JYU DISSERTATIONS 199

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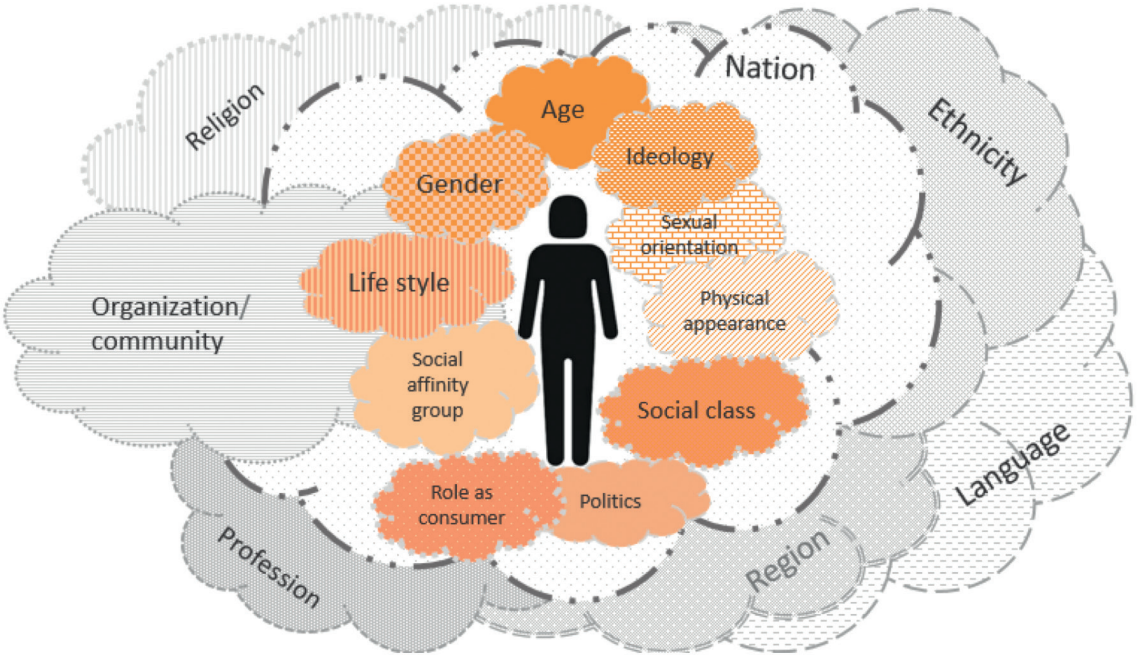
How service designers, professional literature and service users view the role of national, regional and ethnic cultures in services



UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

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ABSTRACT

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Societies and economies are increasingly based on services. Service design is a human centric and participatory approach to develop services into value creating service experiences. Services are predominantly based on human interaction, and since no human interaction takes place in a cultural vacuum the purpose of this study is to explore how culture is approached in service design. The focus is on large cultures such as national, regional or ethnic cultures and what kind of a role cultural factors are given during service design activities and interactions. Additionally, the study explores the service user perspective, i.e. how do they perceive cultural factors and backgrounds to matter in service situations in general.

The research joins a timely discussion on how culture is conceptualized and made relevant in professional contexts. The interdisciplinary study draws on the recent advances in service research and explores how the new service marketing perspectives emphasizing service stakeholders as joint value creators have contributed to service design in activities related to cultural issues.

The study follows a three-pronged methodological approach. First, professional service designers were thematically interviewed about their understanding of culture and how cultural issues are addressed during service design processes. Secondly, professional service design literature was analyzed to shed light on how cultural issues are approached in the professional service design discourse. While the results from the first two sub-studies indicated that cultures are addressed only in cursory ways during design processes, the third sub-study explored on service users' perceptions of cultures' role in service situations. These multiple interviewer, structured interviews imply that service users think in more varied ways about cultural issues than how the topic is discussed by service designers and in the domain's professional literature.

Service designers seem to approach culture with caution. Although claiming its relative importance they seem to lack ways to approach it. Thus, more knowledge is needed about how to suitably operationalize culture in various service design contexts. Furthermore, new models are needed to apply a dynamic and socio-constructionist understanding of intercultural communication in the design processes.

Keywords: Culture, intercultural communication, service design, service

TIIVISTELMÄ (ABSTRACT IN FINNISH)

Chydenius, Tarja
Kulttuuri palvelumuotoilussa
Kansallisten, alueellisten ja etnisten kulttuurien rooli palvelumuotoilussa, ammattikirjallisuudessa ja palveluissa käyttäjien näkökulmasta
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Yhteiskunnat ja taloudet perustuvat yhä enemmän palveluihin. Palvelumuotoilu on ihmiskeskeinen ja osallistava lähestymistapa palvelujen kehittämiseen ja arvoa tuottaviin palvelukokemuksiin. Palvelut pohjautuvat pitkälti inhimilliseen vuorovaikutukseen, joten ne eivät tapahdu kulttuurisessa tyhjiössä. Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena on tarkastella, miten kulttuuria huomioidaan palvelumuotoilussa. Tutkimus keskittyy suuriin kansallisiin, alueellisiin tai etnisiin kulttuureihin ja siihen, miten kulttuurisia tekijöitä huomioidaan palvelumuotoilun aikana. Lisäksi tutkimus selvittää palvelunkäyttäjien näkökulmaa eli sitä, miten käyttäjät arvioivat kulttuuristen tekijöiden vaikuttavan palvelutilanteisiin yleisesti.

Tutkimus osallistuu ajankohtaiseen keskusteluun kulttuurin käsitteestä ja sen relevantiksi tekemisestä. Tieteiden välisessä tutkimuksessa hyödynnetään viimeisintä palvelututkimusta ja palvelujen markkinoinnin uutta näkökulmaa, jossa korostuu palveluprosessin osallisten rooli yhteisinä arvonluojina. Tutkimus tarkastelee sitä, kuinka tämä ymmärrys heijastuu kulttuuristen tekijöiden huomioimiseen palvelumuotoilussa.

Aihetta lähestytään monimenetelmällisesti. Ensin palvelumuotoilijoita haastateltiin temaattisesti heidän kulttuurinäkemyksistään ja siitä, miten he huomioivat kulttuurisia tekijöitä muotoiluprosessin aikana. Seuraavaksi analysoitiin kulttuurin esiintymistä palvelumuotoilun ammattikirjallisuudessa. Koska kahden ensimmäisen osatutkimuksen tulokset osoittivat, että kulttuurisia tekijöitä huomioidaan palvelumuotoilussa vain pintapuolisesti, selvitettiin kolmannessa osatutkimuksessa palveluiden käyttäjien havaintoja kulttuurien merkityksestä palvelutilanteissa. Strukturoidut monihaastattelijahaastattelut viittaavat siihen, että palveluiden käyttäjät antavat kulttuurisille tekijöille paljon moninaisempia merkityksiä kuin mitä ilmenee palvelumuotoilijoiden tai heidän ammattikirjallisuutensa keskusteluista.

Palvelumuotoilijat näyttävät lähestyvän kulttuuria varovaisesti. Vaikka haastatellut palvelumuotoilijat tunnistivat kulttuurin suhteellisen merkityksen, heiltä näytti puuttuvan tapoja lähestyä sitä. Siksi tarvitaan lisätutkimusta siitä, miten kulttuuria voidaan operationalisoida eri palvelumuotoilukonteksteissa. Lisäksi tarvitaan uusia malleja, joiden avulla dynaamista, sosiokonstruktionistista kulttuurien välisen viestinnän ymmärrystä voidaan soveltaa palvelumuotoiluprosesseihin.

Asiasanat: kulttuuri, kulttuurien välinen viestintä, palvelumuotoilu, palvelu

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The past years have been full of reading, reflecting, writing and even more revising. I have been on a quest for truth but learned that in human sciences, there are many perspectives into truth and many versions of realities. Great service is about good choices based on knowledge and understanding about people's lives in local and global contexts. I am curious to see how this dissertation lives on in the future discussions by service designers and researchers of intercultural communication and other fields.

This kind of academic exploration can never be achieved alone. There are many people I would like to thank for their support. First of all, I am very grateful for my main supervisor Marko Siitonen and my secondary supervisor Marke (Malgorzata) Lahti for our countless and insightful discussions that have driven my thinking and writing. The seminar sessions in Jyväskylä were always inspiring, and I am grateful for the peer support provided by all the friendly participants.

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Most of all, I am thankful for my husband, children and parents for their patience and encouragement. My two most devoted companions during these laborious years were my lovely dogs who forced me to take energizing breaks away from the books and screens. Sadly, the older one did not last until the end of this long journey.

I feel privileged to have been able to get an excellent overview of service design, intercultural communication, service research, design studies, and science philosophy and methodology. I have learned a lot also about myself and know that all this learning will go on. The most illustrative for my long slope of enlightenment is the classic quote by Aristotle: "The more you know, the more you realize you don't know."

Veikkola, February 12, 2020
Tarja Chydenius

FIGURES

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1 INTRODUCTION

Services already comprise a major part (over 60 %) of total gross value added in most developed countries (OECD 2017). Services are also increasingly intercultural due to internationalization, liberalization of trade and digitalization of private and public services. New kinds of service concepts are quickly copied and implemented across nations. Simultaneously, local customers and service users are becoming more diverse and international. Along these trends, interesting counterforces to globalization are gaining footholds, such as initiatives or political movements demanding increasing consideration of national and local cultures, requiring regional independence, calling for less dependence on multinational alliances such as the European Union, or new kinds of patriotic and populist actions in protection of national trade and values perceived as shared within these large groups of people.

Simultaneously, service users (customers, consumers, citizens, business clients) have higher demands for their services than previous generations, and many are looking for more personalized or higher quality services than the "you get what you are given" mass service offerings. Consequently, attention on customer-centricity has also increased substantially in recent service research and practical service development (Gummesson 2008; Korhonen 2016).

The growing global importance of services calls for a deeper understanding of the behavior of service users and the value creation processes often rooted in the prevailing cultural environments and use contexts. As services are provided, co-produced and increasingly co-designed, and value is co-created (Vargo & Lusch 2006; Sanders & Stappers 2008; Ojasalo 2010) by individuals and organizations in a rapidly changing global context, the role of culture within services calls for further research (Ostrom, Parasuraman, Bowen, Patricio & Voss 2015).

Culture is an integral part of human behavior. Negotiation of (cultural) identities, shared values and behavioral preferences are inseparable parts of human interaction (e.g. Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009; Taras, Kirkman & Steel 2010). Hence, the cultural contexts or cultural backgrounds of the involved service value chain stakeholders may affect the service. Numerous diverse people may be included as service developers or designers, suppliers, providers, enac-

tors or interactors in their roles in supporting the service processes or implementing the offerings, or as service users co-producing, purchasing, using and experiencing the service.

Culture is often taken for granted and not questioned. In services, culture seems to matter sometimes, but not always (e.g. Stauss & Mang 1999, 329). The objective of this study is to explore how culture(s) are approached during a service design process. The focus is on "large cultures" which refer to national, regional or ethnic phenomena (Holliday 1999). The key concepts of the study are elaborated in section 1.2.1.

The following few real-life anecdotes offer concrete examples how culture can be a significant factor in services, no matter whether it is a question of intercultural or even intracultural encounters. All these narratives illustrate that a cultural factor has an impact on the service experience. The consequences may be minor – for example a neutral observation that culture does play a role in a service situation – or a major one leading to a decision not to purchase the service again or to recommend it further.

A case of a Finnish service process, sent by a reader to the editor in Helsingin Sanomat 2017 (a major Finnish newspaper) in response to a precedent letter to the editor where someone had complained Finns not being polite enough to greet each other:

> *– – I have to say that I was downright thrilled to get Finnish service in one northern Helsinki car tire shop. – –. When I arrived at the mounting shop there were no other customers, only five men doing their tasks around the tire machines. I did not greet them, nor did they greet me. I lifted my tires and rims onto the floor of the hall and the men soon moved them next to the tire machines – without saying a word – and then started the mounting. It was self-evident that the [winter] tires needed to be mounted on the rims. I went to the office where I told the clerk what was being done to my tires on the other side of the wall and paid for the service. He did not greet me nor did I greet him.*
> *When I returned to the hall the workers were almost done with the mounting. After finishing they lifted the tires in the trunk of my car and I drove away. – –. For a foreigner this could be confusing and ridiculous but for us seven Finnish men this was a completely natural and neutral customer service situation where we all could be true Finns like we really are. – – (Ikonen 2017. Translation by the author.)*

A British woman sharing her personal prejudices about intercultural service expectations (at a Service Design conference 2013):

> *"We have a neighborhood restaurant which is run by Near Eastern immigrants. Even though it is located very close to my home I never used to visit it. It was not about my dislike of different ethnic flavors but rather about my suspicions that they do not follow the same hygiene standards or may not make a single Western woman feel welcome to dine alone. It was only when a friend told me that the res-*

> *taurant had a British (white) waitress attending to the guests. That was the decisive point for me to start going there. I am a bit ashamed to tell you this but mostly it had to do with my own insecurities of not "belonging" there. I discovered that the food is great and the service very warm and welcoming."*

A case of recreational services in Texas, USA, two signs displaying safety instructions for a roller coaster. The sign in English language is substantially bigger than the one containing information in Spanish:

> *"– – . San Antonio, one of the largest cities in the United States, is also a city in which the majority of people are of Latino, Hispanic, or Spanish –speaking heritage. So why is the warning sign in Spanish smaller than the one in English? – – Think about what message size conveys all by itself"*(Brummett 2010, 1).

Similar examples of intercultural (between people from different cultures, Gudykunst 2003) or intracultural (between people within a same cultural grouping) service experiences are countless. We all share them, and they may be based on real experiences, ignorance on cultural aspects, on common generalizations, stereotypes, and even prejudicial thinking. Besides negative connotations, cultural aspects in services may be neutral or contribute to many positive outcomes and experiences. For example, culturally influenced experiences are often appreciated when traveling and consuming touristic services. In these kinds of service fields, cultural diversity is sought after to experience local and often very different and exciting local practices, ways of living, tastes, or artifacts connected with the services. In local, daily service situations or while purchasing digital services online, one might encounter factors or behavior that derive their justification from the cultural environment or backgrounds of the stakeholders. Scholars (e.g. Stauss & Mang 1999; Weiermair 2000) have pointed out that customers are often willing to adjust their service expectations downward in intercultural service encounters. But while societies are becoming more and more diverse, counting on service users' patience is not an aspired solution.

Service experiences can depend on many cultural factors such as choice of language, communication styles, feelings of being excluded, disrespected, or anything similar where the cause of surprise, confusion or disappointment is related to the service stakeholders' differing cultural practices. Sometimes these cultural issues may even prevent the transaction or use of service. It is, therefore, worthwhile to explore how culture, as a whole, is taken into consideration while developing and designing services.

Services are always heterogenic and service users are usually willing to accept a certain degree of variation in service performance which is called the "zone of tolerance" (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler 2009, 80–87). This is the range between desired and adequate service where service users may not even pay attention to the service performance. The zone of tolerance is stretched or diminished due to a number of factors, one prominent one being the price. Other factors include personal needs, derived service expectations or personal service philosophies, temporary service intensifiers such as emergency situations, perceived service

alternatives, self-perceived service roles and situational factors. Culture may be one of these situational factors, and expectations for recognizing one's cultural identity (a self-conception derived from cultural socialization processes, Ting-Toomey & Chung 2012, 66) may be included in the personal needs. Similarly, service providers may believe that service users are willing to stretch their zone of tolerance in the lack of alternative services.

1.1 Background and societal context of the study

The need for research and knowledge focusing on services grows in parallel with societies gaining more and more of their wealth from services. In 2014, the global share of services of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) was 68.29 %, compared with 58.41 % in 1995 (World Bank 2017a). In some developed countries, the share of services is currently substantially higher: for example, in Finland the GDP share of services was 71 % in 2015 (World Bank 2017b). At the same time, the shares of GDP coming from industry and agriculture are rapidly decreasing. Similarly illustrative is that even traditional product-based industrial companies such as the Finnish elevator manufacturer Kone or power plant and motor manufacturer Wärtsilä are gaining around half of their income from services (53 % and 46 % respectively), and currently already more than half of their staff is employed in services (Kone 2017; Wärtsilä 2017).

With growing economic focus on services, the service environments are rapidly changing, too. Despite many geopolitical uncertainties, indicators of global growth and integration such as foreign direct investments, inbound tourism expenditure or net migration are rising (World Bank 2017c, 128–134). Difficulties in filling lower paid service jobs, aging populations and declining birth rates in many developed markets are adding pressure to increase work related immigration which increasingly lead into situations where service providers and service users do not share a common cultural background. Moreover, urbanization as a megatrend is characterized by people's desire to live close to relevant services. In many metropolitan areas around the globe, the background of the inhabitants is already very multicultural, and the trend seems to be continuing (van Hook & Lee 2017; Hiekkavuo 2017). All these societal factors call for more attention on the role of cultural factors in services.

These transformations mean that increasingly diverse service users are facing service providers with multiple cultural backgrounds, and that services are designed and justified from many ethical, political or cultural standpoints. Decisions about what kind of services are chosen as objects of service design, to whom they are targeted and who are involved, or how the service design activities are framed may be culturally motivated. In other words, service providers and designers construct services as their solution to what they see as problems and opportunities in the service worlds they participate in (Blomberg & Darrah 2015, 69). Along the distinct diversification of service user groups, a clear shift towards inclusiveness and a need for strategic diversity management can be observed, for

example, in public services and educational services (e.g. Acquah, Tandon & Lempinen 2015). Consequently, it is vital to learn more about cultural phenomena and their potential significance in services proactively. Culture may become relevant during any stage of a service process, including innovation, planning, development, execution, co-production and use.

Besides culturally diverse local contexts, international service trade is increasing (Toivonen, Patala, Lith, Tuominen & Smedlund 2009). The WTO (2012) has identified four different modes of international service supply: cross-border trade, consumption abroad, commercial presence, and presence in natural persons, many of them involving information technology. Based on these internationalization modes, Sampson and Money (2015) discovered that countries make different use of the modes depending on their cultural tendencies. This "can have major implications for predicting and promoting national competitiveness in different types of international services" (ibid. p. 642). Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Erez and Gibson (2005, 368) argue that instead of addressing whether or not culture makes a difference in international business and services, "it is more useful to address the issue of *how* and *when* it makes a difference".

With the help of global digital service networks and platforms, services now reach global audiences while localization to specific cultural contexts may be required. Goncu-Berk (2013, p. iv) states that designing for another culture is much more complex and "less intuitive and vulnerable to assumptive thinking", so standard local or domestic approaches may not suffice. How do service designers approach these issues? How are the global concepts unfolding and experienced locally? Getto and Sun (2017, 90) claim that local and global aspects are so intertwined that they cannot be separated.

The fact that services do not take place in a cultural vacuum has thus been recognized. A better understanding is needed of culture's role during the whole service process and of the service user's culture-relevant value creation (Strandvik & Heinonen 2015; Dennington 2017). In their wide two-phase data collection process investigating future service research areas Ostrom and al. (2015) identified 12 broad service research priorities. Three of them are of special interest for this dissertation: Leveraging Service Design; Understanding Value Creation; and Understanding Service in a Global Context. Among the last category are questions affecting all aspects of service design and delivery such as: How can services be designed for global delivery? How do cultural contexts impact on customers, employees and partners (ibid. p. 142)? These research priorities justify further the research questions of this dissertation.

This study focuses on service design which is a rapidly expanding practice for developing services co-creatively in order to meet service users' real needs (Yu & Sangiorgi 2018; Clatworthy 2011). Service design is based on a human-centered approach with capacity and methods to investigate and understand diverse people's experiences, interactions and practices as well as their values and dreams (e.g. Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011) – which all may vary depending on the cultural context. Service design provides an approach to uncover cultural realities, yet there is very little research conducted in this field.

1.2 Research objective

The rationale for this dissertation emanates from the interest to explore the role of culture in service design. A presumption was made that since service does not take place in cultural vacuums, different cultural realities (Holliday 2013) should be dealt with while designing for service. Cultures have been the object of inquiry in many related fields (see section 2.1) but seem to be lacking from the discourse of service design. The aim is to find out when, how and to what extent service designers and service users perceive factors related to culture(s) to matter during a service design process, if at all. Service design was chosen as a focus area as the emerging domain (Miettinen 2012) has adopted co-creative and holistic approaches for service development across different fields (Mager 2004; Wetter-Edman 2014). Service design is applied through participatory methods and draws on thoroughly understanding a service user's needs, thus making it possible to look at service users as whole cultural beings. Service design aims to enable the emergence of desirable service experiences which can materialize at any service touchpoint (contact points and situations between the service provider and the service user; Clatworthy 2011). Blomberg & Darrah (2015, 36) claim that in order to understand discourses about service, scholars should explore "the social context within which services make sense". Therefore, it is of great interest to find out how service designers see specifically large such as national, regional or ethnic cultures to be present and taken into consideration. Service designers engage themselves in human-involving activities such as co-design with service users and other stakeholders, conducting thorough user research and applying methodology such as ethnography (Miettinen & Koivisto 2009; Han 2010). Yet, culture seems to be seldom discussed in the context of service design (Dennington 2017; Manzini 2016). In order to fill this gap, the present study analyses how so called large cultures are conceptualized and how culture is perceived to matter during service design processes and in actual service situations.

The main research question of this dissertation is:
How are national, ethnic and regional cultures approached in service design?

In order to be able to answer to the research question it is split into more concrete and detailed sub-questions:

TABLE 1 Sub-questions for complementing the main research objective and sub-studies where the questions are dealt with

	Research questions	**Case studies**
R1	How do service designers speak about culture(s)?	1 (2)
R2	How do service designers speak about taking cultural factors into consideration during the design process?	1 (2)
R3	How is culture addressed in professional service design literature?	2
R4	How do service users characterize the role of culture in service situations?	3 (2)
R5	How is good service defined from a cultural point of view?	3 (2,1)

The emerging interrogation is explored in three separate sub-studies, each concentrating on a different set of sub-questions from various perspectives. The numbers in Table 1 represent the sub-studies which will contribute to the different research questions. Answers to some sub-questions are expected to be touched upon in more than just one sub-study, and the complementary cases are indicated in parenthesis in Table 1.

1.2.1 Definition of key concepts

The central concepts of this dissertation are culture, intercultural communication, service, and service design. The concepts are outlined below shortly and elaborated in more detail in section 2.

There are different understandings and approaches to the concept of culture (e.g. Holliday 2011, Sadri & Flammia 2011, Dahl 2014). Cultural meaning systems are displayed in elements such as language patterns, communication styles, values, attitudes, beliefs, customs and thought patterns that are characterized by shared habits and tendencies to act in certain ways (Barnett & Lee 2003, 260; Dahl 2016).The contemporary socio-constructionist approach considers cultures as dynamic, shared meaning systems, being constructed and becoming "real" in human interaction (Piller 2011; Ting-Toomey & Chung 2012; Dahl 2014). Yet, much of the culture-related research reviewed and discussed in this study is based on a descriptive, even essentializing cultural understanding (see Chapter 2). Indeed, partly due to the way earlier research has operationalized culture in the context of service and design related research, and partly due to the way culture is addressed in the empirical data, culture is operationalized in this study mostly from the viewpoint of so-called large cultures, i.e. as national, regional or ethnic groups as opposed to small cohesive groupings such as organizational or professional cultures (Holliday 1999).

Intercultural communication is a form of interaction where "humans negotiate meanings, identity, and relationships" (Baxter & Braithwaite 2008, 4). The interaction involves a communicative act (verbal or nonverbal) between actors representing different group identities. Services are based on interaction, and value co-creation is a function of interaction (Grönroos & Voima 2013, 133). Interaction in the context of service can be direct or indirect between two or more

actors (Grönroos & Gummerus 2014, 204). Direct interactions are two-way, dialogical processes. Indirect interaction is not limited to humans only but the actors can also be intelligent systems or products, enabled by human minds. Since service design processes and services themselves are based on diverse stakeholders' interactions, the role of understanding intercultural communication becomes crucial. The concept of intercultural communication refers here to people with different meaning systems in interaction (Piller 2011). Scollon, Scollon and Jones (2012, 8) characterize these systems as discourse systems consisting of different ideas and beliefs about the world, various conventional ways of treating other people, ways of communicating and methods of learning about other systems of communication.

The concepts of service (singular) and services (plural) reflect a paradigmatic shift in the recent service research (Vargo & Lusch 2004; Grönroos & Voima 2013). The singular form is significant in this research, indicating that service users are rendered service, i.e. being supported to get one or more jobs done (Bettencourt, Lusch & Vargo 2014, 44; Gummesson 2007). The plural form, on the other hand, refers to separate service offerings (Edvardsson, Gustafsson & Roos 2005; Gummesson 2007). The new "service logic" has transformed the role of a service provider from a value generator into a facilitator of a service user's own value creation processes (Grönroos 2008; 2011). Strandvik, Heinonen and Vollmer (2018) go on to argue that a service user's "value formation is in large part hidden for the service provider" and call for increased understanding of customer logics and contexts. The "customer dominant logic" (Heinonen & Strandvik 2015; Strandvik & Heinonen 2015) emphasizes the importance of understanding service users' lives and their value formation processes which may or may not be subject to cultural preferences and practices. This is pivotal for this research since service (being rendered service) may depend also on cultural factors. Grönroos (2011, 26–27) posits that "fundamentally, the customer is always the value creator" and a service provider can only support the value creation. These activities hardly take place in cultural vacuums. Moreover, Meroni & Sangiorgi (2011, 227) state that "services are no longer considered as a design object but as a 'mean' of supporting the emergence of a more collaborative and creative society and economy". This thinking highlights the large societal and cultural impact services may have.

Approaches to culture are studied here in the emerging field of service design. Service design (SD) is characterized by taking advantage of methods where existing or prospective service users and other stakeholders have the power to influence a service design process and its outcomes (Miettinen 2012, 7). Service design is a practical approach with the aim of ensuring desirable service experiences and innovating new service opportunities while creating value for both the service user and the provider organization (Mager 2009; Teixeira, Patrício, Nunes, Nóbrega, Fisk & Constantine. 2012; Foglieni, Villari & Maffei 2018). The participatory aspect and human-centricity as involving the whole range of human experience (Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011, 38) make the field of service design especially interesting from the culture-focused perspective of this dissertation. Many of the

SD research methods and co-creative activities are epistemologically constructionist, aiming at constructing and negotiating common meaning (often value) with relevant stakeholders. Thus, it is most interesting to explore whether the domain has adopted a postmodern understanding of culture highlighting cultures as fluid complexities with blurred boundaries; or whether the domain's professionals are leaning back to the functionalist, even positivist, approaches characterizing cultures as descriptive, self-sufficient social systems where an individual's behavior is defined by their cultures (Holliday 2011; Dahl 2014).

The increasing need in seeing service users as more diverse groups and as involving all facets and scales of their experiences reflects on the use of the term "service user". Depending on the role of the service user or on the scholarly context or the service sector, service users are denoted with many different terms: customers, consumers, citizens, beneficiaries, (b-to-b) clients, patients, users, end-users, users, actors etc. (McLaughlin 2009; Strandvik & Heinonen 2015). In the following, the term "service user" is preferred as a general term without links to specific service sectors, contexts or operating settings. The term "service user" stands for any person using, co-producing, or co-creating a service.

1.2.2 Scope and delimitations

The dissertation joins the discussion of improving service experiences and enabling human-centric services, taking an intercultural communication perspective. The research domain for this dissertation is service design. This implies that the notion of "service" is approached from a general viewpoint where service is considered as an output of the whole service provider organization (Edvardsson & al. 2005, 111). The focus on the singular form of the notion "service" means that the concept is considered as value experienced by the service user and emerging as a result of service co-production and value co-creation processes (Helkkula Kelleher & Pihlström 2012a; Grönroos 2011). This opposes the traditional notion of "services" (in plural) as separate deliverables equaling to service products (Edvardsson & al. 2005; Vargo & Lusch 2008). The adopted stance in this dissertation follows the recent paradigm shift to a service logic, in which service is seen as a way of thinking supporting profit-oriented goals (Grönroos 2006) (see section 2.1.). This new mindset of seeing *service* as experienced, rendered service makes different categories of *services* (cf. Grönroos 1990, 53–58), different service contexts and fields or traditional service industry related service typologies less relevant for this explorative study.

Similarly, the distinction between commercial, public or third sector services is irrelevant here. Nevertheless, it needs to be mentioned that prior culture-related service research has largely focused on the commercial service field (Grönroos 2016). A need for considering international or cultural aspects in public or third sector services has been much more recent. This evolution is reflected in this study as well.

The rationale of service design is in making service development more human-centric – in making it desirable from the service user perspective but also profitable for the provider organization (Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2015; Foglieni & al.

2018). However, the direct economic relationships and commercial concerns are not explored in this research. It goes without saying that no service is viable in the long run without being desirable, profitable and efficient.

Service design processes involve many stakeholders. The focus here is on the service designer who is typically contracted by a service provider organization (as an external or in-house designer) and subject to the provider guidance and criteria. In their roles as experts of service users' needs, service designers are sometimes referred to as advocates for the service users.

This research is not limited to any geographical area or to national boundaries. My aim is to explore how cultures are approached in services in general. Nevertheless, due to the local context of the dissertation writing, limited resources, availability of some research material or interviewees there is a slight emphasis on the Finnish service environment. Despite the aim towards cultural neutrality, it is unavoidable that my own cultural background has had some impact on the way this research is conducted and data interpreted.

The approach of culture in this dissertation focuses on how large cultures are addressed in service design and perceived to matter by designers and service users. The abstract and fluid concept of culture (see section 2.4) makes the definition of any culture or a person's cultural background challenging (cf. Hall & du Gay 1996; Scollon & al. 2012). Yet, the motivation to study cultural phenomena from the "large culture" perspective is grounded on the dominant large culture (often national culture) discourses of intercultural issues in every day talk but also in the service business area and design related research (section 2.1). Despite the criticized use of "country as proxy for culture" (Schaeffer & Riordan 2003, 175; Piller 2007) it is important to acknowledge that the popular statements about large cultures are socially and discursively constructed "realities" of culture for many people (Holliday 2013, 164; Piller 2011, 64–66). Thus, ignoring the discourse of national culture as a main type of large culture would not be pragmatic while also many legal, language, political and similar issues are linked to nation-states. It is especially these contested views on culture which justify the general large culture perspective in this study and make it interesting to observe how culture is approached in service design and perceived to matter in service situations.

Gustafsson et al. (2016, 13) posit that service research is complex and too wide to be studied from an intradisciplinary perspective and claim that it is by nature "an interdisciplinary domain apt for transdisciplinary contributions". The research at hand is interdisciplinary in that it links, blends and integrates (Thompson Klein 2017) knowledge from different scholarly fields (service research, design research and intercultural communication studies). Gustafsson et al. (2016, 10, 13) distinguish between multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research. Multidisciplinary research merely lends or borrows theory to or from another field to describe or explain phenomena while inter- and transdisciplinary theorizing are more advanced approaches. Interdisciplinary research is interactive, mutual theoretical development leading to revelatory advancements, and transdisciplinary research is more holistic contributing to a novel, coherent theoretical understanding "that is applicable across and beyond

preexisting theories in any single contributing discipline" (ibid. p. 12). Gustafsson et al. (2016) welcome new interdisciplinary studies to advance service research to help it strive to become first truly interdisciplinary and ultimately transdisciplinary. The interdisciplinary scope of this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

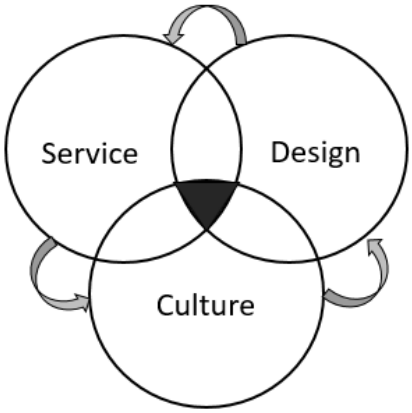


FIGURE 1 The scope and context of the dissertation

The research questions are connected and observed through the lens of design (using a designerly approach to developing services, Wetter-Edman 2014, 100), seeing service as a perspective of value creation (e.g. Edvardsson & al. 2005; Vargo & Lusch 2004) and culture, constructed by the people in interactions in a given local and social context (e.g. Scollon & al. 2011; Piller 2011; Dahl 2014). Manifold cultural factors may be present during a service design process as the stakeholders' activities and preferences may be motivated by their understanding of culturally valued practices or their own backgrounds. This makes this exploration a never ending and correspondingly impacting interdisciplinary loop.

1.3 Research approach

The following subsections provide a statement of the ontological and epistemological approaches of this dissertation.

1.3.1 My standing as a researcher

Cultures are created and confirmed as a result of human interaction (Scollon & al. 2012; Dahl 2014). This study follows the line of thought that sees intercultural communication as being characterized by individuals' differing cultural frames of references and meaning systems, which affect the way messages are communicated and filtered, and intended meanings are received. These frames of references are dynamic and creative, depending on the context (Dahl 2016, 76). With intercultural communication studies as my scholarly field, I am especially interested in the culture-related, interactional aspects of service and service design.

Since interactions, acts and processes of designing for service are embedded and unfolding in situation-specific contexts (c.f. Blomberg & Darrah 2015, 8), more attention is needed on the role of cultural factors surrounding service design and use processes. The complex and dynamic phenomenon of culture is not easily defined or described and should, therefore, be studied in larger historic and social contexts, thus observed how it is constructed in the society at large but also in situation-specific contexts, such as service design projects. Cultural factors may affect, consciously or unconsciously, which service challenges are chosen to be designed, what the scope of the design is, how the boundaries of the designed service and service systems are defined, what the methodological approaches during the design process are, for whom services are designed, who is included in the co-design processes, how team dynamics develop, what the role of culture is in experiencing value connected with the service, and so on.

Research dealing with culture is traditionally focused either on culture-comparative or culture-interactional phenomena (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009 266–267). This study is not to be placed in either one of those approaches. The object of inquiry of this research is neither aiming at comparing cultures nor focusing on how different cultural groups interact with each other in service encounters or other touchpoints, but again not excluding this knowledge. The research interest is neither culture-general nor culture-specific (Gannon 2008, 32–33) meaning that the unit of analysis is not culture (or cultures) per se. Instead, this research explores how cultures are approached and what kind of a role large culture(s) are given during service design and in service situations in general. It is of special interest to study how service designers operationalize culture, and whether the different approaches to culture are prioritized (Chapter 2).

There are distinct similarities in the focus of intercultural communication and service design. Both research areas observe phenomena and practices which aim to increase understanding and trust between the partners. In intercultural communication studies the aim is to understand the dynamics in interpersonal interaction and reduce the uncertainty about factors and systems perceived different (e.g. cultural frames of reference) (Barnett & Lee 2003, 260; Piller 2011). In service design, better understanding about the service users and their needs and dreams helps reduce uncertainty related to the desirability of the service, thus increasing the willingness to purchase or consume services (Erlhoff, Mager & Manzini 1997; Wetter-Edman 2014). Moreover, the collaborative aspect of service calls for relational qualities and trust (Manzini 2009, 53).

In this predominantly qualitative study, it is also important to be aware of my own values and motivations. Reiss and Sprenger (2014) argue that despite the aim to be faithful to facts and pursue objectivity human perception is always affected by the researcher's personal situation, language, culture and physical circumstances. Humans tend to see what they can relate to. Therefore, it is not possible to regard this research from a fully culture-free or completely ethno-relativistic perspective. Nevertheless, I have made conscious efforts to be aware of my own cultural and linguistic influences and limitations as well as my personal situation as a lecturer of culture-related studies in a university of applied sciences.

