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CULTURE OF DIVERSITY

A Theoretical Orientation for the Cultural Practice of Social Cooperation

By Thomas A. Bauer

Abstract

Kommunikation hat eine Rationalität, die auf Kultur ausgerichtet ist. Kultur hat eine Rationalität, die auf Vielseitigkeit ausgerichtet ist. Die Vielseitigkeit und Vieldeutbarkeit der Wirklichkeit (Polysemie) macht den Sinn – und die Notwendigkeit – von Kommunikation aus. Probleme und Lösungen sind zwei kulturell unterschiedlich geschriebene Seiten ein und derselben Wirklichkeit. Die Wirklichkeit, von der wir reden, ist nicht komplex aufgrund der ihr unterstellten Natur, sie ist komplex aufgrund ihrer Kontingenz, aufgrund der kulturellen Zumutungen. Ihr Potential ist Diversität, ihre Ressource ist Kommunikation. Aus anderen Quellen lässt sie sich nicht erschließen, was ganz einfach zu Folge hat: wollten oder sollten wir die Wirklichkeit verändern, weil wir sonst keine Auswege aus unüberwindbaren Krisen befürchten, dann müssen wir die Kultur unserer Kommunikation verändern. Und auch das geht nur, wenn wir uns gleichzeitig dafür entscheiden auch darüber zu reden, wie wir miteinander reden und wie es möglich ist, dass sich in dieser Gesprächskultur Gedankengebilde so verselbständigen, dass wir sie nicht mehr als unsere Gedanken- oder Tatenspiele wieder erkennen, sondern in ihnen eigenständige von außen kommende Bedrohungen vermuten.

In order to explain, what is or what could be the culture of diversity it needs to decide for a frame of reference, which has significance and relevance for the problem we are talking about. This is a very simple requirement, otherwise it would not be possible, at least not politically sincere to argue for certain measures how to develop or how to establish culture of diversity – not to speak about the necessity to answer honestly the question, why is there a need of cultivating diversity? Obviously the term of diversity becomes a paradigmatic position in understanding and explaining the problem of social togetherness, it becomes even a cultural and political term and gets used in contexts of conceptualizing new horizons of societies. There is

no other most enlightening concept of reference than the one of communication. Because communication is the instance to unify difference and to make diversity understood as a challenge of culture.

Epistemological approach: talking about culture

The insinuation of making a meaningful statement talking about culture of diversity is possible as soon we accept equally being obliged to make a meaningful statement on diversity of culture. If we decide for a theory of culture we decide for a culture of theory. If we decide for an open and learning model of theory we come so far to conceptualize an open learning model of culture. In this sense culture is open software, which is learning itself (reflexive) by use of itself. Culture is in need of getting confronted by reflexive interruptions (Schmidt 2004,59), which become a part of itself, because culture is a circular communicative process, communication on communication.

The observation of culture is possible within a cultural framework of observation. As observation is a way of getting in a communication (understanding) position to what you are talking about, the key of observation is communication. The more complex the experiences of social connectivity (society) become – and they become so by increasing organization of the communication interests of society -the more important it will be to compensate moments and factors of uncertainty. Which only can be managed by instances of self-observation holding increasing complexity. Thus the society insinuates to hold certainty of control. In the same time the world of societal reality becomes more open and more casual. Beyond of all processes of systematization (e.g. by media) the society tries to get off of all strong protocols of tradition and discovers the horizons of orientation more and more in itself and within the execution of itself. What means: society, in search of understanding itself, increasingly gets involved in paradigms, which mirror less the conditions of continuing formations but more the challenges of alteration. Culture and Communication are such paradigms. They get theoretically (Giddens 1990) Hall 1998) and politically more and more interpreted as ground models of an open and self-responsible society. In that (cultural) gesture of self-reflexive attention the society learns there and then to come to its best practice: culture and communication explain themselves mutually within the context of self-reflection. Culture and communication are to each other the one to the other side of the coin (which is society); the one is not negotiable without the other. In spite of the fact, that they are different competences of social practice, the fragility of culture

always is the fragility of communication, the vulnerability of culture is communicative, the vulnerability of communication is cultural.

A culturological understanding of communication (Bauer 2003a) seems to be the right theoretical framework, in which it makes sense to reflect on problems and solutions of diversity. And even more: A communication-theory-based analysis of diversity is at its best end a diversity-theory-based analysis of communication and culture. A study of social change in culture and a study of feasibility of social change in negotiating diversity only makes sense out of the condition to understand change itself as a matter of culture, as an effort of culture: culture is the in formation level of change as change is the formation level of culture. What culture is supposed to be, is changing under the eyes of consideration as it of interest to change the point of view. Where there is no such interest, nothing will change. The will of change always is the preparedness of self-reflexive (intelligent) interruption of routines.

So it has to be the task of this article to concentrate on cultural problems of diversity in critical reference to identity or ethnocentrism in the framework of a cultural explanation of communication or a communication-theory-based explanation of culture. Referring to this blended concept of communication and culture (Bauer 2003) the idea is not to find new solutions for old problems, but to make new problems attractive. The solution of a problem with that dimension as the culture of diversity represents, is not to intend to get off all the problems, but is to come to know, what problems should an organized and democratically civilized society face, in order manage the transcultural communication with minorities in a way:

- that those minorities realize themselves as an integrated and totally accepted social corpus of the society which they are living with
- that the society comes so far to become aware of the cultural and societal potential of minorities,
- that both parts come so far to see that one without the other never will complete the concept of cultural identity of the social amalgamation they want to represent.

That means that a theoretical analysis of culture of diversity regarding the context of cultural media and communication practice (media culture) should offer a new perspective of problematization – at least more than there already exist (cf. MDI 2004): the thousandth exhortation of human rights or the thousandth reminder of principles of democracy or the thousandth claim of freedom of communication

and media or the often repeated invocation of reason. It is time – especially regarding the Balkan discourse – to pay analytical attention to the experience:

- that any cultural, political or structural change troubles the identity-concept of any multi-minority society- at least insofar as every change provokes crises and every crisis demands changes (diversity as a productive crisis of society),
- that any culture (of diversity) not only has an ideal notion about itself, but also a real face -at least insofar as (following the concept of Cultural Studies) culture may be understood as the everyday use of values (Bauer 2002), the style of living WITH conditions - and not as a ceremonial celebration of hypostasis (cf. Bromley/Göttlich/Winter 1999)
- that a pragmatic and rational view of problems raises viable solutions, which come true in a pragmatic sense of living a (and in) common culture.

