Intercultural Communication and Competence Research through the Lens of an Anthropology of Knowledge

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Abstract: In consequence of various predicaments of the culture concepts and of an applied communication theory, that is mainly oriented towards cooperation and understanding, research in the field of intercultural communication is facing epistemological paradoxes. The following article explores how a paradigm of culture as knowledge, as it has been discussed in recent Cultural and Social Anthropology, could contribute to a new understanding of intercultural communication and competence (ICC). It further discusses the consequences emerging from such an understanding for the construction of research fields in ICC.

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1. Introduction

Studying the field of intercultural communication is a highly complex task for researchers. Especially the controversial concept of culture, as one of this field's key components, often causes theoretical difficulties, which are being inevitably reproduced in every intercultural research setting. The theoretical problems with the culture concept are well known, so they need not be outlined in all detail. However, the following passages will briefly recount the main issues with the intention to prepare for subsequent thoughts on this concept. [1]

One main obstacle of addressing communication research fields under the perspective of culture is the inbuilt assumption of distinction. Intercultural communication research has adopted this notion of distinction, although it intrinsically aims to rise above it. This creates misunderstandings in the definition of intercultural communication. Paradoxically, cultural studies on communities have already shown decades ago that cultural groups are symbolically constructed and imagined rather than a natural entity (ANDERSON, 1983;

BARTH, 1998 [1969]; COHEN, 2000 [1985]). However, intercultural communication research is still caught in this paradoxical loop: It is constructing precisely those differences that it initially intended to overcome. [2]

Another dilemma of intercultural communication research (ICCR) is the conceptualization of diversity within cultural groups. Questions of similarities and differences within cultural groups—meaning of cohesion and integration—are far from being understood in detail. It has also become more complicated since individuals in socially differentiated societies have many identity options and face the task to construct a unique, individual personality (GIDDENS, 1991; KRAUS, 2006). Ideas of hybridity (BHABHA, 1994) and superdiversity (VERTOVEC, 2007) challenge the idea of intercultural research in general since cultural traditions become manifold or hazy. [3]

Furthermore, the idea of culture is closely connected to tradition and only scarcely to innovation or change. Thus, investigating intercultural communication hardly takes cultural dynamics and processes of social change into account. One needs to consider, however, that more or less dynamic but still ongoing change is part of every cultural production and reproduction. And more, dynamics seem to be increasingly relevant within modern life-styles (WELZ, 2003). [4]

The concept of culture thus has its limits. Even the upcoming more or less new ideas about culture, such as transculturality (ORTIZ, 1995 [1940]; WELSCH, 1999), hybridity (BHABHA, 1990, 1994) or cosmopolitanism (HANNERZ, 1996; VERTOVEC & COHEN, 2002) cannot solve the outlined difficulties of the culture concept. They just accentuate them in a different way or challenge the relevance of the concept of culture in general. [5]

However, the culture concept is not the only component, which is causing theoretical complications in intercultural communication research. The problems imported by the culture concept are furthermore supplemented by the theory of communication, which is mostly applied in ICC. This theory is mainly oriented towards cooperation and understanding, but rarely develops a comprehensive concept of the various intentions of communicating.[1] Persuasive or strategic dimensions of intercultural communication are not only apparent in business communication. Nevertheless, an ethical orientation towards "understanding" is often still assumed. Thus, the relevance of power structures, which are enacted in social fields, for communicative acts is not systematically acknowledged. Furthermore the interrelation of communication and communicative competence is not worked out at all (RATHJE, 2006). [6]

To sum up shortly, theoretical difficulties with ICCR are limiting the understanding as outlined above. Furthermore, culture theory and communication theory as relevant theoretical frameworks for ICCR are used complementary, like two independent variables. Thus, the fundamental interrelation of them both, the dialectic constitution of culture and communication, is widely ignored. [7]

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1 Communication here is understood in a broader sense as communicative action in the tradition of the symbolic interactionism (BLUMER, 2004).

Thinking about qualitative research on intercultural communication and competence thus means facing these foundational theoretical obstacles. The following article will explore how a paradigm of culture as knowledge, as it has been discussed in recent cultural and social anthropology, could contribute to a new understanding of ICC. [8]

2. Understanding Culture as Knowledge

To outline the idea of *culture as knowledge,* I will mainly refer to a conceptual article written by the Scandinavian anthropologist Fredrik BARTH in 2002, who put the paradigm and guiding principles of research forward to anthropological discussion. According to BARTH, the difference between the *culture* and the *knowledge* concept is not too big. The surplus of this new paradigm lies mainly in the disaggregation of the culture concept. But this small variation is a fundamental one and has significant consequences for the conceptualization of investigations, as BARTH suggests.

> "Knowledge provides people with materials for reflection and premises for action, whereas 'culture' too readily comes to embrace also those reflections and those actions. Thus the concept of 'knowledge' situates its items in a particular and unequivocal way relative to events, actions, and social relationships" (BARTH, 2002, p.1). [9]

Knowledge is distributed in populations whereas culture is understood in terms of sharing. But stocks of knowledge vary widely within populations depending on spatial, social and cohort experiences. Knowledge gives the individual the capacity to orient himself. It consequently structures the individual's understanding of the world and purposeful ways of acting. Knowledge always shows three "faces" when applied in any kind of situation.