1.3.2 Social constructionist understanding of culture

It is hard to find an objective understanding of the obscure notion "culture". Large cultures are especially challenging to approach as they are seen as too big "entities" for large groups to share and agree on values and practices (Piller 2007). Sadri and Flammia (2011, 37) claim that nations can be seen just as arbitrary political agreements between groups of people. Yet, large cultures are seen as "common statements about culture" (Holliday 2013, 164) and deserve to be researched.

Ontologically, it can be questioned whether service designers understand and consider reality from the cultural point of view: Do they think that the cultural background of the actors in a service system matter? If so, how do they take it into consideration? How is this interest displayed during a service design process? As they design for service users it is relevant to be informed on how service users perceive culture to matter in service situations. The ontological questions of *What is culture?*, *What is service?*, and *What constitute feelings of cultural belongingness in relationship with service experiences?* are fundamental in this study.

Some further questions can be posed: How can we find out about the reality of the cultural phenomena connected to services? Are they even worth being studied when separating large culture(s) from other cultural influences is almost impossible and when service experiences are always subjective and interpretative? In the positive case, would this kind of study have any truth value beyond individuals? These questions lead to an epistemological question of what kind of knowledge is available or can be gotten about large culture(s), service and the value experienced connected with these factors when studied together?

In my understanding, answers to the above questions are constructed by humans in interaction and in creating and sharing meanings in mutual discourses, for example, during a service design process or in service situations. This research is based on the social constructionist perception which states that the reality of the notion of culture, service or a service experience is formed by a sum of various social, cultural and economic factors. Social and communicative construction implies that the world is socially created by the involved actors (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Luckmann 2013), and the interpretative approach in intercultural communication studies shares the belief that culture is both created and perpetuated in human interaction (Sadri & Flammia 2011, 87). Eventually, the reality is relative to each actor, such as a service designer, a service provider or a service user. They may or may not perceive the reality in the same way and their different cultural backgrounds may color their perceptions differently (Metsämuuronen 2009, 218).

Rubin & Rubin (2012, 19) define an interpretative approach as a way how people view a phenomenon and the meaning that they attribute to it. An interpretative approach adopted in this study acknowledges that "the social world consists of multiple realities according to the subjective position of the person", and "rejects a single objective view of reality" (Baxter & Braithwaite 2008, 8). The interpretive research tradition is a form of a wide constructivist paradigm which acknowledges the world as creation of human knowledge (Järvensivu & Törnroos 2010). Järvensivu and Törnroos introduce a moderate constructionism

which offers a pluralistic view of reality. These realities include subjective, socially constructed and objective realities. If enough similarities, shared subjective realities provide material for constructing realities socially. Objective, positivist realities become true only through sharing them subjectively and socially. Järvensivu and Törnroos claim that moderate constructionism is fairly close to critical realism sharing the same ontological and epistemological grounds. Both acknowledge that "research should proceed towards finding local, community-bounded, and interacting forms of truth that are created and validated through dialogue – –" (ibid. 2010, 101). While critical realism is closer to one universal truth, constructionism in its moderate form is approaching (naïve) relativism. Both are well suited for the qualitative cases in this study. As their difference in interview studies, Järvensivu and Törnroos (2010) illustrate that in the critical realism mindset the real and reliable information is seen to reside inside of an informant's mind and is waiting to be discovered, and analyzed by a controlled and systematic process in order to eliminate biases and errors. In line with moderate constructionism, on the other hand, interviews are seen as social encounters in which knowledge is constructed together. The social constructionist approach fits well with the objectives of this research which aims to reveal how service designers and service users perceive the role of culture. Critical realists claim that when a large enough group agrees on shared meanings, they become "real" which is an assumption shared in this dissertation. The following continuum (Figure 2) positions this research approach between critical realism and social constructionism but leaning strongly towards the latter one.

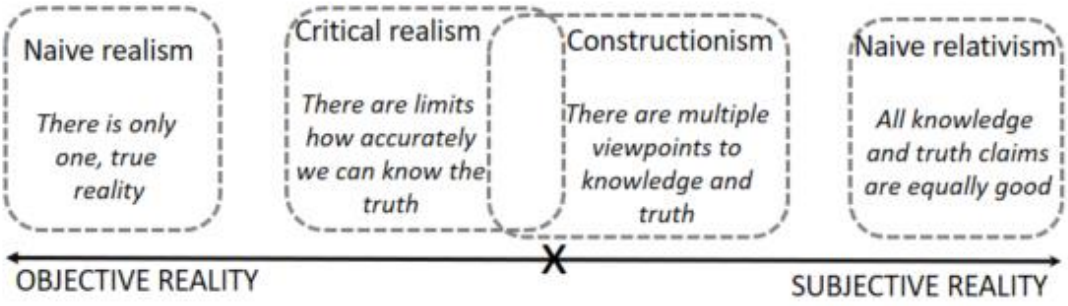


FIGURE 2 Position of the dissertation on the ontological worldview continuum (based on Järvensivu & Törnroos 2010)

Subjectivity is present in this research both in the interviews and in the analyses of the data. This study creates new and usable knowledge through these multiple viewpoints of the subjective truth by organizing and thematizing the presented and gathered data openly and analyzes it as objectively as possible. Hatch & Cuncliffe (2006, 11) note that objective and subjective ontology, for example culture, "would be unobservable if not for our capacity to experience and communicate what can only be approached subjectively".

1.4 Structure of the dissertation

The first chapter introduces the contextual background for this dissertation, followed by the research questions that guide this study. My standing as a researcher is also presented in this section.

The section on theoretical foundations presents an overview of the literature review and the theoretical knowledge in the areas combining the three main constructs of this study: service, design and culture. In the field of service research, the emphasis is on observing how different service marketing logics have evolved and paved the way for service design. In increasingly service based societies, service design can be perceived as a natural correspondence to product development in goods-dominant contexts. The concept of culture and different streams of intercultural communication studies are elaborated at the end of the second chapter. The different ontological and epistemological understandings of culture are reflected upon and observed how they are presented in the service marketing and design fields. Intercultural communication provides an important approach to service design as being based predominantly human interaction.

Chapter 3 introduces the methodological choices for this study, which is comprised of three sub-studies, presented in detail in Chapters 4–6. The empirical section looks at the research problem from different angles. The first sub-study is based on interviewing service designers with the aim of finding out how professional service designers approach culture and how they take cultural factors into consideration during a service design process. The second sub-study investigates how culture is addressed in the professional service design literature, covering professional textbooks and articles from 2009 to early 2017. The third sub-study explores the service users' perspective: how and when, if at all, do diverse service users think that cultural factors matter in services. Each of the sub-studies is followed by reflections on the limitations of the sub-study and summarized results.

Chapter 7 discusses the combined findings of the three sub-studies and draws conclusions for theoretical and practical implications. Research areas for further research are also suggested. The final chapter summarizes the research and its findings in Finnish.

2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The focus for this study is service design (SD) which is claimed to take a holistic approach in uncovering the service users' needs (Miettinen & Koivisto 2009; Stickdorn & Schneider 2010; Polaine, Løvlie & Reason 2013). As culture is affirmed to affect all human behavior (e.g. Kirkman, Lowe & Gibson 2006) it is also to be assumed that the cultural background of all stakeholders – not just the service user's – has some relevance during a service design process and outcome. A service design process includes interlinked service systems and multiple stakeholders. It is hence a very complex system (Patrıcio, Fisk, Cunha & Constantine 2011, 180) involving many instances that incorporate visible and hidden cultural aspects that may have an impact on the service delivery and the final service experience. An additional cultural dimension is brought in by the fact that services are primarily relationships between service providers and service users, and creating highly complicated networks of relationships between internal organizational departments, third-party stakeholders, national and international infrastructures, customers and end-users (Polaine, Løvlie & Reason 2013). Polaine et al. (2013) claim that the quality of service recurrently suffers due to the difficulty of connecting these systems and organizational or systemic silos. The often complicated systems and relationships are based on cultural assumptions and practices, yet the cultural factors within this field have been studied relatively sparsely.

2.1 Reviewing prior knowledge on cultures' role in services

Service design is considered as evolving domain (Sangiorgi & Juninger 2015) and there are yet no academic journals focusing solely on service design (JournaITOCs 2017). In order to detect discussions and map out existing knowledge combining the main constructs of service, design and large cultures a wide, systematic review was needed. The multidisciplinary characteristics of this topic made a standardized systematic literature review difficult due to the vast scope of literature and inconsistent use of vocabulary. Notwithstanding, the aim of this

review was to follow the guidance of systematic literature reviews laid by Jesson, Matheson and Lacey (2011) as rigorously as possible. Jesson et al. (2011, 103) consider the following elements as key characteristics of a systematic literature review: standardized, structured and protocol-driven methodology; focused, explicit and transparent; comprehensive and exhaustive search for all the relevant literature; objective, balanced and unbiased. Jesson et al. (2011) envisage literature reviews as a continuum, ranging between a traditional and systematic review (Figure 3). Based on Jesson et al. (2011), the dots indicate where the literature review at hand is estimated to be located on these continuums. It can be placed in between a traditional and systematic review due to a selected choice of reviewed literature. Once the search databases were chosen, a rigorous search method was applied, aiming at transparency and replicability. The review process will be described below.

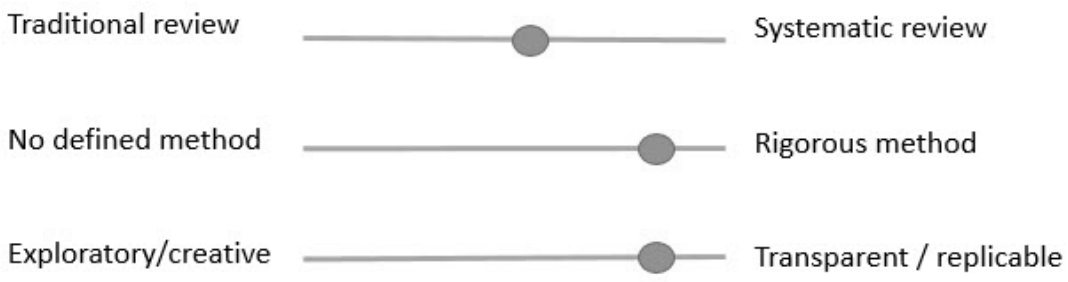


FIGURE 3 Type of the literature review (based on Jesson et al. 2011, 103)

The key phases of the review process are illustrated in Table 2. The scoping review started at the beginning of this research. The goal was to gain an understanding about the topical areas and to compile key words and definitions of the core concepts for later use. The scoping review soon revealed a multitude of different approaches in several scholarly fields and an array of diverse conceptual definitions for culture. This emphasized a need for narrowing down the focus on the most pivotal fields from the perspective of the scholarly field of intercultural studies and fields that have had most impact on the practice of service design, namely service marketing and design research fields.

Diverse words and forms used for culture were e.g. *culture, national culture, societal culture, national, sociocultural, cross-cultural, intercultural, multicultural, transcultural, transnational, international*. Each one of them may have referred to different aspects of geographical or group-specific behavior, such as a region, a nation, an organization or other group-specific phenomena. The diffuse terminology was one of the main hindrances for conducting a rigorous systematic literature review, the other ones being a lack of realistic timely resources to cover a very wide multidisciplinary area.

The databases selected for the literature review are well-known international scholarly publication platforms accessible for university students

(Proquest Central, Web of Science). The time frame for the literature review material was set to start in 2000 because of the emergence of the concept "service design" at the beginning of the millennium and a more established use of it around the mid-2000's (Mager 2004).

TABLE 2 The key phases of the literature review (based on Jesson & al. 2011, 108)

Phases	**Aim**	**Time**	**Databases**	**Key words**
Scoping review	Mapping the field, locating knowledge gaps, setting up inclusion and exclusion criteria	2014–2015	Google Scholar; Finna*; professional literature	Compiling key words
Comprehensive search	Finding relevant hits, refining the search	2015–2016	Proquest Central; Web of Science; Google Scholar; Finna (JYKDOK + Laurea) *	"Service design + cross-cultural", "Service design + intercultural" "service design + national culture"; OR "service + culture" OR "service design", "service development", "service experience" (see below)
Quality assessment	Using "hierarchy of research", including or excluding texts	2016– early 2018	Above databases Reading full papers	

* Finna is a search interface maintained by the Finnish National Library. It provides access to a basic search and an article search in a wide and international material canon provided by the partner organizations (Finna 2017).

In the lack of consistent "controlled vocabulary", key words assigned to this research are "natural language keywords" (Jesson & al. 2011, 27). Four different compositions of key word pairs were chosen to be used differently in various field-specific searches, covering the multidisciplinary scope of the review.

In service research related literature rooted in business economics, "service design" AND "cross-cultural", "service design" AND "intercultural" and "service design" AND "national culture" were used. National culture was considered the closest possible equivalent to a large culture. The plain search word "culture" was also tested but it yielded a huge amount of occurrences referring to organizational culture and was thus rejected. Similarly, using only "service" as a pair would have yielded too big an amount of occurrences relating to service business in general. In searching through design related literature, the same key word pairs were used.

In literature relating to intercultural and cross-cultural research the key word pair "service" AND "culture" also proved to be too wide. As the likelihood of finding any pertinent knowledge with the search word pair "service design"

was considered to be fairly low, two additional key word pairs were used: "service development", "service experience". Service development can be seen as a close alternative for service design, although it does not automatically include human centricity and participatory aspects of service design. A good service experience can be seen as a goal of service design (Zonderdijk & Voss 2010) and was therefore used for finding related studies. Additionally, the selected journal volumes were manually searched for relevant topics dealing with large cultures and service design but possibly using different concepts. Using "culture" as a key word was not necessary since in this search category all journal papers were dealing with cultural phenomena. Also, the likelihood of the word "culture" referring to organizational culture was markedly lower in this research field than in service research or design related literature.

Besides general database searches, peer reviewed journals were chosen to be reviewed manually for current topical issues dealing with the research interest (Fink 2014; Jesson & al. 2011; Metsämuuronen 2009). Finding appropriate journals for the manual review was challenging. The body of work relating to this multidisciplinary research area is very broad, including journals in international business economics, consumer studies, service research, service management and marketing, social sciences, design studies and cultural studies, just to name a few. The scoping review revealed that the amount of journals dealing with service-related international business economics was too wide to be realistically reviewed by one person. Even though none of this literature concentrates solely on the field of service design the scoping review showed that there are several academic peer-reviewed journals publishing articles related to service design besides their main focus areas.

To ensure a sufficient coverage of the field of service design, a comprehensive literature search was conducted on articles found in academic peer-reviewed journals. These were selected from the list of references from the most recent PhD dissertations at the time of the review (in 2015) in the field of service design (Blomkvist 2014, Botero 2013, Han 2010, Kimbell 2013, Segelström 2013, Wetter-Edman 2014). Additionally, journals which were referenced more than once in the articles published in Touchpoint, a professional journal of service design between 2009–2015 (volumes 1–7) were selected to be included in the review.

The following peer-reviewed journals related to services in **international business economics, service research, service management and marketing** were selected to be manually reviewed. The selection of particular articles touching upon my research interest was based on the article heading, key words and reading the abstract. This was made in order to detect relevant topics that were not discovered using the key words used in the general database search.

Harvard Business Review
International Journal of Service Industry Management
Journal of Academic Marketing Science
Journal of Service Management
Journal of Services Marketing
Journal of Service Research

Journal of Service Theory and Practice
Managing Service Quality
Marketing Theory
Service Science

The following peer-reviewed journals focusing on the **design field** were selected to be reviewed manually:

Design and Culture
Design Issues
Design Research Journal
Design Journal
Design Studies
Design Management Journal
Design Management Review
International Journal of Design
She Ji: The Journal of Design, Economics, and Innovation

There were no references to journal articles covering cultural studies in the service design related doctoral dissertations nor in the service business related journals. This suggests that the claimed multidisciplinarity of the field is not yet reality. It also made the choice of peer reviewed journals dealing with national culture more challenging. Ultimately, the selection of culture-related journals was made by very practical criteria and was based on access in the journal databases in the JYKDOK library (Jyväskylä University Library catalogue). Out of the 477 peer-reviewed journals focusing on cultural studies the following journals were considered relevant for this study. These journals were searched manually besides the key word pairs "service design", "service development" and "service experience":

Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies
Cross Cultural Management / Cross Cultural & Strategic Management
Cross-Cultural Management: An International Journal
Cross-Cultural Research
Cultural values / Journal of Cultural Research
Culture and organization
European Journal of Cultural Studies
European Journal of Intercultural Studies
International Journal of Cross Cultural Management
International Journal of Cultural Studies
Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology
Journal for cultural research
Journal of Intercultural Communication Research
Journal of Intercultural Studies
Language and Intercultural Communication

Each manual search within the selected three scholarly journal groups revealed interesting studies around the research topic and will be discussed separately in the next section. The following key findings are based both on the database searches and manual searches of the above listed peer-reviewed journals using key words listed in Table 2.

2.2 Key findings and remarks on previous studies

Based on the multidisciplinary approach of this study and due to limited interaction and apparently lacking common research interests of the three disciplinary fields, the domains of service research, design research and culture-related research are reviewed separately. Research combining all three disciplinary areas seem to be very scarce, but studies including two of the perspectives (either culture and service research, or service research and design, or design and culture-related research) seem to be extant and are discussed in this section.

Tables 3, 4 and 5 are structured around the main focus areas emerging from this multidisciplinary literature review. The aim of the listing is not to be all-encompassing. Instead, the purpose is to highlight with different examples the wide variety of topics dealing with cultural phenomena in service research or design.

2.2.1 Culture-related service research

Culture-related research in business economics and especially in marketing and management contexts is extant. The need to study culture's role in international business has been widely recognized since the 1960's and has been the object of interest ever since (Usunier, van Herk & Lee 2017). The research seems to be focused predominantly on national cultures and their relevance in major business activities (e.g. Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Erez & Gibson 2005). Early research was focused on internationalization of business but has since progressed from generalizability of theories, testing assumptions and boundary conditions towards new theory development and enlarging perspectives from single nation contexts. Most of the research has been within the etic (culture-general) research paradigm and at the early stages predominantly examining other cultures from a Western perspective (Usunier & al. 2017, 2, 62).

Service research as well as the latterly emerged service design research have their disciplinary roots in service marketing studies within business economics (Lovelock & Gummesson 2004; Sangiorgi & Juninger 2015). The early culture-related marketing and management research, initially focused on internationalization of business and on a nation as a market area, has varied from specific disciplines and streams of business to field and context specific research (Grönroos 2016). The vast variety and amount of academic publications addressing cultural issues in business economics is indicative of the wide interest and need for cultural research in many different fields of business studies (Usunier et al. 2017).

Existing literature also points out that despite some global turbulences, such as cultural change, convergence and divergence, large cultures remain a salient characteristic of business relations and activities. It also means that standard culture-free business practices would be "overly optimistic" as stated by Leung & al. (2005, 358).

Baron, Warnaby and Hunter-Jones (2013) claim the history of service research and the early paradigm of service marketing and management is based on the conception of services being considered as non-material alternatives to physical goods. According to this logic, services could thus be sold and marketed in similar ways as products. This logic is visible in the early research on internationalization which concentrates on product-oriented approaches and does not deal with service research as a separate scholarly field. However, due to a higher degree of human interaction in services increasing attention was to be paid on culture. The interest in internationalizing services began in late 1970's but research publications on the topic started growing as late as in the latter 1990's (Grönroos 2016, 131). Strategies that Grönroos identified for internationalizing services are direct export, systems export, direct entry and indirect entry modes, amended later with digitalization which has considerably changed the service internationalization options. A gradual decrease of ethnocentricity and acceptance of other perspectives has spurred further interest in culture's role in services, taking place in parallel with the increasing diversification especially of Western societies. Public services were not discussed much in the early service research which may have resulted from the fact that societies were offering public services mostly for a local population often considered homogenous. Similarly, in light of this review, internationalization of domestically offered public or non-profit services seem not to have been considered relevant and research on this field had been scarce until early 2000's.

Table 3 includes illustrative examples of research interests emerging from the review of current culture-related service research. The lines between these interest areas are often blurred and the list serves only as an exemplification of non-standard categorizing.

TABLE 3 Example categories of culture-related service research and their main focus

FOCUS	EXAMPLES OF TOPICS	EXAMPLES OF STUDIES
CUSTOMER, SERVICE USER	Service encounters	Singh Gaur et al. 2017; Stauss 2016; Sharma et al. 2015; Harris & Russell-Bennett 2014; Tam & al. 2014; Reynolds & Smith 2010; Lin & al. 2007; Frazer Winsted 2000; Stauss & Mang 1999;
	Customer expectations, recommendations	Tansitpong 2012; Alden & Chen 2010
	Communication/marketing, user interface	Petersen & al. 2015; Reynolds & Smith 2010; Reynolds 2010; Wang & Mattila 2011; Tsikriktsis 2002
	Relationship marketing / management	Beveridge& Kadura 2016, Schumann et al. 2010
	Customer co-production	Parahoo, Harvey & Radi 2015; Sampson & Money 2015
	Service failure and recovery, Feedback, Complaining styles	Walsh & al. 2015; Park & al. 2014; Wang & Mattila 2011; Kim, Li & Doh 2010; Zourrig & al. 2009, Yuksel, Kilinc & Yuksel 2006; Kanousi 2005; Wong 2004; Voss & al. 2004; Becker 2000;
	Language and localization needs	Metters 2008; Holmqvist & Grönroos 2012
	Varying cultural groups (e.g. Muslims)	Gayatri, Hume & Mort 2011
	Waiting practices and time-orientation	Pàmies, Ryan & Valverde 2016
	Perceived discrimination	Barker & Härtel 2004
ORGANIZATION/ EMPLOYEES	Organizational strategies	Lee, Madanoglu & Ko 2013
	Cross-cultural management and leadership	Wang & Mattila 2011
	Intercultural teams	Chung & al. 2010
	Service role, emotional stress, coping strategies	Sharma, Tam & Kim 2015
	Cultural sensitivity, cultural intelligence	Shapiro & al. 2008
PARTNERS, NETWORKS	Business relationships, relationship marketing	Schumann & al. 2010; Barry & al. 2008
	Co-production, co-creation	Sampson & Money 2015; Ojasalo 2010
	Co-operation modes with local partners, outsourcing	Lee & al. 2013; Metters 2008
SEGMENTS, MARKETS, SOCIETY	Internationalization strategies, Marketing strategies	Grönroos 2016; Kirca, Cavusgil & Hult 2009; Lovelock 1999; Grönroos 1999
	Cross-cultural market segmentation	Furrer, Li & Sudharshan, D. 2000
	Country of origin affecting services	Javalgi, Cutler & Winans 2001
	Digital service economy	Sabiote, Frías & Castañeda 2012

	Market specific research, Emerging markets	Guesalaga, Pierce & Scaraboto 2016; Gayatri & al. 2011; Alam 2010; Hyder & Fregidour 2009
SERVICE OFFERINGS	Service quality, service dimensions	Basfirinci & Mitra 2014; Yayla-Kullu et al. 2015. Gayatri & al. 2011; Reimann, Lünemann & Chase 2008; Kong & Jogaratnam 2007; Laroche & al. 2004. Cunningham & al. 2004
	Service development and innovation	Lim & Park 2013; Alam 2010¸ 2011;
	Design and delivery of services	Pullman 2001
	Self-service, digitalization; technologies	Fisher & Beatson 2002;
SERVICE SECTOR OR FIELD-SPECIFIC	Airline industry	Yayla-Kullu et al. 2015; Bruning & Saqib 2013
	Traveling & Hospitality	Bakir & al. 2017; Ching Yick Tse & Ho 2009; Hsieh & Tsai 2009; Kim & al. 2010
	Health care	Miranda & al. 2015; Fregidou-Malama & Hyder 2015; Oelke & al. 2013; Kuo & al. 2012, Davidson & al. 2010; Frampton, Gilpin & Charmel 2003
	Financial services	Schumann & al. 2010; Chui & Wok 2007; Malhotra & al. 2004
	Educational services	Beveridge & Kadura 2016

Services are increasingly looked at as unique value offerings where a service user's experience is the dominant measure for success (Vargo & Lusch 2008), leading to new service marketing logics elaborated in more detail in section 2.3. The role of service providers is maturing towards that of a facilitator of value experiences (Grönroos 2008, 309). This has incited further interest in culture's role in experiencing the service quality in culture-specific ways and made it a popular stream of research. For example, the perception of service quality has been shown to vary across cultural groups (Smith & Reynolds 2001). Experience of quality is paving the way for the current research stream of studying value-based experience (e.g. Helkkula & al. 2012a, 2012b; Grönroos & Voima 2013).

Another example of a growing body of research in international service research has been the intercultural service encounters (e.g. Stauss 2016), seeing culture not just a mere marketplace but as a context. Internationalization and growing global service offerings in specific service fields have inspired studies on culture's role and potential influence in sector or field-specific services. Hence, examples of most abundant culture-related research in tourism, hospitality, airline industry, health-care, and financial services are also included in the listing in Table 3.

A major part of the culture-related research within business economics seem to equal culture with nations and to be founded on a cross-cultural (culture-comparative) approach, for example comparing chosen cultures in how expectations for service differ between them, what certain national groups consider to

be a good service, how service providers are aiming at optimizing their service concepts and offerings according to national segmentations, or how culture impacts service encounters. This is in line with Usunier's et al. (2017, xv) observation that the main aim of cross-cultural and international research in this field has been "to find interesting similarities and differences, rather than universals".

Cross-cultural studies are most often based on quantitative methodologies where cultural groups are observed as national averages. In light of the literature review it seems that Geert Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions framework has gained a very strong foothold in business economics (see also Sun, D'Alessandro, Johnson & Winzar 2014; Beveridge & Kadura 2016; Långstedt 2018). A clear majority of the reviewed service business related articles were basing their cross-cultural examination on this framework, initially coined in 1980 (Hofstede 1980). Only a few other cross-cultural frameworks were used, some complementing Hofstede's model with additional or alternative perspectives. For instance, Yayla-Kullu, Tansitpong, Gnanlet, McDermott and Durgee's (2015) research on national culture's impact on airline service quality relies on theories combining cultural characteristics identified by Hofstede (1980, 2010) and the GLOBE study (House Hanges, Javidan, Dorman & Gupta 2004), implying that cultures placing high value on future orientation provide better services while highly individualistic and uncertainty avoiding cultures tend to perform poorly. Kirca's et al. (2009) research relies on Schwartz's (1994) cultural value orientations. Bearing in mind that already in the early 2000's there were over twenty known cross-cultural frameworks (Osland & Bird 2003), the unbalanced use favoring Hofstede's framework was striking (see also section 2.5.2).

As a participatory, often team-based and human interaction focused practice, service design requires intercultural communication, international teams' and projects' management and leadership skills and other similar intercultural competence. Studies addressing these areas are more likely to be found e.g. in cross-cultural management literature which is out of the scope of this review. Similarly, information and communication technology have an increasing role in transnational service systems and touchpoints. It is without doubt that ubiquitous technology, internet of things and other new technology-supported ways will be an integral part of services. Nevertheless, this stream of literature was not included in this review.

There seems to be ample research into service-related business revolving around companies' internationalization and recognizing companies need for understanding local cultures and markets (e.g. Patala 2008). Also, consumer research has steered its focus increasingly on culture (e.g. Shavitt et al. 2008; Sun & al. 2014). Yet, hardly any research was found dealing with diverse local or domestic service users or multiple actors involved in the service design process.

Studies directly aimed at developing the theory or practice of service design related to culture were not discovered in this review. The concept of "service design" was used only in one article. The research paper of Yayla-Kullu et al. (2015, 102) claims to establish "empirical relationships between cultural norms and the elements of service design choices of the firms" but does not elaborate what it means with the process label "service design".

2.2.2 Culture-related design research

Service design has also gotten its inspiration within the field of design (Mager 2004). Therefore, it is of interest to see how this field has adopted a cultural lens to meet the societal and economical changes and the evolution of the concept of service, as seen in service business research. Even though sharing many joint objectives with business economics, the field of design seems to be in large a separate research area with its own research streams and publications.

Buchanan (2001) recognized the transformation of the design profession, moving from early emphasis on graphic design to industrial and later to interaction design and progressing latterly towards environmental design. Segelström (2013, 14–15) later includes design of systems along with interface design, design thinking and service design in the design of interactions. He emphasizes the roles of user-centered design and human-centered design in the maturation process of service design.

Manzini (2016) points out that "culture is virtually absent from the debate on contemporary design" which is well reflected on the academic research literature. The database searches and manual literature reviews yielded only few useful findings about culture's role in service design for this research. This is hardly surprising since as an emerging domain there is only a limited amount research done in this field. However, there seems to be research connecting culture and other fields of design, especially in cross-cultural settings. Most of the research conducted in various design fields – such as product, graphic, industrial or environmental design – are not pertinent to this study and are therefore not included in this review except for a few illustrative examples in Table 4. It illustrates research conducted within various design fields with some examples of the varied perspectives in these focus areas. The categorization is again only exemplary and reflects some common professional specialization fields emerging from the review. Many important design fields such as industrial or environmental design are thus not included. Some categories may be covered in overlap in various articles.

TABLE 4 Examples of culture-related design research categorized by the main focus of the research activity

FOCUS	EXAMPLES OF TOPICS	EXAMPLES OF RESEARCH
PRODUCT DESIGN	Designing for other cultures; Product form	Goncu Berk 2013; Lin 2007; Moalosi & al. 2007; Honold 2000
GRAPHIC DESIGN	Colors; Form; Symbols	Joy Lo & al. 2016; Zender & Cassedy 2014; Gyoung Soon Choi & al. 2010; Noiwan & Norcio 2006
INTERAC-TION DESIGN	Website design and usability; Interaction design; Human-computer interaction; Technology	Rodil 2014; Kamppuri 2012, 2011; Sun 2012; Winschiers-Theophilus 2009; Li & al. 2009; Fletcher 2006; Noiwan & Norcio 2006; Slack & Wise 2005
DESIGN METHOD-OLOGY	Design cards; Participatory design	Sun 2015; Blair-Early 2010
DESIGN PROCESS	Development process; co-creation	Christensen & al. 2017; Gautam & Blessing 2007; Felgen & al. 2004
SERVICE DESIGN	Service design as cultural intermediary; Designing for other cultures; design thinking	Dennington 2017; Goncu Berk 2013; Christensen & al. 2017

Kamppuri's (2011), Goncu Berk's (2013), Sun's (2015) and Dennington's (2017) research proved to be the most interesting and share relevant insights for this study. Kamppuri (2011) examines cross-cultural interaction design and criticizes the earlier shortcomings of existing methods of cross-cultural interaction design as being biased, taking culture for granted, and having been too product oriented overlooking the cultural effect on the design process (pp. 6–7). She presents an alternative approach aiming to "increase awareness and understanding of culture among interaction designers". In the spirit of Strauss and Quinn (1997), her view of culture is process-based and characterized by opposite tendencies of durability/individual or historic variability, motivational/demotivational force, sharedness/distinctiveness, thematicity/specialty. Kamppuri's study's merit lies in the way she depicts the historic progress of human-computer interaction design starting from usability engineering evolving to user-centered design and towards designing for user experiences and creating worth (pp. 16–20). It is only at this third wave of development when culture is discussed seriously in interaction design. In the two earlier waves culture was seen as a mechanistic variable or as a design context (pp. 25–34). These stages are illustrative and also important from the service design perspective since most modern services incorporate digital touchpoints. Similarly, current service research (theory) and service design (practice) have attached their interest in value-based thinking and user experience. Kamppuri (2011) concludes by presenting an important question (2011, 172): to which extent is the designer expected to draw on existing cultural practices and values and to which extent can a designer expect to introduce new elements to the prevailing culture?

Dennington (2017) gives partial answers to Kamppuri's (2011) questions by claiming that service design also acts as a cultural intermediary, transforming the culture in context. Dennington (2017, 604) has also made a similar discovery with this research: "The dominating view in service design – – does not currently seem to be culturally oriented." She sees services, similar to products, as carriers of socio-cultural meanings. Her research is exploring culture as "social awareness" and aims to translate this awareness into a new service concept. This can be done by translating socio-cultural trends into meanings, these meanings into a service concept and the concept into details of service (p. 607), thus enabling culturally more meaningful services. Dennington (2017) focuses on exploring culture's socio-cultural influence in setting up a specific fashion service.

Goncu Berk's (2013) study on cross-cultural product design explores ways to design for diverse cultures, the main emphasis being on designing for customers in non-Western emerging markets. Her grounded theory approach is process-focused and concentrates on designing for another culture by interviewing product designers. Culture is observed on a national level and seen as a place people live in, affected by environmental, technological and economic contexts. The researcher develops a detailed step-by-step framework for designing for other cultures. This framework, including the design process, methods, challenges and strategies, can also be very useful for service designers. Goncu Berk (2013, 225) claims that the design focus should be on "what people do with the products available to them rather than the products themselves".

Sun (2015) points out the importance of operationalizing culture purposefully. The difficulty of operationalizing lies in the disconnect of action and meaning (p. 64). Value oriented cultural dimensions overlook concrete user activities by focusing on static view of meaning. She analyzes how theory-based culture knowledge can be transferred into design insights through scaffolding. She also claims that designers are not used to "connecting the critical vision and macroscopic understanding of culture from the broader sociocultural context to the microscopic reflections from the immediate context" (p. 65). In line with the interpretative view on culture and using design cards as a case example, she explores on effective ways of incorporating complex cultural influences and on how to transform sophisticated understanding into interaction design insights (p. 62).

Another sign of rising interest in culture's relevance in the field of design is Christensen, Ball and Halskov's (2017) multi-case compilation on cross-cultural co-creation based on design thinking. This edited book investigates how culturally diverse stakeholders and designers think during the co-creation of innovative products. The data set is based on naturally occurring design dialogue, working in normal contexts. The themes relate to topics of team dynamics and conflicts, designing across cultures, cognitive and metacognitive aspects of design thinking, design talk, framing in design, co-creating with users, and design iterations across time, composed of nearly 30 different case studies. The overarching perspective in these diverse settings is design thinking, and culture is not specifically defined or even discussed. The case studies are individual and methodologically different approaches to study design phenomena in cross-cultural con-

texts. The research cases focus on analyzing different social processes as they unfold during the design workshops and discussions. No common conclusion is provided.

2.2.3 Service and design related intercultural research

Many scholarly fields are interested in culture's characteristics, the way it is constructed, its presence in and its impact on human behavior: international business economics, consumer economics, cross-cultural psychology, anthropology, communication studies, social and organizational psychology, marketing and management studies, just to name a few (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, 5; Sun & al. 2014).

This part of the review is narrowed down on intercultural communication research gained from the culture-related journals listed in section 2.1. An intercultural communication perspective is especially justified since cultures become alive in human interactions. With expanding international interaction, the role of intercultural studies has grown in importance and developed new approaches. The etic frameworks are complemented by emic perspectives.

Recently, intercultural studies are increasingly focusing on constructive and critical approaches. Social constructionists claim that culture is co-constructed in a dialogical process, and critical scholars also see culture as a dynamic and complex social construct (Evanoff 2004; Angouri 2010, 209). Holliday (2011) claims that a stream of critical cultural awareness calls for a new and creative approach to culture beyond the neo-essentialist, universalist Hofstedian legacy. He calls for recognizing the ideological and politically influenced interests in culture-related discourses and adopts a critical cosmopolitan approach which sees cultures as emergent and expressive, providing an ability to "read culture which derives from underlying universal cultural processes" (ibid. 2013, 1). The critical approach aims to reach beyond ideological othering where othering is understood as defining a person through imagined negative characteristics of a particular group (Holliday 2011, 198). Consequently, cultural classifications such as the universalist frameworks are considered partially outdated, strengthening national stereotypes and simplifying real life phenomena.