If this is how matters stand, that the way of looking at things decides, how then the subject of reflection looks like – what is not at all surprising – then it not only makes an epistemological but also an ethical sense to break the routines and to reflect societal diversity as a problem of culture of diversity, which at its end appears as a theoretical question:

- what must a culture look like which gives space to diversity? Or, if still counts, what we said before (culture as the other side of communication): what is the communicative rationality of culture? Is it diversity? Or just variety? Is it unity? Is it universality?
- And the other way round: what is the cultural rationality of communication. Is it diversity? Is it homogeneity? Is it universality?

The rationality of culture: diversity in communication

Generally spoken culture is a social practice in generating meaning and in referring to generalized meaning, it is the social constructive expression of a socially and collectively developed program on values and orientations of sense, which fulfil the notion of an “own territory”, of identity and togetherness of all people experiencing itself being connected by that program (Schmidt 2004) in significant media: language, common social institutions, common history, common narrations, common traditions. In this interpretation culture always may be taken as a framework and legitimacy and justification of social

control. But: Origin is not the only point of reference for a definition of culture (and here already an open minded theory of culture needs to break the routine of everyday use of the category) but also: ideas of never realized notions, horizons and room to move, options of being otherwise, and future. Thus besides through a repeating use (which also is a way of changing it - mimetic aspect (cf. Gebauer/Wulf 1998)) culture realizes itself as well through creation of sense and meaning, especially in times of crises or challenge (creative perspective). It is a character of traditional attitude to conceptualize culture in reference to history or what is thought/said to be the history of a social group. Drawing identity concepts from cultural frameworks of the past leads the attention to categories of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and common territories. Drawing identity concepts from cultural frameworks developed in relation to present challenges or crises (future aspect) leads the attention to the potentials of rooms to move: discourses, creative language, and unaccustomed performances. All in all the cultural competence (which includes ability, readiness, authority, and responsibility (Bauer 2002)) of any social amalgamation relies on:

- Sources of historically developed programs of assimilation to and accommodation of environmental conditions of life, from where it may draw models of knowledge and models of reality (Schmidt 2003, 34), and equally on
- Resources of creatively developed and proved programs of appropriation of meaning, of realities and environmental conditions of life. The (socio-cultural) way of appropriation of reality is communication (de Certeau 1988)

In the same way as communication and interaction maintain a framework of reference (and even: order) of reality (sharing meanings) by permanent changing performance, character and media (discourse) (Foucault 1988), culture (meaningful social practice) maintains a framework of reference negotiating collective identity by permanent trying out its potentials of development, change and variety. Thus development, change, and variety can be taken as the intrinsic characters of cultural unity and universality, which get expressed and symbolically mediated in diversity. Diversity is a matter of media (performance) through which culture expresses the intrinsic competence of variety and plurality.

In this context of reflecting the rationality of culture, which is based in reasons of diverse mediation of communication, it seems that the concepts of multiculturalism, interculturalism or transculturalism (Hepp/Löffelholz 2002) were just theoretical surrogate of the concept

of diversity. Why? Because regarding the connection, diversity comes out as the background structure of inter-, multi-, or transcultural communication. And more: Culture is a concept of unification, a construction of unity, which only makes sense-assuming difference (Deleuze 1992)

Concluding the way of argumentation we come so far to say: The rationality of culture is to maintain in the state of development by (through) change in a specific ecologic balance of appropriation between assimilation, accommodation. According to Jean Piaget`s concept (1972) (social) intelligence is the cognitive balance between assimilation

Not only Talking about culture as an social-practice environment of diverse we have to ask, whether it must be like we think it is:

The philosophical problem of cultural amalgamations

There is a philosophical background to the discourse on diversity, which has to be mentioned roughly and briefly: the idea of one; of a unity, which is universal. Maybe this idea gives more certainty than an idea of more, which can be that way or that way – you never know. One is an epistemological calculation, which always was used in the interest of approving the truth – in religion, in politics, also in cultures. The idea of being THE religion, culture, the true one, always has been a dimension of thinking concepts of truth or such of identity. Identity became a model of a personal unity, social, political or cultural unity. The concept of unity also kept the myth of one as a source of power. So it`s not surprising that identity and (identified) unity culturally and politically are dealt as a resource of power. Or otherwise: Any power (economy, military, a.s.o.) is dealt as the authorized basis for cultural (national) identity. This routine of thinking has to be re-thought.

Diversity is a fact of experience. The power of facts is becoming a concept of understanding reality. Diversity is becoming a concept of social calculation. Obviously the concept of diversity replaces other concepts of social amalgamation, which determined the society for long periods. Social co-existence (closeness) and social segregation (separation) are the two sides of a unity, which is sociality. Both sides include a decision in reference to a cultural program, from which man learned to use models of knowledge and wisdom in order to distinguish between unity and plurality (cf. Schmidt 2003,38). Such distinction (differentiation) decides on certainty and trust in self-identity and on identification of others. There is a strong anthropological and cultural

desire to make identity true. The certainty of social and cultural existence has to do with right of defining reality or even truth and not at least with claim of truth. For that it needs figures of evidence. Plurality (which is, of course, not the same like diversity, but is the basic concept of diversity), generality, and unity are such qualities and categories of orientation. But: Generality mostly is used in the sense of universality, which insinuates: generality is, when the same feature is given to different things, it always represents the majority and the majority always is supposed to keep the evidence of right.