1. a substantive corpus of assertions and ideas about the world,
2. a range of media of representation (words, symbols, actions …),
3. a social organization, knowledge is distributed, communicated, employed and transmitted within a series of institutionalized social relations. [10]

Which stocks of knowledge are relevant for individual action can be found out, when looking at how individuals make use of it to interpret the world und to act. In this way, knowledge can be distinguished conceptually from group membership, social relations and other social aspects of daily life. [11]

BARTH thus develops a new thinking about differences in interaction. Differences are not primarily interpreted in terms of diverse cultural belongings. It is first and foremost a question of knowledge asymmetries between the interacting persons. Differences are likely to appear within as well on the edges of societies. Even so, it is known that people are interconnected with the communities they live in and the assumption of individually diverse knowledges raises the problem how

individuals get integrated in larger social contexts. To develop an understanding in this question, BARTH again offers a knowledge based theory.

> "[M]uch of our knowledge we have accumulated by learning from others—including, indeed, the criteria for judging validity that we have learned to use. Though it is experience-based, most knowledge thus does not become private in any individual sense. This makes a great deal of every person's knowledge conventional, constructed within the traditions of knowledge of which each of us partakes. My personal skills and embodied knowledge are likewise largely constituted on the basis of activity into which I have been socialized, some of them embodied through purposeful practice, some of them preconceptual, arising from experience based on how my physical body functions in the world" (BARTH, 2002, p.2)[2]. [12]

In this context other authors emphasize the variation in intensity of knowing. They state the various facets of personal knowledge from "knowing of to knowing about and knowing how" (GATEWOOD, 1994), or they favor viral models of culture (SPERBER, 2002 [1996]). [13]

In his understanding of knowledge BARTH includes feelings, attitudes, information, embodied skills as well as verbal taxonomies and concepts. In his definition of the term "knowledge," he includes all the different ways of under-standing, which people make use of to constitute reality. He thus develops a very broad understanding of knowledge as a basic daily human phenomenon. [14]

This change in perspective is fundamental. It diverts the emphasis of scientific observation from the existence to the emergence of culture. Now the practices and processes of cultural production and reproduction are a core interest for cultural analysis. Not the similarities but the constitutions of communities attract the interest of the researcher. Now, researching means to concentrate on individual approaches to the world rather than on collective world views. "People construct their worlds by their knowledge and live by it, and therefore an anthropology of knowledge should ask how these varieties are variously produced, represented, transmitted, and applied" (BARTH, 2002, p.10) [15]

Interconnecting elements are according to this understanding not so much specific common information but common knowledge about processes of production and validation of knowledge. BARTH suggests "that each tradition of knowledge will be characterized by distinct and in their own ways stringent criteria of validity—presumably in some kind of systematic relation to the uses to which that knowledge is put" (BARTH, 2002, p.10). This paradigmatic re-orientation towards the means, processes and organization of cultural production is asking not so much for existing traditions but rather for the inherent logics driving cultural development. Although cultural properties and traditions are not of interest as entities of itself, they remain subject-matter of cultural analysis. Traditions are to be kept, to be performed and to be integrated into life. They only last if they are regarded as relevant enough to spend time on keeping them active. Like change,

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2   Here BARTH refers to the mathematician and philosopher Bertrand RUSSELL (1948) and to LAKOFF (1987).

traditions depend on processes of knowledge production, communication and acquisition and thus are part of the ongoing cultural production (BENDIX, 1989; WELZ, 2003). [16]

The knowledge anthropological paradigm directs the scientific interest towards research settings in which culture is in the making. This shift addresses the problems of cultural theory outlined above and is deeply rooted within anthropological thinking. Nevertheless, it also offers new perspectives for intercultural communication research. By understanding culture as knowledge, it puts the processes related to knowledge practices on the research agenda and thus highly emphasizes communicative actions as inherent part of cultural production. So, to be more precise, under the new paradigm we focus on culture in the communicative making. Communication and culture are conceptualized as inevitably interlinked within an anthropology of knowledge. This goes well with recent understandings of communication theory.

> "Communication is the way humans build our reality. Human worlds are not made up of objects but of peoples' responses to objects, or their meanings. And these meanings are negotiated in communication. Try not to think of communication as simply a way to share ideas, because it's much more than that. It's the process humans use to define reality itself." (STEWART, 1999 in BRAITHWAITE & BAXTER, 2008, p.4) [17]

Theoretically, ICCR moves beyond the idea that culture and communication are more or less influential factors affecting each other in intercultural communication situations (GUDYKUNST, 1984, 2005). Conceptualizing culture—disaggregated in terms of knowledge—and communication as deeply interlinked and as basic processes for the constitution of any sociality means in consequence to study the communication between "strangers" in a broader framework of social theory and thus conceptualize intercultural communication situations as a kind of primordial social situation. Societies are grounded upon communications, meaning upon communicative action. Despite a variety of conceptual differences, especially in the idea how structures are built starting from this basic process, communication based social theories agree highly on this point (BERGER & LUCKMANN, 1966; HABERMAS, 1988, 2006; LUHMANN, 1990, 1995). The primordial situation of society is conceptualized as an interpersonal interaction of two strangers. They start in a system theory perspective to overcome the contingency of the situation communicatively and thus are a starting point for more complex forms of social organization (LUHMANN, 1990). In a knowledge sociological actor centered theory to habitualize frequently recurring interactions is also understood as a beginning of larger social contexts (BERGER & LUCKMANN). The idea of coordinating and integrating humans more or less productively, either of different meaning systems (LUHMANN) or of specific personal interests (BERGER & LUCKMANN) is thus grounded in communication. The described primordial situation of society shows many similarities with intercultural conditions: two not acquainted persons, a situational not defined encounter and a reciprocal uncertainty about the intentions of the other. Bridging indefinite differences is part of any communicative action, although it might vary in scale. Thus, the

