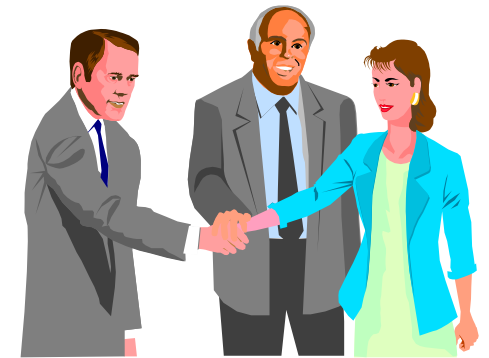




**Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness.
Marc Twain**

Intercultural communication

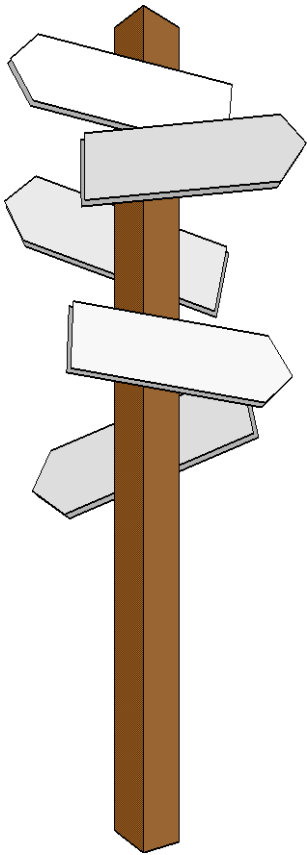
Is self-awareness the first step?



What is culture?

- norms, rules and values, we acquired over the years
- serves as orientation and influences acting, thinking, valuing, feeling and appreciating
- permanent used system for orientation and therefore widely unconscious
- everything, we consider as normal and take for granted
- „culture is like contact-lenses...“ (Triandis)

What happens if cultures get in contact...?

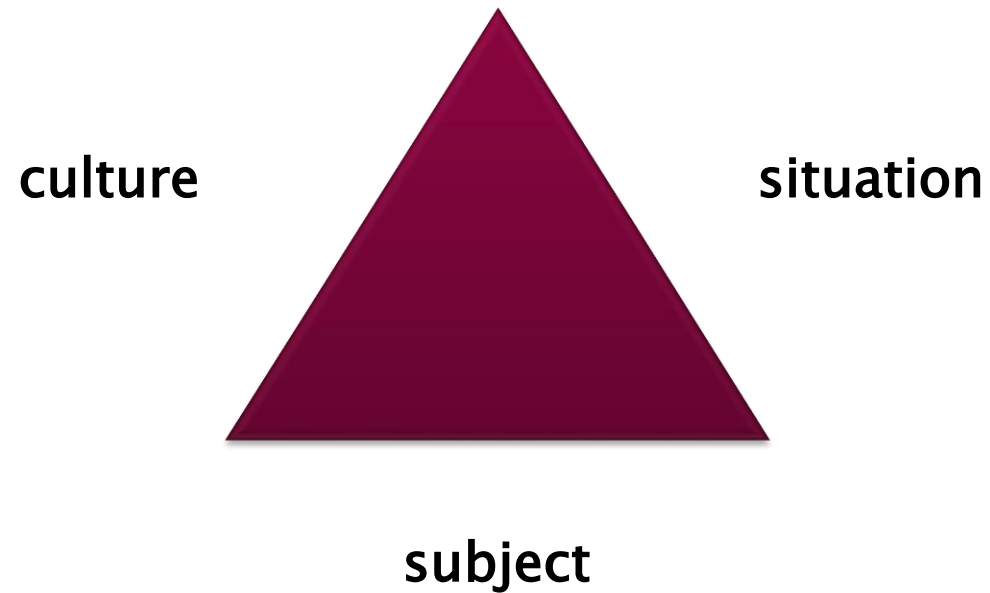


- people with different systems of orientation meet
- often only limited consciousness of one's own culture and limited knowledge about foreign cultures
- unequally sized overlapping of cultures
- increased risk for misunderstandings, conflicts and frictional losses
- limited repertoire of solution strategies

