The Stage of Multicultural Leadership

Challenges and Opportunities which leaders are facing nowadays.

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“Exploring culture is an exciting endeavour, as it involves a never-ending process of discovery. Not only is it the discovery of others, but in that discovery of others, a rediscovery of self”.
(Schneider, Barsoux & Stahl 2014, p.xiii)
Statutory declaration

“We declare in lieu of an oath that we have written this Master Thesis ourselves and that we have not used any sources or resources other than stated for its preparation. We further declare that we have clearly indicated all direct and indirect quotations. This Master Thesis has not been submitted elsewhere for examination purposes.”

Date: 18 / May / 2017

____________________________________  ____________________________________
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Abstract

Working, communicating, socialising and proceeding in multicultural environments are not always easily put into practice. The contrary is the case, it poses various challenges. These challenges will be investigated within this work with a specific focus on the research issues: Which changes leadership needs to face in terms of adapting to new multicultural circumstances? And if so, how to do it? As well as the question about how to strengthen the cultural competences of respective leaders or future-leaders in order to facilitate working and social corporate processes in a company or an organisation.

The approximation with Grounded Theory will be conducted as the methodology approach in this thesis. It allows us, as the creator of knowledge, to break the collected data which is gathered within several interviews in order to create thematically concepts out of them and afterwards to relate the respective concepts to each other.

As a result, potential challenges occurring in multicultural environments regarding the collaboration with each other will be identified as well as suggestions of solution in terms of how a leader should face these challenges in order to create chances out of them. Concretely, a guide will point out the most important research insights, based on the experiences by seven interviewees who perceived working in cultural diverse surroundings out of the leadership perspective. The guide’s main target is to evince a way of direction for leaders and/or future-leaders who want to turn potential daily challenges into opportunities. It is a quick checklist that can be used in order to ensure cultural differences as valuable resources instead of barriers for the achievement of the companies’ success whatsoever.

“A leader is someone who helps improve the lives of other people or improve the system they live under.” – Sam Houston.

**KEY WORDS:** Leader, leadership, culture, multicultural, challenges, chances, strategies, guide.
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1. Introduction

“I can’t change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination” (Jimmy Dean, n.y.a. online)

The following introduction aims to clarify the broader context of the Master thesis. It defines the problem which will be investigated in a wider and more general context. Further, it focuses on offering the reader a general level of knowledge in order to be able to follow the subsequent objective and problem issue of the thesis.

The world we currently perceive ourselves in is mainly shaped by driving changes. A world which is characterised by an intense, energetic and extraordinary competition. A world which creates chances and opportunities for companies to expand their activities all over the world. A world which enables communication at every time and thus connects people to each other. A world which provides information as quick and as tangible as never before. A world which is characterised by the phenomenon of Globalisation (Ursah & Baines 2009). The above-mentioned elements emphasise hereby that globalisation is more than a: “primarily synonym for global business”, instead it allows: “social-activists, labor organizers, journalists, academics, and many others to work on a global stage” (Ursah & Baines 2009, p.vii). Globalisation implies intercultural elements and connections since it strengthens the worldwide interdependencies between countries, people and companies. It creates virtual networks between individuals who may be located on different continents. Networks offer the ability to exchange information, trade, resources and to profit from each other and take advantage of synergetic effects. Although the regional proximity is not given, companies, organisations or individuals from different cultures, countries and religious backgrounds are connected on a virtual basis which leads to a greater
or a lesser extent huge interdependency within different networks. Hence it further leads to an intercultural and multicultural development through these networks and connections which are forced by the driving changes of the globalisation itself. Nevertheless, all these connections and networks ask for mutual acceptance and tolerance of their individuality in a multicultural context. These mentioned interactions and multicultural backgrounds become more and more a main component of our lives and fields of activities nowadays. Multiculturalism as such is about the understanding that people from different cultures, religious understandings, racial origin do interact with each other on distinctive possible levels (Quezzaire & Wagner 2015).

However, multicultural environments and networks do not always work smooth and easily. The process of globalisation assumes open-mindedness, a high tolerance limit and acceptance for others but this is clearly not always the case. Globalisation pulls its circles around many different aspects and consequently it is hardly remarkable that it leads to positive as well it leads to negative effects. Groups and associations occur which stand up against tolerance, multiculturalism and acceptance. For instance, there are different right front parties in countries as the Netherlands, France, Finland and Germany which gain more and more political importance and support which are seen as threats against the multicultural lifestyle. Another more drastic example is the existence of the Islamic State. “The Islamic State is a transnational Sunni Islamist insurgent and terrorist group that has expanded its control over areas of north-western Iraq and north-eastern Syria since 2013, threatening the security of both countries...” (Freeman 2014, p.vii). The short form for the terroristic group is ISIS which inter alia pursues the target to destruct multiculturalism and does not support any of its elements. Nevertheless, ISIS does not avoid the globalised world. The contrary takes place. And at this point the negative consequences of the globalisation and its effects are clarified. As ISIS takes advantage of the internet communication worldwide and
uses it as a tool in order to recruit new members. Furthermore, the worldwide flow of simplified trades between companies, countries and consumers are positive on one side but on the other hand groups as ISIS profit from it as well. Positive outcomes and elements must be treated and used carefully since they are available for groups and organisations which are against multiculturalism and its development and take advantage of the internet and newly developed technology. In this context, especially the social media platforms as Facebook, twitter, Instagram etc. must be considered. They take advantage of these in order to spread their attitude, xenophobia and specially to recruit new potential members for their organisation from all over the world.

The question which remains at this point is how multiculturalism is constantly increased?

One answer to this question was mentioned in the beginning of the introduction in relation to the globalised world, as there is a constant flow and exchange of trades, information, employees and other elements worldwide. But on the other side, the multicultural development and intercultural connections are more intensified over the last years because of wars and disputes which make people leaving their home countries involuntarily. The refugee crisis in 2015 affected Europe in many different ways. One outcome is to be named in the increased cultural diversity in EU-countries. Refugees import now and then new cultural aspects, different behaviour patterns, sets of values and attitudes.

In order to achieve a successful implementation of the described new influences into the society, it is important to prepare existing and potentially cultural homogenous groups for new influences. Cultural aspects do not only affect the society but also the business world. This context creates the framework of the Master thesis. It needs to be questioned how businesses and corporate lives may change over time through the influences of new appearing cultural views and especially how organisations but more specifically leaders can react in order to
support the integration of cultural diversity and take advantage of the positive effects which globalisation may bring along. However, the refugee crisis is only one element which influences and strengthens the multicultural development and leads to more intercultural relations.

In accordance to Snow et al. (1996) multicultural collaboration and teamwork is based and understood as the fundament of globalisation itself. That is why globalisation causes a strong development to multiculturalism and works interdependently as it leads to an increasing intercultural connection. Furthermore, those connections push the globalisation and its outcomes in a wider context.

In terms of the connection between us as the writers of the thesis and the title it is important to underline that we work in a multicultural team since Spain and Germany are the respective countries of origin. We took advantage of the aspect of globalisation as such since it enabled us to continue our studies in an intercultural context and environment. Thereby the prospective Master degree in Sweden is accepted in almost every country all over the world which enables working in new cultural climates. In this context, it becomes clear that the aspect of globalisation leads to a positive outcome for us and all the other international students in this programme. In addition to that, it needs to be mentioned that Sweden requires other cultural backgrounds and understandings than the ones we grew up and got comfortable in over the years.

The studies in an international context make us to face cultural differences between our own cultural origin and the Swedish one. Furthermore, culture plays a significant role when it comes to multicultural working groups. We experienced the chances of it and consequently feel a personal connection to the title of the thesis. During the study programme, we could constantly observe the challenges of leaders in a multicultural environment as well. There is to mention the head of the programme Philippe Daudi who set rules right in the beginning of the programme in order to make clear some
kind of *own culture* in the class where everyone agreed on. These experiences and similar ones influenced us all over the time and furthermore, build the basis for our potential future career. Our potential future careers will be shaped by international, intercultural, multicultural and different working environments. We, as the writers of this thesis, aim to lead in an intercultural context and therefore may face the different challenges which occur in these situations. During the research for the thesis we constantly were aware of the fact that the results may not only affect, support and potentially help current leaders but furthermore, the results and experiences do also build a fundamental understanding for our future careers.
2. Objective and Purpose of the Thesis

“Research is formulized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose”. (Zora Neale Hurston, n.y.a. online)

In the following part of the thesis the main objective and the different, existing purposes will be pointed out. The objective of the thesis builds the framework of the work which leads the red thread. Around the red thread the main issues and the main question will be structured and organised which figuratively symbolise the guide of this work. The main issues and the main question are subsequently implemented as guidelines in terms of their responsibility to achieve respective research results.

2.1. Problem definition and subsequent discussion

In the context of the title challenges and chances of multicultural leadership the objective of the following thesis paper on one hand is to find out which challenges leaders need to face in their way of leading in multicultural environments. And on the other hand, it will be investigated which chances the aspects of leadership in multicultural situations can bring along. The aspect of multiculturalism needs to be defined in the beginning in order to understand which possible impacts it can have on leadership. Nevertheless, without going into detail, multiculturalism is a phenomenon nowadays in the 21st century which plays a significant role within many different environments. As for instance concerning the private or the business life it shapes the world consequently. According to Schneider, Barsoux and Stahl (2014) there is an increasing shift to cultural heterogeneity in many countries to be perceived. This development enforces instantly: “...a premium on managerial skills in creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive workplace” (p.ix). This understanding must be further investigated in which terms it also
requires leadership to react in a certain way. Nevertheless, Schneider, Barsoux and Stahl (2014) emphasise that it has never been of a higher importance for managers to pay attention to the influence of cultural differences (p.ix), as they occur through multiculturalism for instance. The current working situation has changed over the last years into a more interdependent, interlocked and intercultural atmosphere - either face-to-face but even more virtually on the online platform (p.ix).

In this context, it is questionable in what way it furthermore, influences leadership and respectively how leaders may have to adapt their leadership style in order to be an active part of it. Lasserre (2003) for instance, emphasises that organisations have to adapt their way of thinking globally in terms of including their perception of leadership into a potential change. Especially since global leaders currently are highly demanded and partly difficult to find for organisations, one must address the few existing global leaders for the purpose of making profit of the advantages which globalisation brings with it. In addition to that, it is important to mention that it is not only necessary to investigate on a possible reinvention or reinterpretation of the leadership role but furthermore it is indispensable to question what leadership might have to drop in order to act successfully in a multicultural environment. Another approach is based on the investigation in which way leadership can prepare in order to be well-positioned for incoming influences. In this context, the following paper aims to contribute appropriate ways for leaders to clarify how to improve the corporate intercultural competence and cultural intelligence and especially how to take advantage of it when it comes to multicultural working environments. Besides, approaches to manage cultural differences will be outlined in order to give a broad picture of which screws can be adjusted in order to lead successfully although there are existing multicultural influences. Thus, the question why this study is important and why leaders and their respective leadership styles can profit by reading this thesis comes up.
There is no doubt about the fact that cultural diversity is an influencing factor which increased its impact over the last couple of years. According to Rhinesmith (n.y.a. cited in Greiner & Poulfelt 2010, p.228): “…globalization presents numerous challenges for new leadership and management practices, such as: what kind of global strategy and structure to adopt for their organizations; ...which managers will be successful in leading new initiatives in foreign lands?”. This quote examines that globalisation as such occurs in many different shapes. Cultural diversity and therefore multiculturalism must be named as two of them. The world is connected as close as never before and thus consequently also the multicultural outcomes and their effects.

That is why we question in which way the role of leadership has to reinvent, respectively how leadership has to set up in order to face multicultural influences successfully. We define leadership as a tool of any leader in the world which keeps up the follower-leader relationship and furthermore leads the followers in a certain direction. Most certainly, the direction is symbolized by targets which one is aiming for. Now it needs to be questioned if leadership has to be reinterpreted in order face challenges as globalising influences on a daily basis. Personally, we want to find out within the framework of this work how and what leadership can, respectively has to do.

To summarise, the answer of the question why the study about the mentioned title is important it is necessary to highlight its significant role as a tool for leaders and future-leaders which are facing or will face constant challenges in a fast and globalised world in the 21st century. Who might currently or futurewise take advantage of the investigations and the respective results on: How to face multiculturalism in the context of leadership? Further, leaders will find out through this study what chances occur in a multicultural context and what kind of challenges and possible obstacles and how they can be conquered. In addition to that, the probably most
significant aspect in terms of highlighting the importance of the named study is based in the preventive measures. Since it is: “Often, the realization of the power of culture comes only in retrospect” (Schneider, Barsoux & Stahl 2014, p.ix). This study aims specially to evince those powers of culture and consequently how to conquer and take advantage of them out of a leader’s perspective.

2.2. Research Question(s)/Issue(s)

The conception of a research question or a research issue is an indispensable and crucial aspect of all research since the formulated question builds the basis for the researcher and the reader to direct the own understanding around a specific subject (Alvesson & Sandberg 2013, p.1). In this context it is very important, according to Alvesson & Sandberg that the respective questions are created on an innovative character because they: “will open up new research problems, might resolve long-standing controversies, could provide an integration of different approaches, and might even turn conventional wisdom and assumptions upside down by challenging old beliefs” (Campbell et. al. 1982 cited in Alvesson & Sandberg 2013, p.1).

Furthermore, a research question is embedded in a broader context and cannot be seen as separate to the topic as such (Alvesson & Sandberg 2013, p.19).

In terms of putting the theoretical background into practice there are two main issues which will be investigated within the thesis. The 1st research issue is named by the following: Which changes leadership needs to face in terms of adapting to new multicultural circumstances? And if so, how to do it, respectively how to constantly reinterpret and reinvent the leadership role in this context? This question opens a new research problem since the multicultural impact has never before been as strong as it currently is. Therefore, it creates new and sometimes even unexpected challenges for leadership. These challenges will be outlined in the following work and
furthermore it will be investigated how leadership can adapt and change in order to fit into the currently developing multicultural environment. Leadership in this context explicitly does not focus on a specific environment; instead it focusses on any leadership activity within a multicultural frame. In order to answer this demand, leaders from very different contexts will be interviewed in terms of their experiences within their individual surrounding. In general, it will be investigated what strategies leaders can put into practice in order to successfully face multicultural challenges.

The 2nd research issue is about to strengthen the cultural competences of respective leaders or future-leaders in order to facilitate working and social corporate processes in a company or an organisation.

Furthermore, the 2nd research issue goes along with Campbell et al. understanding of a good research issue. Since it may: “turn conventional wisdom and assumptions upside down” (1982 cited in Alvesson & Sandberg 2013, p.1). The potential outcomes of the 2nd research issue are capable of question the so far assumed strategies in leadership situations. Certain leaders might be convinced of the correctness of their approaches and perceive it as conventional wisdom. At the same time the new understanding might not go along with their former understandings and approaches and so turns their wisdom around.

Both research issues focus on an innovative approach and furthermore are integrated in a broader context of multiculturalism which plays a significant role for the strategic direction of leadership styles.

2.3. Multipurposes

The following chapters point out the different purposes which guide-line the process of this thesis. The description and investigation on it
aims to deepen the importance and necessity of this work for the reader. Out of four different views it will be described for which reason the research topic plays a significant role.