perspective developed here on the dialog between people with diverse stocks of knowledges is based on an understanding of the so called "intercultural communication" as a communicative form inherent in all social formations, though differently elaborated. We will have to come back to the implications of this integrative perspective later. [18]

First, it is about to develop a more precise idea of what it means to study intercultural communication in terms of an anthropology of knowledge. I will exemplify this with some empirical material. It was collected during a research for a Bachelor Thesis by Lisa KOCH (2008). It addresses the question whether music supports the understanding between nations. This is a rather common assumption about music, sports and other personality building activities when practiced in international cooperation. [19]

3. Culture in the Communicative Making

The question whether music can contribute to an understanding among nations was investigated on the example of the West-Eastern-Divan Orchestra (WEDO) founded in Weimar in 1999, Germany, by the famous maestro Daniel BARENBOIM. The foundation of the youth orchestra was intended as a counterpoint against the long lasting enmity and the permanently failing peace efforts between the Israeli and Palestinian governments. Initially, young musicians were recruited mainly from Israel, from various Arabic countries and from a few others. Intensive rehearsal workshops were organized, first in Weimar, later in Sevilla. Anyone who has played music in an orchestra knows that this is not an easy task. It requires a lot of effort to coordinate the interplay of the various instrument groups. To form an orchestra is a complex endeavor. And this certainly does not get easier under the specific circumstances of the WEDO. However, Daniel BARENBOIM's idea was realized. Actually, if measured in terms of musicality, it has proven to be a successful project. Concerts in many countries of the world document that Israeli and Palestinians cooperate productively in the WEDO. But what does this mean for the understanding among nations? And how can these achievements be investigated from the perspective of an anthropology of knowledge? [20]

Understanding requires personal contact and does not start at a macro level. It demands personal knowing which is interrelated to collective stocks of knowledge, by referring to them, co-producing them and vice versa. If looking at it from the perspective from an anthropology of knowledge, by bringing them together for rehearsal workshops in Weimar, the young musicians are dis-embedded from their traditional social spaces. At home in Palestine or Israel, the prevailing knowledge about each other is characterized by intense emotions and has little constructive orientation. Over the years, various experiences within the populations have been condensed to a wide spread, and thus collective stock of knowledge. This has been internalized since early childhood, and like this has become a very stable assertion. "The father of my neighbor was killed by a suicide bombing in a café in the middle of the day," or, "We could not bring our child into the hospital because the Israeli had closed the border. There was

nothing to avoid his dead," are stories, which are more or less omni-present in the daily life of the region and are reconfirmed from time to time by analogous incidents. Except in professional contexts, there is little direct understanding-oriented interaction between single members of the diverse groups. Both, Israeli and Arabians, by the way, cannot be classified easily into homogeneous cultural groups, since they are internally highly heterogeneous, but in inter-group comparison rather similar. Stereotypically, knowledge, based on the experiences of others rather than acquired through personal contact, is leading the interaction. As a consequence practices of distinction, of segregation and of drawing borders are literally and metaphorically dominant in the contact between the members of the two groups. In the routines of daily life there is little space for understanding-oriented communication. [21]

Bringing the young musicians to Weimar means, at the same time, displacing them from the socially well established knowing about the others in their home country. Together with the deep, widely spread and highly valid knowing about the others in each population, the symbols of distinction and segregation, which configure the social space—such as border fences, segregated areas of living and so on—are left behind. Although they are still very present in the minds, they loose their relevance for daily interaction and with this for the orientating knowledge of the young people. Instead, interaction with an increasing amount of unknown people with a large variety of cultural heritages becomes part of their daily experience. Furthermore, some of these "foreigners" turn into *significant others* (BERGER & LUCKMANN, 1966), at least during the time of orchestra rehearsals and concerts. The worldwide activities of the orchestra open to the musicians a wide range of experiences of intercultural interaction, and help to naturalize the process of getting into contact and cooperating with "foreigners." In that way, the knowledge about interaction and individual communicative competences can be increased immensely. [22]