Unity indicates on the one hand what is unique and in the sense of numeric connection indivisible (individual), and on the other hand the concept of unity insinuates the unity of collection (accumulation), of a closed frame of diversity, which is divided and structured in several parts (state, nation, organization etc.) Plurality, universality and unity are measures of reference when we come to decide what we recognize (realize, notice) between equality and diversity. The crucial problem is notion. What makes us sure in generalization of individual subjects? Are we even able to recognize generality? Or is generalization/universalization already the application of models of reality by which we give order to things they do not have by themselves?

Triangular concepts of unity, universality or plurality are generated in the context of (originally pre-Socrates) cosmology, which took reality in an ontological way of enlightenment. Nevertheless already the Greek philosophers knew that continuity and change belong together (parable of river) and thus create an unity – and some of them already knew, that unity is not an ontological, but a logical feature, something, which only is recognizable by thinking it. It was Plato who argued, what things were (quality of reality) they would owe to the ideas which they are part of. Due to ideas, he thought, we are allowed to recognize characters of things. Then Aristotle went further saying that there is to be distinguished between an ontological status of things and an epistemological status of subjects. Now, in context of constructivist epistemology, we know, the problem is the dualism between observer and subject of observation. Reality is, what we consider (or even negotiate) as reality. What we do not count as reality has no relevance. What we decide to be relevant gets the status of reality. Observer and subject of observation mutually behave in a circular process. The characters of unity, universality or plurality of reality are constructs by which people negotiate the reality (Foerster 1993)

We are forced to find our way about because we are not determined, neither by nature, neither by history, neither by custom. And more: Diversity of performance of life multiplies the option of plurality of performance of life. In order to be able to live in and with a diverse environment (inside AND outside) we are forced to make decisions or to change already fixed decisions. That means to determine the own standpoint and equally to fix a point of overview. This dilemma we can only get managed so far as we discover what is unchangeable and constant in variability, what means: so far as we are able to find universality in particular features and so far as we reduce the many to unity. The more options we face, the less we find the world to be easily surveyed, the more we try to get orientation between the extreme positions of unity and generality/universality, the less we are able to discover one in other. Thus we learn: difference is the capital, the resource of unity (Faßler 1997) There is nothing to be united if it is not somehow different; there is nothing to become a unity what does not make difference.

The rationality in communication: diversity in culture

Communication – especially in its technically mediated version is, because of structural openness of the result, a matter of cultural complexity. There are so many possibilities and opportunities of giving a meaning to the process of exchanging information from both sides of the partner relationship, producers, mediators, and consumers. There is no *lex naturalis* and no metaphysical protocol, which dictates how communication has to be done and what it should look like. There is no physical regulation, all what we know and think about communication, what to do, how to do and why to do so or otherwise, in order to come so far to understand each other, is cultural knowledge and cultural calculation. In compensation of that lack it needs to remember of an anthropological resource, which is reasonability, the competence of cosmological use of experience in thinking and acting. Reasonability in that sense is the direction of thinking and acting according to the universe of knowledge programs a strategy of reasonable sense.

Following that, rationality of (in) communications is the idea, that culture of (in) communications is present in the collective notion of reasonable use of sense - and rationality of communication then is the intrinsic program in communicative acting to follow and to create culture, as the rationality of culture is to follow structures of

communication. It makes analytical sense to distinguish between different levels of rationality of communication:

- Ethical rationality: ethic is a socially agreed frame of orientation by which we give moral sense and value to our communication activities. It is a dimension of competence to decide to which value one gives priority in which situation: egocentric, other-oriented or subject-oriented values.
- Esthetical rationality: Communication needs signs and signs maintain meanings. It is a dimension of communication competence to decide for the "right" sign and signals. It may be somehow an ecological decision to balance between possibilities and limits of use of communication signs in the interest of sustainability.
- Pragmatic rationality: the ability to decide for communication actions following the logic of success in special situations.

In other words: There are reasons enough to develop (personal and public) communication by experiencing (experimenting) communication, because there are no other limitations to act in communications but cultural ones.

Culture, as a program of using and realizing values of sociality in acting performance, is both, a guiding but also a controlling frame of reference for communication. Injuring (culturally developed) values of communication is injuring values of cultural arrangements by which one gets included (integration) or excluded (segregation) of community. Understanding culture, as which it was designed before, we have to conclude: if culture is the rationality of communication, then communication is not only the resource of affirmation models of knowledge and reality (developed out of cultural programs), but also the resource of creating and constructing cultural horizons, new frames of sense and meaning – at least and especially then, when societies/communities are challenged by crises. It is communication, which decides between similarity/equality and variety. There is no other background unite. So the innovative (problem solving) and intrinsic rationality is a matter of communication. It is the competence focus to develop new frames of cultural orientation: which performances – in fact - diversity.

The cultural rationality of communication is the resource (reservoir) to manage conflicts and crises. Crises usually come up in processes, when it is not clear enough which criteria are the deciding lines to be followed, - often when there are different interests to be realized or to be served. In that situation it is helpful to have a background-culture

which is wider and in its leading criteria more integrative than the actual interests. There is no other legitimized direction for operation of communication potentials in case of conflict and crisis but the cultural programs, which keeps the archive of values of mutual understanding. But it works only, if it is in general use. Culture, which is not in everyday use is not culture, it is just a decoration in case of need. A decoration, taken in service in the case of need, does not represent enough depth, not enough credibility, not enough objectivity, in order to compensate uncertainty.

Crises are dispositivs (Foucault 1988) of communication. They depict, what communication is like: a re-construction of sense, negotiated by exchange of information and by sharing a decision. This is not a mechanism which just has to be brought on its way, it is a subjective performance of competence in differentiation and decision, of being able to pay attention to the other out of a clear (and transparent) own position. The panic, which often comes up in critical or decisive situations, often happens because of the fact, that the hidden interest or hidden agenda is not compatible to the cultural background or is somehow a separated interpretation of a common cultural program. Decisive communication demands cultural background and only gets solved in relation to a common cultural program. Communication competence in situations like that is cultural competence: ability, preparedness, authority, and responsibility to decide the performance (rhetoric) of communication and to balance the options both of common sense of cultural behaviour and of challenge of overcoming the crisis by authentic expression of critical situation. The cultural rationality of communication is to decide to give the crises, the challenge, the complexity a position (performance) of communication.

