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UNESCO symposium
Cross Cultural Sustainability
Workshop Testimonials from the international MSc students

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Testimonials

Workshop 1

Symposium workshop: Intercultural Dialogue in the Mediterranean, by dr. Maria Lourdes Rubio Rico and Silvia Monserrate Gomez

The core message of the symposium workshop “Intercultural Dialogue in the Mediterranean,” revolved around the essentials for fostering effective communication. The workshop emphasized that a successful dialogue hinges on establishing clear mutual expectations. Key elements such as active listening, confidentiality, and a non-judgmental approach were highlighted as crucial for enhancing the quality of the dialogue.

A particularly engaging activity during the workshop involved everyone from our group selecting a card with an image that they felt represented themselves. Each participant then briefly presented their chosen image to the group. This exercise aimed to create a comfortable, trustworthy, and open atmosphere, allowing group members to share interesting personal insights and characteristics. Following this, we were asked to choose an image for the person sitting next to us based on our first impressions of each other. This activity elicited positive feedback and compliments, further fostering a pleasant and inclusive group dynamic.

These activities underscored the importance of creating a supportive environment where individuals feel valued and understood, which is essential for meaningful dialogue. The workshop then shifted to a broader discussion on interconnectedness, emphasizing that our actions and decisions impact others within our network. This interconnectedness means that creating a positive atmosphere in our interactions is vital, as it influences not only our immediate contacts but also the wider network.

I found the workshop very fun and successful, especially because, with a small group, we were able to delve quite deeply into the subject matter. It was beautiful and interesting to see how quickly we could create a pleasant and open setting with people we didn’t really know. This proved that, with the right approach, many barriers can be quickly overcome, and that an open and confidential atmosphere is essential for meaningful conversations. (8 Bre)

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The workshop I attended during the symposium was really enjoyable and exceeded my expectations in its educational value. I followed the workshop Intercultural Dialogue in the Mediterranean, which was facilitated by the UNESCO Chair at Rovira i Virgili University. The workshop included engaging activities which were both fun and eye-opening. One of the exercises involved describing ourselves through a picture that you found the most appealing, and the best fit for you as a person. The activity revealed a lot about ourselves and others in the group, fostering a deeper understanding and connection among

participants. The sense of trust within the group was established beforehand, which created a secure environment for open sharing. This was something I highly valued.

Another activity required us to describe our neighbor through one of the pictures. This exercise was very insightful, as it demonstrated how others perceive you, and the features they consider when forming an opinion. It was a valuable lesson in understanding different perspectives and the factors that influence our views of one another.

The workshop concluded with a focus on family connections, highlighting the generations and people who shape our identities. With a fun exercise, the connections came to life. We first used a woolen thread to illustrate the connections between different individuals, showing the web of relationships that form our social networks. These visual representations also demonstrated the impact of excluding someone from the network, or yourself, emphasizing the importance of inclusion. After we stood in a line, holding each other's shoulders, representing an entire generation.

Overall, I found the workshop an enriching experience. It provided practical insights into intercultural dialogue, emphasizing the importance of understanding, trust, and connection. The activities were not only enjoyable but also deeply meaningful, leaving a lasting impression on all participants. (34 Ho)

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The symposium workshop I attended, led by Dr. Maria Lourdes Rubio Rico and Sílvia Monserrate Gomez, was a unique exploration of intercultural dialogue in the Mediterranean. While I provided technical support and help to the speakers, I was also actively engaged as a participant. The workshop's central theme revolved around utilizing the spiritual dimension to promote peace education and construct narratives. This emphasis on spiritual dimensions set it apart from typical workshops. The primary objective was to cultivate a secure environment where individuals could collaborate by exploring their own origins as a basis for respecting others. The facilitators stressed the familiarity of the space, assuring participants that all expressions were welcome. The session started with an intriguing icebreaker: selecting a photograph from a table and using it to introduce oneself. Thereafter, participants chose another photo and presented the person seated to the right based solely on that image. This exercise illuminated the perspectives others hold of us through the subtle cues we provide about ourselves, which was very interesting. Another captivating activity involved passing a rope within a circle, accompanied by stating one's name. Eventually, the rope formed a complex spider web, illustrating how our actions resonate throughout our community. Sílvia explained that movement within the web symbolized the interconnectedness of our actions and their impacts on others. Witnessing this visualization was fascinating and set me to think. (60 Po)



Workshop 2

Navigating (Strategic) Paradoxes and Dilemmas, a Life Skill to handle persistent tensions in work and beyond, Subtitle: Paradoxes in the Business Environment: Branding Examples and Coping Strategies, by dr. Jonathan Schad & Prof.dr. Brian Tjemkes

Paradoxes are common in business environments and reflect the need for organizations to balance multiple needs and goals in the face of internal and external pressures. By exploring paradoxes in business environments, we can gain a greater understanding of how different brands respond to these paradoxes in their business models.

The paradox of short-term profits versus long-term growth is common in fast-growing companies such as Amazon. In the early and mid-term stages, Amazon often chose to sacrifice short-term profits by offering low-priced goods and free shipping to attract a large number of users. This strategy compressed profits in the short term, but greatly increased its user base and market share. At the same time, Amazon has invested heavily in areas such as logistics infrastructure and artificial intelligence to lay the groundwork for long-term future growth. Despite short-term profit constraints, Amazon ultimately achieved great long-term success by building a large ecosystem and diversifying its business model.

