

Gernot Wolfram and Patrick S. Föhl

Trans culture

a brief introduction



Funded by the



Let's begin with prepositions:

against to without
because
in out around
despite under
behind **through** since
beside over of
on instead with
for before upon
among after between

... **for, with, against, instead, because,** etc.

Conventional perspectives often aim for definitude when actors from different cultures collaborate.

Transcultural concepts centre on the preposition **through**. What experiences and self-descriptions has someone gone through? And how can collective change be achieved?

What constraints have a particular effect on cultural professionals having to position themselves, for example, as immigrant artists or as German cultural professionals, etc.?

What new descriptions can be found that don't label people, but allow them to go through many phases of creativity and experience?

Many art and cultural projects

are looking for new pathways within their national and international environments. The topic of *trans-culturalism* is becoming increasingly significant. What role do origins, language, self-descriptions, cultural specifics and possibilities for participation play in the conception, planning and communication of projects? This introduction aims to highlight new possibilities and perspectives of the concept of trans-culturalism for the work of artists and cultural enterprises.

Transculture – a definition approach

“Transculture describes a dynamic understanding of culture in which different cultural influences meet and blend with one another. We no longer speak of clearly defined differences, but of a set of diverse cultural influences that are simultaneously effective not only in a country, but also in individuals themselves. This diversity is often only present subconsciously, since the coexistence of people is characterised by certain norms and values. Recognising and differentiating cultural diversity is always dependent on a process of reflection.”

Working definition for the *Transkultur* conference of the Fern-Universität Hagen in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut and Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb), October 2017, Gernot Wolfram, Patrick S. Föhl and Thomas Heinze

Transculture explained simply

Transculture is a term for diversity in people and societies. It helps people not have to commit themselves to one culture. For example, people with parents from two countries can be transcultural. They carry parts of both countries in them. Often they do not want to choose one culture. Transculture also includes artists who blend different styles. It also incorporates the ability to engage with different cultures without judgment. Transculturalism focuses on common themes and values.

Multiculturalism



Interculturalism



Transculturalism



Roots or routes?

In his book *Wir sind wie Baumstämme im Schnee* (2012), cultural scholar Arata Takeda proposes considering the homonyms “roots” and “routes” when dealing with issues of cultural identity. Instead of first asking about people’s origins, in this view it is wiser to be sensitive to the pathways that people have taken and are taking in their lives and to how they name and describe these influences and experiences. The same has significance for artistic positions. According to what stipulations and criteria, for example, are cultural professionals invited to national festivals?

Perspective: the self-description

One crucial transcultural perspective is therefore the question of people’s self-descriptions. Clear and unambiguous associations with a national or mono-cultural context are possible here, too, as long as the people choose this as their own self-description. Institutions can foster this process of differentiated self-description by spending more time working on their own self-definitions, rephrasing and reflecting on their own roles as a work-in-progress.

Farewell to interculturalism?

Transcultural perspectives are a supplement, not a substitute for intercultural work. However, conventional assumptions of interculturalism are being called into question. Terms such as “foreign culture,” “identity management” and “intercultural coaching” are seen critically. Transculture assumes that foreignness is always a construct. Perceptions of different values, behaviours and forms of communication create feelings of alienation. However, these feelings also exist in each individual.

In her book *Strangers to Ourselves* **Julia Kristeva** quotes Hölderlin: “But one’s own must be learned as well as that which is foreign.”

cf. Thomas, A., Kinast, E.U., SchrollMachl, S. (eds.) (2010), *Handbook of Intercultural Communication and Cooperation. Volume 1: Basics and Areas of Application*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

cf. Kristeva, J.(1991), *Strangers to Ourselves*. Columbia University Press

Transcultural cultural policy

In many countries in and outside Europe, we are observing a return to accentuated national and mono-cultural narratives, for example within arts funding. Even in Germany, the focus on “domestic” and “foreign” is still noticeable in many cultural policy perspectives. Therefore, transcultural projects are always an opportunity for the respective cultural policy to form new categories. In many countries, traditional immigration

movements, such as the history of immigration of Turks, Poles and Arabs to Germany, have already led to a situation in which artists and cultural professionals no longer wish to commit themselves to cultural definitude, but demand recognition of their different cultural influences in their work and their biographies.

Digital levels of transculturalism

The digital transformation of many areas of work and life as well as in the arts has created cultural hybrid phenomena. Technical devices and digital processes take on the role of social actors and cooperation partners. We can certainly speak of an influential global digital culture (cf. Stalder 2016), which feeds itself from different sources. The global transfer of ideas, works of art, images, ideas and aesthetic formations, has long made transculture a reality in social networks. Here, too, easily useable terms are needed that adequately describe this new complexity. The central motif is the hybridity and intricacy of digital forms of expression. Especially in politically or economically unstable countries, the use of memes, digital collages and forms of expression is sometimes the only way to become visible and audible. People can talk over long distances about issues that are often similar. In these discussions, a form of resistance often arises that carries the spirit of cultural cooperation in

itself. Diverse knowledge flows together and becomes a pool of hybrid, resistant thinking. Transculture is seen here as a gathering of voices and ideas that resist being blocked by any national borders and being categorised.