2.3.1. 1st Multipurpose

*Enhance proficiency as a writer* - We, the researches and students in the Master Program *Leadership and Management in International Contexts*, perceived some challenges while planning, structuring and writing this work. Since this is the first paper that we write in such a formal style, it required time to find the appropriate words that raise the paper on a Master level. Furthermore, the text has been refined and improved constantly in order to make it even and understandable for any reader. On the other hand, we have been working in the quotation and referencing system to make it as accurate as possible. Finally, it is important to mention that any occurring challenge within the research and writing process turned out as a chance to enlarge our knowledge and understanding. This aspect formed simultaneously the basis for our critical thinking.

2.3.2. 2nd Multipurpose

*Contribution to the advancement of the issue* - Times are changing so is leadership. In other words, the leadership role is progressing at the same time as new multicultural groups are emerging nowadays. However, while searching for appropriate literature, we noticed that there is a lack of information regarding the leadership role when it comes to leading within a constant growing multicultural environment. Thus, we want to contribute to the topic by gathering as much information as possible and subsequently create our own guide for leaders and future-leaders who lead in multicultural environments. On the other hand, we want to outline the fact that this topic plays a significant role to us which is why we feel a special connection to it, since the Master program we attend educated us for a potential global leadership career. Finally, the contribution to the
topic aims to guide other future leader, as we are, to understand the importance of developing, adapting and improving leadership styles to the constantly changing environment.

2.3.3. 3rd Multipurpose

*Inspire other people who might read the thesis and help them understand how to interpret the multicultural aspect* - The importance of the topic stands out when one realises the wide extent of the theme that involves any person that is surrounded by people from different countries or cultures. Thus, this work does not exclusively focus on the target group of leaders but also for anyone who might be involved in a multicultural environment and strives to widen the individual perspective about leadership of such. However, this paper’s principal aim is to guide leaders in their adapting process to the new multicultural circumstances and to show them the importance of their role and the impact they have when leading others. In addition to that, respective followers of any leader can also take advantage of this paper when working in a multicultural environment with a view to understand their leader but also to widen the individual perspectives concerning cultural backgrounds.

2.3.4. 4th Multipurpose

*Go through the field so future researches might use this one as a beginning for theirs* - As stated in the already mentioned purposes above, this paper contributes to an important and worthwhile topic to investigate on. Nevertheless, the limitations stated later in the thesis could be developed in future papers using this one as a reference. Furthermore, more time and space (pages of the thesis) are needed to go deeper into certain details. Therefore, future researches can take advantage of this thesis as a beginning for their investigations on the field in order to explore and deepen the research issues and potentially also to point out a development of multicultural influences and its respective meaning regarding leadership over the years.
2.4. Chapter outline

The structure of this Master Thesis is organised in seven chapters as follows: the first chapter contains the introduction of the thesis in which the research problem is pointed out. Chapter two contains the description of the objective and purpose of the paper. It also includes a detailed analysis concerning the problem which is studied. In this chapter, the research issues are formulated as well as the multiple purposes which outline the importance and necessity to investigate on the research topic and what it can contribute to future studies. The subsequent chapter explains grounded theory as the methodology approach that has been chosen to analyse interviews and thus the way of coding and dealing with the gathered information. Chapter four and five contain respectively the theoretical framework in the field of culture and its relationship with leadership that has supported our investigation. In chapter four the meaning of culture and its influence in people’s behaviour is studied while chapter five states the issue of how to manage and lead in a multicultural environment. The interviews have been analysed in the penultimate chapter: findings. This chapter is divided into five categories which evolved throughout the analysis of all gathered data within the interview sessions given by seven respondents. Culture as such, additionally has been analysed in order to emphasise the respondents’ point of departure. In the following, potential challenges, suggested strategies and occurring chances that the respondents identified, have been pointed out in order to set up a guide for leaders and future-leaders facing multicultural working environments. A conclusion of the analysis has been given in order to summarise the findings and answer the research issues.
The last chapter of this paper is composed by a reflection of the work in order to show how future researches could approach the field of leadership and its interconnection to multicultural environments.
3. Research and Methodology

“Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought”. (Albert Szent-Gyorgyi n.y.a. online)

In the following chapter the applied methodology and its respective design will be pointed out. In the context of the thesis the qualitative approach was conducted in order to examine the highest possible and deepest insight concerning the significant and influencing aspects in terms of the study issue. In terms of the research issues the qualitative approach is claimed for the features as being flexible, subjective and speculative (Halfpenny 1979, p.799 cited in Silverman 1997, p.13). Thus, the qualitative approach enables the most valuable outcome concerning the respective research results because of its close connection between the data and the researcher’s understanding of it. Consequently, it facilitates an integrated perspective of the researcher’s interpretation. According to Silverman (1997) qualitative researchers aim to: “…produce a set of cumulative, theoretically defined generalizations deriving from the critical sifting of data.” (p.13). This process will be undertaken by the accession of the Grounded Theory and specifically by conducting semi-structured interviews with people in different leadership positions.

3.1. Research Design

The approximation by applying the grounded theory is suitable in the context of this topic in terms of its focus to add a new interpretation of a phenomenon. This interpretation, in turns, might help shed new lights on already existing theories. Generally, one might say that there are different levels of ambition when using Grounded Theory. One might aim at developing a new theory or one might aim at developing a metaphor which in turn can serve to give more and deeper sense to
already existing theories about the studied phenomenon. Applying grounded theory requires in the context of this work that there are different angles and hence various potential results with regard to the research issues. Different angles are taken into consideration in terms of analysing responds from leaders within fundamental different leadership positions or experiences as for instance within a company, in a sports organisation or a student network. This approach enables us as the creator of knowledge to expect different possible results regarding the research topic of the thesis. According to Goulding (2002, p.50) Grounded Theory was applied by many researchers in the context of investigating on management issues. The main reason for this the authors elaborate in the fact that management includes aspects as behaviours, people and the communication between and to them. Thus, there is no doubt about a consequently existing connection to leadership as well.

In addition to these presumptions, leadership as such which builds the main aspect of the investigation process of this work, must be understood as a “social process” according to Kempster and Perry (2011, p.117). Consequently: “grounded theory is a very suitable methodology for exploring and seeking to explain processual and social relationships such as leadership” (p.117). This understanding goes along with our approximation of grounded theory in terms of the perception of leadership as a social relationship which will be investigated within different frames of references by different leaders. Hereby it is important to mention that we are not aiming to develop a new leadership theory, instead we strive to extract the most valuable and promising approaches out of applied leadership styles, based on theoretical background and on the respondent’s experiences which will be outlined within interviews. Furthermore, we consider new influencing factors on leadership and connect it to existing knowledge and create new meaning out of it. This procedure is based on providing sense and a guideline to new entering leaders, but also
those who are interested in adapting their leadership style and understanding to new circumstances.

3.2. Applied Methodology – Grounded Theory

Grounded theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). According to that, the researcher takes all collected data into consideration and subsequently strives to extract meaning from the respective data and use it as indicators. “In general grounded theory seeks to move in a systematic way from categorizing data related to a phenomenon toward linking those categories” (Kempster & Parry 2011, p.108).

The following figure represents the practical approximation with grounded theory. Based on an existing empirical level which according to Simmons (2012, p.23) is in most cases presented through interviews, the researcher aims to create patterns within the empirical research. Regarding interviews as the approach of gathering data this means that we as the creator of knowledge strive to build patterns and understandings between the different statements of the respondents in terms of pointing out similarities or differences between their experiences. The interpretation of us, as the researcher thereby is grounded. This respectively means that the level of experience, outlined by the respondent, is grounded.
Furthermore, the approximation with grounded theory must be understood as an ongoing process in terms of its procedure beginning at an empirical level, over creating empirical patterns, conceptualising and interpreting them and finally its reconsideration, respectively repetition of all named levels. However, the investigation process to achieve a second result is only necessary if the gathered data is insufficient in terms of answering the research issues.

The empirical nature is based on the respondent’s answers which are analysed in the following step and subsequently empirical patterns occur through the analysis and findings of similarities or differences within the respondent’s experiences. The findings are labelled after, in the sense of creating themes and concepts in which the creator of knowledge classifies them. Out of all created understandings and findings a guide for leaders and future-leaders will be created.

Parry (1998) describes this process as an iterative interplay between the elements of gathering data, analysing accordingly and finally conceptualising and interpreting it. We, as the researcher, hence are allowed to rerun this procedure several times and in addition to that, even other researchers could carry the research theme forward. This
approximation ensures that a continuous research, addition of knowledge and respective analysis regarding one specific theme is conducted. As crucial within applying grounded theory is, according to Parry (1998), to understand the fundament of which the researcher derives the theory. That is why we, as the creator of knowledge, focus systematically on our collected data in terms of labelling different themes and topics which are mainly touched. The process of labelling and creating concepts requires a sensitive analysis of all gathered data which will be taken into account through a careful choice of themes. The mentioned themes are based on the respondent’s answers.

In terms of meeting the requirement of a sensitive analysis a continuous comparison of data and its respective analysis will be conducted. This procedure is based on the suggestion within different literature (Parry 1998, Silverman 1993). Regarding to Parry (1998, no pagination) the researcher will state certain findings within the analysis, whereby these findings will demand to collect new data. “By doing so, concepts can be more clear and abstract, and the relationships between concepts can be confirmed. This process of generating higher levels of theoretical abstraction is called theoretical coding” (Glaser 1978 cited in Parry 1998, no pagination). The theoretical coding forms simultaneously the point of departure for creating in this context a guide for leaders and/or future-leaders who are facing multicultural environments.

In this context, it is important to repeat and emphasise the fact that this work does not aim to create a new theory about leadership in multicultural contexts, however it strives to create a guideline and deep understanding leading in multicultural environments and how to successfully face certain challenges.

Considering us, as the researchers of the named issues, it is according to Parry (1998) necessary to get rid of individual intellectual existing knowledge about the issue which will be investigated. In this context, it means we have to create a balance between the theoretical
knowledge about culture and leadership as well as personal experiences in order to avoid presumptions what the respective research will find out (Strauss & Corbin 1990 cited in Parry 1998, no pagination). Due to the multicultural orientation of our Master studies we perceive ourselves as involved into different multicultural environments. Nevertheless, all personal gained experiences and understandings are based on a non-leadership level wherefore a natural distance between us, as the researchers and the topic, as well as its findings and theories, exists.

3.3. Interviews and Conversations

In the following section the approach of data collection via interviews and conversations will be outlined. Nowadays, the public media as newspapers, online-blogs, radio or TV-channels conduct interviews in order to extract as much information by the responder as possible. In addition to that interviews are not focussing specifically on one target group. Basically, everyone can personify a responder - politicians, actors, families, teachers, policemen and so on. That is why interviews enable a wide range of possibilities in terms of the theme and interview partners.

Thus, interviews are furthermore part of qualitative research (Banister et al. 2011, p.88) since they are similar in terms of their way of performance to a usual conversation between people. An interview hence: “...may be informal and unstructured conversations” (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill 2016, p.390). Nevertheless, interviews are usually prearranged concerning the main theme by the interviewer although a not-necessarily given structure.

In context to our work we decided to choose the possibility to take advantage of both an interview and a conversation by conducting a semi-structured interview. In general, there are three different types which can be characterised in an interview: unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006
cited in Banister et al. 2011, p.89). Concerning the different availability in terms of respondents and the potentially highest outcome regarding the topic of the thesis the semi-structured approach is the most suitable one. This kind of interview allows negotiation (p.90) and conversation between the interviewer and the respondent so that we, as the researchers, obtain the opportunity to explain partly more demanding content of a question. In addition to that, another advantage of this approach is that the interview is prepared in advance by predetermined directed questions but nevertheless, these can be asked in a different order, depending on the specific answers (p.90). Furthermore, semi-structured questions allow to leave certain questions out or even to add new aspects during the interview itself (p.90). Besides the predetermined questions, it is usual that the interview schedule allows comments in order to initiate a discussion about a certain aspect which the interviewer introduces (p.391). The overall target of this approach is more flexible since it only focusses on the development of an interview guide as such, including key questions, but allowing the possibility to adapt to each respondent.

3.3.1. Data collection

Based on a prearranged interview guide, the key questions are posed to the respondents within a time frame of fourteen days, between March 13th and March 24th, 2017. Primarily within face-to-face interviews, but due to geographical distances also via Skype interviews as well as self-administrated interviews (SAI) via email. The language of communication commonly was agreed on English due to different countries of origins of all respondents and the researchers. In order to collect all information within a semi-structured interview: “...data will be captured by audio-recording the conversation or perhaps note taking” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016, p.391). All respondents agreed in advance that the respective face-to-face
interviews will be audio-recorded in order to enable the researchers to analyse every detailed aspect as primary data. The fundament of the data collection was created by the orientation of the mentioned interview guide within a semi-structured interview framework. The complete interview guide can be seen in the Annex. It contains of five main elements, created around the research topic. Attention should be paid to the approach of general understandings to more specific ones, as well as personal involvements in such. The elements are named by the following: Culture, Multiculturalism, Working/Leading within an environment of cultural diversity, Intercultural Competence and Development of Leadership. All answers on each theme of the respondents are recorded and transcribed. Due to the enormous length of the interviews the transcriptions are not attached to this work.

3.3.2. Qualitative sampling

In the following it will be described why the respective respondents have been chosen which organisation or rather agency they belong to and what kind of position they work at. Primary criterion which all respondents have in common is the fact of interacting in a multicultural environment in any way. Furthermore, all respondents unite a leadership experience and thus are able to point out different perspectives in terms of leading in a multicultural environment. This leads to the fact that various different shapes and perceptions can be described even though the two main elements of having leadership experience and acting in a multicultural environment are covered. The common basis, but simultaneously existing differences ensure comparability between the respondents on one side, and various perceptions on distinctive levels on the other side. Due to a still consisting unequal gender distribution we, as the researcher, decided intentionally to take into account a majority of female respondents within this study. Hereby it is important to mention that we do not aim to evaluate different experiences between
genders, instead the main target is to pay attention to descriptions of women in multicultural contexts, in order to achieve a better gender mixture.

Table 1 represents the interview partners, the multicultural organisation or agency they belong to and their role or position. Intentionally, as mentioned before all respondents are involved in fundamental different roles within multicultural environments. Madeleine Modig for instance is the president of the European Student Network in Kalmar, Sweden and hence in charge of organising and structuring “get-to-know-meetings” for more than 200 new international students from all over the world every year. Mette Lindgren Helde contributes experiences of working as a freelancer in her own company in various multicultural environments. She travelled in high-contrasted cultures, compared to the West-European one and therefore is able to speak out of diverse involvements. Cyprien Kiffer is the manager of a multicultural team and has been travelling and working in multicultural environments for a long time which makes him able to give a valuable insight to the topic. In addition to that, Danielle Pesch has long-lasting experiences within multicultural environments in which she positioned leader- and manager-posts. Maxmikael Wilde Björling is able to contribute valuable experiences in terms of having the possibility to compare homogenous and multicultural student-groups and their respective working and social environments with each other. Furthermore, Sissy Viklund gained experiences within different multicultural working environments and consequently has a wide range of perceptions on the matter how multicultural teams work and how their efficiency may be challenged. Finally, Sofia Hult is in charge of leading the volleyball department of the sports-organisation FIKS in Kalmar. Swedish and international students from different multicultural backgrounds are gathering three times weekly in order to play volleyball together. Hence, Sofia Hult is able to speak about occurring challenges as well as chances and learning lessons which can be drawn out of it.
Table 1: Interview partner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation/Agency</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madeleine Modig</td>
<td>ESN Kalmar</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mette Lindgren Helde</td>
<td>Lindgren Helde Kommunikation</td>
<td>CEO, freelance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle Pesch</td>
<td>Baxter World Trade SPRL</td>
<td>Senior Director / Global Supply Chain Program Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprien Kiffer</td>
<td>Philips Lighting – Valladolid Factory</td>
<td>Procurement Department Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxmikael Wilde Björling</td>
<td>Linnaeus University</td>
<td>Lecturer in multi- &amp; homogenous environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sissy Viklund</td>
<td>Markem-Imaje</td>
<td>HR Business Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofia Hult</td>
<td>FIKS Kalmar</td>
<td>Head-Leader (Volleyball)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Created by the authors

3.3.3. Analysis of collected data

Previous chapters describe the process of gathering data. Subsequently, it needs to be investigated how the collected data is analysed. Corbin and Strauss (2008) describe the analysis as necessary in order to give the collected data a certain meaning and thus to become able to work with it any further (p.46). The analysis as such they describe as the procedure of investigating on something so that one understands what sense it has and how it functions. Furthermore, analysing is according to the authors strongly connected to the researcher’s interpretation of it (p.48). Consequently, analyses may vary in terms of their outcome between different researchers, always depending on their further involvement of own interpretation.
According to Simmons (2012), firstly the researcher is supposed to outline patterns or themes within the sampling of data and in addition to that, to reproduce and create relationships between the described themes. This procedure forms the fundament in order to create theory: “maintaining grounding in the data throughout” (2012, p.24). Furthermore, Corbin and Strauss (2008, p.51) highlight the step of creating themes as indispensable since they include the researcher's interpretation of what the data means. That is why, we as the creator of knowledge, aim to conceptualise all gathered data. It enables us to point out our own understanding of all that has been said and experiences of the respondents. We are going to frame themes and collect all data and information by different respondents out of their own stories in order to subordinate those accordingly to each topic. All created themes subsequently build the head of a chapter within the analysis.