The paradox of global standardization versus local adaptation is particularly prevalent among multinational corporations. McDonald's ensures that customers enjoy a consistent dining experience no matter where in the world they are by standardizing its operational processes, menus, and service quality. At the same time, McDonald's also makes localized adjustments to suit the culture and tastes, for example, offering veggie burgers in India and teriyaki burgers in Japan. Through standardized operational processes and localized product adjustments, McDonald's has achieved successful expansion in the global market, meeting the dual needs of globalization and localization.

Google is a successful example of the paradox between employee benefits and cost control. Google is known for its superior employee benefits, including high salaries, flexible working hours, free meals, gyms and creative work environments, which have attracted and retained a large number of talented people. Despite the huge investment in employee benefits, Google maintains high operational efficiency and profitability through its highly automated business processes and strong technological innovation. Google has found a balance between high benefits and cost control by creating an efficient work environment and culture that maximizes employee productivity and innovation.

The paradox of environmental responsibility versus financial gain is becoming increasingly important in modern business, and Patagonia is an outstanding case study. Patagonia is committed to environmental protection, and its business model includes using sustainable materials, reducing its carbon footprint, and supporting environmental organizations. Despite the added costs of environmental initiatives, Patagonia has earned a loyal customer base and realized good brand reputation and financial returns by communicating its environmental values. By deeply rooting its environmental philosophy in the core of the brand, Patagonia has successfully turned environmental responsibility into economic benefits, demonstrating the compatibility of sustainability and business success.

These examples show how different brands deal with and cope with various paradoxes in their business models, finding the right balance to achieve success and sustainability. When facing these paradoxes, companies need to continuously adjust and optimize their operating models through flexible management strategies and innovative solutions. For example, Amazon has achieved a balance between short-term profit and long-term development through diversified investment and ecosystem building; McDonald's has successfully met cross-cultural challenges through a combination of global standardization and localization; Google has achieved a win-win situation between cost control and employee satisfaction through excellent employee benefits and efficient operations management; and Patagonia has successfully transformed its environmental responsibility into brand advantages and economic benefits through its strong commitment to environmental protection.

Through these cases, we can see that paradox is not only a challenge for enterprises, but also an important driving force for innovation and progress. When dealing with paradoxes, enterprises need not only strategic planning and management, but also in-depth adjustments in culture, structure and leadership to adapt to the changing market and environment. Through continuous learning and optimization, companies can find balance in a complex business environment and achieve long-term sustainability and competitive advantage. (36 Hu)

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In workshop 2, dr. Jonathan Schad and Prof. Dr. Brian Tjemkes explored how to deal with strategic paradoxes and dilemmas in work and life, emphasizing the importance of these competencies in the 21st century. They focus on how organizations can innovate and grow by dealing with paradoxes and conflicts. Traditional business strategies have tended to focus on economic performance at the expense of other vital factors such as corporate social responsibility, sustainability, and long-term innovation. Modern organizations must learn to balance profit and purpose, short-term and long-term, as well as continuous innovation and developing existing business models. In the seminar, PepsiCo's case study was used to demonstrate how companies can achieve their long-term goals without sacrificing short-term profits by identifying and managing these paradoxes.

The seminar, "Managing Strategic Paradoxes and Dilemmas," was presented by Dr. Jonathan Schad and Prof. Dr. Brian Tjemkes. The workshop will focus on identifying and addressing common strategic paradoxes in organizations, such as exploration and

exploitation, social responsibility, and economic performance. The case of Pepsico is discussed in the seminar. In the seminar, we discussed in groups the paradox faced by Pepsico's new Indian woman president. In the paradox of financial and social, the groups discussed how Pepsico solved the paradox of a beverage product facing a social quest for health already the company's finances. One of our groups argued that Pepsico should keep producing and selling its best-selling beverages because it is fundamental to its ability to make money. At the same time, a healthier range should be introduced in the same line of drinks, such as sugar-free drinks. This would ensure that the company would not be affected financially, and the consumers would be faced with more choices, which would increase product sales. In the following case study, we discuss how Pepsico solves the paradox of exploration and exploitation in addition to the first paradox. Exploration refers to the company's need to continuously innovate and develop new products and markets, while exploitation refers to optimizing and making the best use of existing resources and markets. Our group believes in dedicating some of its resources to innovative R&D to develop new health drinks and food products to meet the market's changing needs. While securing market share for existing best-selling products, we will gradually introduce innovative products that will be continuously improved and refined through market testing and consumer feedback. We are setting up a dedicated innovation team responsible for developing and marketing new products, working closely with existing business teams to ensure synergy between innovation and utilization. Using the case of Pepsico, the workshop highlighted three practical approaches to dealing with paradoxes: from conflict to compatibility to complementarity. The first approach is to realize the coexistence of need one and need two by identifying and resolving unproductive conflicts. The second approach allows the two needs to coexist and complement each other by finding compatibility. The third approach unlocks synergies between the two requirements by creating complementarities. The speakers also discussed dealing with these paradoxes over different time horizons, suggesting that companies take a long-term view to balance the conflict between short-term and long-term goals. In addition, the workshop explored the impact of culture on handling paradoxes, emphasizing that the meaning and handling of paradoxes may vary in different cultural contexts. Therefore, understanding and navigating these paradoxes requires both efforts at the strategic level and thoughtfulness and coordination at the cultural and organizational levels.