Al-Ani, A. (2017), *Widerstand in Organisationen. Organisationen im Widerstand. Virtuelle Plattformen, Edupunks und der nachfolgende Staat*. Wiesbaden: Springer

Latour, B. (2005), *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford University Press

Stalder, F. (2018), *The Digital Condition*. Polity

Future topic for cultural education

In many societies, more and more children are growing up in bilingual or multilingual households. In bi-national families in particular, children learn that they do not have to choose between cultures, but that there are ways to combine different influences. The Verband binationaler Familien und Partnerschaften (Association of Bi-National Families and Partnerships) points out that **792,123 children were born in Germany in 2016** (2015: 737,575), of whom 73,721 or 10.6% (2015: 71,440 or 9.7%) were from **bi-national marriages with one German parent**. That is **every ninth child born in Germany**. For the future of cultural education, this means finding forms of address that appeal to all future cultural users. The richness of their influences and their abilities can contribute to creating an open and diverse cultural life that is by no means arbitrary.

cf. <https://www.verbandbinationaler.de/presse/zahlenfakten/kinder/>



Terminology for transcultural projects

Based on the approach of this brief introduction that transculture represents a perspective and not a set of prescribed actions, we advise using caution in establishing fixed categories. The authors have therefore decided to work with a collection of keywords to introduce readers to some terms used in transculture. The most important categories are **openness** and **trust**. They provide the framework for orientation on transcultural ways of thinking. The following collection of terms should be considered additional information and as a kind of toolbox. This means that it can and should be supplemented, expanded and modified by readers. The concepts are therefore not fixed, but form a basis from which individual emphases and adjustments can and should be made.

A Agency: “Agency, in the sense of the capacity to act, is the form in which the subject debate in cultural studies resumes today after the ‘end of the subject.’ Here, voice is not only what the larynx produces, but what has the opportunity to be heard and acknowledged

in public discourse.” From a transculturalism perspective, therefore, the voice is always a gathering of very different discourses, which are concentrated in one channel. Promoting this multiple layering of voices within the voice, especially in art, is part of agency work.

cf. Assmann, A. (2012), *Introduction to Cultural Studies. Topics, Concepts, Issues*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag

Ambiguity tolerance: Ambiguity tolerance refers to being able to “tolerate” the tension between frequently incompatible ambiguities and opposites and, despite everything, to continue a sympathetic discussion without feeling uncomfortable or reacting aggressively. This is a core skill for transcultural work.

cf. Reis, J. (1997), *Ambiguitätstoleranz. Beiträge zur Entwicklung eines Persönlichkeitskonstrukts*. Heidelberg: Asanger.

Associations: Closeness is often the result of associations shared by people. Similar tastes in music, the same preferences for situations, for character traits, for cultural manifestations in sport, books, film and dance, even colours and shapes can occasionally create closer ties than origin, language or national cultural similarities.

cf. Latour, B. (2005), *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford University Press

B Bias (media bias): A tendency to believe that some people, ideas and opinions are more relevant than others. As a result, this attitude may lead to unfair treatment of people. In cultural work, this is often manifested as media-based suppression of cultures, for

example the low level of interest in productions from Eastern and Southeastern Europe on German television.

cf. Bias. Merriam-Webster Online, retrieved 19 February 2016 from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bias>.

C Constitutional patriotism, from the German perspective: Constitutional patriotism is a citizenship concept that sees itself as an alternative to the understanding of ethnic citizenship. According to this concept, citizenship is based on shared political values such as democracy and freedom of expression, rather than communities of common descent or language. Considered transculturally, this model is notable as it forms categories other than origin and language to facilitate participation. On this basis, the question arises of alternative narratives that can bind people of all origins.

Habermas, J. (1994), “Citizenship and National Identity,” Bart van Steenbergen (ed.) *The Condition of Citizenship*, SAGE Publications Ltd

Cosmopolitanism: Cosmopolitanism is not an arbitrary term, but a transcultural character trait that can be anchored in local contexts rather than in national concepts. “The cosmopolitanism that I advocate does not require that one renounce the local. For all foreign cultures are only interesting because they are the product of a particular place with its own subtle differences and differentiations,” writes the Ghanaian scientist Kwame Anthony Appiah. Many new cosmo-local-politan cultural approaches are currently coming from the African continent.

See also **Grand Citizen**.

cf. Appiah, K.A. (2011), "Zurück in die Zukunft: was es heißt, ein Kosmopolit zu sein," Stemmler, S. (ed.) (2011), *Multikultur. Willkommen im Einwanderungsland Deutschland*. Bonn: BpB

Cultural appropriation: "Cultural appropriation is the adoption of elements of a culture through members of another cultural group such as dancing in a feathered head-dress at festivals or during carnival although one is not a Native American. Opponents of cultural appropriation find this particularly problematic when people from a socially privileged group take on elements from the culture of a minority or a discriminated group."