Communication - chance and challenge of difference

It makes sense to become aware, that communication is not just a social strategy of reduction of complexity (Luhmann 1974, 292). Complexity of life is not something which exists outside of communication, it is not a character of things or events, it is a character of processing things, a character of giving meaning to them, a character of construction of reality and sense, an effect of communication. But outside communication there is no (relevant) reality, not an easier one and not a more complicated one. So communication is the (only) resource of creating complexity, because we mix, describing our experience, our position of experience with perception of what we experience, or even more. We create reality by

perception in reference to the concepts we already have learned to use, in order to keep them in mind as a resource (reservoir) of reducing the complexity of perception. It is obvious, that we have the inclination to accommodate new scenes of experience to the capacity of what we are able to work out or able to stand. This inclination has a logical correspondence, which is: the unity of truth. We conceptualize the reality of meaning as the representation of truth, as we think, that the subject of perception exists as we see it in the same manner even beyond and outside of any perception. Things are, how we look at them. In stories and discourses (Schmidt 2003) we keep those models of reality, we use them in re-constructing reality especially in new and unaccustomed connections and by them we make sure (justify) that things aren't otherwise or can't be otherwise than we see them. And following that path we think, to understand each other just needs a way of exchange of (realized) experience, in order to come so far (by negotiation) to agree (consensus) in seeing the same thing in same way. Then we think we have found the subject as it is, if we clean it from wrong view. Thus coming to an unity of understanding we get affirmed, that there is only one way to understand reality and to come so far is a matter of privilege, or of wisdom, of knowledge, or of education.

Exactly this constructive view of realization gives the option of thinking that the capacity of communication is not only to reduce complexity to units of order, it is also the capacity of making difference. If there is no other protocol of reality than that of observation, then the point of observation decides about reality. The subject of description coincides with the description of the subject (Mitterer 200). Realizing that construction it makes sense to enhance the power of differentiation and distinction as consciously creative way in theory and practice of communication. The most rational method is setting it a break. There are two models of breaks:

- The methodical break:
To describe a society as a society is a methodical break, it is nothing else than a way to figure out the calculation of a description and describe the calculation. By describing the calculative observation of a society the society becomes a descriptive performance. Maybe this is (already) a way of clarification and explanation, and maybe this helps already in gaining perspectives.
- The intelligent break:

To describe a society as a society in reference to a critical point of reference is a bit more than just a description. It is the description of description, the observation of observation of society. The intelligent break turns the observation of a subject into the subject of observation. That demands a decision of perspective, which is only possible after a process of distinction between several options. In order to be able to distinguish between several options the criteria of distinction has to be pointed out. Thus a decision of requirements allows a decision in settings, because requirements give orientation in performing meaning and sense by settings. So settings then may be used as requirements of (next) settings (Schmidt 2003, 27). The best way of creative enlightenment is the intelligent break; it is somehow a learning (self reflexive) intervention and gives the chance to turn round the point of view.

If two people have the same opinion on one subject, one of the two people is already too much in that game, was a dictum of Winston Churchill, which says: more people gives the chance and the challenge to see more different aspects. The idea is simple: a dialogue is much more challenging in stating the own standpoint and facing the other one, but rewards (or challenges) with more resource of decisional criteria. The interest of communication, referring to the intelligent break, is to find the difference and to look for a unification of difference, because unification (communication) only makes sense, if there are different views to be unified in a social relational amalgamation. To unify same views in a social relation does not give a new point of view, but only an addition or confirmation. The dialogical moment of communication as important as the discursive one (distribution of sociality), but it seems that the discourse model of communication has the position of priority (Flusser 1998) dominating the culture of communication.

In this context again the question of competence is to be raised: The ability, the preparedness, the authority and the responsibility of deciding for the principle of dialogue is a competence of cultural rationality which says: if there is any desire of sustainable communication, and if the own position is clear and stable, why avoid to get involved with an other point of view? It makes more sense to be interested in difference than in affirmation of own positions. It is a sort of ethical rationality to spend attention to the interest of others, if you wish that others got involved with your interests. Ethical rationality is the decision for a critical observation of observation, is the rule to the

rule. But ethics needs the public discourse, since it is a culturally negotiated program of enlightenment out of crises and in reference to crises. Ethics is the consciously creative thematisation of rule against the routines; in that sense is it a program of breaking the rules.

The sociological problem of cultural amalgamation
Let us close up at the idea of the triangle of unity, plurality and universality, which seems to be the philosophical background concept, from which diversity may be drawn as a philosophical – and furthermore as a cultural value of communication. In order to understand diversity not only as a cultural or (just) an ethical value, let us get reminded, that culture always is an expression of society – and society always is a result of cultural programs. They behave as an auto-constitutive proportion mediated by communication. The one is the guarantee of the other. The quality of the one is the guarantee of the quality of the other. That is the reason, why it seems to me that there is a theoretical need to take a look at the social practice of societal amalgamation from a point of view of cultural anthropology. The main question in that context is: How amalgamate people to become a unity, how is that unity socially structured, in order to allow diverse performances, thus keeping identity and togetherness. In sociological terms that are a question of relationship: how do social unities understand the relationality of social existence? In terms of communication theory I already tried to give an answer: the unity of difference of similarity/equality and variety is – communication. Communication is the social practice resource to decide for unity of difference.

Communication theory and the sociological theory of cultural history give the backing for the following hypothesis: For long time unity and unification have been the concepts of close co-existence and consistency. What keeps societies or communities in consistency? Is it discipline (John Locke), strong religious jurisdiction (church), concentration of authority (totalitarian systems), decentralization of power (democracy), civil ethics and political self-administration (US), or is it the principle of non-violation of other's rights? Some societal cultures do not care about conformity; some of them do or – at least – have no problems about it. Within the context of European democratic political culture it is the idea to care for co-orientation in a way, which avoids conformation or uniformation. The history of social culture of amalgamation (Taylor 2002) knows about three different formations of amalgamation:

- The embracing amalgamation:
Shows high concentrated community character; people feels to belong together by close vicinity, strong familiarity, highly symbolized interior relations, strong borderlines keeping distance to other cultures. This form of amalgamation stresses intimacy, but gives interior certainty and safety feeling, but has an authoritarian character and needs strong dogmatic expressions in generating social identity. Those embracing formations of amalgamation control the interior orientation, keep distance to other communities and avoid mixture or integration of other cultural codes. They correspond historically to times of feudalistic or absolutistic societies. In times of conflict and crises this formation relies on hostile neighbourhood in proportion to next vicinity.