Moreover the micro-cosmos orchestra is a special knowledge domain. The common work on sophisticated music performances demands high attentiveness to the other musicians; it demands concentration on the others, coordination in many ways and disciplined control of personal animosities. Only in a conjoint cooperation a harmonic interplay becomes possible; success is reached either collectively or not at all. With this orchestral setting, BARENBOIM creates a space and an atmosphere for personal interaction between members of both groups. This enables the acquisition of knowledges which previously had had no space in the home countries. They are based on individual experiences and are not built upon unfortunate experiences of others. To reinforce this learning, the orchestral work is complemented with discussions, speeches, and workshops supporting intercultural cooperation. Not to be underestimated, this cooperative attitude is strengthened Daniel BARENBOIM and his co-head of the orchestra, the Arabian author and journalist Edward Said, both charismatic personalities with a mixed intercultural biography. In the understanding of Israelis and Palestinians, music is not more than a catalyst, giving the initial kick for further processes of

interaction and cooperation.[3] The orchestra, as a specific dimension of musical knowledge, provides a social environment, containing and demanding specific knowledges and practices. Here, former perceptions of Israelis and Palestinians about each other lack relevance or are even dysfunctional and thus need revising. [23]

That these experiences will not stay without consequences when the young musicians go back to their home countries is to be expected and to be hoped for. As for the initial question on the process of creating understanding between two enemy groups, we still deal with traditions, stereotypes, attitudes and norms, terms to be subsumed in another word: culture. However, these terms are hardly mentioned above in the analysis of the WEDO case. Instead, the culture component has been disaggregated. More innovation for cultural analysis is gained by doing this fragmentation in terms of knowledge instead in terms of commonalities and tradition. Thus the dynamics of cultural production taking place in the intercultural interaction of Israeli and Arabians are emphasized and built the main focus. The knowledge perspective supports avoidance of reifying or constructing cultural belongings. They are no more than a point of departure for the intercultural communication. By focusing on the interrelation of individual application of knowledge and meso- and macro-structuring essentializing ideas of cultural traditions, shared orientations and homogeneous populations, as closely attached to concepts of nation and culture, are fundamentally challenged. The paradigmatic turn from culture to knowledge is to be recognized. But indeed, it is a small one, and as BARTH (1998) has stated also, a significant one. [24]

4. Constructing the Fields of Intercultural Communication Research

The shortly outlined example of the WEDO illustrates various aspects of the perspective an anthropology of knowledge paradigm brings into the analyses of culture and with it into intercultural communication research. The fragmentation of culture, in individual and more shared stocks of knowledges, in symbolic representations of this knowledge, in various media and in a social organization of knowledge puts a stronger emphasis on the process within which culture is produced: the ongoing reproduction of Israeli-Palestinian stereotypes as well as the production of new cultural forms in the WEDO. Tradition is, in this perspective, not longer a restricting, action-defining framework, but much more a reference and a means of further cultural production. Tradition provides the productive situation as well as the material for individual actors and future action. Instead of asking which "cultural standards" (THOMAS, 2003) are brought into intercultural communication from the point of view of an anthropology of knowledge, the individually used knowings, their reference to group knowledge, their variations and the growth of knowledge in interaction will be searched for. In this way, intercultural communication is also constitutive to society. It is not placed at the edges of social growth, but is a more or less important element of it, depending on the intensity and significance of the intercultural contacts. The Israeli and Palestinian example exemplifies the deep embeddedness of the

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3   NOTHDURFT draws parallels between music and communication in its dialogic character, the aesthetics and the sensuousness (NOTHDURFT & SCHWITTALLA, 1995).

intercultural in societal contexts. The way both states and their inhabitants interact with each other has an enormous impact on societal and cultural processes within each group. Coming back to the example of the WEDO, personal interaction of the young musicians seem to have lesser impact, but still are part of the cultural production in each population. The consequences of the individual intercultural learning of the Israeli and the Arabic members of the WEDO for the interaction of both populations on the meso and macro level are probably being neglected at the moment, but could become more relevant when discussed within the frame of a question of scale. [25]

Intercultural communication would no longer be a question of ethnicity, of nation, of membership in an organization or of language. Under the paradigm of an anthropology of knowledge, it would become a question of diverse knowledges of people within a society and between societies, and thus more a question of scale, a question of shared and diverse information. How different are the stocks of knowledges? Are there similarities? Are there basic differences or even cosmological contradictions? How can diverse stocks of knowledge be made referable to various cosmological orders? Inductively, intercultural communication research has already gone this step towards a knowledge related identification of cultural differences. When managerial and organizational cultures (e.g. HINNER, 2004) were added to the research agendas of intercultural communication research, it was not only an expression that business is one of the main fields of application in ICC history (HALL & HALL, 1990). It is a reaction on the recurring experience that culture matters in organizational contexts. Hence the idea of diverging stocks of knowledges can already be found in ICC research. However, it has not been made explicit. Empirically, the need for an extension of ICC approaches towards a wider range of fields has become clear. But theoretically, within predominantly applied theoretical frameworks of culture and communication a plausible argumentation for this extension hardly can be developed. [26]

4.1 Trends of culturalization

When intercultural communication becomes a question of scale, according to diverging awareness, then the question of which fields of ICC research are relevant becomes increasingly indispensable. Still, anticipated certainties about what the defining categories for the intercultural are being questioned more and more. Coming back to the previously outlined problems of culture concepts, it becomes more complicated to identify cultural belonging in respect to membership. The potential cultural references, non-reflected, internalized or intentionally selected by individuals, have increased tremendously. When policemen question Turkish second generation migrants, as it has been sketched out in the case study presented by Norbert SCHROER in this issue it is far from being certain what the intercultural lines of the communication are. Is it a sense of Turkishness still relevant in the communicative habitus of the potential delinquents, although they have fluent language skills, because they were born and have grown up in Germany? Is it a general immigrant experience? Or is it a question of diverging social statuses that constitute the situation? All these, and

probably some more differences could be relevant for the failure of police inquisition, which repeatedly fails in its intention to receive a committing statement to the crime, and this with the same communicative pattern with all suspected criminals of migrant tradition. Thus, this failure is likely to be an intercultural problem, but still the cultural references are not obvious. [27]

