



## How to train in interculturality? 2/3

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### Forging the sense of observation

The second presupposition of the question « How to train to interculturality? » refers to a clear understanding of what « what does "interculturality" ». By intuition, everyone can grasp that this term is used to refer to what is implied, both in complementarity that in conflictual situations, the meeting between two crops.

Yet nothing is less obviously individuals meet each other, not the cultures. So, an individual embodies-it a culture? In this case, there is a risk of reducing an individual-generality, such as when Martin Dufour, an expatriate in Germany, or Ernst Schmidt, in France, are designated by their colleagues as being "the Frenchman" or "the German". By taking it up a notch at the on the level of generalization, "the French" or "the German" will sometimes be challenged as if they were the representatives and they're wearing them-ass talk original, of the type: «But you Frenchmen, why do you think... go to-you as much time at the table?"? or?: «How is it...-that in Germany you also strictly adhere to the rules of the game. and procedures?». Each one is thus summoned to make because of peculiarities taken for the expression of a truth gesometimes not directly experienced but simply raped.carried by others ("I was told that..."), or even deduced from stereotypes ("It is well known that Russians are cold and impassive"), a lack of knowledge ("The individual does not exist in Japan") or simply an error that biases the perception ("He's Arab, so Muslim"»).

Yet, who has experienced immersion in another countries has seen differences in the distance between the twoperand body contact (why didn't this Saudi guy tell me that he was ae don't let go of your hand while talking?), the relationship to time (Remembering Germans who arrived at a formation in Frankfurt two minutes after its scheduled start time and theirapologies for this terrible delay) or the way of argumenter and to convince ("Do a workshop around the French proverbssso that the participants can get the most out of it.-even of the same companies.gements in contrast to the proverbial local proverbial thinking", me advised a friend from Côte d'Ivoire to whom I asked how comto carry out intercultural

training in Abidjan), as many particularities embodied by individuals. Need-it does however Focusing on the individual's singularity while disregarding those observations that show the influence of the societal context on an individual to explain in part his behaviours, modes of action, ways of communicating and interacting with us?

We will have to find the right balance between the positive and the negative. tion of denial ("cultures have no influence") and the point of view culturalist ("it's all about culture"), two crosses that, one, prevents the right questions from being asked to enrich the understanding of foreign partners and, on the other, reduced this understanding has only a cultural dimension. Go to universalizing indifference and relativizing essentialization, it agrees to position interculturality training without sink to these extremes. Thus, the astute observer, cons stereotypes that he carries within him and those that are not. Is he a reflection of the local population's mistrust of the local population, and therefore of its own perceptual biases and able to identify the bias of others about it, will have noted many exceptions, like the atheism privately claimed by a Saudi renaissance man. the Jeddah, or the tolerance for delay shown by a German concerned with building interpersonal relationships with his family and friends. ant to address formal topics. It draws two main lessons from this. jeurson the one hand, there is no truth in the interculus field. turel, but only trends or frequencies of certain phenomena on the other hand, the intercultural encounter requires that observations from individuals and from singular situations, in order to draw possible lessons from them on the societal context, and not to infer the behavioural patterns of the and attitudes based on general truths about a culture. In other words, the more you think you know about a foreign culture, the more you have to be wary of that knowledge. Priority must always be days be given to the singularity of the experience, even if it means that the than that- This belies what we think we know about a culture[3].

Thus, at the foundation of intercultural training is the following The development of the sense of observation - to be able to be closer of observation without judgement and to add a complementary dimension: observation of others but also of oneself. Observe in the intercultural context that means first of all, when receiving an email, when faced with the language the body of the person you are talking to, being attentive to his or her own way of to argue and reason, to determine what may be the personality of the person with whom one is interacting, or his or her professional culture (a computer specialist or a lawyer will not have the same jargon, the same way of reading problems, the same de (Is this strong presence of positive emotions in my Brazilian partner's life due to the influence of an environment where compliments and smiles are major vectors of interpersonal relations ?).

These observations of the other are directly dependent on the self-observation. My reasons for amazement are straightforward determined by my personality, my professional culture, my or my culture in the societal sense. Thus, the strong presence positive emotions in this Brazilian partner can be remarkable for me because I have a reserved personality, or good because I belong to a trade where the reservation and the appearance of seriousness are professional standards, or again because I come from a societal context in which one can tends to internalize the positive in public and to be wary of compliments as a simple vehicle for criticism born criticism - or for all three reasons at once. The questioning about each other are only born in me because they reflect what I am in terms of the different dimensions of culture... the things that influence me. To put it more directly if I get a difference in the other person, it is first of all in my mind. i. She teaches me as much about each other as it does about myself...-even.

Integrating one's own context into the training

Training in interculturality is therefore not only about training to the understanding of another

culture, but also to its own cultural environment. It is the knowledge of this the last, and to what extent it acts on itself, which will rub off on the need and content of the training. As a result, training of French to relations, for example, with the Americans, this isn't quite the same thing as training the Chinese. In contact with those same Americans astonishment, observations, questioning, challenges and obstacles will not be the same. Let's stay with the French the experience of our societal context varies according to the origin of our partners. And do, among those working in French companies, the Americans find us very explicit and hierarchical, while the Americans find us that the Chinese believe that we are rather implicit and marked by a moderate hierarchy. Would be - whereas there is experience is only relative and that, all in all, one does not pour The aim is to identify those cultural trends and frequencies which, if subsumed in the killed to truths fixed in reductive generalizations, are the living matter of intercultural training?

To go beyond this question, it is necessary to distinguish two levels of culture: the visible and the invisible, the manifest and the hidden, the conscious and the unconscious[4]. Classically, intercultural studies represents them by an ice-berg: the part that emerges comprises the most obvious and manifest elements of a cultural context, about which everyone can develop an expertise (by learning the language, history, gastronomy, politeness, etc.), of such a culture), while the submerged part refers to those elements that are invisible, difficult to access, hidden at first glance, opaque to the point of becoming unconscious (the relationship to time and space, mode of reasoning, values, etc.). Two individuals from different cultures are like two icebergs coming into contact: some elements will complement each other, others will collide, the positive or negative intensity of this contact depending on the depth of the iceberg that is affected. For example, a grimace on my part when I am presented with a strangely smelling dish may cause my host to feel uncomfortable, but the discomfort will increase in intensity if I react sharply when he asks me what my religion is or how much I learn. Once again, it is important to remember that the configuration of this contact, where complementarity and conflict are mixed, is as variable as the individuals themselves. It is futile, and even dangerous, to think of intercultural relations according to scientific laws. There is no cultural kinetics that would make it possible to know in advance what energy is going to be released from this or that interaction - and so much the better for the unforeseen events that feed our respective experiences.

3) Who would meet Tidjane Thiam for the first time in knowing only that he's a franco-Ivorian would prepare to meet "a Franco-Ivorian", with the stereotypes that he are partners, not a brilliant polytechnicien, major of its graduating from the Ecole des Mines, with an MBA from Insead, today at head of Credit Suisse. In 2009, he explained in a very published by the Institut Montaigne, he explained what he owed to the France and why he had left her, tired of the glass ceilings...professionals he was up against. He had just taken the head of the Prudential group in London. See "France is a idea, being French is an emotion", by Tidjane Thiam: <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/blog/2009/10/09/366-the-france-is-a-idea-be-english-a-emotion-by-tidjane-thiam>

[4] In the words of the anthropologist Edward T. Hall in *At-beyond culture* Test Points

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