In transculture, relationships between appropriation criticism and the experience of one's own and others' diversity are constantly being renegotiated.

cf. <https://www.fluter.de/kulturelle-aneignung-und-alltagsrassismus>

Cultural globalisation: Cultural globalisation means that there are increasingly interdependencies and influences at the level of cultural ideas, designs and identities. However, the associated "global culture" does not constitute a "cultural melting pot" in the sense of a "McWorld." It is better understood as a global reference system: a store of the most diverse strategies for appropriation, resistance or interpretation as well as a discussion forum for addressing differences or demonstrating similarities.

cf. <http://www.kulturglossar.de/html/gbegriffe.html>



Transculture / Best Practices

The examples used here are not representative. However, in their conception they show that they are relying on new aesthetic qualities. The connecting and common aspects of different cultures and the appeal of contrasting different influences are emphasised here.

I. Creole music contest at the Werkstatt der Kulturen in Berlin

From the self-description:

"Creole offers a stage to musical diversity ranging from BalkanSka, Afrobeat Beatbox, New Anatolian Traditionals to Cumbia Crossover, Chinese Ethno Sound to Poetic Persian Jazz, Brazilian Progressive Rock. Creole is looking for professional bands and ensembles who present this diversity and are at the same time the virtuosos of this new musical language. What matters is artistic quality and originality!"

<http://www.creole-weltmusik.de/de/home/>

Cultural glocalisation: “Re-localisation has become an integral part of global cultural programming, as when multinational corporations have painfully experienced the consequences of ignoring the context of their sales market. For example, the music channel MTV had to drop a uniform concept and now broadcasts 28 region-specific programmes.” The relationship between local identities and global influences is especially important for the understanding of transculture. Syrian immigrants participating in cultural life in small German towns are contemporary experts on the challenges of cultural glocalisation.

cf. Robertson, R. (1998), “Glokalisierung: Homogenität und Heterogenität in Raum und Zeit”. Beck, Ulrich (ed.), *Perspektiven der Weltgesellschaft*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, pp. 192–221.

Cultural identity: Cultural identity is an elusive term. Many ideological patterns within the national identity debate are often invoked to explain cultural identity. Here, caution should be exercised, as identity descriptions often have an exclusionary effect. Identity is not something fixed, but a process of different influences. In transculturalism, identity is renegotiated as an inviting, dialogue-oriented, open form of self-description and the tracing of one’s own pathways and attitudes.

cf. Föhl, P., Gegenfurtner, M. and Wolfram, G. (eds.) (2015), *Road Map für kulturelle Entwicklung in der Ukraine*. Glossar. Kiev: Goethe-Institut.

Cultural mapping: This term can be used to understand methodological approaches

that provide a transparent overview of the cultural actors, networks and potentials of a city, region or country in different ways. Frequently, such mapping processes employ visualisations, cartographies or other overviews, which in a sense enable a “bird’s eye view.” Such mapping processes can be helpful to make the transcultural complexity of places and cultural topographies visible.

cf. https://www.creativecity.ca/database/files/library/cultural_mapping_toolkit.pdf

Cultural mythology: Myths act as strong narratives in many societies, especially in the arts. This includes, for example, the overemphasis on cultural identity or the assumption that people need to be introduced to art. Revealing cultural myths can help us to gain an insight into the realities of everyday cultural life.

cf. examples for Germany: <http://www.dw.com/de/deutskekultur-mythenundfakten/a40314359>

Cultural pluralism: Recognition of the achievements and contributions of different cultural groups in a society for the sake of coexistence. Understanding of the strengths of overlapping ideas, concepts and actions of different people and groups. The emphasis on the common and the connecting within a pluralistic society is a core concern of transculture.

D Deep dreaming: The computer software Deep Dream is an interesting example of digital search movements, in which an original image is modified, expanded, superimposed