The uncertainty whether a problem is interculturally grounded has become a matter of analysis itself. Even in situations with obviously culturally mixed participants—according to traditional categories of ethnicity, language, nation —, an intercultural approach does not necessarily turn out to be helpful for our understanding of a problem. At least the lines of interculturality are not "naturally" given, but are a matter of identification since there is, nowadays, a multiplicity of options of cultural references. This conclusion is to be taken from Norbert SCHROER's findings[4], which are not isolated exceptionalities, but correspond with other studies' findings, which state that different cultural traditions do not matter in any case (DREHER, 2005). If, and how culture has an impact appears as a question of investigation rather than a given research setting. This under-determination of research fields relates to the theoretical non-specify of ICC. In some key concepts, the specification of the *intercultural* dimension in contrast to more general concepts like *communication competence* for example cannot be sharply construed[5]. The cultural grounds of the problem thus need to be suspiciously and routinely viewed in any research setting—even more, since culture has become a trendy term and culturalization seems to offer a universal response to various problems (KASCHUBA, 1995).[6] [28]

Constructing a relevant field of research is a well known task in any study addressing cultural issues, since transnational anthropology has pointed out the constructedness of the seemingly "naturally given" local fields (HANNERZ, 1996; MARCUS, 1995). In the eyes of anthropological actors, young musicians of WEDO, for example, have become "moving targets" of research (WELZ, 1998). As they are traveling around the world, researchers need to follow them at least for some time, especially if qualitative methods are applied. Additionally, in a reverse perspective: the embeddedness of local interaction in larger social, organizational, national or even supra-national contexts is demanding a close look at the interplay of global and local settings and actors (WELZ, 2002). In this rather new task of constructing the own fields of research, instead of seeing them as given, ICCR could learn from related disciplines in which culture is also a subject of matter. Much of what has been described and analyzed in their qualitative methodologies could be valuable for ICCR as well. [29]

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4   The research design and the findings of Henrike EVERS (2009) also presented in this issue point in a similar direction. She evaluates the individual knowledge growth after long term intercultural experiences. Culture and tradition do not play much of a role in her approach, although, when following traditional categories of intercultural research, the setting could be identified definitely as an intercultural. Her operationalization is lead by the intention to avoid reifying categories and though does not intentionally match the idea of the perspective of an anthropology of knowledge, which focuses on the processes and the outcomes of interaction.

5   For an exemplary definition of intercultural communication competence see WISEMAN (2002).

6   An outstanding example for this practice is the widely recognized idea of the clash of civilizations by Samuel HUNTINGTON (1996).

ICCR is even more in the situation to move in its construction of the field beyond this reflexive rethinking onto own research leading concepts. The choice of an ICCR field is to be qualified in further aspects. Since the above developed understanding of "intercultural" is mainly a question of diverging knowledges, or, to be more precise, a matter of the scale of diverging knowledges, divergences in the knowings of the participants, which become an important indicator for potentially intercultural dimensions of an investigated setting. Besides, the quality of divergences is to be kept in mind since contradictory elements in the stock of knowledge tend to increase complications in interaction situations, such as the presented example of the Israeli and Palestinian conflict indicates. The identification of a problem as being intercultural thus is far from being an easy task. Even the classification presented above of the Israeli and Palestinian conflict as an intercultural problem is not a convincing assessment at the first glance, when the question of divergence is brought up. Both groups share the same daily life, but they experience occurrences from different angels of the setting. When coming to the divergences in awareness of members of both groups, the range of knowledge is not likely to vary enormously between Israeli and Palestinians, but the emotions attached to the more or less common stocks of knowledge doubtlessly vary widely. So although the conflict was identified and analyzed above as an intercultural problem, a more detailed analysis challenges this categorization fundamentally. This new evaluation is not the final clue, but it demonstrates that a solid argumentation would require—to bring BARTH's three faces of knowledge back into the discussion—an analysis of high intensity of the stocks of knowledges, how they are represented, organized and applied in situations of interaction. [30]

4.2 How to identify the intercultural?

To find out about the relevance of culture in a setting of interaction, again the perspective on "culture in the communicative making" as a basic characteristic of each interaction is to be acknowledged. This unsolvable interrelation of both concepts, culture and communication, is reverse or dialectic. And thus, "communication in the cultural making" is the other end of these interrelating perspectives. The communicative end is a promising starting point for questions about the intercultural grounds of interaction. Communication under investigation of its cultural making then needs to be investigated from two sides of cultural "infiltration." When the "use" of culture in interaction is at stake, again a disaggregated perspective in terms of knowledge is applied. Both are significant dimensions of interculturality in interaction:

a. the idea of culture actors hold and apply in interaction; often this is done with an intention of distinction (BOURDIEU, 1984);
b. the mode of communicating, knowing and (re-)constructing social reality actors have acquired through socialization, in the sense of a structuring structure, as Pierre BOURDIEU has put it. This is not a static mode but gives a frame within which communicative action is performed and within which new forms are being developed. The habitus of an actor is—as sketched above for

other traditions—an ongoing project of reproduction, including potential trans-formations and changes. It affects the way the actor deals with strangers and strangeness (BOURDIEU, 1990) as well as with communicative action. [31]

