:353

²⁷⁰ Also see Hampden-Turner, C. M.; Trompenaars, F. 2000

situation. As opposed to the Hofstede study, whose data source comes from one organisation, the data of the Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars study was collected across different organisations in different industries located in different nation states²⁷¹.

Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars oblivious of the pending impact of their study found themselves selling the book far beyond the intercultural industry.

The third stream emerged with the rise of the new economy in the early 2000s, which increasingly required people to collaborate across organisational boundaries and national borders. The intercultural industry responded by offering new tools predominantly focusing on interpersonal skills. The revival and more sophisticated expression of some of the self-assessment tools applied from the 60s throughout the 90s with the aim to exploring one's perception found their expression in the form of psychometric instruments. These tools require candidates to complete online questionnaires and provide them with personal feedback. Prominent tools are The International Profiler (TIP) or The International Team Trust Indicator (ITTI). TIP is a development tool providing feedback to help participants reflect on where their skills are in working with and across boundaries whilst the ITTI is team instrument that identifies trust gaps, allowing teams to build trust specifically in ways they need to improve cooperation and productivity. Both aim to provide solutions away from a mere problem analysis.

5.2.2. THE PROMINENT SOLUTION

Since the emergence of the intercultural industry in the 60s organisations were told to think in packaged units of "Categorising cultures", which as a logical consequence were wrapped in training sessions usually featuring a duration of two up to four days. The content of these training sessions changed over time according to the need of the client organisations, which the intercultural industry in turn adapted according to the need of the markets. Mostly large organisations sent their employees to such training offering and as a result shaped the offering then made available by providers.

²⁷¹ Hampden-Turner, C. M.; Trompenaars, F. 2000:357

From my perspective there seem to be three historical waves in this development, which are in alignment with the three streams of historical development. The first one initiated in the US largely characterised by the first overseas assignments of the Peace Force; the second one primarily by the emergence of new markets in the Far East and later in Central and Eastern Europe; and thirdly the wave of the new economy requiring individuals working on multicultural teams in either the virtual or the traditional space.

The historical development and herein the power of organisations dominating these markets changed the training content accordingly. Whereas the first two waves largely promoted culture-general also known as sensitivity training²⁷² and culture-specific contents, the offering for the third wave is largely a reflectionist approach drawing on the concepts of emotional intelligence such as the earlier mentioned psychometric tools largely building on feedback.

In reference to the first two waves culture-general training attempts to sensitise individuals to the experiences they are most certain exposed to when interaction with people from other culture²⁷³. Learning methods for culture-general training are both experiential and didactic. Experiential refers to the use of self-assessments with the aim to exploring one's perception, attitudes, stereotypes and subsequent behaviours. The two most commonly applied simulations are commercial products such as BafaBafa²⁷⁴ and Barnga²⁷⁵. Both simulations involve all training participants who are assigned specific roles with the objective to allow them to experience cultural differences and thus cultivate sensitivity toward foreign cultures²⁷⁶.

Didactic refers to the use of cognitive approaches such as the earlier described culture-general assimilator. In addition, the use of frameworks, films, videos²⁷⁷, and lectures are popular.

In contrast, culture-specific training is based on the assumption that information about a specific culture is essential for cross-cultural interaction²⁷⁸. Popular methods are once

²⁷² Dahlen 1997:81

²⁷³ Cushner, Brislin 1996:4

²⁷⁴ Developed by Shirts 1973

²⁷⁵ Developed by Thiagarajan and Steinwachs 1990

²⁷⁶ Dahlen 1997:88

²⁷⁷ Popular examples are Going international or Managing the overseas assignment by Copeland Griggs

²⁷⁸ Cushner, Brislin 1996:4

more the culture assimilator, now the selection of culture-specific vignettes, culture-specific role-plays, and information specifically on the potential host country such as history, economics, religion²⁷⁹ and specific attitudes such as proxemics, kinesics, time perception, body language and non-verbal behaviour²⁸⁰.

In general, presenters do not have any formal education that specifically qualifies them as interculturalist or expert. Quite reversely, the industry is market-driven which means those who manage to sell themselves successfully are perceived as interculturalists or experts. For the majority of training it can be concluded that the theoretical frameworks described above such as the dimension models by Hofstede and Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars are the base concept of all learning.

It is significant to point out that the vocabulary used by facilitators to describe difficulties largely built on Hofstede's research. Labels most frequently used were 'collectivist, indirect, high power distance', whilst vocabulary stemming from the Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars study was used only by one facilitator, who largely specialises in the intercultural field.

As for the project the team of facilitators repeatedly asked for some intercultural training whereas the required format would often be a half a day culture briefing.

Whilst the discussion about some potential intercultural training was ongoing, one of the business school team members sent a memo to the facilitators providing a quick fix:

General Guidelines

- Egyptians tend to speak at a much closer distance than North Americans. Even if you are unaccustomed to this level of contact, do not back up or shy away. If you keep your distance, the perception might be that you find your counterpart's physical presence distasteful or that you are a very cold, unfeeling person. Moreover, conversations usually involve touching.
- Egyptians like to joke around and make fun of themselves. For example, Egyptian bureaucracy is a favourite target. Nevertheless, no matter how self-deprecating their humour gets, you should not try to make fun of Egypt or the Egyptians.

²⁷⁹ Cushner, Brislin 1996:7

²⁸⁰ Dahlen 1997:76

- Egyptians love their country so any conversation that includes praising the country's culture, history or people can guarantee a positive response from the Egyptian counterpart in the conversation.
- Generally, Egyptians prefer to work at their own pace. Attempting the "hard sell" or forcing them into making a quick decision will probably be futile, and not in your best interests.
- Women are an active part of the Egyptian workforce. If you encounter a woman decision-maker in business, she will probably be very Western-oriented in her behaviour. In all likelihood, she will initiate a handshake, with either men or women.
- Business will not proceed until your counterpart knows and decides that he likes you. Consequently, the social side of the deal is just as important as the work-related one.
- Although Egyptians often like to gesture with their hands while speaking, pointing is considered extremely rude.
- Egyptians consider getting closer to people as a sign of friendship so most of them are not really aware of the idea of "personal space" as western people do, so do not take it as a violation if someone does that.
- If you tend to sit crossing legs on top of each other, make sure the bottom of your shoes is not pointed towards anyone face.
- If you have to take your shoes off for any reason (visiting a mosque maybe) you should also put your shoes next to each other with the soles facing each other or facing the ground to avoid the soles facing anyone's face.

Topics to avoid

- Women/ inquiring about female members of your counterpart's family.
- Israel; in the current situation (I believe its also in general) politics is not the best topic to open with Egyptians, because people will react differently to a conversation involving the current middle east crisis and of course Israel, so if you ever get involved in a conversation about politics its better and safer to just listen and nod especially if you disagree or try to defend the opposing party's actions.

The introduction into the historical development and the dominant approach provides an overview of the overall mindset, facilitators were exposed to when experiencing the live cases presented on the following pages. It is also important to note that concepts of the interculturalist industry are widely unknown in the Egyptian business community, hence unfamiliar to the interaction partners.

5.3. THE LIVE CASES

In this section I present four selected live cases which occurred in the course of working on this project in Cairo.

Live cases are individual or group experiences which are current to those who experience them and are thus the owners. They are emergent to the course of collaborating on a project like the researched, hence are emergent as opposed to incidents such as described in the section on the culture assimilator, which a) happened in the past; b) are owned by another individual; or c) written up to specifically suit a learning situation.

Here, I briefly describe the live cases, which by the respective owners and the majority of facilitators were labelled as intercultural issues. Also, I provide the immediate reaction of people part of the cases as far as available as well as some general background enabling the reader to understand the situation in full. In the succeeding section, I will view these live cases through the three lenses of diversity. By doing so I will derive potential implications as to whether these live cases, typically classified as „intercultural“ either foster or impede diversity.

5.3.1. THE EXCLAMATION MARKS

Communication technologies are at large divided into synchronous and asynchronous technologies, whereas synchronous refers to face-to-face meetings, telephone conversations and communication technologies such as WebEx whilst asynchronous refers to technical libraries, databases with client information and email.

On the specific project much of the communication took place in the virtual space, specifically by email, which taken the time between email sent and email received qualifies as a non-synchronous way of communication. In addition to email communication tele-

phone conversations were an integral part of the communication across boundaries. This section presents an incident occurred in email communication when after the first pilot workshop some of the facilitator team of the business school gave feedback to the client²⁸¹. The email sent from the business school showed following features:

The mail stretched over one and a half pages in print version. The text was organised in paragraphs, each presenting a separate topic area. Sentences had commas and full stops as well as capital letters at the beginning of each sentence.

At the start of the text the author used positive language referring to what worked overall and the positive outcome. The vocabulary largely contained words such as 'helpful, concerned, appreciate'. Also, the author focused on the equipment that was made available for the first programme run.

“Our view is that the conference centre was spacious, well organised and pleasant. Most of the equipment required was provided, which made our job as workshop facilitators that little bit easier.”

Some problems experienced were carefully phrased such as “the use of beanbags seemed to drain participants after a while” followed by a suggestion to rather use regular chairs.

These examples clearly demonstrate a language that English first language speakers would use to providing feedback and typically second language writers would need to acquire in addition to the usual language skills.

Having analysed the email authored by a small group of the representatives of the business school I now draw to the client's email response. Answers to the single sections in the original email were written in between lines as in common practice in business emails. As opposed to common business practice some the text passages of the original email to which the writer responded were spelled out one more time. These passages and the response lines were all highlighted in red, bold face at font size 14, which is significantly larger than the font size of 10 used in the initiating email.

Additionally, some of the answers were underlined such as some of the numbers of the equipment made available for the pilot programme. In reference to the seating arrangement for the participants the response was phrased as follows, “We recommended for you chairs/tables set up but you were more into beanbags seating. Be-

²⁸¹ For protection of the individuals involved I refrain from further specifying the parties involved.

sides, the attendees behaviour/participation is of a great part from the instructor task/facilitation method“.

Further terminology such as “Please clarify ...” and “Pls specify ...” was used several times.

The style of email text such as using bold face, font size, and using exclamation marks is not to be done in business communication from the point of view of English first language speakers and was perceived as inappropriate, unprofessional and even shocking. Those involved and familiar with the response felt uncomfortable and assumed that they have done something wrong.

In this event the business school followed the routine of giving feedback as it would typically provided in partner situations; the client’s defensive reaction however suggests that in this case that the client did not expect this type of behaviour but perceived the business school in the role of supplier.

A thorough analysis of this live case will follow in the discussion section where I will view this case through the three lenses of diversity and by that provide more detail and implications.

5.3.2. USING THE CAIRO METRO

This live case occurred in the first third of the programme duration, which indicates that by then, most of the facilitators had some exposure to the local business life and the host culture in general. Two facilitators, one male and one female took the metro in Cairo, which among the team had the reputation to be clean, safe, tidy, and well organised. Altogether, it offered a good alternative to Cairo traffic, irrespective of catching a taxi or using the driver the facilitator team had at their disposal.

After purchasing the tickets and identifying the route they got on the platform and upon arrival of the train they embarked on one of the middle cars of the train. They were engaged in a conversation and only later noticed something was „not quite right“ in the car. The male facilitator then noticed that there were women only around him and resumed that he might have done something inappropriate. Until the train reached the

next station he tried to hide as effectively behind the female facilitator to then disembark in the next station as quick as possible.

This story made it to the bigger group of facilitators and was told many times to the amusement of the other members of the facilitator group.

Upon inquiry how the women on the car reacted once his presence was noticed, the male facilitator said that they either smiled or looked into the other direction. These reactions were confirmed by the female facilitator. Apparently, there was no opportunity to clarify this encounter at a later stage. Inquiries with Cairene women not involved in this encounter confirmed that occasionally Non-Egyptian men would embark on the woman's car and reactions would vary from laughter to ignorance. Golia enhances this further by drawing a link to the past:

„The Cairene perception of foreigners is formed through these interactions, illumined and at times obscured by traces of the foreigner's historic presence in the city. Foreign influences are real, because foreigners and remnants of their past as well as current activities in the city exist²⁸².“

For full information, each subway train carries two cars assigned for women, typically positioned in the centre of the train. One car is for women at any time of the operating hours with guidelines presented in red, in both English and Arabic. The other of the two cars is for women at certain hours of the operating time with guidelines presented in green, again in both English and Arabic.

5.3.3. THE ABSENT PHOTOGRAPH

Further to the previous chapter, I once more refer to the activity named “Great communicators”, with typically two facilitators leading this session with a group of approximately 30 participants. As indicated earlier, the activity sparked some lively discussion about the displayed personalities in the photo gallery. Towards the end of these animated discussions participants often referred to Muhammad concluding that the

²⁸² Golia 2004:97

Prophet was certainly as a great communicator and by that had introduced some sustainable change.

At one incident, one of the facilitators spelled out that “we are sorry we do not have a photo of Muhammad”. At the time of the incident the noise level in the room was quite high caused by some extended parallel conversations participants had engaged in. The conversation in the room carried on with apparently nobody having heard the statement or nobody wanting to have heard the comment.

Daily debrief sessions regularly held in the evenings facilitators would typically use to reflect on how the day went. The facilitator used this forum to disclose the incident above described. At the same time, the facilitator pointed to the fact that she was aware about the common restriction of not portraying Muhammad. Nevertheless, only once she had made the statement, the facilitator became aware of this restriction. Although she knew cognitively, in the lively interaction with the participants she still built on her own repertoire.

Facilitators participating in the evening debrief session left on the assumption that none of the participants had heard the comment or nobody wanted to hear it, so no further action would need to be taken.

The incident developed to a story repeatedly shared among individuals who worked on this project and was disseminated even further into the business school. Most often it was told in order to amuse someone.

Also, it led to some lively discussions on how much one needs to know about local culture once exposed to one or even having an integral part in the learning and knowledge industry in the respective location. The discussion was once more revived when the British school teacher working at the Khartoum's Unity High School was jailed because the majority of her seven-year old pupils voted to call a teddy bear Mohammed²⁸³.

A gap in perception and interpretation less public than the one elicited by the Teddy bear story” developed between facilitators and participants. Facilitators build their own

²⁸³ The Evening Standard (London). Tuesday, December 4, 2007

story and multiple interpretations whilst the storyline and inherent interpretations possibly produced among the participants remained unknown to the other side.

The incident will be viewed through the three lenses of diversity in the discussion section.

5.3.4. THE MOBILE PHONE

This live case does not capture one single incident, but rather describes observations collected throughout the project. In brief, this case is about the extensive use of mobile phones by participants at any one time during the project. For illustration I will use quotes from facilitators and comments from participants.

Statements from two different facilitators, which are representative for the whole team are as follows:

„This was the most extreme example of use of mobile phones during teaching sessions. Normally participants can be persuaded to switch their phones off or at least turn them to silent. We see them checking messages frantically at coffee breaks and lunch time. Occasionally people will leave a classroom to take an urgent call. Some groups treat the latest phone as a status symbol and you see them on desks to be admired. However with this company, phones were an integral part of their lives. Calls were taken and made throughout the classes. You would be teaching and people would be talking on the phone. When challenged they saw taking calls simply as part of their value of being accessible to boss, department and customers (internal or external). Phones were also switched on to a prayer channel shortly before prayer time and you would hear the first calls to pray that way.“

„There is a level of arrogance that you encounter, with the client being seen as a premium company to work for and a reputation of skimming the crème of Egyptian youth when recruiting. I think being in the mobile phone business adds to the need to be constantly on the 'phone – it's a status statement. ... Culturally, there is a tendency for low level disruption, although this is not deliberate. Constant chatter, walking out to make or receive calls and poor time keeping, all make it difficult to keep sessions on track. A major triumph is getting them to turn off their ring tones.“

Comments from participants upon inquiry into the extensive use of their mobile phones would typically be:

“We need to be connected at any time and we need to have the information immediately.”

“My boss expects me to be available, so I have to answer, even in the evenings and on weekends.”

“For us this is normal.”

“We are in the telecommunication business. We have to have one. Some of us have two.”