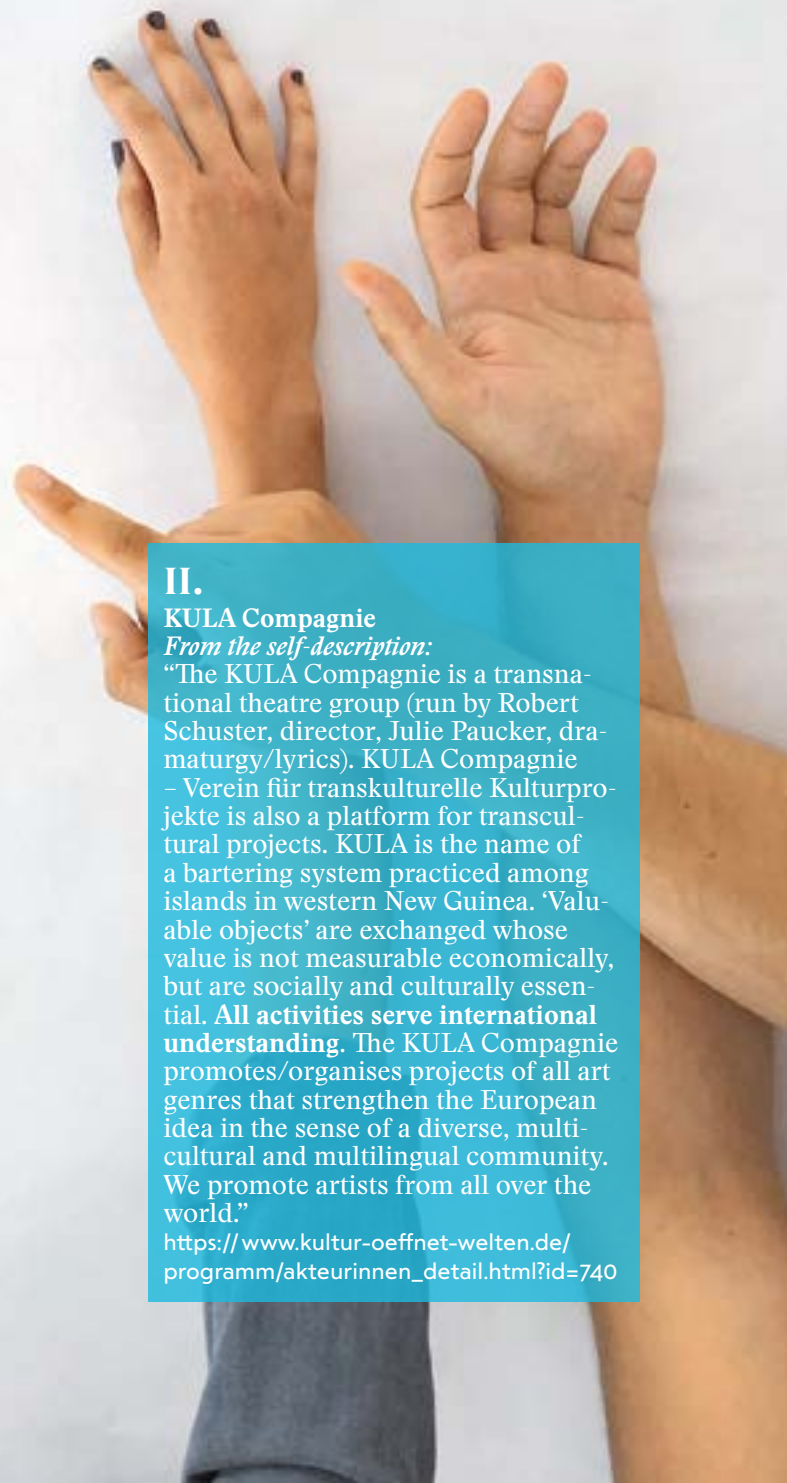
and altered, but without completely denying the original structure. This principle reflects transcultural perspectives and practices. Such transformation chains can be exciting approaches and inspirations for planning cultural projects.

cf. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/jun/18/google-image-recognition-neural-network-androids-dream-electric-sheep>

E **Emphatic communication:** One major problem in cultural engagement is often the taking of sides by actors, even when it is well intended. Often there are discussions between camps, attitudes and positions, which seem to be clearly separated, for example in religious disputes. Emphatic communication is a tangible element of transcultural action. This means people work while attempting to understand what influences, steers and concerns the others. At the same time, the connecting elements, those that refer to common traditions and points of contact, are placed in the middle of communication. “All judgments are tragic expressions of unmet needs,” Marshall Rosenberg wrote. Sometimes they are also an expression of a cultural misunderstanding arising through language and communication.

cf. Rosenberg, M. B. (2015), *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*, third edition, PuddleDancer Press

Empowerment: Empowerment in the transcultural context is understood above all as the ability to become aware of one’s manifold influences and to reflect on them autonomously.



II.

KULA Compagnie

From the self-description:

“The KULA Compagnie is a transnational theatre group (run by Robert Schuster, director, Julie Paucker, dramaturgy/lyrics). KULA Compagnie – Verein für transkulturelle Kulturprojekte is also a platform for transcultural projects. KULA is the name of a bartering system practiced among islands in western New Guinea. ‘Valuable objects’ are exchanged whose value is not measurable economically, but are socially and culturally essential. **All activities serve international understanding.** The KULA Compagnie promotes/organises projects of all art genres that strengthen the European idea in the sense of a diverse, multicultural and multilingual community. We promote artists from all over the world.”

https://www.kultur-oeffnet-welten.de/programm/akteurinnen_detail.html?id=740

Equity: An approach that demands a fair start for all people, especially in work processes. Equity goes beyond the aspect of accessibility and implies, for example, the need for cultural institutions to hire more people from those target groups that they wish to win over for their cultural programmes. This is the only way to produce equity internally and externally and only then can authentic, honest and inclusive audience/community building succeed.

It also focuses on aspects such as equal pay, recognition and inclusion in communication processes. Especially in international cultural work, while there is understanding for diversity approaches, there is a lack of actual equity measures.