Regardless the research approach, it seems that services have been studied surprisingly sparsely from an intercultural perspective, as Table 5 illustrates. Only a few interesting sources within this stream of research were found relevant for the study at hand, a selection of them being discussed below and a few discussed later in the theoretical section. Some categories may be covered in overlap in various articles. The low number of relevant findings indicate a need for further research in this scholarly field.

TABLE 5 Examples of service or design related research within intercultural research and their main focus

FOCUS	EXAMPLES OF TOPICS	EXAMPLES OF RESEARCH
LANGUAGE	Power of language	García & Canado 2005
MEETINGS	Multinational participation	Angouri 2010
CROSS-CULTURAL MANAGEMENT	Cultural paradox management	Beveridge & Kadura 2016
SERVICE ENCOUNTERS, CUSTOMER SERVICE	Intercultural service encounters affecting customer experiences; non-verbal communication; communication	Brewis 2008; Barker & Härtel 2004; Ryoo 2005
PUBLIC SERVICES	Non-verbal communication	Brewis 2008

Similar to service research in business economic, the main focus area seemed to be in service encounters. One of the most encompassing was the doctoral dissertation of Brewis (2008) who studied multicultural customer service situations within two public service organizations in Finland. The focus of the approach was on the service provider's employee and it was discovered that the front-desk employees experienced a lot of stress in interaction with immigrants due to linguistic challenges and perceived cultural differences. The research does, however, not study the phenomena from a service development process or service user experience perspective.

Barker and Härtel (2004) reported on inequitable service perceptions of culturally diverse customers in service encounters. Ryoo (2005) presented an in-depth analysis of talk between shopkeepers with Korean background and their African-American customers. The author discovered that service encounter interactions included predominantly positive and friendly aspects, which had been overshadowed by previously published interethnic conflict and tension focused research. The service encounter parties developed specific rapport-building strategies such as small talk and joking in order to have pleasant store experiences and to downplay potential unpleasant incidents and to overcome certain negative stereotypes toward each other.

Garcia's & Canado's (2005) article focused especially on relationship between language and power in global development teams by interviewing members of multicultural teams. The authors claim that linguistic proficiency is closely connected with power, and viewed "as the single most influential element in attaining an advantageous position" within multicultural teams (p. 101). The interviewees of the study also indicated a clear hierarchy of languages, English being in the most salient position.

2.2.4 Summary of findings

Service, design and culture are abstract concepts and phenomena addressed in several fields. Exposing the different approaches and topics which may contrib-

ute to this study called for an as systematic and wide review as possible of relevant literature. The review was narrowed to explore related scholarly fields of service research, design and intercultural studies. These three fields were estimated to provide most relevant insights into the topic at hand.

As a whole, service research literature within service research offers several valuable insights into culture's importance in various stages of service development and service touchpoints but the view remains fragmented. For example, service encounter interactions was the focus of several studies. An approach examining the role of culture during the whole co-creative development process and during the service user's journey at different stages of her relationship with the service seems still to be lacking. The review revealed that cultural factors seem to have an influence on various service aspects, bringing along many practical and theoretical implications. This supports the argument of this study which claims that cultural factors should be considered during service design.

Public services seemed to be more present within intercultural research than in the two other categories. However, this may be due to the specialization of service research and design journals on commercial services, or the more humanistic approach of intercultural research. This remains to be studied separately as it is not within the objectives of this study.

The review confirms that there is a lot of discussion about culture in service research. Culture-related perspectives in design research seemed rather scarce especially in the service design field. Manzini (2016, 52) calls for more debate on emerging design's (designing that is not yet mainstream) cultural dimensions to enhance design disciplines as a needed change agent. The cultural attributions now seen in design-related discourse are orientations on solutions and participation, yet more discussion should "be undertaken through a dialogical approach" involving those directly affected and focusing on listening, changing opinions and converging toward a common view. Manzini adds (2016, 85) that currently, design experts too often take a role of a process facilitator transforming them into mere administrative actors.

The absence of service-related studies in intercultural research was noticeable. It seemed that the pivotal role of services in modern societies has not quite been recognized yet in intercultural studies. Alternatively, the long-stretched timely scope of a service design and delivery process may pose challenges to study this field. As an interaction and communication-based approach, intercultural research may be better suited to study particular interaction incidents or sequences rather than a process-oriented and comprehensive system of networks, technology and multiple actors. There seems to be service-related research taking place in specific fields such as health-care (e.g. Truong & al. 2014, Saha & al. 2008, Schouten & Meeuwesen 2006). However, due to the key word and journal selection, health-care and similar fields were not pinpointed in this study. Despite the above-mentioned challenges, real human-centricity of services cannot be reached without an intercultural research perspective, and a holistic, inter- or transdisciplinary approach (Gustafsson & al. 2016) is needed drawing on service research, design studies, intercultural communication studies among others.

An additional observation surfacing from this review is how the construct of culture has been conceptualized and operationalized in the review material. Table 6 illuminates some of the various approaches within this review. The list is not exhaustive. The main observation was that the concept of culture was seldom elaborated or reflected upon. Most often, it was taken as granted without conceptualizing the phenomenon of culture. The purpose of the table is to visualize the difficulty in discussing cultural phenomena due to imperfect correspondence of concepts. Sun et al. (2014) remind that conceptual ambiguity and approach inconsistency are making culture difficult to approach or measure, and any comparative research is thus very problematic.

TABLE 6 Examples of ways of conceptualizing and operationalizing culture

Factors of culture	**Operationalization**	**Source**
Geographical scope	Culture seen as a place: e.g. Western / Eastern, national, regional, local; Ethnic	Most of the reviewed sources
Size / type	Small cultures (cohesive small social groups) Large cultures (national, ethnic, international)	Holliday 1999
Group context	Organizational Professional Ideological Religious etc.	Schein 2010
Psychological	Intangible abstractions (Values, norms, beliefs, convictions, attitudes) Concrete activities (Practices, behaviors, material artifacts)	Hofstede (1980) , Schwartz Value Survey (1994), GLOBE study (2004)
Referent target	Self-referenced Group-referenced	Fischer 2006
Emic /etic perspective	Comparative, universalist: cross-cultural Non-comparative, relativist: intercultural	Gudykunst 2002, Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, Evanoff 2004
Frameworks / measurement scales	Value dimensions, Value orientations, Polarities	Hofstede, Schwartz Value Survey, GLOBE study, Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner
Level	Individual, psychological, collective, ecological	Triandis 2004; Leung & al. 2005

Table 6 provides an opportunity to see culture as a very multifaceted, abstract and fuzzy construct. However, most often culture was flattened to sets of one-dimensional characteristics, relating mostly to groups identified by their physical

environments. Cross-cultural, often neo-essentialist frameworks were repeatedly used to indicate and study generalizable culture-specific behavior. Additionally, the prevailing discourse seems to revolve around national cultures, and many studies are taking national culture as face-value, not considering the multiple, mixed and layered dimensions of cultural identifiers. The critical, social constructionist paradigm emerging in the field of intercultural communication seem to be slowly gaining traction in business or design literature.

By following the social constructionist research tradition, culture is co-constructed in various social interactions involving factors from all of the categories in Table 6. This research context positions this dissertation in the field of intercultural communication studies with specific interest in service design related research and how culture and intercultural communication is perceived to be present in the socially constructed design processes. The concepts of service, service design and culture and their shared research interests are elaborated in sections 2.3–2.5.

2.3 Services versus service

The theoretical development of the notion "service" has taken place predominantly in service marketing and management related research during the past two decades. This discussion has given perspectives and terminology to related service research, and paved the way for the practice of service design (Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2015).

Marketing is seen as an "activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large." (AMA 2013). Marketing is often connected with the private sector, but the advancements made in service research have widely spurred interest in improving customer- and human-centricity within public and non-profit service sectors also. As complex service delivery organizations and with increasing public participation as well as demands for providing societal well-being for diverse citizens, governments and other public organizations are facing similar economic-based challenges (UK Design Council 2013; Penin 2018). Consequently, service marketing focused terminology will be used in the following sections even though it is not intended to concentrate specifically on commercial services but to deal with services in general. Regardless of the sector, the wider interest in the service user's world calls for consideration of contextual and cultural factors.

Both plural and singular forms of the notion "service" are used in service research related literature and in discourses concerning the development of service(s). However, depending on the form the term may refer to different service marketing logics. A paradigm shift was initiated by marketing scholars Vargo and Lusch in 2004. The emphasis on "service" implies a groundbreaking new perspective in the field of service research but also in practice. The concepts of

"service" and "services" are discussed in more detail below. Additional key concepts in this new research paradigm are "value" and "experience" which are created or emerging during the service process. These terms are delved into further in the following sections.

2.3.1 Defining service

The concept of service has been especially elaborated in the field of service marketing and management (Zeithaml & al. 2009; Foglieni & al. 2018). Along with recent societal and economic changes, service marketing research insights have yielded a more multifaceted view where services and goods are accepted as different marketing disciplinary fields, and the focus has shifted on service as a perspective onto business (Grönroos 2007).

Services are commonly separated from goods or physical products by their intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability (the so called IHIP definition, cf. Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry 1985). Many types of categorization have been used to describe different kinds of services, e.g. based on the type of seller, type of buyer, buying/use motives, object of demand, amount of customer contact, involvement of physical products, involvement of the service user, degree of customization, automation of the production system, service sector (see for additional classifications in Grönroos 1990, 53–58; Gummesson 1993; Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2008, 62). Brax (2013) has identified a lack of a generic definition of service and emphasizes the process-based nature of services.

Many of the categorizations and definitions fall short in current service-led economies where the demand for more personalized service experiences continues to grow. Increasingly more importance is laid on developing and designing user-centric services (Vargo & Lusch 2004). Rather than as a noun, marketing scholars Lusch and Vargo (2006) propose a definition for services as a verb:

> *Services are "– – the application of specialized competences (knowledge and skills), through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself – – ".* (Lusch and Vargo 2006, 283)

Edvardsson et al. (2005) point out the difference in singular and plural forms of the terms: "Service" relates to the holistic and strategic mindset of the service provider organization in enabling good experiences, a feeling for the service user of being served. "Services" in plural refer to separate service offerings. The "service" school of thought takes a holistic perspective on the service phenomenon and emphasizes a service user's role and experience during the value creation process (Lusch & Vargo 2006; Helkkula 2010; Grönroos & Voima 2013). This perspective problematizes treating service users as unified groups or as defined by social categories such as nation or ethnicity.

Taking a service user point of view Bettencourt, Lusch and Vargo (2014, 44) regard service as something that helps a service user to get one or more "jobs done (i.e. accomplish a goal or resolve a problem)". This also highlights the process characteristics of service. As opposed to products, there is no single moment

when a service can be perceived to be "manufactured or ready". Instead, service offerings are related to the value generating activities during the service provider's processes (design, development, manufacturing, delivery), in service interactions and in service user's activities during latter use and experiences (Grönroos 2006; Grönroos & Voima 2013; Helkkula & al. 2012a).

As practicing service designers Polaine, Løvlie and Reason (2013, 28–31) have been cataloguing a vast amount of services they have come across and developed a "core service value" approach to define service and to understand service processes and performances better. They have observed that all services meet three generic needs of service users, or "jobs to be done". Polaine et al. (2013) claim that the three main performance categories for helping people to get jobs done are: *care*, *access* and *response*. The first category means care for people or things, the second access to people (knowledge, skills) or things, and the third category refers to service offerings that provide a response from people or things (e.g. assistance to get something done). These performance types may all be incorporated simultaneously in a given service. Penin (2018, 21), also taking a practice-oriented but collective perspective, defines services as "the soft infrastructure of society" as people's lives are heavily dependent on many kinds of service provisions (e.g. transportation, telecommunication, banking, restaurants, entertainment).

2.3.2 Service and interaction

Grönroos (2007, 8) claims that "services are inherently relational". The relationship perspective on service marketing and management, as its own theoretical approach in business services, emphasizes the interactional and relationship management aspect as the core phenomenon in service. Grönroos, a pioneer of the Nordic School of service research, considered relationships pivotal in utilizing relevant information and knowledge for developing services into genuinely customer-oriented and value-generating services (ibid. p. 12).

The role of interaction has also been emphasized in other marketing perspectives. Interaction does not take place only between the service provider and the service user but is a central concept in complex networks of service systems and ecosystems, involving multiple stakeholders such as customers and end-users, employees, suppliers, partners, and so on (Lusch & Vargo 2006; Gummesson 2008; Barile & al. 2016).

Besides seeing service users as increasingly diverse groups, the interactional aspect provides an interesting lens into exploring culture's role in services. It is assumable that the more services involve human interaction the more likely is the relevance of cultural factors. Often uncertain and dynamic service systems, networks and ecosystems (Barile & al. 2016) add complexity to the interactions. Also, services with little human interaction (e.g. technically mediated, self-service) may rely on cultural factors and knowledge (e.g. choice of visual symbols). Concurrently, some of the service categorizations are also getting diluted or becoming meaningless. High tech (dependent on technology, automation) and high touch (dependent on people) services are producing mixed elemental forms

(Grönroos 2007). For instance, an insurance consultation via an online meeting software includes both high tech and high touch service involvement.

If considering service provider–service user interaction, the amount and type of interaction varies and depends on the type of service, object of the service (the service user, their possessions, or their cognitive / experiential needs), or the degree of the service user involvement. Inspired by Toivonen et al. (2009, 42) Figure 4 illustrates how interaction is present in all sorts of services. The purpose of the figure is to provide examples of knowledge intensive or special skills demanding services (commercial or public), and how the amount of interaction (low/high) varies during service user involvement (low/high), not to categorize services exhaustively. The illustration demonstrates that interaction does not equate to physical service encounters. The type or way of interaction may vary (direct, mediated; one-way, two-way, mass communication; face-to-face, one-channel, multichannel; simultaneous, sequenced; ad-hoc, preplanned; verbal, written, multimedia etc.), yet, as the figure depicts, there is no straightforward correlation between the object of the service or degree of involvement of the service user and the amount of interaction. For example, a guided tourist event is a service that demands a lot of one-way communication from the guide. The service users' involvement is also high since they need to be moving with the guide and the whole group. However, their interaction involvement is typically rather low and less active. In a psychotherapy session, on the other hand, a service user (patient) is typically expected to communicate a lot with the therapist. Moreover, any service interaction may vary and depend a lot on the social and cultural context. As an example of this contextual heterogeneity of a service offering, Figure 4 showcases a hair cutting service. This type of service does not necessarily require a lot of interaction but may – especially in some social and cultural contexts – involve a lot of interaction in practice.

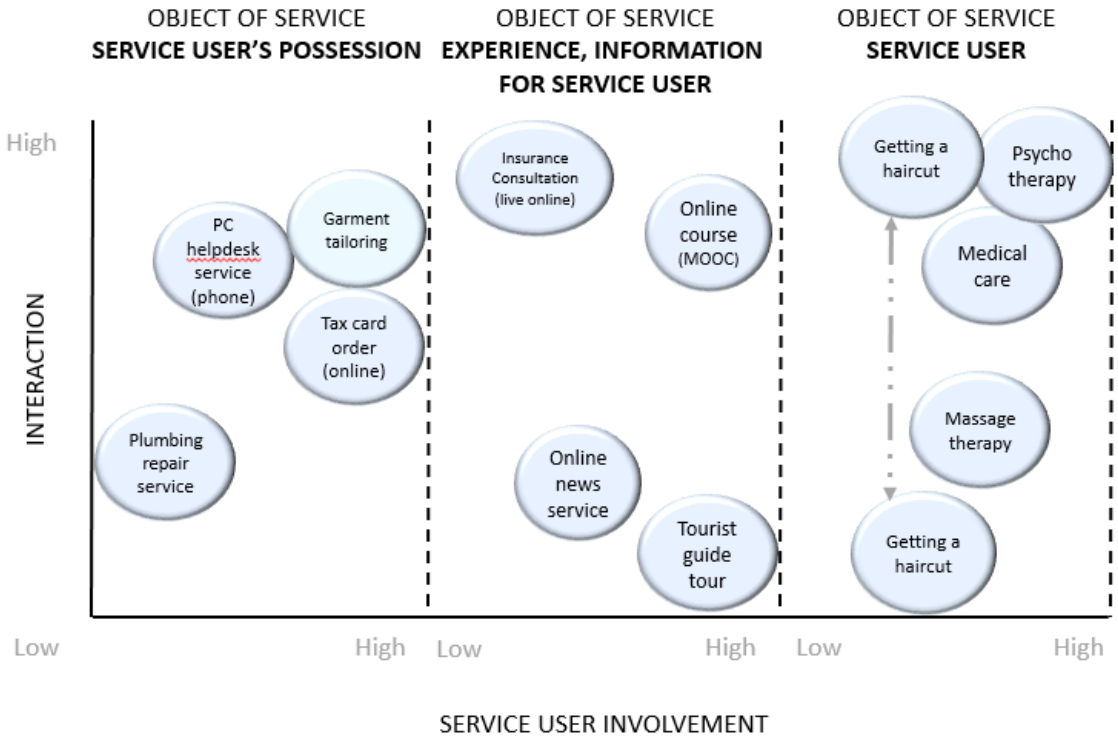


FIGURE 4 Examples of service offerings and interaction in selected knowledge intensive or skills demanding consumer/public services, based on Toivonen et al 2009

Figure 4 does not exemplify low knowledge intensive and little expertise demanding or serial and mass-produced services which are typically low-interaction at service encounters. However, even these kinds of services are likely to be culturally very different and would benefit from relationship management. Taking an example from consumer services: Frequent visits to a certain coffee shop would entail a loyal relationship but the degree of interaction and customer's involvement during the service co-production (see section 2.4.1) or at encounter would still be rather low. Presumably, high investment or other professional services (such as business-to-business services) involve a higher degree of interaction. Observing service performances from an intercultural perspective, a lot of issues are relevant and need to be addressed during service interactions (e.g. Tam, Sharma & Kim 2014; Rosenbaum 2005).

Although important, service interaction seems not be the only factor being relevant for the service process stakeholders. Research in the service field has progressed to focus on value formation where interaction is seen as one component only, although as an important one. Scholars have realized that value formation is a more longitudinal process taking place beyond service encounters and interactions (Strandvik, Heinonen & Vollmer 2018). New knowledge of value formation calls for new ways of thinking about service and for wider perspectives. These research interests have transformed the thinking in the field and spurred a groundbreaking shift in service marketing research. The new paradigm is introduced in the next section.

2.3.3 New logics for service business

A strong focus on interactions and relationships helped to shift the focus onto the service user (Strandvik 2013). The approach produced terminology such as customer orientation, market orientation or customer-centricity, often used interchangeably to describe the business logic. Korhonen (2018, 30) points out that these terms are defined differently by various scholars. Commonly, the elusive terms focus on service users and value emerging during the service process. The relationship orientation in service marketing and management has been shown to be beneficial for both the service user and business performance (ibid. p. 33), and the conceptualizations served as steppingstones towards the importance of understanding service interaction, service users' needs and intergroup dynamics.

A similar orientation on the service user has been found to be beneficial also in public services, where a need for improved services responding to economic, social and environmental issues is evident (cf. Sangiorgi 2015; Strandvik & Heinonen 2015; Thomas 2008). The public sector often needs to solve complex issues, and expectations are high for transforming citizens from passive receivers to active individuals (Jégou & Manzini 2008) and to provide service systems to support well-being of citizens, for instance through health, education, social and training services (Design Council 2006; Andersson 2010).

The business perspective on relationships management and concepts such as customer-centricity are, nevertheless, seen as grounded in goods-dominant business logic (GDL) focusing on singular transactions (Bettencourt, Vargo & Lusch 2014). The traditional GDL is based on a mindset of marketing goods, i.e. services as non-physical alternatives for products, and on a value-in-exchange perspective, where value is seen "exchanged" at the service encounter (Grönroos 2007, 25). In relationship marketing the locus of value was in relationships and interactions. These perspectives do not offer opportunities to understand service users in the economic and social changes as they are focused on the service provider organization (Lusch & Vargo 2008). As a true service user focused (using the term "customer") approach Vargo and Lusch (2004) introduced the service-dominant logic (SDL). The foundational principles of SDL include axioms such as: A product is actually a service that it helps to deliver; value is co-created by the service firm (provider organization) and the service user (customer); service firms can only deliver value propositions; and the service user ultimately defines the value (Vargo & Lusch 2004; 2008; 2016). Consequently, all organizations sell or provide service. No matter what the form of offering (product or service) it is helping the service user to get a job done (Bettencourt & al. 2014, 51). For example, a car is – in the end – not just a product but a service for the customers to move themselves from one place to another destination. Equally, a training course is actually not an educational "service product" but a service that helps the service user to accomplish certain skill-requiring activities at her work. Co-creation becomes an economic management strategy to produce value mutually. It encompasses the idea that markets provide a new platform where service users and organizations can share, combine and renew resources and capabilities to create

mutually benefiting value in interaction, service and mutual learning (Prahaland & Ramaswamy 2004; Lusch & Vargo 2006).

Services (in plural) as separate service offerings are considered to be terminology of goods-based logic (GDL), equivalent to "service products". The singular form "service" provides a more contemporary perspective on service as experienced value (Edvardsson & al. 2005, 111; Gummesson 2007; Grönroos 2008). With this new paradigmatic approach, Edvardsson et al. (2005) emphasized the experience, benefit and value that service brings to the service user. The role of a service provider has changed drastically from a provider of transactions to an enabler for service experiences. Whatever the form of the offering, the goal is to render service, to make the service user feel "being served" or to get a job done (Grönroos 2008; Bettencourt & al. 2014).

SDL sparked more interest in service research towards value focused approaches. Grönroos (2011, 283–284) claims that since "all types of resources transmit service and are consumed or used as "service" the logic should not be called just service "dominant" but a logic of service, in short "Service Logic" (SL). The SL approach stresses the interactive process which allows the service provider to "– – move beyond value facilitators only and become co-creators of value with the customer as well" (Grönroos 2011, 296) while in SDL, value is created together in "networks of networks" by interdependent service process stakeholders' interactions (Vargo 2009, 374).

Both service-dominant logic (SDL) and service logic (SL) are based on the perspective of "transmitting service" to the service user, thus in essence based on provider logics (Figure 5). Complementary service research emphasizes the service user perspective instead of the service perspective (Heinonen, Strandvik, Mickelsson, Edvardsson, Sundström & Andersson 2010; Grönroos & Voima 2013) because it is ultimately the service user who defines "service", i.e. the value experienced while using a service offering. The interactions and use should thus be studied from the service user perspective. Therefore, Heinonen et al. (2010) and Voima, Heinonen & Strandvik (2010) claim that like GDL, SDL and SL, too, all are very provider-dominant in their mindsets and do not help gain enough knowledge about a service user's real needs and expectations. Instead, they propose a new mental model which they call "customer-dominant logic of service" (CDL). Moreover, Heinonen et al. (2010, 5) argue that CDL is a different business perspective in that it positions service users truly in the center of the focus. Figure 5 depicts the different service business logics in their relevant spheres.

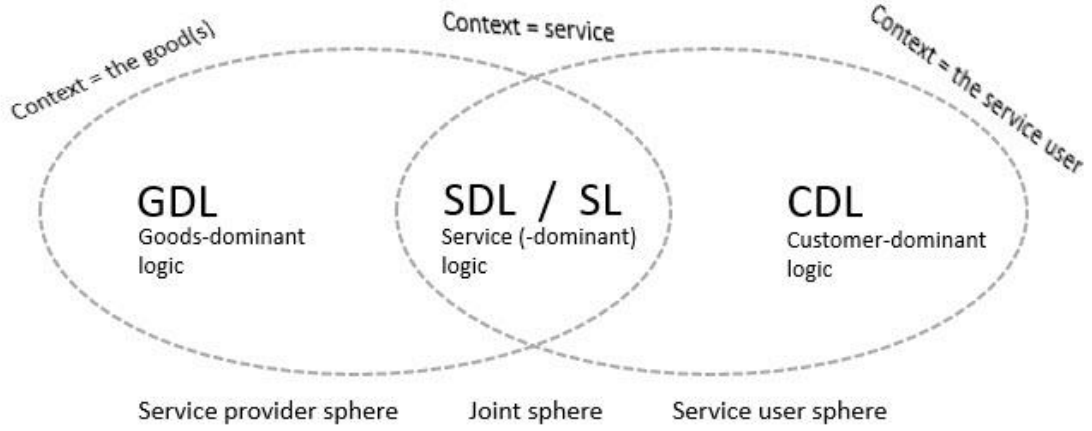


FIGURE 5 Strategic mindsets, their focus spheres and contexts in service marketing and management. Based on Heinonen et al. 2010 and Grönroos & Voima 2013.

Heinonen and Strandvik (2015) and Strandvik et al. (2018) further claim that a customer-dominant logic is also needed to uncover invisible needs related to the service and a service user's everyday life, i.e. service users and their lives being the context for value emergence (Figure 5). This means that more understanding is needed related to a provider organization's relevant business and service-related activities. This is a ground-breaking change, since many service provider organizations still function traditionally, and common business planning and decision-making tools are based on transaction thinking (Viljakainen, Toivonen & Aikala 2013; in Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2015, 309). Furthermore, typically siloed service provider organizations have very differing views on customers' needs, wishes or dreams depending on which department, function or service line is involved (Strandvik 2017). Strandvik further claims that, in fact, in service provider organizations hardly anyone knows what service users really prefer and how service could be integrated in service users' lives.

The evolution of different service marketing logics during the past decades is illustrated in Figure 6. The graph also locates service design in relation to the overall development of the research field although it is not considered a theory as such. Strandvik (2013, 2017) claims that while moving from the provider-focused perspective towards the process-oriented perspective (including interaction processes) too much focus has been attached on the "moments of truth" (encounters in customer-provider interaction, Normann 1992). Instead, the research interests should be shifted in the direction of use situations, beyond the service encounters and towards the customer spheres where the interactive processes lead to and where the service user's value is actually formed. This mindset is the core of the customer-dominant logic (CDL).

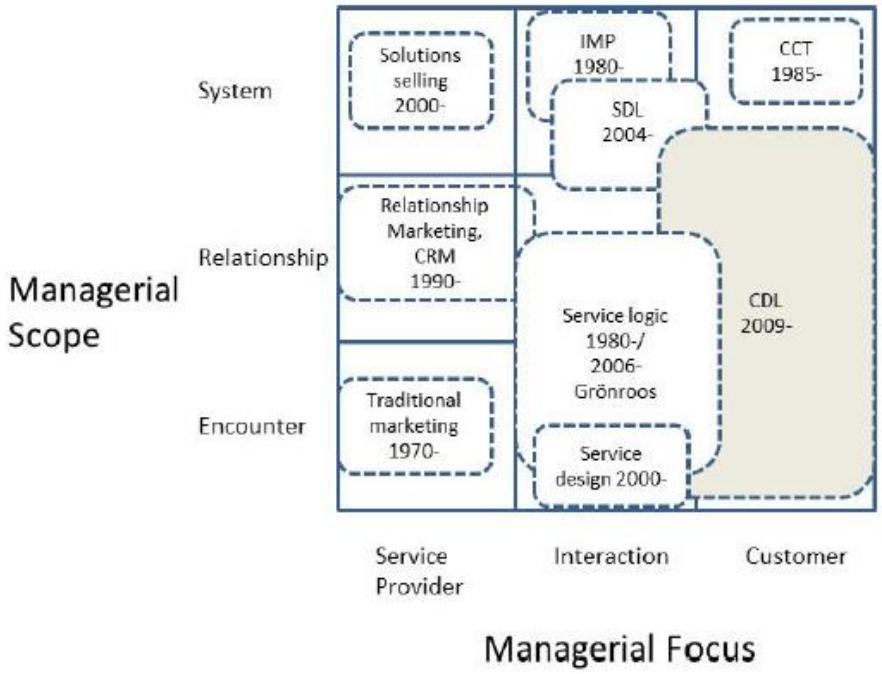


FIGURE 6 Different perspectives on marketing (Strandvik 2013; used with permission) CRM = Customer relationship marketing; IMP= Industrial marketing and purchasing; SDL= service-dominant logic; CCT= customer culture theory; CDL= customer dominant logic

The new paradigm provides an opportunity to better understand culturally dependent service needs and ways of benefiting of service offerings in various contexts. It enables new understanding on how value is being formed. CDL provides a useful framework to examine the role of cultural factors while aiming at capturing a service user's "reasoning and sense making" and is different from the emphasis on "aggregate concepts such as customer cultures, practices, and collectives – –" (Strandvik & Heinonen 2015, 122). Different cultural settings alter the value priorities, and very similar offerings can deliver excellent or miserable service depending on the context (Bettencourt & al. 2014, 58). CDL acknowledges that service users and their mental models are diverse, and there are thus many customer logics. The scholars call for a deeper knowledge of service users' lives, their long-term service experiences and the various context-bound service processes by suggesting more in-depth ethnographical studies.

2.3.4 Service as value

Value (as equaling price) has long been a central concept in service research. The new service marketing perspectives have widened the concept of value. But what exactly is the "value" that is co-created or emerging? Is it perceived differently in different large cultural contexts, such as nations, regions or ethnic groups?

The abstract notion seems to be escaping exact conceptualization. There is no agreed upon definition on value, and it has been conceptualized differently

depending on the field of inquiry and on the epistemological perspective (Gallarza, Gil-Saura & Holbrook 2011; Korkman 2006). The term has conceptual linkages to the notions of (customer) satisfaction and quality, and Gallarza et al. (2011, 184) regard these terms as "hybrid constructs – – in the sense that one is usually conceptualized with reference to the others".

Holbrook (1999) points out the difference between values and value. The plural form means *criteria* by which judgments about value are made, such as cultural values. Value in singular refers to a *preferential judgement* (Korkman 2006, 32). This is an important distinction to be made, since in the context of cultural studies and social sciences, values (in plural) are defined as collectively perceived, desirable, abstract and general goals that guide a person's choices and perceptions (Helkama 2015, 8).

Among many scholars, Alakoski (2015) has explored alternative and historically evolved views on value. By reviewing service marketing related literature, she concluded ten different approaches to value: exchange value, consumer value, customer desired and received value, value in business markets, added value, relationship value, value chain, value proposition, value in use, value in the experience (ibid. p. 43; Holbrook 1999; Edvardsson, Tronvoll & Gruber 2011; Helkkula 2010).

In service contexts, the emergence of value is a manifold phenomenon. Verbs such as propose, offer, produce, exchange, form, create, co-create, or emerge are used to describe how value is brought to existence. All stakeholders (e.g. service user, service provider, partners, networks) are aiming at getting value out of the service process. Value is elusive and dynamic in the sense that it keeps changing, depends on the context, and means different things to different people. Take for instance a travel insurance: if an emergency occurs involving the service user, the value rendered by the insurance service can be immense in many aspects. If nothing happens, the value it brings may be nominal although emotionally securing. Accordingly, from the provider organization perspective, value is defined very differently.

Notably, service users are not looking for good service(s) per se but for the *value* that the service brings. For example, a mobile communication operator service has little value as such but allowing the service user to connect with her friends creates the actual value (accumulating during the use of service). Even the process of planning the purchase and the dreams connected with the prospect of being able to play better online games with friends can evoke the feelings of being better off than before, i.e. create value. Grönroos (2008) points out that even though the concept of value is often associated with positive connotations only, the service process can also take negative turns and create bad value experiences for the stakeholders.

In the earlier production-oriented and goods-dominant logic value was mostly seen as trade-off value (value-in-exchange) where the service user was seen as a rational actor comparing service offerings and potential utility (value) (Kotler, Keller, Brady & Hansen 2012). Porter's (1985) classic value-chain perspective characterized value as something that is cumulated in the process and delivered by the provider organization. Thus, value was seen as something that could

be "handed over" from the service provider's sphere into the service user's sphere (see Fig. 5). According to this logic, the provider organization was assumed to know what exactly service users need and value.

Normann and Ramirez (1993; 1994) renewed the predominant interpretation of value in business economics and marketing and shifted the focus onto the service user (customer). With the new mindsets on service, Vargo and Lusch (2004, 2008) and Grönroos (2008) present a newer perspective on value. The value creation is positioned in the core of modern economic exchange and value is actually value-in-use, always individually and contextually determined by the service user. The application of competences – such as knowledge and skills – is seen to create value to benefit the stakeholders of a service process. Physical products are considered only means to support the value creation process. Service-dominant logic (section 2.3.3) transits the traditional ways of thinking about value towards value-creation networks, value co-creation and value propositions instead of concepts such as equilibrium systems, value-added and price (Lusch & Vargo 2006, 281–288). The potential value is co-created in interaction and by exchanging available competences and resources. This requires agreements on the content of interactions and mutual needs (Vargo, Maglio & Akaka 2008, 146). Grönroos & Voima (2013, 137, citing Berger & Luckmann 1966) similarly emphasize the value co-creation and a more holistic perspective on value in the customer context but stress the function of interaction. Grönroos & Voima contend that value co-creation takes place in interaction and it is the service user who creates the actual value-in-use during usage where value is socially constructed through experiences. The interaction can be direct (in the joint sphere, see Fig. 5) or indirect in use situations where the customer interacts with outputs of the provider organization's processes, such as a product (p. 142).

For each user the value creation process is different, and value is constructed and emerging non-linearly in different spatial and temporal settings encompassing various emotional, social, ethical or environmental dimensions (Grönroos & Voima 2013; Helkkula & al. 2012a). Edvardsson et al. (2011, 327) similarly emphasize value as a social construct where social forces contribute to dynamic value creation. As a consequence, the focus in service research has shifted from the perspective of the organization towards that of the service users, on their needs and ability to extract value out of the service during the service co-creation process (cf. Grönroos & Voima 2013; Vargo & Lusch 2008; Prahaland & Ramaswamy 2004). The perceived value emerges through the interaction between the service provider and service user (value-in-exchange) and the use (value-in-use accumulating over time) and depends ultimately on the service user. Thus, the role of the service provider is practically facilitation of desirable service experiences (Grönroos & Voima 2013) and demands for more understanding on the factors influencing a positive (or negative) value experience.

Heinonen & Strandvik (2015) point out the subjectivity and diversity of customer logics and value creation processes. It is an opportunity for the service provider to reveal how service users are generating value-in-use, away from the service provider's sphere. Strandvik et al. (2018) stress the importance of under-

standing service users' mindsets and contexts where cultural meanings are constructed in various social practices. They further emphasize that service user value is also emerging outside the service provider–service user interactions. Service users' earlier experiences, their own contexts, use situations and mental activities after the service interactions may also be relevant for the value creation.

The notion of the "line of visibility" used in traditional service blueprints (Shostack 1984) to design service processes from the service user perspective becomes, therefore, inadequate. Uncovering service user activities that are unknown and invisible to the service provider demand additional efforts. Strandvik et al. (2018) assert that changing situations, trends and cultural factors, i.e. the whole service user ecosystem needs to be considered as the context for value emergence. They claim that qualitative research methods are to be prioritized when aiming at sensing weak signals and understanding deeper how service users interpret and give meanings to service use situations and the way value is being created.

Korkman (2006) examines the concept of value from a practice-theory perspective, as a form of contextualism. He first presents three paradigmatically different stances to "customer value" (service user value): cognitivistic, experiential, and resource-based theories of value, and then introduces his practice-oriented approach. This approach takes its inspiration from the resource-based view of customer value (ibid. p. 43). Figure 7 summarizes Korkman's review on customer value in service marketing and management and, at the same time, provides an illustration for one potential classification of various value categorization. The practice-oriented approach to customer value emphasizes that value cannot be produced according to the service provider's intentions but is created and evolving continuously in a service user's changing situations which are mostly invisible for the service provider.