Facilitators felt quite exhausted from the continuous disruptions caused by the use of the mobile phones. Only half way through the project one of the facilitators brought an article on the effects of multi-tasking published in the Harvard Business Review, which each of the facilitators from then onward used to state at the beginning of each workshop.

5.3.5. TOUCH BEHAVIOUR

The live case of ‚Leading the blind’ refers to an exercise bringing out the importance of trust and collaboration in order to lead in situations of ambiguity and uncertainty. The exercise is typically followed by relating the learning to current environment. Often, the exercise is held outdoors, in this case however, taking the spacious rooms and the outside climate into the account, the exercise was conducted inside the seminar rooms. Usually, it was introduced and followed through by two facilitators. Participants were supposed to work in pairs with one person blindfolded and the other person leading. The objective was to take on different sensory experiences; touch, smell etc. followed by a plenary discussion of the transferable learning.

The written brief made available to all facilitators suggested the following routine:

„Trust exercise in pairs, with leader and led (blindfolded or eyes shut) moving round the room with contact by wrist. Leaders change on the second round (i.e. each person being led gets a “new” leader).

Important to brief clearly and de-brief on change of leadership.“

Participant reactions would often show frowns and after some hesitation people would follow the instructions.

It is important to note that only facilitators new to the team followed the written brief. Some of them literally invited participants to touch each other and often encouraged them to really hold the other person tightly for a maximum output of the exercise.

Once, experienced facilitators noticed that facilitators less experienced working in this environment told them to refrain from doing that.

Neither participants nor any person in charge of the programme had addressed the issue.

5.4. DISCUSSION

The proposition of the intercultural industry is neither new nor unknown, nevertheless seems to amplify its impact in working situations as inherent to this project.

The interaction in this “intercultural setting” appears to be dominated by three key factors, which are a) the intercultural vocabulary and; b) the assumption that “there must be a problem”; and c) the packaging of intercultural learning. Contingently, this overall negative view of interaction might limit the opportunity of developing newness from diversity. Before drawing this conclusion I will view the above-described live cases through the three lenses of diversity, which are the lens of multiple identities, the lens of perception, and finally the ecological lens.

For viewing the live case of the exclamation marks through the **lens of multiple affiliations** it is essential to be familiar with the reaction it created at the business school end.

In reference to the reply email the general view among facilitators was that this person, namely the author must have a problem or alternatively lacks competence. The reply was categorised as defensive, aggressive, and accusatory. The author supposedly tried to cover up something and did not want to take on own responsibility easily. Also, the extremely detail-oriented style was noted in opposition to the style in earlier written communication

Until this case the author of this email as well as other representatives from the client organisation were perceived as extremely polite and indirect to an extent that they were known to be difficult to make a commitment. Overall, the communication style was experienced in terms of creating soothing speeches as Golia states:

“If Cairenes appear the most agreeable of yes-sayers it’s because ‘no’ implies confrontation, or worse disappointing the interlocutor. This is a culture where the art of determining what others want or need to hear is inculcated,....²⁸⁴”

The habit of persistent politeness appeared as almost impenetrable and difficult to work with. At the time of the case none of the facilitators took the time to investigate alternative aspects away from communication issues such as the lens of multiple affiliations would bring to light. Specifically, affiliations that come into account are as follows: gender as a female in a more male-dominated environment; age as a young person in an environment of primarily more senior individuals; work experience as having only a limited number of years in this organisation in this position and yet having to deal with a complex project; and hierarchy as representative for a system with pronounced hierarchy’s fear of superior getting to know about the feedback. The effect of the affiliations illuminates some of the diverse challenges the author had to manage. This recognition and thus insights might have helped to handle the issue differently and to address some of the topics in a way more appropriate for the author of the email.

In reference to the metro case the affiliations of gender and religion are probably the dominant affiliations. In this case the service level is geared beyond the necessary need of spatial separation but designed to the comfort zone of women using this type of public transport. This service level is unique to the subway in Cairo as opposed to the bus and minibus service widely used in the city. In excess to the service level in

²⁸⁴ Golia 2004:139

places where facilitators typically live and work, the Cairo metro distinctly offers a more sophisticated service as it leaves a choice to women where to board a train.

The earlier described live case of the lacking photograph might indicate that some of the multiple affiliations might dominate others, in particular in situation perceived as stressful. Under stress, which in this situation was caused by climate change, jet lag and tiredness, noise level in the room caused by multiple and synchronous conversations, and the fairly unknown working environment, individuals tend to draw on their primary affiliations. In this case, it appears to be the values of the religion known from the socialisation process that is Christianity, which clearly sponsors portraying the messenger. Knowledge acquired at a cognitive level seems to be overpowered, which once more necessitates the questioning of traditional intercultural learning as laid out in the above sections.

The excessive use of the mobile phone incorporated the affiliations of industry, status, hierarchy, and profession, all of which indicate a sense of elite in the local community. One could argue the necessity of the excessive use as to whether it is not merely a demonstration of self-actualisation.

In the live case of touch behaviours once more the dominant affiliations seem to be gender and religion. Although the activity that caused the live case clearly raised irritation mainly expressed by nonverbal behaviour, neither side addressed the issue. Rather, the feeling of discomfort was carried on through the workshop, potentially underpinning the division between them and us.

As a next step in the discussion of contributions from diversity I apply the **lens of perception**, whose key concepts are stereotypes, self-fulfilling prophecies, and the concept of belonging and othering.

As for the live case of exclamation marks the lens of perception might have a major impact on the case. The asynchronous 2-way communication process led to some stereotyping such as 'the Egyptians shouting, being loud, how can this person write something like this in an email, childlike behaviour and more'. Intercultural vocabulary such as power-distance, directness (as per Hampden-Turner 'specific') was applied. Power-distance was supposed to refer to the artificial distance the client attempted to build between the two partners whereas 'directness' referred to style of language used, which until then was characterised by greatest possible politeness. "You cannot have

an adult conversation with them” as occasionally overheard as a result of this email exchange apparently had become a self-fulfilling prophecy, which once more led to infantilising the other.

The absence of a sense of collaboration expressed by ‘them’ versus ‘us’ and the lack of expression of, ‘we being in this together’ results in some pronounced othering, with pointing to differences as prescribed in the intercultural industry.

Due to the absence of clarification of the live case of the lacking photograph, it invites for a number of interpretations how perception might influence either party involved in the interaction. These are a) participants did not hear the comment due to lack of international experience; b) participants heard the statement, but showed no effect on interaction based on othering, that is “they are so different, no need to bother”; c) participants heard the comment and did not verbalise the issue, yet it has a negative impact. This interpretation is based on the assumption that effective interaction would be made difficult because of the lack of understanding on the other side; d) participants heard the comment and jump on the facilitator; and e) participants heard the comment and give skilful feedback.

The intercultural industry supports the ascription that the other side is not capable of dealing with conflict situations, hence is infantilising members of the other side. This in return, generates versatile assumptions how the message of the missing photograph might have been received. Equally, on the facilitator side the experience raised a number of memories of how incidents similar to this have caused major bilateral conflicts, such as scenes of manufactured outrage over Rushdie's Satanic Verses; the Danish cartoons affair; Pope Benedict's speech; and past this project the Teddy bear case in Sudan. On the latter, I will draw in the section covering the ecological lens.

In reference to the metro live case Golia's illustration on the perception of foreigners seems to be in accordance with the feedback from inquiries with Cairene women. Expectations of foreigner's behaviours are formed through experience, which again is based on self-fulfilling prophecies; i.e. the occasional male foreigner will embark the metro car reserved for female passengers.

The affiliation of religion clearly has an impact on the setup of the metro car system. This setup exist in places where space between man and women is welcome, nevertheless the socialisation of the male visitor from a place where this setup is not common made him forget about the guideline, although the person knows about it.

In terms of perception to the mobile phone live case the elite character connected to mobile phones inculcates a sense of belonging with in-group members, i.e. other mobile phone owners, peers working in multinational organisations, car owners, all of which are key idiosyncratic to the Egyptian middle class. This stands in stark contrast to the others who do not enjoy the fringes this class of people has access to.

Now the discussion leaps to the third lens, the **ecological lens** by viewing some of the incidents that have already been examined in the light of the two other lenses through the capturing aspects from the environment. Equally, I look at some of the incidents that have not yet been investigated through the lenses of diversity. The ecological lens focuses on the influences coming from the habitat and, in addition on the various 'scapes' that seem to have an impact on the described incidents.

Pertaining to the live case of exclamation marks three scapes seem to dominate the scene, i.e. mediascapes, technoscapes and ethnoscapes.

Mediascapes come into account when analysing the sources of feedback as such. As the email content clearly categorises as a piece of written feedback, it is critical to investigate the origin of this tradition. Publications on feedback in general and more specifically on feedback guidelines, that is how to give and receive feedback, predominantly originate in the Anglo-saxon world and are disseminated through literature in English to other regions.

Closely connected to the mediascapes are the technoscapes in this live case. As synchronous and asynchronous communication is crossing formerly impervious boundaries they now have a significant impact on social behaviour. Traditionally, feedback guidelines suggest one-to-one conversations for giving and receiving feedback, which at the time of the live case was impossible due to a failed personal meeting. Therefore, asynchronous communication was selected for giving feedback. As demonstrated this type of media used for giving feedback qualified unsuitable although feedback guidelines were adhered.

A telephone conversation might have been more suitable allowing the conversation partner to bring forward the own preferred style of responding.

Finally, landscapes of persons shifting between worlds and yet carrying their values along known as ethnoscapes come into account. Building on the predeceasing chapter 'Calling the West' the encounter of the colonial versus the colonised might have impacted the inferiority potential interpreted from the text. Additionally, the organisa-

tional aspect of two organisations liaising with one another, one from the learning industry and the other from the high-tech industry in the role of student might be further explanation of this live case.

The live case of the absent photograph is also subject of the ecology, in which this interaction took place. Precisely, this refers to the conversations facilitators engaged in further to the interaction. These conversations were accompanied by feelings of unease and discomfort often making a reference to other “minor issues” ending in a major international escalation.

Whilst the more historical Jyllands-Posten’s cartoons of Muhammad caused public protest first in Denmark and finally led to protest across the Muslim world in late 2005 a case current to the late stage of the project became public, that was the Teddy bear case in late 2007.

In this case, the British primary school teacher, Ms. Gibbons from Liverpool working in Khartoum’s Unity High School, received a 15-day prison term in November 2007 for offences against the prophet of Islam after allowing a teddy bear to be named Muhammad in a school competition. The boy’s family added that he was not thinking of the prophet when he named the bear. But a classroom assistant complained to the authorities, which led to Gibbons’ arrest for blasphemy²⁸⁵. It was personal animosity that was to prove Gibbons’ undoing. Two months after the bear had been named, Sara Khawad, a school secretary who by her own admission bore a grudge against the head teacher, complained to the authorities²⁸⁶.

These developments, namely from small incidents to events known worldwide are clearly a responsibility of the mediascapes. In the cartoon case some of the depictions were reprinted in many other newspapers and as a result caused more turmoil whilst the British media captured the Teddy bear case by demonstrating great sympathy for the released teacher, in particular upon her return to Great Britain.

The mobile phone plays along the lines with the technoscapes as it presents one of the most popular means for synchronous communication. It also stands for some of the

²⁸⁵ The Sunday Times (London) December 2, 2007

²⁸⁶ The Observer (England) December 9, 2007

ethnoscapes' mobility and accessibility as well as mediascapes' image-centered, narrative-based accounts of reality.

The electronic capabilities allow its users to produce and disseminate information at any time required or desired. In the above described live case the line between commodity and status seems to be vague, nonetheless the mobile phone is loaded with meaning as such as it serves as one symbolic object for differentiating oneself from the other, hence may be viewed as a contributor to diversity. Again, it depends on the ecological context if it is a cultural artifact of diversity or a symbol of sameness with the in-group representatives.

The live of touch behaviour represents one example of ethnoscapes as landscapes of persons who constitute the shifting world in which they move. In this case one group of people, i. e. the facilitators carry their ideas and approaches that work in one place to another without questioning the appropriateness of their action in the target place. The written brief that facilitators new to the programme adhered to proved to be supporting the issue rather than contributing to a new solution. Thus, I argue that guidelines can impede diversity rather than foster it.

5.5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The widely known concepts of the interculturalist industry²⁸⁷ necessitate a critical view on the two inextricably linked subject matters of "intercultural" and "diversity". Clearly, these concepts and related vocabulary had an impact on the individuals working on this project, which crystallised by the assumption that intercultural encounters must become a problem. In turn, this negative view has an impact on the individual's perception displayed in the interaction with the "other" and the impact on one's reaction. Reactions as

²⁸⁷ Dahlen 1999:13

described tended to inhibit in-depth reflection and subsequent solution-seeking together with the “other”.

The live cases demonstrate that the widely used format of two or three day intercultural workshops tend to be outdated when working in setting as the described. Instead, this hybrid way of working requires a more contemporary format in order to address the issues individuals encounter in real time.

The live cases also display that the analysis of encounters between participants and facilitators largely remained at the tip of the iceberg. Results of reflection rounds and further dispersed conversations terminate in ascriptions of “the other” mostly in a negative way such as aggressive. Facilitators’ vocabulary was aligned to the intercultural terminology whilst the Egyptian participants seemed to distance themselves from such terminology. Two reasons need to be taken into account to justify this statement whereas a) is the absence of overheard or observed discussions, which addressed this topic area and b) is the potential lack of this vocabulary in the Egyptian business environment. The limitation the intercultural vocabulary imposes on a thorough analysis of these live cases is reinforced by the fragmented knowledge individuals often have of these concepts. This combination seems to limit the potential exploration the source of multiple affiliation offers. The richness of multiple affiliations encapsulates age, hierarchy, gender, religion, elitism, which once activated might assist in creating sameness.

The reduction to tip-of-the-iceberg level continues to the level of perception. The intercultural vocabulary seems to underpin stereotyping and thus reinforces the gap between “them” and “us”, usually putting “others” in a disadvantageous position.

Equally, perception of the others, namely the perception of the facilitators appears to be translated and extended from experience with tourists once outside the business setting. In return, behaviours of this group seem to fall into these patterns. The metro case demonstrates that individuals tend to fall back on perception during socialisation, in that case that seclusion is something sensitive and bound to wrong-doing rather than a potentially increased service level providing comfort for a specific group.

The perceived inequality between learning partners potentially reduced the potential for conflict resolution, hence limits the development of alternatives for new ways of cooperating, and so impedes diversity. By emphasising otherness the effort of seeking elements of sameness diminishes, whereby sameness might help bridge gaps and overcome potential conflicts.

The ecological lens allows a different angle on the incidents, again beyond the tip of the iceberg analysis typically provided by the intercultural industry. For illustration the live case of question mark appears to be more of an issue associated to technoscapes. Idiosyncratic to technoscapes and specifically asynchronous forms of communication is the time lag between the communication partners. The combination with the depersonalisation also characteristic to email communication resulted in a more superficial analysis of the live case such as the ascription of the other as in childlike behaviour.

The ecological lens also permits a more critical view on the live cases as to whether potential conflicts are inherent to the environment or merely of personal doing or origin. The live case of the lacking photograph demonstrates the interplay between mechanism from various scapes and personal action, which taken to a prominent case was displayed in a negative form in the Teddy bear case.

Both, the live case and the more historical case of Teddy bear show that all representatives of the learning and knowledge industry are an integral part of contextualised knowledge transfer. This responsibility requires both, the knowledge of the local systems and its translation into displayed behaviours. Whilst the interculturalists claim such incidents to be a cultural expression, I argue that it is the individual's expression in an interaction. Also, it is the individual's responsibility to acquire both, knowledge and the translation into displayed behaviours, which in turn is ideally acknowledged by the interaction partner.

Overall, from the perspective of the facilitating team the affiliations of gender and religion most frequently surfaced, which were bases for the selection of the live cases labelled as "intercultural".