Through case studies and group discussions, I learned how to identify and deal with strategic paradoxes in complex business environments and apply this theoretical knowledge in practice. I understood how to find balance and solutions from different perspectives when facing seemingly opposing needs. I learned how to respond to the needs of the market and society while meeting financial goals by diversifying product lines and resource allocation. Through group discussions, I appreciated that the collision and integration of different perspectives is the key to finding the best solution. On the other hand, by attending this workshop, I learned much practical knowledge about identifying and dealing with complex paradoxes in organizations. First, I gained a deep understanding of the importance of an "ambivalent mindset," i.e., the ability to understand and respond to issues from multiple perspectives when faced with seemingly opposing demands. This made me realize that in my daily work, I cannot only focus on short-term economic benefits but also need to consider long-term innovation and sustainable development. Secondly, I learned how to deal with

paradoxes by recognizing conflicts, finding compatibility, and creating complementarities. These three approaches have provided concrete strategies to balance different needs in my practical work better. Finally, the workshop made me realize the impact of cultural context on paradox handling. People may understand and deal with problems differently in different cultures, thus requiring more flexibility and sensitivity when working in a cross-cultural environment. Overall, the workshop broadened my perspective and provided me with practical tools and methods that enable me to deal with complex issues more confidently and effectively. (59 Pe)

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The complexity of paradox theory and its application in organizational settings were the main topics of the workshop "Navigating (Strategic) Paradoxes and Dilemmas, a Life Skill to handle persistent tensions in work and beyond," which was given by Dr. Jonathan Schad and Prof. Dr. Brian Tjemkes. The main takeaway was the importance of understanding and navigating paradoxical conflicts.

The main topics that we discussed in the workshop were:

1. **Paradox theory:** During the workshop, the concept of paradox theory was presented. This theory emphasizes the simultaneous existence of elements that are incompatible but relate to each other. Although these paradoxes are unsolvable, they can be properly managed to maximize their potential.
2. **Typical responses to paradoxes:** Brian Tjemkes & Jonathan Schad gave examples of typical responses to paradoxes, including polarization, favoring one side over the other, and suppression. Instead of creating solutions, these answers frequently result in confrontations.
3. **Engaging paradoxes:** Here, I learned about the value of accepting and contextualizing paradoxes. Organizations can overcome conflict and discover synergies that improve overall performance by acknowledging the coexistence of competing needs. By using this strategy, the focus is shifted from conflict ($1+1=2$) and compatibility ($1+1=2$).

During the workshop, we formed groups and had two interaction sessions about a case study of PepsiCo, by the chairman and CEO Indra K Nooyi. It emphasized how the business handled the conflict between its financial success and its social obligation namely addressing obesity. "I didn't create Pepsi Cola. [...] I'm trying to take the products and make them healthier. And guess what they tell me? "Don't be Mother Teresa. Your job is to sell soda and chips." We then tried to brainstorm and solve the dilemma in teams before learning how Indra K Nooyi eventually did it by implementing strategies such as "Performance with Purpose," PepsiCo attempted to restructure its product line and decrease the promotion of unhealthy options which was a clear example of putting paradox theory into practice. (75 Su)

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During the navigating strategic paradoxes and dilemmas workshop we focused on a case from Pepsico. Before dive into the details of the case, Dr. Jonathan Scad mentioned how professionals typically think about strategy. Mostly there is a complexity between choosing a strategy focused on “customer oriented” or “beat the competition” and also simple success strategies like focusing on “scale of the company” or “acquire or be acquired” are increasingly challenged. Up until 10 years ago companies only had one goal which was economical performance. They focused on SWOT analysis, scenario analysis, etc. and implemented the plan continuously. In this workshop we focused on how companies go over strategic paradoxes or dilemmas. When we look at the Pepsico case, we saw that the new Pepsico CEO has difficulty selling soft drinks which are not healthy for people and might cause health issues in the long term. She said the product killed their most perpetual customers. The dilemma was as obesity was rising, selling their current product lines and at the same time financially making sure the company still doing well as board members highly prioritize the financial values. In groups we discussed how to solve this dilemma of Pepsico and shared our ideas with each other. It was definitely challenging to think of a solution for a global company in a short amount of time and what most of the people used solutions from today's world like sponsoring sports events as Redbull is doing currently. Brian Tjemkes mentioned that it is important to be able to acknowledge complex interdependence between these two paradoxes in order to solve the dilemma. What we currently see in today's world companies open unit compliance where they will have departments which will focus on these dilemmas separately. For example, these days many companies have a CRM department in order to implement sustainability, diversity and equality and so on. (77 Ta)

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The workshop hosted by Dr. Jonathan Schad and Prof. Dr. Brian Tjemkes tackled a critical yet under-addressed challenge in achieving cross-cultural sustainability: embracing and leveraging the inherent tensions within complex systems.

The core message of the workshop centered around the idea of paradox thinking as a strategic tool for navigating the intricate web of challenges facing organizations and societies today. Traditional approaches, the workshop argued, often advocate for clear-cut choices, forcing a trade-off between competing priorities. However, the workshop presenters emphasized that such binary thinking can lead to suboptimal outcomes in the long run.