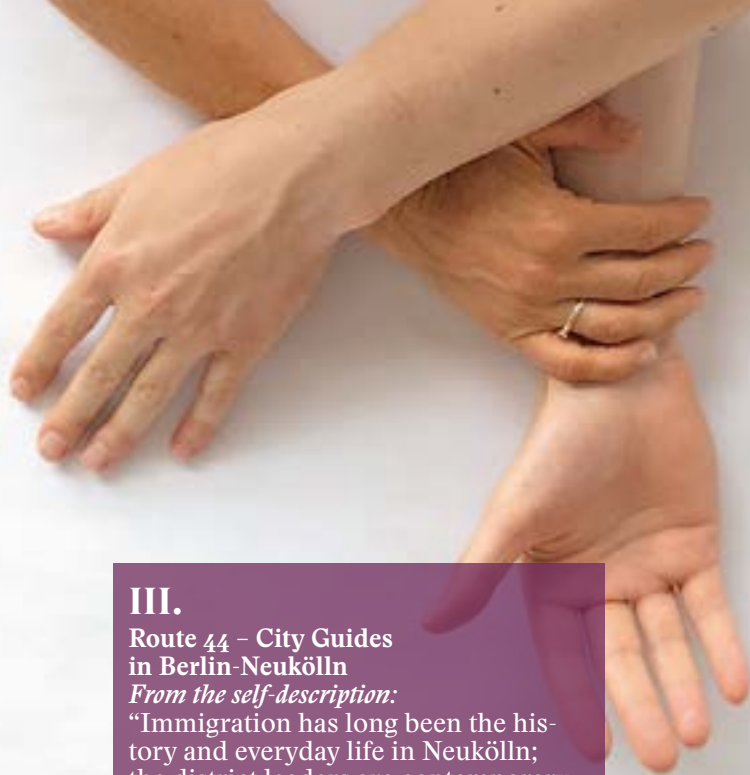
cf. <https://generalassemb.ly/blog/diversityinclusionequity-differencesinmeaning/> and Föhl, P. S. (2015), "Equity. Ein Impulsbeitrag zur (post) Audience DevelopmentDebatte in Zeiten zunehmender Transformationserfordernisse im Kulturbereich," *Kultur und Management im Dialog. Das Monatsmagazin von Kulturmanagement Network*, No. 101 (May 2015), pp. 12–15.

F Foreignness: In transcultural terms, the concept of foreignness is used with caution. The foreign basically only exists in the eyes of another observer. Those who are called foreign do not experience their own existence as something distant and unusual. Foreignness is often a projection of one's own hidden "foreign parts" that are looking for an image and a projection surface. Sayings like, "That's foreign to me" semantically boil down subjective constructions.

cf. Kristeva, J. (1990/2016), *Strangers to Ourselves*. Columbia University Press

Freedom: The concept of freedom in the context of transculturalism assumes that people are empowered to reflect on their own socialisation and to form their own narratives about the conditions of their existence from the narratives given to them. These narratives can change, as can the self-chosen representations and role models. It is thus first and foremost a responsible freedom to inform oneself, albeit accompanied by the risks of overconfidence, idealisation or negative deconstruction. This reflection is crucial in dealings with artists in an international context.

G "Grand Citizen" (art term): One problem in transculturalism is the fact that national affiliation, holding a passport for example, expresses specific rights and also privileges of an individual. An emphasis on multiple cultural layers must therefore not conceal the imbalances in life circumstances that are still governed by distinct attributions such as one's passport or place of birth. "Grand Citizen" is therefore a term suggested by the authors to describe a person of general dignity and "civility." It is a possible designation for all people who can agree on recognising and respecting the diverse cultural and individual influences beyond national borders. Common values and concepts of tolerance as the expression of cosmopolitanism (cf. also **Cosmopolitanism**), which is not only rhetorical, can coalesce in the concept of the Grand Citizen. It represents a higher-level



III.

Route 44 – City Guides in Berlin-Neukölln

From the self-description:

“Immigration has long been the history and everyday life in Neukölln; the district leaders are contemporary witnesses who report from their own experience and outlooks. Their district tours are as varied as Neukölln itself! See Karl-Marx-Strasse, Richardplatz or Gropiusstadt through the eyes of women who have made this place their (second) home. Neukölln has become their adopted home or refuge, vexing with its problems and fascinating in its potential.

The women have immersed themselves in the history and the present of the district and invite guests on their tours to discover the unknown and to see the familiar from a different perspective. District tours of a special kind with women who are at home in Neukölln and share their personal impressions with you. Get a (different) picture of Berlin's ‘notorious’ district!”
<http://www.route44-neukoelln.de/>

identification, which is not defined by boundaries and, through the word “grand,” consciously describes a higher value that is not characterised by exclusivity.