At large, many of the facilitators' perception seems strongly influenced by the concepts from 80es and 90es. Hofstede's dimensions seem to have the greatest influence, although the research data stems from one organisation with a strong corporate culture, i. e. IBM back in the 80s. It has little relevance in today's challenges in a hybrid world with individuals working across boundaries, irrespective of skill level and type of contracts. Although this cosmopolitan workforce seems to have entered the fourth stream, the vocabulary and mindset of the interculturalists still dominates the scene.

The interculturalist industry presents the affiliations of gender and religion as stand-alone feature largely ignoring context and meaningful associations. Now the three lenses of diversity aim to present a more holistic picture. As illustrated by the means of live cases in-depth understanding necessitates thick descriptions as opposed to a tip-

of-the-iceberg coverage such as the culture assimilator including best-fit answers. Also, thick descriptions require the involved parties to be exposed to the particular case. It would add value to the cooperation to extend Abu-Lughod's "ethnography of the particular" beyond anthropology to both groups, the facilitators and the participants,

"to look into the ways individuals go through life, "agonising over decisions", making mistakes, trying to themselves look good, enduring tragedies and personal losses, enjoying others, and finding moments of happiness."²⁸⁸

It would make making tacit knowledge accessible and so turn it into explicit knowledge. Attempts during the project were a) narratives on a day-to-day basis during the day and over dinner at the hotel. These were neither structured nor captured in writing; b) emails with the aim of exchanging experiences which due to the nature of the medium were captured in writing; c) conversations at the business school once back from a trip to Egypt including both the team of facilitators and other colleagues not involved in the project. The latter shows the first transition from live case to incident, which includes the live case turning historic as well as releasing ownership.

Clearly, the proposed approach of fully fledged thick description followed by an in-depth work on the three lenses would eliminate superficiality and would allow to moving the discussion to a more profound level. The project-long learning approach would also stimulate the necessary adoptions of learning programmes beyond the often observed adjusting at etiquette level, such as dress code, working times, and touch behaviour.

The proposed strategy might invite for variety in ways forward when encountering a conflict, hence would qualify as fostering diversity. The key learning from this project is the application of the research framework on future projects, which equally necessitates making resources available, enabling this process?

²⁸⁸ Abu-Lughod 1991:158 in Dahlen 1997:169

6. THE VALUE DEBATE

6.1. INTRODUCTION

Over the recent decades organisational values have become an indispensable part of organisations in any industry and non-profit sector. The process of designing, defining, establishing, and disseminating organisational values is complex and contingent.

The two organisations, namely the British business school and the Egyptian client organisation worked closely together towards one common objective, that was, the dissemination of organisational values expressed as performance drivers. Concretely, this meant a set of tightly described behaviours, which were prescribed by the human resource department of UK based headquarters.

As a consequence of the characteristics of this collaboration it was two European based organisations collaborating in order to execute the task of implementing these defined values in the target organisation in Egypt. Inherent to this project is the fact that both organisations build their work on values meaningful to them.

This chapter investigates the contributions from diversity on the impact of organisational values as proposed by the client organisation. It adds new insights to the debate on diversity by exploring the gap in the interplay between organisation's strong consistent messages as proposed by organisational values and the individual's identity, which as per earlier chapter tightly builds on the multiple identity constructions.

6.2. CORE AND CONTEXT OF THE COOPERATION

The section “Core and context of the cooperation” addresses aspects relevant to the cooperation between the British business school and the Egyptian client. It covers a) the implications of values have for organisations; b) the development of business schools over the recent decades; and c) the common history the two countries have where either organisation is situated.

All three aspects certainly inspired the Egyptian client to seek a British partner, which after the tender process resulted in a close collaboration between the two organisations over the period of one and half years. The British business school and the Egyptian client organisation worked closely together towards one common objective, that was, the roll-out of the performance drivers. Concretely, this meant to disseminate a set of values expressed by behaviours, which were prescribed by the human resource department of UK based headquarters. The objective of this initiative was to maximise organisational efficiency and output. The following three sections provide background to the three aspects relevant to this cooperation, which are a) values in organisations; b) the development of business schools; and c) the common past of the two countries.

6.2.1. VALUES IN ORGANISATIONS

Organisational values or the synonymously used corporate values, are a widely known concept in the business world. Pheysey argues that every culture has its values and that values are whatever is esteemed, prized or appreciated in that culture²⁸⁹. Peters and Waterman argue that organisations are repositories of myths, symbols, stories and legends that reflect and reinforce the central (and positive) values of organisations. They provide examples such as caring about customers, being innovatory, focussing

²⁸⁹ Pheysey 1993:4

on quality. As a result they argue that bureaucracy decreases because everyone shares a strongly held 'philosophy'²⁹⁰. Strongly ingrained organisational values are supposed to create an environment which encourages managers and employees to set priorities that enable them to judge whether an order is attractive, whether a customer is more or less important, whether an idea for a new product is attractive or marginal²⁹¹.

They are designed as behavioural guidelines serving for orientation in a world shaped by post-modern thinking, which stands for a) resistance towards certainty and resolution; b) rejection of fixed notions of reality; and c) acceptance of complexity, of lack of clarity and of multiplicity²⁹².

In contrast, organisational values typically attempt to overcome uncertainty and ambiguity and 'try to impose on members of a class of universe the laws of their commonality', equally they are labelled as a universalist approach²⁹³.

Specific to the context of this study and as described earlier the aim of this large and complex project was to implement so called performance drivers. At each of these performance drivers lie clearly defined organisational values. The performance drivers were identified in a separate programme independent from the one the British business school implemented by representatives of the headquarters in the United Kingdom. The purpose was to translate the streamlined organisational values into behaviours to make them readily available for dissemination across the organisation all around the globe. Employees working for the organisation should adopt these values by displaying corresponding behaviours routinely when communicating and collaborating with peers, managers, reports, and clients. Beyond the identification and dissemination of these values the organisation had number of mechanisms, in place in order to monitor employees' adherence to these behaviours. For example, performance drivers are an integral part of the regularly held performance reviews and the 360-degree feedback process specifically developed to serve this purpose.

In practice this meant that the business school developed workshops on the basis of these performance drivers, which included values such as customer orientation, fo-

²⁹⁰ Peters and Waterman in Parker 2003:11

²⁹¹ Mullins 2002:326

²⁹² Atkinson 2002:74

²⁹³ Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 2000:14

cused communication, dealing with uncertainty, personal impact, and performance through others. The method applied in the workshops was behaviour and skill-based and was delivered to more than 1000 people from different levels in the Egyptian organisation. Multiple workshops on the same performance driver were designed for different managerial levels and connected at the time of delivery through large group events. This combination of different approaches allowed managers to work with the messages and explore their meaning with senior colleagues from different levels with the purpose of anchoring these strong and consistent messages across client organisation in Egypt.

The organisation faced a number of reasons for developing strong and consistent messages aimed at gaining competitive advantage. In a highly competitive environment it was key to focus resources on the organisation's sustainability as an integral part of corporate social responsibility. Firstly, in the short-term this was of high priority and urgency with a new rival entry in the immediate marketplace located in the direct geographic neighbourhood.

Secondly, in the long-term it was of high priority to consider the interests of the wider group of stakeholders in the environment. The communication and development of strong and consistent ethical messages related to sustainability were important for the social justice perspective of the socially highly diversified Egyptian society. It aimed at contributing to the society's programme on welfare and education, specifically, at human development. That is the link between business development and poverty reduction, safety campaigns, and charity work in particular focussing on school education. This includes financing operations on developing and upgrading schools providing them with information technology.

These initiatives are not only necessary means triggered by external forces and management fads, but are in accordance with the values from an Islamic perspective. Distinctively, these are a) a high sense of belonging, meaning "those who show a higher sense of belonging to this *umma* normally display a higher involvement in the affairs of the society and are inclined, more than others, to champion societal causes"²⁹⁴; and b) a high dissatisfaction with the present affairs given they appear unsatisfactory or inconsistent with their perception of the interest of society requiring to change the status

²⁹⁴ Abbas 2007:155

quo²⁹⁵. Both values result in the necessity to take over leadership in order to manoeuvre the organisation into this new direction.

The performance driver programme was one vehicle to align behaviour with the organisation's strategic orientation aiming to extend its ethical aspirations, displayed by the corporate social responsibility practice.

In reference to the earlier addressed debate on *is* versus *has* culture the dissemination of clearly defined values definitely qualifies as *has* culture. Clearly, the organisational values stem from members dominant in the organisation, that is, a group of representatives from the headquarters situated in the UK. Although details are unknown due to an absence of resources it needs to be assumed that they were built on the basis of senior managers' values interpretation and preferred way of doing things; and finally they can be treated as another variable that can be manipulated, changed when necessary and according to context. With this in mind, the values disseminated by the performance driver programme need to be labelled as the driver of the organisation's corporate culture.

Most organisations promote values in one form or the other. Based on my work with other clients the majority of organisations build their values on their corporate culture as opposed to their organisational culture. Developing values from the organisational culture required a continuous process, which allowed to integrate the negotiated and shared meaning that emerge from social interaction from throughout the organisation. This inclusive approach needed the involvement of all employees, of which senior managers are an integral part although not able to control it.

Having provided the meaning and the position of values in organisation I now provide an overview of the development of business schools and their role in disseminating values.

²⁹⁵ Abbas 2007:156

6.2.2. THE BUSINESS SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

As per earlier project description one of the partners in this cooperation was a prominent British business school, equipped with multiple accreditations necessary to compete in the international post-graduate education market. The Financial Times carries out annual rankings looking at tailored and open executive education programme and MBAs. Over the last few years the business school has consistently reached a top position in the Financial Times' executive education rankings. The rankings are predominantly based on the views of the business school's customers and clients.

As briefly introduced in chapter one, business schools have experienced an unparalleled popularity over the last few decades. The need for professional managers along with a massive expansion of higher education led to a global explosion of professional management education throughout the twentieth century from a handful of countries at the dawn of the twentieth century to more than 100 countries by the end of the same century²⁹⁶ as illustrated in below graph:

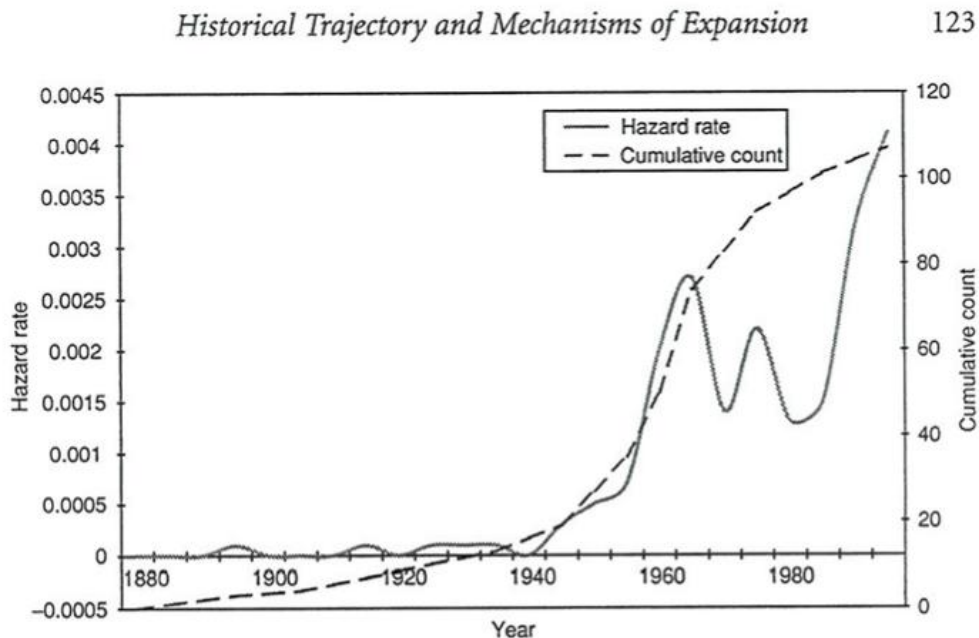


Figure 5.1 Cumulative count of initial adoptions and hazard rate of the founding of the first B-Schools, 1880–1999

²⁹⁶ Moon, Min Wotipka in Drori, Meyer, Hwang 2007:121

According to a survey from 1999²⁹⁷ Anglo-Saxon countries are leading in number of institutions offering MBA programmes, i.e. United States (490); United Kingdom (271); and Canada (67) followed by European countries, i.e. France (75); Spain (61); and the Netherlands (39). In comparison, Egypt had 4 institutions offering MBA programmes.

In parallel to MBA programmes, business schools serve as a centre of knowledge transfer and skills development in general management for organisations in the private and the public sector. This offering contributes to the rise of management education, largely known as management development and change management initiatives usually in the broader specialist areas of strategy and leadership. These recent trends that are, the rise of MBA programmes and the popularity of management development are a result of globalisation. As Moon and Min Wotipka consent that,

„ ... certainly, cross-national variation exists in the degree to which nation-states are involved in global society, and thus, in the extent to which globalisation may affect them. Two channels of global involvement seem especially relevant in explaining the adoption of B-Schools: participation in the global market and the polity.²⁹⁸“

Egypt's focus on economic development and the stratification of the business education system seems to trigger interest in cooperating with a Western business school. The country has a stable growth economy and faced only limited impact from the global finance crisis. As opposed to the UK and USA only certain industries have been affected and will be affected in 2010; these are the automotive industry; the tourism industry; and currency brought in from the Middle East. It is estimated that 65% of the population of 78 million are under the age of 30 and 35% are under the age of 15. Despite this young population, neither foreign direct investments nor the Egyptian industry can source sufficient skilled people to service demand. The Egyptian academic education culture encourages people to take secure white-collar public sector jobs over often better-paid blue collar/factory private sector work. The three tier secondary system of academic, general and technical streaming currently reinforces the prestige of academic work over vocational routes²⁹⁹. This is closely linked to rank and hierarchy in the

²⁹⁷ Moon, Min Wotipka in Drori, Meyer, Hwang 2007:125

²⁹⁸ Moon, Min Wotipka in Drori, Meyer, Hwang 2007:128

²⁹⁹ Middle East Association mission paper 2008

Egyptian society. In addition, it is a result of a general lack of analysis for training and development needs except for large private sector businesses.

In addition to the preference towards academic education, there seems to be a general gap between supply and demand in training and development in Egypt. The quality of skills development training in the state sector institutions at all levels is generally regarded as poor and not producing people fit for employment. In contrast, the standard of fee paying private education institutes is usually of a high standard with graduates more work ready.

These three phenomena, a) the countries demographic development, b) the need for a well educated workforce to meet the needs of a stably growing market; and c) an insufficient public and a superior private education help business schools become widely accepted:

„ ... The twentieth century, justification for management education has been offered to the extent that even the critics of B-Schools now take them for granted. Positive discourses on B-Schools from practitioners of business education, business people, and international actors generate normative pressures on societies yet to adopt them.³⁰⁰“

Rarely, one questions this US and UK hegemony of MBA programmes and management education³⁰¹. This leads countries in transition as is Egypt to import a) elitism; as well as b) Western theory and management practice. In this context, elitism refers to selected individuals having access to education and training. Western theory and management is strongly based on the concepts of individualism³⁰² and universalism³⁰³.

As a graduate of an executive MBA programme from a triple-crown British university my personal experience is that these schools are the locus of transferring knowledge and skills of general management in a standard language featuring standard models and frameworks usually ethnocentric to the place of origin. Typically, they offer limited cultural adaption necessary to meet the needs of a more international student audience.

Globalisation draws organisations into a wider and hence more international market requiring them to adopt standard procedures reflected in a common business language

³⁰⁰ Moon, Min Wotipka in Drori, Meyer, Hwang 2007:127

³⁰¹ Adizes in CEEMAN 2007:20

³⁰² Adizes in CEEMAN 2007:20

³⁰³ Hampden-Turner 2000:14

and standard approaches. In this sense, business schools and training providers are primarily a mirror showing how deeply societies are embedded in globalisation, and therefore affected by world models and standards³⁰⁴.

