LIVING ABROAD,
REFLECTING THE INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCES

study guide and background learning material

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1. Course information

1.1. Basic information

Course title: Living Abroad, Reflecting the Intercultural Experiences
Training programme: Business Administration and Management BSc
Course code: 60B205
Semester: elective
Prerequisite: none
Evaluation: exam mark (1-5)

1.2. Learning outcomes

The course has double aims. On the one hand it tries to introduce their temporary place of residence, Szeged, to the foreign degree students. In the framework of contemporary cultural and social theory it aims to open up the contemporary social and cultural changes of the town. At the lectures selected pieces of the cultural landscape of the town will be presented. On the other hand this course aims also to introduce the basics of intercultural communication. The theoretical foundations of intercultural communication are brought closer to the students by discussing their experiences. The most important aim of the course is to provide analytic frameworks to reflect on the cultural and psychological effects of migration happening with the students. This way the course contributes to the following competencies, which are listed as required learning outcomes of the 'Business Administration and Management' training programme:

a) regarding knowledge, the student
- knows and keeps the rules and ethical norms of cooperation and leadership as part of a project, a team and a work organisation;
- possesses the know-how required to complete basic leadership and organisation related tasks and is capable of preparing, launching and leading small to medium sized projects and enterprises;

b) regarding competencies, the student
- can uncover facts and basic connections, can arrange and analyse data systematically, can draw conclusions and make critical observations along with preparatory suggestions using the theories and methods learned. The student can make informed decisions in connection with routine and partially unfamiliar issues both in domestic and international settings;
- Can cooperate with others representing different professional fields;
- Assumes the role of leader and organiser in project- and group work after acquiring the necessary practical know-how and experience while also carrying out assessment and evaluation tasks;
- Can present conceptually and theoretically professional suggestions and opinions well both in written and oral form in Hungarian or in a foreign language according to the rules of professional communication;

c) regarding attitude, the student
- Behaves in a proactive, problem oriented way to facilitate quality work. As part of a project or group work the student is constructive, cooperative and initiative.
- Is open to new information, new professional knowledge and new methodologies. The student is also open to take on task demanding responsibility in connection with both solitary and cooperative tasks. The student strives to expand his/her knowledge and to develop his/her work relationships in cooperation with his/her colleagues.
- Is sensitive to the changes occurring to the wider economic and social circumstances of his/her job, workplace or enterprise. The student tries to follow and understand these changes.
- Is accepting of the opinions of others and the values of the given sector, the region, the nation and Europe (including social, ecological and sustainability aspects).
- Keeps the principles of lifelong learning inside and outside the world of labour.

d) regarding autonomy and responsibility, the student
- Takes responsibility for his/her analyses, conclusions and decisions;
- Is capable of organising, leading and directing organisational units, work teams, enterprises or minor economic institutions independently taking responsibility for the institution and its workers;
- Takes responsibility for his/her work and behaviour from all professional, legal and ethical aspects in connection with keeping the accepted norms and rules;
- Completes his/her tasks independently and responsibly as a member of certain projects, team tasks and organisational units;
- Holds lectures and moderates debates independently. Takes part in the work of professional forums (both within the economic institution and outside of it) independently and respectfully.
1.3. Topics of the course

Migration – reasons, causes and types, effects
Adaptation – stages, theoretical models
Culture shock
The effect of migration on personal identity
Culture – origin, meanings
Cultural relativism and ethnocentrism
Reasons to study intercultural communication?

1.4. Readings

Core readings
selected chapters:
- Why Study Intercultural Communication? pp. 3-44.
- Social Science Perspective on Language pp. 219-227.
- Interpretive Perspective on Language pp. 228-232.
- Understanding Intercultural Transitions pp. 305-347.

Further readings


1.5. **Assessment**

**Exam:**
- multiple choice test on the basis of lectures and readings at the end of the semester (100 points)

**Extra points:**
- Pechakucha20x20 presentations (PechaKucha 20x20 is a simple presentation format where you show 20 images, each for 20 seconds. The images advance automatically and you talk along to the images.) Self-critique is the first step to understand and accept others. This is why topics can ONLY be self-reflexive presentations of your culture. The pechakucha should be agreed with and presented to the instructor: - your critical thoughts on your nation; - tensions in your society (ethnic, religious, social, cultural, economic); - the things you would change in your society [NO touristic marketing videos, no propaganda, etc.] (max. 10 points) (How to Make a Pecha Kucha: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32WEzM3LFhw&t=6s)

**Grading:**
- 0-8 – fail (1)
- 9-11 – sufficient (2)
- 12-14 – average (3)
- 15-17 – good (5)
- 18-20 – excellent (5)
2. Guideline for exam preparation

2.1. General information

The exam is a multiple choice test. The test consists of 20 questions. Each question has four answers from which one is correct. Some questions include charts, models, images.

Registration

Students must register for the exam through the electronic system (Neptun). One exam date is provided each week in the exam period. In case of fail mark, students must register for a new exam and appear again. In case a student would like a better mark, they can register for a new exam date (in line with the general exam regulations). In this case their mark will be based on their performance at the new exam.

At the exam

- The venue of the exam is shown by the electronic system (Neptun).
- Please, be at the exam venue on time to be able to start the test together with the group.
- 25 minutes is provided for the exam.
- The exam mark is provided in three days time through Neptun.

2.2. Preparation for the exam

The curriculum has two components. Component A deals with the social and cultural history of Szeged and Hungary. It touches on questions like the Hungarian language and the origin of the population. This is not part of the evaluation. Its aim is to help the everyday adaptation of the students. Component B deals with intercultural communication theory. To help the understanding of these there are discussions and tasks in the classes connecting the theoretical material to personal experiences of the students. Intercultural communication theory is part of the evaluation.
3. Self-assessment sample test

Choose one answer from a), b), c) or d)!
Duration: 25 minutes

NAME: Neptun
CODE: 

1) Cultural relativism is  
a) The experience of being between two or more cultural positions. As international migration increases more and more people are living on the border physically, making frequent trips between countries, or living on the border psychologically between bicultural identities.  
b) The view that all beliefs, customs, and ethics are relative to the individual within his own social context. In other words, “right” and “wrong” are culture-specific; what is considered moral in one society may be considered immoral in another, and, since no universal standard of morality exists, no one has the right to judge another society’s customs.  
c) The meaning of a message that tells others how they should respond to the content of our communication based on our relationship to them.  
d) It is the tendency to believe that one’s ethnic or cultural group is centrally important, and that all other groups are measured in relation to one’s own. Such individual will judge other groups relative to his or her own particular ethnic group or culture, especially with concern to language, customs, and religion.