H Hybridity, transcultural: “Hybridity denotes the simultaneous action of subjects in diverse cultural systems, resulting in the creation of new cultural articulations and socialities. This leads to the development of ‘hybrid cultural identities.’ The concept of cultural hybridity is based on a transformed understanding of ‘identity.’ It is useful in this day and age to understand identity as an open-ended process of identification which has no certainties, fixed reference points or continuity.” However, transcultural hybridity seeks to create fixed reference points and continuity by introducing new terminology and images that invite us to identify with them.

cf. <http://www.goethe.de/lhr/prj/daz/glo/glh/en8496474.htm>

Implicit-association test (IAT): People don’t always say what they’re thinking. And we can assume that they don’t even always know what they’re thinking. Understanding such variations is an important subject of scientific psychology. With the IAT we can trace conscious as well as unconscious attitudes, stereotypes and the emergence of prejudices. For transculture, this represents an important approach to being able to understand existing feelings of cultural superiority or inferiority and how they arise.

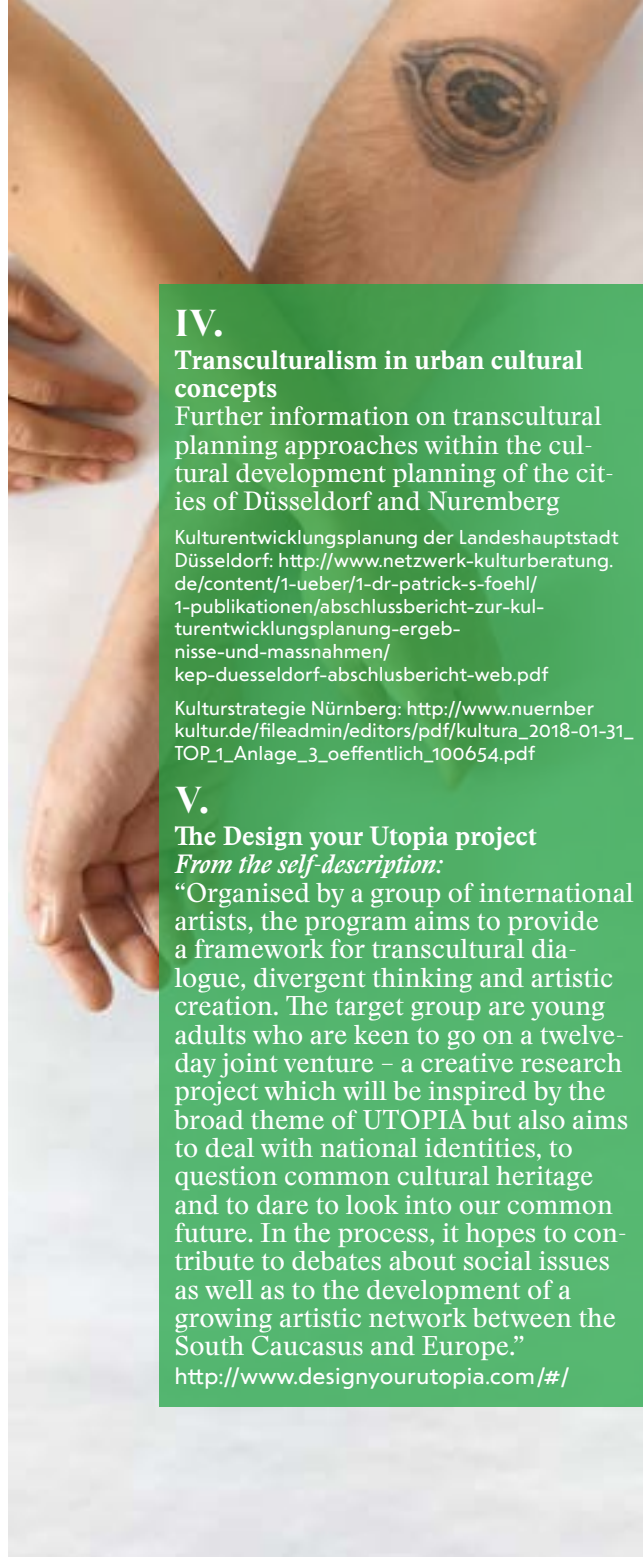
cf. <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/germany/>

Intercultural dialogue: The term is often used in grant applications, project descriptions and international cultural events. It gives the impression that cultures as such can talk to each other. “Cultures do not speak,” writes Frank-Olaf Radtke. A report by the company Educult also emphasises that only people can engage in dialogue with each other, not cultures. Therefore, the term runs the risk that actors identify with a supposed position of “their” culture and think that they have to represent it in such a dialogue. This often leads to a discussion defined by limits. In addition, it encourages actors to take a side instead of participating in both sides of the dialogue with their own positions.

cf. Radtke, F.O. (2011), “Kulturen sprechen nicht. Die Politik grenzüberschreitender Dialoge.” Hamburg: Hamburger Edition and EDUCULT – Institute of Cultural Policy and Cultural Management (2008), *Kunst, Kultur und interkultureller Dialog*, commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture, Vienna: Expert report

Intersectionality: In the political context, intersectionality refers to concepts that address a wide variety of problems and forms of discrimination and power relationships to which particular groups are particularly susceptible. In science, this perspective claims to combine social, institutional and subject-related dimensions in the study of social inequalities and forms of discrimination. Transculturally speaking, it is about not looking at individual characteristics in isolation, such as origin or language.

cf. <https://www.unibielefeld.de/gendertexte/intersektionalitaet.html>



IV.