The workshop highlighted the reality that strategy and organization are inherently riddled with paradoxes. Examples include balancing innovation for future growth while optimizing existing models, or considering both shareholder value and broader social responsibility. These seemingly contradictory forces are not roadblocks, but rather opportunities for synergy.

The key lies in navigating these paradoxes, rather than resolving them. This involves embracing the interdependence of seemingly opposing forces and fostering recurrent synergies between them. Schad and Tjemkes acknowledged the current lack of practical knowledge on how to implement this approach effectively. Challenges include shifting

mindsets within leadership and integrating paradox-aware practices into organizational structures and operations.

The workshop explored these complexities through two key themes:

- **Understanding Paradoxes:** This theme delved into the nature and origins of paradoxes, examining how internal and external pressures, broader systems, and interactions with others can create paradoxical situations. Additionally, the workshop explored how paradoxes manifest, their dynamics, and potential hierarchical relationships.
- **Approaches to Dealing with Paradoxes:** Here, the focus shifted to practical strategies for leveraging tensions. The workshop explored how to create agency and respond effectively, examining the interplay between structural, cultural, and leadership approaches. The possibility of collective "paradoxical frames" for managing tensions was also raised.

In conclusion, the workshop on navigating strategic paradoxes offered a fresh perspective on achieving cross-cultural sustainability. By moving beyond binary thinking and embracing the inherent tensions within complex systems, organizations and societies can unlock new possibilities for achieving long-term success in a world brimming with interconnected challenges. (84 Vi)



Workshop 3

VU cultural heritage since 1878; moral leadership and a sustainable mission in turbulent times, by Dr. Ab C. Flipse and Eline Bos, MSc

Core message: Exploring the VU's cultural heritage and moral leadership through object-based learning In the VU Cultural Heritage workshop I attended, the core message was two-fold. Firstly, by using a method called object-based learning, our workshop leader wanted us to engage with artworks, artifacts, archival materials, and digital representations to connect with history. Secondly, through the use of such objects, our workshop leaders told the story of the VU since its inception in 1880 and highlighted aspects of its moral beliefs and leadership.

The session began with the investigation of an artwork of the original VU building on Keizersgracht. Through this we learnt that the VU began as a 'free-from-the-state-and-church' Calvinist University with 5 students, 5 professors and 3 faculties and was founded by Abraham Kuyper on the basis of religious beliefs. After this, we explored the VU's history through a charity piggy-bank used by the female Calvinists to support the existence of a medical faculty. We learnt that the VU has throughout its history been supported through donations by both wealthy industrialists such as Willem Hovy, and individual contributors from the Calvinist faith.

We learnt more about the development of a science faculty at the VU and its prominent biologist Jan Lever through a model of shells used in Lever's teachings, and we listened to a recording of MLK's speech during his visit to the VU in the 1960s. We then reviewed another artwork which was an abstract depiction of the VU campus and its faculties. We learnt about the history of the VU locations from the original building on Keizersgracht, to many more buildings scattered throughout Amsterdam, to a centralized campus where the VU remains today. Finally, we learned more about the VU's cultural exchange with other nations through several items which were gifted to the VU by collaborators in for example Indonesia.

In summary, the workshop taught us about the history of VU through the use of object-based learning and provided us with a more nuanced view of the VU's cultural heritage and moral development. (4 Ben)

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I attended the "VU cultural heritage since 1878; moral leadership and a sustainable mission in turbulent times." by Dr. Ab C. Flipse and & Eline Bos MSc, learn about the experience of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU) when it was founded by Abraham Kuyper. VU always adheres to the principles of academic freedom and independence, ensuring that its research and teaching activities are not influenced by external pressures. This principle is essential for fostering innovation and independent thinking, fostering an environment conducive to academic exploration and breakthrough.

Through this lecture, I got to know Dr. Ab C. Flipse and Eline Bos, MSc, two people who have made significant contributions to VU and the academic community. Dr. Ab C. Flipse is a university historian at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU) and founding director of Geheugen van de VU. Geheugen van de VU is a project dedicated to the preservation and presentation of VU's historical and cultural heritage. Dr. Flipse's research focuses on the history of science and university history, with a particular focus on VU's historical development and its role in academic freedom, religious influence and social responsibility. Dr. Ab C. Flipse is well known in academia and has published several important papers on the history of science and the history of education. His work involves not only the study of historical events and people, but also the analysis of the dissemination of scientific knowledge and the role of universities in society. Through the Geheugen van de VU project, he introduced VU's rich historical and cultural heritage to a wider audience, promoting an understanding of the university's history and scientific development. Eline Bos holds a Master of Science degree and is the Curator of Academic Heritage at VU. She has extensive experience in the conservation and management of cultural heritage, focusing on the preservation and display of historical artefacts and archives in academic institutions. She is responsible for managing VU's special collections, ensuring that these important historical materials are properly preserved and effectively used. Ms. Bos is committed to making VU's cultural heritage known and appreciated by the public and academia through exhibitions and educational activities. She actively promotes the integration of cultural heritage into the University's educational and research programs so that students and researchers can better understand and utilize these resources. She has also taken on leadership roles in several cultural heritage conservation projects, advancing the field of heritage

management. Dr. Ab C. Flipse and Eline Bos, MSc, through their work at VU, not only preserve and showcase the university's cultural heritage, but also make it widely disseminated and recognized through various interactive and educational activities. Their efforts have ensured that VU's history and values will continue to play an important role in the future.