2) In the Stress-Adaptation-Growth adaptation scheme which state constitutes this: “Response behaviors: selective attention, denial, self-deception, avoidance, withdrawal, or hostility, cynicism”  
a) transformation  
b) stress  
c) adaptation  
d) growth  

3) What is self-reflection?  
a) our image as our cognition recognizes it in a mirror  
b) examination of our thoughts and feelings and our determination to get to know them  
c) examination of the intention of our communicative partner  
d) the memory fragments we store in our cognition about our childhood
4) Adaptation can take place in several different ways if we are examining its effect on identity. One of the following though is not a valid one. Which one is not correct?
   a) Assimilation
   b) Segregation
   c) Cosmopolitanism
   d) Integration

5) Below you see an adaptation scheme. Find the right names of its stages!

   ![Adaptation Scheme]

   b) 1. State of mind; 2. Crisis; 3. Honeymoon; 4. Adjustment

6) What is empathy?
   a) recognizing the differences in space used in different cultures
   b) recognizing emotions that another person experiences
   c) recognizing the gestures of other cultures
   d) recognizing the meaning of a handshake in different cultures

7) What is the technological imperative among the reasons to study intercultural communication?
   a) Cultural origin does not have an effect on the ability to use modern communication technology
   b) Apple fundamentally influenced communication technology in every human society
   c) War images are globally spreading by communication technology
d) Communication technology has brought the world much closer together, even without physical proximity

8) Marshall McLuhan, a prominent mediatheorist, used the expression of "global village" to describe that:
a) as a result of population growth urban spaces and semi-urban spaces exchange villages
b) technology allows us to experience other cultures that are not our own
c) because of migration people from other cultures can be our neighbours
d) globalization brings us rural products from other cultures

9) What is the meaning of "melting pot"?
a) A special kitchen equipment spread by the global appearance of McDonald’s
b) It describes the effect of global consumption where we are melting products (food, spices, fashion) of other cultures to our own culture
c) It’s the dominant metaphor used to understand assimilation and acculturation of immigrants in America
d) It refers to downtown areas in global cities where the population has truly mixed origin

10) Below you see an adaptation scheme. Find the right names of its stages!

![Diagram](image)

b) 1. Time at home; 2. Culture shock; 3. Honeymoon; 4. Reintegration
c) 1. Time abroad; 2. Reintegration; 3. Culture shock; 4. Arrival
11) Who is a sojourner?
a) people who are travelling around the world with only a backpack  
b) people who are in a preparatory phase for longer space travel  
c) people who move into new cultural contexts for a limited period of time  
d) people who consist a special segment of tourists (i.e. pilgrims)

12) What is assimilation?
a) A type of cultural adaptation in which an individual expresses little interest in maintaining cultural ties with either the dominant culture or the migrant culture.  
b) A type of cultural adaptation in which an individual gives up his or her own cultural heritage and adopts the mainstream cultural identity.  
c) The policy or practice of compelling groups to live apart from each other.  
d) A sense of in-betweenness that develops as a result of frequent or multiple cultural border crossings.

13) What is separation?
a) The activity of migrating across the borders of one or more nation-states.  
b) A relatively short-term feeling of disorientation and discomfort due to the lack of familiar cues in the environment.  
c) A type of cultural adaptation in which individuals maintain both their original culture and their daily interactions with other groups.  
d) A type of cultural adaptation in which an individual retains his or her original culture while interacting minimally with other groups.

14) What is intercultural identity?
a) Identity based on a specific foreign culinary element  
b) Identity based on a specific far away religion  
c) Identity based on two or more cultural frames of reference  
d) Identity recognizable from a specific dress
15) Below you see a table presenting the motivation of migration and the types of the migrants. Two pieces of information is missing from the table. First, find the term marked with 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation for Migration</th>
<th>Short-Term Duration</th>
<th>Long-Term Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Forced</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Immigrant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) culinary  
b) touristic  
c) study  
d) voluntary

16) Below you see a table presenting the motivation of migration and the types of the migrants. Two pieces of information is missing from the table. Now, find the term marked with 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation for Migration</th>
<th>Short-Term Duration</th>
<th>Long-Term Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Forced</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Immigrant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) tourist  
b) sojourner  
c) culinary critic  
d) journalist
4. Background learning material

Users guide: this part shortly summarizes the main theoretical concepts, points out the exact part of the reading which deals with the given issues. The correct interpretation is helped by reflection questions pointing out the focus of the studied issues and making the understanding personal. The material is supported with a lot of futher readings and video material.

4.1. Focus topic: migration and adaptation

Our world is deeply influenced by migration. Your presence here in Szeged is also part of this process. Migration and its effects on personal identity is probably the best way to start this course. This is a perfect occasion to learn to be self-reflective, which is an important basis for cultural relativism. In this part of the course you will get to know the variations of migrant-host relationships, the concept of hybridity, the different models of adaptation, the concept of culture shock, the individual traits influencing adaptation, the concept of liminality and of multicultural identity.

Key and compulsory text for this topic:

A) Migration - reasons, causes and types

I) What is migration and who are the migrants? How large is the group of migrants worldwide and in certain localities?

Our key text defines migrant as an individual who leaves the primary cultural context in which he or she was raised and moves to a new cultural context for an extended time (Martin – Nakayama 2012: 310).

See an overview of the topic from Joern Barkemeyer and Jan Kuenzl. Their introduction argues that „almost everywhere on the world, international migration is a hot topic. Most of the time the debate about migration is fierce and charged with prejudices and fears. At the political level, this has far-reaching consequences, ranging from electoral victories of populist right-wing parties to the increasing isolation policy of Europe and the United States. But what exactly is migration? What are its causes? And what are problems and opportunities?” Check their presentation at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOZmqlwqur4
Social and cultural effect of migration reach us through media representation which is influenced by several factors. To gain a real image about migration I suggest you to surf on the Pew Research Center’s special page where you can discover the in- and outflux of migration from country to country. [http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/05/17/global-migrant-stocks/](http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/05/17/global-migrant-stocks/) Economist also created a short presentation about the same topic, but please, keep in mind this was made well before the current migration crisis, back in 2009. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcoOENLfpUI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcoOENLfpUI)

To help our better understanding on the mixed group of migrants the table in our key text is suitable:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation for Migration</th>
<th>Short-Term Duration</th>
<th>Long-Term Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Sojourners</td>
<td>Immigrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involuntary (Forced)</td>
<td>Short-term refugee</td>
<td>Long-term refugee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Martin – Nakayama 2012: 310-313)

**Reflect:** Use the key text and the provided helping materials to understand the differences among the above categories!