Transculturalism in urban cultural concepts

Further information on transcultural planning approaches within the cultural development planning of the cities of Düsseldorf and Nuremberg

Kulturentwicklungsplanung der Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf: <http://www.netzwerk-kulturberatung.de/content/1-ueber/1-dr-patrick-s-foehl/1-publikationen/abschlussbericht-zur-kulturentwicklungsplanung-ergebnisse-und-massnahmen/kep-duesseldorf-abschlussbericht-web.pdf>

Kulturstrategie Nürnberg: http://www.nuernberkultur.de/fileadmin/editors/pdf/kultura_2018-01-31_TOP_1_Anlage_3_oeffentlich_100654.pdf

V.

The Design your Utopia project

From the self-description:

“Organised by a group of international artists, the program aims to provide a framework for transcultural dialogue, divergent thinking and artistic creation. The target group are young adults who are keen to go on a twelve-day joint venture – a creative research project which will be inspired by the broad theme of UTOPIA but also aims to deal with national identities, to question common cultural heritage and to dare to look into our common future. In the process, it hopes to contribute to debates about social issues as well as to the development of a growing artistic network between the South Caucasus and Europe.”

<http://www.designyourutopia.com/#/>

Interspace management: The arts managers of the future are masters of interspaces. They do not work exclusively in the field of art and culture, but move confidently in other areas and act at the interfaces of transcultural partnerships. The big challenge for arts managers is to find a consensus or a union of different positions where many actors with different hybrid interests and influences meet – in the (yet) un-negotiated interstices of new global societies.

Föhl, P. S.; Wolfram, G.; Peper, R. (2016), "Cultural Managers as 'Masters of Interspaces' in Transformation Processes – a Network Theory Perspective," *Journal of Cultural Management. Arts, Economics, Policy*, Vol. 2 2016/1, pp. 17–49.

M Multilingualism: Bi- and multilingualism are great transcultural assets as long as these skills are not experienced as stress. "He or she only speaks good/mediocre/poor German, English, French, etc." Transculture promotes creative dealings with multilingualism and playing with different linguistic expressions and levels of competence. The presence and mixing of languages shape many contemporary cinema, theatre and performance productions.

cf. <http://www.gfljournal.de/12016/blumbarth.pdf>

Opting in/Opting out: Opting in is a process in which one assumes existing roles and cultural patterns in a society and thus experiences belonging and is often a formulated demand made of many immigrants and of immigrant art. Opting out is the rejection of this process. In opting out, an individual rejects pre-formulated social roles and rene-

gotiates them. In transculturalism, opting out processes are more common. They are also closely related to artistic performances and interventions.

cf. Assmann, A. (2012), *Introduction to Cultural Studies. Topics, Concepts, Issues*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag

O Othering: Othering describes the process of positively highlighting oneself or one's social image by negatively branding someone or something else and as different or "foreign," whether due to race, geographical location or ethics, the environment or ideology. Othering also often occurs in well-intentioned cultural projects, such as when African or Asian artists are announced and presented as artistically "different" actors per se.

cf. <http://www.kulturglossar.de/html/obegriffe.html>

P Participation: Participation means that access to art and culture must not remain the exclusive domain of groups that are predestined due to their origin, education and resources. In particular those who have experienced other influences and may also have feelings of alienation towards offers catering to the majority must be given the opportunity to participate. In the transcultural context, we can debate the difference between participating and partaking. Partaking would emphasise the true belonging of those with different experiences far more.

cf. Fuchs, M. (2008c), *Kultur – Teilhabe – Bildung. Reflexionen und Impulse aus 20 Jahren*. Munich: kopaed.



VI.

The international TransCultural Exchange network

From the self-description:

“TransCultural Exchange’s Advisory Board is comprised of leading international curators, artist-in-residency directors and artists. They provide multiple perspectives and a broad range of expertise to ensure the long-term success of TransCultural Exchange.”

<http://www.transculturalexchange.org/2018-conference/overview.htm>

VII.

The artists of the Mpigi Social Innovation Academy, Mpigi, Uganda

Under the direction of Etienne Salborn, a whole village has been created in Uganda based on the principles of self-empowerment and the interplay of different cultures. Many refugees, artists among them, were able to build a new future here based not on their origins but on their skills. Creative thinking and working processes guide coexistence in Mpigi.

<http://www.socialinnovationacademy.org/>



Q Quality: Measuring artistic quality is a challenge. In principle, however, we can say that origin is not an artistic quality per se. Also, the repetition of common attributions such as “indigenous artist,” “person with immigration background” or adjectives such as “international,” “global,” etc. are not quality categories. Here, transculturalism asks more about content, artistic quality, innovation, bricolages, successful re-combinations and less about forms of representation.

R Relevance: Transculture raises the question of artistic relevance in a differentiated way. Frequently at festivals and national weeks, artists or cultural products are still presented as representatives of their countries of origin. Here, relevance is linked to the context of a culture of origin. In transcultural perspectives one would instead consider it contrapuntally. How competent is someone for a topic, how much physical knowledge does the person have beyond conventional categories?