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam was founded by Abraham Kuiper. The core mission of the school is to conduct scientific research free from state intervention and with a focus on impact on society. This founding principle emphasizes academic freedom and the pursuit of knowledge in the service of social progress. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam always adheres to the principles of academic freedom and independence, ensuring that its research and teaching activities are not influenced by external pressures. This principle is essential for fostering innovation and independent thinking, fostering an environment conducive to academic exploration and breakthrough. VU's mission incorporates a strong sense of social responsibility and ethics. The school actively addresses social challenges through research and education, aiming to produce graduates who are not only professionally skilled but also ethically responsible and socially aware. This approach is consistent with the school's historical commitment to a positive impact on society. VU has integrated sustainability into its core mission, focusing on academic and social sustainability. The school promotes sustainable practices on campus and embodies the concept of sustainability in its research and educational programs. This commitment to sustainability reflects VU's broader goal of contributing to a more sustainable and equitable world. The lecture highlighted the importance of understanding and preserving VU's cultural heritage. Through access to historical objects and documents, participants gained insight into the school's rich history and the evolution of its mission. This practice has helped to reinforce the core values of academic freedom, social responsibility and sustainability that continue to guide Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam today.

Through lectures by Dr. Ab C. Flipse and Eline Bos, MSc, I learned a lot about the importance of preservation and presentation of academic heritage and how to spread this heritage through interactive and educational activities. Their work is not only the preservation of history, but also the inheritance and continuation of core values such as academic freedom, social responsibility and sustainable development. Through participating in this seminar, I also deeply realized the importance of academic freedom. VU's history demonstrates the value of conducting independent research without outside intervention. This freedom not only promotes academic innovation, but also provides a solid theoretical foundation for social development. VU's emphasis on social responsibility and ethical leadership made me realize that education and research are not just about acquiring knowledge, but also about contributing to the progress of society. The school's history and current projects show how to solve social problems through education and research, which is of great enlightening significance for my career development and social participation. The workshop demonstrated the unique value of cultural heritage in education through an interactive experience of history. Through this lecture, I have a deeper understanding of VU's history and culture. This kind of experiential learning enhanced my knowledge of history. In my career, I will also continue to focus on the preservation and dissemination of academic history and cultural heritage. This includes participating in projects such as Geheugen van de VU, which communicate the history and values of academic institutions to a wider audience through digitisation, exhibitions and educational activities. I

also hope to actively participate in the practice of cultural heritage protection and management, and provide better services and support for the academic community and society. (73 Son)

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I attended the symposium workshop 3, "VU Cultural Heritage Since 1878: Moral Leadership and a Sustainable Mission in Turbulent Times". It was an engaging and interactive session led by Dr. Ab C. Flipse and Eline Bos, into the history and evolution of Vrije Universiteit (VU). We had the opportunity to handle and guess some of the VU's historical artifacts.

One notable item we looked at was a container filled with small green piggy banks used by women's aid to raise funds for VU in its early years. The university did not receive government subsidies and relied entirely on donations. This piggy bank was part of the 'VU Plan 1937,' which aimed to establish a medical faculty. The women's fundraising efforts became a great success, with around 115,000 women involved around the 1960s. It was intriguing to learn how these women played a crucial role in financially sustaining the university during those times.

The history and future of the VU's campus were shown to us, particularly its development within the Zuidas area. It was interesting to see how the campus evolved over the years, incorporating facilities like Medicine. Sustainability is now a key principle in its future development. Dr. Flipse also emphasized that VU values a cohesive campus community, preferring a single location rather than being spread across the city.

The University Building at Keizersgracht 162 was also shown. This building was the heart of VU life until 1966, then moved to the new campus. Faculties such as Theology, Law and Arts, the university administration, and the university library were all in there. Now this building is an apartment.

Jakop Slegt's 1971 drawing, "University and Library A.D. 1971," depicting the VU campus was also shown in the session. Central to the drawing is the Main Building: drawn like an open book. To the right side is the library's book tower and the humanities faculty is on the left side. It includes symbols inspired by Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man and an eagle symbolizing knowledge. The surrounding landscape is filled with scientific instruments radio telescopes and satellites. On the very right the "Pro" and "Test" banners represent student protests of the time. (88 Za)



Workshop 4

Symposium workshop: Introduction to Futures Thinking with Causal Layered Analysis for Cross-Cultural Sustainability, by Christine Kavazanjian and Prof. dr. Christine Volkmann

The speech by Ferrier also aligned with the workshop I attended about future thinking with a Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) for cross-cultural sustainability. The workshop was given by Christine Kavazanjian and Christine Volkmann, and they let us think a lot about how we see the future and what we are scared of, or what we think could be improved in order take care of cross-cultural sustainability. The workshop provided a good insight in how we see the future through the lens of CLA, which works like a sort of iceberg. This analysis breaks down complex issues into four layers: litany, systems, worldview, and metaphors or myths.