- The to-one-another directed amalgamation:
Is built on high mutual attention and care, is a form of turning one's face toward the other's and stresses attention and confidence. Thus mutual and direct control stresses conformity and uniformity. There is almost no chance of deviation, divergence, or difference. The strong face-to-face direction of mutual attention expresses mutual care and helpfulness as long as the relational proportion is characterized by identity and identification, but is also the expression of strongest opposition, hostility and hostile control. Those one-toward-one formations are easy (especially in times of conflicts and crises) to turn to one-against-the-other formations of amalgamation. They are compatible to times of war, to totalitarian and to fascist systems. In those systems it becomes tradition that the one-to-one-attention turns to mutual spy-control. The geopolitical block systems after the Second World War and other systems of political equilibrium are as well political expressions of this formation type.

- The side-by-side amalgamation:
Relates to the concept of individuality and individual competence (responsibility) of life and relies on individual morality. Thus formations come into existence, in which one gives to the other space of self-realization. The expressive individualism challenges the culture of authenticity, amplifies the significance of spaces for mutual self-presentation and constructs a formation, in which everyone is looking, arranged side by side, to the same direction, giving space to the next

other out of the principle to claim space enough for oneself as it is given to any other in a manner, so that one does not violate the interest of personal and individual style of living. This amalgamation form stresses authenticity, self-competence, openness and tolerance in the sense of acceptance of different kind of appearance, behaviour, and thinking. In times of crises and conflict this formation puts trust in peaceful neighbourhood, but in same time it may be characterized as an expression of interest not getting involved in other's life.

To all appearances some phenomena indicate a change to stronger individualistic trend for life styling, managing one's life, success and happiness. All this loosens traditional attachments and obligations of common social life. The modern order of mutual utilization and capitalization follows a "soft relativism" (Taylor 2002, 79), accompanied by ethics of authenticity and of acceptance of other's concepts of value. The codes of social conformity get less restrictive under the conditions of increasing social and economical welfare. Poverty and hopelessness still demands strong social contraction among people who is concerned. Even if it seems, that mutual utilization becomes stronger and overtakes the appearance of fairness and mutual respect of the other's freedom, it is to state: the concept of community in relative distinction to society (F.Tönnies) breaks down insofar society no longer is the guarantee of cultural community, and cultural community no longer is the focus of notional society.

The concept of trans-cultural communication

The proportion of community and society has to be re-written. It is obvious, that the first two types of amalgamation not at all allow diversity of cultural orientation within an amalgamation, not even outside of it. Maybe the third type, the formation of side-by-side amalgamation allows diversity of cultural orientation and interpretation, but, as it seems to be, under the condition of minimizing mutual attention and social responsibility. That exactly is the dilemma of a media-mediated society. Most of our political communities or national unities, which are confronted with diverse group formations within the political or national framework, are not yet used to accept difference as an expression of unity. The process of globalization, accompanied by decentralization of capitalism, decentralized structures of distribution of power (Tomlinson 2002,

151), amplification and widening of economical, political and administrative units forces cultural communities – as long as they understand themselves as such - to uncouple from national or political frames. A challenge like this is comparable to the demand for leave one's home. In any case, to stay with that image, a move is close at hand.

The contemporary social theory keeps some last exits or theoretical exit strategies, which are to be discussed within the discourse on diversity:

- On national level:
The renunciation of the concept of nation and national border is long overdue. The monolithic concept of amalgamation, which understands nation as an amalgamation by birth, ethnicity, common territory, common culture, community history, and self-sufficient structures of political administration does not any more serve in positioning identity and framing cultural unity. Talking about nationality, as a political concept makes clear, that nation-states are not any more to be defined by homogeneous ethnic group or culture, living within the borders of it. Nation states often host various cultures and ethnicities and – on the other hand – various cultures and ethnic groups are spread over the entire globe, living in one nation-state or in an, how countless Diasporas and minorities show. Nationality does not any more serve for cultural identity. Even if the cultural representations continually are reproduced by nation-states, their cultures are no static entity; they are changing from territory to territory and from time to time. Additionally to territorial and temporal changes, national cultures are supposed to represent various different ethnicities, races and social classes, so that for every category national culture is understood and lived in a different way. National culture is characterized by multiplicity, which makes it theoretically impossible to believe in a concept of national culture as a source of cultural identity. So it makes sense to follow the view of Cultural Studies, that a concept of national identity can only be a way to unify cultural diversity and a political frame of supporting culture of diversity – at least on three levels:
- On political level:
There is a trend in political organization to overall political congregations, which represent a loose and open frame for

difference and diversity in national, cultural or communitarian concern. Those greater unions, as the European Union becomes like, on the one hand place at disposal a socially organized environment for self-development, self-representation and relationship, but on the other hand they challenge (or even provoke) defence of singularity and peculiarity. The interest of belonging to a strong and great political organizational unit, which is, of course, aware to become sustainable by cultural identity goes hand in hand with globalization. Globalization (of politics, economy, and culture) as a process influences the whole spectrum of human life and touches the concept of (socio-political) balance – although we know, there is no balance at all – not between North and South, not between West and East, not between poverty and richness, not between economy and ecology, not between hunger and satisfaction. There are different definitions of globalization (Giddens 1990, Beck 1992), but it is clear, that globalization is moving the world to a unity in economy, politics and political operation, which raises the question of significance of cultures.