Considering the theoretical sampling, as Corbin and Strauss (2008) describe it, we conduct an initial microanalysis as an open form of coding in the beginning of our research project (p.58). It enables us to perceive data very detailed in order to establish a first overview and understanding of existing information and material. Furthermore, this approach ensures to view through a: “microscope to examine each piece of data up close” (p.59). We perceive the microanalysis as valuable in the context of our research topic since it will enable us to develop a potentially controversial approach. As outlined in chapter two, some leaders might be convinced of their conventional wisdom about leadership. A microanalysis however, is able to reveal detailed aspects and lead to the opportunity to create new approaches and understandings which this work is aiming for.

Following the microanalysis, the process of coding: “taking raw data and raising it to a conceptual level” (Corbin & Strauss 2008, p.66) is conducted. The coding is based on the gathered data through various implemented semi-structured interviews. The first step hereby includes the open coding which Corbin and Strauss (2008, p.198)
describe as: “breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks or raw data” which summarises the process of organising findings into different themes.

Subsequently, following the second step of coding, the axial coding which outlines the creation of relating concepts or themes to each other (Corbin & Strauss 2008, p.198). This procedure is based on the aspect of identifying similarities and/or differences between formerly arranged concepts/categories. To summarise step one and two: data which has been broken into different parts within step one – in order to set up concepts – is rebuilt in the following. Corbin & Strauss (2008) mention this approach as elementary so that subsequent investigations on mutual relations between the concepts are enabled and consequently conducted.

We follow the suggested approach by Corbin and Strauss in terms of investigating all interviews and their respective data which are extracted out of the respondent’s story, in order to create concepts and themes out of that. Those, we understand as the anchors of the analysis, they build the head of each chapter within the analysis of this work and found the basis for a following result.

The main purpose of chapter three is to enable the reader a detailed overview how and for which different steps in terms of research have been conducted. Consequently, the reader obtains a clear and transparent understanding of how the research results which will be outlined in the final chapters of the thesis have been found.
4. About Culture

“Culture makes people understand each other better. And if they understand each other better in their soul, it is easier to overcome the economic and political barriers. But first they have to understand their neighbours, in the end, just like them, with the same problems, the same questions” (Paulo Coelho).

Culture is part of everyone’s life. We all, as human beings, grow up within a cultural environment. That means that from the very first moment one is born, the habits and traditions of surroundings affect and shape. However, there are several cultures that influence us. Every time one changes, for instance, the place where one lives or works, another different culture emerges and shapes on different outcomes. Not only because of the different cultures that each member of the new environment has, but because of the interaction between all of them that creates a new culture within the group. This is important to be understood and, thus, it is the reason why culture as such will be investigated. Because culture is present wherever one goes and in which environment one is acting. Furthermore, this chapter aims to provide a wide picture of what the concept of culture embraces and its influence in people's behaviours. In addition to that, the chapter shows the connection of culture to the organisational culture that is being created when people from different cultures are gathered in the same working environment.

4.1. Definition of culture

Culture as such has numerous definitions. “In 1952, Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn published a list of 164 definitions of the term. More recently, John R. Baldwin and his colleagues have listed over three hundred meanings of culture and other scholars have offered additional definitions and approaches” (Lustig & Koester 2013, p.25).
All of them convey the same but differently. On the other hand, there are several ways of analysing the definition depending on what one wants to extract. Therefore, some definitions of culture have been selected to explain its meaning more in detail. The two first definitions describe culture as such. The last definition nevertheless is related to the topic of this paper which is strongly tied to the organisational culture that is being created when people from different cultures work together.

Jenks (1993) has somehow defined culture as: “a familiar term within our tradition” that: “can be employed to summon up holistic appraisals of the ways of life of a people, their beliefs, rituals and customs” (p.10). This definition suggests that culture is a route or direction that defines one’s path in life through tradition. Whether it is chosen intentionally or not, culture accompanies each of us. Secondly, the definition includes words like customs and beliefs which mean that every single action that one executes is determining one’s culture. A belief makes one to behave in one way or another since it makes one to reflect on what is right or wrong to be done. Everything one does shapes the individuality. Finally, this definition highlights the fact that culture is not something punctual that can be learnt easily. On the contrary, a process is needed in order to understand and internalise it. Culture is always created within a community where people share norms and values, for instance. And it highly depends on the people who are in that place at a moment. It is also important to emphasise that culture is created in a particular moment. That is to say, the culture created within a community in a particular moment could be somehow different than the one created in a similar community in another time.

For instance, female communities created in the same place but with twenty years of difference from each other allow an appropriate example. The culture created within a company where women are working highly differs from the culture created by women in the same company twenty years later. It cannot be the same culture created
since they will have different frames of references, values or information regarding how advanced the society is in that moment. Hence, culture is affected by plenty different factors such as time, place or people.

The second definition we are analysing is named by Schein (2004) who states that: “culture is to a group what personality and character is to an individual”. On the other hand: “one can view personality and character as the accumulation of cultural learning that an individual has experienced in the family, peer group, the school, the community, and the occupation” (p.8).

This definition conveys that: “culture is within us as individuals and yet constantly evolving as we join and create new groups and eventually create new cultures” (Schein 2004, p.8). We all, as human beings, have personality and a character that shapes and defines us constantly. It is inevitable that one develops certain characteristics while experiencing and interacting with different kinds of stimulus. This makes one to join different groups according to one’s preferences, which will lead to the creation of a new culture regarding those preferences. On the other hand, and as stated in the first definition’s analysis, the creation of a culture is a learning process composed by one’s experiences through life. Furthermore, these experiences are mostly influenced by relatives, friends, teachers, neighbours and anyone who might surround one.

Another definition in terms of how to approach and understand culture is based in the following: “Culture is how organizations ‘do things’” (Katanga, cited in: Watkins 2013). One can see consistent and observable patterns of behaviours in organisations that create a culture. The core of culture within a company is created by repeated behaviours or habits and it shows what people feel, think or believe. (Watkins 2013).

This definition conveys that culture in an organisation is created through the habits of how things get done. These habits will develop over the long-term period due to behaviour patterns and usual
approaches which will create a specific organisational culture. Each internal action in a company sharpens the corporate culture, as for instance the relationships between executives and employees or any leadership approach that will define the internal culture. Thus, culture is exactly how the organisation does things.

When reading about culture and its definitions, the outstanding fact is that all of them include the word behaviour. At the same time, other words that also describe culture such as norms, values or social practices include behaviour in their definitions as well. Even a belief is the reason people behave in one way or another. Thus, one could state that a combination of behaviours determines a culture.

The other way around, behaviour contains somehow the description of what culture is. The way one reacts to the environment and to what is happening around one reinforces its culture.

It does not matter how complicated one wants to define culture as such. The most significant aspects about culture value, behaviour, people, believe, a certain time and a certain place. "Culture has been defined in a number of ways, but most simply, as the learned and shared behaviour of a community of interacting human beings" (Useem & Useem 1963, p.169).

4.1.1. Different concepts of culture

As emphasised before, there is no doubt about the fact that leadership is being influenced by factors such as multiculturalism and interculturalism. It is important to highlight that these factors are not the same. Furthermore, the concept of cross-culturalism goes along with other mentioned aspects. Thus, it is important to study those concepts and the differences among all of them in order to avoid potential confusion between them. Fig. 4 represents the differences between the concepts of multiculturalism, cross-culturalism and interculturalism. However, it is worth to study the differences among all of them as follows.
Different disciplines in a wide context will be defined and subsequently the cultural meaning will be applied to them in order to get a deep understanding of the different cultural disciplines. According to Stember (1991), multidisciplinary: “involves several disciplines who each provide a different perspective on a problem or issue” (p.4). Turning this meaning of a discipline into the cultural frame, it requires the existence of several distinctive cultures within a society whereby each of them is able to contribute and provide different values and input based on the individual origin.

Considering the relation between the present cultures within the environment, the approach of multiculturalism requires that all existing cultures are equally important. They individually contribute different values and beliefs whereby none of them is prioritised in any way.

Nevertheless, the above-mentioned definition of multidisciplinary by Stember (1991) does not convey that each discipline interacts with one another. Therefore, it is important to emphasise that within a multicultural environment different cultures are present; however, they do not actively cooperate with each other.

Following the process and the order stated in Fig. 4, Stember (1991) defines cross-disciplinary as: “a viewing of one discipline form the perspective of another” (p.4). This definition suggests that the...
disciplines interact with each other while aiming to develop an understanding for each other’s perspective. This requires communication and willingness to take up other perspectives and views than the own one. Hence, it demands to leave the individual comfort zone.

Turning this again into a cultural frame, it means that all different cultures actively interact with each other while also aiming to achieve an understanding for individual respective values in a cross-cultural environment. In order to create an efficient cross-cultural environment, the community has to focus on communication to each other, practically this phenomenon is viewable in families or companies.

Finally, Stember (1991) states in her paper: “Advancing the social sciences through the interdisciplinary enterprise” that: “interdisciplinary literally means between disciplines” (p.3) in a broad sense: “suggesting the basic elements of at least two collaborators, at least two disciplines, and a commitment to work together” (p.3-4). The same understanding goes along with the concept of interculturalism which requires an existence of different cultures – at least two cultures that are interacting with each other and that are developing a mutual commitment. This process leads to the creation of a new culture on which both (or more) cultures agree. The new culture represents a combination of the individual cultures of origin. Through their respective contributions, a potentially new way of beliefs, values and norms is created.

On the other hand, interdisciplinary: “requires more or less integration and even modification of the disciplinary contributions” (p.4). Furthermore: “participants must have an eye toward the holistic complex of interrelationships and take into account the contributions of others in making their own contributions” (p.4). Thus, a collaboration and understanding from all the existing cultures within a specific community is needed. Their relationships, values and
processes are important to be developed in the same direction in order to work successfully efficient together.

To summarise the concepts of culture, a leader of a multicultural team has to lead cultural differences. Multiculturalism, cross-culturalism and interculturalism can occur in each organisation or company as such, individually or simultaneously. However, from the very beginning the different cultures do not have a close interdependency to each other. As soon as they start interacting, it is required to have a basic understanding for each other in order to work successfully together. However, in order to achieve an intercultural environment, more than simple interactions and basic understandings are needed from both, the leader and the followers. According to Stember (1991): “This work requires respect for the each other’s capabilities and intentions; commitment to common interests or problems; exceptional patience…” (p.8). Hence, an intercultural team will eventually emerge when people from those different cultures start bringing their own values and customs for instance, and thus they start to evolve a deeper understanding for each other’s culture.

4.1.2. Culture shock

In the previous chapter the process of different cultural concepts was outlined and how various cultures are able to collaborate and interact. Nevertheless, one must be aware of potential situations in which these processes do not function easily. The outcome of such is called culture shock.

“Culture shock is the process of initial adjustment to an unfamiliar environment” (Pedersen 1995, p.1). “In a multicultural context, culture shock is more or less sudden immersion into a nonspecific state of uncertainty were the individuals are not certain what is expected of them or of what they can expect from the persons around them” (p.1). Thus, a culture shock potentially occurs the first time one is surrounded by a different culture. Fundamental for culture shocks in each kind are different perceptions of values and beliefs, as the
following example outlines. For instance, there are different ways of introducing oneself depending on the individual cultural origin. Based on our Western European experiences, we shake most certainly our hands in order to introduce ourselves. Whereas the handshaking for instance, can be seen as rude or impolite in other cultures.

Regarding a practical experience conducted by Mette Lindgren Helde (2016), different cultural backgrounds and expectations can be shown in the very beginning when people meet each other the first time. Mette Lindgren Helde asked students in the course Leadership & Management in International Contexts to try out intentionally a new way of introducing to each other. Practically the students had to adapt a new cultural habit for some time in order to introduce to a person from another cultural origin. This experience contained for instance two kisses on the cheek, rubbing noses on each other or the handshake. After evaluating the experience and personal feelings the students reported that they partly felt very uncomfortable and insecure to leave their own habits and therefore the individual comfort zone. These and similar occurrences may lead to a culture shock and hence are likely to appear within multicultural organisations.

This culture shock is related to what human beings can see and experience when interacting with other cultures. It is related to what one can see and touch. In other words, it is related to the conscious. On the other hand, there’s an unconscious part that one cannot see, which offers an explanation for the observed behaviours. “According to Freud, the unconscious is the source of our motivations, […], neurotic compulsions” (Saha 2006, p.224). “Because the unconscious is so large, and because we are only aware of the very small conscious at any given time, this theory has been linked to an iceberg, where the vast majority is buried beneath the water’s surface” (Saha 2006, p.224). Thereupon, in Fig. 5 the conscious is represented by dress or celebrations for instance, which are the elements one can see or experience. Conversely, the unconscious is represented by the notion
of time or the concept of beauty, the attitudes and the motivations for instance that define one.

Figure 3: Iceberg Model

Source: Created by the authors

4.2. Different cultural dimensions and models

One could assume that there are different cultures within every community and that people who belong to those communities start building their own culture when interacting with each other. This assumption does not necessarily imply that individual cultural origins will be replaced, however due to shared experiences and behaviour patterns new cultural understandings can develop and lead to the creation of a new culture as such. However, there are potential difficulties. The described process may differ for some cultures in a way that they create tension among the members of the group. That is why it is important to study the different cultural dimensions in order to see the opposite poles and understand how people from different cultures behave and respectively to find out why.
4.2.1. Cultural dimensions by Hofstede

In the following chapter, we are going to outline the cultural dimensions by Hofstede. Hofstede and his dimensions are worldwide strongly connected to culture and its research. That is why we are going to outline the dimensions of culture he created, however we want to emphasise that Hofstede never investigated on multicultural groups which represents the main background of the topic of the thesis. Based on that fact we are additionally going to describe other theories which take the aspect of multiculturalism into consideration.

Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) introduce some issues that are seen as common basic problems in cultural diverse environments. These issues might bring along consequences for societies and cultures to interact. There are common challenges differing from country to country in those areas. This interpretation goes along with Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) executions. The authors outline six different dimensions that cover the most important matters that can make a person to behave in one way or another. “A dimension is an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures” (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov 2010, p.31).

The dimensions will be outlined in the following in order to show that there are differences among cultures in terms of how people react to the same situations but containing different values, norms or beliefs regarding their own cultures. “It will show that although the variety in people’s minds is enormous, there is a structure in this variety that can serve as a basis for mutual understanding” (p.4). The dimensions, represented in Fig. 6, are:

*Equality vs inequality:* a concept called Power Distance is used by Hofstede et al. to explain how unlike equality is perceived by people from different countries and cultures. Further, the authors define Power Distance as: “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (p.61). Thus, either in organisations,
families, schools, etc. there is always someone who has more power than another member of that group. The Power Distance Index measures whether people from different countries accept more or less those power differences. There are some evidences such as the country’s geographic latitude, the size of its population or its wealth which explain why there are different existing perceptions of equality (p.84).

**Individualism vs collectivism:** there are two kinds of society regarding the willingness of the people to do more for either themselves or for the group. “The vast majority of people in our world lives in societies in which the interest of the group prevails over the interest of the individual” (p.90). However, there are also individual communities in which children grow up learning how to get a personal sense of accomplishment or to find a considerable freedom to adopt their own approach to the job, for instance (p.92). It highly depends on the family and the place where the children grow to determine if they are individualist rather than collectivist or the other way around collectivist rather than individualist.

**Femininity vs masculinity:** “All human societies consist of men and women, usually in approximately equal numbers” (p.137). Both men and women have different biological characteristics such as strength, height or shape. However, that does not mean that they cannot create the same value. This dimension suggests that there are some societies in which a male role is more or less dominant than in others. Thus, there are countries where even women adopt male behaviours, for instance in the working environment.
Uncertainty vs certainty: “All human beings have to face the fact that we do not know what will happen tomorrow: the future is uncertain, but we have to live with it anyway” (p.189). This might create anxiety within a country. What they do to avoid the uncertainty is to develop technology, law and religion in order to prevent themselves from the unknown. Thus, there are countries which tend to be better prepared for the future than others in terms of a simple focus on existing insecurities of their citizens.

Long-term orientation vs short-term orientation: Societies with characteristics such as the search for quick results, respect for traditions or an old-age unhappy life which starts late determine what a short-term orientation culture is. On the other hand, long-term orientation cultures are characterized by perseverance and sustained efforts toward slow results as well as respect for circumstances and an old-age happy life which starts early (p.243). The former is focused on the present while the latter is focused on the future.

Indulgence vs restraint: The level of happiness, the control in one’s life and the importance of leisure (pp.280) that people perceive in their lives within a country is studied to explain this dimension, since these are characteristics which define how people are and/or how they
behave. “Indulgence stands for the tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoy life and having fun. Its opposite pole, restraint, reflects a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms” (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010, p.281).

After studying these dimensions, the potential existing differences among countries and cultures in the world are strongly present. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), conducted a study in: “Cultures and Organizations”, based on interviews with employees of the international company IBM to show the differences between all the countries regarding each dimension. Thus, they show several tables in which they rank the countries regarding their punctuation in the dimensions. The most important insight is that countries seem to follow a logic connection within their own cultures when looking at the dimensions. There is a relation between the grade of equality-inequality and individualism-collectivism within a country, for instance.

With regard to the cultural dimensions by Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov. (2010), all these aspects potentially occur in a company or organisation. As for instance, there are people from different countries and cultures having an unlike level of power distance or tolerance of uncertainty. This makes the leader facing challenges in terms of leading those. On the other hand, the leader obtains the opportunity to create a new culture within a team in order to use it in a new way as strengthens.

4.2.2. Other models

Although Hofstede’s (2010) cultural dimensions are the best known, there are some other researches who have been studying the cultural differences among countries. Some different models and dimensions emerge depending on the researcher and the way he/she studies culture as such. The analysis of the cultural dimensions by
Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) have been very detailed and descriptive. Nevertheless, there are other models proposed by different researches which shall be mentioned in the following due to the lack of Hofstede’s consideration of multicultural groups in his research. Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars suggested in 2000 their own bunch of dimensions as there were: universalism/particularism, individualism/communitarianism, specificity/diffusion, achieved status/ascribed status, inner direction/outer direction and sequential time/synchronous time (Klyukanov 2005, p.137). Comparing those to the dimensions by Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), the similarities become obvious. They all study the reactions of people to the same problem regarding global issues. In this context and in comparison to the approximation with Hofstede it is important to highlight that Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) focus in their research on multicultural groups which sets the fundament for our thesis work. That is why we see Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner as a valuable theoretical background to our work besides the dimensions created by Hofstede.

On the other hand, Schwartz supports that: “individual and cultural levels of analysis are conceptually independent” (Nardon & Steers 2009 in Bhagat & Steers 2009, p.5). Hence, he distinguishes between three different dimensions within the cultural level of analysis that are: conservatism and autonomy, hierarchy versus egalitarianism and, finally, mastery versus harmony (Nardon & Steers 2009 in Bhagat & Steers, p.7). By mentioning these dimensions, he explains to which extent individuals are integrated in groups, to which extent equality is valued and expected and, finally, to which extent people seek to change the natural and social world to advance personal or group interests (Nardon & Steers 2009 in Bhagat & Steers, p.7). That is to say, how people react to the same issues within different countries and cultures.

Hence it becomes obvious that the dimensions stated by the different researches convey the same but are called differently. “These
dimensions are all globally concerned with how people solve different tasks – for example, how they deal with time, with work, with inequality and with groups” (Klyukanov 2005, p.137).

Culture is not easy to be analysed because of various different existing perceptions about the same main aspect. However, researches have studied and recognised some patterns which help us to understand the cultural differences among all of them.

4.3. Cultural diversity

The first question which occurs when talking about cultural diversity is what does diversity mean? “In the context of the workplace, diversity equals representation” (Sherbin & Rashid 2017, para. 2). Thus, this means that there are people representing different cultures within the same environment.

Furthermore, according to Kerwin (2010, p.vii): “cultural diversity is the variety of human societies or cultures in a specific region, or in the world as a whole”. This definition, thus, suggests that cultural diversity occurs as soon as there is more than one culture within a community. Lately, this phenomenon is increasingly to be observed in global acting companies. Every employee in an organisation contributes his or her personal cultural background that is why all employees considered collectively create cultural diversity. In addition to that, Kerwin (2010) suggests that cultural diversity within an organisation emerges as defined and mentioned above as multiculturalism (p.vii).

There are different aspects to take into consideration when talking about cultural diversity. Aspects such as language or costumes for instance might evolve as a positive or potentially negative aspect in different contexts. Concerning positive aspects, one has to think about matters like education or knowledge development. Within a cultural diverse environment, sharing ideas and opinions could lead to the creation of a more valuable knowledge. On the other hand, there are
other conceivable negative aspects that cultural diversity could generate within a community. For instance, the spoken language or the beliefs which one characterises could potentially lead to challenges in terms of the collaboration between all members of a multicultural group. A suitable example is for instance travelling abroad where another and unknown language is spoken and that fact might lead to difficulties in terms of a proper and clear communication. However, potential negative aspects coming along with cultural diversity open the opportunity for improvement and change to adjust. To get to know basic skills of another language before travelling may lead to appreciation abroad and a consequently simplified communication. In addition to that, cultural diversity can be seen as a supportive tool which makes people aware of other cultures and individualities worldwide. And furthermore, adjusting the own partly restricted views to a more and more open perception. Therefore, cultural diversity connects people in many different ways and, although it makes communities and groups facing challenges, the wide range of chances must be exploited in order to extract the various advantages.

4.4. Culture and organisation

Cultural diversity does not only affect the way employees work or behave with each other within an organisation but also its structure, systems and processes (Schneider, Barsoux & Stahl 2014, p.93). As stated already in this paper, depending on the origin of the team members, the leader of a multicultural team must face different kinds of challenges. Thus, regarding the cultural dimensions by Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) analysed in the chapter titled Cultural Dimesions by Hofstede of this paper, the leadership phenomena needs to become aware of those challenges and also take advantage of possible chances. It highly depends on the country where the
organisation is operating. For instance: “in countries with high power distance [...] Leaders would be expected to take decisions and communication would flow from the top, down through the ranks” (Schneider, Barsoux & Stahl 2014, p.96). Another example is the different leadership style that must be adopted when studying Hofstede’s dimension related to uncertainty vs certainty. If the level of uncertainty avoidance that a country has is high: “The role of leadership would be more one of planning, organising, coordinating and controlling” (p.96). On the other hand, leader’s performance within a high collectivist orientation environment will be adapted to integrate all team members as well as foster team effort. Finally, contrary leadership roles stand out when working in either masculine or feminine cultural environments. For instance, shareholder satisfaction and target oriented teams are common in countries with a high level of masculinity. Nevertheless, a country high on femininity will work for the employee’s well-being and to show interest for social responsibility (p.96).

Hence, each cultural dimension would make a leader to adopt one style or another. All of them are different to each other. Thus, this shows the impact that culture has in the structure, the system or the processes of any organisation. This entails that a leader must take advantage of the chances as well as facing potential challenges.

On the other hand, the reaction that an organisation has related to several matters such as: “the nature of policies and procedures, planning and control, information processing and communication and decision making” (p.105) can make it way more different than others. And those matters are also related to the meaning of culture since the cultural diversity existing within an organisation would force the leader to adapt its style to the one that is needed for the team/organisation to be successful. However: “different logics of organisation exist in different countries, which can be equally effective, if not more so, given different societal contexts. In fact, there seems to be little doubt that some contexts are more favourable to the
success of certain management practices, and it need not always be the country where that practice originated” (p.113). Thus, this would also affect to the organisation and the way it performs in the multicultural environment.

Therefore, the significant role which leadership play in cultural diverse environments becomes obvious in this context. Not only because of the relation among the members of the organisation but also because of the decision that leaders have to make regarding cultural differences. Leading under these circumstances is not easy and, thus, it is worth to study the possible challenges and chances that leaders have to take into consideration in order to be successful.

Chapter four of this thesis mainly focused on outlining a short but detailed definition of what culture, respectively cultural diversity means and especially in terms of its connection to leadership in those environments. The approach in this context was to firstly investigate on the general cultural aspects and to subsequently emphasise the more detailed elements in chapter five.
5. Managing cultural differences through cultural intelligence

“Cultural intelligence: an outsider’s seemingly natural ability to interpret someone’s unfamiliar and ambiguous gestures the way that person’s compatriots would” (Earley & Mosakowski 2004)

The following chapter of the thesis focuses on the issue how to manage and lead intercultural, regarding the aspect of multiculturalism. It needs to be investigated why companies and organisations are affected of globalising influences and how to react accordingly. In the context of change in terms of going with global trends the following paragraphs will outline why companies are dependent on experts on the area of intercultural knowledge and intercultural competences. Furthermore, it will be questioned what might be needed in order to overcome challenges? How leaders can profit and take advantage from it? In order to answer these questions, the aspect of cultural intelligence, respectively cultural ignorance, will be investigated.

5.1. Leading Multicultural

“Changes over the last decade or so have made business not just more international but also more interdependent and more global, increasingly through alliances and joint ventures, as well as cross-border mergers and acquisitions” (Schneider, Barsoux & Stahl 2014, p.176). In addition to that, the daily business life nowadays works mainly globally, as there are increasing trades and exchanges, an increasing demand for high-quality products on a low-price basis and the increasing shift to online selling platforms. Consequently, companies are required to react to the mentioned changes in terms of creating a globally-minded strategy, especially in terms of the internal positioning concerning leading positions. Therefore, there is an
increasing demand concerning executives, leaders and managers who are globally established and able to lead cultural differences.

Why is this so important and necessary? Because companies tend to implement more interwoven cross-cultural strategies in order to answer the demanding expectations of the globalised 21st century (Schneider, Barsoux & Stahl 2014, p.175). Further, they might be now and then dependent to constantly adapt to outer influences as for instance the described changes of alliances, joint ventures etc. Thus it must be highlighted in this context that global operations of companies and organisations not necessarily lead to the fact that the staff and especially the executives increasingly think and act across borders. Cross-cultural thinking does not automatically evolve through a change of direction or strategy of a company or organisation. Instead, it must be developed within a learning process as it will be pointed out in the chapter about intercultural competence and cultural intelligence. Or, companies may decide to employ new staff and especially the so called global-executives. Schneider, Barsoux and Stahl (2014) outline that the executives and their abilities in terms of leading in multicultural environments build the fundament to survive as a company in a nowadays very competitive world.

However, it must not be forgotten that the attitude and understanding of multicultural awareness is required on all positions within a company (p.176). The approach of cultural intelligence and tolerance should be understood and interpreted as well by the front-line employees as by the CEO. However, in terms of their influencing positions, there are mainly the leaders and managers who are required to deal successfully with challenges occurring for instance through cross-border collaborations. The evolving question subsequently must be: “Who are these leaders and managers? How do companies develop or employ them?”. In accordance to Schneider, Barsoux and Stahl (2014), companies might be forced to shift away from their former internal positioning and especially their
corresponding responsibilities. The authors claim that it would be more worthwhile to: “…focus less on who is an international manager, and consider instead what international tasks and responsibilities employees really do fulfil and what opportunities can be made available to provide them with international exposure and help them develop cross-culture competencies” (Schneider, Barsoux & Stahl 2014, p.177). The authors highlight with this quote that the question should rather not focus on who is the right one to manage and lead the company in a globalised world. Instead, the question should focus on what the company already owns in terms of all skills which the staff has and can contribute to a successful working multicultural environment. This understanding requires a strong-will of all company-members to participate on one side but also the possibility for them to be involved actively. Consequently, this approach will lead to a simplified leading atmosphere for the executives who are not completely responsible on their own but instead, receive active support by their employees. Without any doubt, the employees symbolise the gearwheel of the company whereby the executives are demanded to make it turn constantly. That means that the executives still own a highly-responsible position within the globalised environment of the company.

Scholars agree on that most companies nowadays strive to employ so-called global-leaders as the leadership style of the standard-leader within a domestic environment does not sustain the high intense and competitive atmosphere in the currently existing global context anymore (p.177). The main difference between a global and a domestic leader is identified through the following: The mindstretching approach (Black & Gregersen, 2000, cited in Schneider, Barsoux & Stahl 2014, p.180). Black & Gregersen outline that a global leader is responsible for stretching the own mind around the whole world, around different cultural environments, economic backgrounds, as well as values and standards. Whereby a domestic leader only needs to focus on the national background in which the company acts in
which the cultural differences are not as strong as in a global context. Consequently, the frame of activity is substantially larger and thus requires accordingly more knowledge and understanding. The main reason for the upcoming high demand of global leaders is based in several global developments and consequential changes within the strategy of companies but also their internal positioning. Leading minds that are responsible to direct and interact with all parts of the organisation in order to achieve the companies’ targets are required to follow the global developments. This presumes inter alia to learn to act in an increased globalised environment which is influenced by the following factors (p.177): An elementary shift to more diversity on the workforce, an immense requirement of global knowledge in order to bridge gaps between cross-border activities, an increased number of stakeholders, as well as ethical issues in terms of the consequences of the globalising process. The named aspects represent only a short overview why companies nowadays are literally forced to develop or employ global leaders. Those elements clarify what any leader, manager or executive in a global context needs to grow on the individual understanding and performance of his or her global mindset.

