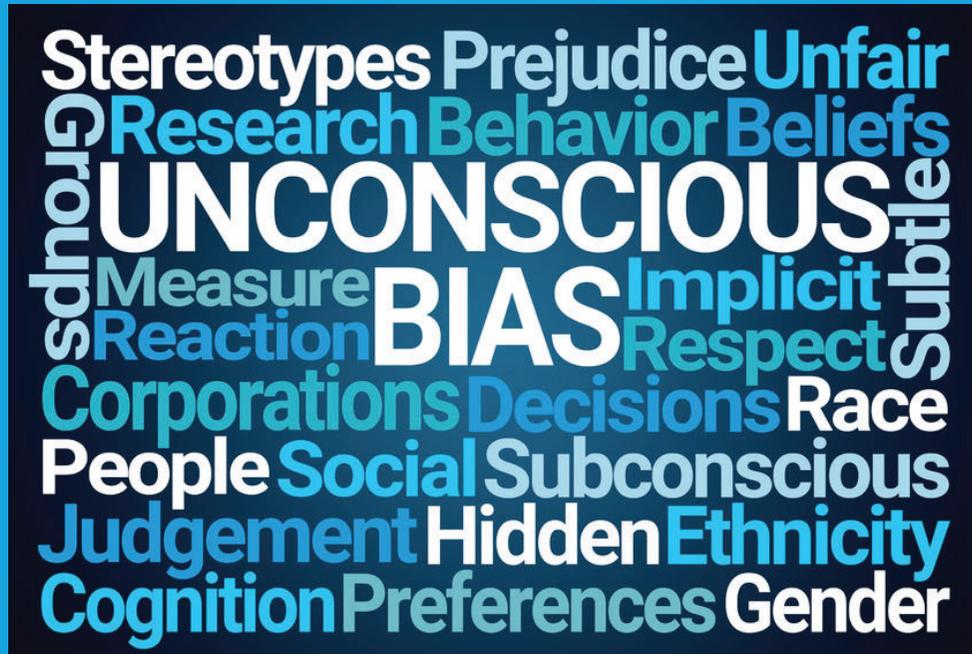


SIETAR JOURNAL



UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

COSMETIC OR DOOR OPENER?

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Impressum

SIETAR Europa
637 bd de la Tavernière
Residence l'Argentière - Bât E
F - 06210 Mandelieu la Napoule
Tel.: +33 4 93 93 36 59
communication@sietareu.org www.sietareu.org

SIETAR Journal

Editorial

Breaking our Unconscious Bias

Sigmund Freud once wrote, "The mind is like an iceberg, it floats with one-seventh of its bulk above water." He was referring to his discovery in psychoanalysis, that the conscious mind is continuously overwhelmed by unconscious biases. They function beneath the radar, are powerful, consistently undermine our best intentions.

Research and studies have been documenting how we all have biases in health care, employment, sports, the arts, education system housing and the political process. The question is, how do we identify and dismantle them?

Rob Gibson provides us with an answer: a large German company, in a "war for talent", is offering "unconscious bias" workshops to that help employees in ways intercultural training can't do. And the results point to an increased demand. Starts on page 9.

On the same theme, Eva Röttgers offers a fascinating look at the neurological functions of the human mind — comfort, stress and survival zones. By becoming aware, we can learn to overcome traditional neuro-pathways and open ourselves to new experiences and the challenges of an ever-more-complex world. From page 11.

In contrast, I've attempted to analyze people's reaction to mass migration by looking at two nations, one "open-doors" and the



other "shut-borders". A neurological and statistical survey that definitely needs discussing if we're to move forward toward a successfully-integrated world. Begins on page 13.

Our interviewee, Michael Buchmann, offers absorbing insights into the intercultural world as it struggled to find its way in the '80s and '90s. Working for a German government aid organization, he had many ups and downs in becoming interculturally competent in third world countries. His thoughts — and experiences — are priceless. Begins on the next page.

Finally, our correspondent in Montreal, Dan MacLeod, takes us on an intercultural journey as seen through the eyes of a fox. An amusing fairy tale with a message about both the planet's environment and global migration. From page 16.

A lot to read, but definitely worth the while.

Patrick Schmidt, Editor-in-chief

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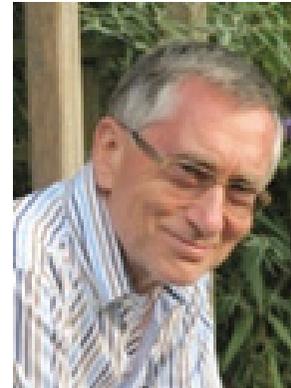
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Interview with
Michael Buchmann

*A passionate and animated
 interculturalist*



One of the consequences of the Yalta conference in 1945 was the redrawing of the eastern European map, resulting in the massive movement of ethnic groups, between 20 and 31 million people. Approximately 12 million were Germans, displaced from east-central Europe to Allied-occupied Germany and Austria. Administrative organizations were set up to help integrate the expelled, but there were immense hardships all around. This was especially true for the children born during and after the war.

One such child was Michael Buchmann. As he tells us in the interview, his reasons for becoming an interculturalist were largely due to his family's constant moving and the feeling that he didn't belong to any particular area. His continual search for *Heimat* and identity led him to seek a career abroad, attempting to understand others in order to find himself.

He worked for German private-public organizations overseeing development and support strategies for third-world countries, becoming acutely aware of cross-cultural issues. Intercultural development and sensitivity was still a relatively unknown concept and, as he tells it, mainly through trial and error did he learn to become competent in international relations.

He has accumulated a rich repertoire of experiences and now gives back by teaching. He's a passionate communicator, winning respect from colleagues and students alike, and was recently named "best lecturer" at the Karlsruhe Institut für Technologie.

Perhaps we can begin with the early experiences that led you to become an interculturalist...

I've asked myself that very question. Basically, it's because I am a German in a double sense. The racist ideology of the Nazis had caused the death or suffering for many millions, including my family. As a German I wanted to contribute in whatever little way I could that people don't devalue others any more but learn to meet with respect and cooperate with understanding. This became a deep motive in my work. The other factor is that I am a child of refugees. My parents came from Silesia, where their families could be traced back for 700 years. It's now part of Poland and, after the war, they had to leave. We moved often, from Bavaria to Hessen and finally to North Rhine-Westphalia. My parents would say to me, "This is not our home," so I didn't feel deeply rooted in the areas we lived in. And it explains in large part why I've always kept exploring and asking, "Where's my home?"

My grandparents played a part in me going beyond my cultural roots. They lived close to a U.S. Army base with many African-American soldiers. My grandmother would say to me, "Look at these good-looking Black soldiers. *Sind die nicht hubsche Kerle?*" (Aren't they beautiful boys?) I never forgot those words; they somehow taught me to see beauty in other settings, to go beyond the surface to the heart and soul of a person.