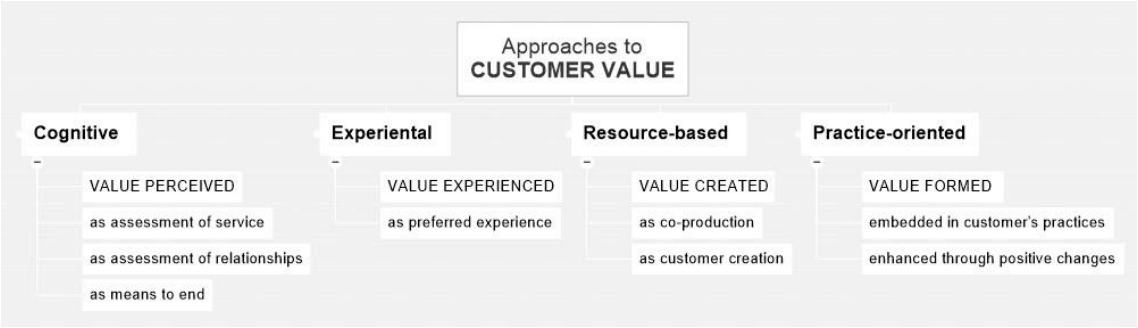


FIGURE 7 Different customer value concepts in service marketing and management, based on Korkman 2006.

Korkman (2006, 35–37) describes the cognitivistic approach to customer value as a service user's process where they compare and make judgements about past, present or imagined future experiences' value for them (citing Oliver 1999). This approach has its roots in the classical utility theory and implies that value is perceived subjectively, and value is mainly generated by the provider organization and exchanged during provider-customer interaction. Utility may not always be

perceived rationally but also hedonistically, and concepts like benefits and sacrifice, and personal tastes have been gradually included in the ideology of customer value (ibid. p. 34–35). From a sociocultural perspective this approach is problematic since it "excludes context as an active source of value creation" (p. 37).

While service users are considered to be "thinkers" in the cognitivistic value approach, the experiential approach also presents them as "feelers and doers" (Korkman 2006, 37). This perspective is rooted in a phenomenological stance where "world is considered as experienced world", making this approach highly subjectivist (p. 38). Holbrook (1999) claims that service user (consumer) value emerges through experiences such as efficiency, play, excellence, aesthetics, status, ethics, esteem and spirituality. The value thus refers to the experience of consumption (Korkman 2006, 38–39). The focus of this approach is in the immediate individualistic and subjective experience of a service user but the socio-cultural context is neither taken into consideration in this approach (ibid. p. 39).

The resource-based perspective on customer value gives service users a creative and active role. A service user is seen as a resource for the service provider or for a larger network (Korkman 2006, 41). This perspective of value links closely to the understanding of customer value in recent service marketing literature (SDL; SL). Customer value is generated, co-produced or co-created, depending on the service logic taken. From the resource-based perspective, services are viewed as a chain of interactions with touchpoints all along the service consumption process. The quality of these inter-human or technology mediated interactions influences the quality of the service user's experience and perception of value.

The practice-oriented stance takes service users' practices as its starting point (Korkman 2006, 164). Practices relate to informal "structures by which actions are orchestrated in everyday life" (p. 40) and are "culturally embedded 'ways of doing' that combine actions and context" (p. 10). Practice can thus be any chains of actions based on "a template", such as ordering food or fine dining rituals. Korkman claims that "the actual service [value] is the practice which the customer is engaged in, whereas the provider would then point out its own involvement in the specific practice" (p. 31). Therefore, interactions as such are not important but only as part of the practices where the value is embedded. From this perspective, a service user should foremost be viewed as an actor who is actively constructing meanings in the practices (pp. 164–165).

The value creation in social practices thus becomes a cultural process and brings in the collective aspect (see also Arantola-Hattab 2013) of value emergence, while the value-in-use perspective is perceived in a rather individualistic way of addressing value emergence (Grönroos 2011). The practice-oriented approach is "dynamic, contextual and historic". Social practices and sense making in them vary depending on a cultural environment such as a community or a nation (Holliday 2013, 6). Korkman's (2006) approach can thus shed more light on value emergence in culturally and socially constructed service sequences.

Overall, the nature of value as such is often impossible to describe (Helkkula et al. 2012a), yet it is evident that services are not offered or consumed in a

cultural vacuum. The role of social and cultural practices in terms of value is not clear and more research is needed. According to the new service logics (SDL, SL or CDL), the feeling of being served, i.e. the "service" equals the value-in-use which is "idiosyncratic, experiential, contextual and meaning laden" (Vargo & Lusch 2011, 7). This fundamentally new perspective on value suggests a conversion from "marketing to" towards a "marketing with" point of view (Lusch & Vargo 2008). This collaborative approach paved the way for a new kind of mindset for designing for service. In lieu of offering great service(s) or "service design" many service designers claim to aim at enabling great service experiences (Zomerdijk & Voss 2010; Polaine, & al. 2013, 131).

2.3.5 Service as an experience

The above reflections on value reveal that the notions of value and experience are closely interrelated. Value connected with a service is *experienced* qualitatively and subjectively and is often evaluated in relation to expected service. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines (2019) the term "experience" as something "personally encountered, undergone, or lived through" and as an "act or process of directly perceiving events or reality". Coxon (2015) defines an experience as a phenomenal, mental construct that is always unique for an individual. An experience is something "lived-through" and charged up with meaning. These mental constructs are characterized by a strong cumulative aspect when people's life events add to the experiences and subsequent memory structures (ibid. p. 12). The subjective notion of experience is elemental for service user centered development of services. Jain, Aagja and Bagdare (2016) consider experience as a new basis of exchange and essential for both the service user and for achieving success for service provider organizations.

Pine and Gilmore (1998) launched the concept "experience economy". This advanced experience-focused research especially in the field of consumer marketing. The authors claimed that even a usual cab ride can be turned into a memorable experience if the service provider transitions the thinking from selling services to customers to providing "staged, personal sensations for a guest" (pp. 98–99). The concept is often linked with entertaining and hedonistic services. Prahaland and Ramaswamy (2004, 137) consider that – based on the value co-creation perspective discussed above – "value is now centered in the experiences of consumers". Grönroos (2007, 7) remarks that service firms are mostly operating in an "ordinary economy" and should not be carried away by the experience economy concept. Carú and Cova (2013) provide a less ideological perspective on consumer experience and claim that ordinary experiences and extraordinary experiences are just two different levels of intensity of experience. Moreover, they claim that a utilitarian value of products or services contemporarily taken for granted and people are looking for meanings which can be produced as part of the consumption activity. This entails an embodiment of meanings in the form of experiences (Arnaud 2018). The excess of material possessions is driving people (e.g. consumers) to seek meaningful life in experiences. Service design researchers Meroni and Sangiorgi (2011, 220) note that with economic transformations

social and environmental concerns are gaining recognition as determinants for value experiences.

Helkkula, Kelleher and Pihlström (2012b, 556) point out the different ontological and epistemological backgrounds of service experience characterizations: process-based, outcome-based and phenomenological experiences. The latter relates to the topical discourse of the service-dominant logic where value is identified as being phenomenological (experiential) and meaning laden (Vargo & Lusch 2011). Heinonen et al. (2010) envision value emerging from customers' mental and emotional experiences which Arnould (2018), taking a consumer marketing perspective, describes as outcomes of narrative, material, social and political imagination. Grönroos and Voima (2013, 138) claim that value is created during the service usage in a "longitudinal, dynamic, *experiential* process –".

Helkkula et al. (2012a, 66) state that value in the experience is "an intrasubjective, socially intersubjective, context- and situation-specific phenomenon that is both lived and imaginary, constructed based on previous, current, and imaginary future experiences and is temporal". The authors argue that value is experienced following a service experience. The service user's value-in-use may not be instant but accumulates over time (Grönroos & Voima 2013). Helkkula et al. (2012b) separate experiences from practices: Practices are socio-cultural phenomena as routinized patterns of behavior, embodied and manifested mainly at the collective (cultural) level. Experiences are phenomenological and subjective sense making, both individually and socially constructed. Helkkula et al. (2012b) see practices and experiences as intertwined and both should be taken into account in value creation. Contextual and cultural factors are thus important in value creation where individuals, practices and experiences cannot be separated.

Designing for pleasant experiences is a common practice in many design fields (Benz 2015), and the experience concept is dominating discussions in the professional field of service design, too (Teixeira & al. 2012). Expectations for good service experiences have risen while market economies and leading brands have trained customers and service users to expect more (Reason, Løvlie & Brand Flu 2016, 3). In their service business guidebook Polaine et al. (2013, 132) classify service-related experiences in task experiences, commercial experiences or life experiences, which can be further broken down into four (sometimes overlapping) categories of user experience, customer experience, service provider experience and human experience.

Along with the emergence of service design around the latter decade of the last millennium, usability engineer and cognitive scientist Donald Norman claims to have invented the term "user experience" (Merholz 2007). Figure 8 highlights the role of user experience (UX), customer experience (CX), service provider experience (SPX) and human experience (HX) as pivotal concepts and objectives in service design (Polaine & al. 2013, 131). The figure depicts how holistic service design (see 2.3.5) covers and can support all these experiences.

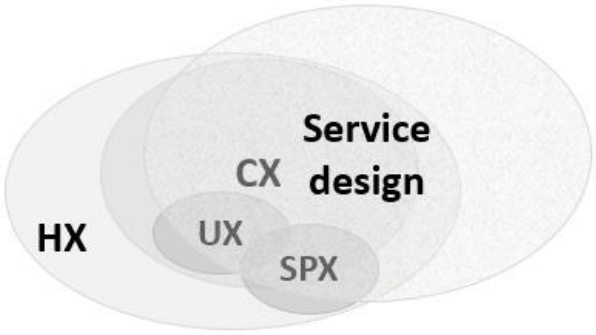


FIGURE 8 Holistic worldview of service design

A user experience (UX) is usually considered to have resulted from interaction with technologies and is shorter in time span than a customer experience. The concept covers cognitive aspects, sensations and feelings most often related to task-based experiences, the ability to complete tasks with the interface functionalities. UX has become a buzzword especially in the field of ICT and interaction design and has spurred new research areas in order to understand trust building, aesthetics and emotions in interaction. (Kamppuri 2011, 21.)

Customer experience (CX) is described as the sum of task experiences (Polaine & al. 2013, 134). It is also based on the service expectations in terms of quality and value. The quality of the service can be managed by the provider organization, but the value experience is solely determined by the customer. Jain et al. (2016) define customer experiences as "a holistic interactive process, facilitated through cognitive and emotional clues, moderated by customer and contextual characteristics, resulting in unique and pleasurable/un-pleasurable memories".

Helkkula (2010, 24) considers the holistic concept of "service experience" to include a service network's multiple beneficiaries' individual experiences and a broader concept than a "customer experience". This is also the term adopted in this study as it stresses the fact that services are often provided in complex value creating networks, service systems (Vargo, Maglio & Akaka 2008).

Service provider experience (SPX) refers to the interactions in between the actors within these arrangements of resources. For instance, staff delivering the service may be simultaneously an internal service user and a service provider (e.g. in administrational and other internal support functions). The SPXs, including employee experiences, take place in service provider spheres and, if negative, they are likely to influence the customer and human experiences (Polaine & al. 2013, 135).

Polaine et al. (2013, 136) define human experience as the overall value experience resulting from a service as a long-term and a much deeper and emotional experience than customer experiences which are often task-based or commercial experiences. Human experience, a concept coined by Richard Buchanan (2001b, 36) impacts the quality of life and well-being at large of a service user and connects design to human dignity and human rights. Human experiences are especially central in the non-commercial public realm (Juninger 2012, 20).

Meroni and Sangiorgi (2011, 38) claim that "understanding experience is crucial for design for services [– –] because experiences are connected to and affected by all the elements that shape the nature and the quality of a service". Patricio et al. (2011) call for a systemic review of service design to address different levels of service user experience.

A qualitative approach helps to gain understanding of cultural factors, and the meanings and value people connect with their experiences. Coxton (2015, 12) points out that human experiences are constantly interpreted through social and cultural filters. In business related research, the consumer culture theory (CCT) especially has been used to explore heterogeneous distribution of meanings of cultural groupings (Arnould & Thmpson 2005). CCT observes how culture of origin is socially constructed as something consumable (e.g. food, music, traditions).

Many service situations can be considered as being everyday cultural practices (e.g. using public transportation, ordering a meal, seeing a health care specialist), and be perceived as noticeable signs of difference to newcomers (Holliday 2013, 6). In a particular cultural context, people may experience even small provider behaviors such as the tone of voice, subtle manifestation of suspicion, avoidance (e.g. eye contact) or lower employee effort, which form experiences of strangeness or uncertainty. Thus, uncovering the value-creation logics in different cultural settings is important. Service design aims at supporting optimal service experiences. As the success of a service is increasingly determined by the subjective value experienced by the service users, uncovering these tacit, often culturally emerging service needs, wishes and dreams is essential. A collaborative approach and understanding of joint sense making beyond behavior helps to develop a service and improve the use experience. Ojasalo and Ojasalo (2015, 313) and Wetter-Edman (2014) claim that service design practices have the potential to realize the new business logics. For getting detailed understanding about experiences Patricio et al. (2011) suggest mostly qualitative methods such as observation, in-depth interviews, focus groups, usability testing, and walkthroughs as suitable instruments for data collection.

2.4 Service design

Service design (SD) is a human-centric way of service development that aims at bringing service user centered perspectives and processes to benefit improvement of existing and innovation of new services (e.g. Sangiorgi & Juninger 2015). Holmlid and Evenson (2008) describe service design as "complimentary to conventional service development". Clatworthy (2013, 9) emphasizes the experiential dimension of service design and defines it as "designed offerings to provide experiences that happen over time and across different touchpoints". Service design is still considered as an emerging and establishing domain. (Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011; Miettinen 2012; Wetter-Edman 2014). Academic research is still relatively scarce and, therefore, in the following, both academic and professional literature will be used.

There seems to be no single definition used to describe this primarily practice-oriented (Kimbell 2011) domain. Each author characterizes service design slightly differently. The examples below illustrate selected approaches. The length and complexity of the latter definitions reflect the evolution of the domain from an early methodology-based approach towards a wide systemic, multidisciplinary approach.

- SD is a consulting practice, often operated in the new service development contexts, characterized by a people-centered design approach, and by a highly adaptable design process and tools, leading to highly knowledge-intensive design outcomes.
  Han, Q. 2010. Practices and principles in service design, stakeholder, knowledge and community of service. Doctoral thesis, School of Art & Design, Dundee University

- SD is the use of a designerly way of working when improving or developing people-intensive service systems through the engagement of stakeholders (such as users and frontline staff).
  Segelström, F. 2013. Stakeholder engagement for service design. Doctoral thesis, Department of Computer and Information Science, Linköping University

- SD helps organizations see their services from a customer perspective. It's an approach to designing services that balances the needs of the customer with the needs of the business, aiming to create seamless and quality service experiences. Service design is rooted in design thinking, and brings a creative, human-centered process to service improvement and designing new services. Through collaborative methods that engage both customers and service delivery teams, service design helps organizations gain true, end-to-end understanding of their services, enabling holistic and meaningful improvements.
  A crowdsourced definition by a panel including 150 practitioners or academics in service design, collected by Megan Erin Miller (in Stickdorn, Hormess, Lawrence & Schneider 2018, 20).

- SD is the practice of designing services. It uses a holistic and highly collaborative approach to generate value for both the service user and the service provider throughout the service's lifecycle. In practice, service design helps to choreograph the processes, technologies and interactions driving the delivery of services, using a human-centered perspective. Service Design today is applicable across multiple sectors, helping to deliver strategic and tactical objectives for both the private and public sector.
  The global Service Design Network's definition for SD in 2019 (www.service-design-network.org)

Service design as an educational field emerged in 1991 when Cologne International School of Design (KISD) formed a network of academics and professionals involved in related design disciplines. The first professorship was established at KISD in Germany in 1995 (KISD 2016a). The first service design consultancy was formed around the early 2000's in London, UK, when the founders realized that designing mere interaction and interfaces was not enough. Development projects seemed to involve a whole network of actors and "eventually end up at the service" (Downs in Moggridge 2006, 412). The need to design services holistically and to promote use over consumption had been noted. In hindsight, it seems that the practice of service design is a logical response to the changing economics and market needs towards more user- and human-centered services.

The need for service design had also been recognized within the service management and marketing field. Shostack (1982) is seen to have first coined the term "service design". It took, however, a longer time for the term to get established, and a decade later the service marketing researcher Gummesson (1990) argued again for a need for systematic design of services. While product development has been an integral part of traditional marketing (e.g. Kotler & al. 2012) and can be perceived as part of the goods-dominant logic (GDL), modern marketing logics provide a theoretical framework for understanding and analyzing service design (Wetter-Edman 2014, 95; Blomkvist 2014)). Figure 9, based on Strandvik (2013), positions service design in relation to the new business perspectives emphasizing service users' active role in value creation (e.g. Vargo & Lusch 2004; Grönroos 2006; Heinonen & al. 2010).

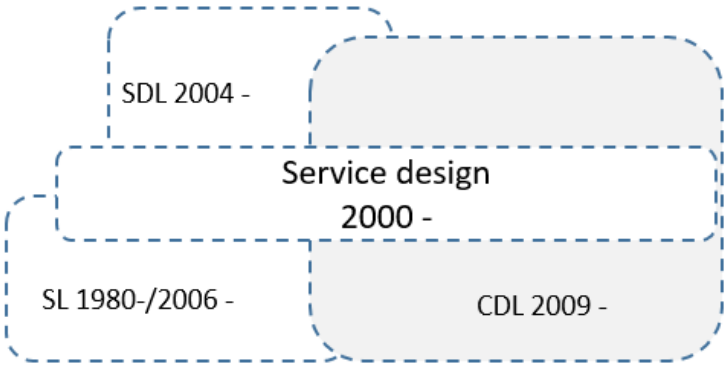


FIGURE 9 Positioning service design based on the different perspectives on marketing and service. (Based on Strandvik 2013, see Figure 5)
SDL= service-dominant logic; SL= service logic; CDL= customer dominant logic

Although Strandvik (2013) considers service design rooted in service logic (SL) and service-dominant logic (SDL) - the emphasis being on the service provider organization perspective - service design seems currently epistemologically close to CDL especially due to its service users involving methodological approaches in uncovering and understanding the different customer logics (see section 2.3.3). Besides, service design is often characterized by its focus on human-centricity –

defined as a broader interest on the service user's life than just customer-centricity (e.g. Costa, Patricio & Morelli 2016; Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011). The significant linkage between CDL and SD is likely to continue and find new forms in the future.

Besides the influence of service management and marketing, SD has simultaneously been inspired by the field of design, especially design thinking, industrial and interaction design (Sangiorgi & Juninger 2015, 166; Kimbell 2011; Erlhoff, Mager & Manzini 1997). Design thinking, a close concept with service design, is considered to be coined by Rowe in 1987 in the field of urban design (Dam & Siang 2019) and by Buchanan (1992, 157) in the context of human centric design. Design thinking gained popularity in parallel with the recent paradigm shift in service research and has developed through various specialization areas as a field of inquiry (Dam & Siang 2019). Design thinking and service design share similar starting points and goals. According to Liedtka & Ogilvie (2011) design thinking is based on human-centricity, incorporating multidisciplinarity, user-centered empathy, and a holistic problem-solving approach with all involved stakeholders. Design thinking requires an understanding of people's behavior, value, practices, interactions, expressed and hidden needs and motives. The terminology in the field is not quite established and the two concepts (SD and design thinking) are often used interchangeably. In correspondence with Tschimmel's (2012) characterization of design thinking as a way of thinking, it can be considered as a problem-solving mindset. This also incorporates the idea of non-designers engaging in designing (Sangiorgi and Juninger 2015, 167–168). Design thinking is a prerequisite for service design which as an approach offers a new kind of means for implementing service logic (Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2015, 312).

The goal of service design is to attain deep insights about service users, their needs and desired goals in order to enhance value creation. Sanders and Stappers (2014, 30) stress that this includes recognizing all levels of people's needs and dreams, encompassing physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and cultural needs. Founding on these aspects, non-material service is given a form that supports the emergence of a good service experience (Mager 2004). Manzini (in Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011, 3) argues that what can be designed is the service action platform, not the actual end result. Nevertheless, scholars and practitioners stress (Lin, Hughes, Katica, Dining-Zuber & Plsek 2011; Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011, 38–41) that service design (or design for services) reaches beyond user-centered design towards human-centricity, not limiting itself only to "use" requirements but including the whole range of human experience (needs, dreams, behaviors). Meroni and Sangiorgi (2011, 226–227) see services "becoming a paradigm for a more relational economy and society" where both society and design are moving toward more open and collaborative patterns. They interpret services as "complex and relational entities that include products in processes where the human component is determinant". Therefore, services cannot be fully designed or predetermined, and they prefer the term "design for services" which implies the idea of transformation of the whole design context (Foglieni & al. 2018, 19). Meroni and Sangiorgi (2011) claim that the term "service design" is more suitable for "services as a different kind of "product" (the old IHIP understanding of service, see

2.3.1). While the use of the term "service" instead of "services" implies the provider organization's role as facilitator for the emergence of customer value, i.e. the feeling of being served or being better off than before the service consumption process (Vargo & Lusch 2004; Grönroos 2006; Gummesson 2007) the term "design for service" would be more accurate. The same understanding is incorporated in the use of "designing for service" which Kimbell (2011, 49) sees as a constructivist approach to the process of design, to create value. Ultimately, it is the service user who experiences or perceives the value-in-use being created during the service process (Grönroos & Voima 2013), and this value becoming a part of the service user's context and even "a part of value in life" (Strandvik & al. 2018). Foglieni et al. (2018, 20) reflect further on the conceptualization of the terms and end up with an observation that "service design is usually referred to as the overall discipline and practice of designing service" while "design for service" represents the investigative and preparatory side of service design. In order to take this wider and practice perspective of the profession, the term "service design" (SD) is used in this dissertation. SD is operationalized as collaborative, human-centered design activities which enable service users' desired goals and positive experiences while also taking service providers' operational and economic objectives into consideration.

The impact of SD reaches beyond single service development processes. The expertise in detecting rapidly shifting service user behavior and needs has given service designers a recognized role in service providers' organizational mindsets and routines (Kurtmollaiev, Fjuk, Pedersen, Clatworthy & Kvale 2018). Clark and Guenther (2014) point out that in keeping up with the promise on delivering great service experience organizational structures need to be transformed and aligned with the experience delivery. The process requires diverse groups of actors and entails design being taken to the organizational level. Thus, besides as a mindset, Stickdorn et al. (2018, 21–22) rightfully describe SD design as a process, as a toolset, as a cross-disciplinary language and as a management approach.

With a holistic approach SD aims at gathering deep insights about service users' needs and involves designing both the front stage (visible to the service user) and backstage (invisible to the service user) of services (Bodine 2012, 11). Service design practitioners Polaine, Løvlie and Reason (2013) emphasize that SD is fundamentally about and for people. They argue (2016, 36) that service design is a counter-evolution for industrialization which has led to "frustration and poor experiences for service users, because the industrial mindset is usually all about *efficiencies* and economies of scale rather than *effectiveness* of the delivered service". Shifting attention from the masses and focusing on individuals requires new knowledge and enables novel opportunities. This also means a shift in research methodology from quantitative towards more qualitative approaches (Patricio & al. 2011; Strandvik & Heinonen 2015).

The breadth and versatility of a SD approach allows the practitioner to discover larger changes in the society and markets. Consequently, design as a shared social process combined with acknowledging the inevitability of uncertainty and ambiguity (Cross 2011, 20) offers possibilities to create new service

solutions, concepts and practices. While design is drawing on cultural inspiration, SD is also constructing new cultural, service-related practices.

2.4.1 Collaborative approach in service design

Service design is often understood in light of its methodology with a strong participatory approach acknowledging the importance of involving a wide range of stakeholder groups (Han 2010, 204). By involving customers with participatory methods service designers support the service providers in fulfilling their new role as facilitators for the customer value creation activities (Wetter-Edman 2014; Bailey 2014).

Terms such as "co-design, co-production, co-creation" illustrate a service user's active role in delivering service, implying that value is created together with involved stakeholders. The terms are also important in describing the participatory aspect of SD. The use of terms, however, has advanced separately in adjacent disciplines and they are sometimes used as synonyms to characterize the collaborative aspect of the design process (Kalinowski 2016, 70; Mattelmäki & Sleeswijk 2011). Ojasalo (2010) elaborates on the concepts of co-production in services and value co-creation from the perspective of service marketing research. While both terms refer to a customer's involvement, the degree of involvement in co-production is lower and based on the provider organization's parameters. Customers can be seen as "partial employees", acting out their roles as scripted by the service provider, and "managing, educating and rewarding customers are needed to enhance customer participation" (ibid. p. 175). Co-creation, on the other hand, refers to value formation and requires thus a more active involvement of the service user. Thus, a dialogical interaction between the provider and user becomes utmost important. The provider strategy starts by tapping into the value networks and also understanding customers' hidden needs by listening and learning together. During the joint value-creation "[c]ustomers may also be directly involved in *co-design*" (ibid. p. 175). Value is co-created or constructed together in interaction. However, value may also emerge and be experienced later (value-in-use), and depends on interactions and on use, or even on imagined contexts or envisioned futures and emerging from "individually determined social contexts" (Helkkula & al. 2012b).

Co-design refers to designing together, and is often used in a more narrow sense than co-creation (Sanders & Stappers 2008). Juninger (2012, 22) claims that co-design is "a method of its own right" following human-centered design principles. In co-design, designers as facilitators work together with other stakeholders and use their ideas for inspiration and innovation (Sanders & Stappers 2014, 29). Steen, Manschot and Koning (2011) see benefits in co-design for the SD project, for the service users and for the organizations involved. Sanders and Stappers (2014) see co-design as the dominant practice in SD with a "designing-with" mindset (ibid. p. 30). This entails an understanding that people (service users) themselves are the experts of their future lives and should be involved in the service development process from early on.

Summarized, co-design (the collaboration of designers and service stakeholders) can be seen as an overarching action-based concept in service design, drawing on the understanding and knowledge of the value co-creation processes and service co-production activities (Figure 10). The joint activity of co-producing a service can be designed collaboratively but not defined completely by the co-design stakeholders. The service user may also act out their roles in other ways than intended. A service user's value creation may start well before the actual service while making plans or dreaming about future use. The experienced value can be influenced by co-design activities, service use situations, and it is not limited to interactions. As illustrated in Figure 10, value for the service user is set during collaborative SD activities and may emerge before the actual service purchase decision, accumulate during interlinked co-design and co-production activities, and may emerge well beyond the actual service use.

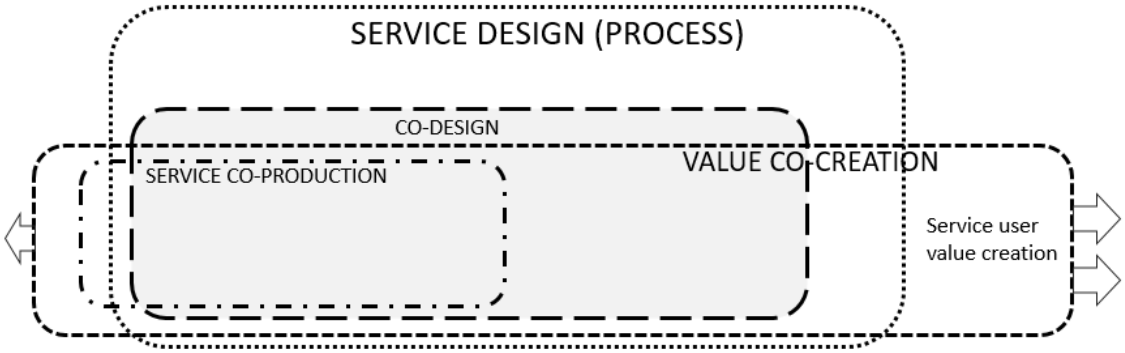


FIGURE 10 Different collaborative activities during a service design process. The arrows indicate the aim of service design to enhance the longitudinal process of value creation.

Design activities are typically complex, iterative processes. There are several recommended process models for service design, one of the best known is the so called double diamond (Figure 11) created by British Design Council (Design Council 2015). This process is divided into four steps: Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver. Each step is marked with specific tools and methods to accomplish the desired goals. In practice, a creative design process starts by discovering insights into the problem, proceeds to defining areas to focus upon, developing potential solutions for the framed challenge and delivering solutions that work.

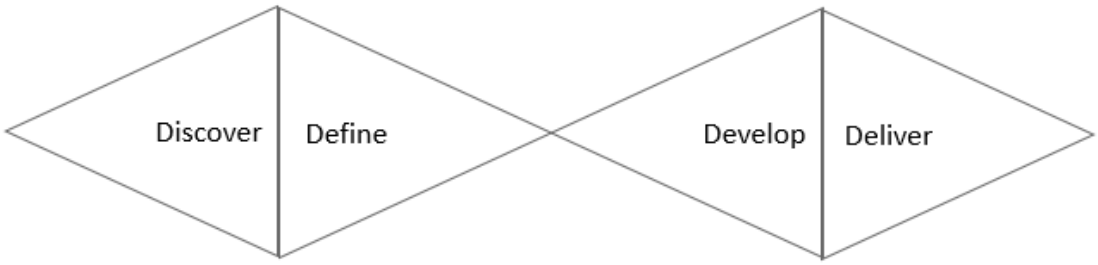


FIGURE 11 A typical service design process (Design Council 2015).

Stickdorn et al. (2018, 37) differentiate the methods and tools. The first term refers to "procedures to accomplish or approach something, such as conducting contextual interviews – –", the latter term referring to "concrete models such as journey maps – – ". The methods and tools used can be traditional (e.g. interviews), adapted for SD (e.g. mobile ethnography) or innovative methods specifically developed for SD (e.g. customer journey maps) (Segelström 2013). The research approach is often qualitative, allowing deeper awareness about the service users' ordinary life, expressed and hidden expectations. Ojasalo (2010, 174) claims that traditional research approaches do not often provide the right types of insights about customer value formation and new improved methods are thus needed.

Service user inclusion as early as possible during the service development process is the key component of service design. If applying the customer-dominant logic (CDL), the design process starts by discovering what the potential service users really need and adjusts the provider organization's processes into delivering solutions based upon these needs. Quite often, though, service design is initiated with the provider organization's interests in mind but aiming at combining the mutual benefits for all stakeholders, in line with the service (-dominant) logic (SDL, SL).

In light of the research objectives of this dissertation more knowledge is needed on how different cultural backgrounds and communicative repertoires are considered and used, how experienced value is constructed and how meanings are interpreted in service co-design, during service co-production and value co-creation activities. Methods used in SD are suitable for interpreting cultural meanings and values and construct new reality. However, this can be a difficult task requiring specific knowledge. Sun (2015) provides an example of gaining cultural insights with design cards. She argues that before rich understandings of local culture can be transformed into design recommendations, the complex cultural influences need to be operationalized. This again builds on the understanding and defining of the concept of culture, which will be further discussed in section 2.5.

2.4.2 Process stakeholders in service design

Services including several stakeholders are social relationship stimulators – not just business offerings or transactions (Normann & Ramirez 1993). Sanders and Steppers (2014, 39) point out that a service user, although central in many aspects, is just one person among others whose needs are to be addressed during service development. The authors note that service designers are typically dependent on true collaboration across functional and organizational borders, and the process emphasis should shift from "design OF" services or "design FOR" users to "design WITH" people.

Han (2010, 54) discovered that professional designers and their relationships with stakeholders were rarely articulated or even considered. Her dissertation (2010) focused on researching who, in which process stages or activities and how various stakeholders were effectively and efficiently involved in service design projects. The three major stakeholder groups were the designers themselves, the service provider organizations (often a client of the service designer) and the service users. The fourth "extended stakeholder" group (e.g. employees, managers from supplier and distributor) were also discovered to have frequent interaction in the service design process. Han also observed a number of different roles taken by the stakeholders: information provider, decision maker, authority, evaluator, alliance and learner (2010, 181). The three stakeholder management approaches taken by the service designers were leading, facilitating and producing, often co-existing in relation to the design activities.

In culturally increasingly diverse communities, there is a growing need for inclusion of diverse perspectives on service process stakeholders' needs and motivations. Diverse people's needs and dreams may not easily be aligned with the provider organization's functional or commercial goals. Many of the problems are "wicked", demanding multiple insights and approaches simultaneously (e.g. Page 2008). A process stakeholder's cultural background may resonate with decisions taken during the process, such as defining of the problem and its boundaries, the choice of methods and tools used during the design process, and during intercultural interaction with other team members and process stakeholders (cf. Blomberg & Darrah 2015; Ting-Toomey & Chung 2012). Research indicates a linkage between diverse co-design teams and produced outcomes. Taking a cross-cultural approach, Alam (2010) and Steenkamp et al. (1999) showed how team cultures, nestled in national and organizational environments, relate with innovativeness in developing new services. Trischler, Kristensson and Scott (2018) provide a more detailed view. In their study, an ideal and most innovative co-design team was composed of members that shared similar goals, their knowledge and experiences differed maximally, and their relationship diversity (gender, age, nationality) was moderately varied. Co-design sessions are relatively short in duration, thus diverse teams were found to need facilitation for team bonding, collaboration, and managing team conflicts (p. 138).

2.4.3 Competence needed in SD

The above observations on service design and its relationship with connecting disciplines indicate a demand for a wide array of competence. Singleton (2012; in Young 2012, 83) asserts that co-designing for service is considered in service design discourse such a complex task that an interdisciplinary approach is necessary. In Table 7, Meroni and Sangiorgi (2011, 211–213), with research backgrounds and emphasis on community-centered design and public services reform, provide a set of four broader job profiles for service design professionals based on their human-centered design approach (p. 204). These profiles are related to four main areas where service designers work on, namely service experiences, service systems, service models and future scenarios. The profiles are coexisting and overlapping, and obviously vary depending on the nature of the organization or institution.

TABLE 7 Job profiles for service designers
Based on Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011, 211–212.

PROFILE	**Description of main objectives**
Designer for service **experiences**	Improve existing services by observing and evaluating service experiences and interactions Suggest new functionalities and ideas Engage users and staff Design conditions – Overlaps with service marketing
Designer for service **policies**	Strategic position Develop policies, business models and service configurations – Overlaps with service management
Designer for service **transformation**	Foster new service models relying on collaborative and democratic patterns Create platforms for collaboration, social networking, open source innovation – Overlaps with community and regional development agents
Designer for service **systems development**	Future directions for regional or sector development agencies Work with local communities to generate visions Introduce design thinking, new services Service scenarios for long-term development processes – Overlaps with urban and territorial planning

Table 7 reflects the need to integrate service design into all social and cultural practices on a wide front, including public, commercial and third-sector organizations. To highlight the interdisciplinary nature of the field, Meroni & Sangiorgi (2011, 215) map knowledge of related disciplines needed to excel in the above job profiles: service operation management, service marketing, interaction design, cognitive psychology, ethnography, experience design, participatory design, scenario building, strategic design, organizational strategy, strategic planning, spatial planning, sociology, project management, production management, network organization studies, social psychology, behavioral science, innovation management, organizational studies, system design.

The array of competences needed vary depending on the profile, but are clearly advanced-level, requiring knowledge-based, action-based and emotion-based skills. The following scholars have outlined competence areas and concrete skill sets required from a service designer from alternative perspectives.

Ojasalo and Ojasalo (2012) outline the required multidisciplinary competences within a framework of a master's degree in Business Administration. The degree in Service Innovation and Design will endow the graduate with competence in business and management in service innovations, value creating competences, and user-centric service design competences. The business competence areas include understanding of value creation processes and relate to a wide set of strategic, managerial and leadership skills (e.g. futures thinking, analysis of global environment, change leadership, service culture, management of networks, financial planning, revenue models, marketing). A service designer also needs competence in deeply knowing the customers and end-users, about development processes, design process and methods, and cultural issues.