**II) What reasons caused the current migration crisis which deeply influences Hungarian social and political discourse (and in this way has an effect on your life also)?**

We have to be aware of the sizes and causes of the current crisis, so check this video “in which John Green discusses the Syrian refugee crisis and the growing number of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, and Eritrea crossing the sea with the help of smugglers to seek refuge in European Union nations. Also discussed: The difference between migrants and refugees, the rights of refugees as established by international law, the globalization of all regional crises, and how the death of 3-year-old Alan Kurdi galvanized the world.” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVV6_1Sef9M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVV6_1Sef9M)

**Reflect:** Consider the vast diversity of migration and the homogeneity in media representations!

**III) What are the effects of migration on host societies?**

There is a widespread debate on the effect of migration in host societies. Whereas the economic effects is usually considered positive there are
concerns about the cultural effects. See the lecture of Philippe Fargues about some effects delivered in the International Migration Institute: Demographic change, international migration & development
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFtD19Zd7-I

reflect: HOW YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS OR SOCIETY THINKS ABOUT THE EFFECT OF MIGRATION!

B) ADAPTATION – STAGES, THEORETICAL MODELS

I) WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF THE CONCEPT?
Adaptation is not only a human cultural process. Every creature tries to survive in the environment available for them. Check this short clip of how animals adopt to the natural environment.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRX2JtKFUzk

Nature had and still has an effect on humans. Watch Sweet Natural Living’s rather relaxed style video which introduced in the following way.
“The human being is obviously a tropical animal. This is where we originated and this is where we "belong", biologically speaking. Due to our adventurous and curious nature, we have explored vast areas of the earth, well beyond our natural habitat, and that's great! What a blessing it is to be human! However, strictly in terms of health, it's not really a good thing. We have NOT adapted to a cooler climate, we have MADE adaptations. Tools. As we moved further north out of Africa and the temperatures sank, we made clothing, and fire to keep us warm. This means we dealt with the situation WITHOUT having to physiologically adapt. However, clothes are not an equivalent of skin and fur. Our skin is a living structure. Clothing is dead and performs no vital functions, and in fact positively hinders the natural functions of our actual skin underneath. It's very important for good health to have the skin exposed to the air and sunshine, preferably at all times! Artificial heating typically also means sitting inside a building for large parts of the day, where the air quality is not as good. So our tools for survival in an unnatural climate unfortunately does not make up for not being where we "belong" and is in fact a problematic aspect in itself. Evolution is such a complex and interesting topic, and is very difficult to really discuss with any certainty. How does it work? How does it happen? Survival of the fittest? Evolutionary leaps? Genetic mutations? How does a species develop? Natural selection? Origin of the species? These are all subtopics under the genre Evolution Theory. We do not claim to KNOW all there is to know about this, but here's our thoughts, some of our ideas and observations anyway. Please comment and share yours too!”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LVHaYSCOII
Reflect: Consider the primordial use of culture in our strive to survive unnatural environment!

ii) What is cultural adaptation and what theoretical models do we have about it?
In the broadest sense of the concept we can call cultural adaptation every human adaptation which takes place with the help of culture. Compared to adaptation observable among animals cultural adaptation usually does not involve the change of human body and takes places in rather short period of time. Read Rob Boyd’s article Culture: the Engine of Human Adaptation http://www.beinghuman.org/article/culture-engine-human-adaptation

Intercultural communication developed several models for the better understanding of cultural adaptation.

Adaptation Model 1.)
The Anxiety and uncertainty management model of adaptation was developed by communication theorist William Gudykunst. According to our key text Gudykunst “stresses that the primary characteristic of relationships in intercultural adaptation is ambiguity. The goal of effective intercultural communication can be reached by reducing anxiety and seeking information, a process known as uncertainty reduction. There are several kinds of uncertainty. Predictive uncertainty is the inability to predict what someone will say or do. We all know how important it is to be relatively sure how people will respond to us. Explanatory uncertainty is the inability to explain why people behave as they do. In any interaction, it is important not only to predict how someone will behave but also to explain why the person behaves in a particular way.” (Martin – Nakayama 2012: 321-22) Cf. this model with the flight or fight model of adaptation which can be found in our key text.

Reflect: How did you prepare for your stay in Hungary? What kind of uncertainties can you remember from that time?

Adaptation Model 2.)
Stress-adaptation-growth dynamic is an adaptation model, describing the changes in the individual in three phases. Young Yun Kim, who developed the model, “suggests that adaptation is a process of stress, adjustment, and growth. As individuals experience the stress of not fitting in with the environment, the natural response is to seek to adjust. This process of adjustment represents a psychic breakdown of previously held attitudes and behaviors—ones that worked in original cultural contexts. This model
fits very well with our dialectical approach in its emphasis on the interconnectedness of individual and context in the adaptation process.” (Martin – Nakayama 2012. 324-25.)

1. Stress: normal response in alien environment → personality disintegration, lack of stability → defensive mechanism to minimize that → response behaviors: selective attention, denial, self-deception, avoidance, withdrawal, or, hostility, cynicism
2. Adaptation: stress is temporary; leads to adaptation (you have to react)
3. Growth: the stress-adaptation experiences bring change
   → internal transformation
   → creative responses to new circumstances
   → coping ability grows

Reflect: Recollect your memories or reflect on your present feelings: what kind of response behaviors can you detect in yourself? Recollect your first successful adaptations (usually shopping) when you achieved your first successful challenge in the host society!

Adaptation Model 3.)
 Norwegian sociologist, Sverre Lysgaard, developed the most well-known adaptation theory on the basis of his interviews conducted among students studying in US.

The U-curve theory of adaptation

Lysgaard “was interested in understanding the experience of cultural adaptation. His results have been confirmed by many other subsequent studies and have been applied to many different migrant groups. The main idea is that migrants go through fairly predictable phases in adapting to a new cultural situation. They first experience excitement and anticipation, followed by a period of shock and disorientation (the bottom of the U curve); then they gradually adapt to the new cultural context. Although this framework is simplistic and does not represent every migrant’s experience, most migrants experience these general phases at one time or another.

Honeymoon / Anticipation: The first phase is the anticipation or excitement phase. When a migrant first enters a new cultural context, he or she may be excited to be in the new situation and only a little apprehensive.
Culture Shock: The second phase, culture shock, happens to almost everyone in intercultural transitions. Individuals face many challenges of transition in new cultural contexts. Culture shock is a relatively short-term feeling of disorientation, of discomfort due to the unfamiliarity of surroundings and the lack of familiar cues in the environment. Kalvero Oberg, the anthropologist who coined the term culture shock, suggests it is like a disease, complete with symptoms (excessive hand washing, irritability, and so on). If it is treated properly (that is, if the migrant learns the language, makes friends, and so on), the migrant can “recover,” or adapt to the new cultural situation and feel at home (Oberg, 1960).