Assumed may be that organisation A managed to employ a global leader, the evolving question is what kind of challenges he or she is going to face and especially how they distinguish from the ones which a domestic leader faces. In Accordance to Schneider, Barsoux and Stahl (2014, p.178) there is especially one outstanding challenge which only affects global leaders requiring a specific global mindset and understanding. This challenge is named by: “…understanding different cultures and managing effectively across cultures” and it consists of the understanding itself what the other culture is about. On the other hand, it is also to implement all tasks a leader or executive has into the new multicultural situation. Tasks, as for instance to conduct an organisational strategy, to interact, discuss and observe employees. For a successful ongoing it is mainly important for the
leader to be aware of the different existing cultures within the field of operation and to create simultaneously an accurate interpretation and analysis of the other cultures and context (p.178).

5.1.1. Multicultural Teams

“The real test of a global company is its ability to utilise cultural differences. In an era of global competition, drawing on the abilities of employees worldwide becomes a competitive necessity, not an ideological luxury” (Schneider, Barsoux & Stahl 2014, p.174). This quote examines the authors’ ideas about the high potential outcome of cultural differences which evolve in multicultural environments. Nevertheless, the quote further indicates that a company nowadays basically must be able to focus on differences and consider those as added values which are naturally given. The main insight which can be extracted is based on the understanding that companies and especially their leading minds have to be able to work within multicultural environments without perceiving differences as a threat or unknown. Instead, they must be interpreted as a natural consequence evolved through the own global-thinking strategy and as indispensable in order to survive in the highly competitive business world.

Schneider, Barsoux and Stahl (2014) stress the aspect that creation of teams nowadays is used as a supportive tool or partly even as the solution within companies in order to react to the dynamic and fast changing outer surroundings (p.207). In addition to that, one must know that these teams no longer consist of homogenous characters. Instead, these teams are characterised by differentiation in various ways. In relation to this paper, the focus within the teams will be established around multiculturalism. The authors see multicultural teams as: “…designed as a deliberate attempt to promote better decision making, greater creativity and innovation. The pay-off of multicultural teams is presumed to be in improving the quality of decisions” (p.209).
5.1.2. Possible Challenges of Multicultural Teams

Considering all the different existing expectations of multicultural teams, organisations, team-leader, global leader, basically everyone needs to be aware of the fact the multiculturalism within teams may also affect challenges of different kinds. The following chapter will focus on exactly these potential occurring challenges.

According to research done by Gibson and Zellmer-Bruhn (2001) the understanding of the right approach within team differs enormously between cultures. Even though the creation of teams is almost conducted on the entire world, the definition and policy is not the same. The authors found out that there are five main different metaphors concerning the perception of teamwork: military, sports, community, family and associates (p.274). These metaphors are responsible for expectations and understandings within teams concerning different aspects. For instance, regarding the role of leadership, targets, mutual communication etc. Consequently, countries or/and cultures in which these different metaphors are common are potentially not prepared for different understandings in terms of cross-cultural collaboration. At this point, the global leadership role is significant. Since in such constellations it is required to create suitable processes in order to meet different cultural expectations and perspectives (Schneider, Barsoux & Stahl 2014, p.208). There are mainly three different challenges which occur in general within multicultural teams (p.209).

1) Communication under difficult conditions, 2) A higher conflict potential and 3) High scope for interpretation in terms of aligning on own responsibilities.

Obviously, the named aspects lead to a more complex connection within a team. That is why the elements have the potential to lead to frustration and general discontent about the own person or team member (p.210).
5.1.3. Possible Chances of Multicultural Teams

“The benefit of multicultural teams and their inherent diversity has intuitive appeal” (McLeod & Lobel 2014 cited in Schneider, Barsoux & Stahl 2014, p.209). This quote examines the wide potential range of opportunities which may occur through multiculturalism. However, it is depending on the situation and its circumstances. There is no doubt that diversity leads to a wide field of perspectives and understandings as well as different chances which occur in terms of creating new approaches on an innovative basis. This allows thinking outside the box (p.209). In case the team members, including the team-leader, understood to value and highlight the differences between each other, the multicultural team is able to work way more effective than monocultural teams. In addition to this aspect, a general focus on similarities within a multicultural group can lead to get stuck at a certain point in terms of being innovative and creative since one remains behind because of unused multicultural resources (p.210).

5.2. Leading in a multicultural environment

In chapter 5.1 Leading Multicultural it was highlighted that leaders in cultural diverse environments are required to interpret and analyse the context of operation in terms of its different cultural aspects and the general institutional environment (p.187). Without no doubt this approach is easily described theoretically but essentially more crucial and challenging to implement practically which is why many companies are still searching for the suitable global leader. Schneider, Barsoux and Stahl (2014) consider different lessons which may lead to achieve the status of the suitable global leader. One aspect hereby is to create a balance between the personal, known culture and the new culture(s) which is/are implemented in different kinds within the organisation. The authors emphasising that the more a leader or
manager resists adapting to new cultural influences the more significant is the individual excessive demand to handle the unexpected situation (p.182). Furthermore, it remains to be questioned how much a global leader self is able to abandon in terms of the own cultural habits and instead to accept and adapt to new cultural views. According to Schneider, Barsoux and Stahl (2014, p.185) a lack of willingness to adapt could lead to an absolute dilemma and thus makes the leader failing within the global frame.

In addition to that, the authors indicate the process of cultural adjustment (p.183) as indispensable in terms of its supportive impact on finding the mentioned balance between the familiar culture and the new and partly unexpected one. Furthermore, it is about to become aware of warning signals in case the multicultural environment is threatening to fail. “The process of adjusting to a foreign culture is said to follow a U-curve comprising three main phases: an initial stage of elation and optimism (the honeymoon), soon followed by a period of irritability, frustration and confusion (the morning after) and then a gradual adjustment to the new environment (happily ever after)” (p.183). The more a potential global leader or manager is aware of the different steps and levels within the cultural adjustment process the higher the tolerance for all employees or multicultural teams which might struggle partially in terms of reaching given targets. A global leader may, according to Schneider, Barsoux and Stahl (2014), also see him- or herself as part of the cultural adjustment process and not only the own employees. The emerging insight hereby is that every leader, global leader, executive or manager reacts differently within environments of multiculturalism depending on own experiences, knowledge or just personal attitude (p.184). Thus, there is no doubt that all leaders consequently exert different styles of leadership in order to manage and lead within multicultural situations. Nevertheless, there are certain skills which potentially support a global leader in order to create successful working environments for him- or herself and the employees. As one of the most central aspects
the interpersonal skills are named by Schneider, Barsoux and Stahl (2014). Especially, since these abilities include the capacity to build up and potentially also retain relationships which leads to the fact that the global leader becomes involved into the corporate and social lifestyle. In addition to that, this process founds the basis to an exchange of information between leader and employee, as well as a simplified communication and especially the installing of trust (p.186) which is an indispensable factor in this context and relationship. Within the process of creating relationships the authors mention the time pressure within the competitive and fast-changing business world as a potential threat (p.187). That is why it is important that global leaders achieve time allowed in which they are able to focus concretely and specifically on individuals and the effective construction of relationships. Furthermore, the authors outline the aspect about knowledge of another language and previous international experience in terms of investigating in which way these elements support a global leader to succeed in a multicultural environment. However, the authors mention that without any doubt it can be helpful to be able to communicate in different languages. Nevertheless, this target may be hardly reachable. Instead, it is way more important to try: “...to develop a feel for what matters to others, picking up bits of conversational currency: local expressions, information and interests” (Schneider, Barsoux & Stahl 2014, p.187). On the other way around, it could lead to a huge damage in case the global leader refuses to speak other languages than the own mother tongue, since it represents some kind of disdain (p.187). The most important insight in accordance to the ability to speak foreign languages and previous international experience is named by a general interest in other cultures than the own one (p.187). Schneider, Barsoux and Stahl (2014) emphasise that global adjustment evolves as soon as one shows interest and a willingness to get new insights and especially tolerate the occurrence of cultures in its various ways. Additionally, the authors summarise that former international
experiences are not simply transferred into a new environment (p.188) and new cultural facets which is why companies cannot take it for granted that leaders from a global background necessarily are able to represent a global leader. Finally, the authors highlight that besides the already mentioned aspects especially the factors of intercultural competence and cultural intelligence play a significant role in terms of leading globally. That is why the following chapter outlines the ideas and crucial responsibilities of the two named elements.

5.2.1. Intercultural Competence and Cultural Intelligence

Cultural intelligence is: “a person´s capability to adapt as s/he interacts with others from different cultural regions” (Early 2002 cited in Schneider, Barsoux & Stahl 2014, p.189). Hereby it is important to mention that the authors found that people who do not feel completely connected and integrated in their own culture tend to adapt to new cultural surroundings more easily than others. At this point, it is mainly important to question how cultural intelligence can be assessed and gained. Schneider, Barsoux and Stahl (2014, p.189) emphasise three elements which are closely tied to people who own a high level of cultural intelligence, as there are: “cognitive skills that allow him/her to function effectively in a new culture”, “motivational drive to adapt to a different cultural environment”; and “the ability to engage in adaptive behaviours” (p.189). Consequently, a high level of cultural intelligence can be described as a significant element and tool in terms of gaining and developing cross-cultural knowledge and understanding. Thus, there is no doubt that cultural intelligence is desirable to achieve for global leaders in order to adapt their own individuality to new cultural surroundings, but also to lead others to adjust. According to Flaherty cultural intelligence is: “...a key predictor of integration in multinational teams (2008 cited in Zander, Mockatis & Butler 2012, p.596), but also of international assignment effectiveness (Kim, Kirkman & Chen 2008 cited in Zander, Mockatis & Butler 2012, p.596) expatriate adjustment and performance (Shaffer &
Miller 2008 cited in Zander, Mockatis & Butler 2012, p.596), and task performance in culturally diverse settings (Ang et al. 2007 cited in Zander, Mockatis & Butler 2012, p.596). These aspects create the groundwork in order to lead successfully in a multicultural context, as well as a global leader (Zander, Mockatis & Butler 2012, p.596). Along with cultural intelligence goes according to Schneider, Barsoux and Stahl (2014) the intercultural competence which centrepiece is described as: “...the ability to see and understand the world differently than one has been conditioned to see and understand it” (p.190) and named the global mindset. Corresponding to Zander, Mockatis and Butler (2012), the global mindset creates the little extra which can lead to a competitive advantage of a company and thus must be understood as a very valuable asset. It is able to obtain a competitive advantage because of: “...its dual focus on cultural competence and strategic organisational impact” (p.596). In relation to global leadership the capability of taking advantage of the individual global mindset can consequently support the global leadership activities within a multicultural context. Since it does not only focus on understanding the cultural differences and the subsequent adaption to it, but also on their potential chances and the question how to implement those into the strategic organisational direction. The higher the leader’s level of global mindset, the higher the possible success regarding the leadership of multiculturalism in companies and the relation to the organisational targets. According to Schneider, Barsoux and Stahl (2014, p.190) global mindset consists of two key elements – cognitive complexity and cosmopolitanism. Whereby cognitive complexity means that one has the ability to interpret situations in ambiguous ways. Furthermore, to tolerate the state of ambiguity and in terms of being involved in a decision-making process one is able to weigh up alternatives and interpretations and to include their understandings into the final decision (p.190). Considering the cognitive complexity in terms of global leadership it plays a significant role with regard to create a balance between tolerating differences on
one side and bringing the integration process forward. Whereas cosmopolitan is described by Schneider, Barsoux and Stahl (2014, p.190) as the general interest in other existing cultures and habits and further the constant will to widen the own knowledge through new insights from different perceptions. The described key elements which create the global mindset can be, as mentioned, of enormous worth for leaders in a multicultural context. The main reason for this assumption is that it: “…simultaneously balance the often contradictory demands of global integration and local responsiveness that characterise today’s multinational corporations” (p.190). Global mindset allows a leader to answer the demands of differentiation and tolerance on one side and concurrently it grants to fulfil national targets which are detached of the multicultural context.

The above outlined aspects clarify the importance of global competencies for organisations nowadays. That is why international leadership development represents a central role within this context. Hereby it needs to be stated that leaders can hardly be taught to become a global leader within leadership courses (p.197). Instead, it turned out that international experiences, as working in global teams or shift the job position in an international context have the potential to pay out successfully.

5.2.2. Development of a global mindset

After considering the important role of intercultural competence and cultural intelligence as well as the global mindset, it might be valuable to investigate how to develop a global mindset as a leader. In order to find out which elements are necessary to perform, the following qualitative research conducted by Cseh, Davis and Khilji (2013) will be reported in terms of its respective results concerning the development of a global mindset for leaders. Crucial for the findings of the study is the Global Leadership Mindset model:
The model consists of the following three elements: “Orientation: which is a way of being that includes elements of openness, collaboration, awareness, mindfulness, appreciation, flexibility and cosmopolitanism”; “Knowledge: defined as a cognitive structure consisting of sense-making, systems-thinking, integration, selection, analysis, imagination, reasoning, intuition, perception and judgement”; “Behaviour: An enactment of orientation and knowledge, which includes a propensity to engage, be curious, have the ability to build connections, demonstrate global business savvy, exhibit cultural awareness and appreciation, balance tensions, evidence visioning, and cope with the speed of changing events and technologies” (Cseh, Davis & Khilji 2013, p.492). Hereby the learning element connects the different elements within the individual environment in which one the leader acts in. Combining all elements and its respective meanings together it creates the global leadership mindset of a leader within his or her personal environment.

Concerning the research results of the study it was found out that global leaders are more effective when they are embedded in a continuous learning process. Consequently, there is a self-reflection
process taking place in terms of different experiences within a global context and leads to an extension of the learning and knowledge frame (p.494). In addition to the continuous learning through doing process the authors furthermore state that the study result confirms that Human Resource Developer (HRD) are a further helpful aspect for leaders in a global context, for instance through cross-cultural training whereby: “these programs and activities have to be internalized through a self-reflective process that will allow the participants to make meaning of their learning” (p.494). To sum up the findings, basically the development of a global mindset is very dependent on the individual orientation, knowledge and behaviour of each leader. Nevertheless, it can be strengthened through the allowing of continuous experiences, potential mistakes and the subsequent reflection of it. Furthermore, additional support can be helpful, for instance offered by HRD within an organisation which necessarily has to be internalised in order to fit to the specific working environment.

5.3. Cultural ignorance

In the following chapter, it will be pointed out which consequences might evolve through the behaviour of cultural ignorance. Providing that multicultural teams have to collaborate internally but lacking a certain level of cultural tolerance and acceptance the achievement of assured targets can become very critical. It remains questionable which role cultural ignorance plays in this context. In general, it is important to find out as what ignorance in a cultural context must be understood as: “Ignorance is one of the greatest barriers to understanding between two people. If we do not understand each other, if we do not know the culture, the language, or the history of each other, we are unable to see each other as human beings with value and dignity” (Wantland 1975, p.1). The quote highlights that ignorance as such brings plenty of obstacles in terms of human communication and collaboration. It indicates that
people do not entirely understand each other and especially their beliefs, values and norms. Consequently, this can lead to a lack of mutual respect and tolerance which subsequently hinders the target of successful collaboration. There is no doubt that in terms of cross- and intercultural collaboration there are existing cultural differences between people which may consist of ambiguous beliefs and values because of potentially conflicting frames of references (p.2). To cope with these differences is more and more a crucial challenge nowadays and especially for team-members in multicultural teams and their respective leaders.