My interest in other cultures grew with the many moves and

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Michael Buchmann

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The agreement at the 1945 Yalta conference to displace entire ethnic groups caused huge distress and suffering among millions of people.



also a high school friend who came from Turkey. When I started studying at university, my closest friends were from Palestine, Iraq and Iran. I found that I could easily connect to foreigners. I was also active in the “Bochumer Aktionskreis Südliches Afrika” supporting the liberation fights in the Portuguese colonies. These were driving forces that later led me to international development cooperation and intercultural training.

And there was the Vietnam War. I became politically engaged taking part in anti-war demonstrations. In 1975, when I visited North Vietnam, I heard Vietnamese calling it the “American war”. And I saw what carpet-bombing had done to Laos. To be honest, at that time I had difficulty accepting the U.S. culture.

Some years later, when I was in the States for professional reasons, I saw the other side of the coin — the positive aspect of America, what the culture has given to civilization. I was coached for years by an American, attended conferences and became a member of the American Society for Training and Development — all allowing me to become less rigid. These personal contacts transformed my negative views and emotions, a very important learning experience and an important principle in intercultural training — to see the other side of the culture and honestly work off own resentments. This process also helped me later to reconcile myself being a German.

I noted from your Linked-In page that you did your doc-

torate on the Chinese economy under Mao Zedong. Did you you become a specialist of the Chinese economy?

No, not really, but still very interested till this day. However, when the Ruhr University Bochum established the first (West) German partnership with a university in China, my wife and I became the personal contacts to their first exchange professor, the Deputy Director of the Planning Commission at the Central Committee of the Communist Party under Deng Xiaoping; he was sent to study our social market economy.

I started work at the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*, in a research center “Development Strategies” in Bochum. I was with a multi-disciplinary group of scientists, working out support strategies for developing countries. It was applied research, you had to go out into the field and test it. That’s why I lived in Thailand for three years; it was a government-to-government agreement and our task was developing strategies for the higher education system.

Was the program successful?

Yes, in the sense that we were part of a team which made contributions not only in Bangkok but also in regional centers. It was also important for my own development; I worked with some of the brightest minds of Thai society. One was the chief economist at the National Bank, who later became the Director General of the World Trade Organization.

Afterward, I joined the GTZ (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Tech-*

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Michael Buchmann

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hackndmedia.blogspot.com

Meeting Geert Hofstede in 1982 and learning about his cultural dimensions was a turning point in Michael's intellectual development.

nische Zusammenarbeit) and introduced project management worldwide. I built up an international team of trainers and workshop facilitators, who were then sent to work with their local partners. That was in the eighties. I think we were pioneers in training and facilitating international teams to develop their partnership and project strategies. I went to Africa and Arab countries to teach what we had developed in Germany.

It was extraordinary learning-on-the-job ordeal. We had no idea of how ethnocentric and interculturally insensitive we were. When my colleagues and I came back to Germany to evaluate our pilot run, we found we all had exactly the same experience: we were overly German in our methods — you always start with problem analysis — and this approach wasn't working. Our local partners would say, "You parachute yourselves into our country and have the audacity to put your fingers in our noses."

Essentially, we came back with bloody noses. We had thrown ourselves into the water without real understanding of cultural differences and we were drowning. So we changed our approach by becoming more positive. We introduced "stakeholder interest analysis", a method by which we ask who are the stakeholders, what are their motivations, interests and strengths, and how can we build on that?

Today, whenever I'm asked to solve a problem within an international team, I start by finding out what the positive points

have been. This can be confusing. "But we brought you here because of our problems" the team would say. But I take time and insist on learning about what they liked about one another. Even if it takes half a day, it reduces the pressure in the kettle, and here again, helps to see also the other, more positive side of the coin. I might even design a little ceremony, mutually exchanging these positive experiences and thanking one another! These positive emotions are important. They raise the energy and willingness to look at the negative sides later. Then I ask what people found strange and difficult, letting all stakeholders explain their viewpoints without judgment. I might also supplement something with my professional knowledge. Again they experience something important and valuable: we can listen, self-reflect and explain our behaviour. Only after that do I go into the problems.

How did you move into the intercultural field?

As I was the leading person in project management at the GTZ, I became a delegate to a world conference in Copenhagen in 1982. Geert Hofstede was the keynote speaker. His audience was basically engineers, architects, managers... people who want things to be clear, structured, measured. As he explained his findings, we were all very surprised. "What? You are telling us that culture can be measured?!"

Later, my superior and I had the GTZ invite him to our monthly leadership forum so that the directors and managers could

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Michael Buchmann

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Kandy, Sri Lanka



hear about cultural differences and, more importantly, why we need to learn about them. But we weren't applying them.

What do you mean, you weren't applying them?

In 1986, I went to Kandy, Sri Lanka to help establish and lead an integrated regional development program for several years. Again, it was a fantastic learning-on-the-job experience. I started with the typical German consensus, team-oriented style as I was convinced team-oriented leadership was the only way to succeed.

I would introduce myself and say "I know a lot about project management, but you are experts in different fields and specialties. You know what works in your country". I would then ask: what do you think, what do you suggest we do?

They were hesitant to give open answers and were waiting for my suggestions. It took a while before the smartest of them started to respond and I sensed the confusion. "Why is this German management expert asking for our opinions?" But people began to like my style, began to have rising expectations, seeking advice from me.

My Sri Lankan partner, from the President's Staff Ministry, didn't like my leadership, but couldn't tell me. Later I understood how deeply he was rooted in his harmony-oriented upbringing and attached importance to conservative values. In his view, I asked

too many questions. And my approach didn't at all click with his authoritarian style. So, behind my back, he asked GTZ, "Don't you have a stronger leader?" I was horrified when I heard this.

Obviously, this was a clash of high and low power-distance. Were you aware of the dynamics going on?

No. I sensed it, but didn't have a word for it. I had honestly forgotten about Hofstede's "dimensions". I sat down and asked myself, "What's going on?" Are there negative sides to my leadership? Are my partner's authoritarian methods positive? It took me a few days to realize and accept that each style has its positive and negative sides. In my mind I needed to rephrase his style from "authoritarian" to "directive". In this learning process I understood how important it is to mentally erase negative, devaluing terms when describing otherness. Use at least neutral terms or even positive ones being at par with your self-description. This is one condition for mutually respectful cooperation.

I was in a conflict. My partner hadn't liked the open and long discussions in our weekly meetings. But I still wanted to hear and respect our subordinates' views maintaining their motivation, which now had reached a high level. I resolved the conflict by asking our subordinates to give me their points of view before the meeting, and then integrated their ideas into my deliberations during the meeting. This kept their motivation high and, at the same time, satisfied my partner because he saw the two of us in the driver's seat. In the end, our pro-

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Michael Buchmann

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“You see my wife, and mother-in-law”. In polarity management, it’s not one or the other; it’s both.



gramme was evaluated by the Sri Lankan President’s office as the most successful of all provinces.