- On level of social framing:
Within the Cultural Studies discourse on social and empirical conditions of conceptualizing culture, it often was argued (cf. Clifford 1992) that the frame-conditions are changing. For long time the territorial, national, even institutional frames have served as structures of reference in defining identity. Those conditions have changed. Now the media (media programs), the public discourses and conversations come into attention for constructing images of identity. Generally spoken: the frames are changing from stabile one to moving ones. That is the reason, why cultural identities can no longer be conceptualized by terms of place, but better in terms of travel. The concept of Diaspora appears in a new context, which focuses on travel, dispersion and motion: Nomadic and/or diasporas identities (Braidotto 1994) are terms, which refer to fluid and moving conditions of constructing identity, especially in respect to local migration, but also to communicative migration through media in general and to the internet in particular. The fluid and ever changing framework (understood like that out of a constructive understanding of reality) makes it necessary to develop relational concepts, which functions in connection with relations of power of signification. Diaspora is not only to be seen as the space of

where people have migrated to, but also as the space, where the "natives" have to learn to live with the minorities and diasporas. Thus the diaspora space is the site, where "the native is as much a diasporian as the diasporian is a native" (Brah 1996, 209). Diasporians are at once local and global. They are networks on trans-national identification, encompassing "imagined" and "encountered communities" (Brah 1996, 106), they are less focused on common territory and identification with territory, than on social dynamics and the remembrance of origin and the danger of forgetting this location and the process of dispersal.

An other term, which signifies the cultural change in conceptualizing identity, is hybridism. Hybridization (Martin-Barbero 1993) is a process, which is caused by real and virtual cross-border travelling (Clifford 1992). It challenges the development heterogeneous codes identity it implies the melting and mixing of separate, originally homogeneous cultural forms. But once we get invited to project our wishes of identity to culturally mixed images, and once we mix images of identification coming from different original cultures and offered by media as platforms of identification, we have to consider that the cultural frame of social and symbolic interaction no longer can be used as a homogeneous code of identity.

On level of Communication:

Culture is a program of society functions and a complex and dynamic codification of schemes of co-ordination and co-orientation. One of the essential elements of that dynamic social change – connected to globalization - results from peculiarity of the cultural programs of other societies. Observing cultural expressions – again in this context – is always done by deciding (or re-affirming) for a cultural point of view. The perception of other cultural codes happens as the perception (interpretation, evaluation) out from the own point of cultural view. And the other way round: the perception of the own cultural environment happens by experimenting other (learned) points of cultural observation. So it makes sense to understand this cross over perception as a transcultural communication (Hepp 2002). The media as a platform of cultural perception blend the cultural expressions and create connections across the cultural systems. Instead of traditional concepts of culture (national or regional cultures) the

globalization of media communication create diverse styles of living, which cross the "old cultures". The concept of transculturalism picks up this circumstance and notices, that the systems of meaning turn to a multiple assembled environment of symbolic interaction (Blumer 1969). Thus the multi-optional society is created by media communication.

Diversity – change and challenge of identity

The big challenge of current societal circumstances is to live in different worlds and to synchronize this situation as a unity of own life. The social science tries to create concepts, in order to offer codes of explanation and classification, but also in order to offer models for new outlines of social amalgamation. Since culture always plays a big role in assembling individuals or groups, diversity is one of those concepts, which indicates new conditions of societal self-understanding. As already touched before there are two opposing schools of thinking within the identity discussion in the tradition of Cultural Studies theory (Lienhart 2002):

- The concept of essentialism:
Essentialism seems to be deeply rooted in Western societies, believing that every human being has an "essence" of self that is called identity. Following this belief, every individual is supposed to be born with a rather fixed essence (psychic, physical qualities) of identity, performed by sex, race and ethnicity. Based on that concept strategic essentialism often was used to presuppose the human identity as a stable entity for specific practical or political purpose. After discovering the knowledge that culture was a construction, it was clear that race formation and sex formation just have a meaning in context of establishing cultural identity, not by themselves, and that they are codes of social cosmology.
Ethnicity is a special category. On the one hand it is an anti-essentialist category, on the other hand – in political practice – it is strategically used like an essentialist category. Ethnicity as well is a cultural concept centred on the sharing of norms, values, and beliefs, cultural symbols and practice. The formation of ethnic groups relies on shared cultural signifiers which got significance by specific historical, social and political contexts, and which encourage a sense of belonging based on a common mythological ancestry (Barker 2000, 195).

- The concept of relationalism:
That conceptualization of identity becomes one of the dominant issues in the tradition of Cultural Studies and also in post-modern philosophy (Keupp 1999): Identity in sum is a patchwork-result of observation of observation, an evaluation in the interest of autonomy, sovereignty, and self-confidence. It is, thus culturally constructed, a matter of relations of thinking, of differentiating observation and evaluation. The concept of relationalism does not insinuate identity as a naturally given (ontological) characteristic; it thinks identity as a culturally constructed subjectivity, related to social relations. As a matter of observation (self-control) identity is a parallel phenomenon, it is formed through parallel experienced observations of experiences and consciousness. Conscious and unconscious processes are running in the same time, one crossing the other.

Crises of Identity – a matter of diffusing relationship

Identity comes to public attention as a problem, when politics touches the frames and the conditions cultural self. In that case psychology becomes politics. Therefore it has to be pointed out once again: identity is a concept of relational rationality. It is a semantic code for the fact, that self-perception is not possible without perception of one's relation to others and vice versa. Even more: It would not make sense to use the concept of identity as a theoretical or analytical value of reference, or as a category of political decision, if it would not include the fact of relational rationality. The rationality of relationship – again – is communication. Identity is not an ontological category, but a semantic description of social constructive constitution of self. The construction is culturally maintained by symbols. There is no "true" identity outside this symbolic interaction. The threat of integrated identity comes from diffusion of (and diffusion in) social relations. Insofar diversity of cultural symbols (language, media, topics, cultural rituals of minorities) seems to trouble political or national identity and create a new type of "cultural citizenship" (Klaus 2004), it is relevant for the problem perspective and as well for perspectives of solution to consider which concept of identity the public discourse in politics and media is following. It is to assume, that they think in categories of essentialism, which affirm the idea, that stating identity is just a matter of mirroring or giving others the same insight. If you look into

the mirror (images of or treatment by others), you think to see yourself or what you think to have been all the time before. Identity is both, history and future. It is history in the sense that history is the narrative construction of identity as it has become. In this conceptualization it is thought to be the future as the sustainable continuation of evolving what it was before and until today. As history, we see our identity as in a mirror, our faces a map tracing the path of all that has gone before.