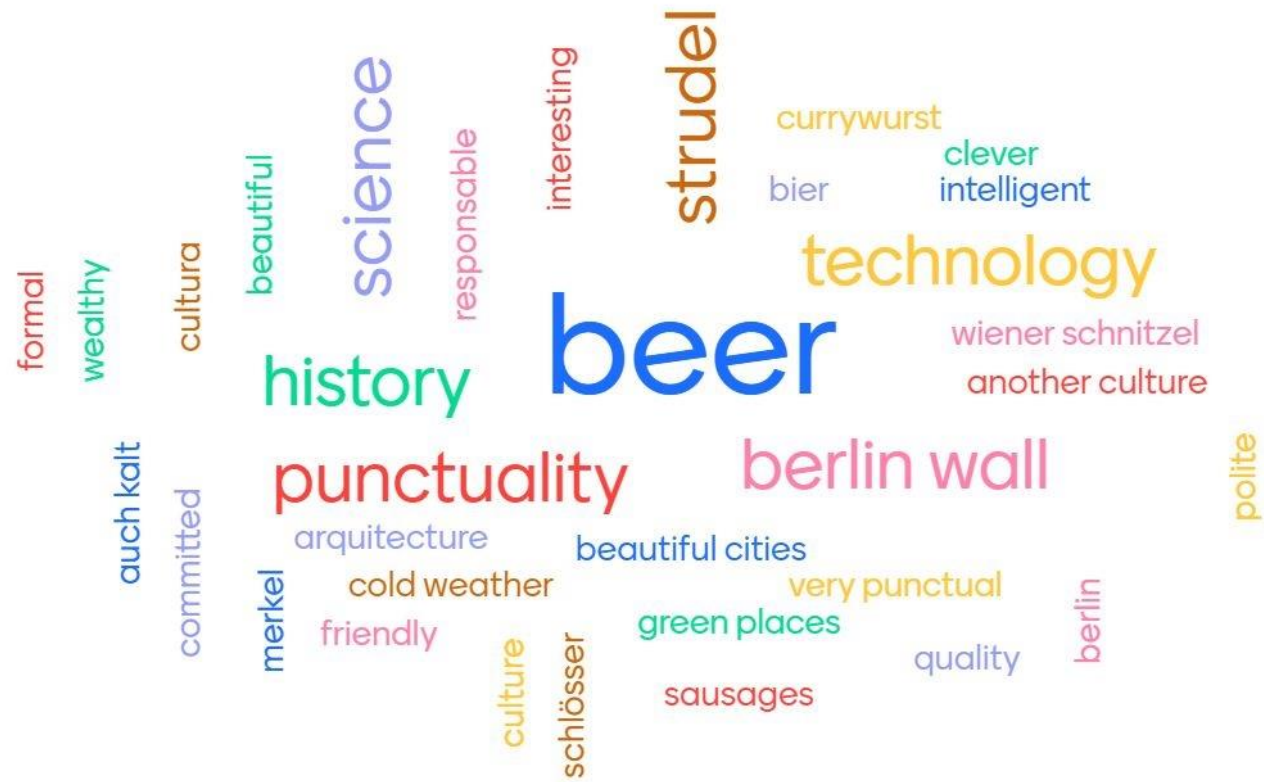
What are cultural standards?

- implement for description of cultures – no absoluteness
- central criteria of a culture, that come into operation as norms and standards when they interact
- cultural standards describe ideal and extent of tolerance in case of thinking, acting, appreciating and feeling
- cultural standards describe characteristics on a generalised and abstract level
- cultural standards reveal differences
- cultures change through dynamics accomplished by individual interpretation of cultural standards
- historical dimension

subject – situation – culture



What is typically German for you?