Many authors (e.g. Wetter-Edman 2014, 199) stress the intermediary role the designer holds between the service user and the organization. This requires a new kind of holistic and multidisciplinary competence where a future designer can work across scholarly and practical fields, and in organizationally diverse and cross-functional positions. Sanders and Stappers (2014, 29), coming from a design background, state that service designers need to master general design methods, but also increase their knowledge in social sciences (in order to understand the service user world) and focus more on facilitation and research related skills. They emphasize integration of many disciplines, process-orientation and collaboration: "It is a growing recognition of and skill at involving end-users in design processes as 'experts of their experience' (p. 30)". Segelström (2013, 143) sees visualization skills as major support in stakeholder engagement, way of communicating insights and delivering research findings and development ideas for the client.

Han (2010) mapped the knowledge and skills required in "communities of service". The explicit knowledge and techniques (as mentioned above) are complemented by tacit knowledge of handling human relationships and experience, that she calls "social skills" (p. 189). In this skill set she lists the following: negotiation skills, team work and coordination with people from different disciplines, the ability to quickly grasp the management style of the service provider, sensitivity towards the underlining social/political relationships. Mattelmäki, Vaajakallio & Koskinen (2014), drawing on interpretive emphatic design focusing on users' everyday life experiences, claim that empathic sensitivity in design consists of sensitivity layers toward humans, design, techniques and collaboration. The layer of human sensitivity is particularly meaningful for making sense of service design process stakeholders, their experiences and contexts.

Based on skill requirements for service designers in job postings in the USA, Mirzaie and Parlato (2017) summarize, aiming at bridging the gap between academia and industry, four skill areas that should be part of a service designer's capacity building. The skill areas reflecting recruiting expectations are human

skills, technical skills, business skills and quantitative skills. The last area includes interrelationships between design and business models, feasibility and viability of solutions with financial and operational impact. Notwithstanding the importance of the three other areas, they want to emphasize the human skills area which they consider providing critical preparation for service designers' challenges.

Looking at the above listings, it is easy to see a correlation and partial overlap with intercultural competences (cf. Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009). Many practitioners have also argued that this competence should be seen as increasingly critical future work skills within service design (Kylänen 2013, 80; Davies, Fidler & Gorbis 2011). Miettinen and Sarantou (2019, 9) point out that designers deal with complex systemic challenges and need to focus holistically on often complicated social, cultural and environmental phenomena.

The acclaimed need for intercultural competence and understanding cultural phenomena calls for exploring how service designers approach and perceive the role of culture in their work. Before presenting the three sub-studies taking a closer look at service designers' relationship with and understanding of culture, the social phenomenon of culture will be discussed in the following section.

2.5 Connections of culture and service(s)

There can be several approaches to culture within services, in analogue to Gudykunst and Lee's (2003, 7) incorporation of culture into communication. Firstly, culture can be viewed as part of service. From that perspective no service can be provided without cultural aspects being an integral part of it. This perspective highlights the fact that service (the experience of being served) can be perceived and defined differently in different cultures. Secondly, service(s) can be viewed as part of culture. In this approach, each service act is constructing the contextual culture, often also the larger societal or national culture. Even whole nations could be observed as a construction of politically and democratically articulated and developed service systems (Morelli 2002, 5). Thus, the way of designing services can be seen to create culture through interaction and values guiding the design, delivery and service use processes. In the third approach of connecting culture and service(s), service research and theoretical foundations can be seen rooted in a certain culture, for example in Western or Eastern cultural research traditions and the cultural background of the scholar(s).

In the following, I first discuss definitions for culture and introduce various theoretical research approaches to culture relevant for this study. I also explore different types of culture, especially the notion of nation-based large cultures. Cultural values, cultural identification and identity formation are also reflected upon as important factors in both intercultural communication and in service-related value creation. The section concludes by examining culture's role in and as part of service experiences and in service design.

2.5.1 Characterizing culture

Culture, its practices, norms and values are shared by groups of people and affect human behavior to varying degrees (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, 267). Culture's role is a constant object of research, and it has been fascinating scholars in various fields. Culture, related theory and practices have been researched in fields such as communication studies, applied linguistics, foreign language education, cultural anthropology, international business and organizational management studies, international relations, psychology, sociology, or history (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009; Sadri & Flammia 2011, 11).

Despite having been an object of research for several decades, culture continues to be a complex and debated construct meaning different things to different people (Scollon & al. 2012, 3). Its multifaceted and multidimensional characteristics become evident in Table 6 (section 2.2.4). There is a myriad of different definitions for culture. Herskovits' (1948) early and popular definition demonstrates the width of the concept: "Culture is or encompasses everything that is man-made". Usunier et al. (2017, 10, citing Lagerlöf) also highlight culture's intangibility and broadness by explaining that culture is what remains when everything that is learned is later forgotten and becomes unconscious knowledge. Spencer-Oatey & Franklin (2009, 3) sharpen the definition of culture to "a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioral conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behavior and his/her interpretations of the "meaning" of other people's behavior."

In the so called descriptive approach culture is essentialized, where certain values and practices are made the essence or core of that which all members of the group share (Dahl 2014, Piller 2011). Culture is seen as something people "have". This descriptive approach is seen too restrictive and undervaluing human agency in increasingly multicultural societies where people mix and move flexibly between cultures. As a response to this critique, the social constructionist approach offers a more flexible and dynamic perspective on culture. In this approach culture is seen as something people "do" together (Dahl 2014; Scollon et al. 2012, 5). Culture is thus constructed by shared meanings in interaction and shared practices in specific situations. This understanding also allows other dynamic and complex factors such as personal characteristics, personal goals, situational factors, power and social relationships enter into play (Dahl 2014).

Especially in the (neo-) essentialist research tradition culture has been observed on several levels. According to the pioneer researcher of cross-cultural groups and organizations Hofstede, culture and the human mind is composed of several cultural layers, in particular of a national level, regional/ethnic/religious/linguistic affiliation level, gender level, generation level, social class level (including educational or occupational dimensions), and finally also of organizational or corporate levels (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010, 18). Organizational culture expert Schein (2010, 5) claims that understanding culture at any level requires some understanding of all of its levels since "national, ethnic, occupational, organizational, and microsystem issues are all interconnected".

The focus in this dissertation is on the large cultures, i.e. regional, national, ethnic or international cultures (Holliday 1999, 237). This perspective has been chosen due to the prevalent and common professional discourses of connecting culture with geographical locations. Nevertheless, it needs to be noted that the presence of sub-cultures (social groups, ideologies) or other imagined collectives and small cultures (such as gender, religion, profession) may be more influential in a given service situation than that of a large culture (ibid. p. 239–240). All these cultural levels can be parallel and intertwined realities in the "ever-changing and complex whole" (Holliday 1999, 254, citing Tyler).

Figure 12 represents my view of humans identifying themselves simultaneously with many cultural groupings and making use of many cultural practices dynamically. Evidently, cultures are not bound by borders but are, in fact, fragmented across groups and national lines (Jones 2007). Despite being illustrated for practical reasons as rather fixed "cultural entities", the clouds with open borders aim to depict cultures as fluid and constantly changing dynamics in interaction with each other.

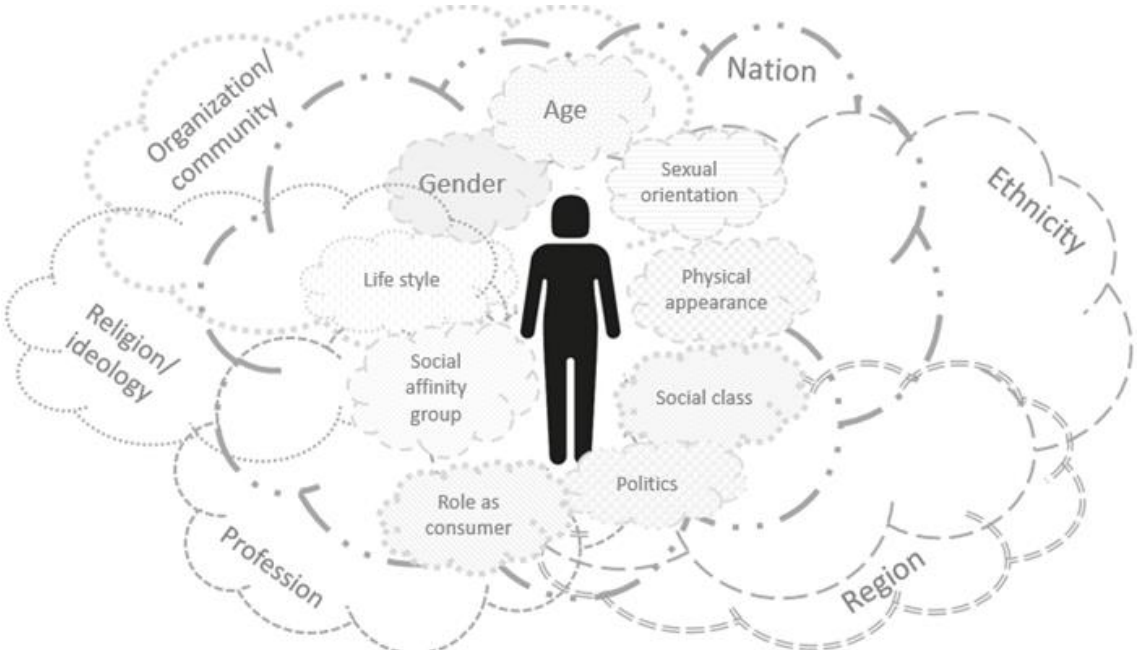


FIGURE 12 Individuals are embedded within several types of small and large cultures.

How culture is conceptualized will define the way it will be approached in practice. I see my understanding of culture to be a complex composition of even contradicting tendencies which can be dynamic but also stable. These tendencies are in constant flux and people can learn to switch into different operational cultural systems (Dahl 2014). Wenger (1998, 83) calls these shared resources cultural repertoires, such as established interpretations of words, artifacts, gestures, or routines. Cultures, i.e. cultural practices, also change over time. Depending on the context, some cultural factors, such as age, gender or level of education, may have a more prominent role and may affect the behavior and preferences in the interaction. Drawing on Eriksen (1994, cited by Dahl 2014, 7), I see individuals being

"cultural hybrids". This makes culture an open question and I am interested in studying how it is being defined and approached in service design.

Due to different conceptions of and ways to operationalize culture there are also very different approaches to study it (e.g. Sun 2015, 62). Piller (2011, 13) states that it is fundamental to be aware of the various understandings and "to ask who makes culture relevant to whom in which context for which purposes". The different research approaches and their underlying viewpoints of culture will be discussed further in the following section.

2.5.2 Different research interests towards culture

Culture can be approached from different ontological and epistemological perspectives. Dahl (2014) presents two different approaches to culture; the descriptive essentialist approach and the ever-changing and processual constructivist approach. The constructivist approach is often cited as a more modern and dynamic alternative to the descriptive essentialist approach (ibid. p. 7) where culture is seen as a rather permanent "thing" characterizing an individual. Drawing on the social constructionist perspective Luckmann (2013, 44) claims that cultures are "social realities" that "are the result of human activities".

The terms "social constructionism" and "constructivism" are related but used in slightly different meanings. The constructivist approach used mostly in social psychology "focuses on variability, arguing that cross-cultural encounters create an entirely new context in which the rules" are yet to "be constructed" or learned (Kecskes, in Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, 35), and culture is seen as situational. Social constructionists, on the other hand, believe there are no rules, but the reality unfolds in interaction. "It is through the daily interactions between people in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated" (Burr 1996, 3). According to Warren and Fassett (2011, 29) a social constructionist perspective on communication is very dynamic: "– – a process, as a messy enterprise that we all engage in, searching for meaning in ourselves and in each other as we make our way through the world. Meanings become what we create together, not what we discover or reveal".

Many researchers (e.g. Dahl 2014, 7; Sadri & Flammia 2011, 25; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, 36) claim that the regularity emphasizing essentialist and the variability emphasizing constructionist approaches can be compatible and both useful, depending on the research objectives. The descriptive essentialist approach of culture is needed when searching for shared patterns among people sharing similar cultural backgrounds, when explaining behavior or activity in terms of cultural groups, when comparing cultures or describing their differences. All the same, Dahl (2014, 7) sees the dynamic (using the term "constructivist") approach appropriate when the researcher needs to understand individuals' behavior and their communication with each other, and especially in situations where other contextual factors may be important. Holliday (2011) contends that established essentialist or neo-essentialist theories of culture are ideological in nature and introduces a cosmopolitan critical approach which recognizes power relationships and construction of culture by political (often Western) interests.

Sadri and Flammia (2011) study culture from an international relations perspective and distinguish similar but not identical approaches: the social science, interpretive, critical and dialectical approaches. The social science approach assumes that culture is predictable and can be described as part of external reality. The interpretive approach is drawing on a social constructionist perspective where culture is seen as a subjective and creative co-construction of the interaction partners. The critical line of research is drawing on historical contexts and studying culture as subjectively seen reality and power struggles. The dialectical approach is bringing together the strengths of the three other approaches and allows a lens to study many contradictory phenomena in cultural studies (p. 25). The dialectical approach was first coined by Martin, Nakayama and Flores (2002) and it acknowledges the value of the various approaches and not limiting oneself to one perspective only. There seem to be several dialectics which are in tension in interpersonal relationships. Sadri and Flammia claim (2011, 114) that by "recognizing the dialectics between the cultural and the individual we can avoid stereotyping and appreciate each person as an individual while still acknowledging the shared communication patterns of group". Martin et al. (2002, 4–6) identified six dialectic characteristics or tensions relating to culture, communication, context and power: cultural – individual; personal – contextual; differences – similarities; static – dynamic; history/past – present/future; and privilege – disadvantage. The dialectical approach offers a framework to reconcile the different approaches and to "hold contradictory ideas simultaneously without attempting to reduce them to a dichotomy such as good/evil or right/wrong" (Sadri & Flammia 2011, 112–113). As an example, the authors explain (p. 112) that an individual may have simultaneous but contradicting characteristics but these should be viewed as interdependent and complementary, just as a person can be both "strong and weak or wise and foolish", depending on a situation.

An additional terminological clarification is needed for the concepts of cross-cultural and intercultural which are traditional terms and sometimes even used as synonyms. The usage of these terms is quite established in various research fields, e.g. in management studies the term cross-cultural is commonly and solely used to refer to activities across cultures and in interaction between representatives of different cultures. In communication studies, however, a clear distinction is often made between the terms intercultural and cross-cultural communication (Gudykunst 2003; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, Scollon & al. 2012). The cross-cultural approach is comparative, taking often a quantitative approach and is mostly etic (culture-general) in nature. Cross-cultural studies are predominantly difference-based. Thus, many cross-cultural frameworks have given an essential shape for the cultural differences in forms of cultural orientations, dimensions or polarities. Frameworks such as Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck (1961), Hofstede (1980), Gannon (1997), Lewis (1999), Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997), Schwartz (1999, 2014), the GLOBE study (2004), Meyer (2014), just to name a few, aim to describe how people coming from different cultures perceive the world and communicate differently.

Intercultural studies focus on studying human interaction between people predominantly with qualitative research methods and is often emic (culture-specific) in nature. (Gudykunst 2003, 150; Sadri & Flammia 2011). Koole & ten Thije (2001, 571) define intercultural communication as general communicative situation where communication is "only possible when interactants construct a common ground of meanings and practices that are oriented to as shared". Keisala (2012, 30) claims that crucial competences in intercultural communication are the ability to negotiate and develop together a cultural framework in which the interaction and competence can be based. Hence, intercultural communication is not difference based, and in order for it to be successful stereotyping and othering are to be avoided (ibid. p. 31).

Scollon et al. (2012, 17) have observed and created a third understanding of intercultural communication which does not start from an assumption of cultural difference. They associate cultures, i.e. large groups of people with discourse systems, and communication across discourse systems as "interdiscourse communication". This approach sets aside any a priori notions of group membership and identity. Instead, the scholars are interested in "how and under what circumstances concepts such as culture are produced by participants and relevant categories for interpersonal ideological negotiation" (Scollon & Scollon 2001, 544). The interdiscourse approach draws on and has contributed to the social constructionist research tradition.

Etic and emic perspectives on culture are also complementary (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009). Etic research examines cultural variability or universal aspects of all cultures. This is important when the purpose is to understand, generalize or compare human behavior, for example in different cultural service contexts. Emics, on the other hand, is a culture-specific approach studying one cultural system or certain few cultures (Triandis 2004, 67–68). To understand one culture, an emic framework is important but concepts provided by etic frameworks (cross-cultural models) are beneficial in complementing the emic knowledge. Beveridge & Kadura (2016) call for increasing emic research interests to balance the large number of etic perspectives especially in service business related research (see section 2.2).

Gudykunst (2003, vii) states that "understanding cross-cultural communication is a prerequisite to understanding intercultural communication". While this statement can be considered a slight overstatement, I see that both cross-cultural and intercultural approaches, etic and emic knowledge are important to consider in service design, each serving different purposes. The several cross-cultural, often neo-essentialist models (Holliday 2011, 5) have provided useful concepts for etic knowledge while emic approaches and an intercultural lens help embrace more specific knowledge, such as customer insights and empathy needed to design for human-centric service.

Predominant essentialism claims that there are many differences in nation-based cultural behavior (Piller 2007). Usunier & Lee (2013, 108) provide examples among the following behavior: learning and memory; perceiving shapes, colors and space; motivation to own, buy or spend; relationship to age, purchasing power across generations; perceptions of self and social groups, group influence;

social class and gender differences; attitudinal and value changes; decision-making roles and styles; purchasing behavior such as environmental factors; and post-purchase behavior such as perceptions of quality and complaining behavior. Again, it needs to be pointed out that this listing is made from a national-culture based and comparative perspective. It overlooks a variety of behavior actuated by generational, gender, occupational and similar factors. Even though different frameworks and approaches provide often useful concepts to explain variation in group behavior, e.g. for marketing and management purposes, they can also be highly problematic for other reasons. For example, they may not include still unexplored dimensions and the definition of their boundaries may be too vague (Sun & al. 2014, 342–343).

Essentialist, social science-based and cross-cultural approaches are looking for general tendencies among larger groups of people. Their aim is to provide understanding of cultural differences and provide average and universal, i.e. etic knowledge about culture. Cultural characteristics are often described as dimensions, behavioral polarities or sets of values. Culture is seen as a rather stable "thing", such as a national or ethnic category characterizing all individuals belonging to the group (Piller 2007, 210). The risk for using these approaches is in stereotyping groups of people, reducing individuals to representatives of their cultural essence, and seeing culture as something that can be added or removed. The interpretative and constructionist approaches aim to understand how reality is co-constructed in interaction. In these perspectives, culture is processual and dynamic, not taken as given a "label". These approaches recoil from predictions of cultural behavior, focusing rather on the microscopic insights about local culture.

In analogue to Sadri & Flammia (2011), I will illustrate how applying the different research approaches to service research and development can add new and relevant knowledge. The social science type of research interest could be useful in researching typical service-related behavior in cultural groupings. For example, researchers might study the use of services, willingness towards buying certain services online, or they might measure attitudes of certain groups about perceived service quality. The approach helps identify behavioral and attitudinal variables, yet it can only yield mean values and indicate general tendencies. It overlooks individuality and variability within the given cultural group and is thus not always culturally sensitive (ibid. p. 85–87). Interpretive researchers are interested in describing human behavior and observing cultural patterns but do not predict any certain behavior or attitudes (ibid. p. 87–93). Researchers adopting a cultural interpretation approach are interested in understanding the actions of social groupings from inside, often using fieldwork-based approaches such as ethnographic research methods. For instance, researchers may be interested in learning how communities create shared meanings about service quality, or they might examine the rhetoric used to describe service experiences. The interpretive approach provides contextual and detailed cultural understanding (ibid. p. 95) and is thus especially valuable in studying service encounters or perceptions of culture. It does not provide comparative data, and the data is not easily generalizable to apply to any other individual or cultural groupings. Critical researchers

examine reality as subjective and contextual. Scholars of this approach view culture in terms of power struggles where majority cultures as dominant groups set the standards on what is valued (ibid 102–103). Critical scholars might be interested in researching historical and political contexts of service usage, or how services are made available and accessible for certain service user groups. Critical scholars are typically interested in unequal distribution of power, thus public services might be of special interest for their line of research. Finally, the dialectical approach is not a specific theory itself but aims to look at the other approaches holistically and to bring them together (ibid. p. 118). It tries to avoid the dualistic perspective (either/or) typical to many traditional approaches to academic thinking (p. 113). When applied to service research, a dialectical scholar might research the cultural/individual or the history/future dialects in service preferences. Or the researcher could examine the tensions between the cultural and personal identities as a service user.

Using further Sadri and Flammia's (2011) terminology, the first two sub-studies of this dissertation inquiring about the way service designers and the professional literature deal with cultures are predominantly based on the interpretive approach. These sub-studies aim to explore how culture is spoken about, i.e. how the understanding about culture is constructed among service designers and within the professional SD literature. The third sub-study, based on service user interviews, is both interpretive and critical by nature. It is interpretive in that it studies how the users describe how they perceive culture to matter in service situations. Their subjective interpretations form shared meanings among peers about appreciated service characteristics from their cultural perspectives. These interpretations are co-constructed in service situations but also by the interviewers and interviewees. The critical approach comes into the play in recognizing how ideologies may impact the ability to "read culture" during the service consumption or the development process. The interviews can also be approached critically since many informants recognize impacts of majority cultures and their subjective realities are questioned by more powerful service stakeholders.

Throughout this dissertation, the term cross-cultural is used when referring to a comparative approach between cultures, and intercultural when some activities take place between people who see each other as representatives of two or several social groupings. In most cases, I will use the terms "cultural" and "culture" to refer to the terms' relationship to cultural practices and environments, and to make clear my general interest of cultural phenomena in service design without comparative or interactional objectives.

2.5.3 Nations as large cultures

This section explores how nations are often equated with culture. Especially, cross-cultural approaches are dominated by "large culture" research interests where cultures are predominantly matched with nationality (Holliday 1999, 237). The cross-cultural frameworks are typically based on statistical and large-scale analyses of value dimensions connected with nation-states as units of analysis (Piller 2011).

Defining national culture is equally complex as defining culture, and many scholars and lay people do question whether a nation can stand for a large cultural group while a nation is a more or less forced political construct. Anderson (1991, cited in Piller 2007, 4) claims that nations as large entities are "imagined communities", since finding common and shared cultural denominators in such a large group demands imagination from the people identifying themselves with a national culture. Hofstede et al. (2010, 21) conform that nations should not be equated with societies which are historic and organic forms of large social organizations. On the other hand, Hofstede et al. (2010, 21) claim that nations are forming "historically developed wholes even if they consist of clearly different groups and even if they contain less integrated minorities". This has led many critical scholars such as Piller (2011, 64) to criticize the use of nations as cultures and claims that discourses of "banal nationalism", promoted by political and commercial agendas, "socialize people into seeing themselves as members of a particular nation".

There can be several societal cultures, i.e. sociocultural groups within a nation based on a "sharedness" such as a geographic region, ethnicity, religion or language (Chhokar, Brodbeck & House 2008, 3). As a matter of fact, only very few nation-states in the world can be considered monocultural (Gannon 2008, 33), and cultures are mixing with an increasing pace through travel, internationalization of trade, globalization of communication, entertainment technology, immigration etc. National cultures should, therefore, not be taken for granted and should incorporate historical, political or contextual perspectives. Commonly, when talking about national cultures people are actually referring to major societal cultures within nations.

National culture serves as a basis especially for classifications in cross-cultural frameworks. Many of these etic and (neo-)essentialist frameworks have been used to study and compare cultures in practice in various research fields. Despite of a strong constructionist research trend in other fields it is quite striking that most international business research, including service business research, relies on a small number of cross-cultural, neo-essentialist frameworks (such as Hofstede) and take national cultures as given and reduce culture to a homogeneous group essence (e.g. Leung et. al. 2005; Piller 2011, Holliday 2011). Långstedt (2018, 2–4; 12) claims that the dominance of essentialist, nation-based discourse in cross-cultural management makes discourses about nation-based culture prevalent in many organizations. This has resulted in using "[national] culture as a cause of actions and an excuse".

National borders certainly help give some shape to the fuzzy construct of large cultures. Drawing on cross-cultural psychology Schwartz (1999, 25) argues for additional reasons for using national groups as units of analysis in his well-known cultural value-orientation theory. Nations often possess shared and common strong forces such as a single dominant language, an educational and political system, military organizations, shared mass media, markets, [public] services and national symbols that produce and promote a shared national culture. Legislation, currencies and other similar factors are also bound to national borders.

These factors are impacting global economies and services, thus making the national cultural approach rational. Even critical researchers such as Holliday (2011, 45) regard nations as an external reality. Therefore, he reasons that nations as "artefacts of cultural realities rather than factual statements about what these realities comprise" (2013, 164) do permit nations as research objectives.

Scholars such as Dervin (2014), Fang (2014) or Tung & Verbeke (2010) claim that a "solid" approach based on nationality or ethnicity is insufficient to capture the dynamic concept of culture and denies any individualism making people objects of stereotypes and false social representations. Gerhart and Fang (2005, 977) argue that the dominant role of national culture in nation-based cross-cultural models is actually a false assumption and estimate in their study that, in fact, only 2–4 percent of variance of individual values can be explained by country of origin. Hofstede et al. (2010, 40) have responded to the criticism by adding a section into the latest edition of their book claiming that individual personality dimension scores correlate with national culture scores – but point out that the range of personalities within each country is far too wide for justifying the stereotyping of individuals based on the national culture scores.

In the globalized world the discourses about nation-based cultures seem increasingly outdated. National cultures are most likely imagined very differently by each individual holding the nation's passport. Therefore, nation-based culture research can only yield averages that do not match with the variety of these imagined realities. Some methodological issues provide an additional challenge for using the complex concept of national culture as a research object. Sharma, Wu and Su (2016, 224) argue that such an approach "suffers from ecological fallacy, assumes cultural factors to be unidimensional constructs and provides little or no evidence of construct validity and measurement equivalence of these scales". The authors call for more accurate reflection on individual-level cultural values and orientations. Sun, D'Alessandro, Johnson and Winzar (2014) and de Mooij (2013) also highlight the problems in measurement due to conceptual ambiguities. As a multi-dimensional and elusive construct culture is difficult to measure by any means. Therefore, researchers need to make sure to use similar units of analysis and operationalize culture similarly. De Mooij (2013, 260) argues that a frequent mistake is to apply culture-level data to individuals.

Scholars taking a critical stand towards defining culture through a national identity (e.g. Piller, 2007; Holliday 2013), nevertheless, acknowledge the ubiquity of the discourses and admit that since "people everywhere really do use, talk about, explain things in terms of – – national culture profiles – – the profiles are therefore *real* in their minds" and "have to be taken seriously" (Holliday 2013, 163–164). The discourse of nations and countries as large cultures simplify the complexity of culture to an approachable notion, as also observed in section 2.2. While being aware of the fallacies connected with "national culture" the researcher should be aware of the importance given to nations on some other fronts where the belief of a national culture's existence does not seem to be much questioned. Quite the contrary. For example, people sharing common cultural markers like national languages, political views or ethnicity have traditionally found motivations for forming nations of their own, and this is ongoing even in the

current global landscape (e.g. Catalonia, Scotland, and Kurdistan). Another topical example of a nation as a discursive but also continuous construct is the phenomenon around nation branding (Pamment & Cassinger 2018; Kaneva 2011). Nation branding includes a systematic identity building by recognizing or even constructing shared practices and values within nations. Interestingly, from this viewpoint the national culture is acknowledged to be dynamic and evolving, and a nation's brand can be refreshed. This deviates from the stable idea of an essentialized national culture. While nation branding is another example of a construction of an arbitrary, imagined commonality, the construct of national culture can also be considered dynamic and evolving.

Equating culture with a nation is problematic. Cultures are dynamically evolving hybrid systems and labeling certain national cultural characteristics as fixed behavior or values are simplifying complex cultural phenomena. However, national practices such as legislation can construct local culture, and there can be common patterns in thinking and behaving which may be interpreted similarly by groups or majorities within a nation. This kind of knowledge can provide useful information about national regularities and variability and may be used to create "first best guesses" and provide information about macro-level tendencies. However, this type of quantitative data can only be approached as averages or mean values, and even then reveals only limited glimpses of the "big picture". Using social science based approaches should not lead to assumptions that all members of certain social groupings possess similar defining features.

2.5.4 Culture as fluid and processual activity

The fluidity and hybridity of culture needs to be recognized (Figure 12). As a unifying concept for constructionist "process-oriented cultural approaches" Dahl (2014, 5) uses the notion of "dynamic cultural understanding". This refers to cultures in constant change and people with different backgrounds and histories creating cultural arenas "where competing concepts meet and interact with one another". Our interpretations of situations are influenced by how other people in similar environment interpret them (Jensen 2013, in Dahl 2016). Jensen contends that it is "through the construction of the 'others' we construct narratives about ourselves". This cultural self-perception allows one to express "a cultural community as the one he or she identifies with" (ibid. p. 9).

The processual characteristic of cultural behavior is highlighted by the differing maturity stages or roles of its members. A member of a social grouping or community of practice might be a novice, a core member or peripheral member, thus being very differently committed or contributing to construction of the group culture. In new social groupings, shared patterns and interpretations only start developing gradually and some cultural manifestations change and diffuse over time. (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, 38.)

Thus, culture in human behavior is much more than a set of values, behaviors or thinking patterns that can be technically added to or removed from a person. The fact that cultural knowledge is co-produced (Tanno & Jandt 2002, 378) and passed on in human interaction is relevant for service research and theory

building in service design. A similar process characteristic is typical in services, too, which are co-produced in interactions with various stakeholders face-to-face, mediated by technology or via digital interfaces. The stakeholders do not necessarily share the same cultural background. The concurring cultures may be organizational, regional, national, and ethnic or of any other sub- or small culture. Thus, no individual shares exactly the same cultural repertoires which, basically, makes all human interaction intercultural. Even though Keesing's (1974, 89) definition about culture is already quite old, it brings nicely into the foreground the process aspect and the very subjective meaning of culture: "– – [Culture] is [an individual's] theory of the code being followed, the game being played, – – ". Dahl (2014, 5) also perceives culture as an ever evolving "social game" in which people make culture relevant in particular situations.

The processual notion of culture is well suited to service development where service designers need to orchestrate the whole. Knowledge – not assumptions – of service users' expectations will help to deliver culturally meaningful service. The decisive role of service users in co-producing the service needs to be taken into account. If not knowing what is expected from them, if not being familiar with the "rules of the game" service users will feel confused and uncertain which again leads to a weaker service experience.

2.5.5 Cultural values

When reading or talking about culture one cannot avoid encountering the notion of cultural values, referring to abstract concepts or beliefs which are either appreciated or not appreciated by the majority within certain communities. Especially, scholars with a social science based interest towards culture consider values as a fundamental ingredient of a culture (e.g. Hofstede 1980; Schwartz 1994; Matsumoto 1996; Triandis 2004; Helkama 2015). Scholars with a social constructionist research interest also agree on values role in constituting communities. Dahl (2014, 5) contends that "people carry with them sets of cultural values and clues to understanding, which are mobilized when people interact." In the following paragraphs I will first reflect on what the discourse of cultural values have contributed to the essentialist and neo-essentialist approaches and then summarize some of the contributions of a more modern understanding of cultural values.

Cultural values refer to what groups of people consider desirable and that guide their behavior in given contexts. Social psychologist Schwartz's (1990, 1994, 2011) value survey (SVS) is one of the most encompassing study of individual and cultural values. Schwartz asserts that people should understand the underlying cultural and motivational values that drive their behavior. By comparing societal value orientations Schwartz (2014) justifies using countries as cultural units. He has shown that values form a two-dimensional system and that group-level and individual-level values are similar but not identical. Individual values are manifestations of the underlying culture but are not the culture. Helkama (2015, 111) demonstrates that individual values cannot be directly derived from mean cultural values much the same as group emotions cannot be accrued from individual emotions. Depending on the size of the social grouping, its members

typically share at least some characteristics and values common to the group. Nevertheless, not every person is guided by their personal nor cultural values. Individuals and groups differ substantially in the relative importance they attribute to the [cultural] values (Schwartz 2012, 3).

The complementary effects between group-level and individual-level values and behavior have been addressed in Martin, Nakayama & Flores' (2002) dialectic approach as a tension between cultural and individual forces. Concurrently, people possess individual characteristics that are unique to them. Besides, every individual belongs to several cultural groups, and the values, practices and beliefs of these groups are likely to be shared by the individuals identifying themselves with these communities. This complexity makes a straightforward equation of cultural and individual values prone to stereotyping.

A claim that values would directly steer individuals does not find direct validation in research. Fisher's (2006, 1428) study indicates that individuals do not always internalize societal values. He claims that self-referenced values (as opposed to group-referenced values) deal with personal wishes and desires, and correlate with well-being and experiences. This signals that group-based values may be more important in collective than in individualistic societies. In high-conformity societies, people tend to conform to behavior they do not like (Sun & al. 2014, 352; Fisher 2006). For example, in fear of being marginalized, people may more easily embrace group-level values they would not necessarily recognize as their personal values.

Some researchers have observed a difference between values and practices (House & al. 2004; Gannon 2008) indicating that cultures manifest themselves in two distinct ways: people do not always act upon what they say they value. Sun & al. (2014, 353) postulate that "values are more suitable for predicting consumer emotions and attitudes, whereas practices correspond to actual behaviors". Notwithstanding, Stringer and Cassidy (2003) have found that cultural values do serve as a motivational basis for actions which is important to consider in developing services.

When activated values become infused with feelings. This is what makes values especially interesting in the context of service design which aims to optimize the value experienced by the service user (e.g. Motta-Filho, Cavendish & Alt 2018, 78; Zomerdijk & Voss 2010). However, the concept of "value" seems to be used with a different meaning in different contexts. In service research, value has been characterized e.g. as value-in-use or value-in-experience (section 2.3.5) which all refer to an individual's perception of being better (or worse) off than before (Grönroos 2008, 2011; Vargo & al. 2008). This value formation is "in large hidden for the service provider" (Strandvik & al. 2018), and may be guided by cultural values. To distinguish group values such as cultural, moral, public values from "something that people value and in which they are thus motivated to invest money, time, energy and commitment" Kamppuri (2011, 50; citing Cockton 2006) uses the term "worth".

It would be worthwhile to examine how the value (or worth) experienced in services relates to wider cultural values of an individual's environment. The

paradigm shift from services into service (value-in-use) emphasizes the importance of value. De Mooij (2003) claims that "once consumers have satisfied their basic needs they will spend their income on what best fits their value systems". Thus, service users may be looking for value experiences typically appreciated in their communities. Being part of a larger "good" can strengthen a service user's self-esteem and cultural identity. Consequently, Sharma & al. (2015) claim that service managers should look beyond visible cultural differences, such as ethnicity, nationality and language, and focus more on the invisible cultural differences, such as customs, values and norms.

The tension between different approaches towards culture seem to be tearing apart the different views on cultural values' role, depending on the field of inquiry. Drawing on the constructionist research approach humans are seen more flexible and inventive, not just driven or affected by shared cultural core values (Dahl 2014). People are perceived adaptive depending on the context and the purpose of the interaction. Not only values, but also personal and others' experiences and goals, the context, social relationships and other similar complex factors come into play (Dahl 2014, 6). Moreover, critical researchers emphasize the role power relations have over cultural values. Holliday (2013, 20) claims that values play a significant role in politics and "should not be allowed to become instrumental in Othering". Piller (2011, 69) argues, to the contrary of the divergence theory, that cultural values are increasingly diluted and "decoupled from the nation in the context of globalization and transnationalism".