The saturation in the domestic markets of the UK and US based business schools necessitated them to focus their activities on emerging markets. The rise and popularity of business schools capacitated the cooperation between clients in international markets and business schools operating from domestic markets. The business schools' overall focus on the development of subjects related to senior management is one of the key drivers for value definition and dissemination from the viewpoint of a corporate culture.

In this section I presented the key idiosyncrasies of the business school industry, I now turn to the third reason for the cooperation between the British business school and the Egyptian client, that is, the common past.

6.2.3. THE TWO COUNTRIES' COMMON PAST

This project is a master image of globalisation, which is strongly embedded in the temporality of the tension between the past and the presence.

This section illustrates the overlap in the history of the two nations, which host the two partner organisations in the cooperation. Specifically, the more recent history indicates reasons why Egypt, the country in transition, seeks guidance from the Anglo-Saxon world in the area of education and development.

Although, history seems to happen in sequential patterns, overlaps of the current and the past are the specificity characterising this work. As described by Sassen explaining the colonial past,

,pace' the matter that it is the colonial past, is the notion that the past is unsettled, not in the sense that it yields only imperfect knowledge or data but in the sense that it lives.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁴ Moon, Min Wotipka in Drori, Meyer, Hwang 2007:128

³⁰⁵ Sassen 2001:269

Historically, Egypt has been dominated by foreign powers; that is, Fatimides, Mamluk, Ottomans, the French and British to name a few. Mohammed Ali (1805 – 1849) in the role of prominent moderniser of Egypt looked into the development of military, industry, the education and health sector, inviting Europeans to help build an awakened Egypt.

The British rule of over 70 years was ended by the 1952 coup initiated by the Revolutionary Command Council. As a result Gamal Abdel Nasser became president in 1956. “Nasser was perceived as the first native son to rule since the pharaohs”³⁰⁶, whose socialist politics caused many foreigners and Egyptians, who were in the position, to leave the country. A wave of brain drain was the consequence accompanied by a simultaneous wave of nationalisation of buildings, factories, and utilities.

Nasser’s orientation toward the Eastern bloc was terminated by his successor, Anwar Sadat, shift to the American-dominated West and his policy for ‘liberalisation’. Sadat’s policy opened the doors for foreign investments and the subsequent establishment of multinational companies in the country. One of this orientation’s master images is the installation of satellite cities³⁰⁷. Supplemented by the rapid growth of the population these settlements grew steadily outside the city of Cairo, one of which is 6th of October, where the researched organisation is situated.

The British rule did not only reshape Cairo in architecture and infrastructure, it also formed the Egyptian way of organising learning and education. Decision makers in the Egyptian training and development industry frequently state two reasons to explain the preference for the British and American education providers over European ones. These are: a) the organisation of studies by semester and b) the grading system. These decision-makers have the purchasing power over a range of international education providers. They themselves are familiar with the British/American system as are the potential consumers of the development initiatives.

However, seeking expert knowledge at a British business school could imply recalling colonial humiliation in the minds of those who have experienced it, most likely through the narrative of parents and grandparents.

³⁰⁶ Golia 2004:82

³⁰⁷ Ghannam 2006:251

„The dialectics of the colonised mind includes both admiration and disaffection. It would be a mistake to try to see postcolonial disaffection toward the West as just a reaction to actual colonial maltreatment, exploitation, and humiliation.“³⁰⁸

Equally, disproportion in approaches is fostered by the introduction of knowledge based on Western deductive approaches.

„The colonial powers (e.g. Britain, France, Italy, etc.) brought with them their conceptualizations of leaders and leadership, which evolved around power and its implications. The direct colonization, however, did not last long enough to initiate genuine transformation in the perceptions and practice of leadership. The post-colonial era, therefore, has been primarily by cultural discontinuity and mistrust of Western conceptualizations. Absence of critical evaluation of the colonial legacy and reasonable familiarity with the Islamic classical perspectives remain a persistent problem.“³⁰⁹

Remarkably few local institutions offer MBA programmes, which as earlier elaborated serve as benchmark for the quality of worldwide education. Equally, local organisations specialising in education and development seek alliances with British or American business schools. The outward orientation might be interpreted as an extension of the reliance of former colonial powers.

Reviewing these three aspects we have seen that they can be understood as encouragement for this cooperation.

The frequently observed collaboration between UK and US based business schools and consulting firms in Egypt and other parts of the Middle East appear to have three causes helping illustrate the context of this cooperation. Firstly, the recently experienced popularity of the business school model over the last few decades; secondly, the close historical ties between the UK and Egypt; and thirdly, the fact that a large number of headquarters of Egyptian organisations are in the US and the UK and OD processes are typically of 'Western origin'.

³⁰⁸ Sen 2006:85

³⁰⁹ Abbas 2007:145

6.3. THE EXPRESSION OF VALUES

This section covers the various ways the client organisation disseminates its values, which includes the visual expression such as the building, office spaces, communication materials, and the overt display of organisational hierarchies. Likewise, it includes the more intangible ways of value expression, that is, the adoption of expected behaviours with connected control mechanisms, and the display of more covert organisation hierarchies.

In the context of the programme, the client at the start of the cooperation presented a range of materials, whose aim was to communicate the company's organisational values. The materials were handed to the design team from the business school in order to provide insight into the values with the aspiration to design the programme content in alignment with the communicated values. On a daily basis, the presented materials were used to communicate the values throughout the organisation within a range of initiatives. This process was started well in advance to the performance driver programme. In the following section I will describe the most important expressions of these values, i. e. the values based organisation, the performance driver guide, personal performance drivers, overt and covert display of values. I will then analyse their messages through the 3 lenses of diversity in order to investigate their impact on diversity.

6.3.1. THE VALUE-BASED ORGANISATION

The value-based organisation (VBO) is an approach that ensures corporations to run on consistent values, such as maximising shareholders value and adding value to the customer service. Individuals working for a value-based organisation are expected to show behaviours and actions in alignment with the organisation's mission, vision, strategy, and objectives. Values are typically disseminated overtly by value statements, which are communicated in various ways throughout the organisation.

Specific to the research project, the client organisation presented their understanding of a value-based organisation in the form of a booklet, which served as a supplement to one-day workshops, which the client called VBO workshops. The aim of these workshops was to familiarise employees with the concept of the value based organisation. These workshops were organised prior to the performance driver programme that forms the basis for this research. Hence, the participants of the performance driver programme had already experienced the VBO workshop before they attended the performance driver (PD) workshops. The client handed the booklet to the design team of the PD programme in preparation to the design of PD workshops.

The following section briefly describes the layout, structure and the content of the booklet. The design of the supplement is a glossy and colourful 20 page A4 booklet, which walks the individual participant through the concept of the value based organisation. The brochure invites him or her to complete predefined sections once having identified his or her own findings. The front page shows a picture of a group of Egyptian people all dressed in white shirts or blouses raising their hands to the sky whilst standing on a fallukah³¹⁰. The headlines text aims at the individual, "it begins with me ..." in connection with the value based organisation.

The introduction section aims to explore motivation, for which values are used as a synonym. Values are further divided into "being" and "doing" by the use of leading question serving to investigate the meaning of values to the individual. The following pages focus on personal needs, again inviting the individual participant to identify his or her personal findings, which then requires a translation into the representation of the need. On the overleaf the brochure carries on to explain what values are by dividing them into "priorities" and "preferences", which present how we choose to live our lives. This explanation is further presented by the means of a formula, attempting to summarise the complex subject matter in a simple equation. This section carries on with an invitation to the participant to identify his or her own values, which should be written up in small boxes. The brochure continues then to explore the values at home as opposed to the values at work, which should be rated on a scale from 0% - 100% as how to feel you are living these values at home and at work.

³¹⁰ Egyptian sailing boat

The organisation's definition of a value-based organisation is presented by the Egyptian symbol of temple, each column filled with labels of organisational values. Finally, the brochure concludes with a summary focusing on the extent of congruence between own values and organisational values, on shared organisational values, and what customers will experience from that.

Towards the end of the brochure the values and behaviours are displayed with the help of visual images. Six pictures underpin the message of six values, which stand for the organisational culture. One visual shows a group of all men in business suits dancing together. Another photo shows a group of men and women smiling into the camera. One photo shows a man climbing a rock. Another photo displays a person stretching her arms towards the sky. The person is shown from the back dressed in traditional Egyptian clothes. In the background one can see a pyramid. Yet another image has a group of people cheering somebody, which necessitates some physical contact. A few dispersed women stand at side. The person cheered is tossed into the air, for which a photo image is inserted.

The final double page summarises the implementation of the values-based organisation by asking "How am I going to make difference – at work tomorrow? Going back into the business, how do I need to be and what do I need to do differently?". The overall key word on these two pages is 'bokra', which is Egyptian Arabic and means 'tomorrow'.

6.3.2. THE GUIDE TO PERFORMANCE DRIVERS

The guide to performance drivers is a glossy A4 brochure designed in the company colour. The cover page displays a Western looking man in a business suit and an Egyptian woman wearing a coat and a headscarf, both showing signs to the reader. The sign the Western looking man is holding up says, "Developing your skills is easy", whilst the sign the Egyptian woman shows to the reader reads, "Just develop the right behaviours".

The introductory text on the following page states that one needs the right behaviours and skills in order to develop one's performance. The behaviours and skills aim to help the organisation deliver its vision and values. They are designed for every individual in the organisation helping them to meet their goals and targets and equally assist the organisation labelled as "us" to help build successful relationships with customers, colleagues, and other stakeholders.

The benefit of the performance drivers is described as making it possible to develop a global organisation with the assistance of a common model to assess people and their performance in terms of common role profiles and organisational structures. Another benefit of the performance drivers is as laid out in the guide is for recruitment. Knowing what good performance looks like makes it easier to recruit the right people. Overall benefits are improvement of the organisation's performance by avoiding duplication of business processes and also by saving cost and time.

Further in the brochure each of the performance drivers is broken into subcategories labelled as qualities. These qualities range from two to five per performance driver and should help managers complete a role profile, engage in a performance dialogue, or in a development discussion.

On the following pages the performance drivers and their respective qualities are further broken into behavioural indicators. These range from 10 to 24 for each of the six performance drivers. A random selection of behavioural indicators reads as follows: Keeps up-to-date with market trends; ensures all activities are reviewed from a customer's point of view; recognises and rewards effective performance; demonstrates respect for diversity and cultural difference; builds networks and useful contacts; actively resolves conflicts within team; clarifies to others how their goals link to group plans; makes unpopular decisions if necessary; treats others consistently and fairly, lobbies opinion formers in advance of decision. These 111 behavioural indicators are allocated to three managerial levels, i .e. level 1, level 2, and level 3 which refer to the level of skill required to perform this role.

The discussion then moves on to the differentiation between behavioural indicators and potential indicators. The text clarifies that according to some research there is no indication that performance and potential always correlate. Whilst performance indicates that a person is consistently going above and beyond expectations, potential refers to the additional ability to make the transition into a different level of performance. It also

indicates working in a completely different way. The brochure further elaborates that high performance in the current role does not necessarily predict success in a different role and that good managers don't always make good business leaders.

6.3.3. PERSONAL PERFORMANCE DRIVERS

The personal performance driver approach is a document that is tightly based on the 360 approach. In general, 360 feedback (sometimes called 360-degree feedback) provides information on an individual from a number of sources and perspectives. Its promoters claim that this gives managers and individuals better information about skills and performance as well as working relationships. The 360-degree approach requires participants to rate their own attitudes and abilities on a number of dimensions, but also to ask several colleagues, a superior and subordinate to rate them on the same areas.

Typically in a 360 feedback, 8 to 10 people fill in questionnaires describing the individual's performance. Often the individual fills in a questionnaire for him or herself too, assessing his or her own performance. Ideally, the whole process should be anonymous and feedback from results should be presented to the recipient by a skilled coach.

The questionnaire usually consists of a number of statements rated on a scale, for example from one to five, and often includes the opportunity to add free text comments. It often shows the actual ratings given for each question, as well as averages for each question and for each competency or skill, and any written comments.

Specifically, the personal performance driver form invites an employee to express his or her view on the colleague's behaviour at work. The labels used in the introductory text tend to be informal such as "trusted colleague" and "your workmate". Confidentiality is mandatory and the form should be returned to the colleague who inquired in receiving such feedback and who might want to discuss in further detail. Also, the text explains that this form of feedback is not part of the colleague's performance assessment.

The second opinion needs to be filled into a grid, again organised by performance drivers and their respective qualities. Each quality is further enhanced by one behavioural indicator. The grid is further subdivided into “Current strength” with the number equivalent of 4/5 and “Room to develop” with the number equivalent of 1-3.

6.3.1. OVERT DISPLAY OF VALUES

As outlined at the beginning of this chapter the dissemination of values is organised in various ways. One includes the visual expression such as the company building and office spaces. The following paragraphs outline these most eye-catching value expressions at the Egyptian headquarters.

As portrayed in chapter 03 the headquarters are situated in an elegant and heavily guarded business compound in the desert outside Cairo. Two contemporary glass buildings of each approximately eight floors dominate the site. Four silver columns approximately 15 meters high frame the main entrance of the main building. Facades are held in shaded glass appearing blue and reflect well-looked-after lawns, palm trees, and parked cars.

The entrance hall is spacious and occupies several floors in height at once. The floor and the reception desks are kept in light-coloured marble. Large size flat screens are mounted at random intervals in the elegantly furnished hall and the open areas throughout both buildings presenting state of the art interior design pieces, inviting people to follow the 24-hour news in Arabic. Sofas and comfortable arm chairs are spread in the open areas typically in subdued colours such grey and brown and the bright company colour. Each open space has one workstation with internet access. Also, there are a number of plants spread in the open space areas.

The office areas consist of open space offices. Each employee is allocated workspace in the form of a small cubicle, which is arranged by shoulder-high separation walls. The colours of the furniture are grey whilst walls are largely held in a subdued mint green. Pictures and catch phrases of the value-based organisation are displayed on the walls. Each pillar of the open space offices has six corporate values printed on the two of its

wider sides. The printed values are in both English and Arabic; however the latter are shown in Latin transcription.

Garbage cans with two different colours on the lids require managers and employees to separate garbage.

6.3.2. COVERT DISPLAY OF VALUES

The overt display of organisational hierarchies is usually presented by organisational charts, which show functions and reporting lines. The covert element includes how these roles are filled out and in what way these relationships are composed along the reporting lines.

In relation to the performance driver programme this section covers the mode with which hierarchical levels were handled in the client organisation, and specifically, how they were mirrored in the programme.

As outlined in the introduction chapter the learning architecture featured a mixture of large group events and performance driver workshops tightly knit into a compact schedule accommodating the greatest possible participant numbers in shortest possible time (period of one year maximum for the delivery). Workshops needed to be designed towards the different needs of three managerial levels. During the design phase the absence of connectedness between hierarchical levels became transparent to the programme architects at the business school. This group designed large group events (LGE) at the beginning and at the end of each workshop, which were intended to bridge the hierarchical gap among managerial levels. The initial design suggested LGEs up to one full day. The client met the suggestion of introducing LGEs with hesitation pointing to the fact that senior management would not welcome such initiatives. Finally, an agreement was found which allowed to incorporate LGEs, however with significant reduction in time spent on connecting people from different hierarchical levels. The final design is presented in chapter one.

After two hours LGE the group of approx 90 managers were broken into three or sometimes more parallel workshops according to hierarchical levels. Considering the fact

that there were more level three managers than level-two or level-one often there were two level-three and one level-two workshops run in parallel.

The client presented their overt values in a clear and explicit way by requiring the providers to keep the three managerial levels separate throughout the programme. At the same time, the client demanded some of the content to be the same across the three managerial levels in order to ensure the same understanding of the performance drivers and to establish one common language on the value topic.

Quite the reverse were some of the reactions of the participants to the separation of the hierarchical levels, of which one was demonstrated in a vivid discussion during one of the workshops. A small group of participants pointed to the egalitarianism among the people of the three levels with reference to the Prophet who according to the participants claimed that 'all people were equal' and 'why do we differentiate here' (in the workshops).

Another way of expressing more covert values was the means of feedback forms handed out at the end of each workshop. These feedback forms are also known as happy sheets and are supposed to provide information about the level of satisfaction among participants regarding the workshop.