In the meantime, the scientifically elaborated idea of "culture" has been deeply embedded in popular thinking. And, according to the point made above under (a.), a leading scheme of interaction, even if the theoretical progress is not adapted immediately and only diffuses into larger populations in a longer term perspective. People easily tend to blame culture if a communication fails. And understandably, the circumstances allow this interpretation, for example in interactions with migrants. In these cases, communicators are likely to apply the culture concept in a reflexive way, in the sense of a meta-communication or a communication "repairing" discourse according to the understanding of HABERMAS (2006). Sometimes, they switch into a more strategic dealing with the idea of culture. For instance, by presenting themselves as foreigners who need help, although they would be able to deal with the situation on their own. The concept of culture thus is a term and a category of daily life and of active application widely spread in populations. This practice can be subsumed under the term of "doing culture." And, it is almost self-declaring that such interaction practices of cultural distinguishing and self positioning is an essential part of intercultural communication research. Defining ICCR fields according to such applications of popular ideas of culture is a rather easy task, since their objectivations can be identified easily in spoken and written language. This gives them a double function: They are at the same time an expression of interculturality as well as an indicator for it. [32]

More complicated is the dealing with the habitual dispositions of communication outlined above under (b.). When they come to be part of an intercultural situation, the full complexity of the relational categories "culture" and "communication" constituting each other is at stake. Accordingly, a field which is acknowledging such complexity construction and access is a precondition to get legitimate insights in this constitutive process. Due to this basic quality, the indicative value —according to interculturality—of these structuring structures of communication is not given. Since cultural dispositions are deeply embedded in cultural practices and meanings, only detailed analysis will open insight into the grounds of the structuring structure a person refers to while interacting. Only when in communicative situations continuing misunderstanding or non-intended consequences occur in recurrent patterns, is it likely that the interaction is defined as intercultural. Even partners with largely, or according to the situational issues largely shared knowledges, may fail in their interactive efforts. As the Israeli Palestinian example indicates, if they are involved in conflicting systems of meaning and thus come to completely diverging interpretations of facts and circumstances. [33]

This means, categorizations as "intercultural communication" in a scientifically precise, re-constructible mode can only be an outcome of intense investigations. Beside the identification of obvious applications of culture as a distinctive and declaring category, they also need close analysis of the habitus—in the full sense

of BOURDIEU's concept—as unconsciously applied, constantly but only mutually growing frameworks constituting individual interaction. Furthermore, quite a few cases would need to identify communicative patterns of misunderstanding or failure. Consequently, defining fields of intercultural communication would in fact become an effort of itself and a complicated procedure, which could hardly be demanded as an initiatory act for staging the field of ICCR. In addition, it is to be recognized that especially by setting these complicated modes of qualification on the ground of defining the "intercultural," the starting point as well as the constitutive element of intercultural communication would continue to emphasize distinctions and differences. [34]

Regarding all these problems in subject construction and in field construction of ICCR, it does not seem to make much sense to conceptualize "intercultural communication" as a distinct research area in itself. Inherent problems of the culture concept would still be perpetuated. To avoid these troubles accompanying the field of intercultural communication since its foundation in the 1970s in America, "interculturality" could be understood not so much as a category of analysis, but rather as an outcome of communication research. Interculturality would not be part of a preliminary field construction, but would be a result of intense research within a certain field. Then, hopefully the schematic ideas of interculturality, as they circulate in popular discourse as well as in other disciplines, which are not so well familiar with cultural theory, would diminish step by step. The above developed dimensions of interculturality (a) active reference to culture as a category of distinction and of explaining differences and (b) in the sense of the communicative habitus could then serve within analytic processes as criteria to identify a given situation as interculturally influenced or even defined. Then, the intercultural, in its full complexity of the two outlined dimensions, would be a finding identified by communication research. [35]

One could argue that this position is far too modest according to the decades of research in intercultural communication. Especially, because experienced researchers probably have developed enough of a sense about interculturality to come to a high-quality judgment about which field is to be declared as *intercultural*. However, the inter-subjective reconstruction of this categorization would not be possible by mere experience-based field construction. Furthermore, the quality of the various lines of intercultural differences would stay diffuse and still manifold categories of diversity (age, profession, gender, etc.) could be relevant. In addition, aspects of diverging knowledges (like situational knowings, cosmological knowledge, communicative competence, and others) would have to be divided into developing an elaborate understanding of the intercultural. Remarkably, a category of distinction and difference remains and thus the relevance of this obvious widely spread human practice is acknowledged. By reducing ICCR from a field of its own to an important dimension within communicative fields, the adhering assumption of difference within the culture concept looses its character of a paradigmatic paradox. If one assumes, theoretically, the existence of differences, this does not necessarily mean one is excluding cooperation oriented approaches. Provided that besides more or less

fundamental distinctions there are further strands of communicative action supplementing more conciliating interactive achievements. [36]