The first layer, Litany, addresses the surface-level understanding of what is happening. In the context of cross-cultural sustainability, this involves recognizing the challenges and issues through data and observable facts. This level presents the official and generally accepted description of the issue or topic, emphasizing the immediate and often alarming symptoms that are easy to see and communicate. Moving to the Systems layer, the focus shifts to why these issues are happening. This level delves into the underlying social, economic, and political structures and policies that maintain these issues. For cross-cultural sustainability, it might explore how global economic systems prioritize profit over environmental and cultural considerations, or how political policies can either hinder or improve sustainable practices. The Worldview layer examines the deeper cultural assumptions and perspectives that enable structures and justifies behaviors. This involves questioning what is considered true within different cultural contexts. Recognizing these worldviews helps to understand the diverse motivations and values that drive human behavior and policy-making. Finally, the Metaphors or Myths layer explores the collective symbols and narratives that shape our collective consciousness. These are often expressed through art, stories, and symbols that influence how societies perceive and interact with the world. For cross-cultural sustainability, this involves rethinking our relationship with nature through new stories that emphasize interconnectedness rather than exploitation.

The probable future of cross-cultural sustainability, as discussed in the workshop, requires addressing all four layers. This Causal Layered Analysis provides a framework for analyzing and addressing complex global challenges, highlighting the importance of cultural sensitivity and future literacy in constructing sustainable solutions. (7 Bo)

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This workshop was intriguing and insightful in this age where future planning regarding crosscultural sustainability is empirical to future-proof the environment and society.

The iceberg analogy helped describe what an ideal future and most probable future would look like in 2050 in terms of cross-cultural sustainability. The iceberg analogy describes that only a fraction of the future is visible. Similar to an iceberg, one cannot see under the surface which is most of the iceberg (the future). Thus, we can only speculate about the future. However, this can be achieved by analyzing past data to conceptualize and predict the future. This iceberg analogy is key as it facilitated critical thinking and different perspectives which was extremely diverse as the workshop ranged from students to retired people from many different cultures.

To help visualize, conceptualize, and explain how to become future proof the causal layered analysis was used and is split into four steps: 3

Liany- What is currently happening and a description of the topic.

Systems- Different political, economic, and social systems that are underlined by the issue.

Worldview- The perspective that we should be solving issues with a worldwide view. However, issues need to be addressed locally and solved locally first for them to have a worldwide effect. This is apparent as no one culture is the same and in order to be successful in the future one must be open to every type of culture. For example, practices in highly collective Japanese cultures may not be successful in individualistic European cultures.

Metaphors or myths- Using images and analogies such as social narratives collectively to symbolize something and express it through art and stories.

The workshop tasked us with coming up with the most probable future of cross-cultural sustainability. We concluded that the current world is trapped in fear of the unknown regarding AI. For society to become a success one must be better and smarter than AI as AI is overpowering society and becoming more of an influence on everyone's lives and jobs. This will cause massive inequalities that will be hard to rectify globally as AI is having an increased influence on Western society and is not very diverse as it creates a larger gap between the developing world and the rest.

With the growing need to create a future-proof world with many unanswered questions, it is difficult to have an equal world in the growing age of AI. (10 Car)

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Reflecting on the recent workshop I attended, it offered a profound exploration into the application of foresight tools in our unpredictable world. The session began slightly behind

schedule due to unforeseen circumstances, but Christine and Christine adeptly adjusted, demonstrating the flexibility they emphasized throughout the event.

The workshop commenced with an introduction to the VUCA framework—Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity—underscoring the unpredictable nature of our global environment. This set the stage for understanding why traditional planning methods fall short in such a context. They then introduced us to the Causal Layered Analysis (CLA), a powerful sensemaking tool designed to delve deeper into understanding and predicting future scenarios. The focus was on envisioning the future 25 years ahead, specifically through the lens of cross-cultural sustainability.

Participants were divided into five groups, each tasked with employing CLA to forecast and ideate desirable futures. In my group, the discussion quickly veered towards the rapid advancement of AI technologies and their potential societal impacts. We examined the current capabilities of AI and projected their future development, painting a scenario where AI could supplant many human roles, leading to significant societal shifts.

A particularly engaging debate ensued around a dystopian future dominated by a select few who can manipulate AI to their advantage, exacerbating societal inequalities. This led us to the critical conclusion that to avoid such outcomes, robust regulations must be established. These regulations should prevent AI systems from developing human-like characteristics, such as emotions and biases, which could further complicate ethical and societal dynamics.

Overall, the workshop was both enlightening and thought-provoking. The hands-on experience with CLA not only deepened our understanding of the tool but also fostered a collaborative spirit crucial for addressing the complex challenges of our time. (15 Dia)

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The symposium workshop on Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) provided an immersive experience in exploring the depths of complex issues through a multi-layered approach. CLA, developed by futurist Sohail Inayatullah, is a technique used to analyze the causes of problems at different levels: the litany (surface level), systemic causes, worldview/discourse, and myth/metaphor.

During the workshop, participants were divided into groups and tasked with dissecting a contemporary issue using CLA. Our group focused on the topic of climate change. At the litany level, we identified observable symptoms such as rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and melting ice caps. These are the immediate, often sensationalized aspects of climate change that dominate media headlines and public discourse.

Moving to the systemic causes, we examined underlying factors like industrial pollution, deforestation, and dependency on fossil fuels. This level required us to think about the economic, political, and social systems that perpetuate these environmental issues. We

discussed how policies favoring short-term economic gains over long-term environmental sustainability contribute significantly to the problem.