Did this lead to a change in training programs at the GZT?

Yes. In 1990 and back in Germany, one of the first things I did was contact Geert Hofstede to learn from him personally and start intercultural management courses to include his dimensions.

And we needed to change our principles of leadership and cooperation, which were still very German in nature. I asked permission from the Board to raise the percentage of foreign managers — we worked in 130 countries but less than 10% were non-German. This was the beginning of intercultural training for the whole organization and the results have been a positive transformation.

Have you had other learning experiences that contributed to your profile?

Yes, in 1994 I attended a development conference in Monterrey, Mexico, where I gave a talk on international leadership. The other speaker was an American, Barry Johnson, talking about polarity management, his specialty. We both learned from each other.

He greatly widened and deepened my learning. His polarity management supplements “or” thinking with “and” thinking. Many conflicts or complex issues are not problems to be solved, but polarities to be managed, interdependent opposites, both valuable and both needed. In intercultural co-

operation polarity management transforms “my way” or “your way” conflicts to new synergistic combinations of both cultures’ approaches. Seek neutral terms for both poles, recognize the upsides and downsides of each pole more objectively, and create amazing synergies by applying this approach. This process started in me in a still simple way, when I changed the negative label “authoritarian” leadership to the more neutral “directive”.

What you’re saying is it’s basically about dimensions.

Exactly. When Barry saw cultural dimensions, he said they were polarities. Collectivism-individualism, high and low power-distance, hard and soft management... They all have upsides and downsides. I think interculturalists should be using this principle.

For instance, I recently worked with an American-German company, implementing team management principles and designed something to get both groups on board. I asked the German managers about their experiences and they said Americans brought products to the market that weren’t yet mature, a sort of “quick and dirty”, pro-active approach. The American managers, on the other hand, said Germans were problem-oriented and too long and complicated in their analyses. I helped both parties see the whole picture, the strengths of both cultures, a sort of polarity management. Both groups could then combine strengths to create synergies. This is the strategy international companies need to take.

You won in 2017 the “best lecturer” award at KIT (Karlsruhe

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Michael Buchmann

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Speaking at the SIETAR Deutschland Forum in Bonn early this year.

Institut für Technologie). Can you give us your secrets on how you motivate your students to listen to you?

I definitely love my work. I began my studies in economics and social sciences, which are rather sober fields of study. But I've learned that we shouldn't only work on the brain level, we should also work on the emotional level. Even serious accountants, economists and engineers have emotions. When I teach, I don't hide my emotions. I show my fascination, what drives me, tell them about my experiences and setbacks. It's compelling, the students see the motivation, the enthusiasm. Theories and empirical findings are not enough. You need to tell stories so they can relate and it becomes practical.

How do you see the SIETAR at the moment?

I sometimes wonder about some kind of "religious wars" among interculturalists. "Do cultures — and culture standards — exist anymore? Do corporate or national culture dimensions still make sense?" Such questions are justified. But we shouldn't throw the baby out with the bath water. We need to think of our clients' practical needs. The German plant manager for Penang, Malaysia, needs to hear about high power distance, collectivism and harmony orientation, what leadership expectations are expected, and how to establish trust, open them up to get "the bad news" he needs to look at as their superior being responsible.

In SIETAR – as in our societies - , I see too much one-sidedness and naiveté, in particular on the topic of migration.

At one Berlin workshop I attended, people were only talking about how wonderful migration was. I said, "Wait a minute. I come from a refugee family. I had tears in my eyes when I saw the wonderful "Willkommen" scenes at the Munich railway station. However, we have a growing gap between pro- and con-groups, not only in Germany but also in the U.S. Why do you think Trump was elected? Will we also talk about negative experiences and concerns around migration?" I was brusquely talked down by the group's facilitator. She said, "We only want to hear positive stories!" No one, SIETARians from various European countries, dared to disagree.

The main polarity we need to see around migration is "Open Culture" and "Core Culture", "Willkommenskultur" and "Leitkultur" in German. Denying truths and values in both poles only fires the fights. "Migration" is an undeniable and unsolvable polarity that needs to be managed. The best in both sides can even be leveraged. We SIETARians, in particular, should be role models in moving from "Or" thinking to "And" thinking and help reconcile.

If we continue denying other people's thoughts and feelings, we will increase the gap with opposing groups, not heal the wounds. Again, we should remind ourselves that we are bridge-builders. This means we need to see all sides of an issue. If we can attain that frame of mind, then SIETAR will play a more important role in our society.

Interviewed by Patrick Schmidt

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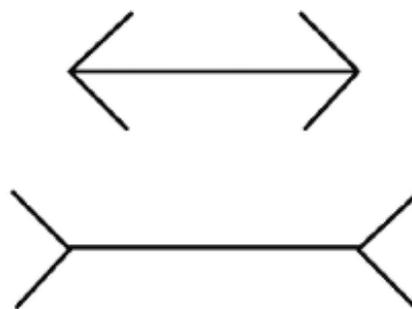
Unconscious Bias: cosmetic or door-opener?

by Robert Gibson

When I was first asked to put together an unconscious bias workshop for some HR colleagues I was very sceptical. “Isn’t this what we, as intercultural trainers, have always been doing?” I asked myself. My client sent me a link to the Implicit Association Test (IAT) and I found out that I was biased against West Germans with a preference for East Germans. Wasn’t that more of a test of keyboard dexterity than anything else? Perhaps the whole thing was just a quick fix for cultural problems. Two years on and I’m convinced that unconscious bias training can reach people in a way that other intercultural training can’t.

I am not alone. Google is just one of the many companies worldwide addressing unconscious bias. Over half of the company has now taken part in their in-house “Unconscious Bias @ Work” workshop. The Royal Society, a leading UK academy dedicated to promoting excellence in science, claims to “actively address unconscious bias when making decisions”. Ellyn Shook, chief leadership and human resources officer at the global strategy and consulting firm Accenture, says the company’s video *Inclusion Starts with I* is part of Accenture’s campaign to become “the most inclusive and diverse company on the planet”.

So why is there all this fuss about unconscious bias? It all comes down to increased awareness of the need for diversity. There is a clear business case for diversity: diverse



Is the bottom line longer than the top line?

teams have the potential to be more innovative and are more likely to foster customer proximity than monocultural ones. Demographic trends have created a “war for talent”, in which there is no place for any barriers to hiring the best people, regardless of their background. Unconscious bias is a barrier to the diversity that businesses need to be successful on the global market. Fascinating research — using the latest technology to find out how the brain works — forms the basis of our understanding of unconscious bias. Nobel Prize-winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman describes two ways of thinking, which he calls “fast” and “slow”. The brain is only about two per cent of our body mass, but it consumes about 20 per cent of our energy; it has evolved to make mental shortcuts to save energy. We cannot cope with all the information that we are bombarded with. Every second, we are exposed to 11 million bits of information but can only process about 40. We are continually filtering information.