According to the relational concepts of identity (observation in relation to your observation of other's observation of yourself), the look into the mirror does not reproduce your-self; it just shows the way how you see yourself and – maybe – how you wish to be seen by others. But you don't see yourself, as others see you. In nature, the image in a mirror is reversed from the way we look to the outside world. Reflected back to us directly, side for side, the mechanics of perspective is oversimplified. The contribution of another mind, an outside observer, is missing. It is only you. You are considering yourself considering yourself. There is a blind spot, which is your own position of considering yourself. To compensate that lack and to get an integral image of yourself, you need another perspective, the point of view of others, even – or better: especially, when that point of view is contradictory.

Following the relationalist concept crises of identity are not to be defined as problems of consistence/inconsistence between sight of yourself and sight of yourself by others, as the essentialist concept recommends, but – what is especially important, when a psychological term becomes politics – is a matter of closed mindedness of relations (to others and their sight of yourself) based on self-centred estimation of yourself. The crises of identity start with the refusal of plurality of points of view and of diversity of perceptions. Crises of identity rise as crises of distinction and differentiation – mostly caused by lacks of communication. Identity is the framework of ordering relationships according to culturally internalized values, which is a dynamic process: contents from past, present and future serve as vanishing points of realizing relations. Self and the environment of self get integrated and mixed up in that process, what makes identity becoming a construction of a social framework, to which one refers in order to decide for a unite of meaning, or a unity of meaning and observation. In case of crises people often goes back to routines, to schemes. They give the feeling of certainty. Often in same manner done decisions become a schema, called a script. Scripts (frames) are schemes of success of behaviour, which

give certainty in repeating situations, not matter if in professional or private life. Scripts (a term of Transactional Analysis) are learned instructions, which include both cognitive and emotional components. The complexity of scripts is mostly created by emotional implications. In particular there are no clear rules and no codex of behaviour for those scripts. They are learned programs and they influence the further learning programs Especially because of the emotional dimensions of consciousness, they get first remembered in complex situations. Emotional implications cause the difficulty to become open minded for other models of decision than for those, which already are ruled by the script.

Cultural scripts, generated by cultural programs, are not individually fates; they are an agreement between collectives and individuals, both drawing benefits from it. The Cultural Theory (Douglas 1996) has developed a grid model, by which there can be analysed those scripts according their main orientations:

- Hierarchical cultures:
They base on the principle of a structures social order, oriented on rules of distribution of power. This type of culture starts from the point, that differences and varieties between societies or members of societies are not changeable. They are a fact by existence. The resource of identity is law and order.
- Individualistic Cultures:
Changeability and variability of positions seem to be a typical moment of this type of cultural performance. Everything seems to be possible, if there is corresponding effort. The balance of offer and request is a dominating characteristic, which makes the feeling of success or failure somehow becoming a calculation of competition. Culture in that view is a fight for advantage and priority. In individualistic cultures members fight against the collective. The resource of identity is individual success.
- Equalizing Cultures:
A feature of strong equality among group members characterizes them. There is no competition, everyone may get any position or take any role. Roles result not by fight or competition, but by relations among members. They are final results of mutual relationships, which rely on the collective. In cultures, based on equality of members, the collective gets highly idealized. True is, what is the position of the collective. Sects correspond strongly with that type. The resource of identity is the belief in togetherness.

- Fatalistic cultures:
Groups, which understand as a collective by same or similar fate often, follow the tendency to resist the mainstream. By actions like that they reassure each other mutual loyalty. The source of identity lies somewhere beyond the real life and in the hand of an instance, which is venerated as a holy. This instance is the resource of formation, of reward and punishment.

There is no doubt about it that those styles of thinking – as they are just an analytical outcome in the interest of classification - nowhere are to be found in a pure appearance. Real culture always evolves under condition of mixture of sources. It is mentioned in this article, in order to suggest further research. Applying this grid-model to the situation at South East European countries (cf. Erdelt-Vieth 1993) or to countries involved in the discussion between Islam and Western World, you will find multiply mixed dimensions of that grid model, but it could help to focus the problem perspective on cultural scripts and to explain, why it is more difficult for the one (for example religiously centred cultures) than for others.

Independence – a historical category

Those styles of culture, developed in the framework of Cultural Theory, can be taken as an analytical framework in order to understand the development of cultural scripts. All cultural amalgamations, by which principle ever they unite, decide in favour of scripts and strengthen a program of routine – especially in the context of national identity. For as long as politics has had to do with the wielding of power, identity has been used, or misused, as a factor of that power. The underside of identity is the fear of weakness, of powerlessness, or worst of all, irrelevance. Not to be considered, not to be valued for oneself, not to be somebody, means not to count, or to be only an appendix to the lives of others. In that understanding of principles of identity one gains a life of one's own only through independence. Whenever power has been in the hands of one person or one system, identity has been abused as political drug. All authoritarian systems have legitimized their totalitarian leadership by setting a dogma of identity. History, heroes, culture, ethnicity or religion – or all those together – have been sources of political manipulation, because they are the cultural archives of identity.

This view of oneself by gaining distance from others follows a simple mechanism of the autosuggestion of independence: To be myself, I

don't need anyone. Thus independence has a long history as the paradigm for national identity. As national independence has long been understood as a concept of power: Independent are they who do not need anyone's help to realize their own needs and wishes. The only way to achieve this is the symbolizing of domination by ritualizing the wording of own identity in terms of power and at the same time, concentrating on the weak points of others. The solution, which can be given by theory, is: there is a need of change of paradigm, from an instinctive one to an intelligent one, from power to competence (Bauer 2002)

In the face of instinctive anxiety, it is easy to believe that power (over others) is the most effective means of living your own life. Discriminatory reporting, as it was usual until today in the South East European media (cf Udovicic / MDI 2004) mirrors this hypothesis. And of course, in a sense, that is how it works: To maintain yourself is a question of power. But maybe it is more than that; maybe it is also a question of competence. Competence is an intelligent concept of power. It brings the capacity to modify the resources of the environment to the needs of one's life, as well as to help to adapt to the conditions of social and cultural world around.