The feedback forms were divided in sections, one for each workshop session organised by topic and related activities. Participants were required to consider each question and respond on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating the lowest satisfaction level and grade 5 the highest. These feedback forms were called 'Evaluation form' and the explanatory note presented the scoring as 'grades'. As per feedback sheet low satisfaction should be explained, "For any Items Evaluated by grade 1, kindly mention the reason in the comments area."

Clearly, this instrument qualifies as an overt value measure, nevertheless indicates a number of explicit messages such as a) the level of overall satisfaction with the workshop measured by happiness of participants, and b) the preference of one session over another. As the feedback is provided subsequent to each workshop it needs to be considered as short-term measurement.

The importance of the feedback forms was illustrated by the handling of the process. One representative of the local human resource department came to each workshop

pointing to the importance to have these forms completed at the end of each workshop. The representative reminded the facilitators from the business school to collect the forms. The repetitive call for these forms made certain to have a representative number of forms returned in order to provide consistency in the feedback process.

In reference to the large group events written feedback consistently showed highest satisfaction from the level-three managers than the other two hierarchical levels. The lowest satisfaction as per feedback showed the most senior managers (level-one). This result shows that level-three managers seem to have benefited more from the LGEs than the other two levels. Overall, the LGEs ranked relatively low in comparison to other activities held in the course of the programme

The covert message in this type of measurement bears a number of aspects, which are a) the absence of long-term measures, which would be necessary to evaluate learning rather than preference, and the monitoring of changes in displayed behaviours in accordance to the overall objective of the programme; and b) the testimonial of having executed the guidelines of implementing the performance drivers given by the British headquarters. Beyond the mere execution of the guideline the Egyptian client 'bought safe', that is, from one of the leading triple-crowned and Financial Times-ranked business schools, situated in Great Britain, the same location where the headquarter of the client organisation is based.

6.4. DISCUSSION

The discussion section looks at the expressions of values described above through the three lenses of diversity. This view through the lenses provides the necessary analysis for the identification of the contributions from diversity. In addition, the analysis will bring to light what aspects of these expressions of values foster diversity as opposed to factors, which inhibit diversity. The analysis follows the same order as the research framework, that is, first the lens of multiple identity, followed by the lens of perception, and finally the environmental lens. Within each lens, the analysis is chronological with the presented expressions of values.

As per research framework the **lens of multiple identity** contains visible or tangible affiliations and less tangible affiliations.

Reviewing the VBO booklet it becomes clear that this means of communication largely dwells on the affiliation of “Egyptianness”. Its representation is displayed by a large number of symbols such as the “fallukah”, the pyramid, the desert-like surroundings. The site of the Egyptian organisation is represented by the visualisation of a traditional temple, whose pillars are filled with labels each showing a corporate value. Also, the appearance of the portrayed people is filled with Egyptian symbolism. This includes partly traditional-style clothing, people hairdos, and the way groupings of men slightly away from the groupings of women are illustrated.

When looking at the less tangible affiliations the most dominant in the brochure are the work and the private affiliation, which at the end of the brochure requires the managers and employees to establish the greatest possible overlap between the two.

Altogether, the brochure does not address the subject matter of multiple identity, quite reversely it seems to ignore this diversity overall. Again, this is shown by the attempt to align the private and work affiliation on the whole.

“The guide to Performance Drivers” provides references to an additional set of attributes within the range of multiple identities; nonetheless this set appears to be descriptive and non-voluntary to the individuals who chose to work for this organisation.

The random selection of behavioural indicators among many others features diversity as in, “demonstrates respect for diversity and cultural difference”. As behavioural indicators are subsets of values the call for respect of diversity tends to oppose the message of consistency, which is inherent to the values proposed. Equally, the call for the “high potential, who are sought to work in a completely different way” stand in stark opposition to one streamlined set of behaviours the organisational values tend to promote. Considering the fact that the behavioural guidelines are also applied in the recruitment process, it needs to be assumed that only similar types of people enter the organisation. This in turn impedes the spectrum to engage with people who prefer a different way of working. In addition to the likely in-group dynamics evolving from this approach, it might be difficult for an individual dwelling on other ways to find acceptance for his or her action.

Equally, the personal performance driver approach, i. e. the 360 approach suggests performance as identity creating process, nevertheless allows the individual little freedom in adopting these behaviours or not.

Regarding overt values the corporation's site underpins the affiliation of status. The symbols as expressed in the building, the layout and the offices space speak to the elite, who have managed to find a position in an integral part of an international firm. These overt values also empower the affiliation of generous physical space and cleanliness, again an affiliation reserved for the elite in Egyptian society. The value phrases printed on the office walls and pillars suggest an additional identity, namely the organisational, which employees are invited to adopt.

Covert values as presented in the large group events are an essential component of the programme, which largely activate the hierarchy attribute of one's multiple identity. In detail, affiliations activated through the client brief and thus mirrored in the programme design are status, managerial levels, and overall hierarchy. The attempt undertaken by the business school to bridge the gap between the hierarchical levels was greatly diluted at client end by the reduction in time spent on the large group events. The mode of encounter features on the large group events, namely engaging in a dialogue across managerial levels was new to many managers and largely welcomed, in particular by the most junior managers of the whole group. In general, this way of connecting was perceived as innovative. The affiliations reinforced in the feedback were largely the 'here and now'. The affiliation of future-orientation was neglected due to the client preference. Once more, the hierarchy affiliation was strengthened by some of the elements each feedback form required from the participants, i. e. in addition to their name they had to fill in their respective managerial level.

More details on perception inherent to hierarchy will follow in the subsequent section on the lens of perception.

The **lens of perception** is critical as to refer to the ways we see others and likewise the ways we are seen by others. The 2-way process can lead to a) stereotyping and b) self-fulfilling prophecies.

In the context of the VBO brochure the use of the symbols of 'Egyptianness' might serve to simplify and systematise the abundance and complexity of the information inherent to organisational values. These symbols can be seen as a result of the gen-

eral cognitive process of categorising complexity into generalisations of ,something typically Egyptian', i. e. temple, fallukah, which is widely accepted and known in and outside Egypt.

These generalisations which largely dwell on stereotypes about Egypt are doubtlessly supposed to create 'belonging' to the organisation, nevertheless the belonging might aim at the Egyptian branch only, although the overall objective of the corporates values aimed at creating belonging to the whole of the organisation.

In addition, the perception of the closing key word of ,bokra' is twofold. Literally, it means ,tomorrow', however with a view to its wide use it is known to refer to ,something that will never happen'. Typically, the meaning of ,tomorrow' in a learning context as the one the brochure is designed for, ,tomorrow' refers to the transfer of the learning to the workplace and the immediate implementation and application of the newly acquired knowledge.

The guide to performance drivers offers guidelines which at large are applicable to any multinational organisation, nevertheless the definition of performance drivers is tailored to the needs of the organisation examined and their market environment. The overall tone of the proposed values largely builds on the notion of belonging. This is specifically expressed by addressing the employees in a personal way, by presenting the performance drivers and their respective subqualities in service for the employees. The text leaves the impression that the adherence to the suggested behaviours for each performance drivers is voluntary, for which it can be argued that they increase the need for belonging. Quite reversely, the monitoring aspect is dissipated at any performance measure an individual has to deliver in the organisation. The monitoring process is reinforced by the application of the personal performance driver approach, also known as the 360 approach. The prescriptive way might cause an unwanted effect, that is, the adherence to the required behaviours on the surface whilst producing resistance in the true behaviours.

Overt values strongly contribute to the belonging to a unique space far from the traditional Cairo. It creates belonging to the exclusive business-oriented community filled with symbols of the British headquarters such as corporate identity expressed by the logo, font type and company colours, the office layout, which are alike across the globe, and even the system of garbage separation. Equally, it creates othering to the world outside immediately and seamlessly connected and yet segregated by the bor-

ders of the business compound, which is the hectic, the crowded, and the polluted face of Cairo.

Overt values are also displayed by the application of two languages in the printed value phrases, which seem to suggest belonging to the local and equally the global world.

In reference to covert values feedback data shows that the highest level of seniority gave the lowest scores on LGEs throughout the various groups, medium level of seniority gave medium level of feedback, and the most junior level of the senior managers gave the highest scores. The assumption is that the most junior level of managers enjoyed the exposure to higher hierarchy levels because of increased accessibility and the possibility for building personal ties. The feedback result, which indicates lower scores for senior managers, might be a restricted interest in the contact with less senior managers or even apprehensive of the exposure to their concerns. One explanation might be the potential reduction of their status in relation the exposure with their more junior colleagues. Furthermore, it might indicate the corrosion of belonging to the clique of the senior management elite.

As laid out in chapter one the environmental lens builds on two key concepts, which are Hannerz's diversity aspect of ecology and Appadurai's notion of 'scapes'.

The VBO brochure reinforces the message of the habitat to an extent that even people reading the brochure who are oblivious of the organisation and its context can derive meaning of the surrounding, which the organisation has managed to become part of. Regarding 'scapes' two will be key for identification of diversity issues from the external environment, that are, a) ethnoscaples and b) mediascaples.

Ethnoscaples are landscapes of persons with a view to individuals who shift between the worlds. Whilst ethnoscaples traditionally aim to shift between geographic distances the value debate in the VBO brochure asks the managers and employees to shift between the private and the work world. Beyond the mere shift between the private and the work world the VBO brochure attempts to eliminate any potential diversity between these two worlds by trying to trying to make them nearly one of a similar kind.

Mediascaples are image-centered, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality and by definition are expressed by electronic capabilities and to produce and disseminate information. The value debate anchored in the VBO brochure is a paper-centric capabil-

ity, thus quite untypical for the organisation's usual urge for electronic media. The diversity lies in the unusual way the organisation communicates with its people regarding values, which can be interpreted as making the corporate values more tangible by promoting them in a tangible format, that is, paper.

Overall, the VBO brochure which featuring the value 'how we choose to live our lives' presents a contrast to the fatalism often expressed in the Arabic language such as 'in shah allah'.

The guide to the performance driver and the personal performance driver approach equally feed into the mechanics of ideoscapes. Both expressions of organisational values serve as a vehicle to transmit the ideology of the organisation whilst simultaneously discouraging a potential counterideology, which might be shown as behaviours away from the suggested by the headquarters. The benefits to the organisation is a universalistic approach implemented worldwide and reinforced by regular assessment disguised by the notion of performance management.

The **environmental lens** assists the meta-level consideration on the performance driver approach by identifying that the contributions from the headquarter environment inhibit diversity.

The organisation's overt values are images of ethnoscaples, technoscaples, and ideoscapes. Ethnoscaples as the landscapes of persons constituting the shifting worlds which incorporate moving groups. In the specific case the moving group typically shifts between the organisation's overt values of company site and the outside world. The neighbourhood of the business compound represents ethnoscaples as they represent a corporate identity project generating its own logic. This social and human mini-world is the representation of the macro-world disseminating its values and ideas to this local production. In this light the neighbourhood can be considered as an impression of ideoscapes, that is, an image of the headquarters and its connected ideas.

The building and its connected features also speak to the technoscape as it stands for the global configuration of technology which moves across various boundaries, which were of formerly impervious³¹¹. The steel and glass construction alone addresses a number of drivers with contributions from other multinational enterprises. Beyond mate-

³¹¹ Appadurai 2005:34

rial it requires human resources such as skilled and unskilled labour. To commission this expression of organisational value it requires a complex relationship among money flows, political control, and market rationality³¹².

Covert values largely play to ideoscapes as an image of a privileged group with its own ideas and symbols, which in the specific context seems to be hesitant to shifting meaning and connotation to other groups in the organisation.

6.5. CONCLUSION

The value discussion in organisations with its long tradition is still vibrant and the core of many management development programmes as shown in the analysis through the three lenses of diversity. The labels for these programmes and initiatives may vary as this study demonstrates, nevertheless the value subject is core. The analysis shows that the researched values were defined by representatives of the human resources department of the British headquarters, a group which qualifies as senior management. The source of the defined values and the mode of their dissemination certifies them as symbol of the organisation's corporate culture, thus they are a representation of the *has-culture*. If they were representative of the organisation's *is-culture* and herein, would be meaningful to all organisational members the process of definition would have necessitated the involvement of all. Equally, if they were archetypal for the *is-culture* the process of dissemination would be near to redundant. In the light of these findings the researched values clearly qualify as corporate values.

The corporate values seem to be in search of universalism expressed in sameness and similarity imposed on all members of the organisation as laws of commonalities³¹³ regardless of location or rank. One could argue that this approach reduces individuals to one single identity requiring one consistent presentation of one's identity construction.

³¹² Appadurai 2005:34

³¹³ Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 2000:14

This is the other end of the spectrum from the concept of identity, as laid out in the introduction chapter. There the discussion exploring the ethics in identity recognises multiple identities in a number of contributions from different disciplines featuring concepts such as the “cultural make-up³¹⁴” and “plural identities³¹⁵”.

However, the overall result of the discussion of the three lenses underpins the organisation’s attempt to streamline identities applicable to all engaged in the organisation. The more detailed exploration nevertheless, reveals that the Egyptian subsidiary managed to create a newly defined identity by interpreting the value proposition adapted to the local needs.

The VBO brochure fosters diversity by the display of number of affiliations such as appearance, gender-specific behaviour, and symbols full of retained meaning which I label as „Egyptianness“. The exhibit of work and private affiliation might be interpreted as one addition to multiple identity. Overt values speak to the affiliation of status generating and regenerating an elite in Egyptian society.

Although the analysis points to a number of affiliations one must argue that the obligation to adhere to the prescribed corporate values as expressed in the guide to performance drivers and the connected monitoring process makes the multiple identity offering void. This argument is strengthened by the attempt to align the private and work affiliation on the whole.

Altogether, neither the material nor other artefacts address the subject matter of multiple identity, which the value interpretation of Egyptian part of the organisation offers to its employees. The inconsistency contained in the message might cause confusion among people in the organisation.

The overall purpose of corporate values is the augmentation to profit maximisation and thus shareholder interest. Supposedly, one additional benefit is the creation of belonging, which the organisation’s headquarter attempts to achieve by the worldwide value dissemination.

³¹⁴ Hannerz, 1996:58

³¹⁵ Sen, 2006:29

The lens of perception crystallises that the local interpretation of values with its distinct symbols of corporate identity constructs belonging to the Egyptian subsidiary. This approach stands in opposition to the initial idea of belonging to one global brand rather than a local spin-off.

Belonging to the global is fostered by belonging to the elite. It devises a cosmopolitan identity between the traditional space and the high-tech space; however the researched expressions of values lack to address the idiosyncrasies of this space entirely.

The environmental lens assists the meta-level consideration on the performance driver approach by identifying that the contributions from the headquarter's streamlined approaches and so inhibit diversity. It brings to light that diversity is largely created beyond the organisational boundaries as in ethnoscaples, technoscaples, and ideoscaples. The shift in these landscapes are within limits left to the individual's interpretation and to some greater extent beyond the individual's control such as global configurations in money flows, political control, and market rationality.

The global outlook is confirmed by the domination of the immediate habitat, that is, the desert by the simultaneous focus on the wider net of the headquarters.

Three aspects capacitate and substantiate the cooperation between the two partners. These are a) the overlap of the assumed corporate values of the two organisations, which is largely based on the commonality of the national identity, i. e. Britishness; b) the unparalleled popularity of business schools and their endorsement through the internationally acknowledged media of the Financial Times, which stand for buying safe; and finally c) the common past of the two countries with its remaining footprints in systems and processes.

This chapter embodies the organisational inconsistency by promoting mixed messages between a "universalist identity" as proposed by the organisation's clearly defined corporate values as opposed to an "Authentic identity", multi-faceted and introduced to organisation by its members' "Is-culture" pursuing their daily business routine.