Adaptation / Adjustment: The third phase in Lysgaard’s model is adjustment, in which migrants learn the rules and customs of the new cultural context.” (Martin – Nakayama 2012: 327-331)

There are several personal accounts on this model of adaptation. Check e.g. this one: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=klASsZPCToU

Reflect: Consider the effect of a lengthy stays abroad on your knowledge, routines and your way of life!

iii) Can we really go home after a longer stay abroad without any changes?

W-curve model of adaptation

Migration studies points out that a lengthy stay abroad will have some effect on our daily life. We will change even though we try to resist. Most of us are actually happy to let in new habits into our lives. As our key text says: “When migrants return home to their original cultural contexts, the same process of adaptation occurs and may again involve culture, or reentry, shock depicted by the W-curve model (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). Sometimes this adaptation is even more difficult because it is so unexpected. Coming home, we might think, should be easy. Scholars refer to this process as the W-curve theory of adaptation because sojourners seem to experience another U-curve: the anticipation of returning home, culture shock in finding that it’s not exactly as expected, and then gradual adaptation (Storti, 2001). Other terms for the process of readapting to one’s home culture include: reverse culture shock, reentry shock, and repatriation. There are two fundamental differences between the first and second U-curves, related to issues of personal change and expectations (Martin, 1984). In the initial curve or phase, the sojourner is fundamentally unchanged and is experiencing new cultural contexts. In
the reentry phase, the sojourner has changed through the adaptation process and has become a different individual. The person who returns home is not the same person who left home.” (Martin – Nakayama 2012: 331-333) There is a fictitious documentary on the adaptation models, take a look: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmyWVpOFW88


Reflect: Do you know anyone around you who already stayed for a longer time abroad? Chat with him/her about the effect of the other culture on his/her life!

iv) What is culture shock?
Culture shock “is a relatively short-term feeling of disorientation and discomfort due to the lack of familiar cues in the environment.” (Martin – Nakayama 2012: 328) Culture shock is probably the most well-known and studied concept in connection with migration. There are countless funny or more serious flicks on culture shock. Check these ones:
Culture shock in China: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajNh3NwVj1s
Culture shock of Chinese students in Europe: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7xfk8pNZ4w


Reflect: Recollect your most striking experience after arriving to Hungary which seemed to be quite normal for the locals!

v) What influences the seriousness of culture shock and adaptation?
There are certain individual traits which influence adaptation and the seriousness of culture shock. Social status: high status migrants usually find their way more easily in host societies. Gender: gender roles can differ between cultures, which can cause problems for migrants. Age: generally we can say that younger individuals adapt easier. Personality: openness and empathy helps adaptation. Context: host and guest cultures can have previous contact which can create friendly, neutral or non-friendly context. Cultural difference: difference of the host & guest cultures can range from minimal to extreme, which influences the migrant individuals’ chance for adaptation. Check this personal record on cultural adaptation and identity – a personal record:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CiT344IdpmU
**Reflect:** Do you know migrants who left their culture at a relatively later phase of their life? How do you see their coping ability with the guest society?

**C) The effect of migration on personal identity**

1) **How do local communities and migrants cope with the culture of the other?**

There are diverse reactions among the migrants and diverse counter-reactions from host societies on the cultural difference of the migrants.

This table sums the variants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 8-2 Migrant-Host Relationships</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Migrants Value Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host/Majority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Migrants devalue own/minority culture</strong></th>
<th>Assimilation</th>
<th>Marginalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Migrants value own/minority culture</td>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Separation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Martin – Nakayama 2012: 314)

**A) Is it possible to lose one’s own culture?**

Assimilation is “a type of cultural adaptation in which an individual gives up his or her own cultural heritage and adopts the mainstream cultural identity.” (Martin – Nakayama 2012: 314) Here is a moving documentary, "Kill the Indian, save the man.", on the role of boarding schools in the assimilation of American Indians: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOe-x1aUP2o

There are examples physically closer also. We should keep in mind, that the Carpathian basin is an ethnically rather heterogeneous territory. See this map detail from 1910 on the surroundings of Szeged. (Every color means a different nationality.) State powers in the past century tried to assimilate the minority populations.
**B) What is Segregation?**

Segregation is “the policy or practice of compelling groups to live apart from each other.” (Martin – Nakayama 2012: 316) Check these period photos on the segregation in the southern USA: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-7eNRB2_0Q

In Hungary the existence of so-called Roma quarters on the edge of certain settlements is an example that every human society has the tendency of segregation. These places usually lack basic infrastructure. There were several attempts to diminish these segregated settlement parts mostly without any result. (Image: http://m.cdn.blog.hu/ri/riotmagazin/image/cig%C3%A1nytelep2.jpg)

**C) How can Cultures Separate?**

Separation is “a type of cultural adaptation in which an individual retains his or her original culture while interacting minimally with other groups. Separation may be initiated and enforced by the dominant society, in which case it becomes segregation.” (Martin – Nakayama 2012: 315-316) Check this award winning documentary, The Amish - A People of Preservation, on one of the best known examples of self-separation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrWOih3xKXQ

The 1985 film, The Witness, with Harrison Ford is a relatively good account on the life of the Amish. (http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0090329/)

**D) How can you be alone in a culture?**

Marginalization is “a type of cultural adaptation in which an individual expresses little interest in maintaining cultural ties with either the dominant culture or the migrant culture.” (Martin – Nakayama 2012: 318) Our key text gives an example: “For example, women from overseas who marry U.S. military men may find themselves living in relatively isolated parts of the country upon their husbands’ return to the States. These women, sometimes called “war brides,” become marginalized by the dominant society. They cannot find a local community of people with whom
to share their native culture and language, nor can they participate in U.S. culture as a result of linguistic, cultural, and sometimes prejudicial barriers. These women may also be rejected by their husbands’ families, leading to further marginalization.” There is a pretty fine webarchive, Canadian War Brides, full of statistics, statements, commemoration. Check it: http://www.canadianwarbrides.com/intro.asp

**E) IS THERE AN IDEAL WAY FOR TWO CULTURES TO LIVE TOGETHER?**

Integration is “a type of cultural adaptation in which individuals maintain both their original culture and their daily interactions with other groups.” (Martin – Nakayama 2012: 316-318)

Integration nowadays is considered as the best solution for the individual to live in his/her new society. In the framework of the ‘Refugees, migration and intercultural dialogue of the Creative Europe’ program of the European Commission there is a call for refugee integration projects now. „The general objective of this call for proposals is to support projects facilitating the integration of refugees in Europe, enhancing mutual cultural understanding and fostering intercultural and interfaith dialogue, tolerance and respect for other cultures.”