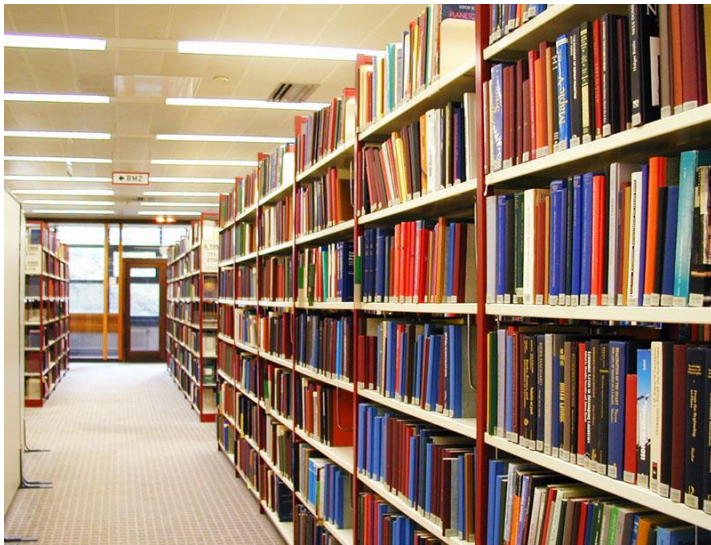
German cultural standards at a glance

- subject orientation
- appraisal of rules and structures
- internalised control
- time management
- division of areas of life
- regulation of distance
- weak context as communicative style
- individualism

1. Subject orientation

- roles and professional competence in professional cooperation are decisive
- factual things have top priority – relationship–signals are often not appreciated
- Germans feel comfortable with a personal touch but don't expect it
- subject orientation is able to override hierarchies
- experts hold a high status

2. Appraisal of structures and rules



- rules and commandments with strict construction and penalty
- non-adherence can be avenged by uninvolved people
- aim: minimisation of risks and control over the situation
- rules and structures = best way for problem solving
- to be fond of organisation
- orientation towards details

3. Internalised control

- in Germany rules are considered as being binding upon all: right and wrong are clearly defined
- „there has to be reliance“: high value of reliability
- internalised control is precondition for planning, even articles of incorporation are based upon it
- not control, but identification leads at work to effort
- reliability depends not on person but rather on object
- self-discipline and hardness as interior site of conscientiousness

Aspects of internalised control

- basis: consensus
- ostentatious antecedent
- social component: justice
- autonomy and independence
- Bringeschuld bei Problemen
- moral valence: internalised control is criterion for engagement and trustability

4. Time planning

- time as precious property in Germany
- object as central theme
- consecutivity is the heart beat of the live
- appointments as regulative between task and people
- time may not be stolen
- time planning in private domain, too
- time management as much valued ability
- Nevertheless, do Germans always improvise?



5. Division of areas of personality and areas of life

- division professional – private
- division rational – emotional
- division role – person
- division formal – informal
- regulation of distance



Division professional – private

- on the job you work – in private you live
- at home relationships are in the foreground, at work objects are in the foreground
- private life shall be ignored at work
- cultural standards reveal difference
- on the job friendships are just as little expected as invitations to one's home

Division rational – emotional

- rationality belongs to profession, emotions belong to home
- trial, to ignore sympathy while evaluating
- drawbacks at work allow negative emotions
- German emotionality with respect to friendships is often too much for non-Germans

Division role – person

- at work, person should be concealed behind his function
- blur of role and person as first step towards a loss of authority
- to solve conflicts at work pertinently, object should be in the foreground
- role bestows great self-assuredness