The worldview/discourse layer prompted us to consider dominant narratives and beliefs, such as consumerism and economic growth paradigms that perpetuate environmental degradation. We analyzed how the widespread belief in continuous economic growth often leads to overexploitation of natural resources. This layer helped us understand the broader ideological frameworks that justify and normalize harmful environmental practices.

The most profound layer, myth/metaphor, challenged us to uncover the deep-rooted stories and symbols that shape our understanding of climate change. We explored the metaphor of Earth as a fragile mother figure, evoking a sense of care and urgency to protect her. This layer revealed how cultural stories and symbols can drive both harmful and beneficial actions towards the environment.

The core message of the CLA workshop was the necessity of addressing problems at multiple layers to achieve sustainable solutions. It emphasized that superficial fixes at the litany level are insufficient without tackling the deeper systemic, discursive, and metaphorical dimensions. (33 Hoi)

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Christine Kavazanjian opened the workshop by introducing the topic of “Futures Thinking with Causal Layered Analyses for Cross Cultural Sustainability”, which are major global changes that will significantly impact the future. She emphasized the importance of understanding major global changes that will significantly impact the future and emphasized their interconnected nature. She introduced the concept of the iceberg model with its four phases of causal layered analysis. She showed an image of an iceberg to illustrate that much of the underlying factors and connections are not immediately visible, just like the larger part of an iceberg hidden beneath the surface. She then divided the class in five groups and explained that we should think critically about the topic and follow the causal layered analysis to delve deeper into the topic. She encouraged us to reflect on the sources of our projections about the future, consider what influences our thinking, and explore how our perspectives might differ from those of others.

Our group began by focusing on environmental challenges as a major aspect of sustainability, adopting a realistic and somewhat pessimistic outlook. We recognized that the climate crisis brings a variety of issues beyond environmental degradation, such as climate refugees, increased inequality, and landscape changes, which can polarize societies and heighten nationalism during crises. The discussion touched on the different stages of grief in relation to climate change, noting that society might currently be in denial, with some people acknowledging the problem while others do not see its impact on their lives. The group speculated that experiencing more severe consequences could lead to broader realization of the problem and proactive change. However, there was uncertainty about where society would be in 25 years, leaving the discussion open-ended.

After the discussion Christine gave every group the opportunity to share what they discussed. One group discussed the influences of AI and the development of technology in the future, while the other group talked about how equality will develop and how this should look like in the future. It was interesting to notice that every group came up with other mega trends that they thought should be discussed. The overarching purpose of the workshop, Christina explained, was to help participants understand the interconnectedness of global trends and help developing a positive outlook on the future. It helped us to critically reflect on the sources of influence and build resilience against future uncertainties. The workshop aimed to empower individuals and groups to prioritize and mobilize action, fostering a proactive approach to shaping the future. (64 Roe)



Workshop 5

Symposium workshop: Increase your cultural sensitivity in coaching, by Prof. dr. Yvonne Burger, Ghislaine Coenegracht, and Wilbert Verheijen

At the start of the session, we were asked to rate our cultural sensitivity on a scale from 1 to 6 without any background information. This task made me think about how I view cultural differences intuitively.

After our initial ratings, we delved into interesting discussions with other students. I found these conversations incredibly engaging as we shared our cross-cultural experiences and perspectives. It was fascinating to see how diverse our views were and how each of us understood cultural sensitivity differently.

The turning point of the workshop was when we were introduced to the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. This model illustrates a spectrum from ethnocentrism, seeing one's own culture as central, to ethnorelativism, recognizing all cultures as contextually relative. Reevaluating myself on this scale after gaining more insight, I was surprised to find my rating unchanged, sparking more reflection and conversation about our perceptions versus reality. I rated myself at 'acceptance' with a potential for 'adaptation', which means that I accept and embrace everyone's culture and in some cases even adapt to someone else's culture.

The workshop facilitator was excellent, creating a welcoming environment that fostered open discussions and learning. During the workshop, we also received five practical tips for us as future 2 team coaches/team managers, which I found very useful for my future interactions both professionally and personally.

Reflecting on this experience, I appreciated how the session challenged us and expanded my understanding of cultural dynamics. The combination of self-assessment, theoretical insights, and practical guidance provided a well-rounded approach to appreciating and navigating cultural differences more effectively. (12 Cha)

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Attending the "Increase Your Cultural Sensitivity in Coaching" workshop was an eye-opening experience that highlighted the intricate ways cultural differences can impact work settings. One of the primary discussions was about how these differences can lead to conflicts and difficulties among employees. Understanding and addressing these conflicts is crucial for creating a harmonious and productive work environment. A significant portion of the workshop focused on stereotypes in cultures. We delved into how these stereotypes can hinder effective communication and understanding. By breaking down these preconceived notions, we can better appreciate the unique cultural backgrounds each individual brings to the table. The workshop introduced us to the six stages of becoming culturally sensitive: Denial, Defense, Minimization, Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration. This progression provides a clear roadmap for enhancing our cultural sensitivity. Starting from denial, where cultural differences are ignored, to integration, where these differences are fully embraced and utilized, each stage represents a crucial step in the journey toward cultural competence.

We were also provided with five practical steps to become a culturally sensitive coach:

1-Underestimate your cultural sensitivity: It's essential to recognize that we may not be as culturally aware as we think, which encourages continuous learning and humility.