Each individual as well as complex and diverse contexts determine which elements of cultural repertoires and values become relevant. Values are constructed in long-term and repeating interaction, and cultural groupings and communities of practice can form common values by sharing intersubjective agreements of same or similar sets of preferences or moral perceptions. Thus, people become members of a same community of interpretation and end up sharing a set of cultural values. However, claiming that clear cultural values based on nationality exist is not realistic since a nation as a community would be too big and too heterogenic a group in order to be able to form one unified community of interpretation, i.e. agreeing on national values.

Some researchers have observed a correlation between trust and cultural values (Helkama 20I5, 124). This is noteworthy since trust is considered a relevant factor both in services and as an ethical dimension and social asset of organizations' intercultural competence (Uusitalo 2009, 35). Trust is generally derived from social norms, and it can be system based, personally-based or process based (Grönroos 2008, 40–41). Because service often materializes during a longer process (value-in-use, value-in-context, Vargo 2008; Helkkula & al. 2012a, 61), service users need to be able to trust the service provider and the promised scope and quality of the service (i.e. relating to all components of trust). Thus, service users may trust more service providers that they perceive sharing similar cultural values. Hence, it is relevant how the service users identify the service providers or themselves, and for the service providers to know how trust is created and communicated in various cultural contexts.

2.5.6 Cultural identity and identification

Self-identity can have a profound influence on how people behave and feel, what they buy or experience. Both social and cultural self-identity and identification of others can play a role during a service design process and in any intercultural service situation although it may not always be negative. For example, Ryoo (2005) points out that there exists an equally positive aspect of interactions during service encounter interactions that is obscured by prevailing research.

Cultural identity may guide, for example, service users' expectations, choice of service providers or brands, or to which kind of (public) services the person feels entitled to. Similar preferences or selections based on cultural identity and identification of the service stakeholders may take place during the service process. Cultural identification can motivate activities such as the target group selection, choice of development team members or who is included in the co-creation process. Service users can also identify the provider organization a representative of some cultural brands or groups.

A person's social identity is a layered construct that consists of cultural or ethnic memberships and other group affiliations to which one attaches emotional belonging, such as nationality, gender, social class, sexual orientation or professional identities (Ting-Toomey & Chung 2012, 77). Self-identity plays a strong role in defining who the person "is" and to which kind of values they hold. Individuals construct their own cultural identity based on small culture (social groupings with cohesive behavior) experiences and large cultures affiliations (Holliday 1999; 2013). Each person is thus building their own cultural reality and identity.

Self-identity formation is seldom a straightforward process. As Sadri and Flammia (2011, 56) claim "an individual's cultural, social and personal identities are often intertwined". In increasing multicultural and global environments people assert different identities flexibly in different situations, depending on the context and people they are interacting with. Hofstede et al. (2010, 17) state that people are continuously defining and redefining the groups they belong to and that "much of people's social activity is spent explicitly maintaining symbolic group ties". Ting-Toomey & Chung (2012, 9) further claim that new generations are also combining global and local cultures together, creating hybrid identities, and that every person is socialized within a larger cultural membership group (2012, 77–79). The association to, for example, national identity or ethnic identity can be strong or weak, conscious or unconscious. Holliday (2013, 164) warns of "methodological nationality" where national culture and identities are "so-believed" constructions that lack scientific validity. The dynamic and hybrid personal identities coincide with the dynamic understanding of culture, and make a precise identification or characterization of one's self-identity difficult. This may still not reduce the importance of the notion of identity in services.

Martin and Nakayama (1997, in Abrams & al. 2003) illustrate how identities are co-constructed in communication with others. Identities are thus not inborn but are evolving over the time in social processes and in particular contexts. Hall and du Gay (1996) and Piller (2011) consider identity ascription and building as

a process, and both cultural identity, difference and similarity as discursive constructions. Piller further argues that cultural identity intersects with social inclusion and justice. People have a strong tendency to affiliate with and like others they identify as being similar to them. In- and out-groups have been recognized to affect social relationships (e.g. Triandis 2004), and the types and importance of in- and outgroups vary in cultures. Sharma, Tam and Kim (2009) use the social identity theory to contend that customers and service providers from the same in-group are more at ease with dealing with each other. Based on several studies (see Leung et al. 2005, 369) "culture" matters especially when the person identifies themselves with a cultural group. For example, language can be a strong identity determinant. Patterson and Smith (2003) provide an example: If the instructions in secondary languages are in much smaller print or shorter or even non-existent it affects the sense of identity and belonging for a service user and reduces the propensity to stay with the service provider. Some factors can moderate or amplify cultural impacts. For instance, social identification with one's own cultural groupings, an immature stage of group development and technological uncertainty can all increase the impact of culture on people's behavior (Leung & al. 2005, 370). Gallivan and Srite (2005) point out that the influence of identity can be much stronger than "shared unwritten rules" and that an individual's intertwined cultural ties to several groups simultaneously (e.g. national and organizational) makes the analysis of the identity's relevance challenging.

Hall and du Gay (1996) describe identification as a discursive process. It is based on recognizing some origins or characteristics within another person. Identification draws on meanings from psychological and discursive repertoires and is a never ending process that "operates across difference" (ibid. p. 2–3). The process of identification may influence thinking and behavior while choosing service providers or consuming services (Kim, Mori & Rahim 2018). Therefore, it is important to recognize different identity affiliations and be aware of not excluding certain groups by intended or unconscious "othering", i.e. specifying someone in terms of another cultural membership (Scollon & al., 2012, 276). Since identification is often based on visual cues and an identity affiliation is not always shared for others these issues are very sensitive and difficult to consider. Fukuyama (2018) has observed that despite of good intentions in identifying another person as part of a cultural group, this can actually increase juxtapositions.

2.5.7 Intercultural communication in the context of service

Services are deeds, processes and performances (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler 2016, 4) enabled by human interaction. Even services without direct human interaction, such as digital interfaces as part of self-services are designed or programed and communicated by people. No matter what the way or type of communication is – face-to-face or technology-mediated messages, spoken or written – the interactional aspects of service activities are important for building trust and creating value. Communication is thus prevalent at every step of a service design process although its importance may be highlighted during certain stages, such as in service marketing or in face-to-face service encounters.

Since each individual belongs to different social groupings, fundamentally, all communication can be seen as being intercultural (see Tannen 1993). Thus, intercultural communication becomes a factor to consider during all service design processes and all service situations. It becomes even more pivotal when the communication styles differ from each other substantially in transnational or interethnic encounters. Philipsen (2003, 35, 47) uses the construct of "cultural communication" highlighting how all communication is infused with cultural particulars and defines the term as "a process through which cultural difference is expressed and constructed".

Social constructionists (e.g. Burr 2003; Piller 2007, Dahl 2014) believe that culture is not an "a priori assumption" defining communication and claim that culture and cultural identities are brought into being by linguistic and social practices. In other words, culture is produced in interaction by shared discourses and co-created meanings. Much earlier, it had already been shown that language is an influential cultural element. Researchers have also argued that there is a connection between cultural patterns and linguistic structures. The linguistic relativity hypothesis, also known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (see Ting-Toomey & Chang 2012, 121; Usunier et al. 2017, 43) posits that language has the potential of shaping our thinking and world conceptualization. Meanings of words are culturally learned and shared, and the structure of language may have an influence on perception and categorization of phenomena. Language also shapes cultural expectations (Lee & Park 2011) and status, hierarchy and vision of appropriate social relationships (Usunier et al. 2017, 46). However, the extent to which these kinds of structural differences and expectations shape culture-related cognitive differences is open to debate (Piller 2007, 216).

Each social grouping has its communicative system and styles which are reflected in verbal, non-verbal, extra-verbal and para-verbal communication (see explanations below). The differences of these society-, group- and individual-level linguistic characteristics and cultural knowledge come to the foreground especially in intercultural communication. Figure 13 illustrates the many-layered characteristics of culture as a communicative system (Bolten 2007).

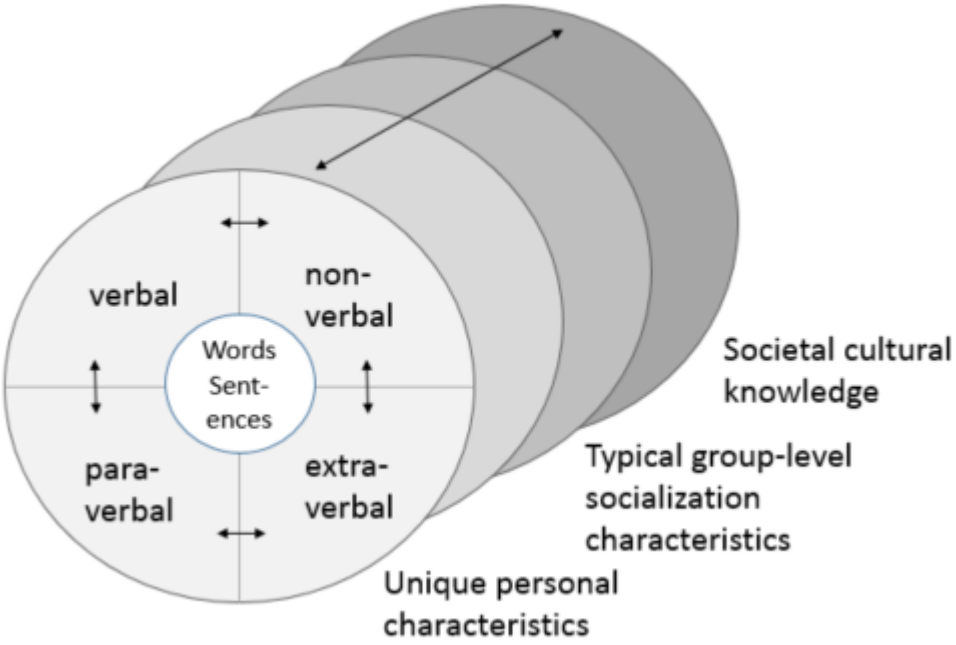


FIGURE 13 Culture as a communicative system includes many layers and communicative styles (Based on Bolten 2007, 84)

In intercultural encounters, these multifaceted and layered systems come into play. Obviously, there are many cultural factors to consider during intercultural service processes or in intercultural service interactions. In the core of Figure 13, the words and sentences stand for propositions of meanings and communicative goals. The propositions may not be received as intended due to communication mismatches due to differing cultural frames of reference.

The verbal communication includes natural language speech, lexical and syntactic choices and rhetoric-stylistic use of language which all vary depending on the cultural context. The non-verbal aspects of communication include kinesics (gestures, facial expressions, body language), haptics (use of touch), oculesics (eye contact and movements), gestures (speech-dependent or speech-independent), or olfactics (smells and scents). Extra-verbal characteristics of communication include contextual, situational and temporal factors, such as proxemics (use and arrangement of fixed and personal space), chronemics (perception, use and organization of time) or phonosphere (sounds and noises). Extra-verbal communication may also include artifacts, symbols and adornments of space and the interaction environment. Para-verbal communication includes intonation, pitch, rhythm, volume or use of silence. In a written communication context para-verbal communication may consist of factors such as use of punctuation, layout, choice of colors and shapes, or the length of the text.

A wide cultural diversity exists among all these factors but they also vary by individuals. While people belong to various communication communities and share culturally distinctive patterns in their interaction they “have the linguistic

resources and social strategies to affiliate and identify with many different cultures and ways of using language" (Kramsch 1998, 82). Thus, generalizing the communicative systems and styles to apply consistently to certain cultures such as a nation would be oversimplifying intercultural interactions. Being aware of and balancing between these realities, or taking into consideration the emic and etic aspects of intercultural communication is an important but challenging ability for all, not just for a service designer.

Piller (2007, 215) warns about not equating linguistic and cultural factors and claims that many cultural misunderstandings are, in fact, linguistic misunderstandings. She further claims that culture, language and communication should always be studied in context (2007, 217–218). For example, language is used differently and for different functions depending on culture but also depending on the person and on the context. Thus, fixed assumptions about culture and language should be avoided. It is particularly important to remember that in intercultural communication the participants have often unequal language proficiency levels, leading to language problems. Especially in service situations where a common language is lacking, non-verbal and paraverbal /metalinguistic aspects such as silence, body language, use of rhetoric, conversational style (Usunier et al. 2017, 52) and visual elements and symbols (Rau, Okicger & Choong 2013; Saffer 2010) can become an important part of intercultural interaction.

The choice of language, wordings or symbols in visual communication is essential but the message may also be conformed by the choice of channel and mode of communication. For example, English language may be a preferred choice in written intercultural communication but may not be the case in face-to-face interaction. Holmqvist and Grönroos (2012, 10) claim that language use is a sensitive issue and should be considered before, during and after the service encounter: the chosen language, language skills or lack of them affects how service users "perceive, execute and evaluate their service interactions with companies". Language preferences can and should be determined with research and co-creation but contextual cues are also important indicators and call for flexibility.

The purposes for communicating in services are numerous. Chiemlecki (2015, 12) illustrates that even such limited service communication contexts as customer queries in a customer service department can fall into four categories in varying interaction depths: informational, transactional, advice-related and diagnostic. Each type presents different opportunities for service differentiation and creating good experiences. Holmqvist (2011, 184–185) found out that the language seems to play a role particularly in high-involvement services for comfort and political reasons. Despite these, financial reasons (price reduction) made many consumers flexible towards the language. The influence of language seemed to be stable across different countries and languages. The lack of fluency in interpreting aimed communicative meanings means that an intercultural aspect is further challenging the complexity of service communication in these and similar situations.

The amount and quality of communication matters as well. Beveridge and Kadura's (2016, 13) examples highlight the cultural characteristisc in respect of

communication quality and quantity. In an analysis of international service dynamics in China they discovered that clients used communication as a benchmark of service value. If the service provider communication could accommodate to and demonstrate the understanding of the paradoxical nature of Chinese cultural values, the relationship between the provider and customer was perceived successful. In less satisfactory situations, the customers would have wanted more and "better" communication.

Intercultural communication is multi-faceted, contextual and adds complexity to the whole process. The value co-creative nature of service development according to the service-dominant logic puts the role of language and clear communication in the spotlight (Holmqvist 2011). The prominent role of intercultural communication already starts early on during the service design process where encultured knowledge (Huotari, Hurme & Valkonen 2005, 70) is guiding the work between the design project stakeholders. Complex meanings and nuances need to be exchanged and shared. Besides effective team work, co-design and other interactional processes, a group of service designers create common understanding about specific service user groups, their needs, and intended service functionalities and qualities. If the process suffers from linguistic or cultural miss-communication and misunderstandings, there would be a high risk that the outcome of the process would be compromised.

In contemporary service environments, any of the service actors can be expected to have a different cultural background. A new kind of culture is hence constantly created and existing cultural practices are confirmed in interaction (e.g. Gudykunst 2003; Ting-Toomey & Chung 2012) and situation-specific service culture is created or confirmed by the (service stakeholders. Thus, even the very notion of "service" is culturally loaded and intercultural communication provides an essential lens into studying the phenomenon.

2.5.8 Culture's role in service experiences

Whether an aspect of service is considered good or bad, high or low quality will affect the service experience. Besides service characteristics or actual delivery, the experience depends on what the person and the society and communities around value. Stephan and Stephan (2003, 111) argue that cultural factors may affect in large, and depending on the context, an individual's cognitive and affective responses.

Service experiences are connected with service expectations and quality perceptions. More research is still needed about these concepts but there are already strong indications that they are relative to cultural appreciations. Beveridge and Kadura (2016) give an example of this in their study of Western educational services offered in China. Professional and billable time were perceived differently by the Western service providers and the Chinese customers who perceived professional time to be an integral part of the service offering, not a separately billable activity. Chinese humanistic and virtue-based perspective in staff relationships also reflected on service relationships. This caused the Chinese cus-

tomer to renegotiate the service contracts frequently and increased the expectation for significant amounts of direct communication. Summarizing several studies, Reynolds & Smith (2010, 5–6) showcase how cultural aspects influence the perceptions of service quality: service-users from individualistic societies tend to have higher service expectations and emphasize outcome over the process; speed of service is associated with individualistic cultures; collectivist cultures tolerate better service failures but emphasize personal relationships and assurance; tangibles seem to be more important to Westerners.

There are several stages during the service development process in which cultural interaction and construction of meaning can take place. An overall approach on the service quality and expectation factors is offered in the Gaps model of service quality, first coined by Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry in 1990 (Figure 14). The model provides a structured way to examine where and how quality gaps emerge during service development and marketing. It also serves well for the purpose of identifying culturally influenced quality gaps and provides a good framework for examining cultural issues affecting service development, marketing and service interaction and usage.

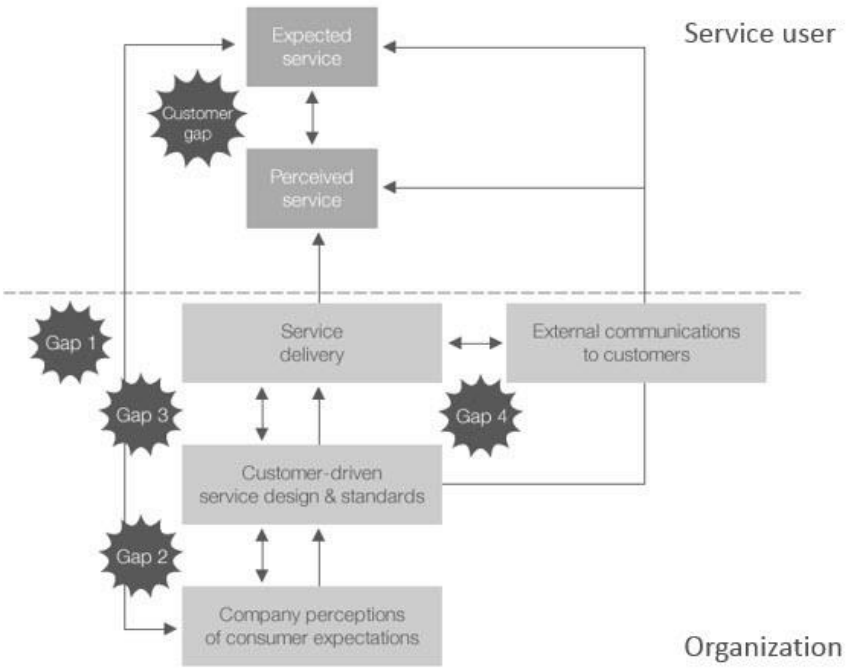


FIGURE 14 The Gaps model of service quality (based on Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry 1990)

The most important gap is called a Customer Gap which emerges from a mismatch of a service user's expected and perceived service. This may be caused due to a service user's, a provider organization's, a partner's or a frontline employee's culturally differing behavior or thinking. The service may be delivered in a fashion that does not lead to a positive service experience. Besides communicational aspects, there are numerous other cultural factors that can cause this. Some of the

cases are well described in the extant intercultural communication research. Service situations may include, for example, face-negotiation, application of different politeness strategies, create conversational constraints, behavioral expectancy may be violated, anxiety or uncertainty are managed differently or communication accommodation is (not) involved (see Gudykunst 2003). Being aware and taking into account cultural issues impacting service expectations is an advantage for a service provider. The prerequisite is that the provider organization possesses knowledge of its customers and end-users and is aware of how service users may perceive the offered service differently in various touchpoints.

The Gaps model includes four provider gaps, each capable enlarging the Customer Gap caused by cultural misunderstandings or ignorance of cultural factors during back office development processes (not visible for service users). The Listening Gap (Gap 1, Figure 14) emerges from the difference between the service user's expectations towards the service and the provider organization's understanding (or capability of understanding) about these expectations. Failures to capture the service users' expectations may emerge due to a lack or insufficient amount of cross-cultural user research, a lack of or ineffective upward communication due to varying cultural practices, a lack of or non-appreciated style of service user relationship focus or inadequate service recovery. In each case, the gap may be caused by misinterpreting the available data and information due to inadequate cultural competence in the organization, or even overreacting to perceived cultural factors.

The second provider gap (Figure 14) is called a Service Design and Standards Gap. It is based on the cultural knowledge and understanding of service users' needs gained during the previous listening stage. If not all in the organization understand or share the same vision of the aimed service quality and characteristics it can lead to designing for service and standards that are not culturally sensitive or even ignorant. Misunderstandings may also be caused by multicultural service development teams not sharing the same customer insights, being too vague about the service users' needs or valuing the development objectives differently. The organization may even set different standards to different cultures based on stereotypical thinking.

The Service Performance Gap (Gap 3, Figure 14) is induced by deficiencies in the organizational policies and practices, for example, recruitment of culturally incompetent personnel, failing to empower frontline employees to adapt their behavior, biased or unequal treatment of colleagues or service users. As services are co-produced with the customer they also have a role to act upon. In intercultural service offerings, however, service users may not be fulfilling their roles in the service process due to uncertainty, misunderstandings, or different cultural practices and expectations. Typically, there are many intermediaries in service systems, and their lack of cultural understanding may also lead to service delivery which is not in line with the designed service and the standards aimed for.

Finally, the Communication Gap (Gap 4, Figure 14) may cause negative experiences and wrongful anticipations towards the service. Culturally distinctive ways of communicating create expectations that may not match with the service user's expectations or do not communicate the proposed value effectively. This

may happen due to factors as discussed in the previous section, e.g. choice of language, different communication styles (e.g. difficult vocabulary, unfamiliar tone of voice, overpromising or emphasizing irrelevant elements of the service). Respectively, the provider organization may lack understanding about different message interpretations by service users with a different cultural background. In a multicultural society, speaking the language of the audience may mean diversification of marketing communicating to more narrowly segmented user groups.

The Gaps model provides a meaningful framework to illustrate the variety of stages and interactions where culture can matter throughout a service design process or relating to the service user and service interactions. Besides the actual service process, there may be additional culture-related factors that can impact the service user experience and be beyond the provider organization's direct influence such as societal and political topics, ongoing crises or market trends.

2.6 Culture and service design

Culture is shaped by design at the same time as culture changes design. Design in the sense of giving shape to and creating something new with a purpose is present in all human civilizations. Each civilization is an outcome of historic and lengthy cultural processes. These cultural characteristics also affect planning and production of artifacts and activities according to a particular community's needs, preferences and values. There are very few systematic approaches on researching culture's role in service design (section 2.4). Tansitpong (2012) claims that services are particularly affected by culture since culture determines how people think, decide and act in their personal lives and at work.

Each human group has unique ways of solving their everyday problems which is reflected in the forms of products and human activities such as services. Leong and Clark (2003, 56) equate design criteria with a culturally distinctive value orientation of a given community. Meroni & Sangiorgi (2011, 213) claim that even a nation can be seen as a result of cultural design processes or as a service system where the resources are applied for the benefit of citizens, and the design actions are based on the nation's values and politics. Similarly, Morelli (2002, 5) sees "cultural, social, economic and technological frames of the actors involved" affecting the construction of service systems.

Kamppuri (2011) sheds light on how culture has been considered within design. Her focus is on digital aspects, studying culture's role in a human-computer interaction design context. Yet, the overall evolution is also interesting from a service design perspective while sharing roots with interaction design. The first wave of paying attention to culture as a variable was initiated by interest in user-friendliness in mechanistic usability engineering. The second wave followed with an increasing focus on user-centered design where culture was no longer seen as a mere user characteristic but as a use context where culture influenced both a structure and a process. In service research, a corresponding paradigmatic

change can be seen in the shift from separate services towards the experience of being served (service instead of services). Kamppuri (2011, 22, quoting Cockton 2004, 2006) describes how the third wave of cultural focus in interaction design draws on values and experiences with an ultimate design goal of creating worth, where worth is defined as a "positive balance of benefits over the costs to the system beneficiaries." This is comparable with the overall objectives of service design where value-bringing service experience is the ultimate goal of the design process.

In present-day societies, people are increasingly looking for meaningful services and value experiences. Service designers have recognized that they are in constant need of "a deep understanding of customer behavior and contextual and cultural factors, as well as identification of those factors that would solve the customers' problems" (Koskinen, Hertto, Nöyränen, & Jäppinen 2013, 40). Mager (in Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011, 233) finds it increasingly important to learn about culture- and market-specific needs for design of services in order to detect specific challenges and to adapt methods and processes locally.

The fluid concept of large cultures co-existing with many other salient bearers of culture, such as gender, age, religion or organizational cultures (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, 211) does not make the study of cultural matters easy. Designers, along with anthropologists and other experts, work to codify cultural knowledge into design practice, such as signs, kits, manuals, web platforms and space layouts (Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011, 23). Knowing the wider socio-cultural service context will be a prerequisite for a successful design process. Christensen, Ball & Halskov (eds. 2017) have rigorously analyzed design thinking processes and discovered similar issues arising during design thinking processes as observed in other intercultural team working and interaction contexts, namely issues in team dynamics and conflicts, communication, decision making, leadership and reasoning styles.

Dennington (2017) poses, reasonably, the question how service design could be seen as cultural intermediary, a maker of culture. She notes that the dominating discourse in service design is currently not culturally oriented. According to her, translating socio-cultural trends into meaning, these meanings into service concepts and finally into service details supporting desired experiences calls for further investigation. Designers have an important role in observing and interpreting local and other cultures (Morelli & Sangiorgi 2006; Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011, 23). Moreover, a relevant question is to which extent designers are aware of cultural processes and capable in their roles as interpreters of cultural meanings in wider design contexts.

Leong and Clark (2003, 55) recognize three different spatial perspectives being reflected differently between design and the fluid concept of culture. The outer tangible or visible level, a behavioral mid-level and an inner intangible level (see Figure 15) are each finding different embodiments in various design fields. Goncu Berk (2013, 18–19) related Leong and Clark's cultural spatial perspectives to product design practices and attributes. She considers the tangible level to affect physical and material aspects in the actual design style. The behavioral mid-level (social aspect) of culture is seen to influence the social interactions

affected by using the design artifact. The intangible level (spiritual aspect) of culture is reflected on emotions derived from design artifacts. In analogue, I translate the interrelationship of culture and design into different dimensions of service design in Figure 15. The order and size of the fields reflect their roles in the frame of culture and service design: The tangible dimension of culture is the most visible and easiest to grasp, while the intangible aspects of culture are harder to perceive. On the other hand, the visible and tangible aspects are commonly recognized as less important factors in service (design), while the actual core of the service is the intangible experience, the outcome of design. A good service equals a good service experience accompanied by positive emotions.

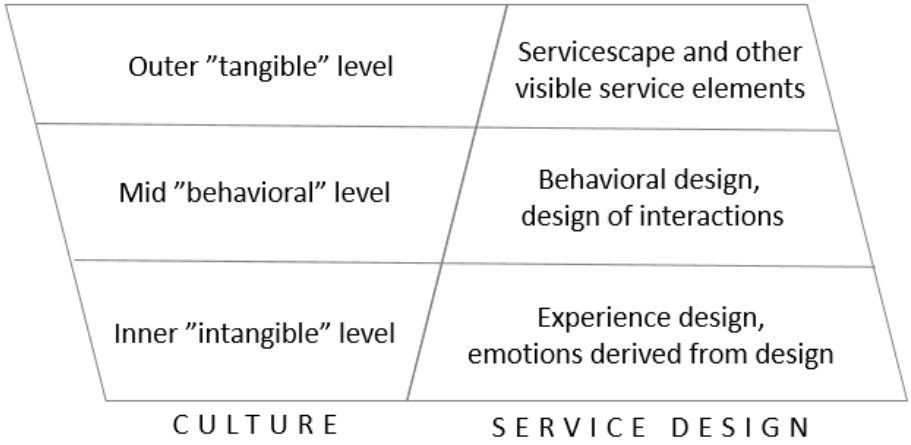


FIGURE 15 The levels of culture in relation to service design dimensions (based on Leong & Clark 2003, 55 and Goncu Berk 2013, 18).

Service designers can encounter cultural issues – or ignore them due to lacking awareness – at all stages of the development process. In cross- and intercultural settings, many kinds of cultural practices and values are present. A service design process is about choices. An important question is who makes the decisions and on which kind of cultural presumptions and knowledge they are based. Several actors, organizations and systems may be involved. This often includes diverse actors bringing their cultural knowledge and values into play, resulting in a greater variety of viewpoints. An important observation is that service provider organizations, like any other organization, may be strongly rooted and influenced by their perceived national cultural norms and beliefs, which may have an influence on the process of service design and delivery (Yalla-Kullu & al. 2015, 101). Thus, in order not to accept the most evident choice or being driven by banal nationalism, critical consideration is needed at every stage of a service design process. Usunier et al. (2017, 56) encourage any approach involving cultures to include "a preliminary phase of conceptual equivalence assessment based on linguistic cues". Core etic and emic meanings should be explored to find a common ground for the design team during the development process.

Figure 16 illustrates cultural contexts in two exemplary service design settings. The first example showcases a typical local design context while the second

provides another cultural design setting. Evidently, there are numerous alternative settings involving many cultural variables. The "foreign" element can be a service provider, a service designer, a service user, or the theories and methods of service design used during the co-creative design process.

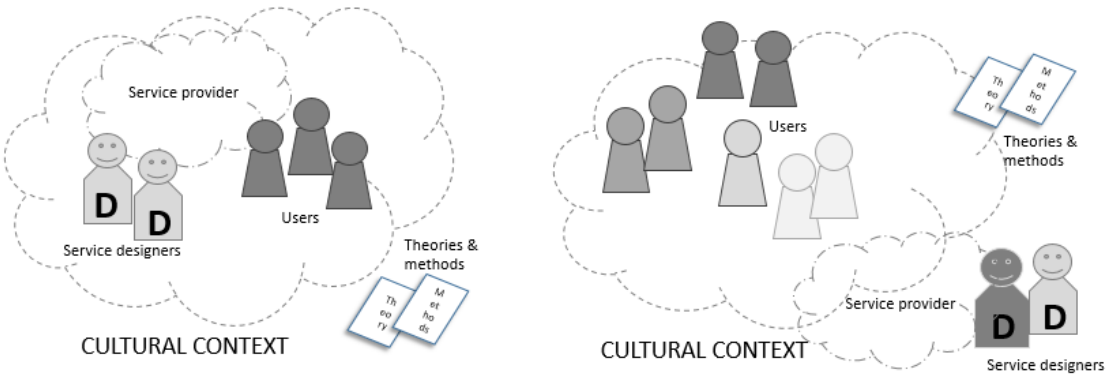


FIGURE 16 Examples of different service design settings involving intercultural elements.

A service provider organization often acts within the same cultural environment which is also the cultural context for service co-creation and service use. However, it is possible that the service provider organization represents another cultural background in international service business. Service design theory and methodology originates predominantly from a Western post-industrialized world. Service designer teams are often multidisciplinary and multicultural, just for the reason of having multiple perspectives represented. The service users may also represent many different cultural backgrounds. An increasing heterogeneity of the users is a common characteristic of a modern and multicultural service context. Most importantly, each service design context is unique. The large variety of service design settings demands cultural awareness and adaptation skills from a service designer.

The increasing diversification of societies and service design settings call for inclusion of culturally diverse actors during co-creative processes. There are service areas (such as tourism or hospitality services) in which cultural aspects have traditionally been taken into consideration. But in many projects the service concepts are typically designed for majority groups only. Including more voices into co-design processes and taking into account underrepresented cultural groups as local service users would make services more accessible and useful for broader audiences.

Sun (2015, 64) sees two important aspects in cross-cultural design: "[I]ncorporating complex cultural influences into design processes (i.e., gaining cultural insights out of user research through the design process), and transforming the rich understanding of local culture into design recommendations (i.e., applying insights to form design implementations)". While doing research on a local culture's role in service users' world, Sun (2015) reminds readers of the importance

of operationalizing culture in a way that suits the research goals. Service designers need thus define their epistemological viewpoint of culture before being able to operationalize it. A macro-level research approach will not yield micro-level insights, and insights of immediate local culture cannot be operationalized to apply on the large sociocultural level.

2.7 Summary

Culture and service can both be seen as abstract notions strongly dependent on human interaction. There seem to be a timely parallel and foundational shift in research paradigms both in the scholarly fields of service research and intercultural communication. Both emphasize a need for deeper understanding of interactions and individuals' world lives. In intercultural communication studies the need relates to understanding the ways of constructing reality and meaning in interaction, in service research the focus is addressed on joint activities of co-creation and connected, meaningful service experiences.

Based on the reviewed literature and reflections on the recent paradigm shifts the two fundamental changes within these separate fields of inquiries seem not to have crossed their disciplinary boundaries. The clear shift from offering mere service products into rendering service or delivering great service experiences (Bettencourt & al. 2014), and what it means from a cultural viewpoint has been little addressed in service research or intercultural communication related studies. An essentialized culture perception (often banal nationalism) seems still to be prevalent in most service-related research.

The advances made in service marketing research have given an important framework for theory building in service design. The slight difference in mindsets between service-dominant logic (SDL), service logic (SL) and customer-dominant logic (CDL) is not constitutional for service design as they all share the same paradigmatic understanding of the importance of a service user's central role in value co-creation and the provider organization's role as a facilitator of value emergence (Vargo & Lusch 2008; Grönroos & Voima 2013; Heinonen & Strandvik 2015). Especially the customer dominant logic (CDL) supports theoretically the human-centered emphasis of service design by shifting the focus on the service user sphere (Figure 5). Understanding "service" requires knowledge of particular sociocultural contexts, where the interactions, experiences and meanings connected with people's day-to-day practices make sense (Blomberg & Darrah 2015).

The modern service marketing paradigm helps shed light on the value co-creating processes. It is, first of all, a groundbreaking cultural change in service provider organizations. Traditionally, a service user has been the goal of marketing activities (marketing "to" or "for"). The modern perspective emphasizes a "with" aspect, and service can be defined as "a value-creating support to another party's practices" (Grönroos 2011, 14), similar to the shift in design mindset to "designing with"(Sanders & Stappers 2014, 30) where designers draw on ideas

generated by other co-design actors. Service design and its collaborative approach is replacing "old-school", organization-driven development activities (e.g. product or service development). This spurs further research needs towards service interactions, and the stakeholders must learn how to participate appropriately in these interactions "by identifying and ascribing meaning to characteristic elements of the service" (Blomberg & Darrah 2015, 36).

No human activity takes place in a cultural vacuum. Value co-creation has mostly been studied from an individual perspective, but the collective aspect becomes relevant especially in CDL when individuals share their perceived value-in-use in their social communities and reflect on their value preferences in the context of larger sociocultural value orientations and trends. Value may be co-created and meanings co-constructed peer-to-peer by sharing experiences and perceptions in the service user sphere. This means that more research is needed on the social and cultural aspects of value-in-use and whether and how values shared by cultural groups contribute to it.

Service design manifests a shift from a categorizing and generalizing target group mindset towards enabling more individualized and holistic service experiences, based on knowing the service user needs and dreams better. Still, there seems to be a gap in incorporating the dynamic, constructionist understanding of culture. Scholars and practitioners should take an interest in the various understandings of culture and ways of operationalizing it in order to support theory development from the joint perspective. Service designers need to be careful, however, not to overinterpret their data and not to "read culture" into the data where it does not exist.

Depending on the goals and abstraction level, various approaches to culture serve different purposes. During the initial discovery stage quantitative, social science based approaches may give important indication of average behavior and typical tendencies in certain cultural contexts and help form a "big picture". Yet, due to differences in ontological and epistemological approach, these insights are hardly compatible with the design recommendations in a locally reframed design context of concrete service situations and use.

While culture is being co-constructed it should not be seen as a "thing" – as something people live "inside of", or as some kind of a simple set of beliefs, values or mental patterns attached to people due to their nationality or belonging to another cultural group. Instead, a more useful approach is to consider culture as a verb or activity where the notion of culture encompasses the idea of "people doing things with other people" or "culture in making" (Scollon & al. 2012, 5; Sun 2015). In this way, the role of culture can be easier to perceive and its relevance considered during the co-design and value co-creation activities which are similarly about doing.