There are two main different ways in order to approach these differences, ambiguous beliefs and values. First, team-members accept and tolerate each other in order to achieve an even higher outcome due to mutual profit through new inputs out of other cultures. Or, second, the approach of the mutual cultural ignorance, the so-called agnotology, which may lead to dissatisfaction, non-effective collaboration, misunderstandings or in the worst case to complete isolation against other cultures. The term of agnotology is a quite newly-known and studied one. However, it currently spreads the world in terms of its strong connection to Brexit and other developments. The Stanford professor Robert N. Proctor defined it as: “culturally constructed ignorance, created ... to suppress the truth in a societally important issue” (Ritholtz, 2016)

Chapter five builds the fundamental basis between the introduction about culture and the respective findings which will be outlined in the following. Moreover, it highlights what challenges and opportunities leaders specifically are facing in multicultural environments and also how intercultural intelligence may be a supporting factor and cultural ignorance an obstacle in these contexts. To sum up chapter five, it creates a necessary theoretical connection to the findings in chapter six which have been found through seven conducted semi-structured interviews.
6. Findings

“Leadership is not about a title or a designation. It’s about impact, influence and inspiration. Impact involves getting results, influence is about spreading the passion you have for your work, and you have to inspire team-mates and customers”. (Robin S. Sharma, n.y.a. online)

The main target of this work is to outline the potential requirements on leadership to change and to adapt to new circumstances. Furthermore, the second aim of this research is to elaborate how to strengthen the individual leadership as such to act successfully in a multicultural environment. In order to react to the named issues, it is worthwhile to present respective challenges in a multicultural environment which might lead to the demand of a leadership-change. Thus, there have been seven interviews conducted with different interviewees facing individual multicultural environments within certain activities outlining their individual experiences. Hence, it is obvious that all following findings and claims cannot be perceived as the unique truth. Nevertheless, they allow us to assume that other interviewees would not have answered very differently and therefore all findings build a solid basis to create a guide for leaders and future-leaders within multicultural contexts. Based on all answers within the interviews we created different topics which we identified as being present in the majority of conducted interviews and further gathered all respective data from each interview subordinated to one topic. The following figure 8 illustrates our procedure.
Figure 6: Approach to analyse the interviews

As Figure 8 presents, all interviewees talk about different stories (s1, s2, s3...) which are very individual and not related to any other interviewee and the respective story. Nevertheless, all stories contain similarities and connections to each other. Based on existing similarities in the individual content, specific themes have been created in order to organise and categorise the raw data as such. Through the process of categorising, primal relations are created to each other. So, each theme from one to four (Culture, Challenges, Chances, Strategies and Extra) unites all respective understandings, extracted out of the interviewees’ stories.

In order to present all findings and interpretations as understandable and transparent as possible we display all results in different stages in which, according to our research, most leaders or future-leaders find themselves when talking about leading in a multicultural environment.
6.1. Cultural framework

All interviewees and leaders who are considered within this research project are somehow embedded in a specific cultural environment. That is why we found it essential to firstly point out a common understanding of what culture means to them. We are convinced that the personal interpretation of culture shapes how a leader acts within multicultural environments.

Some readers of the thesis will likely find their personal definition of culture within the described ones as well. Thus, they may feel personally deeper involved to the topic and thus to our suggestions what leadership might need to change in terms of adapting it to their leadership approach.

As noted elsewhere, the range of interviewee’s answers is very wide and spread into different topics. Notable are the same, very similar but also slightly different elements between the respondents when it comes to their first thoughts about culture. Figure 9 illustrates key words/themes which have been named. However, it constitutes the variety which people connect to culture. Figure 9 intentionally is created as halfway completed. The idea is to imply flexibility and individuality when it comes to a definition of culture. After interviewing seven different people we figured out that their understanding is based on the same idea, however it includes plenty different aspects. That is why we perceive culture as an element which should allow anyone to decide individually what it means and what it includes. Especially any reader of the thesis should feel encouraged to implement individual understandings.
Remarkable is that all respondents connect the aspect of culture to having a certain set of values. Sissy Viklund (2017), Maxmikael Wilde Björling (2017) and Mette Lindgren Helde (2017) furthermore indicate that the respective values which are connected to one’s individual culture direct the individual action which implicates that they tell us, as human beings what to do and how to do it. Maxmikael Wilde Björling (2017) adds in this context that it also tells people how to think. Basically, the individual set of values must consequently be seen as a pointer of direction. It symbolises the individual point of departure which leads to the conclusion that human beings can never be completely neutral and unaffected, they will always have a personal view on events, established on their own set of values which is based on the cultural origin. In this context, it must be highlighted that culture works as a guiding framework. It allows individuals to act in a certain way and to draw conclusions based on their individual frames of references.
In addition to that, all humans are influenced by a personal evaluation system in terms of perceiving and judging things as right or wrong based on the own cultural background and a respective set of values (Lindgren, 2017). Thus, we assume that people tend to reject certain things just because their own cultural origin taught them a different approach.

Closely connected to the set of values are different norms and social behaviours (Pesch 2017 & Lindgren Helde 2017). Danielle Pesch outlines that culture to her means: “A set of social behaviours that a group of people...can demonstrate”. This quote underlines that culture often is also understood to be practiced in groups or at least by more than one individual. Additionally, Mette Lindgren Helde (2017) defines culture as: “Practices in communities, meaning patterns of practices, meaning what you usually do in a community”. People belong to different communities in their lives, one community can be the sports-community, another one can include family-members, friends, colleagues etc. Mette Lindgren Helde emphasises that every individual is part of plenty different communities and adjusts the own behaviour based on the respective behaviour patterns which are exerted in each environment. Nevertheless, there are constantly remaining values concerning the worldview, religion, etc. which will not change although one acts in different communities.

The existence of different communities in which different cultures are executed leads to the emergence of cultural diversity which is understood as: “The variety of different cultures within a single society or geographical area” (Sullivan 2009, p.2) in the sense of having different behaviours concerning religion, beliefs and values (Pesch 2017). Why is cultural diversity interesting for this research? Because it is a pre-condition. “You cannot choose to be part of it” (Lindgren Helde, 2017). People may not like it, they may try to reject it and ignore it, nevertheless it is according to Mette Lindgren Helde (2017) part of every society and thus every human being is committed in cultural diversity. Regarding Danielle Pesch’s (2017) description
cultural diversity is even more present nowadays due to aspects as globalisation etc. which push the mixture of different cultures even more forward. Based on this assumption Danielle Pesch (2017) emphasises that: “you cannot stay in the same cultural environment” constantly. Her description goes along with Mette Lindgren Helde in the sense that cultural diversity is a condition and not avoidable.

All named aspects framing culture as such leave a lot of open space for individual understanding, input and experiences. In the context of defining culture and its outcomes all interviewees mentioned that especially the aspect of cultural diversity holds the potential for arising conflicts.

Considering Maxmikael Wilde Björling’s (2017) description that the cultural origin directs us in a way of teaching people what to do and what to think it simultaneously achieves the judgement or even rejection of other approaches. The individual evaluation system in every human being might be differently strong between people; nevertheless, it makes people affected in a certain way and potentially reserved against contrary values and norms.

Mette Lindgren Helde (2017) mentions certain cultural hotspots which even imply a higher potential of conflict. She specifically names sexuality, food and religion which partly make it impossible to find a common sense. For instance, circumcision as a religious habit in some countries of the world would most certainly never be accepted by any western-oriented person. Cultural hotspots basically imply various loaded topics which distinguish cultures and potentially lead to conflicts between them which arise in challenges as soon as those cultures interact with each other in any way.
The simple existence of various cultures in an environment, called multiculturalism, has potential for conflict. Naturally, the higher the level of interactions between cultures, the more increases the likelihood of conflict. Figure 11 shows the different concepts of culture, embedded in their respective conflict potential and their level of interaction between the different cultures.
Considering Figure 11: The higher the level of interaction between cultures so the higher the conflict potential. The reason for a higher conflict potential will be outlined in the following chapter in terms of the different potential challenges which may occur within cultural diverse environments.

6.2. Occurring Challenges through cultural diverse environments

Remarkable during the interview sessions was that all respondents categorised more or less three different categories of challenges they experienced or could imagine in a multicultural environment. Figure 12 names those.
Individuality: In all cultural diverse collaborations are different individuals united. Each multicultural team-work consists of different nationalities, cultures, expectations and beliefs. One challenge hereby is to identify the present cultures within those environments (Pesch 2017). The process of identifying the existence and approaches of different cultures is according to Sissy Viklund (2017): “a lifelong lesson”. It is an often-named challenge during the interviews to find out: “how people live and think in other cultures” (Viklund 2017). At the same time, it requires especially the will and curiosity (Lindgren Helde & Viklund 2017) to do so. However, the already mentioned cultural hotspots which imply very contradictory assumptions between cultures lead to the challenge that people reject to stimulate their own curiosity to get to know other cultures. Cultural hotspots are according to Mette Lindgren Helde main conditions which lead to conflicts between cultures. This understanding goes along with saying of Madeleine Modig & Maxmikael Wilde Björling (2017) who point out that challenges especially occur when people think differently and react to other cultural approaches in terms of their understanding and beliefs. The main conflict situation in this context is based in the fact that cultural diverse teams partly have to have a will of acceptance and tolerance for each other (Pesch 2017). Mrs. Pesch
presented an example in which she was personally involved. She referred to a business appointment with important Saudi-Arabian clients she had. When she met the clients, she faced the challenge of being avoided due to her being as a woman. The clients from Saudi-Arabia did not want to shake her hands. Consequently, she had the choice of either accepting the circumstance or go against in any way. She decided to collaborate and accept the situation in order to achieve success for the company. However, this behaviour requires strong self-confidence and will. Most certainly many people would have reacted differently and consequently threatened the profit for the company. The practical example constitutes the necessity to accept other culture which obviously arises as an enormous challenge in cultural diverse collaborations. Cyprien Kiffer (2017) outlines in this context that: “the way of interpretation, the way of negotiation with Taiwanese, with Chinese, with Indians and so on are totally different”. This is mainly due to contrasting environments where the people are coming from. To summarise what has been said, all respondents highlighted that individuality as such arises as cultural differences and triggers potentially various named challenges.

*Communication:* Omnipresent in all interviews is additionally the challenge of communication between cultures. The most obvious aspect in this context is without any doubt the language barrier. English is nowadays seen as the dominant global language; nevertheless, not all people speak English on a common level and feel secure to use it. In some countries of the world English is taught at school from the very beginning on, in other countries however, it is not. According to Maxmikael Wilde Björling (2017) there is besides an additional issue concerning the spoken language. Swedes, he outlines, would speak very good and fluent English. However, they would hate to do it in practice. In contrast, Swedes prefer to remain in their homogenous groups without leaving their comfort zone and keep talking Swedish. This behaviour most certainly goes along with the
general mentality in the country, since the people are majoritarian introverted.

In this context communication is also very much dependent on the level how it is performed. According to Sissy Viklund (2017), different cultures communicate either on a rather direct or on a rather indirect level. She points out that it can be challenging to collaborate with rather non-direct cultures as for instance the Asian one.

These aspects which are based on the element of individuality must also be considered when facing challenges of communication.

Madeleine Modig, Cyprien Kiffer, Danielle Pesch and Sofia Hult (2017) strongly emphasise the threat of miscommunication between cultures. Due to simple misunderstandings, various conflicts may occur.

Cyprien Kiffer (2017) mentions for instance that: “there are different ways of understanding the same thing between cultures” which is confirmed by Danielle Pesch (2017). It can be words or gestures – there are different habits and utilisation between cultures concerning the language. Assuming that every individual perceives the own choice of words and gestures as the right one, based on the cultural habits, it may be not the suitable one for others. As long as people are aware of these aspects within multicultural environments the collaboration is not threatened. However, considering a strong connection to the own cultural origin, people may not want to tolerate others. Beginning in the way how to introduce each other, ending with male/female communication – cultures have different approaches.

Figure 11: Challenges

Source: Created by the authors
Feelings: In general, challenges create certain feelings in the mind of humans. This, in turn may create new challenges considering the efficiency of multicultural collaboration.

Mette Lindgren Helde (2017) for instance points out that in cultural diverse environments one will never find routine, instead one experiences various surprises on a daily level. The environment, according to her, teaches constantly new insights and displays where you have been wrong or right in advance. The ongoing teaching must be liked by the receiver otherwise they may lead to rejection. The process of rejection is described by Maxmikael Wilde Björling (2017) in the way that people tend to stick to their own culture even more because of being insecure and afraid of new influences. This behaviour makes it almost impossible to include new ideas, approaches and innovation. That is why rejection is this context turns out as an important challenge for any kind of leader in the world to pay attention to.

If a leader anyway pushes new influences to resisting cultural groups, it may lead to the challenge of frustration. The individual group members feel overwhelmed by the requirements which are put on them and consequently will not work as effective and efficient as usual anymore (Kiffer 2017).

An additionally challenge can occur by an existing perceived inequality between people and the respective cultures (Hult 2017). Even though a certain culture may be in the minority of a multicultural environment it does not necessarily imply little importance.

6.3. Implementation of a strategy

We figured out after investigating the interviews that a leader either is able to aim for creating opportunities through the mere fact of instructing people to fulfil their respective tasks, which consequently requires a rather diminishing leadership-style, or a leader can take
advantage of certain behaviour patterns and strategies which we want to outline in the following chapter. The suggested strategies perceive cultural diversity and multicultural environments as a resource in order to create chances and opportunities. At the same time they analyse the occurring challenges carefully, but focus on the solution-finding to grasp chances.

Figure 14 represents in this context our understanding of the necessity to follow certain strategies as a leader.

Figure 12: Target-approaching through strategies

![Figure 12: Target-approaching through strategies](image)

Source: Created by the authors

The figure is supposed to display a metaphor we want to outline in this context. A leader is living with a group of people on the small island shown in the water and convinced the group that the absolute isolation on the island will never bring them any forward in terms of getting to know new opportunities and chances in their lives. Instead, the leader sees the beach in front of the picture as the goal to reach with the team in any way in order to develop their individual lives. The team suggests swimming over the sea to reach the beach. The leader objects that this might be the faster solution for the moment, but since they cannot be sure about which threats are based in the water
it could be more worthwhile to take more time to build a boat in order to cross the sea safely. The boat is figuratively supposed to symbolise the strategy a leader can take advantage of in order to reach certain goal. However, it might be partly quicker to avoid the time-consuming strategy planning, but that decision simultaneously leads to the fact that he or she might not be able to see the full extent of potential challenges and problems which thus could arise as a threat for the group, company or organisation. Strategies, as in this case the boat, however, enable the leader to involve the group and more carefully taken decision which consequently lead to a higher potential of reaching the aimed target.

6.3.1. Strategies to lead in cultural diverse environments

As pointed out in the chapter about occurring challenges a leader might have to face various potential problems within multicultural environments. However, all respondents within the seven conducted interviews emphasised the possible chances and opportunities through multicultural environments as well. After analysing the interviews, we got a wide range of insights concerning strategy-approaches for all kinds of leader.

The following figure shows our procedure concerning created strategies and the subsequent evolvement of chances and opportunities. The different stages from I to III are outlined detailed as one can read in the following chapters.
6.3.1.1. Step-back Analysis

First of all, and based on the assumption of occurring challenges in the context of multicultural environments, Mette Lindgren Helde and Danielle Pesch (2017) recommend leaders to react with a step-back analysis.