2-Forget stereotypes: Each coachee has a unique cultural profile. Approaching each individual without preconceived notions allows for more personalized and effective coaching.

3-Cultural experience as a team coach is useful, but not critical: While having cultural experience can be beneficial, it is not a necessity. What matters more is the willingness to learn and understand.

4-Develop cultural sensitivity through relationships: Building deep, meaningful relationships with people from different cultures is the best way to develop cultural sensitivity.

5-Think in terms of "cultural dilemmas": Transform cultural differences within a team into strengths by recognizing these dilemmas, discussing them openly, and working towards reconciliation. (14 Far)

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The workshop "Increase Your Cultural Sensitivity in Coaching," led by Prof. Dr. Yvonne Burger, Ghislaine Coenegracht, and Wilbert Verheijen, offered practical strategies for

enhancing cultural sensitivity in coaching. The session focused on understanding and navigating cultural differences to create a more inclusive and effective coaching environment.

One of the key takeaways was the idea of "underestimating your cultural sensitivity." This advice encourages coaches to remain humble and open-minded, always seeking to expand their cultural awareness. It serves as a reminder that there's always more to learn about different cultures.

Another important point was to "forget stereotypes because each coachee has a unique cultural profile." This emphasises the necessity of treating each individual as unique, rather than relying on broad generalisations. By doing so, coaches can build more personalised and respectful relationships, fostering trust and deeper understanding.

The workshop also addressed the role of cultural experience. While cultural experience is beneficial, it is not essential. The focus should be on developing cultural sensitivity through genuine interactions and continuous learning, allowing coaches to be more adaptable and responsive to the unique cultural backgrounds of their coaches.

Building deep relationships with people from other cultures was highlighted as the best way to develop cultural sensitivity. This strategy values meaningful connections over superficial interactions, enhancing empathy and effectiveness.

An innovative concept discussed was thinking in terms of "cultural dilemmas." The workshop suggested that coaches could transform cultural differences within a team into strengths by recognizing these dilemmas, bringing them into conversations, and working to reconcile them. This proactive approach helps create a collaborative environment where cultural diversity is utilised as a team asset.

In summary, the workshop provided valuable insights into increasing cultural sensitivity in coaching. By remaining open to learning, avoiding stereotypes, building deep relationships, and addressing cultural dilemmas, coaches can create a more inclusive and effective coaching practice. (69 She)

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One of the most thought-provoking points Ghislaine Coenegracht made was about the challenges of coaching people from certain cultures. She explained that individuals from Arab cultures often struggle with giving and receiving feedback due to a lack of directness in their communication. In contrast, people from Western cultures are generally more comfortable with being direct in their communication, and are therefore also more comfortable with giving and receiving feedback. This highlights why the concept of "coaching" originated in the United States, a country that has a culture where people are able to give and receive feedback.

Ghislaine also shared a memorable experience that resonated with me. She recounted a time when she had to coach a group of people from various countries, including some from

Europe and one from China. The Chinese participant, being used to a more introverted communication style, was often overshadowed by the more outspoken European participants. These examples underscored the importance of cultural sensitivity and made me more aware of how becoming attuned to other cultures can enhance cross-cultural interactions.

I also found a statement by Wilbert Verheijen, another leader of the workshop, about curiosity particularly interesting. He emphasized that you don't necessarily have to have visited many places in the world to be culturally sensitive. Curiosity is the key. As long as you are genuinely interested in other cultures and willing to learn from them, your cultural sensitivity can grow. This aligns with a TedTalk by Pellegrino Riccardi I watched recently, which also stressed the importance of curiosity in understanding different cultures.

The core message of this workshop for me was that true cultural sensitivity involves integrating other cultures into your own. I had always considered myself quite culturally sensitive because I am open to and accepting of other cultures. However, this workshop made me realize there is still much room for improvement in how I perceive and interact with different cultures. As Wilbert Verheijen pointed out: "I am not yet at the highest level of cultural sensitivity and may never reach it." This is an interesting thought and certainly something worth reflecting on. (70 Smu)

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The workshop I followed was about cultural sensitivity. We learned that we can over- and underestimate our cultural sensitivity. It is best to develop cultural sensitivity through building deep relationships with people from other cultures. We should transform cultural differences within a team into strengths by recognizing cultural dilemmas, bringing them into the conversation and then reconciling them. During the workshop we heard a lot of different examples on how cultures are similar and not so similar. We then had to discuss 1) how often do you engage with people from other cultures in private life? 2) what triggers you in these encounters? 3) when does your irritation start. I felt very culturally sensitive but then I became aware of 1) if do not often engage with people from other cultures in private life, 2) a trigger for me might be people from different cultures not communicating clearly (in my opinion of course). And 3) my irritation starts when I constantly have to ask if someone wants to say what they think, or if they want to speak louder. This showed me that I may be not as culturally sensitive as I thought. The person sitting next to me, with whom I had to discuss all the answers on the questions, was also less culturally sensitive as they perceived beforehand. This showed us that while still studying international business management we have a lot to learn. The workshop was interesting as we also learned about a lot of interesting examples on how to be more culturally sensitive. For example, keep in mind that different cultures talk in different ways. Latino's, for example, interrupt really fast as this is in their culture. While Chinese people are taking breaks in between conversations to show respect and to let the other person speak. When you have this information, you can use it to help others and to adapt yourself to the situation. (86 Wij)