Our mental filter is based on our previous experience. If we have been exposed only to negative or, for that matter, positive images of a particular group of people, we will apply that knowledge in our decision-making. Sometimes, these views of others become fixed as stereotypes. Intercultural stereotypes can be dangerous; the danger is that they lead us to make poor decisions. The effects of unconscious bias can be particularly serious in the recruiting

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Unconscious Bias...

— continued

At first glance, would you hire this person to run your research and development department?



sfgate.com

process. Even before we invite candidates to an interview, we can be influenced by photos or names.

The types of bias which we need to take into account are against particular religious groups, gender, age, race, parental status, educational background, sexual orientation and physical ability. Are men hired rather than women for top management positions? How far do companies hire or develop employees over 50? Are they open to people with a different racial background from themselves? Are they reluctant to promote single parents or women with small children? Do they have a preference for graduates from particular universities? How accepted are members of the LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) community? Would they have hired Stephen Hawking?

How can we address unconscious bias? The first important thing to remember is that unconscious bias is part of being human. We all have our own biases. We can, to some extent, become aware of them but we cannot “heal” unconscious bias. We need to face up to it and, in the context of decision-making, develop processes that reduce its potentially negative effects.

The scientific basis of work on how the brain functions appeals to many people who have previously shown little interest in diversity issues. The starting point is to accept that your brain can mislead you and that your experience can

lead you to make wrong decisions. The next stage is to recognize the advantages of creating an environment in which a diverse workforce can flourish. As Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada says: “Diversity is a fact. Inclusion is a choice.” Taking part in a workshop will not solve the problem but it can increase sensitivity of individuals. When combined with appropriate actions at team level and structural change, it can help create inclusive organizations.

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Thinking, Fast and Slow, Daniel Kahneman (Penguin)

Robert Gibson was responsible for intercultural training at Siemens from 2000 – 2018 and is Adjunct Professor of Cross-Cultural Management at Bologna Business School. He is a former Vice-President of SIETAR Europa and a founding member of SIETAR Deutschland.

Robert will be running a workshop (in German) on Unconscious Bias for SIETAR Deutschland on 10 November 2018 in Frankfurt. <https://sietar-deutschland.de/node/172>

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Neurological Tensions in a Paradoxical World

by Eva Röttgers

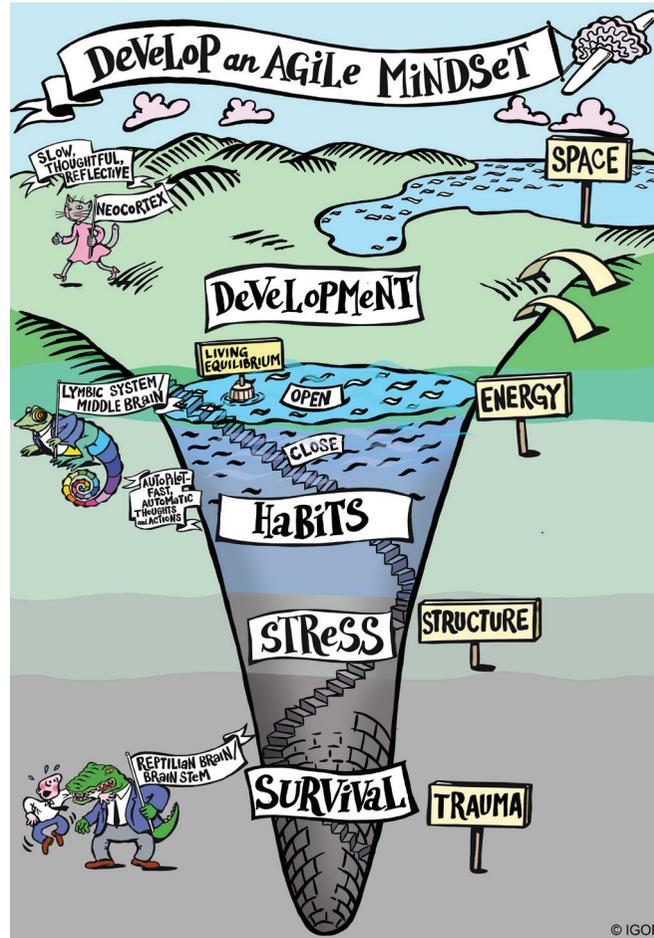
“Feeling unsettled” — “being in a transition without knowing what will come” etc.— these descriptions I hear a lot today from friends, colleagues and readings in blogs, newspapers etc. Are we living in really special times at the moment or is it ‘only’ our perception that something unusual is going on in my own life and/or the world as a whole?

For many it seems like their daily life is continuing like ‘usual’: raising kids, working, meeting friends and family etc. But even these people feel and express uneasiness or even real fear about the many, different events in the world. Others see their life as going through a big transition: either life is exciting with promising new perspectives or life is threatening because of a very unclear future.

The political system in many countries and the international interdependence between nations are ‘suddenly’ experiencing challenges, a contrast to the last 20-30 years, whereby the world seemed like a stable, well-predictable machine.

To understand these developments and its effects on different systemical levels, I would like to contribute a model that addresses the neurological functioning of humans and its consequencess in the world of business and society as a whole.

The human brain has developed over the last millions of years the capacity for optimal adaption to environmental



conditions. As children, openness to impulses of the surroundings is important for learning, while our caretakers ensure that we are protected from potential threats in our environments. As we grow older, our “psychic immune system” (the ability to take care of ourselves when needed) develops. In a simplified version (see illustration above) we can note three different layers of the immune system:

- 1)The comfort zone of habits and beliefs, where we know from our experiences that we are ‘safe’.
- 2)The stress zone, where our body provides additional energy to address actual challenges when it is needed.
- 3)The survival zone, where all energies are mobilized within a fraction of a second when our life is in danger.

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Neurological tensions...

— *continued*

As human beings, do we have the power to transcend our traditional neuro pathways and open ourselves to new, exciting experiences?



Depending on circumstances, our 'psychic immune system' determines whether we are open or close to whatever happens around us. This system works automatically, ensuring that our life will remain stable and yet flexible enough to adapt to new circumstances.

Unfortunately for most people, this fluidity gets lost over the years in our life. We become more or less stuck in the 'comfort zone'. The need for feeling 'safe' dominates many of our activities. The beliefs, habits and behaviors, experienced in the past that ensured our safety, will be consciously or unconsciously our favorite choices.

Or, we can feel constantly under stress or even develop a posttraumatic stress response — a constant repetition of a threatening situation, experienced in the past. This means, the impulses of our internal or external environment are triggering all kinds of defense reactions.

How can these neurobiological relationships help us understand and adapt to our increasingly challenging environment?