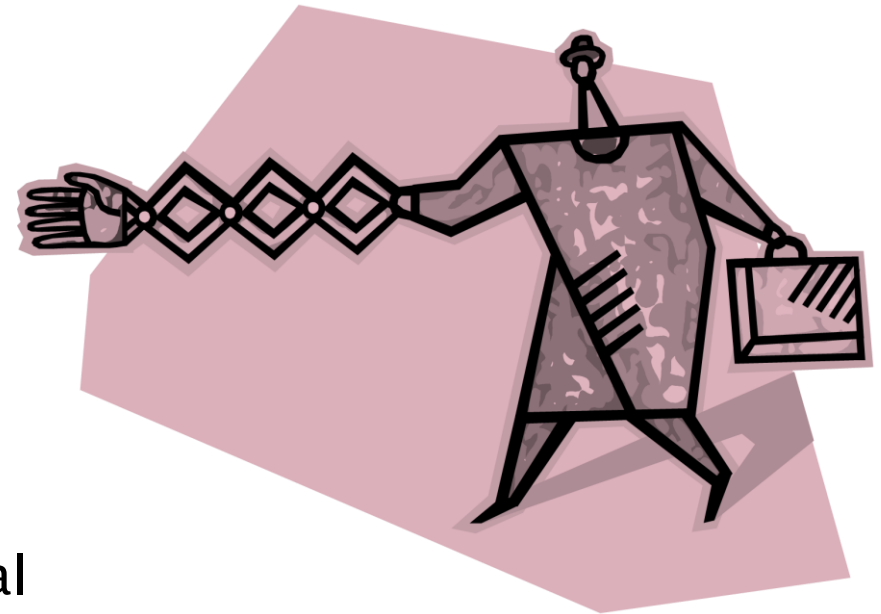


Division formal – informal

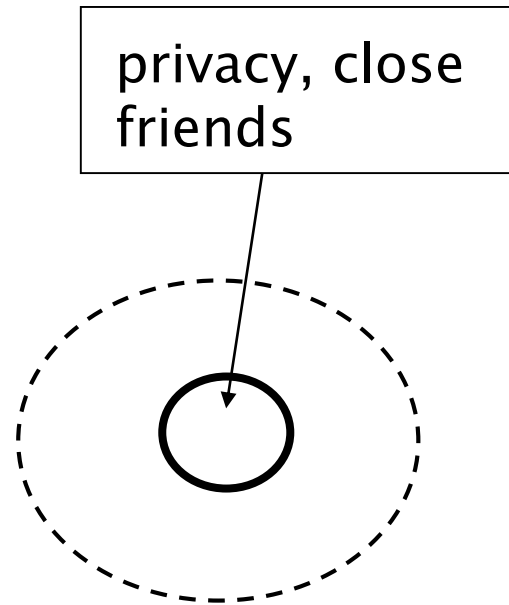
- informal arrangements have to be repeated in formal meetings to be valid
- protocol
- formality bestows fairness
- informal arrangements get quickly the smack of nepotism

6. Regulation of distance

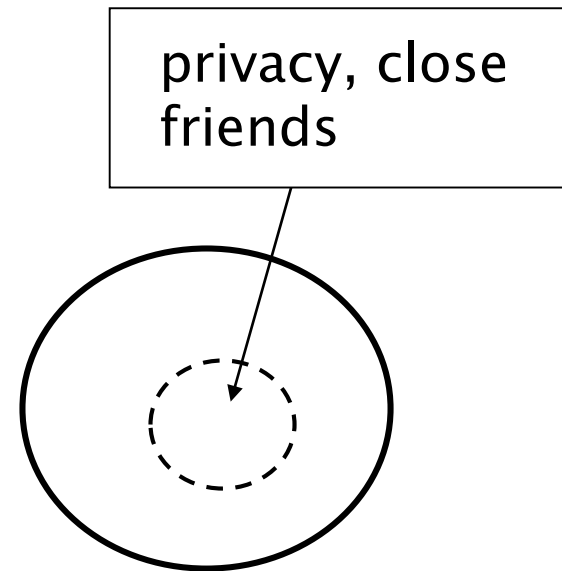
- Clearly increments in the interaction with:
 - foreigners
 - acquaintances and colleagues
 - well-known acquaintances
 - friends
- ⇒ change from role to person
- ⇒ change from rational to emotional
- ⇒ change from formal to informal



Reduction of distance



Peach



Coconut

7. Weak context as communicative style

- accentuation on “what”, not on “how” is spoken
- honesty instead of double standards
- if possible, no leeway for interpretation
- everything that is important has to be formulated in words emphatically
- if something is said in a roundabout way, Germans do often not hear it
- conflict–confrontation and self–assertion
- criticism and analysis of problems as important features

8. Individualism

- accentuation of individual in relative independency from group membership
- I am the linchpin of my life – self-responsibility
- symmetric reciprocal relationships
- contact is possible – even without personal reference
- private space very important
- public spirit as typical German occurrence

Individualism in connection with other cultural standards

- individualism bestows dignity of every individual
- rules and structures for interfaces
- internalised control leads to efficiency of rules
- obscurities are clarified by direct communication
- because group membership is less important, getting to the point is alleviated



Model for deeper digging in the intercultural meeting



Stop the automatic evaluation process!

Specify what irritates you!

Analyse the individual and situational conditions!

Broach the issue of your own expectations!

Recognise the own cultural standards!

Use the knowledge about foreign cultural standards for a mutual satisfaction!



Thank you for your attention!