The hybridity of culture and sieving out the variety of other sociocultural factors (age, gender etc.) makes the study of cultural factors affecting service experiences challenging. The fact that each value creation process is different means that value experiences are always unique to each individual. Furthermore, cultural factors may contribute to the experience anytime during the longitudinal

real or imagined value generation (Helkkula et al. 2012b). The number of complex contributors to the service experience can be numerous, hence there is an understandable enticement to simplify phenomena and essentialize culture (e.g. to banal nationalism). An awareness and deeper knowledge of the ontological and epistemological approaches to culture can guard researchers and practitioners against using values driven from imagined cultures as design guidelines, and help capitalize on the forces of the dynamic understanding (Dahl 2014) of culture in service design.

While a service user is undoubtedly the most central stakeholder in the design process, considering the cultural backgrounds of other stakeholders and of the overall context during the service design setting (Figure 13) should also be remembered. Particularly, uncovered biases or unconscious essentializing of culture may distort good intensions and insights during service design processes.

In the following chapter I outline the methodological approaches to the three separate empirical sub-studies of this dissertation.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

Cultural factors in service design are scarcely researched and more understanding is needed both on the macro and micro levels (Manzini 2016). Traditionally, when the unit of analysis is human perception of cultural factors, the methodological approach is qualitative in line with the interpretative approaches in intercultural communication studies (e.g. Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009; Sadri & Flammia 2011). Mostly qualitative data collection and analysis methods also seem justified for this dissertation with the objective to explore how large cultures are approached during a service design process. Yin (2009) and Johnsson and Christensen (2008) also recommend a qualitative approach when the researcher does not have an abundance of previous knowledge about the phenomena, as in this case.

This research is based on three different sub-studies which are inspired by case study methodology. Metsämuuronen (2009, 222) lists case studies, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory and action research as the most common research approaches in qualitative studies. As laid out by Yin (2009), a case study aims to describe general phenomena based on a singular or a few separate cases and is therefore particularly useful in exploratory research. A case study is a research method but also provides a research setting. A case study is grounded on the presumption that a singular case is representative of something general: similar developments, similar ways of thinking or acting (Yin 2009). The phenomenon should be studied closely from different angles and be supported by relevant and dependable sources. A methodologically triangulated strategy ensures validity of the research (Marshall & Rossman 2014, 56).

The three different sub-studies constituting this research provide versatile perspectives for the research problematics of culture's role in service design. The three-pronged methodological approach is depicted in Figure 17.

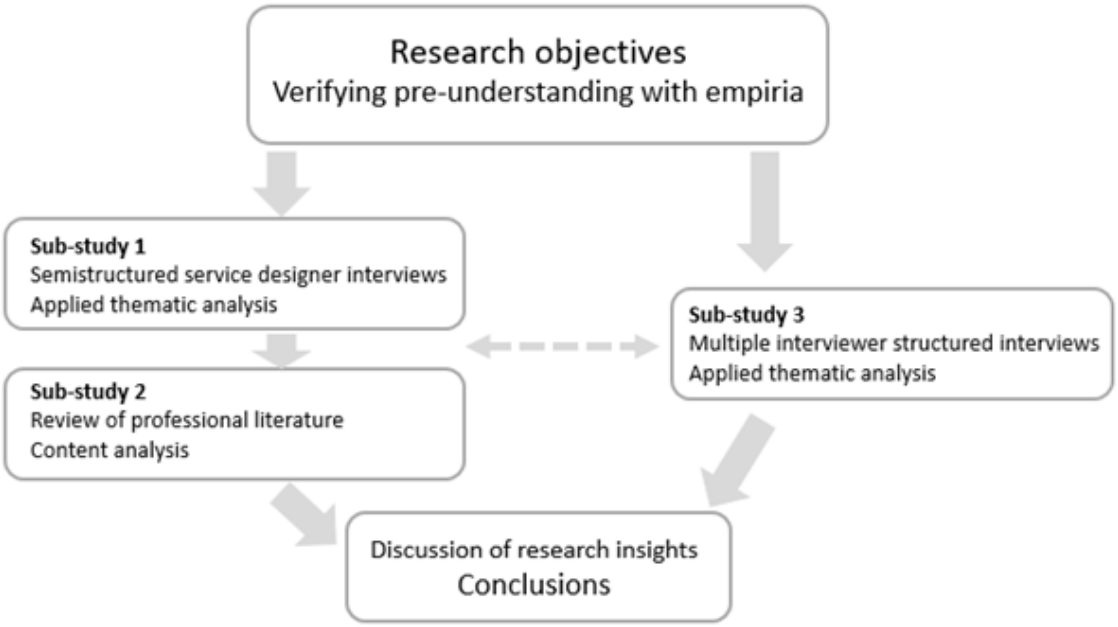


FIGURE 17 Methodological approach

The first sub-study consists of semi-structured service designer interviews. During some initial conversations with service designers it became apparent that service designers tend not to take cultural factors systematically into consideration during their working processes. This lead to interviews with a representative amount of service designers in order to discover whether this initial presumption was correct. The semi-structured interviews were conducted based on pre-selected themes (Rubin & Rubin 2012; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2011). The goal was to select service designers from various countries to give an overview of the practice-based approach of this fairly new and global profession in service development. The first five interviewees were drawn from attendees of the biggest international service design conference in 2014. The sampling was continued by the snowball procedure where the recruitment of the following interviewees was based on the recommendations of the previous interviewees. All 14 interviewees worked as service designers or with a similar title with the aim of developing user-centric services with co-creative methods. The search for additional interviewees was halted when the data showed evidence of saturation. After transcribing the interview recordings the text was carefully read for locating relevant meanings, and the data was categorized, thematized and coded based on the applied thematic analysis laid by Guest, MacQueen & Namey (2012).

The second sub-study was chosen to complement the interviews and broaden the view of culture's role in the field of service design. The wider perspective was enabled by analyzing *professional* service design literature by observing how large cultures were addressed in professional service design books and journal articles. This sub-study is not to be confused with the initial literature for reviewing prior knowledge on culture(s) role in academic literature in the fields of service, design and intercultural communication research (sections 2.1–2.2). The initial data gathering was based in searching specific key words in context (KWIC;

Guest & al. 2012) quantitatively which Bulmer (2006) considers a powerful means to reduce data for a more condensed form for analysis. The quantitative text-driven search for key words and culture-related topics also provided a needed "reality check" where the description of real life is not arbitrarily broken into pieces (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2000, 152) but rather illustrate the phenomena on a larger scale. The discourses of culture – the way in which culture is spoken about – in professional literature were analyzed qualitatively. The data was analyzed following the applied thematic process laid out by Guest, et al. (2012). The professional literature review and content analysis provided an effective way to frame the problem and identify topical issues related to culture's role in service design.

The third sub-study complements the perspectives with service users' experiences with culture-related issues. The first two cases indicated that service designers address cultural factors relatively little, thus an additional approach was needed to verify whether there exists a reason for this disregard from the service users' point of view. This step provides a complementing perspective from the service user side while a service development process can be traditionally seen to represent dualistic sides of service providers and service users. By using multiple interviewers, 50 randomly chosen, culturally diverse individuals were interviewed in their roles as service users. The objective of the structured interviews was to gain a deeper and broader understanding of service situations where culture may have some relevance. The structured interview questions also inquired about factors or behavior that highlight culture's role, about relevant stakeholders' cultural backgrounds and about evaluations of perceived service experiences. Finally, the informants were asked to assess good service from a cultural perspective. This was considered relevant while the objective of service design is to enable desirable service experiences (Teixeira & al. 2012).

The collected research data provides a basis for an inductive, explorative and content driven qualitative analysis. The validity and reliability of the research will be discussed per each sub-study and further, on the whole study level, in the final chapter. Each one of the sub-studies included methodological steps that may bring some limitations and affect the generalizability of the research findings. The interpretative research approach and analysis mean that the truth is constructed by the researcher – in this case through my choice of methodology (Metsämuuronen 2009, 218). The methodological steps are described in more detail in each sub-study which are described in the following chapters 4–6.

4 SUB-STUDY 1: SERVICE DESIGNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CULTURE

The objective for the first sub-study was to find out how large cultures are approached and taken into consideration during a service design process by professional service designers. The semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain answers to the following research questions:

> **R1:** How do service designers speak about culture(s)?
> **R2**: How do service designers speak about taking cultural factors into consideration during the design process?

Additionally, it was considered possible that service designers would take a stance to defining good services either from their own perspective or from the service user point of view:

> R5: How is good service defined from a cultural point of view?

Practicing service designers were chosen as interviewees since the professional domain claims to choreograph "processes, technologies and interactions within complex systems in order to co-create value for relevant stakeholders" (KISD 2016b). The goal of service design is to provide an optimal experience for service users and other stakeholders (e.g. Teixeira & al. 2012; Stickdorn & al. 2018, 27). The profession can be seen as a natural evolution in response to societies' needs to provide more effective, efficient and customer-centered services (Miettinen 2009; Penin 2018). Service design draws on theory building in service marketing and management research and related design fields, such as industrial and interaction design (Kamppuri 2011). A brief history of the field, an outline of service designers' role and suggested qualifications are described in more detail in section 2.4. In the following, the profession is characterized with a few additional details.

Although there has always been "design thinkers", service design as a profession started in the context of private sector agencies (A Little History of Service Design n.d.). Service design agencies started emerging first in Western societies,

but soon the profession found foothold around the world. Many of the agencies have functional and disciplinary overlapping with neighboring fields such as marketing, branding, service engineering, user experience, industrial design, interaction design, digital solutions development, management consultation. This illustrates the interdisciplinary character of the profession (Mager 2009). A common nominator for the broad type of agencies offering service design is their goal to enable optimal service experiences based on thorough service user research, collaborative approaches and solutions often supported by digital touchpoints.

The following listing gives an overview of the organizational settings that many service designers work in. The list focuses on service design agencies and how they characterize their field of activity. The selection is based on the first 10 hits of the global Service Design Network's (SDN) published organizational members from different countries, listed in February 2018. No alphabetical order, listing by country, type of organization or similar logic was apparent, thus the listing on the SDN pages seemed random. The sphere of operations is based on the agency's self-identification on its "About us" or a similar WWW section:

- Product, service and public policy design (Belgium)
- Strategy, design and development of digital products and services (USA)
- Design process support (Japan)
- Design innovation (Taiwan)
- Design company gathering people in the right way to create and implement powerful innovation in products, services, and organizations. (Brazil)
- Service design and innovation agency focused on improving health, wellbeing and public services. (UK)
- Human-to-human business (Finland)
- Innovation services firm (Germany)
- Service design and branding consultancy (Sweden)
- Design research and service innovation (Netherlands)

The above listing shows that service designers work in a broad range of organizations defining their operational sphere in diverse ways. Many of them specialize on specific industries (e.g. health care) or sectors (public services). Moreover, many service designers are working "in-house" in all kinds of organizations, but for simplicity reason, only agencies offering service design expertise were included in the above listing. Despite the large variety in job descriptions and employment contexts there are still a few unifying descriptions for a service designer. As the field is relatively young and has had a strongly international character since its emergence, service designers share very similar methodological and philosophical approaches internationally (Segelström 2013). For this study, the main criteria for selected interviewees was their own identification with the profession.

In the following, the research goals and methodological choices of the semi-structured interviews are described. The section is followed by a description and

discussion of the themes that emerged from the interview data (4.2) and the sub-study is concluded by a summary of the findings in section 4.3.

4.1 Research design

Interviews are traditionally considered a suitable and useful way of obtaining information about people's experiences, motives and opinions (Rubin & Rubin 2012). The questions for the service designers' semi-structured interviews were designed to explore the culture theme with no antecedent hypothesis but seek to understand the perceptions about culture and its relevance during a service design process in a phenomenological tradition. The semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions and inductive probing allowed the respondents to talk about the topic freely, addressing personally meaningful themes related to culture in service design. The data analysis was conducted in a content-driven and inductive manner.

4.1.1 Semi-structured interviewing

The service designers were interviewed during October –December 2014. The critical qualification for being interviewed was that the person identified themselves as being a service designer. The actual job title was not relevant. The aim was to get a selection of service designers from various countries working both in international and local projects to reflect variety in the field. The initial contacting of respondents took place during a global service design conference and continued by purposively selected snowball sampling (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2011, 59). The interviews showed evidence of saturation around the tenth interview and were stopped after the 14th interview.

Eight of the respondents were male and six were female, and all were between the ages 30–44 (which is indicative of the relatively young professional field). Three of the respondents worked in domestic projects only, the rest both in local and international or solely in international projects. The following nationalities were represented: American, Brazilian, British, Canadian, Danish, Dutch, Finnish (4), Italian, Japanese, German, Polish, Romanian, Swedish, and Swiss. Some of the respondents identified themselves with two nationalities. The countries they were working in were Canada, Denmark, Finland (7), Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA. Two of the respondents were in-house service designers in a commercial organization, the rest represented service design agencies or consultancies.

The semi-structured interviews explored the themes listed below. The themes with detailed questions are presented in Appendix 1.

1. Large cultures (e.g. national, regional or ethnic)
2. Culture's role in service design
3. Stakeholders and their cultural backgrounds' relevance

4. Service design tools and methods used in culture-related activities
5. Training and intercultural competence development
6. Non-defined topics

All of the above themes were included in each interview. An open question encouraging the respondents to reflect on any opinions or remarks on large cultural aspects related to service design was posed at the end of the question. The interviews were dynamic and flexible, allowing adjustments to the interview process. The meaning of culture was co-constructed with each respondent in the beginning of the interviews. The term "culture" was not predefined but when the respondent usually asked what kind of culture they were supposed to reflect upon they were encouraged to think about large cultures such as national, regional or ethnic cultures. Eight interviews were conducted face-to-face, five via Skype and one by telephone. The interviews lasted between 24–35 minutes and were recorded, notes taken from them and later verbatim transcribed for easier analysis. The poor recording quality prohibited the transcription of two interviews where only the notes could be analyzed.

4.1.2 Data analysis and coding

The data analysis was conducted manually due to the relatively small size of the corpus. According to Jolanki & Karhunen (2010) computerized qualitative data analysis is not a guarantee of better analysis quality. In fact, they warn about risks of too rigid categorization, the program-forced thinking patterns and overseeing subtle nuances of the reality.

The transcribed data was carefully read and re-read to identify key words and themes which emerged from the implicit and explicit ideas expressed by the respondents. For systematic locating of relevant meanings, the data was categorized, thematized and coded and, if needed, also sub-coded in order to capture the complexities of meanings within the qualitative textual data (Guest, MacQueen & Namey 2012). The data was re-coded with a week between the codings for more reliable coding. A codebook was created following the interview structure with above listed themes and complemented with additional themes surfacing from the data. Only relevant data, i.e. meanings that the respondents were giving to answer the semi-structured interview questions or were identified to correspond with the research objectives, were coded. The codebook included all relevant themes (units of meaning emerging from the data), codes and subcodes corresponding to the meanings, short and full definitions for the codes to set semantic boundaries for the code meaning, and a description when to use or not to use the code. During the analysis, codes were categorized by frequencies, co-occurrences identified and recurring and meaningful patterns highlighted. Large chunks of data were not coded as the respondents also reflected widely on related themes − such as the role of organizational culture, characteristics of service design as a practical approach, process and stages of collecting customer insights. All relevant themes will be presented in detail in the following section.

4.2 Findings of the central themes

Figure 18 illustrates the themes emerging from the data, classified hierarchically into codes. The contextual factors indicated by the respondents were fundamental in evaluating relevant meanings. Five of the themes were preset by the questions (role of culture, cultural background of stakeholders, methodology, concept of culture, cultural training). Additional themes were raised by most of the respondents in their answers or reflections to the open-ended question. All main themes and selected sub-themes are discussed further below.

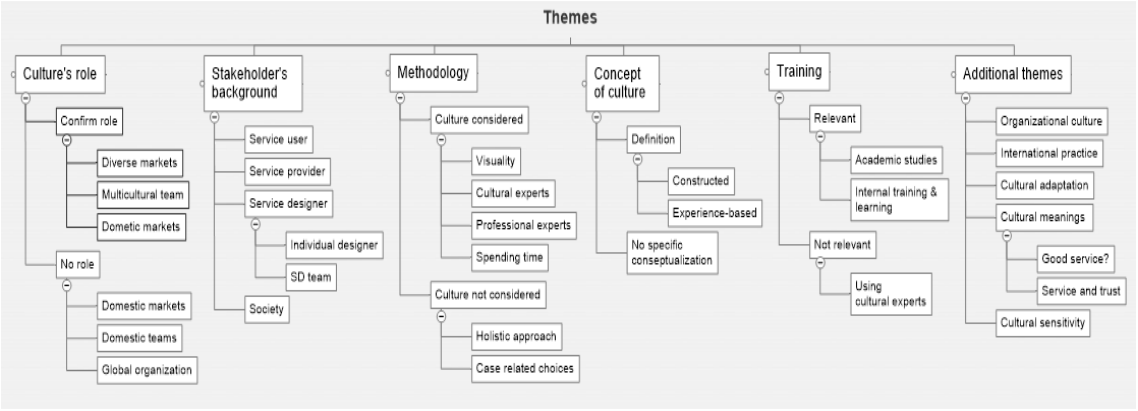


FIGURE 18 Themes emerging from the interview data

4.2.1 The role of culture in service design

The first semi-structured interview question inquired about the respondent's perception of culture's role in service design. 12 out of the 14 respondents indicated without hesitance that factors related to large cultures have some kind of a role in their service design activities. The more diverse the service designer's work environment was (e.g. in large metropoles, culturally diverse societies, international projects), the more important the cultural aspects seemed to be perceived. The concept of "culture" was discussed in the beginning of or during the interviews with each respondent, and they were encouraged to reflect on large cultures. National, regional or ethnic cultures were mentioned as examples of large cultures. None of the respondents critiqued or questioned the concept of national culture, and most of them shared their experiences related specifically to national cultures. Regional or ethnic cultures were addressed only a couple of times.

Specifying the importance of culture's role was more challenging. One respondent formulated it "*that it is not the primary thing we think about*" (Respondent R1). However, there was a wide agreement on the overall relevance of large cultures. Respondent five (R5) argued that:

> *As a designer you need to be aware of the culture you are working for. You need to be aware what are the cultural norms or you might easily ruin your customer research in lack of understanding to ask the right kind of questions or in interpreting meanings correctly.* (R5)

Another respondent formulated:

> *Service design is about shaping behaviors – – and in that sense I think that culture will always have an influence on it.* (R9)

Only two respondents initially gave a negative answer, indicating that they did not perceive culture to have any role in their design activities. However, before the semi-structured interviews were finished all respondents contemplated that recognizing cultural aspects may actually be very relevant in service design and needs more attention.

One respondent working for a large multinational organization stated that in her company the organizational culture was the "big, big thing" and national or other large cultures were mostly only considered when needing to think about practical things such as using different languages or working across time zones. The American company was said to intentionally trying to minimize the influence of national cultures in order to offer global solutions.

Another respondent mentioned that despite working in international projects they did not consider the knowledge gained from the foreign customer being specifically cultural. Instead they considered this information to deal with customer insights in general, not being "*a separate cultural track*" (R14).

Diverse markets

The respondents found it very difficult to separate factors related to large cultures from other demographic and small cultural characteristics (age, gender, occupation, social class, lifestyle, leisure activities etc.) and it was perceived as one reason why culture was not the primary area of concern. The role of culture was most prominent when the service was designed for international or otherwise diverse markets. It was easy for the respondents to give examples about these kinds of cases, and the designers stated that while targeting international, neighboring or diverse markets, culture's role was at least discussed. When the culture was purposely given attention to, it was more often for the choice of communication channels or for naming the service locally than about actual content of the service itself:

> *– – for the African-American community we chose to share information [about health service] through barber shops … or using an infrastructure that exists where that community gets their information – – like through churches."*(R1)

Multicultural teams

The role of culture was perceived obvious when the service designer was not working in their own cultural environment, or the SD team was multicultural. In that case, it was perceived to influence the team dynamics or internal work process, but not the service concept or customer value creation in any way. Multicultural design teams were recognized to impact the internal organizational

productivity both in negative and positive ways. The efficiency of teams was mentioned to slow down due to cultural differences (e.g. language difficulties, challenging communication styles, need for constantly interpreting meanings, hierarchical mismatches) but it was also found to improve the quality of work when different team members were bringing their own cultural expertise and understandings of customer insights into the play. In some cases, cultural issues were seen to be adequately covered if the team members had different cultural backgrounds.

One respondent had noted that many service design teams were truly multicultural and were hiring from abroad. She wondered, however, how these service designers coped without knowing the local language:

> *– – I don't see you can be a service designer in Finland if you do not speak Finnish – – it must be really really difficult – – especially during the insights stage, I don't see it possible – – and there are no purely international projects – – .* (R6)

Domestic markets

Culture is relative, so it becomes apparent and is mostly paid attention to in interaction with people with a different cultural background. The growing diversity of domestic or local service users was acknowledged only by respondents whose societies are notoriously multicultural (e.g. the Canadian respondent). Only two respondents mentioned having worked in projects with groups considered "cultural" like immigrants, language or ethnic minorities. Respondents coming from fairly homogenous countries (such as Finland) and working only in local projects could not pinpoint any SD projects where culture had been discussed. Nevertheless, regional differences were recognized. In some areas, even differences between cities had impacted the service design process as "*– – each city has a different spirit and different people*" (R7). The regional differences were also elaborated by one respondent who claimed that clients from smaller cities placed different kind of expectations for her agency's operations (e.g. by avoiding terms in English language and using familiar approaches).

Examples of cultural issues

While the respondents agreed on culture's relevance, several of them were able to give concrete examples how cultural issues are dealt with during design processes. Visual aspects in general such as use of colors, choice of images, and different channels were mentioned. Language issues were also mentioned: the need for translation, localization or being structured in various ways. Also, intangible service elements were considered to include cultural aspects affecting the service experience and were reported to having been included in touchpoint design (Touchpoints occur when a service user interacts with the service provider across any channel or physical encounter; Patricio et al. 2011, 182). Structuring of information or positioning of advice or guidance on digital platforms were considered to vary culturally. Two respondents had noticed differences in price sensitivity between cultures. Assumptions based on one's own cultural practices had also caused some surprises for the respondents. One respondent described the exam-

ple of how mobile devices are considered very personal and private in her country and how surprising it was to discover that elsewhere these devices may be rented and used communally. This affected directly the interface planning of an application.

4.2.2 Stakeholders' cultural background

The pull of culture begins at birth and continues throughout life (Benedict 1948, in Samovar, Porter & McDaniel 2012). Cultural traditions, practices and shared values constructed in interaction are shaping individuals' thinking and behavior. As the new service marketing research paradigm emphasizes the value co-creation in interaction and in multiple stakeholder networks during lengthy service design processes (see section 2.3), finding out how stakeholders' various cultural backgrounds come to the foreground during interaction and decision-making in a SD project is interesting. A large number of service-related research seems, nevertheless, to focus predominantly on the service users' (e.g. consumers, customers, citizens, end-users) or target market culture, and other stakeholder groups have gotten much less attention. However, there are some research examples that imply that the cultural background or environment of the service provider organization and its representatives play a role when choosing a service provider (e.g. Harrison-Walker 1995; Bruning & Saqib 2013).

Service user

Much in line, the respondents, too, thought that it is the service user's cultural background that should be considered during SD activities. This is an obvious logic since SD focuses on gaining deep insights into service user needs and enabling optimal experiences. The service user research stage was mentioned to include co-creative methods such as co-design workshops which may allow gathering of cultural insights. This specific goal related to culture was, however, not mentioned. In some cases, the initial research was already conducted by the service provider (client of the SD agency).

Language as main carrier of cultural meanings seemed to provide challenges at any stage of a SD process. Holmqvist & Grönroos (2012) claim that language has an important impact on the service experiences before, during or after the service encounter. One respondent acknowledged that there was always going to be communication gaps if there is no shared language, despite the possibility of using translators. Speaking the language was found to be the key to understand the culture and thus crucial for understanding customers' needs. The complexity of linguistic and cultural meanings and translating them into design insights was also addressed.

One respondent brought up the growing heterogeneity of societies. However, diverse groups such as immigrants were seldom considered in her agency's SD activities. According to her, immigrants seemed to be approached as one large homogeneous customer group, the needs of which can be satisfied, especially in public services, by an interpreter or "some immigrant information sharing portal". She admitted that immigrants were wrongfully seen as a unified group of

"the others not speaking our language", and that many service providers and designers often chose a wrongful approach to serve the vast number of diverse people with immigration background in English. This was recognized not to be an optimal approach, but a lack of resources was given as an excuse to overlook the needs of various immigrant and foreigner groups and their needs in relation to language options. Respondent 4, having worked for a health care case targeted at immigrants, had also noted different expectation levels from service user groups with immigration background. This he related to an unfamiliarity with the local service standards:

> *"Immigrants may not be used to demanding the same service quality and scope as others. Or they may be demanding too much which may not be considered appropriate*". (R4)

Service provider
The service provider's culture was not perceived to affect a SD process in any way. Many respondents had not reflected on a service provider's culture being rooted in any specific large culture. As mentioned above by one respondent, her multinational employer, a service provider organization deliberately aimed to diminish cultural influences by enforcing a one language policy and not addressing cultural issues in any specific ways. Instead of being able to recognize a service provider's large cultural affiliations playing any role during design processes, many respondents stated that values and preferences connected with organizational cultures had a more notable role in the design process. Organizational cultures are discussed briefly below.

Service designer
Similarly, the cultural background of the service designer themselves was rarely considered to be relevant during the design process. Only one respondent addressed some concerns about her own cultural background. Respondent 9 admitted that the designer's own cultural background may affect the work process: "– – *the way I am approaching work – – as a culture we [Germans] are more demanding*". However, respondent 4 stated that "– – *we are not the same – – and to succeed in SD you should really be able to listen to that difference*". A Canadian respondent acknowledged that his employer agency had recognized the possible impact of designers' cultural backgrounds and they would "– – *hire for diversity and cross-functionality*". The main motivation for this agency was interpreted to be a demand to widen their perspectives and to be more plausible as an employer and specialist in uncovering wide ranging needs of service users.

4.2.3 Culture's role in choosing methods and tools

Methods (as research approaches) and tools (as concrete models) are differentiated in service design discourse (Stickdorn & Schneider 2010; Stickdorn & al. 2018). Most respondents acknowledged a need to use applied service design methodology to address cultural aspects. The methods and tools used were, however, very similar approaches as used in other design processes. For example, one

interviewee told that his company had designed research protocols that explored what the lived experiences in different cultures are. The approach was building on their standard processes, and based on the results, commonalities within groups were looked for. One respondent mentioned that testing beforehand was important in culture-related cases. The pretesting took place with local individuals sharing a similar cultural background of the service users whose world life was to be researched. The testing would include certain parts such as names or terms connected with the service, or the whole concept.

Common SD tools were considered to be internationally applicable. Yet, it was widely noted that service designers needed to constantly re-evaluate their methodological approach in order to adapt to and be sensitive of varying service user contexts. Several respondents explained that customer insights were collected mainly with help of interviews or just by talking with people. On respondent with several years' experience in conducting customer research in international projects noted that culture did influence the number or length of the interviews.

> *In domestic projects it is so much faster to understand and to develop empathy because we share the same realities, have a joint culture – – at home, after 6–8 interviews you see the same themes to start repeating but abroad even after 12 in-depth interviews you still get so much new knowledge – – .* (R10)

Using local experts or interpreters was also a widely used method to alleviate local customer understanding. Yet, being an outsider from the intended local service context was found to be an asset in some cases. Respondent 2 paid attention to the fact that their own researchers (with Japanese background) "*won't pay attention to [Japanese] cultural characteristics because it is natural for them*". Immersing the researcher(s) in the local environment was also used as an approach. As an outsider, the service designer was able to detect and question some behavior or address taboos more easily than local colleagues. Several respondents working in a SD agency were using professional experts such as anthropologists or sociologists in their SD project teams to uncover deeper customer understanding.

Visual tools were used to capture meanings that were difficult to translate or for detecting important emotions:

> *With domestic customers when they say that the experience was agonizing I know pretty much what is meant. But in another cultural context I don't know what is actually meant. So, we need to have different kinds of tools … game boards, visual cards help a lot in gathering insights – – .* (R10)

At the same time, visuals were considered delicate since visual aids and messages can be perceived and interpreted very differently in various cultural contexts. One practical example was from a SD project in an African country where the team had prepared visual tools for researching on customer emotions. Yet, they discovered that some participants were quite confused with the visual outcomes:

> *– – it's very new to them. It is kind of interesting that they value the written – – maybe it is a sign of literacy to be able to read and understand – – so in that sense I think SD validity is – – very Western – – .* (R9)

Essentially, service user heterogeneity was seen as a starting point for any SD project, but cultural backgrounds were not brought up in a specific way. The customer diversity was said to be approached holistically, e.g. by using ethnographic methods. Tools such as creating personas to represent relevant traits of different types of service users were widely utilized. Methods and tools such as multicultural co-design workshops, customer journeys, desktop walk-throughs, mood boards, contextual inquiry, the Five whys, observation, and value maps were also mentioned as alternatives to understand diverse service user needs. Some methods, such as observation, were considered not to be effective without deep cultural knowledge, or not to be suitable or natural to use in another cultural context. For example, some co-creative tools or collaborative ice-breaker exercises were found not to be appropriate in all cultural settings:

> *Some [of our neighboring country] agencies … hmm they go a little too close … become like close buddies with their customer and play together … well I wouldn't feel comfortable in suggesting to my customers or clients that let's do river dance together or something.* (R 6)

4.2.4 Conceptualization of culture by service designers

The fourth interview theme inquired about service designers' understanding of culture and how they might have operationalized it in their design activities. All but one of the respondents admitted that they hadn't really thought about cultural definitions and about the phenomenon of culture per se. Only one respondent ventured to give his own definition of culture: "*Culture is about inter-relational values and meanings in activities*" (R10). Three respondents stated that culture reflects strongly on decision making, about the way of making cognitive conclusions related to a given project.

Although the respondents had not deliberated on the concept of culture, the construct of national culture was not questioned when addressing large cultures during the interviews. It seemed to be a natural concept in their professional discourse, yet not considered to be very relevant in their daily service design projects. One respondent reported having knowledge about cross-cultural models. Besides being familiar with Hofstede's framework she emphasized that "*rather than relying on models we rely on the ability to be culturally sensitive*" (R9). Another respondent stated that their cultural understanding was based on their own experience, their teams' experiences and feelings. A further respondent admitted that her team was likely to rely on stereotypical thinking in absence of better cultural knowledge.

4.2.5 Training for developing cultural understanding

Service designers are seen to act as intermediaries between the service users and the provider organizations and interpreting insights about users' experiences (Wetter-Edman 2014, 26). Therefore, the fifth theme inquired about training for developing awareness and knowledge about cultural factors in service design and intercultural competence development. Larger agencies were able to offer

training or orientation for the professionals they put into the role for researching cultural aspects relevant in service users' lives and environments. One agency offered training to help with communication skills and language issues, for example when preparing for conference presentations or sales situations. Cultural phenomena could also be discussed with the trainer. One respondent stated that his agency uses PhD-level experts in addressing topical cultural phenomena. Two respondents mentioned having learned about cultures during their academic studies (mentioning Hofstede's framework).

In general, however, intercultural training did not seem to be an issue for the respondents. Most respondents had not considered it relevant at their work and those who had, had not followed up their intentions. Two respondents mentioned that they would not know what kind of cultural training would be most beneficial. Respondent 14 stated that they do "*– – have an international team already so there is no need for [cultural] training*."

Three respondents said that they tried to share their cultural knowledge internally and learn about it through their own and colleagues' projects. One agency had purposefully created a practice of regularly sharing learnings and constructively criticizing all completed or projects in progress. Cultural issues were occasionally included in these discussions.

4.2.6 Additional themes

The respondents were encouraged to freely reflect on the topics during the questioning and at the end with an open-ended question. Some respondents raised a few additional themes related to culture's role during the SD process and its outcome.

Organizational culture

The theme of the service provider organization's culture emerged in each interview. Several respondents had occupied themselves with the notion and found organizational culture more relevant at their work than large cultures.

The crucial role of organizational culture is well documented in extant research literature and was highlighted with the comment of one respondent. He considered, that along with uncovering important facts of service users' value creation processes, the other main goal of SD is "*organizational redesign*" (R1). Another respondent pointed out that only a supportive and design-oriented organizational culture could enable real customer-centric service mindsets, and empower the customer-facing service personnel to act in customer-friendly ways. Service design was considered to have a big role in internal change management and in transforming the internal culture of a provider organization. Organizational structures and systems were recognized to depend on the cultural environment in the main, both national and regional, and several respondents indicated that one can draw a direct equation between organizational and national cultures.

International practice

Ten respondents worked in international teams, and all respondents were exposed to regular international influences through professional global networks and reading professional publications. Besides recognizing SD as an international field, service design thinking was found to be a primarily Western approach (R 9). The international characteristic seemed to be emerging from within the teams and the field itself, not that much from the service users' or from client side. A too prominent international emphasis was found problematic in some respects. One respondent said that her team's SD project proposal was once turned down by a client coming from a smaller city because their project ideas were "way too international".

Cultural adaptation

A need for cultural adaptation was discussed in most interviews, from the perspective of service users, service providers but also service designers. In line with the customer-centric logic of SD, the respondents admitted that there prevails a never-ending need to balance and adapt the service for various customer and end-user groups. Service user adaptation was expected, and one respondent mentioned, using himself as an example, that as a foreign customer, he would automatically adapt to any local conditions, including services.

It was considered that each adaptive choice needs to be solved case-specifically. Some respondents described how the designers were building their cultural understanding through the research gained during various stages of the SD process. The individuals' service stories were considered to contribute to the overall understanding of the service context and the customer value creation process. The core of the service would be built on the experience of all the researched groups after which commonalities were looked for and cultural adaptations built afterwards. The more focused a research stage was, the sharper a service concept could be created.

Cultural meanings

Being able to understand cultural meanings was considered very important. First, the theme related to the internal ways of working, how decisions were taken or research was conducted or prioritized. It also related to understanding local values and norms, for example understanding how to approach service users, what kind of questions to ask or not to ask. The third important area of cultural meanings related to interpreting meanings behind the words. This referred to being able to deeply understand service users' experiences and what kind of meanings the words and thoughts were given in a certain local setting.

A topic of "good service" was reflected upon by various respondents, and how it may be interpreted in different cultural contexts. A Japanese respondent (R2) noted that in many Asian countries, high quality and hospitality are an integral part of good service. A Finnish respondent (R13) had observed that

> *"– – a good service is something that needs to fill a practical purpose, to satisfy the needs of rationality and modesty of Finns. In contrast, in some*

countries the service is experienced as satisfactory only if it also simultaneously fulfills the user's need to display high status."

A Swedish respondent (R3) claimed that the main aim of SD was thought to be promoting the overall well-being of citizens both in public and private services. The acknowledged downside was that "One solution for all" types of services could be too widely promoted. Thus, he interpreted that "a good service" was equal to all but still allowed some adjustments concerning a diverse service user's specific needs.

Trust among the service stakeholders was perceived to be one pivotal factor: "*Services are about trust*" (R12). However, it was noted that the meaning and conception of trust can be interpreted differently in various cultural contexts. A Brazilian respondent had experience in working in several countries and had noted that in some countries trust between the service provider and the customer is taken for granted, as opposed to cultural contexts where there is no automatic initial trust between the service stakeholders. Thus, the trust building process needs to be taken into account at each step of the SD process in different cultural contexts.