In the business world, new technological developments require an innovative mindset of the players. Relying on familiar, proven products, processes and business models do not guarantee the future survival of an enterprise. Innovative companies get very excited about new opportunities

and see big chances to go into new, unknown directions. Even large, traditional corporations start risky experiments with disruptive business models. Take a look at Amazon, getting into the food delivery business or Apple, developing the self-driving car.

At the same time, predictions that up to 70% of actual jobs might be gone within the next years due to the artificial intelligence revolution are generating anxiety and stress responses on a large scale. Additionally, effects of climate change and migration movements are creating pressures to an unprecedented scale. And globalized interdependencies and its unpredictable consequences are shaking up political systems and socio-cultural relationships in many countries of the world.

If we look back at the model of the 'psychic immune system', we can understand why the preferred response of people in these unsettling times is simply "closing the mind", believing that a secure future is through protection of borders and maintaining familiar circumstances. On the other hand, having confidence, conviction and excitement about new opportunities, despite feelings of unsettlement and uncertainty, would be – in my eyes – a more promising mindset. If we can overcome our traditional neurological wiring, it might provide us with the capacity, willingness and competence to take on the paradoxical challenges we are all facing in this highly globalized world.

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Integration Yes... but not in my backyard

A neuroscientific and statistical look at human nature

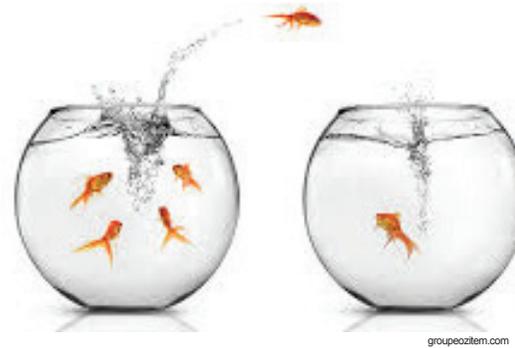
by Patrick Schmidt

A little over a year ago, I was having lunch with a professor responsible for the intercultural communications program at a large European university. He mentioned that he'd taken his daughter out of the public school system and put her into a private school. As he explained it, the massive influx of migrant children had caused social and ethnic conflicts and the scholastic level in the neighbourhood school had begun to fall. He was quite aware that his decision went against all of his beliefs and values, but his child's well being took precedent over the integration of migrants.

Although I could sympathize with the instinct to protect one's child, I couldn't help but think of the contradiction. Highly educated, a strong proponent of respect, diversity and inclusion, he was one of the "best and brightest" of society. Yet, by pulling his child out of public school, he was doing the opposite of what Europe needs to do to successfully integrate people from other cultures.

His single action illustrates the dilemma many of us in dominant cultures face today: how do we reconcile the desire to preserve our cultural identity (and material well-being) while, at the same time, demonstrating human solidarity and empathy for the impoverished — the "others"?

Unfortunately, the response is mostly one of confusion and stress, leading to defensive behavior. When parts of towns



and cities become inhabited by "disadvantaged" immigrants, tensions invariably increase. People in the dominant culture, who can afford it, vote with their feet by moving — the "white flight" phenomenon. Why is this so?

Author Carolyn Calloway-Thomas, in *Empathy in the Global World*, offers an explanation. High birth rates and demographic changes in third-world countries, coupled with wars and economic crises, have generated massive migration throughout the world. This hasn't brought out the best among people of developed countries, leading to collective inaction or rejection of those suffering. She argues that when numerical balance appears to pose a threat to the dominant group, empathy takes a back seat to national identity.

What Calloway-Thomas is saying is that people in general don't have antipathy toward foreigners but, when the immigrant population dramatically increases, the perceived change can affect attitudes. One is ethnocentrism, a combination of belief in one's superiority and contempt for outsiders. Fearful of losing their cultural identities, both dominant and minority groups become overtly judgmental and social integration starts to break down.

In this phase, intercultural misunderstandings become frequent, triggering a primordial reaction far below our thoughts and feelings, a sort of "existential fear", governed by the

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Integration yes... — *continued*

After promoting a generous, open-door policy toward asylum-seekers, Sweden closed its borders in 2016.



amygdala, the part of the brain that scans and interprets the emotional meaning of everything. Neuroscientists tell us that it's this organ, which evaluates danger and decides if we stay or run.

Going deeper, ethnocentrism reflects our need to belong to — and be protected by — our tribe, enabling us to maintain cultural identity. It's our comfort zone. When the tribal collective unconscious feels threatened, the amygdala overwhelms the frontal lobe, the "logic" part of the brain. This "amygdala hijack" leads the mind to ignore complexity and choose a simplistic *either/or* response. As intercultural researcher Mai Nguyen-Phuong points out, evolution has created neural support for the binary *good or bad*, a defence mechanism. But this "quick and dirty" assessment can distort how we relate to other cultures.

We see it happening both in Europe and in the U.S. — moderate politicians faced with a refugee crisis fall back on unconscious bias and join the bandwagon of fear. This explains in large part why Europe today has tremendous difficulty working out a unified immigration policy. While populist extremists whip up emotions that drown out logical reasoning...

Ideally, the way to reduce ethnocentricity is by raising consciousness via a "successive construing and re-construing of what's happening". Any true assessment of social reality

combines both logic and emotion; it's the basis of all psychotherapy as well as intercultural training. But as Edward Hall repeatedly pointed out, overcoming cultural programming is a difficult process because the effects of culture, including ethnocentrism, are largely unconscious.

More interesting, though, is to examine a society that has tried to remedy world problems through fairness and justice while maintaining its cultural identity. The country is Sweden.

Back in the '80s, it adopted a generous, open door-policy toward asylum-seekers. Then, in 2016, the government made a dramatic U-turn and closed its borders. In 2017, Swedish economist Tino Sanandjaji published *Mass Challenge*, which offered an empirical explanation for the sudden change in policy. Drawing on facts and statistics from various government agencies, the book immediately found itself on the top of the best-selling charts.

His premise is that integration is a function of group size. With lesser immigration, new arrivals are surrounded by the native population and finding one's place in society is a gradual social process: learning the language, interacting with neighbours, working with people and absorbing their values.

If the group becomes very large, however, you're dealing with *critical mass* — a chain reaction that generates its own dynam-

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Integration yes...

— *continued*

International observers have pointed out that Canada's successful immigration policy is perhaps the path other nations should follow.



ic. Migrants who feel overwhelmed by the unknown culture can decide to work and interact mostly within their community, not master the new language. Integration becomes far more difficult.

Sanandjaji found that, in 1990, non-European immigrants accounted for only 3% of the Swedish population. With such a small number, integration was quite doable; problems could be isolated and managed within the bigger framework of society.

But with the increase of immigrants — a cumulative process that went on for three decades — a large-scale change occurred. The non-Swedish population had increased to nearly 14% and was growing by one to two percent a year with *persistent*, dangerous gaps in income, employment and education.