This approach makes sure that individuals achieve time to reflect on their personal expectations, furthermore that the inter-communication can be examined properly and that awoken emotions can calm down. The leader has the possibility in this context to reduce stress and further negative feelings which disturb the efficiency of the multicultural collaboration. Regarding Cyprien Kiffer’s (2017) description, people tend to reject any kind of advice and feedback in a situation of a cultural clash, nevertheless, they simply
need time to reflect on their own behaviour and based on that, reconsider their interpretation. He furthermore points out that rejection and reflection are often followed by adjustment. Main condition hereby is to allow people to take time for this process. Concerning this matter, we want to highlight the input which Danielle Pesch (2017) gave us. She perceives it as indispensable important as a leader to figure out the time ellipsis of people from different origins. Based on that they should individually receive as much time as they need to digest and accept information. Her main argument for this is her personal experience within multicultural collaborations in which she figured out that for instance Frenchs usually need more time to work with information than for instance Belgian do. In order to avoid threatening the achievement of targets, she suggests allowing certain cultures to take the time needed. This approach goes along with the explanation by Maxmikael Wilde Björling (2017) who outlines that all international students he ever taught had different ways to study. Individuality is a strength based on his understanding as long as a leader allows it to be lived.

That is why a conscious step back, initiated by the leader implies the permission to take time-off – once to consider individualities and the issue as such rather objectively and on the other hand that to reflect on it.

In addition to that, the leader becomes able to evaluate the situation more objectively. This is not only applicable for the leader self but also for everyone who is involved in a problem situation. People may gain an emotional distance from it and thus are able to judge the situation differently. All interviewees agree on the fact that the respective leader should in any case listen to what the participants have to say. Cyprien Kiffer (2017) for instance, outlines that the leader should be aware in this connection that people have different ways of interpreting happenings. Without any doubt, this is always the case but even more pronounced in multicultural environments.
In this context, it is indeed very important to ask for expectations of all people who are involved in a cultural problem in order to find out on which level they see themselves. Based on the findings the leader should try to create a common level and basis on which people could continue their collaboration (Lindgren Helde 2017). The common basis can be only created when the leader is willed to receive and give feedback (Kiffer 2017) since it displays an exchange of feelings and understandings and consequently solves problems already which grew through miscommunication. Furthermore, it ensures that people feel involved and wanted to actively participate in processes. This creates a feeling of equality between everyone in terms of giving every voice and input the same weighting. Sofia Hult (2017) states the aspect of an existing equality in multicultural environments as particularly important to create an atmosphere in which everyone has the same worth and gains the same attention.

6.3.1.2. Creating an Agenda

The second strategy we recommend, based on our findings in the interviews, is to gather all aspects which were outlined in the step-back analysis and to subsequently set an agenda and plan the future collaboration. Mette Lindgren Helde (2017) explicitly suggests constant *culture-meeting* as valuable in multicultural environments. In these meetings, the leader can specifically focus on asking for existing cultural issues or misunderstandings which requires that an environment is created in which people dare to speak up, dare to speak about their feelings, their fears and frustration. Based on the assumption of Maximikael Wilde Björling (2017), cultural differences found a resource for innovation. That is why it plays a significant role to reflect on cultural issues in order to use the differences afterwards as a resource and create a competitive advantage to homogenous groups. As soon as multicultural environments realise their individual potential through their differences a leader should encourage people further to be different
Hereby it is indispensable that the leader is open for new input and changes which means that one cannot stick to earlier made presumptions about other cultures, instead one should look open-minded at them and sharpen the own curiosity to gather more knowledge.

In this context, we assume that basic issue-meetings are most certainly only helpful when an issue already occurred. However, a cultural-meeting can additionally improve the understanding for each other and respectively the different individual cultures. For instance, could each meeting focus on certain cultural areas in which people introduce their habits, beliefs, concerns and worries to other cultures. Without any doubt does this procedure not necessarily lead to an acceptance of all cultural habits, but it may achieve a deeper understanding for people’s behaviour and thus increase the tolerance for each other. The implementation of cultural-meetings would additionally answer the demand of Mette Lindgren Helde to start building bridges between people. We figured throughout the analysis of the interviews out that the aspect of building connections between cultures is simpler than assumed. Looking at platforms as Instagram of Facebook make notable that various cultures, no matter from which continent of the world they are from, are able to laugh about the same prank-videos. This example simplifies the idea of outlining similarities in order to create bridges instead of gaps between cultures. A leader basically needs to focus on existing similarities among people to make them understand that they might not differ as much as expected from others.

6.3.1.3. Conditions

After pointing out two main strategies which a leader could conduct to create chances out of challenges, we found out through the investigation process of all interviews that there are certain personal abilities which set a condition to implement the strategies. So, there is the element of personality and the element of interconnection.
**Personality**

The interviewees all agree on certain important personality skills of a leader in multicultural environments. We see those skills as a main condition in order to implement the step-back analysis and the setting of an agenda, respectively cultural-meetings. One of the mostly named abilities is listening carefully to what people have to say. This aspect ensures that people feel taken seriously and the leader gets to know their perspectives properly. In addition to that, a leader should be willed to communicate constantly and on different levels. As mentioned before and based on the descriptions of Maxmikael Wilde Björling (2017) people from different cultures communicate in different ways and it is important to be aware of it as a leader. This understanding goes along with the experiences of Sissy Viklund (2017) which points out that cultures communicate on different levels in terms of varying between a rather direct- or non-direct communication. Furthermore, curiosity as highlighted before is indispensable within multicultural environments. It founds the basis of gathering new insights about other cultures and a better understanding for each other. A leader should always show curiosity since he or she is seen as a role model which might lead to the fact that the followers do the same. How to sharpen the own curiosity? Travel and gain experiences (Kiffer, Modig, Wilde Björling & Pesch 2017). Figure 15 represents the vicious circle in which travelling leads to gaining experiences and becoming a deeper understanding of other cultures as well as new insights so that the curiosity of the traveller will increase. We assume that curiosity works as an influencing factor. As soon it goes up the willingness to travel increases. Consequently, the process is endlessly continuable.
Leaders can learn to widen their perspectives through travelling and thus own and new experiences. Danielle Pesch suggests making the own effort of adapting to new cultures and environments by moving to another country for some time in order to gain these skills.

*Interconnection*

Under the assumption that a leader has the described personality skills, they need to be examined in order to be valuable. That is why we want to highlight in the following the importance of creating an interconnection to the respective followers in a multicultural environment so that the leader can put the personal skills into practice.

The most important aspect in this context is to constantly ask questions to all individuals in a multicultural environment in order to find out about their expectations, understandings and feelings (Viklund, Modig 2017). In addition to that it furthermore creates an atmosphere of an ongoing exchange, including feedback-situations and meetings.
In this context of constant communication, the leader can more easily make people aware of similarities between each other in order to support the connection instead of the gap (Lindgren Helde 2017). The aspect of interconnection is in the best case a constant happening between the leader on one side and the followers within the multicultural framework on the other side. We also evaluate it as the main condition to create a process from a multicultural environment in which cultures basically only exist next to each other, over the cross-cultural environment in which they at least interact with each other, to the aim-environment of interculturalism. Intercultural environments have been described by all interviews as the desired future state since it is the most effective (Pesch 2017) and the state development, innovation and movement happens (Lindgren Helde 2017). The leader has based on examples of the respondents indeed a huge influence when it comes to directing the process from multiculturalism to interculturalism. Considering President Trump as a leader of the USA he achieved to direct people back from inter/cross-culturalism to multiculturalism (Lindgren Helde, Wilde Björling 2017). A leader should be aware of his or her power in the sense of being able to direct this process constantly through behaviour patterns. In order to achieve the environment of interculturalism the interviewees see the personality skills as mentioned before as indispensable to have and to conduct in an environment of an ongoing interconnection.

6.3.1.4. Guide

Throughout the analysis of all data we are able to extract the most significant aspects as a multicultural leader outlined by the interviewees. In terms of answering the demand of the approximation with grounded theory the guide represents our findings of what a leader in multicultural contexts needs to have and to execute. Hereby it is important to highlight that we extract meaning from the interviews and combine the results of the analysis with our own
interpretation. The interviews specifically focussed on questions assuming that a leader perceives a multicultural context. Nevertheless, there are various more important aspects as a multicultural leader to have which are not driving from the idea of leading different cultures which will be not further outlined in this paper. As there are for instance, having integrity, being a risk-taker, having a vision and leading with passion (Bennis 2009).

**Be aware to outer changes (Flexible leadership style)**

**Flexibility**

As a leader, you are the one who has the overview about what is happening internally, between your followers, but you should also be aware of outer influences and changes which may affect your team. Get a pair of binoculars to see influences coming in advance in order to prepare your team.

The influence of globalisation for instance is total on cultural diversity and you should be aware of its potential influences on your followers. The more possible networks and connections between people from all over the world are created the higher the mixture of their individual cultural backgrounds for instance. As a leader, you simplify integration processes for new colleagues if you prepare your team in advance in terms of their cultural background, the reason for hiring them and highlighting how they will contribute to the organisational success. Our findings emphasise that if you want to be part of the competitive world, you have to take resources from international background (Wilde Björling 2017). The earlier you implement this way of thinking in your organisation the higher the potential outcome and success of it.

The world is changing continuously and your leadership has to adapt accordingly (Kiffer, Lindgren Helde, Viklund 2017). Hundreds of years ago globalisation was far away from our minds; nowadays it founds the basis for innovation and development. That is why we recommend
creating the individual leadership style flexible in order to achieve a circumstance of continuous possible adjustments.

**Humility**
Keep two things in mind. You do not know everything (Kiffer 2017). And you do not have to know everything. Instead, get experts on your side who may advice you. Besides, your followers can give you valuable feedback and different point of views. Be open-minded to these advices and feedbacks. It will increase your resources and angles.
At the same time, it does not only lead to advantages for you as a leader, but also for your followers. They will perceive you as being humble.
Humility ensures:
1. that you do not expect yourself to know everything
2. a better self-perception of your followers in terms of feeling more important and involved to give input and an individual view
3. an increasing quality of decisions
4. especially in multicultural environments an atmosphere in which every human being feels valuable and consequently dares to speak up (Pesch 2017) which is enormously important in order to take advantage of multicultural resources (Wilde Björling 2017).

**Self-Reflection**
The following aspect of self-reflection is a condition in order to be humble. As a leader in a multicultural environment it is very important to have a high level of self-reflection. It is not an ability you either have or you do not. It is rather an attitude and an aim which you can focus on.
Question your own understandings and habits in order to create open-mindedness for new and sometimes unknown input. In this context, it is necessary to appreciate and enjoy working with people, to show gratitude to them and listen to their stories (Pesch 2017). It
does not ask for much to increase your self-reflection, except the will to learn from others even though one can afterwards decide to do it the own way (Modig 2017). But self-criticism in this environment is very important since it enables you to start going new ways which may approach different cultures more effectively than the ones you were used to.

**Transparency (same direction, no surprises)**

Enclosing to entering new ways and approaches it is without any doubt indispensable to make sure that all followers are walking the same direction and on the same way. Communicate and discuss the way or strategy you want to walk on to ensure that everyone understands you. The more transparency in this context the better it is. In addition to that, it leads to an atmosphere in which nothing is hidden but instead every little aspect gains attention and is viewable. That is why: “cultures have to adapt to each other since there is no strong culture that others have to follow” (Wilde Björlin 2017). The adaption process begins in a multicultural environment and potentially leads to an intercultural environment in which all cultures interact and create their new culture all together. These valuable processes in which according to Maxmikael Wilde Björling successes grow can only evolve when the leader makes sure that all parts of an environment want to move in the same direction. Furthermore, you as a leader should always try to minimise the risk of occurring surprises in any way since they may create insecurity to people (Kiffer 2017). How can you achieve that?

Take decision democratically and present the results in a transparent context. Cyprien Kiffer (2017) outlines that you should ensure that the team is going with you while understanding and working with you. That subsequently creates trust between you and the followers which is a main condition for a successful interactive environment.
**Patience (step-by-step, patience about the integration process of people)**

Whichever step you take do not aim for too much in too little time. Indeed, Cyprien Kiffer presents that a leader in a multicultural environment should always follow a process. In the beginning, it is necessary to create understanding for each other and how they function. In the following a common setup can be developed in which a general agreement is found on how to proceed. In this context, Danielle Pesch (2017) emphasises that observing and helping all individuals to understand each other is one of the leader’s tasks. This you can only achieve when you invest as much patience as possible since all some cultures have very different point of departures in distinctive situations. A leader is asked at this point to create a common level on which everyone in the multicultural environment feels prepared to interact with other cultures in order to achieve certain targets.

**Personal profiles**

Another important aspect we want to highlight for leaders in multicultural contexts is the necessity to observe, the subsequent interpretation of it and finally, based on the findings, to create personal profiles.

All interviewees agree on the fact that different generations for instance have contradictive perspective towards cultural diversity and the general element of interacting with other cultures in various fields. Consequently, as a leader you should observe carefully in detailed what attitudes your followers present. Indeed, Mette Lindgren Helde (2017) sees young people in general as more relaxed in the context of cultural diversity. According to Sissy Viklund (2017) it is nowadays basically more accepted since people know more about each other. This is most certainly because those tend to become more and more alike all over the world anyway through the influences of social media platforms and the respective messages and demands which are spread
on those (Wilde Björling 2017). Young people between 20 and 30 years are getting used to study and live abroad to gather experiences and to communicate in English on Instagram to follow their role models of beauty and fashion. Older people however, often did not have these experiences and hence do not feel alike to people from other cultures as the younger ones do.

It is indispensable that you as a leader focus on these groups in your multicultural environment. Point out for yourself which character you perceive in which group and consequently adapt your leadership style to it. Most certainly the older ones with less global connected experiences need more patience, explanations and dedications of yours than the younger ones do. In addition to that you should also keep in mind that those followers of yours who already found a family and thus a settled lifestyle will struggle much more to move the environment or to travel for longer than those who are living independently on their own (Pesch 2017).

We recommend you to create personal profiles of your followers, especially in the context of cultural diversity so that you are forced to observe and consequently support the individual development opportunities.

**Role Model**

As a leader, you are a role model. Even though you may sometimes not perceive yourself in this role, people look up to you and you should be aware of it.

The main reason for that is naturally given the position you own. A leadership position allows you to lead a certain group of people. Consequently, you also influence plenty of lives (Pesch 2017). Indeed, Mette Lindgren Helde adds that leaders not only lead a certain task as such, but also the team and its relations and interconnections. Hence, any leader is also part of the team and connected to each follower in any way or another. Strongly depending on the trust which your followers have into you, they will furthermore do what you ask them
to, sometimes maybe even without any doubt. In accordance to Mette Lindgren Helde (2017) the newly elected American President Donald Trump is a suitable example in this context. She outlines that he literally displays how a leader can change cultural concepts easily and the mutual perception of each other. That is why you should always be aware of any valuation connected to cultures. You are often seen as a guide and your followers tend to run after you. As soon as you judge the Turkish culture as lazy for instance, the chance that your followers see any Turkish peer as lazy as well strongly increases. That is why we recommend, based on our findings through the research, to speak out carefully and at the same time never to judge any cultural habits since it may lead to a rejection of the followers towards certain cultures.

**Intercultural Competence / Exchange (ask questions, listen...)**

As a leader in a cultural diverse environment it is almost indispensable nowadays to furthermore be intercultural competent and to think with a global mind-set. Indeed, all interviewees agreed on this aspect. Nevertheless, it may sound challenging for you to read and at the same time not to know exactly how to become it. That is why we want to list up some of the most important insights we received through our research on how to become intercultural competent.