Authentic identity would be one contribution from diversity which allowed organisational members to fill this substantial element meaningfully. The organisation missed the opportunity of the versatility inherent to authentic identity. The diversity created between

the streamlined approach of the headquarters and the interpretation of the Egyptian subsidiary is probably unintentional.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1. INTRODUCTION

Firstly, the conclusion chapter will summarise the research findings organised by the three lenses of diversity. The summary is followed by the implications from the findings. The subsequent section highlights the dissertation's contributions to knowledge largely stemming from anthropology origins. These contributions are a) a new thought landscape in the business field; b) the holistic view of culture in organisations; and c) the depth of insights from findings. Detailed explanations underline the contributions from anthropology to the business field.

I then provide an overview of the limitations of this research and equally present potential future research building on this study. Finally, I present the necessary skill and capabilities for anthropologist should bring to conduct work in the field of organisational anthropology.

7.2. FINDINGS FROM THE APPLICATION OF THE FRAMEWORK

The emergence of the research framework of the three lenses of diversity materialised through the interplay of practical application and theoretical analysis. The materialisation required the experience of working on this global project with its connected data collection throughout the project cycle and the subsequent theoretical analysis of the available material.

The new framework for diversity emerged from viewing the abundant materials, which included identifying patterns, coding meaningful repetitions, labelling significant iterations as well as completing this process several times.

The three lenses can be imagined like prisms which causes beams of light to diverge. Similarly, the lenses of diversity diverge encounters and interactions between

individuals and groups into a kaleidoscope of multiple affiliations which are reciprocal to belonging and othering through associated perception and which are contingent to context. Thus, the process of divergence provides an in-depth view of interactions, shedding new light on interplays which otherwise might be interpreted in a different way. The following section summarises the findings that we have seen from chapter 02 to 06. Findings from the three lenses of diversity are numerous. For review below is the visual representation of the framework. Findings from each lens will then be presented.

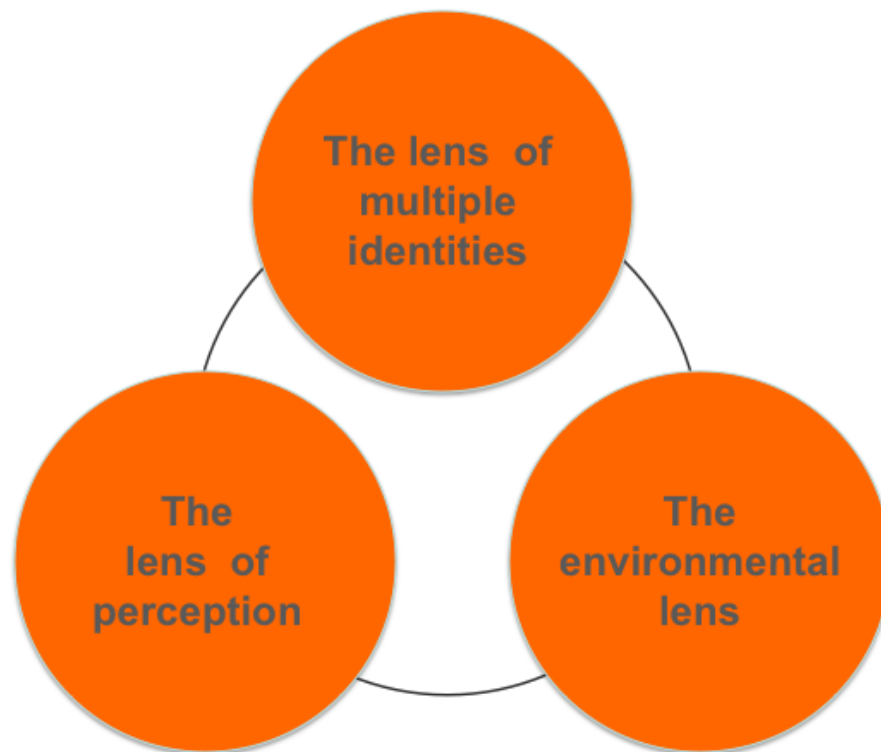


Figure 5: The three lenses of diversity

7.2.1. THE LENS OF MULTIPLE IDENTITY

Findings from the analysis of the lens of multiple identity are manifold. From the findings I developed a new taxonomy, that is, tangible and intangible identities. Tangible identities comprise visible and largely unchangeable affiliations; intangible identities can be changed to a certain extent and further divide into developmental affiliations and environmental affiliations. Some of the affiliations bifurcate into tangible and intangible affiliations and are thus captured in both sections. One example presents religion where symbols of religions are introduced in the tangible section and the overall notion of religion and its implicit connotations are held in the less tangible section.

The developmental and environmental affiliations are purposely presented in one larger section as an allocation to different clusters appears to be arbitrary due to the often interchangeable/mutually constituent nature of this type of affiliations. Nevertheless, the explicit differentiation between developmental and environmental seemed essential due to a) the fact that they can largely be changed or redefined even they are imposed from the external environment and b) they can be adopted a new however are introduced by some external influence.

The environmental affiliations largely address affiliations which were assigned to individuals by the external environment they were exposed to, such as socialisation, and that can be subject to change to a certain extent.

Developmental affiliations comprise affiliations which were acquired at one stage in life often due to context, so in turn are environmental and can be further developed upon the individual's decision. Skill-based identities are included in the developmental affiliations such as the capability of speaking, writing and reading some Arabic presented by individuals with a first language other than Arabic. Equally, meaningful artefacts are allocated to the less tangible affiliations as they appear to emerge from the context where an activity associated with the artefact happens and again can change in accordance with impulses from the environment.

Encounters and interactions presented over the chapters demonstrate an overreliance on some of the explicit aspects of less tangible affiliations such as symbols and labels assigned to religion. They are purposely allocated to the less tangible affiliations as the extent to which these affiliations are expressed might vary. For this reason the tangible expression of these affiliations are allocated in the section of tangible affiliations, e.g. religious symbols.

Clearly, the different types of the identity composition seem to show an imbalance. Prior to the analysis of the encounters through the three lenses of diversity tangible affiliations and some visible expressions of less tangible identities seem to overpower the various encounters. One of the assets of the framework is the counterbalance of this perception it offers once applied to the encounters. Precisely the divergence that the framework offers helps to illustrate the activation of less tangible affiliations driven by some of the acting individuals necessary to navigate perception away from tangible affiliations.

The contingency of multiple affiliations to the environmental context is presented over the course of the research. Chapter 02 presents the affiliations contingent to the encounters presented. Further chapters demonstrate that affiliations change in accordance to individuals and groups participating in these encounters and corresponding adaptations and additions were attributed. As we have seen chapter 03 strongly builds on the affiliations of multiple spatialities and temporalities. Chapter 04 elicits the idiosyncracies of learning transfer whereas some of the activities primarily focused on personalities outside the workshop context elicit tangible identities as in age, gender, and nationality. Activities which focused on the individuals participating, such as more sophisticated communication exercises, extract intangible affiliations of individual backgrounds and personal preferences. The encounters examined in chapter 05 typically classify as intercultural issues in associated business publications and show that dominant affiliations are mainly gender and religion. Only the analysis through the framework for diversity surfaces the less tangible identities such as work experience, service level and gadgets specific to the industry.

Chapter 06 essentially reveals the identity of ‚Egyptianness‘, which the client organisation utilises to create some local meaning. Another affiliation heavily utilised for identity creation is hierarchy, which is consistently mirrored and followed through in the overall programme design.

The contingent aspect of the model is illustrated below. It reflects the dynamic aspect of the model with affiliations changing in accordance with the interactions investigated. The full range of affiliations that have surfaced throughout the chapters of this study are as follows:

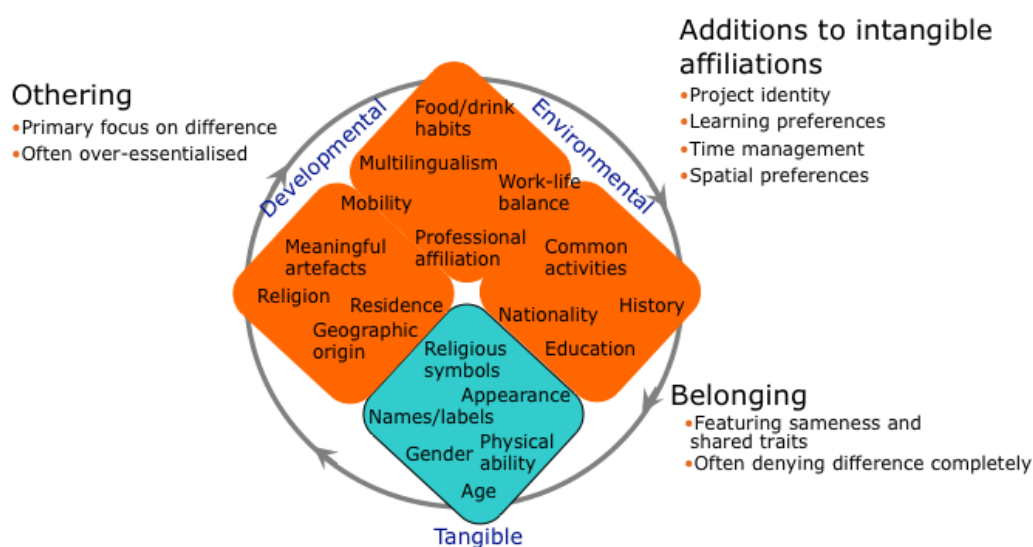


Figure 6: Additions to multiple identities in encounters

7.2.2. THE LENS OF PERCEPTION

The lens of perception demonstrates that belonging and othering complement one another. Belonging and othering is contingent to multiple identities activated in a certain situation; it is highly flexible by changing positions within one situation as participating individuals might change perspectives promptly further to newly activated affiliations by other individuals or group members. The dynamics of belonging and othering turn the diversity mosaic into a kaleidoscope.

At the project start tangible affiliations, such as representing the business school largely determined belonging within team member group. Only the collaboration over time created regrouping within the team according to a different set of affiliations, e. g.

alcohol and non-alcohol consumers. As a result subgroups were entirely different by the end of the project.

Similarly, participants' perception about the team members were based on the assumption that all team members were British. Again, the collaboration over time and the activation of respective affiliations were necessary to break through this pattern. Belonging between these two groups was primarily built on skills and knowledge-based affiliations such as speaking the local language, knowing places in Cairo, and skills and knowledge conveyed in the workshop sessions which were perceived as helpful by the Egyptian managers.

Selected findings from the chapters provide concrete examples for the illustration of belonging and othering. Overall, intercultural issues tend to essentialise othering by stressing a 'we' and 'them' mentality whereas displayed stereotypes ignore multiple affiliations obviously inherent to their nature.

Belonging and othering was clearly expressed in the emotionally loaded discussion by the use of 'You from the West' versus 'We Muslims' further to the facilitation of the case study. Some of the participants, thus sharing belonging with the Egyptian representative in the case study, accused the Western facilitators of offending the Egyptians by using a case study that portrays the Egyptian team member in an unfavourable light. The conflict resolution was only possible by manoeuvring the discussion away from this values-loaded perception towards a number of selected intangible affiliations such as group dynamics and leadership. In this case a potential conflict was purposely introduced in a learning setting and subsequently resolved.

At project level however, potential conflicts tended not to be addressed but rather 'worked around'. The perceived inequality between the business school and the client reduced the potential for conflict resolution. A lot of attention was paid to the emerging hierarchies and power relationships that influenced the global process³¹⁶ between the two international partners. As a consequence the othering resulted in infantilising the other expressed by stereotypes such as 'they are loud, they shout, they act like children'.

³¹⁶ Ghannam 2006:253

Breaking through stereotypes was largely reached by team members' dress and appearance, which was welcomed by the Egyptian managers. Equally the demonstrated knowledge about the local culture helped establish belonging. All of which are affiliations more readily identifiable.

The largely over-essentialised tangible affiliations can lead to stereotyping and self-fulfilling prophecies. Breaking through stereotypes requires in-depth analysis of intangible affiliations and is often achieved by activating affiliations held in common, which enables interaction partners to establish belonging.

It requires awareness of one's own affiliations and interest in or knowledge about the other person's affiliations. These two attributes, namely a) self-awareness, and b) curiosity will assist building relationships necessary for a successful collaboration on projects of this scope.

These attributes are partly reflected in Hannerz's and Wikan's approaches to the other. Reversely, it is not mirrored in Ingold's approach as a simple immersion into another landscape does not address the necessary attribute of self-awareness and mutuality. One addition this study illustrates is the changes in perspective over time that individuals seemed to experience. Time is one critical component in building relationships beyond the activation of tangible affiliations.

7.2.3. THE ENVIRONMENTAL LENS

Findings from the environmental lens across the chapters have shown the inextricable link to the lens of multiple identity and the lens of perception.

The conflict illustrated in the 'Sharif case' in chapter 04 precisely illustrates the identity – perception – environment link. Extreme events³¹⁷, of which 9/11 inarguably, is one are more accessible to memory retrieval than average instances. These are reinforced

³¹⁷ Rothbart 1978: 237 in Tajfel 1981 in Turner and Giles 1981:153

through the channels activated by the mediascapes resulting in the rhetoric of 'war against terrorism'. Negative behaviours of subcultures connected with such events are likely to be over-represented in memory and judgement. This in turn, influenced the participants' perception when working on the case study with repercussions in the workshop, where religious identity and connected negative ascriptions were singled out.

Overall, each of the lenses influences the other two lenses and so creates contingencies in any encounter, thus contributing to a constant creation of diversity.

The analysis has shown that ethnoscapas and ideoscapas are the unparalleled contributors to the environmental lens.

Ethnoscapas as expressed in the team members in the role of cosmopolitans who show remarkable similarities to the Egyptian managers in the role of commuters. The time-space compression as described in chapter 03 happened in both communities, each with their unique forms. Nevertheless, lifestyles could not have been more different and subject to investigation of either community.

Ethnoscapas as in the cosmopolitans were largely culturally heterogenic, which contributed to the activation of situationally adequate yet authentic affiliations. This stimulation helped build relationships in many cases. Equally, the ethnoscapas construct their new and unique history through the interactions in Cairo, reinforced by permanently shifting between the Western business world and their local private world.

Multiple identities, from my point of view, qualify for both, that is, the ethnoscapas and ideoscapas. Ethnoscapas literally incorporate the kaleidoscope of diversity in the being and the doing whereas ideoscapas present the ideas and worldviews of the ethnoscapas.

The great abundance of multiple identities people tend to bring into the organisation is hardly acknowledged although organisational values, as expressed in behavioural indicators, require respect for diversity. As organisational values are standard to all organisations since the 80s this is a phenomenon which can be found in many organisations. As a consequence, multiple identities as an ideoscape are largely absent in organisations and in the business world. Quite reversely, streamlined values as a replacement proposition are transported from the UK headquarter to the local

business. As a response the local business activated Egyptian stereotypes in order to align to local ideoscapes which simultaneously creates othering with the worldwide organisation.

Further to the findings ideoscapes also encompass the image of knowledge management, which in the specific case can be divided into a) the conceptualisation of management theories and models and b) the transfer process of the sought-after knowledge. In regard to a) management theories and models presented on the programme included the topic area of leadership where images represented by communicators such as Clinton and El-Baradei were welcomed by the local community. The offering on management theories and models provided to the client community allowed a certain selection regarding suitability in the local space; whilst the management theories the team members drew upon, i. e the Hofstede dimensions imposed a simplification of the complex cognitive processes of perception, hence limited the process of diversity. In regard to b) preferred learning styles largely determine the knowledge transfer process. In practice this meant to focus more on practical exercises than on theoretical input. Nevertheless, the dynamics of large scale programmes require a certain adherence to the outline, which does not tolerate much deviation from the planned workshop design, hence inhibited diversity that might develop from the facilitator–participant interaction.

In this study technoscapes are restricted to the site and its connected global configuration including people and material and are subject more to ideoscapes.

Financescapes are needless to say significant in the global production, however in the process of the material viewing showed little presence in the encounters experienced throughout this project. Thus, they are not addressed in this study.

7.3. IMPLICATIONS FROM FINDINGS

Implication from findings are organised in three parts, which are a) contributions to knowledge; b) implications for individuals and groups; and c) implications for organisations.