This is not to say all migrants are disadvantaged. A sizeable number of Iranians, Iraqis and Bosnians are well integrated, dress like everyone else, speak fluent Swedish and talk to anyone. But another group primarily lives in ghettos, is unemployed, does not speak Swedish well and does not feel the need to participate to society. And that group has increased to the point that it starts to influence everything around it — schools, social spaces, poverty levels and crime rate.

Some readers may feel I'm concentrating on negative aspects and saying that, in the final analysis, intercultural relations on a large scale won't work. That's not what I wish to suggest.

As interculturalists, we *do* seem to have effective development tools for individuals and teams, less so concerning entire societies. We can, however, learn from large-scale, positive social change. Take Canada. The country appears to have developed a successful policy for immigration: it ignores the race, religion and ethnicity of migrants and instead looks at their age, education, job skills and language ability. It's ruthlessly rational.

The Canadian and Swedish examples could be the beginning of a honest discussion on how cultural differences can be dealt with. If we have the courage to candidly talk about the authentic problems of large-scale migration, how we've sometimes been naive about diversity in specific communities and countries, and to take a hard look at the new science of brain, mind and bias, then we open ourselves to the learning and transformation processes necessary for real social evolution. If we can't do that, I fear we'll lose all credibility, becoming stuck in self-satisfying "happy talk".

Sources:

Interview of Mai Nguyen-Phuong, SIETAR Europa Journal, March-May 2018

Interview of Joseph Shaules, SIETAR Europa Journal, June-August 2017

Interview of Nancy Adler, SIETAR Europa Journal, September-November 2011

Tino Sanandaji, www.politico.eu/list/politico-28-2018-ranking/tino-sanandaji/Empathy in the Global World by C Calloway-Thomas, Sage Publications

Eva Röttgers and I will do an evening workshop (in German) on integration & brain research for SIETAR Deutschland on 18 Oct., 2018 in Munich.

<https://sietar-deutschland.de/blog/rg-munchen-treffen-am-1810.html>

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Il était une fois...

L'aventure malfortunée de M. et Mme Renard

by Dan MacLeod



The fox lay where he lay, in the sun in the middle of an abandoned parking area next to the ruins of a building in the middle of the island. No humans lived on the island, it was a nature-park, but many visited on a sunny day.

Two were approaching now, he sensed more than smelled or heard them and opened his eyes. He wasn't anxious, they moved like biologists — at half-speed and what they thought of as no sound — as if apologizing for even being there. They stopped at the edge of the asphalt, ten “foxes” away.

(Foxes measure distance according to their length. Humans are five foxes slower per second. A second is equal to seven fox-lengths at top speed.)

The fox continued to lay where he lay, enjoying the sun on his fur, the humans stayed where they were. He smiled to himself...“I'll be here a while, you'll see. And then you *won't* see because you'll leave.” He chuckled and rolled over, he liked to do both sides.

The humans reacted immediately, all whispers and hugging each other, sharing a moment. That was very funny because, like humans, foxes show their asses to express the desire that you not be there.

They left soon after, it was the high point of their time, that

he trusted them enough to turn over. Although the *real* high point was just seeing him in the first place. It wasn't normal, humans never used to see foxes. His mother had explained it when he was little.

We are of the forest, not the island, but the forest is no more. The forest became smaller and smaller, a prison not a home, we were forced to flee.

As she spoke, his mother seemed to remember, like she'd lived those times, though it was her mother who crossed over the water.

The island was attached to the city, which had spread out in all directions, and the land between was no earth and the night was white-bright with false light.

Most foxes had not come to the island, they'd gone in all other directions but no direction mattered, humans were already there and already there and already there. Tales were told of those who made it to the Land Beyond, “farther and farther away in all directions.”

The island has been our salvation, from my mother to me to you, his mother had said.

But things were crowded. Sunning himself in a non-earth clearing was evidence of that. There was a flat rock on a

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L'aventure malfortunée...

— continued



hill not far but his bigger brother had it, and his sister and mother had the bits of beach.

There was a bitch he liked on the other side of the island — they'd sniffed each other, wrestled together, bit and licked each other. But he was also thinking about the non-earth and false light that led back across the water to the Land Beyond.

In olden times we had everywhere, life was limitless, our legs and hearts decided where we ran...

His bitch had heard the stories too and she, too, was ready for a better life, a life without limits. They set off over the water that very night, crossing the non-earth under the false day.

Foxes advance with caution, in shadows. Sprints are bursts with a view to hiding. But there was nowhere to hide, they ran and ran. And then, just when their lungs were empty, a stinking clanking elephant flew past on non-legs, floating above the non-earth at a hundred foxes a second! They ran even faster.

They made it across the water, sensed, smelled, saw, behind the buildings, the moving darkness of trees, lost themselves there and breathed and breathed and breathed. Went from park to park, non-earth between but no more false white sun, just yellowish haze beneath dark night and the orange moon they knew and loved.

They went all, all, all the way to the edge of the sound and smell of humans, a long, long way, and found a hidden spot just as the sun rose and they slept curled together like spoons. And that night they found a home, a perfect little den, and settled down to the business of making pups.

But foxes aren't the only ones moving, everyone is, most away from the sun. And then there are some who can't move, like the white bears without their ice, the fish and frogs without their lake. And there are some who *used to* move but don't anymore. Robins no longer bother flying south, for example, since their actuarial tables showed all that effort wasn't just wasted but brought a higher mortality rate.

The humans are moving too, of course, in all directions where they have no business being. And their non-air goes far farther than the non-earth and false light, and their non-water goes even farther.

As for the coyotes, it wasn't that they were surrounded but that they had hardly any food. The animals they used to eat were mostly gone and, as everyone knows, where there are humans there is food. So they were headed that way just when our foxes got far enough away to leave their problems behind.

They hadn't expected coyotes.

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7 Steps to Digital Intercultural Coaching

by Angie Weinberger



Most coaches travel and work face-to-face with their clients. In the early days of my coaching practice, I could sometimes coach up to 15 clients in one week, but I started to realize this was not the best-option. I used to travel two hours to a client in Basel for a 1.5-hour coaching session. This wasn't financially viable, especially if you're living in Zurich, one of the most expensive cities in the world.

I adopted a digital coaching model to serve more clients in a shorter time-frame. Here are some points I have learned:

Step 1: Write the story of your ideal client

Before positioning yourself on the market, put into writing about how your ideal (global) client lives and works.

Step 2: Use LinkedIn to present yourself

Having an online presence in 2018 is a must. It shows your qualifications and approaches and allows you as well to connect with clients and potential colleagues online.

Step 3: Work from a shared office

Share an office so you can engage in offline networking and still offer physical meetings to clients when they are close by.