S Safe spaces: Transculture needs safe and open places and spaces. Cultural institutes in particular often make a statement that is not very hybrid merely with their architecture and furnishings. Spaces for transcultural work should reflect something of the complexity of those who work in them.

cf. Wolfram, G. (2018), *From Project to Space. About a needed change of perspective in cultural management.* <http://www.artsmangement.net/index.php?module=News&func=display&sid=1855>

Simultaneity, as related to the effect of cultural influences: Thinking in terms of the simultaneity of cultural influences is still a challenge for many people. The concept of homogeneous national cultures developed in the nineteenth century still affects our thinking today. The fact that people from bi-national families can easily deal with the simultaneity of different influences proves that the image of completely separate cultures is more a construct than a lived reality.

Stairwell, after H. Bhaba: The image of a stairwell can help us to better understand the dehierarchisation of culture. It focuses on movements rather than fixations. “The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.”

cf. Bhabha, H. K. (1994), *The Location of Culture*. Routledge Classics

T Transcultural arts management: Transcultural arts management strongly emphasises the multiple competencies of artists, cultural institutions and representations

in an international context. Multilingualism, international exchange, bi-nationality, migration experiences and multi-layered traditions are perceived as qualities and positioned in the context of local traditions.

cf. Wolfram, G. (ed.) (2012), *Kulturmanagement und Europäische Kulturarbeit. Tendenzen, Förderungen, Innovationen. Leitfaden für ein neues Praxisfeld*. Bielefeld: transcript

Transcultural education: Transcultural education is related to forms and methods of cultural education. The aim is to make people aware of the many influences that have determined the becoming of the culture in which they live. Transcultural education is characterised by an open search for clues. Especially for people from bi-national families, it can be helpful to realise that they do not have to decide on one culture, but that there is richness in hybridity (cf. **Hybridity**).

cf. Takeda, A. (2012), *Wir sind wie Baumstämme im Schnee*. Münster: Waxmann

Transmutability: “... only the ability to transculturally cross over will guarantee us identity and competence in the long run.” This opinion of Welsch (1994) indicates a specific understanding of autonomy. In this view, the ability to transform and to tolerate simultaneous cultural influences does not lead to arbitrariness, but to a new attitude of self-confident individuals who are bound together by common values across borders.

cf. Welsch, W. (1999), “Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today.” *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, ed. by Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (eds.) London: Sage, pp. 194-213.

Trust: Trust is one of the key prerequisites for institutional collaboration, but also for negotiating transcultural processes between artists and cultural professionals. The fear of a loss of identity in particular can consciously or unconsciously disrupt the establishment of relationships of trust.

cf. von Moos, P. (ed.) (2004), *Unverwechselbarkeit. Persönliche Identität und Identifikation in der vormodernen Gesellschaft*. Cologne, Weimar: Böhlau

cf. also the international project TRUST: <http://www.transculturaltrust.net/>

You can find an expanded collection of other and further terminology on a blog by the University of Bremen on transculturalism: <http://transkulturalitaet.blogspot.com/2009/01/dritter-raum.html>

All hyperlinks were last opened and checked in Oktober 2018.



VIII.

The Goethe-Institut's Damascus in Exile project

The Goethe-Institut Damascus, established in 1955, was one of the first institutes worldwide. It closed in 2012 due to the security situation. Many people were forced to leave the country and are now in exile in Europe. To send a clear signal, in autumn of 2016, the Goethe-Institut created a symbolic place for cultural encounters in Berlin: the Goethe-Institut Damascus | In Exile, a safe space for transcultural exchange for a short time.

<https://www.goethe.de/de/uun/ver/dix.html>

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The Moving Network specialises in empowerment processes and transcultural training. Workshops and seminars in German, English, Arabic and Greek can be requested here: ma.sandrini@macromedia.de



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"Decide already!"*

Analogous to the title of a report by the German-Turkish journalist Gülseren Ölcüm, this sentence is symptomatic of many current cultural debates. Frequently, cultural-political perspectives are based on an apparent definitude in people's identities, origins and confessions. "I had to clear up a lot of stereotypes," says Ölcüm. She implicitly asks for new categories. Can't a person be both at the same time, German and Turkish, different and belonging?

Transculturalism asks for new, more differentiated terms for these hybrid identities.

*Ölcüm, G. (2018), *Türken, entscheidet euch! Deutsche? Türken? DeutschTürken? Wie gehen viereinhalb Millionen DeutschTürken mit ihrem Migrationshintergrund um?* TV report, Radio Bremen

Transcultural interspace management

Recent approaches in arts management demonstrate that cultural and organisational interspaces are becoming more important. Institutions and actors are opening up to new categories and terminology that reflect this permeability.

Cf. Föhl, P. S.; Wolfram, G., "Cultural Managers as 'Masters of Interspaces,'" *CultureWork: A digital periodic broadside for arts & culture workers*, November 2016. Vol. 20, No. 4.