The study's contributions to knowledge are manifold. As we have seen in the introduction chapter the topic of diversity has filled many publications, which bring forward many different aspects of diversity, however fail to address the interactional aspect of diversity. This holistic study incorporates the dynamic aspect of diversity by looking at the interaction between and among individuals and groups, which demonstrates that only the interaction can elicit diversity. This finding leads to corollary one: Diversity is not just there. It is a process, which is created in interaction.

With regards to the client brief, which largely ignored any aspect of diversity, findings show that the presence of diversity as elicited in interactions were one of the key contributors for the success of the project, in particular with a view to building relationships. This insight leads to corollary two: Diversity is there once people interact. People in key positions need to act upon this.

Findings across the chapters have shown the inextricable link to the three lenses of diversity. Each lens influences the other two lenses and being embedded in this cycle creates contingencies in any encounter, thus contributes constantly to the creation of diversity. This insight leads to corollary three, that is, the framework for diversity, which is one specific result from this study and whose application can be of assistance in future projects.

The concepts of multiple identities have been promoted before this work as shown in the introduction chapter. Nevertheless, this study's contribution is the combination of multiple identities with the concept of belonging and othering, which further to the analysis across chapters, produced the new model 'Multiple identities in encounters', which incorporates the relentless dynamics of diversity. Thus, corollary four is the 'Multiple identities in encounters' model and its potential application in future work, in both the academic and the business world.

In line with corollary four is the insight into the extent to which less tangible affiliations need more attention. The activation of selected affiliations presupposes a number of requirements, which are a) self-awareness; b) knowledge about the other and the context; and c) time. This leads to corollary five, that is, the productive management of diversity needs to be learned and developed.

Externalising these affiliations, that would not be activated otherwise, might mean going against the mainstream like salmon going upstream. This might lead people who

feature less popular affiliations to voice less popular views, which in turn, might mean the creation of a potential distance between this individual and the majority group. With regard to the individual in this position it might require a lot of energy to exhibit these less popular aspects of identity because they are more subtle and unconventional and revealing them can be at a cost to the individual. Equally, hiding divergent aspects can cause stress levels in the individual – and denies the group the benefit of new perspectives.

This defines diversity as the reciprocal generative process of individuals and groups interacting with one another, embedded in the cycle of activated multiple identities, eliciting relationships which, according to perception, produce belonging or othering, which in turn shapes and is shaped by the environmental context. This cycle allows for the creation of new perspectives, upon which individuals might or might not act.

So far, findings have largely pointed to the individuals. Equally, findings indicate implications for organisations. In the light of findings it can be said that the organisation's attempts to manage diversity remain in the realm of espoused theory as opposed to theory-in-use. As with many organisations streamlined approaches, such as performance management tools, inhibit the expressions of diversity or, worse, manipulate behaviours according to the prescribed organisational values.

This gap between the introduction of the diversity concept newly defined further to these findings and the current practice of diversity in organisations leads to the question of the extent to which organisations by imposing an often out-dated diversity concept restrict their cosmopolitan employees who make an indispensable contribution to the organisation.

Organisations usually promote a narrow diversity concept in accordance with a universalistic approach featuring consistency in one's identity presentation. However, individuals consciously or unconsciously utilise multiple affiliations of the diversity kaleidoscope contingent to the situation and its context.

This study offers a framework, a model, and a number of insights, which potentially equip individuals to reflect upon past and potential interactions. The application of tools allow to identify potential conflicts and equally allow considerations for building sound relationships inside and outside an organisation.

Moving from the end of functional instrument towards “more culture” will allow individuals and teams to build on their own cultural make-up. Only then, individuals can fully deploy their skills and competencies³¹⁸. In return, this provides the ground for enjoying diversity and herewith developing coping strategies for new situations. Encounters in these diverse settings, most likely accompanied by some friction, will provoke new understanding, cultural approaches to synthesise, and so open up space for new approaches and in general more creativity, given that the various habitats encourages that.

7.4. CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ANTHROPOLOGY

7.4.1. THE NEW THOUGHT LANDSCAPE

One of the significant contributions to knowledge from this thesis is the new thought landscape in the business field. This thought landscape presents a shift in perspectives of phenomena emerging in the business field. As demonstrated in this study the findings opened a new perspective that would otherwise have not emerged from the project. The realities of large projects, their objectives and the connected business routines are typically not conducive for this kind of thinking. This shift in paradigm I call, in the Appadurai tradition, thoughtsapes. These phenomena are dialogically configured with the business objectives, however are often undetected and uncared for at the expense of striving for profit necessary for organisations to survive.

Specific to this research was that the objective of the project as per client requirement was to implement a set of predefined performance driver skills helping the business to grow across the globe and so gain competitive advantage in the telecommunication industry. Beyond the business perspective of the project's objective the new thought landscape of contributions from diversity emerged over the course of working on this project as early as at the start of the project, namely during the acquisition phase. This

³¹⁸ This presupposes that people are being treated equitably meaning recognising cultural variety. Whereas treating people equally means ignoring variety.

new thought landscape made a significant contribution to the project, however had not been in the scope of the decision-maker buying the original project.

Additional contributions from anthropology are the research methods from ethnography. Specifically, this aims at methods such as participant observation and interpretations from the resulting data in the anthropological tradition as opposed to interpretations that are standard to the business research. In the case of the presented study these are: a) members' generalisations, which primarily focuses on team members' and programme participants' generalisations by characterising their own actions; b) neutral observations, which aim at the researchers cross-checking these generalisations against more objective observations such as recorded data (e. g. emails); c) individual members' experience, which include data from semi-structured and informal interviews with team members, programme participants, and representatives external to the project's environment; and d) researchers' interaction with all three listed groups, which aims at the hybrid role of the researcher as laid out in the introduction chapter. Other than semi-structured interviews most of these methods are novel in the business field and require some re-thinking among decision-makers. The combination of methods provides the necessary triangulation essential for the reliability and validity of data. The ultimate contribution is that thought landscapes can be further developed into thought leadership in management development, that is, learning beyond the common management topics such as strategy and leadership, but focusing on developing the skills necessary to discover new thought landscapes.

7.4.2. HOLISTIC VIEW OF CULTURE IN ORGANISATIONS

Another contribution anthropology presents is the opportunity to gain a holistic view of the organisation. The methods outlined in the first contribution all represent an emergent approach to an organisational analysis, which means issues meaningful to the people in an organisation can be surfaced. Whilst standard methods would typically aim at a predefined topic area, hence presents a narrow approach, the anthropological methods encourage looking at what is relevant to the individual who 'design' the organisation's culture. As the result of this wider analysis might differ from the results the decision-makers in the organisation anticipated, in particular from a narrow analysis, clearly subsequent change initiatives would need adaptation.

However, this assumes that decision-makers in organisations understand the organisation's culture as a root metaphor as opposed to an instrumental understanding of culture. The instrumental understanding supposes that culture is just one element of the organisational make-up that can be tweaked and designed as needed, usually by senior management.

The narrow approach is in accordance with the Has-culture outlined in the introduction chapter. This thesis however demonstrates that cultural anthropology delivers significant contributions to the Is-culture and so changes the view how an organisation can be examined.

One question which poses itself is how organisations can develop the more holistic, as opposed to instrumental, understanding of culture that is necessary to acknowledge diversity, which undoubtedly would speak to the ethical standard an organisation should demonstrate.

7.4.3. DEPTH OF FINDINGS

In line with the third contribution is the depth of findings. In the business world, where the research took place, efficiency is critical to the survival of businesses. All activities focus on generating profit, which naturally requires different perception of what is of primary importance. In brief, priorities in organisation in the business world are typically speed and usefulness.

In contrast, in the social sciences the focus lies on the processes. Conducting research with appropriate methods produces valid results with a primary emphasis on the validity of findings rather than the usefulness. The specified research methods acknowledged in the social science field are designed to provide depth and typically allow no shortcuts. As a result findings might be complex and thus perceived as inadequate in the speedy and result-oriented business world.

Over the recent years, however, businesses have indicated an increasing need to dealing with complexity in the business world. Leading and managing has become a gradually more versatile task where simple answers do not provide suitable solutions any longer.

Academic procedures are needed in the business world. As to the fact that findings might be out of the routine scope of business there seems to be a limited understanding of which of the conclusions are valid or invalid and, even more so, relevant for the business.

Academics learn how to analyse, think and reach valid conclusions. This capability should be used to translate findings from research in a way that they can become meaningful for senior managers in the business world.

7.5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Inherent to complex social studies are research limitations, which equally present research possibilities. For reading results and for further research in this area following considerations should be acknowledged: a) The majority of the data stems from qualitative sources, I only considered quantitative data at a few selected points where verification of observations and responses to structured interviews seemed critical such as analysing the perceived hierarchies further to the large group events; b) neither the quantitative nor the qualitative data can exclude social desirability when filling out the written questionnaires as well as when responding to questions to structured interviews and reactions from focus groups; c) the qualitative data does not contain any way of measuring the level of intention of the researched subgroups; d) the questionnaire design was not compiled by using a clean research approach – I did not have a theoretical basis/academic interest in mind when the questionnaire was designed; e) Some of key informers' statements needed to be omitted for proper protection. In particular this aims at political statements; and finally f) regarding generalisability it needs to be recognised that the research tested only one population, even though very large. However, within the format of one programme this indicates high internal validity, but lower external validity.

The findings from my research open ground for further research in the organisational field ideally conducted by anthropologists and researchers from other social science disciplines.

The client's inquiry was to conduct work on the Has-culture and the content delivered largely aimed at the development of the Has-culture that is, driving profitability. In op-

position to the actual assignment stand the aspects of diversity the project contributed to the Is-culture. These are: a) the diversity that the team members brought in; b) the diversity that was developed through the relationships built between participants and team members; and finally c) the diversity among the participants elicited through the interaction with the team members, all of which largely contributed to the Is-culture.

One area for future research derives from the absence of the focus on the Is-culture in organisations. Whilst this study emerged from my background as an anthropologist, organisations should increase their attention to the Is-culture in a planful and purposeful way. As organisations with a strong focus on the Has-culture might foster behaviours in employees aligned with the prescribed culture and run the risk of having people put on an act, they simultaneously might miss on ideas and other forms of variation as people might not feel free to bring them forward.

Also, I would like to encourage research on other projects of similar scope applying the framework for diversity in order to further test external validity.

7.6. ANTHROPOLOGISTS IN ORGANISATIONS

The limitations to this research and equally the contributions from anthropology lead me now to conclude with a number of considerations for anthropologists working in organisations. A number of issues arise when crossing disciplines that need to be considered to benefit of the organisation being researched. This applies for anthropologists in the role of mere researcher and likewise for anthropologists in the role of consultant and in particular for anthropologists in the hybrid role of both.

“Anthropology does have unique gifts to bring to business. We have better ways to talk about the super organic than do other disciplines. Whether culture exists or not, people do think it does. Managing the intended and unintended consequences of this perception can be a critical

force in the lives of corporations and in the well-being of their members.³¹⁹

Further to Aguilera's promotion of anthropology bridging two disciplines requires the hybrid worker of the two worlds to display professionalism by being fluent in the theoretical frameworks, concepts and models both disciplines offer, but more importantly in crossing the boundaries between the two areas of expertise.

The methods specific to the discipline and the resulting in-depth understanding of client organisations allow anthropologists in the role of researcher or consultant to develop a close relationship with representatives in the client organisation.

Both roles, researcher or consultant, require synthesising diverse approaches, which demands a certain set of skills and competencies necessary to conduct work in organisations. These are a) competence in organisation consulting; b) technical competence; c) interpersonal competence; and d) sound business competence.

Competence in organisation consulting entails skills and knowledge in identifying relevant outputs and proposing criteria to measure their achievement. In addition, it requires strong model and framework building skills for conceptualising and developing theoretical and practical approaches describing complex ideas, which need to be communicated in understandable ways to the diverse stakeholder groups involved in and exposed to the change process. Further, it includes a clear understanding of one's own role and personal style; profound knowledge about organisations and perspectives of organisational change, their patterns and dynamics. As a logical extension this embraces a thoughtful consideration of how to deal with individuals responding to change in their organisation. The latter requires maintaining connections with people involved in the process, who often are globally dispersed and are assigned to various roles. In order to ensure the maintenance and nurturing of these connections the hybrid of anthropologist and business/change consultant needs to secure sufficient resources to satisfy this requirement, a key factor critical to the success or failure of the project. Resources covering this need ideally should include enough people who can slip into the role of co-designer³²⁰ of the research and project.

³¹⁹ Aguilera 1996:741

³²⁰ Baba 1996:8

Technical competence is indispensable in combination with the organisation consulting competence in order to conduct any complex change project. Intellectual versatility will be of assistance in this. This comprises knowledge conceptualising theoretical frameworks suitable for the project. Recognising and using the research tool box that anthropology has to offer. As elaborated earlier in greater detail the box includes, besides participant observation, qualitative fieldwork techniques such as structured and semi-structured interviewing; critical incident examination; and semiotic and visual analysis. The rich data resulting from these methods requires data reduction skills such as coding, synthesising, and drawing conclusions from the collected material. Once again, a critical success factor is the relationship building skills establishing relationships and connections with a diverse stakeholder group, again as mentioned earlier within the ethical guidelines prescribed to the discipline. The latter requires the capability of stepping in and out of systems and the differentiation between observation versus interpretation and thus the understanding of value systems on a metalevel.

Interpersonal competence, in addition, are indispensable to move successfully in the role of hybrid researcher/consultant in the fields. From the researcher's personal experience these comprise a) Leadership skills such as getting your message across, making decisions, buying in stakeholder support and altogether influencing skills; and b) Translating values and norms to the whole system impacting the project including the team members, the client organisation, the own organisation, friends and family, and finally oneself. Czarniawska-Joerges³²¹ describes this role as "merchant of meaning". Coping strategies suggested by Baba are providing feedback to the team, and making recommendations that address issues discovered³²². However, one needs to be aware that an ongoing feedback process requires resources in terms of people and time and hence perseverance from all involved.

Finally, business competence will be an absolute necessity for the anthropologist conducting research or working on a consulting project. Business competence comprises sound business knowledge essential to gain access to the client organisation and to build credibility with senior executives and other stakeholders, whom ultimately decide the conduct of the project and research. Successfully

³²¹ Czarniawska-Joerges (1988a) in Alvesson 1993:5

³²² Baba 2001:8

conducting an assessment of financial implications as well as strategic advantages and disadvantages will be necessary to build authority with the decision-maker. Understanding the business the client is in, is as indispensable as is the understanding of the current challenge the client is facing. Often clients are not able to express their needs clearly, requiring the consultant to use excellent analytical skills; the market and its growth challenges in which the organisation is embedded; business models and frameworks applicable to the challenge; which hence makes the corresponding language and terminology a requirement. Finally, the complex subject of organisational culture needs to be handled professionally; an area of expertise that nicely links back to anthropological expertise.

Encompassing all four skills and competencies and their various subsets of challenges would equip the perfect hybrids at their best. The anthropologist in the role of researcher or business/change consultant would feature a number of advantages, which would be a) the possibility of participant observation over the entire period of the project; b) very good access to informants due to direct and continuous interaction with participants and stakeholders; c) informants' familiarity with their organisational site and neighbourhood; d) exhaustive opportunity for interviews and casual conversations with many different kinds of people directly or indirectly working for the client organisation.

The advantageous position of this hybrid role requires the researcher/consultant to translate the complex language deriving from thick description from multi-site research into business language suitable for various managerial levels.

Benefits may become even greater when the anthropologist is aware of potential pitfalls: a) the researcher in the role of consultant cannot look at a straightforward piece of participant observation; b) the double role does not necessarily ensure the continual movement between the distance of the observer and the proximity to the participants; c) the confusion over responsibilities as the observer might slip into the hybrid role of team leader, consultant, facilitator, and even programme director.