4.3 Interculturality in the communicative making—Theoretical imperatives and resources

The above developed understanding of intercultural interaction on the grounds of an anthropology of knowledge is characterized by a fragmentation of culture as knowledge and by an understanding of communication as constitutive for culture and vice versa. Rather than investigating similarities along well known categories of cultural differences (ethnicity, religion, nation, etc.), it puts constitutions of knowledge on the research agenda, and thus analyzes how knowledges and varieties of knowledge are produced, represented, transmitted and applied. Communication practices play a key role in cultural production, as it is conceptualized in an anthropology of knowledge. They therefore require increased attention when it comes to the study of ICC. Further, the boundaries between inter- and intra-cultural actions of communication have been challenged, not generally, but in terms of their discriminatory power. Here, the introduced argumentation joins postcolonial ideas of hybridity (Edward SAID) with iridescent, interactive constructions of the other, relative to self-identity constructions (BHABA) in basic assumptions, but not always in detail and in consequences. In the here proposed understanding, intercultural communication is not positioned at the edge of a social group, but rather is an inherent element of it. As such, ICC should be integrated into social theory, which in turn is essential as a framework for the conceptualization of ICCR. [37]

Relevant social theories (BERGER & LUCKMANN, 1966; LUHMANN, 1995) conceptualize primordial social situations along qualities commonly ascribed to intercultural interactions, but have not yet integrated a distinguished theory on interculturality (RECKWITZ, 2007). In a globalizing world, one can notice an increasing absence of social theory. This restricts a re-conceptualization of ICCR. The circumstances surrounding the shortly sketched example of the Israeli and Palestinian conflict show what an important impact intercultural interaction has on the inner-societal situation. This needs to be taken into account when the stage for ICCR is set in this field. Still, this piece of social theory is missing and constrains the re-conceptualization of ICCR as elementarily inscribed in communication and society as proposed in this article. To get a comprehensive understanding of ICC, the various levels from the interpersonal over the organizational to the national level, shortly all stages from micro to macro level, need to be taken into account. And each one affords to be regarded in its interrelation to the other levels in a theoretical conceptualization of ICC. A lot of theoretical work should be done in future to work out these missing links for an integrative and comprehensive theory of interculturality. Existing social theories with a communication bias should be analyzed on their idea of the intercultural and should be elaborated in this question. [38]

On the micro level, some theoretical work concerned with culture in the communicative making has already been done. Most prominently, Erving

GOFFMAN's work on social interaction offers detailed insights how cultural contexts are produced, embodied and enacted in verbal and nonverbal communicative acts (GOFFMAN, 1959, 1967, 1974). Although GOFFMAN has not elaborated his thoughts as a comprehensive theory it is and already has become a source for further theoretical work on the foundational relevance of communication for the production of culture. Some of the concepts GOFFMAN worked out have been adapted in ICCR mostly as a point of departure for cross-cultural comparison, as for example "face work" or "territories of self." Not always have these comparisons been undertaken in the sense of GOFFMAN's idea, as an interaction constituting process but rather as a given cultural characteristic of the compared populations. Following GOFFMAN's ideas, the given cultural constructs have been investigated, rather than the dynamics of cultural production. Other paradigmatic strands as the ethnography of communication (GUMPERZ & HYMES, 1972), sociolinguistics (BERNSTEIN, 1972) and BAKHTIN's concept of speech genres (BAKHTIN, 1979 [1986]) have also contributed to the understanding of culture in the communicative making. The most elaborated work in this orientation, referring to these theoretical strands, is the social theory of Thomas LUCKMANN (1992). It is based on communicative genres (LUCKMANN, 2002a, 2002b; LUCKMANN & KNOBLAUCH, 2000); which provide in sum of its various forms a specific cultural repertoire (GÜNTHNER & KNOBLAUCH, 1995; GÜNTHNER & LUCKMANN, 2001) and thus reversely are characteristic for socio-cultural contexts. Research on intercultural communication has concentrated on the comparison of specific genres of communication, like mourning rituals or gossip in diverse cultural contexts. On the edge, as a side effect of research on intercultural communication, the emergence of new forms of communications and the hybridization of culturally diverse forms of a specific genre of communication have also been described. But these have not been integrated systematically into the theoretical framework of genres of communication.[7] [39]

Another piece of relevant theory is the actor-centered approach of Pierre BOURDIEU's habitus concept, which has been sketched out as a possible macro-theoretical framework for GOFFMAN's micro-sociological analyses on interaction and interaction orders (WILLEMS, 1997). Following, sharing a similar interest on the ordering structures of speaking and interacting with LUCKMANN, BOURDIEU understands communication as relatively to the field where it is enacted and thus embedded in specific social power and dominance relations (BOURDIEU & THOMPSON, 1991). Furthermore, both BOURDIEU and LUCKMANN are interesting theoretical sources for ICCR: Their work is based partly upon linguistic grounds[8], and thus enables a more or less uncomplicated connection to linguistic research, as one of the strong contributing disciplinary strands within ICCR. [40]

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7 For a summary of this theoretical approach and its application in intercultural research see GÜNTHNER (2007).