The specific objectives are: „help refugees socialise and express themselves without necessarily speaking immediately the host country language be learning platforms in a wider sense, fostering respect and understanding for diversity, intercultural and civic competencies, democratic values and citizenship give EU citizens the opportunity to discover, learn from and understand the values and cultures of refugees and - in the process rediscover and enrich their own support the showcasing and co-creation of cultural and/or audiovisual works across Europe offer the possibility of collaboration with organisations in other sectors in order to stimulate a more comprehensive, rapid, effective and long-term response to this global challenge.”


**Reflection:** Consider your own culture and find examples for the different adaptation methods above.

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**4.2. Focus topic: culture**

**Key and compulsory text for this topic:**

A) How do we use this term in this course?
In this course we use the term building mostly on the teachings of contemporary cultural anthropology. Culture is understood as “a socially constructed and historically transmitted pattern of symbols, meanings, apprentices, and rules. A historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.” (Martin – Nakayama 2012: 87)
Reflect: Find some basic symbols of Hungarian/European culture. Try to reflect on the meaning of them in your own culture and try to collect your knowledge on the meaning of that symbol in Hungarian/European culture.

B) What levels of meanings are incorporated in this key concept?
Culture is a scientific term with one of the most complex histories behind it. Moreover, it is used in our daily parlance with a largely different meaning. In the layers of the term there is human history with all its fate, failures, and achievements. Our key text quotes communication scholar Wen Shu Lee’s ideas about the different layers of culture. Try to understand it always keeping in mind that this is a scientific text, not a statement on certain cultures.
1. Culture - unique human efforts (as different from nature and biology). For example, “Culture is the bulwark against the ravages of nature.”
2. Culture - refinement, mannerism (as different from things that are crude, vulgar, and unrefined). For example, “Look at the way in which he chows down his food. He has no culture at all.”
3. Culture - civilization (as different from backward barbaric people). For example, “In countries where darkness reigns and people are wanting in culture, it is our mandate to civilize and Christianize those poor souls.”
4. Culture - shared language, beliefs, values (as different from language beliefs and values that are not shared; dissenting voices; and voices of the “other”). For example, “We come from the same culture, we speak the same language, and we share the same tradition.”
5. Culture - dominant or hegemonic culture (as different from marginal cultures). For example, “It is the culture of the ruling class that determines what is moral and what is deviant.” [This definition is a more charged version of definitions 2, 3, and 4 through the addition of power consciousness.]
6. Culture - the shifting tensions between the shared and the unshared (as different from shared or unshared things). For example, “American
culture has changed from master/slave, to white only/black only, to antiwar and black power, to affirmative action/multiculturalism and political correctness, to transnational capital and anti-sweatshop campaigns.” (Martin – Nakayama 2012: 85.)

Watch this funny and short summary with examples on the multiplied meaning of culture:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Me2HlTQPS40


Reflect: Are you able to grasp some of the above meanings of culture in your culture?

C) How can we understand another culture?

There is a binary opposition to describe the different ways we approach another culture. We born and are mostly raised as ethnocentrist, meaning we have a “tendency to think that our own culture is superior to other cultures.” (Martin – Nakayama 2012: 5). Contrary to that, social scientists (and you are also studying a social science) are globally view that all beliefs, customs, and ethics are relative to the individual within his own social context. In other words, “right” and “wrong” are culture-specific; and, since no universal standard of morality exists, no one has the right to judge another society’s customs.

Check these flicks with a lot of examples on ethnocentrism and cultural relativism:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlX AeOnU520
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=li49eAKJ CwY

Here are some practical suggestions how to overcome ethnocentrism:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hxb-2Vs513s
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqFv1aM8vqU
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTXIrce8kk

We Hungarians (and some other European cultures) have a rather strange habit, the so-called pigsticking. Check this grotesque flick on the custom:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnsUd9m7eRQ

From the perspective of another culture this is cruel and brutal. In the local culture this has a completely different meaning. Pigsticking is an occasion of strengthening family ties and get hold of good quality, handmade food. Being a social scientist we cannot be short sighted to see the difference!

**REFLECT:** DO YOU SEE ANY HABITS IN YOUR CULTURE WHICH COULD BE CONSIDERED STRANGE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ANOTHER CULTURE?

**D) WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE IDENTITY OF THOSE TRAVELLING A LOT OR RAISED IN BICULTURAL FAMILIES?**
Quickening migration created special variants and modifications of identity. Transnationalism is “the activity of migrating across the borders of one or more nation-states.” Whereas multicultural identity is “a sense of in-betweenness that develops as a result of frequent or multiple cultural border crossings.” (Martin – Nakayama 2012: 341) For this latter one read Peter Adler’s influential essay, Beyond Cultural Identity: Reflections on Multiculturalism here:

**REFLECT:** CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL THEORY USES THE WORD CULTURAL BROKER FOR THOSE WHO ARE ABLE TO CULTURALLY ‘TRANSLATE’ CONCEPTS BETWEEN DIFFERENT CULTURES. DO YOU KNOW SOMEBODY AROUND YOU WHO IS DEEPLY ROOTED IN TWO CULTURES AND IDENTIFIES WITH BOTH?

### 4.3. **Focus topic: reasons to study intercultural communication?**

**KEY AND COMPULSORY TEXT FOR THIS TOPIC:**

For the history of the discipline see the first couple of chapters of Everett M. Rogers, William B. Hart, Yoshitaka Miike: Edward T. Hall and The
A) WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT ON INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION?
Communication technology has brought the world much closer together, even without physical proximity. The vast expansion from telephone to television, email, fax, etc., but first of all the web quickened that process. Marshall McLuhan, a prominent mediatheorist, used the concept "global village". See his thoughts in CBC TV at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HeDnPP6ntic. McLuhan pointed out that technology allows us to experience other cultures that are not our own and even to develop complex relationships with them. We have to keep in mind the mediarepresentation of other cultures, exoticism, thematic channels.

Besides communication technology, the technological development of mobility also enhances the chance to meet other cultures.


REFLECT: CONSIDER THE COMMUNICATION TOOLS THE DIFFERENT GENERATIONS OF YOUR RELATIVES USE TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOU?

B) HOW DEMOGRAPHY AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IS RELATED?
Western societies are aging. Even the European Commission published a short flick to tell this to the European population (European Economy Explained - Going further together - The ageing population - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zISQEpG1AcQ) For a more scientific account check Professor Hans Rosling on Ageing Europe (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHCt6PmSs0k)

A number of Western societies invited immigrants to their societies to keep up the welfare state. Nowadays there are more non-European immigrants & more intra-European migrants than ever before. (Cf. London as a city with one of the largest Hungarian populations.) Immigration significantly altered the social and especially cultural landscape. This caused anti-immigrant hysteria. Especially in a period of economic decline (which took place from 2008) an increase in anti-immigrant sentiment is predictable.
The so called “melting pot”, a “metaphor that assumes that immigrants and cultural minorities will be assimilated into the U.S. majority culture, losing their original cultures”, was criticized as cultures never really melted together → cf. no global culture, but hybridization.