It is an anthropological date that human beings gain knowledge by using knowledge. The instinct to survive is altered by experience and may become culturally enriched by reflection on that experience. Culture is a framework for understanding biological contradictions as challenging paradoxes. Understanding paradoxes gives a position of sovereignty and differentiation.

Concerning the concept of identity, the paradox is a therapeutic tool (formed within the concept of transpersonal psychology), which is still to be discovered by those who play a role in shaping public identity – i.e. politicians and the media. Caught up in defensive concepts of identity based on mistrust, they project hidden attitudes of self-negation, having internalized collective feelings of inferiority and weakness. This habit creates difficulties for everyone, for themselves and for the others. In this manner the closest neighbor becomes the biggest threat, each kind of competition turns to a drama of jealousy. In this state, it is difficult to be, or to become, accepted as a partner with an open face, as a challenging partner who knows what he wants.

Inter-dependence – a future category

The culture of diversity in practice is the political concept of interdependence in politics, economy, and social organization of public life. There is a psychological circle of give and take, that individually, but also collectively, represents the wisdom of life: Self-respect is the healthiest basis for respect for others. Disrespect for others always has been an aggressive attitude. Aggression is a lack of acceptance – a mechanism, which always starts with one’s attitude toward oneself (cf. Galtung 1982) This was one of the most important insights of the “logo therapy” of psychologist Viktor Frankl (2002), and also one of the simplest, that self-acceptance is the first step toward a meaningful life. But, of course, it is a long way from denial and defense to acceptance, adaption and – finally – integration (Bennett 1998). It begins with the decision to accept others. Respecting others gives you respect in return and – that is the most important effect – gives the maneuvering room to come even closer to oneself by creating and working out undeveloped potentials. Thus authenticity enables to shape identity by means of changing yourself according to the conditions of your life.

A healthy concept of identity works openly and offensively: By experiencing others, you experience yourself and you learn to express it in new ways. Negotiating identity in the context of national and international institutions (public affairs), as well as in the context of national and international discourse (the media) is a question of performance and communication skills, the conscious, creative ability, preparedness and responsibility to attract another’s attention in one’s own interest, by developing an open mind toward the interests of others. This ability is, of course, an ethical effort (an effort of creating consciousness, and of critical reflection), which needs pro-active self-expression of and open communication on cultural fundamentals within the various nations or ethnic groups (Bauer 2002) The lack of internal communication (which means to discover AND to accept internal diversity or variety) indicates a lack of self-knowledge and self-confidence – which can only become healed through the attention and acceptance of view of others. In order to maintain identity in the framework of symbolic order of society we need the continuing affirmation of identity building signs and terms. Obviously there is a need of continuous support of the three registers (reality, imagination and symbolic concept) (Lacan at Bracher 1993), which is satisfied by continuing re-production of conceptualizing the world and the knowledge of self.

Since political or public power is no longer in any one person’s hands (dictators or monarchs) having over the last century been given to the people in most countries, the construction of identity becomes an

exercise in deliberation from the national, or other political leadership and can be turned into a lateral, cooperative work of interpretation, of collective self-realization. Together a government and a people can determine what gives a face to a nation or to a community in order to recognize and accept itself and its identity and to get recognized and accepted by others. Under the conditions of democracy, of plurality and of diversity, this process is accomplished by a multilevel public discourse, where media play a decisive role. Under the conditions of market-driven politics, of globalization, of transition, and of transformation of systems, the question of identity became a category of competition. And is a question of to whom to belong.

For over two centuries, the paradigm of national identity was independence. In a multi-dimensional, connected world, however, identity has become a constructive product of communication and cooperation, and independence becomes a feature of partner-relation. As a result, the new paradigm of identity in a multi-faceted world is inter-dependency. Identity and identification are results of dialogue, and the self-realization of nations, minorities and communities becomes real through an open, unguarded interest in understanding the other. Nothing offers a greater opportunity – and also a greater challenge – to getting to know and accept oneself than to engage with and understand others.

The role of media has to be rethought in this context. It has become a remarkable aspect of communications research that former reference points in shaping identity – borders of religion, culture, ethnicity, nationality, race, etc. – are going to be replaced by much more mobile, hybrid and virtual ones, by the discourse models of media communication. Media, as the agencies of public discourse, have to take over the task of critical reflection on the workings society. They are the instruments of a cultural catharsis, when and where a society is in need of restoring or re-inventing itself. Media have the connective capacity to observe the public conversation (meta-communication), to enlarge it where information is too limited, and to enrich it where the discourse-content is too thin or too shallow, to intervene from the outside when conversation is too introverted, to steer from the inside when the discourse gets lost in translation. And while they may be under pressure to reduce the complexity of programs for financial reasons, it may also be their responsibility to return a reasonable complexity to their consideration of social and political life.

Meta-communication (critical and reflexive observation of how we interact publicly) and communication exchange (what we give and

mean to each other) both involve catharsis, involving personal communication with psychological weight. Why should this self-therapeutic potential of communication not work in societal context? The only requirement, as in a personal context, is what therapists call the "insight into and the acceptance of unequal status" (Bauer 2003)

Mobilizing this critical self-awareness is a question of competence in living and surviving under conditions of an ever-changing environment; it is a pragmatic view of ethics and an ethical use of practice. This pragmatic and ethical horizon of self-realization has to be brought into the public discourse; it is a kind of intelligent and therapeutic rule breaking that – in context of society – can only be done by the kind of collective power the media represent. As the media are agencies of topical social interaction, they represent the social competence of a society, for which critical self-observation is one of the key skills.

This of course demands a media culture that cares about the stakes of all participating individuals, peoples and institutions, where owners, editors, journalists and the public – all by their own capacities – share the responsibility of public consciousness.

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