8 LUCKMANN's ideas are built partly upon work of socio-linguistics and linguistic anthropologists like Dell HYMES and John GUMPERZ. Pierre BOURDIEU's habitus concept is put by himself in relation to the idea of generative grammars of Noam CHOMSKY, even more its consonance with linguistics gives it relevance for linguistic research and theory (HANKS, 2005).

Moreover, to elaborate a detailed overview on the theoretical backdrops of intercultural interaction in social theory, intense research will have to be done. Further, the revision of social theories would have to include the question on their contribution to the knowledge anthropological paradigm. At least the social theory of communication based on the habitus concept and LUCKMANN shows explicit analogies to an understanding of culture as knowledge. [41]

Beside an integrating, interlinking perspectives on micro, meso and macro levels of social action, the focus of ICCR should be shifted towards the communicative constitutions of culture and interculture. In such a way, the embedding of intercultural communication in a larger framework of social theory could be initiated. Up to now, the theoretical references stated here have mostly not been recognized as resources for ICCR or have only been addressed extraordinarily selectively within the dominant paradigms of ICC. [42]

5. How to Study Intercultural Communication?—A Conclusion

The conceptualization of culture as knowledge is not so much of a simplification when it comes to the task of identifying problems as interculturally grounded. Cultural analysts in search of a generalized construction of their fields will find themselves disappointed. At first sight, the perspective of an anthropology of knowledge assists to avoid a culturalization of research settings, and thus prevents the field as well as the agents in this field from the predicaments of the culture concepts. Simple re-affirmations of "cultural" certainties cannot intrude easily through the "back door" of research designs. Nevertheless, and this seems to be a main innovation of this new paradigm. Although avoiding culturalist perspectives, it makes the—in many years of qualitative research developed—scientific toolbox of cultural analysis available for sorting the complex interplay of structures and agency in a given setting (HERZFELD, 2001). Thus, an anthropology of knowledge does not solve the problem of constituting intercultural communication research fields straightforwardly. But it helps to reformulate research questions, to adjust approaches and to get a more detailed understanding of contexts. Insofar, an anthropology of knowledge contributes to challenging the field of intercultural communication, not fundamentally, but rather in detail.[9] Potentially, the applicability of intercultural accounts will be reduced, meaning they will turn out as grounded in other theoretic references, as for example, the Israeli and Palestinian conflict: It is likely to be demonstrated as a widely politically motivated conflict rather than a culturally rooted one. It then would not be a matter of intercultural analysis at all. [43]

Such a reduction of the currently flourishing field of intercultural communication seems to be not much of an attractive option to ICC scholars. Although it is not sure if such a reduction indeed would be a consequence. Since all the sorting of intercultural and not-intercultural cases would have to be done, the question is

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9   This challenge has not much in common with perspectives that try to overcome culture from a world systems theory perspective. The latter is heading for reducing culture to a functional dimension, whereas the paradigm of an anthropology of knowledge intends the opposite, a sharpening of the "cultural lens" for the variety and complexity of social settings.

justified why scientists in ICCR should decide for a paradigm reducing the mightiness of their field. The initially promising solutions of the paradigm of an anthropology of knowledge for basic problems in the operationalization of interculturality here seem to turn into the opposite. By reducing the range of validity of intercultural approaches, ICCR is not developed but restricted to a much smaller range of cases and phenomena. From a strategic point of disciplinary politics, this does not seem to be a smart rectification. At a first glance, this impression could be confirmed. However, when looking at it in more detail, the advantages of such a shrinking field will come into sight. In the first place, it will sharpen scientific work, for example when it comes to developing research strategies. Under the perspective of research policy it would be an immense advantage if work on intercultural theory could start from a more valid ground of empirical discoveries rather than facing a jungle of mixed, under-determined, culturalist and intercultural findings. In such a way, qualified concentration on relevant findings could increase sharpness and validity in theorizing intercultural communication. A limitation of its research fields does not seem to contribute greatly to a strategic positioning of ICC in the canon of scientific disciplines. On the other hand, it could be assumed that the positioning of ICC within the range of societies, and thus as an integral element of social theories makes it more relevant rather than less. By this means, it becomes a more connectable reference to other fields of social research as it is today. Similar to other research fields without disciplinary status, like the gender studies for example, interculturality then could become a cross section issue that should potentially be considered in almost all social settings—sometimes in their excluding impetus towards it. [44]

To come back to the initially stated problems in the intersection of communication and cultural theory it has to be made clear at the end that intercultural communication is as much of a social constitutive process as other forms of interaction are. It is a reality-building process (BRAITHWAITE & BAXTER, 2008) and thus primarily a process of negotiation. There is no plausible reason why—when it comes to intercultural communication—the categories culture and communication which constitute each other should all of a sudden loose their inter-relational character and become strictly distinguished entities. In this respect, understanding among each other is not so much the clue of intercultural communication, as far as it can be identified as such. It rather is about coming to a common interpretation of situations. Culture in the communicative making, the productive processes of knowledge production, representing, transmitting and applying, thus moves into the core of intercultural communication research. This, in turn, only deserves its name in the full sense when large varieties in the stocks of knowledges or diverse logics of constructing realities, meaning of producing culture, have to be bridged. Thus, interculturality can only be a finding of social research. It is a perspective of analysis rather than a conceptual, research leading framework. [45]

Acknowledgments

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