Mette Lindgren Helde (2017) emphasises the importance to continuously sharpen the own curiosity to handle new input. Indeed, this is according to her always important as a leader but especially as one in a cultural diverse environment. In addition to that, it helps to understand cultural diversity as a constant ongoing job which never allows everyday life (Wilde Björling 2017). Furthermore, try to increase the continuous exchange with your followers. This works most simplified through asking questions (Hult, Lindgren Helde, Pesch 2017) in order to check for expectations and hence the development of
a common level of understanding as the point of departure for further advancements.

Figure 15: Guide

Source: Created by the authors
6.4. Opportunities through cultural diverse environments

In the following chapter the potential chances which cultural diversity and multiculturalism could bring, will be pointed out. The findings of those are based on the research results on one hand, and on the other hand on their subsequent interpretation by us. It is important to mention that all chances and opportunities describe a possible outcome in case the leader takes advantage of the above outlined strategies. Occurring chances and opportunities strongly depend on various factors as for instance potentially existing challenges in a multicultural environment.

This chapter mainly aims to emphasise the positive outcome which cultural diverse teams, companies and organisation can take advantage of, due to various present cultures in their environment. Throughout the analysis of all information we gathered in the interview sessions, we noticed that the occurring chances and opportunities are basically divided by two main categories. The first category consists of social aspects, whereby the second one is significant due to organisational and efficiency-driven elements. That is why we want to point out the results in the following within the frame of the two characters: Human-Centered and Efficiency-Driven.

**Human-Centered.**

Leaders achieve a better understanding of how to handle people from different cultures in cultural diverse environments (Wilde Björling 2017) and furthermore learn to observe more carefully how people are behaving (Kiffer 2017). This consequently means that a leader who is or was already surrounded by different cultures, obviously also has a better understanding for respective individuals and their behaviours. This aspect plays a significant role in terms of communication, tolerance and mutual understanding in general. A leader, who does not have any understanding for a respective new culture which is
supposed to be integrated in a homogenous cultural group, will not be able to support the integration process. As soon as the leader however, refers back to former experiences in this context, he or she is able to approach cultural differences on another level. This level is firstly based on understanding and tolerance instead of rejection. Time by time this aspect leads to an integration process on one side and a personal development of the leader’s ability to handle people. Another aspect in this context is based on the fact that multicultural environments as such enable leaders, but also any other individual to understand how people from other cultures are thinking, acting and their way of prioritising (Wilde Björling 2017). One can state consequently that multicultural environments widen the own perspectives over time. Habits one never got in touch with before suddenly become part of the daily work-life. According to Cyprien Kiffer (2017) it also helps the leader to break the own limit and the own restrictedness which hence can lead to breaking the own culture and with it its norms and values. Considering these human-centered aspects in relation to the competitive and fast changing world nowadays, it brings various opportunities for each leader and other individual. The main reason for that is that one becomes able to adapt more easily to new circumstances and facts due to the ability of opening-up to new influences. A multicultural environment as such consequently plays a significant role when it comes to influencing people and widen their perspectives and views (Lindgren Helde 2017). An additional opportunity most interviewees see is the aspect of increasing the own emotional intelligence which goes along with the already mentioned elements. An ongoing observation of people and their behaviour patterns leads to a better emotional intelligence. The reason for that is projection, since a leader gains the ability to read people and consequently estimate their reactions. Naturally, projection and forecast minimise the risk for unexpected problems and set up the company or organisation better.
Especially the intercultural environment is indeed named as the main target for most global leaders by all interviewees. It requires a constant communication, interaction and connection between all cultures which leads to continuous exchange in the organisation or team. Mainly important herby is that it also creates a new culture. In this context, we see a high potential for companies since all individuals in an intercultural environment who created their own culture over time will feel closely connected to each other and their culture. At this point a leader can most certainly rely on a strong commitment of all participants. A stronger commitment can increase the efficiency and consequently also the proficiency which thus describes a valuable opportunity for leaders in an intercultural environment.

**Efficiency.**
As mentioned in the last paragraph, the concept of interculturalism can improve the efficiency of a company, organisation or team. In this section, we want to highlight the impacts of it and why a leader consequently can create opportunities out of it.

Interculturalism, according to Cyprien Kiffer (2017), changes everything all the time. Without no doubt, constant changes lead to an ongoing development and an avoidance of stagnation. Mette Lindgren Helde (2017) describes all people influenced by cultural diversity as more open to new impressions which naturally creates an atmosphere in the company or organisation which is very flexible and open-minded instead of closed and restricted. Business in cultural diverse environments cannot be done the same way any day which brings along a very adaptive attitude in terms of accepting new influences (Wilde Björling 2017).

The risk of stagnation in terms of implementing new ideas and input is minimised in the context of interculturalism. That is why competitors for instance have difficulties to calculate a company’s strategy for instance. At this point a valuable clear edge evolves in
comparison to all competitors. A competitor who for example consists of a very homogenous cultural group most certainly is not even able to understand the approach of a multicultural counterpart with its various internal influences. At the same time, it does not only bring a clear edge, but also constant innovation and development (Lindgren Helde 2017). The ideas coming from internal minds are most certainly very different. Combining most of them together can lead to ideas which never anyone had before. A leader in this environment consequently can calculate with creativity, innovation and modern spirit. In addition to that, a leader becomes the opportunity to create new insights based on newly added values and thus to push the movement forward (Pesch 2017).

Regarding Danielle Pesch’s and Sissy Viklund’s experiences, cultural diverse groups are in any way more effective than cultural homogenous groups. The reason for that is the added value based on different cultural understandings, values and norms. In addition to all statements about the improved efficiency through multicultural- or interculturalism it must be emphasised that cultural differences especially nowadays are more and more becoming a resource. A resource which is very valuable in a competitive and fast-changing world as pointed out before. However, cultural diversity asks for leadership closely oriented to the people instead of the task as such. The main advantage of cultural diversity connected with good leadership is that all cultures feel equally important and needed which obviously creates a solid basis for a healthy company culture and atmosphere.

Figure 18 represents these chances that leaders may obtain when working in a multicultural environment. Both characters the human-centered and the efficiency-driven are represented with a circle in which key words are written which have been outlined before. They stand for evolving opportunities. The circles are additionally displayed through arrows that represent the direction of their influence. Practically this mean: all opportunities
named in the social centred character make the team grow on social aspects, as widening the tolerance limit, the will to communicate etc. That is why the arrow is pointing upwards in this case.

On the other hand, the arrow is pointing to the right in the second character because all the aspects that working in a multicultural environment brings along can lead to an increased efficiency of the respective team, organisation or company. Due to avoided stagnation or general new insights, the efficiency of the work may be highly improved.

Figure 16: Occurring Chances

Source: Created by the authors

6.5. Conclusion of the analysis

After outlining all findings in the last chapters, we are subsequently able to answer the stated research issues. The 1st research issue focussed on changes which leadership needs to face in terms of adapting to new multicultural circumstances. Respectively the question, how to do that and how the role of leadership constantly
needs to be reinvented and reinterpreted? Throughout the analysis of all data we found out that leadership nowadays is embedded in a continuous fast-changing world in which less is forecastable. Considering the aspect of multiculturalism, we found out that the impact on leadership steadily increases due to an extensive meaning of globalisation. That is why we can firstly state that leadership faces various changes which also directly affect it. Based on all interviewees’ perception, leadership nowadays has to change on a continuous basis in terms of setting up flexible and adaptive to new cultural influences. The world is becoming more interactive and interconnected than ever before which leads to a cultural diversity in almost every part of each continent. Organisations or companies which so far tried to avoid new cultural influences may not survive any longer in terms of being not competitive anymore in comparison to those who take advantage of cultural differences as a resource. Cultural differences literally have to be understood as a resource nowadays which will be implemented more intensively in the future based on our research. That is why leadership has to open up concerning the integration on one hand but especially in terms of improving the connection to existing cultural homogenous groups. An increasing cultural diversity obviously leads to newly appearing habits, behaviour patterns, communications and expectations. Leadership is required at this point to emphasise the strengths which each culture brings along instead of highlighting differences. To sum up our research result, leadership works as a linkage between cultural homogenous groups, cultural diversity and its integration, the potential innovation and process. That is why we want to highlight strongly that leadership has to constantly reinterpret and reinvent the own role in the sense of questioning former processes and understandings in order to set up as flexible as possible to various named influences.

The 2nd research issue focussed on cultural competences of leaders and future-leaders in order to facilitate working and social corporate processes in multicultural environments. In order to point out
research results in this context we published a guide to direct leaders in the direction of implementing cultural competence in their multicultural environments on a daily basis. Without any doubt does the guide not necessarily lead to a cultural competence as such but it will remind leaders to important aspects which improve the mutual understanding and collaboration in cultural diverse environments. In the best case, it furthermore leads to the development of an intercultural environment in which all individual cultures create a new culture in collaboration to which one every individual agreed and feels thus committed to.

Regarding the approximation with Grounded Theory which we conducted in order to achieve research results, we want to emphasise at this point that we succeeded during the first round of interviews to gather valuable and meaningful data. Thus, we did not see the necessity to take advantage of the possibility which Grounded Theory allows, to conduct further interviews so that potential more meaningful information can be found to answer the respective research issues. We were able to point out various challenges, respective methods of solution to face those and finally to highlight potential chances.
7. Reflection

“Without reflection, we go blindly on our way, creating more unintended consequences, and failing to achieve anything useful”. (Margaret J. Wheatley, n.y.a. online)

In the following and final chapters of this thesis we will outline a post-perspective on this work. Beginning with an analysis of this work in terms of considering what could have been done differently and for which reason. Furthermore, further research possibilities will be outlined in the sense of pointing out in which way this work has been limited. In addition to that, points of departure for researchers who investigate on the same or a similar topic will be described.

7.1. Analysis of the work

The main reason for the choice of the title of this work is based in the fact that we, as the researcher are embedded in an intercultural environment. In the beginning of our studies in Sweden we were acting in a multicultural environment in which every individual was a little lost and alone. But after a short period already, mainly influenced through the intercultural program Leadership & Management in International Contexts and the head of it Philippe Daudi we became involved in a changing process. The process began in the context of multiculturalism, an environment in which the cultures did not interact with each other, to cross-culturalism in which we began to interact and finally to interculturalism, an environment in which we were interconnected with other cultures and created our own program culture. This process over time in which we have been involved in, impressed us and lead to the question if leadership in a classroom cannot be transferred to the business life in a company or organisation in order to answer the demand for a potential change of leadership in cultural diverse contexts.
Indeed, we did not only have positive experiences during our Master program in Kalmar. Instead, we faced various challenges which occurred throughout the frame of cultural diversity, different approaches and understandings in working groups. Considering in this context the increasing interconnection between people and cultures from all over the world it made us curious how a leader should lead influenced by those various factors and if he or she may have to change the leadership approach due to the cultural impacts. Subsequently, the choice of seven interview partners from Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Belgium and France allowed us to gain information out of very different perspectives and positions which made the research result meaningful for leaders in any kind of leading position. We gathered valuable data throughout the first interview session with each interviewee which consequently led to the fact that we did not have conduct a second interview session in order to gather sufficient data and answer the research issues in the context of the approximation with Grounded Theory. In general, we see the findings as very representative and meaningful. However, we perceived ourselves improving over the time in the sense of becoming more relaxed and professional within each interview. During the first interview for instance we felt the questioning as too structured and planned without any flexibility. That is why we would, in case of rewriting this work; begin to conduct an interview with an independent person to receive valuable feedback in advance in order to adjust certain questions.

7.2. Further research & limitations

Within the analysis of all gathered data we noticed that this work could consist of more pages than the requirements allow. The reason for that is that the research topic as such is a very wide one considering all influences it brings along. Multiculturalism contains various cultures. A culture however can furthermore consist of plenty different aspects, as the family
background, sports, interests, etc. That is why people from one country may have the same national culture, however they are member of many different cultural communities which we could not all investigate on within this work due to the space limit.

Another interesting topic for further research is the aspect about increased efficiency by reason of multicultural environments. Some interviewees emphasised that their experiences show that cultural diverse groups are in general more efficient and thus their results. Future researchers could investigate this statement more deeply in terms of outlining in which fields and on which conditions this might be the case and how efficiency is increased in these contexts.

Besides the already mentioned topics, the approach of taking the follower´s perspective could be valuable as well in terms of presenting more meaningful results. We investigated all challenges and chances out of the leader´s view, but on the other side, future researchers could also study the follower´s angle. A different chosen perspective might lead to other conclusions in terms of implementing leadership strategies.

Finally, another topic to investigate on is the question about differences between certain cultures as the Western-European, the Eastern-American, the Asian et cetera related to leadership styles. It would be interesting for any leader to get to know if there are certain leadership approaches which are rejected or appreciated by specific cultures. A study in this context would broaden the research results of this work enormously.

7.3. Personal comment on the research results

Without any doubt, it became obvious during the interview sessions that we interviewed people in multicultural environments did all appreciate working in such. Let it be supposed that, a leader does not appreciate the collaboration with other cultures in general it could lead to an obstruction of implementing the suggested strategies, as
well as adhering to the guide. However, we are convinced of the fact that cultural diversity will become part of any leadership and that some leaders just may have to experience this over a longer period. Based on Max De Pree’s (2004) understanding leadership in general is always learned over time. That is why, we are convinced of the fact that it may take time until leadership adapted to cultural diversity, but in any way or another it will. Especially since leaders will notice the importance of cultural differences as a valuable resource in a competitive world. Nevertheless, we want to emphasise in this chapter that an open-mindset towards cultural diversity will simplify the integration process and leadership in multicultural environments.

7.4. Personal insights

Reflecting on the research, our horizon widened in various ways. Perceiving the aspect of integration out of another perspective than it is usually communicated via media platforms, to get valuable insights into experiences of people who face multicultural environments now and then for several years and to consequently observe a process and similar understandings between interviewees widened our views enormously.

From time to time, during the interviews as such but especially during the analysis of those, we saw ourselves as future-leaders in cultural diverse environments. We do not only evaluate this work as an obligation during our studies but even more we see it as a first deeper insight into the leadership tasks and challenges which we might face over the long-term in our working lives. It demonstrates potential scenarios we may face during our careers and thus prepares us and our mindsets to it.
References


Bjerke, B 2016, Lecturer, Kalmar, Sweden.


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Appendix

Interview guideline

• Culture
  o How do you define culture?
  o Which are main aspects that differentiate cultures?
  o How do you evaluate the aspect of globalization in terms of its influence on cultural diversity?

• Multiculturalism
  o Your perception of a multicultural environment
  o For how long and in which way do you personally involved in a multicultural environment?
  o What is your motivation to be active in such an environment?

• Working/Leading within an environment of cultural diversity
  o How did you perceive working activities (for instance: in a team, as a leader, as an employee, etc.) within a cultural diverse environment?
  o Three different concepts:

  [Diagram showing three concepts: Multi-culturism, Cross-culturism, Inter-culturism]

  Which concept did or do you observe mostly within your involvement in multicultural environments? Please outline, why.
  o Did you observe any occurring challenges in terms of the collaboration between people of different cultures? Please explain how.
• Did you observe any occurring chances in terms of the collaboration between people of different cultures? Please explain how.

• Intercultural Competence
  o What does the ability of having intercultural competence mean to you?
  o Do you think you are intercultural competent?
  o Did you take advantage of it?
  o How would you describe the importance of developing cultural competences as a leader nowadays?

• Development of Leadership
  o Based on your experiences, does leadership nowadays need to change? In which way?
  o Are there any instruments (for instance: further education/knowledge, coaching etc.) which would potentially improve your leadership in a multicultural environment? If so, please outline them.