**Reflected: Consider the interrelatedness of ageing, economic prosperity and child birth rate.**

**C) What is the effect of the globalization of economy on intercultural communication?**

The creation of a world market in goods, services, labor, capital, and technology accelerated in the past century. The outsourced work creates not only economic changes locally, but through cultural differences in business practices there are a further reaching effect. Moreover, multinational companies are employing culturally diverse workforce which is a challenge to manage. There is a Volvo Group conference keynote lecture entitled Intercultural Management in the age of Globalisation which is freely available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYOil8b3o70


**Reflected: What can be an official holiday of a global company? Do some research and find out!**

**5. Class Exercises**

This course inevitably has an intention to make a change in your view on other cultures. As you are all preparing to find work in international business it is no surprise that the course intends to form you into an emphatic, tolerant and culturally relative person. These are qualities necessary to be successful in international business environment.

It is well known that to develop into a culturally relative individual the first step is always to distance ourselves from our own culture. In this way we gain the necessary perspective and freedom to understand and accept other cultures. Distancing ourselves from our culture can emotionally be rather stressful. The feeling of totality and dominance we have been socialized in
during our childhood is a strong bond and is truly hard to overstep. As most of us grew up in monocultural environments it is an enormous step to recognize and accept the relativity of our own culture. However, there are useful exercises to help these inner changes. Most of them tries to point out that every culture is creating its own version of reality. This version is constructed from the point of view of the given culture. In the following you will have the chance to get to know some of these exercises.

5.1. Exercise 1 – social reality is a construction (mental geography)

We all take our culture, nation, history and country for granted. We are not questioning the emotionally based knowledge we have been socialized in while growing up. For example we learn numerous facts about our country in an institutionalized (in school) or un-institutionalized (at home) way. Besides these facts we attach feelings to our country, usually we even personalize it as father or mother. (For example, Hungary is a woman, called Hungaria, and Hungary is a motherland.) Moreover we connect different associations, meanings to certain territories of our countries. The reason why we think and feel certain territories to be more important is not because of geographical facts. It is history (and let's not forget this is different from the past), memory and emotional attachment. The meanings associated with a given territory shape our view of our country. In this way we see (and feel) our country differently than even the most educated foreigner, who only learned about our country. All of these pieces of knowledge create a certain interpretation, a certain version of our country. We could call this perception mental geography which is based on a (just partly factual) knowledge shared by our fellow countrymen. Mental geography is basically a cognitive phenomenon, but we can gain an insight into these rather subjective interpretations of the national space by asking members of a nation to draw a map and characterize it with a closed set of parameters. Here are some examples made by foreign students studying in the international economy program in Szeged.
Analyze the map of Nigeria drawn by a student from that country. Not surprisingly we have the tendency to provide information based on our studies. Even though the student was asked to write down associations, the official maps he used to see overwrote this intention. In spite of that the map already shows a characteristic of the country which is unknown for the outer observer: ethnic complexity. Ethnic heterogeneity is one of the most important features which can influence the mental geography of the citizens of a country and which can be hidden for the outsiders.

Compare the two images of Belgium. Both images were drawn by French speaking Belgian students. The task was to use the oppositional pairs tradition vs modernity, nature vs culture, and past vs future to characterize different regions of Belgium. My aim with this exercise is to deconstruct the monolithic images we have of our countries. As you can see the two students interpreted certain places differently. E.g. the famous town of Brugge/Bruges means tradition/past for one of them, and culture for the other. Even they use the name differently: one is using the Dutch name for this Dutch town, whereas the other is using the French name for the town.
Not surprisingly ethnic tensions are one of the most frequent feature on these maps. At the same time they are one of the best phenomena to reveal how differently cultural (i.e. ethnic) groups see the world around themselves. Look at the map of Jordan above. Do not miss the emotional side notes reflected in the different writing of Palestine and Israel by this Palestinian student.

Some maps even prove that we can have rather incorrect views on the world around us. In the above image drawn by a German student the division of post-WWII Germany is exchanged. In reality Eastern Germany was occupied by the Soviet Union. Besides this mistake the student did not miss to mark the historical size of the territories occupied by Germans. Nostalgia, history and nationalism always walk hand in hand in creating our feelings towards our mother country.
Sometimes this is very strongly socialized into members of a group. Here are two maps drawn by Azerbaijani students. Both of them are interpreting Northern Iran as Southern Azerbaijan. This is a widely shared idea in Azerbaijan.

Compare the two images of Kazakhstan both drawn by Kazakh students. As you see even two members of the same group can attach rather different associative content to their country. One of the students divided up the country and created ‘regions’ using the given oppositional pairs. In case of the other student the oppositional pairs serve only as a starting point and she attaches further information to different regions.

* 

After drawing a map which connects the territory of another country to your country, it is always a good exercise to ask how members of the other group would react to your map. Mental geographies, inclusive and exclusive represent the views of our group. Drawing them helps to question them, helps to reflect on them. Through this you can make the first step to recognize the particularity and subjectivity of mental geographies. This is the first step to
recognize other views of the world, which later can contribute to the acknowledgement of these views.

5.2. Exercise 2. – immerse to local culture

Another way to turn into a culturally relative individual is analyzing the culture which is your temporary place of residence for quite a long time. According to previous research and my personal experiences even though you arrive with a rather limited set of goals to another culture (i.e. studying) during the years spent here most of you will incorporate local habits, customs, recipes to your lifestyle, and will bring personally important objects with you. During the days, weeks, months you spend here, you are analyzing the local context and gain a better and better understanding of it.

To achieve that better understanding naturally you have to be exposed to the other (i.e. local) culture. Not surprisingly most of you are not initially interested to dive deep into the local culture. As we have discussed that in TOPIC 1, PART B in connection with Adaptation Model 2 arriving to another culture is a stressful experience. One reaction to that stress is avoidance and withdrawal. Not the best mental status to get to know another culture.

This exercise aims to help you to overstep this withdrawal. The task is to visit interesting events and places in the local culture. You can gain some extra points counted into your final assessment in case you are reflecting on your feelings in the form of writing a blog entry on your experiences. It is important to stress that there is no normative expectation in connection with the blog entry’s content: I hope you are ready to write about your feelings, emotions, experiences, it can be about your concerns, critiques while visiting an event or place suggested by the teacher of the course. I strongly hope that every evening you spend at a festival in Szeged or every afternoon you spend in the local museum will not only help you to feel settled, but also to gain a better understanding of the local culture.