The listed potential pitfalls might be overcome by using a team of researchers and/or consultants, whose members bring the required competencies and so create the desired synergies. Clearly, this is a question of human and financial resources as is the question of outputs, which at the client's end typically is defined as optimisation of a certain business aspect whereas the researchers often aspire to some research output. Once more, this means bridging diverging ends, which requires working *with* them to

achieve a common goal, not *about* them – a one word difference but a whole world of difference expressed in commitment and exposure.

My knowledge transfer journey required me to experience the socialisation into the client organisation and subsequently externalise my insights by writing this thesis. The findings from my study and the subsequent implications will hopefully turn out to be one more contribution encouraging and inviting cultural anthropologists to work in organisations in the hybrid role of researcher and consultant.

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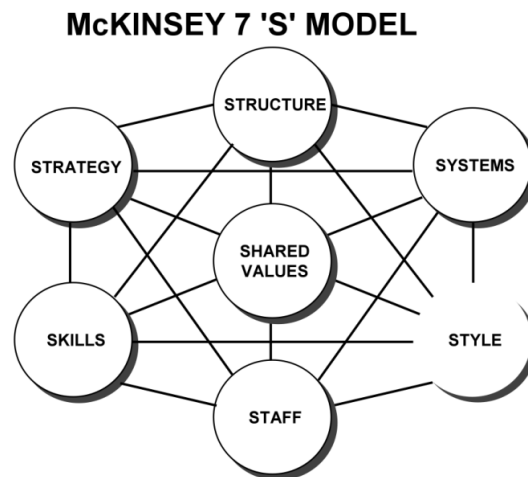
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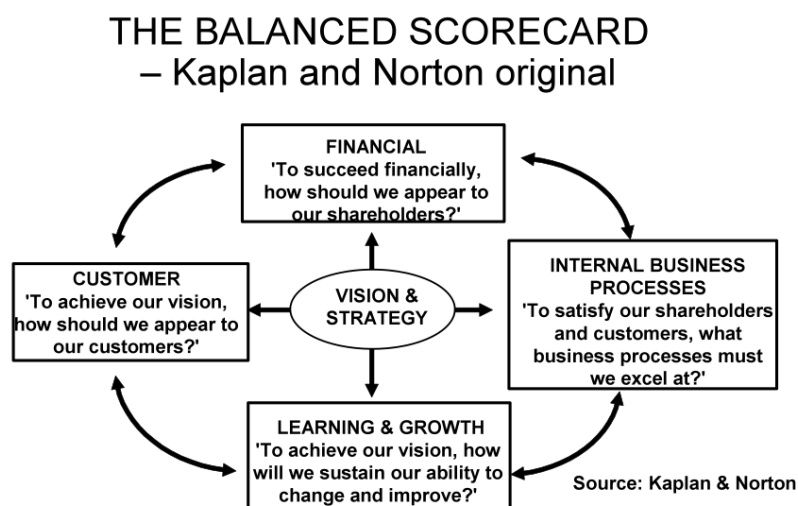
9. APPENDIX

The McKinsey 7 ,S' model



Source: From Mullins 2002: 860

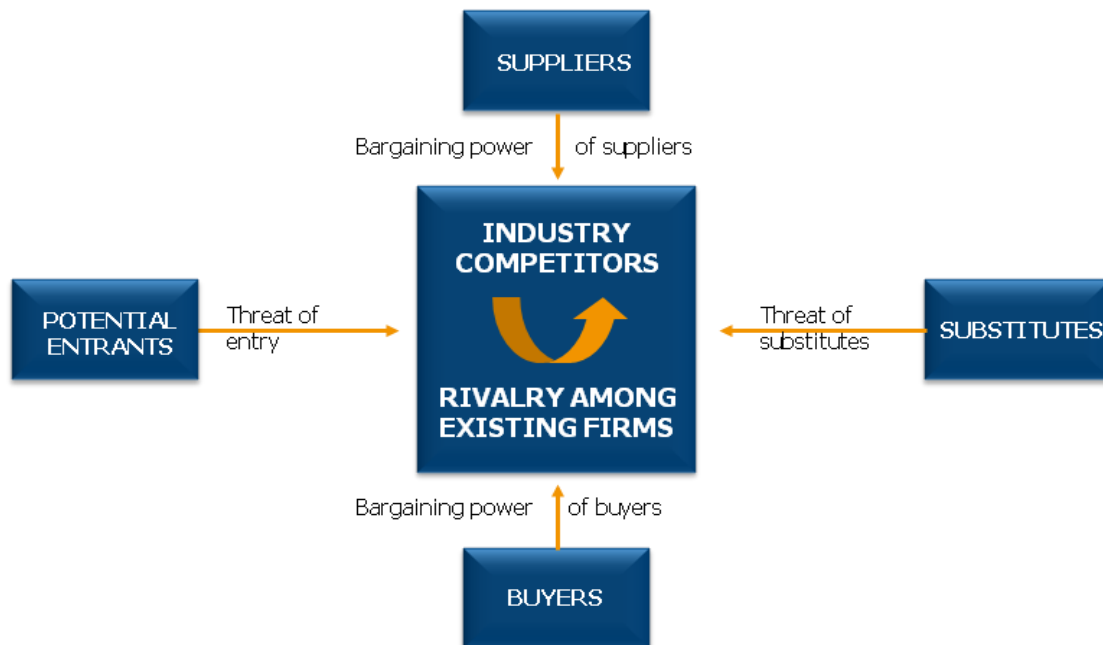
Balanced scorecard



A Framework To Translate Strategy Into Operational Targets

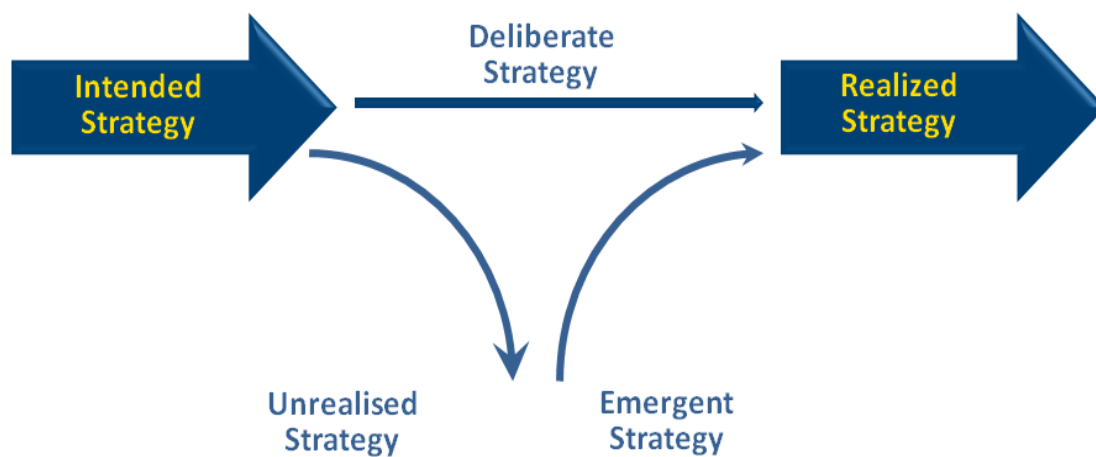
Source: From Kaplan and Norton in Ruttersford 1998:281

Porter's 5 Forces



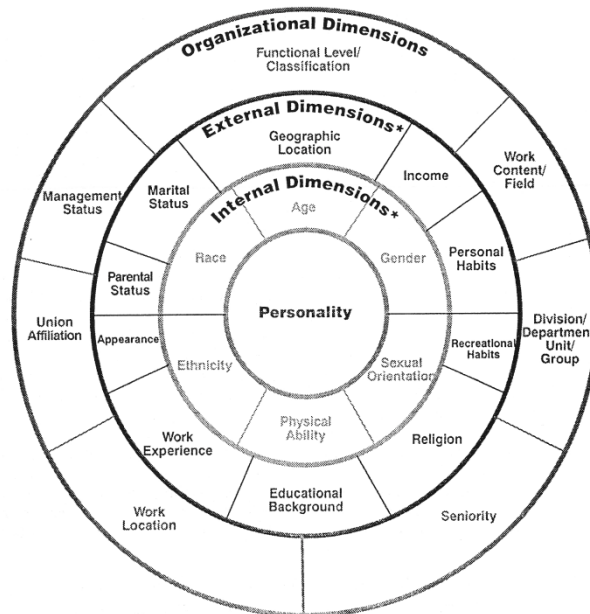
Source: From Grant 1998:57

Mintzberg's emergent strategy



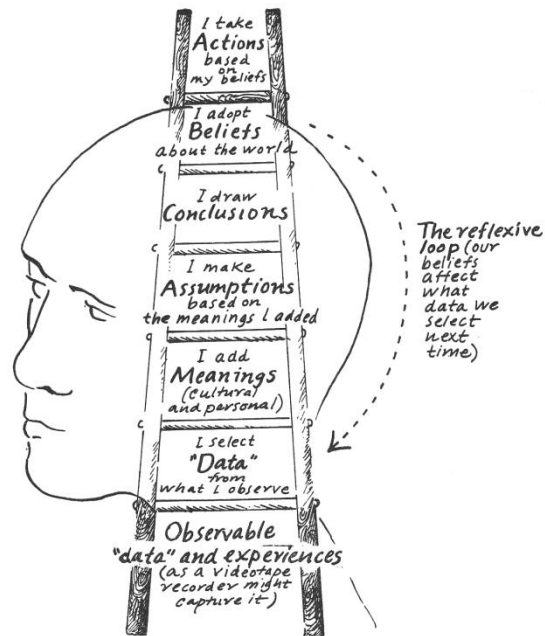
Source: From Mintzberg and Waters in Segal-Horn 2002:21

The four layers of diversity



Source: From Gardenswartz and Rowe 2004:23

Argyris Ladder of inference



Source: From Senge et al. 1994:243

The group that exploded

The case “The group that exploded”

A group of five employees was given the task of preparing a presentation for the visit in two weeks' time of a representative from the head office (based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S.A.). Because of their workload in the office the presentation had to be prepared in the evenings and on weekends. The topic was the training program at their subsidiary, particularly the efforts that were being made to train the very diverse workforce in intercultural communication. The project group members were chosen because they had all attended the course, but they had attended it at different times.

The group was based in Vienna, Austria, at different offices located in different districts and included:

5 characters

The first issue for the group was how to communicate outside of office hours. Everyone except Sharif had e-mail at home and wanted to do the entire project by e-mail. After a fierce discussion, Sharif gave in and gave his brother's e-mail address so that the project could proceed electronically. (Luckily his brother lived next door so he had easy access.) At the same time, he asked that the group arrange a few face-to-face meetings to maintain better contact. The rest of the group members, lead particularly by Jeff, refused saying they could not because of family responsibilities and lack of time. Sharif invited them over to his house for dinner in a last attempt to set up at least one social meeting. The group again refused. The work was divided up and each person started on his or her part individually. Because the presentation was coming up in a week, the group set deadlines for each person. Everyone honored these deadlines except Sharif who had to be reminded several times that his part was still missing. When he sent it in it was completely inadequate in the eyes of the other group members and included, much to their surprise, an original poem about elements of culture clash.

At this point the group called Heather, their (U.S. American) supervisor, at home the evening before the presentation and flatly refused to include Sharif's name on the project, all of which naturally would have negative consequences on his performance evaluation and his career at the company and, quite possibly, on theirs.

(A true story. Names have been changed.)

Source: Elisabeth Cassels-Brown 2007

10. CURRICULUM VITAE

Mag. Priya Elisabeth Abraham, MBA

Email priya.abraham@abraham.at

Personal profile

A highly motivated and dynamic business development and organisation/ management development professional. A strong academic background backs up the 15 years experience of working across different sectors with middle management through to board level across the globe. Excellent organisational team management and relationship skills with a wide international experience spanning from Scandinavia to the Middle East support leading and working on complex projects.

Professional career

Since September 2005 Client Director/Senior Consultant and Member of Faculty at one of the leading British business School

In this role:

- Supports and delivers to the strategic objectives of the Tailored Business division. Successfully wins against competitive tender and personally developed up to GBP 1.5m of programme revenue per calendar year.
- Client directs large and complex change programmes specialising in strategic alignment and cultural integration.
- Develops, manages, and leads a team of executive education directors and faculty working with them designing, managing, following through, and evaluating education and consulting solutions in a range of businesses for a diverse group of clients.
- Developed and introduced a new approach to Intercultural and Diversity training featuring a Blended Learning approach consisting of classroom session and Virtual Action Learning Sets suitable for globally dispersed team members; for this developed relevant materials and e-learning tutors to support this.
- Works with a complex range of key stakeholders on a long-term basis to ensure successful delivery of multiple programmes and maintains and builds on strong relationships with existing high profile international clients.
- Designing and delivering class-room sessions for the one-year executive, the two-year, and the Consortium MBA, all of which are triple accredited. Sessions are in the specialist area of Diversity and Expatriation management within the HR curriculum "Managing Human Potential"
- Developing teaching material building on frameworks and models based on findings from own empirical research

Industry experience

Experience across a wide range of industries, i.e.: telecoms, airline, energy, banking and insurance, logistics, health, automotive, oil and refinery, engineering and design.

Since 2008 International programme director of SESI – the Scandinavian Employee-ship Institute

A Stockholm based consulting firm specialising in organisation culture development by 'mobilising employeeship'.

Since 2005 Associate Professor at IEDC School of Management, Slovenia

The leading Business School in Central and Eastern Europe offers accredited MBA programmes and executive education. In the role of Associate Professor designs and delivers the Intercultural and Diversity Course on the one-year, two-year and President's MBA. In the tailored business sector delivers toward the objective of private sector clients.

Early Career

1996- 2005 Managing partner of abraham consulting

A management consulting firm and training institute specialising in International Business Development, which designs and implements Organisational Development programmes, with a specialist focus on Intercultural management with key projects in China, India, Germany, and Austria.

2002- 2005 Visiting lecturer at University of Applied Sciences IMC Krems, Austria

Design and delivery of university courses in Intercultural Management and Organisational Behaviour.

2001- 2003 Visiting lecturer at Diplomatic Academy Vienna

Higher Education and Qualifications

Fall 2007 - 2010 Doctorate in Cultural Anthropology specialising in Diversity Management at University of Vienna, Austria.

2002 – 2005 MBA for Executives at Open University Business School, England.

1992 – 1997 Magister degree studies in Cultural Anthropology at University of Vienna, Austria. Thesis in Intercultural Communications based on an empirical study of communication of care-givers of diverse backgrounds at a Viennese clinic.

Additional training and expertise:

- **MBTI and 16PF**
She is qualified to level A and level B with the British Psychological Society in the selection, administration and feedback of ability and personality questionnaires. She is also a qualified practitioner of MBTI Steps I and II.
- **The International Profiler**
The International Profiler, TIP is a development tool designed by WorldWork Ltd as a web-based questionnaire and feedback process aimed at managers to build adaptive skills for working in a multinational environment.
- **International Team Trust Indicator**
The International Team Trust Indicator, ITTI is a development tool.
- **Accredited Executive Coach**

Strong language skills: German (first language), English (fluent), Spanish (working knowledge), Russian (basic knowledge), Arabic (basic knowledge).

Publications (Selection)

2007 Looking in a Distorted Mirror: Western Mis-perceptions of Eastern Managers Abraham, P. & Cassels-Brown, E. Looking in a Distorted Mirror: Western Mis-perceptions of Eastern Managers, SIETAR EUROPA Congress, April

2005 Hightech-MigrantInnen in Oesterreich. In: Binder, Susanne; Rasuly-Paleczek, Gabriele; und Six-Hohenbalken, Maria (Hg.): Herausforderung Migration Beiträge zur Aktions- und Informationswoche der Universität Wien anlässlich des „UN International Migrant's Day“. S. 132–144. Wien. Band 7.

1999 Cross Cultural Training: Levi-Strauss for Managers? Occasional Paper of Copenhagen Business School: Department of Intercultural Communication and Management. Frederiksberg.

1998 A Myth? Intercultural Communication in Hospitals – Results of empirical studies, Journal of Cross-Cultural Competence & Management, IKO – Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation, Frankfurt.

Interests

Short-story writing, sculpting, sports