Step 4: Use a good email marketing tool

I recommend *Chimpessential* to learn what email marketing really is and can do. Build an email list, ideally a two-list approach. One is for anyone who is interested in what you do and signs up on your website for free. In my view, you

should have a sign-up option. In *Wordpress*, you can start with their Magic Action Box. You should also have a list of VIP paying clients, which is important for targeted marketing campaigns.

Step 5: Zero in on selected social media

My focus is on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Many coaches work with YouTube and Instagram as well.

Step 6: Organize yourself with a good, shared cloud drive and master sheets

One of the challenges of today is that we all share everything. It is more difficult to find what you need especially if the documents are not tagged correctly. I work with *Google Drive* because it allows me to share work with my global, virtual teams without having to send emails back and forth. It's also ideal with corporate clients if they also use *Google Drive*.

And to keep overviews of projects and tasks, I developed very simple master sheets in *Google Sheets*. I like to use these sheets as I can post a link (URL) to the relevant document or website there.

Step 7: Clarify your purpose through writing

One of my main enjoyments in having my own company is having time and capacity to write and edit. I maintain a weekly blog called the "Global People Club Sandwich". I regularly gets requests for guest posts, which has led to the publication of two workbooks for global people.

Angie Weinberger is director of Global People Transitions GmbH in Zurich. She can be reached at globalpeopletransitions.com.

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Book Review

Virtually Disastrous:

What you really need to know about leadership across distance

by Gary Thomas
 Assit Publishing, 276 pages
 Euro 19.90

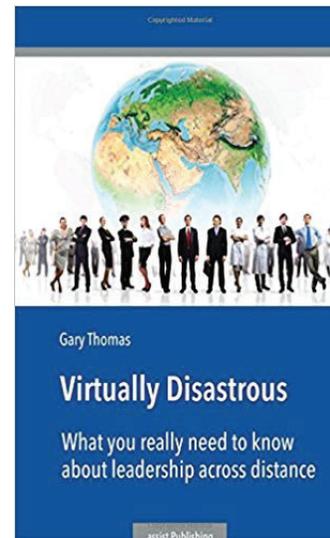
This book is about “the elephant in the room that no one sees”... and about a big misunderstanding.

The elephant stands for the systematic underestimation of the difficulties arising from virtual cooperation in global business. The big misunderstanding is the overestimation of cross-cultural issues within those difficulties.

By underrating the impact virtual working conditions have on people, companies do almost about anything to make work (and life) of their employees more difficult. By overestimating the impact of cross-cultural issues, an all too obvious scapegoat is found: “I knew you couldn’t work with those ___, they are so ___!”. Yet, the real reasons for “disastrous” cooperation are veiled.

The subtitle is “What you really need to know about leadership across distance”. It’s not only for leaders; it’s for anyone who works in an international project team spread over several locations, people who cares for improving communication and cooperation in virtual teams, e.g. trainers and team coaches.

Systematically the author sheds light on the key aspects of successful virtual cooperation, such as team identity, overcoming isolation by bridging distances and ways to lead without hierarchy. Each chapter explores the topic from various angles, full of real life examples and practical suggestions for improvement. For me, it is those little stories and anecdotes



that account for the real value added for me as a reader. Take for example an incident where the avoidance of a production breakdown with the potential to cause a multi-million loss required the smooth and effective cooperation between Germany, the Netherlands and India. Guess what happened...?

The practical perspective is backed by sound theory – models like theme-centered interaction by Ruth Cohn or the team stages of Tuckman are set in context to the setting of virtual cooperation, adding structure to content. Towards the second half of the book, the author digs deeper into aspects like communication (channels), conflict (resolution) and cross-cultural leadership. An entire chapter is dedicated to “trust” as the essential key resource, as a “condition sine qua non” and how to foster and grow such trust within virtual teams.

What I – being a cross-cultural trainer/coach myself – particularly like about this book are four things:

- the humorous and captivating style in which it is written,
- the wealth of – extremely credible – experience that shimmers through and the amount examples from global business,
- the hands-on improvement suggestions anyone can implement right away and
- the structure of the book with short subchapters, highlighted key messages and summaries at the end of each chapter.

Great piece, indeed!

Reviewed by Stephan Hild

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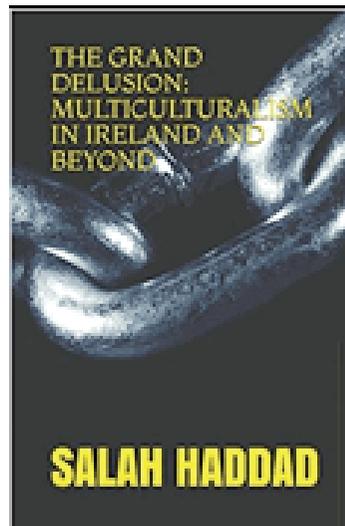
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Book Review

The Grand Delusion: Multiculturalism in Ireland and Beyond

by Salah Hadad,
Independently published, 123 pages
U.S. \$ 10.00



This is a self-published dissertation based on a case study of a Dublin multicultural primary school, focusing on the treatment of multiculturalism in children's literature. However, it is, perhaps, best seen as an indictment of the master narrative of European colonialism, which persists to this day in the ownership and management of power. The author explores the thinking and the behaviors underlying how we socially construct and pass on what is defined as multicultural and intercultural, inevitably along the lines of our unconscious meta-récit.

Interculturalists as well as educators are likely to be struck by and perhaps put off by the author's unvarnished criticism of what passes as multicultural and intercultural in the structure of societies and institutions, often a sop that subtly perpetuates racially-based class cultures, while maintaining and, inevitably, even reinforcing the enduring structures while damaging diverse identities that do not conform to a dominant often unconsciously enforced norm.

The author begins with a brief historical background highlighting the modes of exclusion perpetuated by the colonial mentality, the cultural genocide of the 15th to 18th centuries, the melting-pot melting down of immigrants, which extended from the 19th to the mid-20th century and, finally, in the wake of the failure of this absorption, the pseudo-pluralism underlying the current discourse which we call multiculturalism.

Examining this discourse and the theory behind it leads inevitably to the recognition that multiculturalism is about the management of ethnic minorities within a structure of economic power and control, and, pertinent to the author's exploration of primary education, into the hands of prevailing interest groups managing it, who perhaps have the power to change things but lack the insight to do so.

Thus, the author offers guidelines for teachers and administrators in selecting appropriate children's literature that truly validates the peoples and cultures, who are otherwise reduced to the sidelines of a society by both the conscious and unconscious dominance of European white identity. This is not just a matter of literary aesthetics, but a task essential to the identity confirmation of minority children, an effort needed to alleviate the harmful consequences of lowered self-esteem, lack of self-confidence, and, ultimately, substandard performance in life and work.

The final part of the dissertation provides more detailed examination of the actual textbooks in school use, the images they propose for otherness, which are scant and stereotypical, and simply reflect and perpetuate the religious and social structures of the dominant Irish society. To this interculturalist, the value of the work lies in its power to remind us that intercultural progress is not likely without an examination of the structure and function of our socially constructed master narratives.