Years ago when starting this course for foreign students I decided that we should help those students who will come later to understand their temporary place. That is why I set up a blog to share the experiences foreign students gain here in Szeged. Here is some exemplary entry to help you understand the style, the tone and the content. (Grammar and spelling mistakes were not edited in the following examples.)
Eurodinner ESN: a great experience!

Tuesday on the 15th November 2016 was organized a dinner by the members of ESN Szeged where everyone could share a traditional dish from its country of origin. Between Spanish, Turkish, Bulgarian, German specialties and other meals, we were entitled to a mixture of flavours and good discoveries. To represent Belgium, my choice was to put the "Carbonade Flamande" in the menu of the day. Back on the preparation, the comparisons and especially the discoveries taste.

It was organized in a building not so far from the TIK, library of the university. All the food was on a big table and everyone could taste each speciality. There were tortillas, "Quiche Lorraine", paella but too some meals I haven’t known. It was honestly very tasty. But the room was very crowded and we didn’t have enough place to enjoy correctly the food. Too, there were people who didn’t cook for the event but came. It was bad for this because for example I spend money to prepare my speciality but not them. However, they didn’t feel the proudness to cook something special from their country and my first goal was to share the Belgian identity.

But what about this famous "Carbonade à la flamande"?
First, it is a typical dish of Belgium and Northern France who consisting of pieces of meat simmered in a beer sauce. The name “Carbonade” comes from the word “coal” (‘Charbon’ in French) because of the high number of mines during the past in this region. The word “Flamande” shows the area where it cook was called in the past as “Flemish territory”. The meal consists of chopping beef, pork or horse meat and cooking it with Belgian beers and onions. It is sometimes prepared with gingerbread and a little brown sugar or Liège syrup to bring a sweet taste to the dish.

And what about the event?
With what I heard, it was successful. I’m happy because it was the first time I cooked it. The pan was so quickly empty. But that shows it was great and tasty. I would like to thank my mother for the advice.

To summarize, it was a very nice evening where we could share our specialities, culture. I believe people will keep a nice image of Belgium, a so little country but with a lot of specialities.
X (Belgium)

[This blog entry is a fine example to understand the chance to get to know other cultures while in abroad. A foreign student community in itself is a small ‘culture’. That culture is formed by the differentness of the monolithic local culture: everybody is a constitutive part of it who does not belong to the locals. Such an international evening presented here helps to understand that this small culture is in itself a mixture of several large cultures.]

**Finding tips at the Reök Palace**

In the way to the University, every student can recognize beautiful building with wavy walls and floral decorations that grabs your attention at first sight. And every time when you walk the Tisza Lajos körút you may wonder about palace.

![Palace Interior](image)

Each year Reök Team gives a chance to the international students to enter the mind-blowing history of this palace. A lot of visitors can know that Three-storey palace was designed for Ivan Reök and his family by Ede Magyar in 1907. However not a lot of people know why does building have floral patterns of lilies and ivy creep give a motif of water? Why on the top of the building there is a black eagle which is not so recognizable by visitors? Why were windows shaped like in this way? After answering you can find that, every detail directly links to the owner of Reök Palace. Therefore, this difference makes you try to find tips about Ivan Reök and his family, to think deeply and not just to admire the Reök Palace.

However, our free guided tour did not include visiting galleries that is good somehow because now I have a reason to discover this building again and again.

What I figured out that this Art Nouveau is the case when it is better to pay attention to small details not to the whole picture.

Y (Kazakhstan)
[This entry shows us that our first and initial approach to the local culture is fundamentally touristic. Arriving to a place where we plan to live for years we first look around with the interested eye of a tourist. It is a good approach to act like a tourist in the first weeks as we will gain some understanding of the locality which will be a context for our everyday life for years.]

**Paprika Fest at Alsóváros**

Szeged is a small city. However, it does not mean there is nothings to enjoy. Well, there are lots of things that we can have fun with friends! Almost every week or two, some festivals are held for everyone. For example; wine festival (two weeks ago), paprika Show (this weekend), etc. On 1st of October, I and friend went to paprika festival which was held in Mátyás Király tér. The place is not so far away from Szeged University, approximately 20 minutes walk took us there.

When I got there, first thing came to my mind was, the atmosphere was very peaceful and chill. Elderly people were singing on a stage which was really fantastic, children were running around their parents with laughter. A breeze blew from trees was comfortable as well.

Walking around some shops, there were not only paprika stuff but also accessory shop, hand-made skincare shop and more. Therefore, there were lots of things to look around. The thing I really like is, they explained their products how to use/cook kindly but did not force to buy. No pressure. They were very nice. Compare to my country’s festival, one thing which is really different is, they do not use big voice to gather customers or catch customer’s attention. I prefer this type of communication which is calm and respectful.
The church right behind shops is absolutely amazing. I had never got a chance to get into a church at that time, so it was the first time for me to be in. I was very fascinated by drawings on a wall, sculptures and architecture. I never imagined the ceiling is that high. Every single object is beautiful and hold my breath!

There were a few people just sitting on chairs and relaxing. Now, I am interested in being in a church on Sunday to see what people do or even take part in because it must be a different atmosphere and it will be a new experience for me.

To conclude that day, it was really nice opportunity to know and explore this city. There is much greener so I could feel very relaxed and happy. About products sold by shops, the price is affordable, some shops give a sample to try a taste so that we can make sure before purchase. I would recommend to visit next year if you have not been there! It will be a very nice day!!

Z (Japan)

[This entry is a fine example to make active steps to get to know the local culture. Festivals and feasts are always harder to understand as they are encompassing complex meanings into ritual forms of the local culture. At the same time it is a perfect occasion to feel the other culture. And let us not forget, spending years in another culture will create a certain feeling of belonging to the local culture in most of you. As the feeling of belonging is just partly logical and reasonable, it is partly emotional, such occasions are always a step further to understand the local culture.]

5.3. Exercise 3. – reflexivity in practice

To understand the concept of cultural relativity is always one of the hardest parts of intercultural classes. Reflexivity is probably the most important element we have to use to be culturally relative. Reflexivity “at one level can be understood as a process of continuous self-monitoring including the use of knowledge about personal and social life as a constitutive element of it. In this way the modern person can be grasped as a ‘reflexive project’, that is, the
ordering of self-narratives through self-reflection constitutes self-identity. Here identity is understood in terms of the self as reflexively understood by persons in terms of their biography.” (Barker 2004:174-175)

To reach that personal level of reflexivity we have to be aware of the fact that reflection is vital to react on certain social situations and to gain the most out them. Reflection, which is nicely detailed in this video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObQ2DheGOKA) means that we critically think about what we did in a certain social context, as a result we reach a conclusion and based on that we adapt that to our future behavior. This cycle can be repeated in this way helping our development. The education researcher, David Kolb developed a scheme to understand how reflection can be used in learning. According to him, the concrete experience is followed by reflective observation which then leads to abstract conceptualization. Applying the new knowledge gained in this way is the stage of active experimentation. Critical self-reflexivity is a social science concept. Detailed in that video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPP_5mWjNtc) it is clear, that the reflection described above can be applied to the social science research project also. Self-reflexivity became an important element of contemporary cultural anthropology. Reflexivity is a typically modern phenomenon “The cultural rise of reflexivity is connected to the emergence of modernity in that modern life involves the constant examination and alteration of social practices in the light of incoming information about those practices. Traditional cultures value stability and the place of persons in a normatively ordered and immutable cosmos so that the order of things in life is the way it is because that is how it should be. Here, identity is primarily a question of social position. By contrast, modernism values change, life planning and reflexivity so that for moderns identity is a reflexive project.” (Barker 2004: 175)

In our classes we have used reflexivity as an introduction to cultural relativism. After staying only some weeks here you have been asked to write down the three most pleasant and most unpleasant experiences about Hungary and the Hungarian people. Naturally arriving to a foreign country from a rather distant homeland you had striking observations and you have recorded annoying characteristics of the locals. In such cases one tends to generalize some assumptions and there is a threat to end in a morally superior position. To avoid creating stereotypes right after this task you have been asked to write down the three most pleasant and most unpleasant experience a foreign traveller can face in your country. Turning the original task into its contrast helps us shed light on the relativity of our judgements. Unfortunately half of the class simply avoided to answer that task or even completely misunderstood or denied its role suggesting to visit his/her glorious homeland. The other half of the group provided very valuable material and either immediately understood the role of this task or was just open to try
him/herself. Reading these opinions one can see the effect of immediate contrastive tasks.

Some of the opinions reflect on the behavioural, normative and protocol differences. In such cases even typical generational problems are quoted which can be similar in rather different countries and does not really a specificity of a given country.

It is a natural trend to point out some larger, ‘contextual’ problems, that cannot be changed by everyday local citizens. This distances the origin of the ‘disturbing experience’ from the locals. Military checkpoints in an occupied territory is a typical example in the above quotation.

Such textualisation which tries to distance the problems from the everyday reality of the home environment (‘The sound of the city is so complex.’) is mixed with harsh descriptions and critique (‘People easily split on the street, throw rubish’).
However, in several texts critique appears, which is the first step to distance ourselves from our internalized culture and in this way be ready to analytically look on our dominant culture.

Direct comparison with another country can open room to gain an intercultural identity and in this way make oneself ready to accept the differences of another culture.

5.4. Exercise 4. – mental maps

The concept of mental maps first appeared in behavioural geography. It tries to shed light on the process through which human individuals attach feelings, emotions and meaning to their known physical environment. According to Sarre mental maps are ‘A model of the environment which is built up over time in the individual’s brain’ (Graham 1976: 259.) Mental maps make clear that our space perception is thoroughly subjective and individual. In this way it is an important and useful tool to formalise how human beings construct the world around them. A mental map is a good first step to recognise and reflect on the relativity of our judgements.

Mental maps can be rather different. At least three major types can be pointed out though. Drawings are either pointing out and surround different areas, structured by streets or centred around miniature iconic representations of the most important buildings and sights. With spending more time in the given foreign environment mental maps become more and more elaborate. Here is an example of a very basic mental map of a foreign student about Szeged.
As we can see the most important places needed for study (KO building, TIK), for survival (Tesco, Arkad, immigration office, bus stop) are only supplemented by some spots for relaxation (Retro, Jate Klub). The spatial structure is truly sketchy, even the directions are not represented correctly.

Such limited maps sometimes concentrate only on the most important space which is meaningful for the individual. On the above map we could probably recognise the Rector’s Office and the KO building. Besides the place where a large number of classes are held, the GO building is represented in detail. Commentary, personal feelings (‘looks like hospital building’) are appearing even on this very limited map, which shows us how deeply personal and constructed these maps are.
Commentaries and evaluations usually form earlier than our ability to reach a structural understanding of the foreign environment. On the map above we are only able to recognise Szeged as a city divided by a river. No other structural representation is present on the map. At the same time it not only provides a list for the most important locations for a foreign student, but it is also full of evaluations. Descriptions (‘Dóm tér – the most respectful and strict building in Szeged’), survival suggestions (‘Mars tér bazaar – come early and buy the best fruits and vegetables’), critique (‘TIK – the real university should be here’) and commentary (‘Arkad mall – most beautiful girls’) can be found on such maps.

A typical map showing certain territories of the city in a rather sketchy way, but at the same time clearly marking the personal relationship to certain places (‘I like it!’).
This drawn survival guide is not really useful to find places in the city, but provides clues to certain spots.

Our last example shows some iconic buildings of the downtown. This map at the same time is also full of commentaries and shows how the individual has already attached personal meaning to the foreign environment.
5.5. *Exercise 5. – our multicultural self*

The concept of intercultural self is based on several key issues of intercultural communication. First of all it needs a basic understanding of how personal identity is built into a unique system in each individual from rather common single individual identity elements. These common identity elements (physical, biological, cultural traits) make us similar to a lot of other humans. At the same time the unique structure of these identity elements make us special, individual and original.

To discover our intercultural self this typical class room exercise aims to open up the multinational students in the classroom for each other, provides a basis for discussion, but at the same time it serves as a tool for self-reflection. As we have pointed out earlier self-reflection is probably one of the most important capacity of humans. As this can increase our awareness of our culture and identity self-reflection has a prime importance in intercultural communication.
In the exercise students have to record their four most important identity elements (characteristics). Carefully choosing them, meditating on the hierarchies of personal characteristics this part of the exercise provides a moment of reflection. After this first phase the results are discussed together. The second phase of the exercise is to write down the next four most important characteristics. This is a repetition of the self-assessment previously experienced. Next the students form pairs, exchange the papers and discuss their identity compositions. Finally the students have to introduce their discussion partner to a third student.
Circles of Your Multicultural Self

What identities make up who you are?
Who you are? How would you describe yourself?

I'm from Morocco
49 years old

I'm friendly and kind

I'm a little bit sensitive

I love my culture
"Moroccan Culture"
"It's interesting"

NAME

my name "Asma"
signify "blessed" in my language

I'm studying business administration and management

I don't like this domain "Business..." because..."

I love travel and discover new cultures