Reviewed by George Simons

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This three-day event will have as its theme

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: A KEY FOR INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATIONS

This congress welcomes all those who are interested in exploring intercultural competence as a source of innovation, with the aim of making a multidisciplinary approach to diversity management, an essential mechanism for achieving organizational goals in today's globalized world.

Málaga has been chosen as the location for the congress due to its colourful and diverse ethnicity — blessed with sunshine, loaded with history, filled with a thriving multicultural atmosphere and brimming with a youthful vigour that proudly acknowledges its multi-layered past and a history spanning about 2,800 years. Today's Málaga is a vibrant, modern and cosmopolitan city, and the centre of an important communications hub, so getting there is easy, whatever means of transport you want to use.

More information at:
<https://www.sietar.es/congreso/>

More information on Málaga at:
<http://s3.malagaturismo.com/files/400/400/beachesinmalaga.pdf>

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CCC-Break



You are asking yourself what CCC-Break stands for?

Well, it is a **Cross-Cultural Coffee Break**: every participant grabs a cup of coffee (cappuccino, latte macchiato, espresso, you name it) and dives into a vivid exchange on an intercultural topic.

The Objectives of CCC-Breaks:

Sharing and Learning in an informal virtual setting. Every CCC Break is designed for the max. number of 10 participants in order to allow the maximum of interaction between our participants.

Read about the first CCC Break 1 [here](#)

How can you register?

The following CCC-Breaks are scheduled for the year 2018. Invitation mailings with the possibility to register will be sent out to SIETAR Europa members and members of national SIETARs within Europa only. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact: communication@sietareu.org

Team behind the scenes

Barbara Covarrubias Venegas, Joanna Sell, Pascale Sztum and Marie Utsch, our “masterminds” behind this new event format are looking forward to intriguing discussions with you!

Date	CCC-Break Burning Question	Moderator SEU Virtual Events Team
25.06.2018 11 am CET Duration: 40 mins.	What are useful tools/attitudes for a facilitator/trainer to deal with different hierarchic levels inside an intercultural training group?	Barbara Covarrubias Venegas
04.09. 2018 11 am CET Duration: 40 mins.	Are CC training still relevant with managers who were Third Culture Kids?	Barbara Covarrubias Venegas
03.10. 2018 11 am CET Duration: 40 mins.	How to approach difficult topics on specific culture training (for example using European toilets for Indian employees)? What are other topics which can be described as hot and subtle?	Joanna Sell
06.11. 2018 11 am CET Duration: 40 mins.	How do I reach through those who are convinced there is no such thing as national culture influence, only different personalities?	Pascale Sztum
04.12. 2018 11 am CET	What does persuasive communication in different cultural and professional contexts mean?	Barbara Covarrubias Venegas

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Events, workshops, congresses

SIETAR Europa Webinars

Sept. 19th 2018, Wed., at 14.00 – 15.00 pm (CET)
 Speaker: Sylvia Van Ziegert
 Topic: "Reinventing Global Leadership: Tools for a Volatile World"

Oct. 12th 2018, Friday at 18.00 – 19.00 (CET)
 Speaker: Dr. Milton Bennett
 Topic: "The End of Relativism"

Nov. 15th 2018, Thursday at 14.00 – 15.00 pm (CET)
 Speaker: Arjan Verdooren
 Topic: "The TOPOI model and diversity competence - Cultures don't meet, people do"

CCC - Break

Sept. 4th 2018, Tues., at 11.00 – 11.40 am (CET)
 Moderator: Barbara Covarrubias Venegas
 Topic: "Are CC trainings still relevant with managers who were Third Culture Kids?"

Oct. 3th 2018, Wed. at 11:00 - 11:40 am (CET)
 Moderator: Joanna Sell
 Topic: "Approaching difficult topics on specific culture training"

Nov. 6th 2018, Tues. at 11:00 - 11:40 am (CET)
 Moderator: Pascale Sztum
 Topic: "Reaching those who believe there's no culture influence, only different personalities"

Bath, United Kingdom

10 - 14 September, 2018

Developing intercultural training skills This 5-day course is for trainers wishing to learn more about theory and practice of intercultural training, both to integrate intercultural topics into their current training and also to deliver their own intercultural training courses. Exchange of experience with other participants is also a valuable

part of the course. Information at: www.its-training.com/ or contact adrian.pilbeam@its-training.com

Malaga, Spain

28-30 September, 2018

SIETAR Espana Congress This event welcomes all those who are interested in exploring intercultural competence as a source of innovation, with the aim of making a multidisciplinary approach to diversity management, an essential mechanism for achieving organizational goals in today's globalized world. More information at: <https://www.sietar.es/congreso/>

Milan, Italy

Nov. 5-7, 2018

Facilitating Intercultural Consciousness: Applying the New Paradigm, facilitated by Milton Bennett. Core practical theory course intended for educators, human resource professionals, coaches, international cooperation and partnership workers, and other intercultural practitioners.

Nov. 9-10, 2018

Embodied Culture: Discovering the Feeling of Self and Other in Cultural Context facilitated by Ida Castiglioni. Application course intended for advanced trainers and educators, coaches, and practitioners in therapeutic and contemplative disciplines. Prerequisite: Facilitating Intercultural Consciousness: Applying the New Paradigm.

Nov. 12-13, 2018

Constructivist Intercultural Training and Assessment, facilitated by Milton Bennett and Ida Castiglioni. Application course intended for practitioners and administrators of inter-

cultural educational programs. Prerequisite: Facilitating Intercultural Consciousness: Applying the New Paradigm.

Nov. 15 - 16, 2018

Realizing the Intercultural Dimension of International Educational Exchange facilitated by John Sunnnygard, Ida Castiglioni and Milton Bennett. Special topic course intended for international educational practitioners in universities (e.g. Erasmus Plus), study abroad receiving institutions, international high schools, and secondary exchange programs. No prerequisite. More info at <http://www.idrinstitute.org/>

Somewhere in Belgium

27 May - 2 June, 2019

SIETAR Europa 2019 Congress The theme is "Building Dialogues on Diversity - towards a future of hope." More information can be found at <https://www.sietareu.org/> Contact: congress2019@sietareu.org

Online Everyday

The SIETAR Europa group, discussing

Decolonizing Global Media & Communication

on LinkedIn, has now over 8000 members. Plus it offers videos, articles, books, tools for the intercultural profession. To join, click here: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/2740568>

For more information, contact George Simons at diversophy@gmail.com

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Impressum

SIETAR Europa
 637 bd de la Tavernière
 Residence l'Argentière - Bât E
 F - 06210 Mandelieu la Napoule
 Tel.: +33 4 93 93 36 59
communication@sietareu.org

www.sietareu.org