Cultural sensitivity

Familiarity with cultural theories or approaches such as cross-cultural models were not considered important as such. Instead, cultural sensitivity was mentioned by several respondents to be an essential characteristics of a good service designer. It was said to relate to listening skills and understanding of customers in general. The designer should be attuned to or aware of cultural difference. Constant cultural filtering was said to be in high need especially in international projects. Without cultural sensitivity, discriminating between important trends or only marginal factors was felt to be very challenging in foreign environments.

4.3 Limitations of the first sub-study

The semi-structured interviews were explorative in nature, aiming to understand what kind of a role large cultures (national, regional, ethnic) may have during lengthy service design processes, and what kind of meanings culture was given. The aim was also to investigate what kind of perceptions professional service designers had about stakeholders' cultural backgrounds.

Ruusuvuori, Nikander & Hyvärinen (2010) claim that the data collection already includes theoretical choices and interpretations made by the researcher which affects the validity of the qualitative approach. In this case it can, thus, be stated that the selection of respondents among an international service design community did affect the type of the corpus gained and themes emerging from the interviews. A one country-specific selection or selecting the respondents from among certain types or sizes of agencies might have given different results and

helped to get a better framed and more specific overview of the researched phenomenon. However, even this general approach gives strong indications about possible themes, issues and challenges related to large cultures in service design.

The results are, of course, interpreted from my own cultural perspective and understanding. As in all research, the respondents' answers may also have been affected by their cultural practices so that they have responded in ways as they believe appropriate in the given context and in their local cultures. For example, one answer concerning recruiting for diversity by a respondent may be a response to political correctness in his Canadian context but here, it was taken at "face value" and interpreted as an endeavor to widen the service design agency's culturally diverse perspectives.

The sub-study addressed the role and the way how culture is spoken about and taken into consideration during service design. Cultures were considered relevant but also challenging to be approached. Especially, differentiating large cultural influences from other sociocultural factors was perceived challenging. It seemed that the larger the employer agency was, the more the service designers were exposed to international or cross-cultural design projects, and the more resources were available to deal with cultural phenomena, the more relevant its role was perceived. Also, the diversity of the work environment (e.g. multicultural society) seemed to be associated with the perceived importance of culture's role. The number of 14 interviewees is not enough to draw any quantitative generalizations. Yet, very little new relevant knowledge was gained after the 10th interview, showing clear information saturation. The interviews were conducted during late 2014–early 2015, thus, the situation may have since slightly changed as the professional field has matured.

4.4 Summary of the semi-structured interviews

Cultural factors related to large cultural phenomena did not seem to be a major concern for the interviewed service designers. According to them, cultural issues are little discussed during service design processes. Mainly international projects or design activities aimed for culturally different markets seem to be spurring interest to reflect on cultural factors. Cultural issues in domestic or local service contexts were rarely mentioned, and different cultural backgrounds of service process stakeholders were hardly discussed or recognized to be relevant. In comparison with a related field of user experience design Sano-Franchini (2017, 29) claims that cultural diversity matters: "when we make design choices, these choices come from pre-existing frameworks, cultural knowledge, and organizing logics that are contextual, and rooted in culture-based understandings and rhetorics."

Notwithstanding, many respondents seemed to have an unconscious but emergent approach to take cultural issues into consideration whenever they were seen to be evolving. The semi-structured interview study with service designers illustrated that cultural factors seem not to be systematically taken into account during design processes due to a lack of cultural knowledge and awareness.

Only one respondent out of the 14 interviewees had reflected on the role and nature of culture in more detail. He had several years' experience working in international service design projects. Others had not thought much about the concept, and large cultures were considered as an observable fact or "a thing" which would be addressed only in specific situations. This implies that the service designers were sharing predominantly an essentialist understanding of culture where "it was added" to design processes on a needs basis. However, in recognizing the complexity of cultural factors and in seeing culture evolving in situation-specific contexts they implicitly took a rather social constructionist mindset, supported by co-creative (SD methodology). Overall, the service designers did not seem to have a clear understanding or structured approach to any cultural phenomena.

All interviewees connected large cultures mainly with national cultures. This confirms the proposition of national culture being accepted as an established construct in everyday discourse, as discussed in section 2.5.3. The hybridity of culture as such was not discussed although the intertwined aspects of other sociocultural factors were recognized. International diversity in projects and cultures were familiar to many respondents, but local diversities were less considered from a cultural point of view.

The prominence of organizational cultures was clearly identified by the service designers. Organizational cultures seemed to affect projects more than national or other large cultures and were mentioned to sometimes even to hinder or complicate design processes. For instance, not sharing the same customer-centered mindset in the whole organization was said to slow down service design projects. The power and prominence of organizational cultures is recognized and supported by several studies in cross-cultural management (e.g. Gerhart & Fang 2005, 980), and is also in line with the later discovery in the journal article content analysis (Chapter 5). A strong influence of organizational culture may lead to a "superimposed culture", doing things in "the company way" and not respecting any specific local cultures, is also observed in earlier research. Mäkilouko (2003) describes this approach as a leadership strategy while studying leading styles in multicultural or internationally operating companies. He calls this leadership strategy "cultural geocentrism" which aims to create a distinctive corporate culture reinforced by training and various internal rituals. Organizational cultures were also perceived to be affected by the national culture which is also supported by previous studies. Among others, Schein (2009) argues that organizations' strategic thinking is deeply colored by tacit assumptions of the surrounding (large) cultural practices. Cultural beliefs and practices are often taken for granted but drive the operations and decision-making in organizations. Despite the perceived central role of organizational cultures, they will not be further discussed in this study due to the focus on large cultures.

The emerging field of service design has been very international from its inception in the early 1990's (Segelström 2013, 21–22). The international aspect of the domain was recognized by the interviewees. This may create an "international bubble" where global approaches lead to a mindset that national, regional

or ethnic cultures are not relevant. Especially, the comments on being international or culture-competent by merely working in multicultural teams or international settings reinforce this thinking. A few respondents also reported on expectations for service users to adapt to culturally diverse service behavior. At first glance, expected customer adaptation seems as contrary to the goals of service design (enabling optimal customer experiences). This is, however, supported by knowledge about situational and personal factors influencing the zone of tolerance between desired and adequate service (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler 2009, 80–87). The need for adjustment and flexibility works both ways: the "foreign" service user is expected to adapt to the local conditions and the service provider is assumed to adapt its offerings to local demands. Obviously, this premise only applies if the service is not exclusively aimed at foreign customers, such as tourists, and the customer shares this thinking. Deviations from this standard practice would evoke either pleasant or unpleasant reactions.

There were only a few mentions about aims to make service design teams more diverse or consideration of including culturally underrepresented groups in the co-design teams. Cultural factors were mentioned to pose additional challenges for understanding actual meanings given to words, experiences, or the service itself. Therefore, the respondents claimed that a service designer should develop cultural sensitivity in order to listen for and understand the different meanings. A joint value formation in different cultural contexts should be further researched. The interviews did not specifically inquire what "good service" means from a service designer's perspective. However, some respondents shared their understanding about it, implicitly indicating what their understanding of "optimal" customer experiences is and how to facilitate the emergence of this kind of experiences (c.f. Grönroos 2006, 2008). For example, a Japanese respondent claimed that good service in Japan equates with very high quality and hospitality, indicating that the service provider is expected to make extra efforts to please a service user. A characterization of "good service" from a service user perspective will be further explored in Sub-study 3.

The importance of trust was emphasized by several respondents, especially from the cross-cultural perspective. As intangible and value proposing offerings, services are subject to many culturally constructed perceptions, and uncertainty in relation of some services may cause hesitation and even fear. Assumed trust has an influence on the expected service and its quality, thus initiating the value-in-use formation before the actual service transaction (Heinonen & Strandvik 2015). While trust is perceived differently in different cultures, and service users are shown to build trust differently towards service providers in different countries (e.g. Schumann & al. 2010), this would be an important further research area. The more the stakeholders come from different cultural backgrounds, representing different values and doing things differently, unfamiliarity with these cultural practices may be felt as disconcerting. This may be the situation in terms of content and scope of the service but also in the way it is delivered or in interactions between stakeholders representing different cultural backgrounds. In increasingly multicultural societies, building and communicating trust in services thus needs more attention.

5 SUB-STUDY 2: ADDRESSING CULTURE IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICE DESIGN LITERATURE

The first sub-study revealed that professional service designers found factors related to large culture (national, regional, ethnic) relevant, but mostly as characteristics related to service users while working in international projects. The objective of the second sub-study was therefore to complement and deepen the understanding on culture's perceived role and how service designers regard themselves as culturally situated during service design processes. The methodological choice for the second sub-study was to analyze how culture is addressed and spoken about in the professional literature aimed at service designers. The study was conducted by reviewing selected pieces of literature and searching for key words relating to large cultures as linguistic expressions (e.g. culture, intercultural, nationality etc.).

The professional literature review and content analysis primarily answers Research question 3 (R3), but due to the nature of the review and representation of many voices in the literary narratives, it was considered possible to gain understanding also for answering the research questions 1, 2, 4 and 5. Each research question below is complemented with auxiliary questions.

R3: How is culture addressed in professional service design literature?
- What kind of discourses about culture are used?
- What kind of a role are cultural factors given?
- What types of culture are covered?
- Is culture a regular topic in the professional service design literature?
- In which kind of service contexts is culture discussed?
- Whose culture is being discussed?

Additionally:
R1: How do service designers speak about culture(s)?
- How is culture defined and approached?
- Is the concept of culture based on some cultural theories or models?
- How is culture operationalized?

R2: How do service designers speak about taking cultural factors into consideration during the design process?

– Is culture connected with certain service design methods, tools or to certain stages of the design process?

– Is there any systematics or regularity in addressing culture's impact during a service development and design process?

R4: How do service users characterize the role of culture in service situations?
R5: How is good service defined from a cultural point of view?

The professional literature content analysis was expected to offer an important perspective as words and sentences are carriers of meaning. Thus, shared understanding and contextual reality is being constructed among the professional community with the means of shared literary narratives. This constitutive character of communication is presented e.g. by Putnam and Nicotera (Eds., 2009) describing how communication is shaping communities. The types of discourse about culture within professional service design literature may be constitutive for how common understanding about culture's role during a service design process is built and how culture is mediated by the literary discourses.

5.1 Research design

A review of professional SD literature was anticipated to shed further light on the above research questions whether and how large cultures such as national, regional and ethnic are addressed in the professional discourse of service design literature. An applied thematic content analysis of the reviewed text was selected as a way of analyzing the findings.

Fink (2014) characterizes a good literature review as systematic, explicit, comprehensive and reproducible. This organized approach directed the steps taken in this professional literature content analysis which is text-driven (Krippendorff 2004, 340). Fink's systematic framework was supported and complemented by an interpretative way of reading texts, presented by Krippendorff (2004). His conceptual foundation of content analysis is based on the perception that content emerges "in the process of a researcher analyzing a text relative to a particular content" (2004, 19) as opposed to definitions that take content to be inherent in a text or be a property of the source of the text. This makes content analysis first of all an interpretive approach where the analyst must acknowledge their "own socially or culturally conditioned understandings" influencing and participating in the "interactive-hermeneutic" approach (p. 17).

Krippendorff has further justified his interpretative and process-oriented definition of content analysis by the following statements (2004, 22–26):

- "Texts do not have objective, reader-independent meanings.
- Texts can be read from numerous perspectives.

- The meanings of texts do not need to be shared by others.
- Meanings can speak to something other than the given texts.
- Texts have meanings relative to particular contexts, discourses or purposes."

These statements reveal how much the analyst's own background can affect the interpretation of the meanings. Similarly, the context of a text is never fixed. It is constructed by the writer but also by the reader of the text or the content analyst (Krippendorff 2004, 25). These and Fink's (2014) review criteria apply equally to this exploratory sub-study on professional service design literature. The review and content analysis processes are kept transparent in order for the reader to detect possible biased or faulty interpretations.

The data were searched for using the term "*cultur*" with the key-word-in-context (KWIC) method locating all occurrences of the term in the text and analyzing the context in which the term appeared (Guest. & al. 2012, 10; 51). This search form enabled hits with antecedent affixes (such as intercultur*) or suffixes and other derivative formats of the term (e.g. *cultural). Guest & al. define the KWIC map-making as an approach that "identifies the word as the locus for a theme or concept in a body of text without predefining the textual boundaries". Depending on the search functionality of the e-book or pdf document, some source material was searched with alternative words such as "culture", "cultures" or "cultural". The last form may have also appeared in compound forms such as "multicultural", "intercultural" or "sociocultural", and these forms were included in the study, if relevant. Irrelevant were words or forms containing the key word, such as "agriculture" or KWIC tags included in parts of the text that were not included in the analysis (see below). An initial test search was also conducted with the KWIC search "national" but that test did not yield any hits applicable to national cultures. On the contrary, the test run with "national" as a search word produced a multitude of hits quite inapplicable to the actual cultural reference of the word (such as in names of national institutions) and was thus rejected as a search criterium. Searches for other types of large cultures without a suitable simple search word (e.g. regional or ethnic cultures) were conducted manually by reviewing relevant content topics.

5.2 Choice of corpus

As a difference to the earlier academic and research focused literature review (section 2.1) this review concentrates on practical professional literature. The potential research material included educational and business literature dealing with service design, such as books, journals, newspapers, magazines, blogs or other online media. Professional literature was chosen to be prioritized instead of academically oriented literature because of the fact that service design is a practice oriented profession (community of practice, Han 2010). Therefore, it is likely that service designers gain their field-related knowledge from professional literature, such as journals and books. Another factor for choosing professional

literature was based on the knowledge that at the time of initiating this sub-study (February 2016) there were no academic journals focusing solely on service design.

Touchpoint, the Journal of Service Design published by Service Design Network since 2009 in English language is the only regularly published professional journal in the field of service design, and was thus included in the research corpus. Touchpoint includes articles on topics such as service design methodology, service design and cross-disciplinary research, case studies, news, profiles and interviews with service design professionals (SDN 2016).

The range of possible information sources among professional books was much larger and a considerable narrowing down was needed to make the selection. The aim was to find books with topics discussing professional and methodological fundaments and current topical issues in the field of service design. As an evolving discipline – with its origins in early 2000 (Mager 2004) – the publication time frame of the service design related research corpus needed to be fairly recent. A time range starting from 2009 was set in order to coordinate the book review with the professional journal content review. From its very beginning, service design has been a global approach and English has been the predominant language in the publications. Therefore, only literature in English were included in the researched material.

Table 8 offers an overview on the variety and number of existing professional books on service design at the time of the data collection. The chosen book repositories will be discussed below the table.

TABLE 8 Overview of service design related books (February 12, 2016)

Type of publication	**Location / Name**	**Number**	**Relationship to service design**	**Search method**
Book *	Amazon.com bookstore	1671	Search word "Service Design"	Amazon online search
Book *	servicedesignbooks.org	134	Various categories	Selection by researcher
Book **	Laurea UAS library	72	Search word "Service Design"	Finna Library search
Book **	KISD (Cologne University of Technology, Arts and Sciences library)	25	Search word "Service Design"	TH Köln library search
Book **	Stanford University Library	140	Search word "Service Design"	Stanford SearchWorks catalogue for topic "service design"

* No possibility to screen books by year of publication
** Released 2009–2016

Amazon online book store is today one of the most encompassing retail channels for books and was therefore chosen to demonstrate the scope of book offerings in the field in general. At the time of completing the analysis, it offered a total of 1671 professional books with the search word "service design". Thus, the initial search needed to be pinned down substantially.

Service Design Books is a crowd-sourced online catalogue recommending reading for service designers (www.servicedesingbooks.org). The non-commercial community, initiated by Jeff Howard, listed 134 book titles recommended by 64 curators under a Creative Commons license. This website consists of books that service design professionals recommend to each other. Therefore, the search word "service design" was not a justified criterion for selecting sources in this information repository. Instead, they needed to be handpicked by relevance. The books were listed under following categories: popular, must read, foundation, discovery, classic, recommended, notable, background, supplement, remaindered and unrated. Even the categories "popular, must read, foundation, discovery and classic" contained 76 possible information sources for this study. The selection of books was still too many and needed to be narrowed down further.

For this purpose, a search through academic library catalogues was made for tracking the most quintessential professional books. Three libraries were chosen to serve as representative examples of higher education institutions with strong reputation in service design expertise. Laurea University of Applied Sciences in Finland was the first higher education institution worldwide to offer a full master program in Service Innovation & Design (Degree Programme in Service Innovation and Design 2016). Köln International School of Design (KISD), part of Cologne University of Technology, Arts and Sciences, is a well-recognized pioneer in the field of service design having established the first European professorship for Service Design (KISD 2016a). Stanford University was selected as a representative university ranked among top 50 universities from Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2015–2016 and offering the biggest number (3) of graduate programs with complementary orientation in service design (Ferruzca, Tossavainen, Kaartti & Santonen 2016). None of the Times ranked higher education institutions offered full graduate programs in service design.

Inquiries were made but unfortunately no top loan lists were available from the above mentioned libraries. However, the information specialist responsible for the service-related business literature at Laurea University of Applied Science's library was able to identify a top 10 loan list of service design books. The list included six books in English and four books in Finnish. The six books in English were chosen to be reviewed and are listed in Table 9 with an indication of their availability at the other chosen repositories and whether they existed in e-format.

TABLE 9 Professional SD books in English, indicated by the Laurea information specialist, available in other repositories or libraries. x = available; – = not available.

Author/ editor	Title	Year	Amazon	sdbooks.org	Laurea UAS	KISD	Stanford	Electronic version
Miettinen, Satu (ed.)	Designing services with innovative Methods	2009	x	x	x	–	–	Ellibs
Stickdorn, Marc & Schneider, Jakob	This is service design thinking – basics, tools, cases.	2010	x	x	x	x	–	EBL
Meroni, Anna & Sangiorgi Daniela	Design for services	2011	x	x	x	–	x	MyLibrary Ebrary
Miettinen, Satu & Valtonen Anu (eds.)	Service Design with theory: Discussions on change, value and methods	2012	x	x	x	x	–	PDF
Polaine, Andrew & al.	Service design: From insight to implementation	2013	x	x	x	–	–	Ebrary
Reason, Ben et al.	Service design for business: a practical guide to optimizing the customer experience	2016	x	x	x	–	–	–

None of the books were available in all places. But as the above table shows each one of them was listed at least in three or four of the selected sample repositories. These books were thus estimated to provide a representable sample of service design related books discussing professional and methodological fundaments and topical issues in service design. The Touchpoint journal was also included in the listings of Service Design Books and Laurea University of Applied Sciences' library. All volumes 1–7 (published during 2009–February 2016) – three issues per volume – were chosen to be included into the analysis.

Choosing the time range for the review was set to start in 2009 in order to match the time ranges of the journal and book reviews. The time range is further justified by the fact that as a fairly recent domain, most of the books dealing with

SD have been published within the past ten years. For example, 61 percent of the service design books available in Service Design Books online catalogue fitted into this time range. The percentage would have been even higher but the Classics category included many general business best sellers published over 15 years ago, thus lowering the average percentage.

Blogs and online material were excluded from this review as the evaluation of their quality was found troublesome. The vast number of publications and issues and limited time resources were also reasons to exclude articles in newspapers and magazines from this study.

Summarized, the criteria for selecting the corpus for the professional literature content analysis were as follows:

1. Professional literature
2. English language
3. Published between January 2009–February 2016
4. Listed in most of the chosen sample repositories and thus likely to be considered as relevant sources discussing professional and methodological fundaments and current topical issues in the field of service design.

5.3 The review process on professional literature

The corpus chosen for the literature review was relatively large and the data set needed to be limited to items relevant to this analysis. Guest et al. (2012, 129) regard data reduction as "an integral part of the iterative qualitative data analysis process" and propose various techniques for conducting data reductions. In this case, the type of content of the research data was initially scrutinized and evaluated for relevance. The search with the key word in context (KWIC) "*cultur*"was then conducted only on the main body of text of the selected books. Excluded were those parts of the books that were not expected to deepen the cultural discussion or add any relevant knowledge of the topic, such as acknowledgements, indexes, notes on sources, illustrations, references, "About the author", "Notes on Contributors", and similar sections not appropriate for the content analysis (Table 10). For the journal articles, the search was conducted on the main articles (Table 10). Articles that were not expected to deepen in any specific topic, such as the editorials or short news, were not included in the search.

The KWICs for irrelevant mentions (e.g. agriculture) and mentions out of the context were also excluded or not considered. For example, when as part of proper names (e.g. Culture and Integration Office), or in references (e.g. in a source book's name) these KWIC occurrences were not counted in the overall frequencies.

TABLE 10 The guidelines for reducing the data for the literature review

	Reviewed	**Not reviewed**
Books	• Main body text (all chapters) • Captions (explanations to illustrations) • Tables	• Acknowledgements • Descriptions about the authors or notes on the contributors • Pictures and other illustrations • Notes on sources • Indexes • References • Irrelevant mentions
Journals	Main articles • Main articles • Captions • Tables • Blurbs or textual highlights	• Editorials • Lists of contents • Short news and announcements • Advertisements • Pictures and other illustrations • References • Irrelevant mentions

The search for the key words was first conducted digitally on the e-book formats and article PDF versions. Only one book was not available in electronic format and was therefore read through page by page manually. Besides the electronic book versions and PDF journal issues, each book or journal issue was browsed through manually to detect texts dealing with national, regional or ethnic culture, but without using the word culture as such. The e-formats were identical with the print books except for slight differences in page layout in some editions which resulted to minor differences in page numbering.

The primary analytic objective with the KWIC search was to identify the main themes relating to national, regional or ethnic culture in the professional literature. As opposed to more quantitative oriented classic content analysis the primary unit of observation in this inductive thematic analysis was a text segment in order to capture the embedded contextual meaning of the search term (see Guest & al. 2012, 108). The elusiveness of the term "culture" posed challenges also for the key-word-in-context (KWIC) method in this literature review. Therefore, it was necessary to read at least the occurrence paragraph and often even the whole book chapter or the whole article in order to discover its meaning in the textual context and to catch possible discourses about culture without using the actual word "culture".

Further guidance for understanding the meanings of the KWIC tags and detecting less obvious references to culture was drawn on Brummett's close reading technique (2010) which is a mindful, disciplined reading of a text with aim of deeper understanding of its meanings. Brummett claims that a reader is a "detective of meanings" which applies well to this review where texts have been written by numerous authors and the use of the key word was not consistent. Brummett also stresses the interpretative nature of reading (see also Krippendorff 2004). The following section discusses the clear thematic categories which began to emerge during the reading and analysis of the search results.

5.4 Analysis of the results

The review process of the six books and 21 journal issues yielded overall 218 relevant KWIC hits. The distinct categories among the results referred to large cultures (61 hits), to organizational cultures (58 hits), or to miscellaneous and incoherent mentions using the word "culture" in other forms or meanings in 86 cases. Hits for large and organizational cultures were additionally categorized by their level of detail: an abstract general mention was distinguished from a detailed, more concrete mention elaborating on the concept. Moreover, the reviewed literature included 13 mentions of large cultures without using the actual search word "*cultur*".

The coding of the findings was based on the thematic methodology documented by Guest, McQueen and Namey (2012) by identifying key themes and locating meaning in the data with the key word in context (KWIC) methodology. Guest et al. define the KWIC code as "[a] textual description of the semantic boundaries of a theme or a component of a theme" (p. 50).

In accordance to the "Krippendorffian" interpretative content analysis, certain types of KWIC tags started emerging in the corpus during the close reading. It seemed natural to form categories for mentions referring to a "large" culture and "smaller" cultures (cf. Holliday1999). The book or article authors were clearly linking the mentions of "large" cultures to national cultures. Thus, the categories Large Culture in Abstract (code LCA) and Large Culture in Concrete" (LCC) predominantly refer to national cultures. However, due to the debated nature of the concept of national culture (cf. Piller 2011; Dahl 2014), the term large culture is preferred in the coding. The term "abstract" refers to a general use of the KWIC word, "concrete" to a detailed or specified characterization of the culture. These two categories include regional, ethnic and even continental and other unspecified cultures based on geography, although their occurrence in the corpus was much less common than that of national culture. Therefore, when referring in the following text to these categories of Large Culture in Abstract or Concrete (LCA, LCC) they refer mostly to national cultures but may include a few incidental regional or local cultural referrals, mentions of ethnic cultures were nonexistent.

Organizational culture is an example of "small cultures" shaping people's behavior within a more specified group of people. With frequent presence in the corpus, organizational culture in abstract or concrete were other clear categories (codes OCA, OCC). As this category is not the focus of this research it will be discussed less in the following text.

There were also many additional occurrences of the KWIC tags which did not semantically fit into the above categories of large or organizational cultures. Therefore, a further category for these Other Forms and Meanings (code OFM) was necessary. These mentions included adjectives or compound words or referrals to other cultures without an obvious connection to national, regional or organizational cultures. Examples of these use cases in the corpus are professional,

educational or field specific cultures (*engineering culture, public service culture, industrial culture*) or certain ways of thinking or attitudinal standings (e.g. *design culture, culture of innovation*).

A fourth category type included other kind of referrals to national, regional or ethnic cultures without mentioning the actual KWIC tag (*cultur*). Instead, the words used in these cases referred to a specific geographic area, country, nation or nationality. The code for this category of Different Mentions is DM.

The resulting categories and codes of the analysis are presented in the following Table 11. The KWIC occurrence frequencies of each category can be found in Table 12 (professional books) and Table 13 (Touchpoint journals).

TABLE 11 Semantic categories, descriptions, KWIC coding and examples of the search word "*cultur*". Example sentences are from the research data in the books or journals.

Category	Description	Code	Examples
Large culture, abstract	A mention that refers to **national, regional or ethnic culture in general** without any specification of the cultural behavior or deepening into the topic.	LCA	*"– – The general design structure will not change, but – – performances are likely to vary across cultures and service type".* *"For instance, in some cultures, the evening meal is an important daily activity in which the entire family gathers to eat a home-cooked meal."*
Large culture, concrete	A concrete or detailed reference to a **certain national, regional or ethnic culture** or to a **specific cultural behavior, dimension or characteristic**.	LCC	*"Intimate familial relationships are becoming unsustainable and its [remote village culture in China] collective culture is quickly fading."* *A dynamic cultural heritage [of rural Canadian resource community] and intimate connection with the environment have been masked with generic malls and streets – –*
Organizational culture, abstract	A mention that refers to **organizational culture in general** without any specification of the cultural behavior or deepening into the topic.	OCA	*"There was no culture around the kind of open dialogue required – –".*
Organizational culture, concrete	Concrete or specified reference to **organizational culture**.	OCC	*"– – Clinic takes great pride in its physician-led culture".*
Other forms or meanings	Other forms or meanings of the KWIC tag *cultur* without the above meanings. This code was also used when the type of the social group culture remains unclear.	OFM	Examples of subcategories: – compound words (e.g. *cultural center*) – adjectives (e.g. *cultural probe, cultural change*) – part of a word composition: multi*cultural,* socio*cultural* – certain ways of behaving or thinking (e.g. *culture of learning, design culture, food culture*) – high culture (*referring to arts*) – smaller group cultures (e.g. *project culture*)
Different mentions of or references to national culture	Different mentions The KWIC *cultur* may have been used but the article deepens the cultural aspect beyond KWIC sentences.	DM	Articles such as case studies focusing on local service need or adaptation in a defined sociocultural (national, regional), complementing other KWIC ("cultur") occurrences.

All KWIC occurrences were analyzed within their sentence or paragraph contexts. The approach was interpretative based on my understanding of the contextual meaning as described by Krippendorff (2004) and Brummett's (2010) close reading technique. Another researcher might have reached slightly different conclusions. In case of alternative categorizations, all category codes were listed and the chosen category underlined. In order to diminish the subjective interpretation all unclear cases have been read several times, several days or weeks in between the readings. This kind of reading reduces the likelihood of purely subjective interpretations (Guest et. al. 2012, 70). Overall, this kind of clearly debatable cases represent only a very small share of the coding and are not likely to affect the reliability of this thematic analysis.

The fluid nature of the term "culture" became very evident during the analysis process in categorizing the search term meanings. The following example sentence illustrates the complex and interpretative characteristics of some semantic entities: *"These* [factors such as university structure, student participation, wellness approach and supportive environments in a student mental wellness case] *are key factors to fostering a stigma-free and open culture*." (Touchpoint 6–2 p. 60). This occurrence was classified as "other forms and meanings" (OFM) since the word "culture" did not refer directly to national, regional or ethnic, or organizational culture but rather to a certain way of behaving and thinking. A similar example of the obscurity and interpretative characteristics of the above categories is the following sentence: " – – *anthropologists are keenly interested in researching concepts such as the use of technology to support religious practices, cultural differences in storing and archiving, the concept of the home, and what sharing might mean in the social and cultural context of Asia."* (Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011, 101). Both KWIC tags in this sentence were categorized under LCC (concrete reference to a certain large culture) as they refer to continental Asian cultural practices in storing and archiving items and are implicitly contrasted with different Western practices. Yet, neither of the terms is very detailed and one could argue that either one could rather be classified under the LCA category (national, regional or ethnic culture in a general, an abstract reference).

Sometimes a very similar use of the key word resulted in two different categories. This was the case when the wider sentence context gave clear guidance to the actual meaning of the key word. For example, the word pair "design culture" was categorized most often in the category of other forms or meanings (OFM) but occasionally also in the category of organizational culture in concrete (OCC) depending on their intended (and interpreted) meaning. An example of a categorizing under the other forms and meanings (OFM) is the following sentence with a key word pair "design culture": "*This change in design culture obviously reflects a wider change: the ongoing transition towards an economy based on services, networks and sustainability; – –* " (Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011, 25). The key word pair of the above sentence refers clearly to a bigger culture than just within one organization or certain organizations. Therefore, it was categorized in the OFM (other forms and meanings). An example of categorizing the same key word pair under the organizational culture in concrete (OCC) is the following sentence: "*The case study shows how bringing a user-centric view at service operation level created*

the premises to introduce a design culture at higher political tables." (Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011, 125). Here the key word pair is referring to a specific program within a regional department of work and education.

Even within the same article the same key word pair such as "*innovation culture*" may have been categorized either under "abstract organizational culture" (OCA) or under "other forms and meanings" (OFM) depending on the connection to a certain organizational setting or mentioned in reference to a way of behaving in general.

The following examples illustrate the importance of the larger sentence context in the interpretation: "*Service design can perform a central role in enabling business innovation, improvement and sustaining a service-oriented culture.*" This sentence alone did not yet adequately reveal the actual meaning of the key word and was therefore impossible to categorize. But, reading the whole paragraph and especially the preceding sentence "*This will bring service design further into the heart of the enterprise and become even more relevant to senior decision makers*" highlights that it is actually the organizational culture the article is discussing.

Many occurrences referring to a way of thinking or attitude rather than to a certain organizational or national or regional context were classified under the OFM (other forms and meanings) category. If the exact meaning of the KWIC occurrence remained unclear even after several close readings – with days apart from each other – the KWIC was categorized under OFM. The following sentence exemplifies this kind of dilemma: *"The second insight is that services do not exist in isolation, but in nested inside socio-cultural systems and contexts."* (Polaine 2012, in Miettinen & Valtonen 2012, 167). One could interpret that the word "socio-cultural" refers here to a national cultural setting. But at the same time, it could be claimed to refer to a certain lifestyle or, for instance, to an urban culture. Due to this obvious obscureness, this and similar occurrences were categorized under the other forms and meanings (OFM) category. All things considered, and bearing in mind the research focus of this dissertation the deliberation concerning the categorizing of the organizational culture referrals (OCA; OCC) and other forms and meanings (OFM) was of less importance than the categories of LCA and LCC (national, regional or ethnic cultures in abstract and in concrete). However, the categories of OCA, OCC and OFM provide an interesting research object for further study.

The category of "different mentions" (DM) was the most challenging one to interpret as the category and occurrence boundaries were very blurred. In these cases, the context was the whole article, essay or book chapter. A plain referral to a country, nation or nationality, region or regionality or ethnicity was not considered enough to be counted in. A distinctive factor was whether the content included additional information or a description of local human behavior or practices related to national, local or ethnic service behavior, service preferences or experienced value.

5.4.1 Conceptualizing culture: the professional SD book review

The summarized KWIC results of the book reviews are indicated in Table 12. Each book review is also analyzed separately in the order of the publication year below, discussing the KWIC occurrences but also other interesting aspects of the books relevant to cultural knowledge or understanding. The most relevant and interesting occurrences of the whole review (including the six books and the Touchpoint articles) will be further reflected upon in the summary section 5.6.

TABLE 12 KWIC (key word in context) code occurrences in the reviewed service design books

Code	**LCA** Large culture abstract	**LCC** Large culture concrete	**OCA** Org. culture abstract	**OCC** Org. culture concrete	**OFM** Other forms & meanings	**DM** Different mentions	Category total
I Miettinen 2009	2	–	9	5	5	1	22
II Stickdorn 2010	7	–	2	1	14	–	24
III Meroni 2011	25	3	6	16	28	9	87
IV Miettinen 2012	19	2	2	4	31	3	61
V Polaine 2013	2	1	8	4	8	–	23
VI Reason 2016	–	–	1	–	–	–	1
Total	55	6	28	30	86	13	218
	25,2 %	2,8 %	12,8 %	13,8 %	39,4 %	6,0 %	**100 %**

(I) Designing Services with Innovative Methods
Miettinen & Koivisto (Eds.) 2009, 267 pages

The book edited by Satu Miettinen and Mikko Koivisto is one of the first books to explore service design as a practice. The book starts by outlining the concept and practice of service design, followed by five essays by renowned academics outlining the emerging domain. Part two focuses on the service design practice featuring five essays written by experienced practitioners in service development. The last part of the book presents four service design case studies.

The key word in context (KWIC) appears 22 times in the book and twice in an irrelevant meaning (agriculture). Only two of the relevant KWIC tags refer to a national, regional or ethnic culture in abstract (LCA), as part of listing research objectives "– – *countries, societies, cultures, customers, end-users, citizens* – –"and when referring to "*different cultural contexts*" in general. No concrete mentions are made of national, regional or ethnic cultures while plain referrals to countries' names or national service activity contexts are not counted as relevant occurrences. The absence of more referrals to large cultures is quite expected since the book lays out the foundations and creates a common theoretical understanding of the emerging domain.

Organizational culture is spoken much more about, with nine references in abstract (OCA) and five more specified or concrete mentions (OCC) of culture's impact or characteristics in an organizational context, such as *participatory culture, (prevalent) service culture*, a company's *decision-making culture*.

Five KWIC tags refer to other forms or mentions of culture (OFM), such as the adjective multicultural (team), cultural probe (a method used in service design) or a cultural trend (in general, not referring to any specific organization or an organizational setting).

There is one different mention (DM) of a national culture, namely a case study by Gong discussing Chinese collaborative services and how service design can promote Chinese social innovation in a network society. The book also included a case study about tourism. As a culture-intensive service field it was expected to touch some aspects of culture yet there were no referrals to cultural issues.

(II) This is service design thinking – basics, tools, cases
Stickdorn & Schneider (Eds.) 2010, 373 pages

After its publication, this book was commonly referred to as the "black book of service design" or the "service design bible". The book, edited by Marc Stickdorn and Jacob Schneider and co-written by 23 international service design experts, outlines the approach and background of service design thinking, and introduces the process by giving an overview of the methods and tools most commonly used in service design.

Despite the extensiveness of the volume (373 pages) the KWIC tags found in this book are relatively few, 24 altogether. The KWIC forms included hits on terms "culture", "cultures" and "cultural", none for the other forms (such as intercultural or multicultural). Only seven general references were found to relate to large cultures (LCA), none for more detailed occurrences. This is hardly surprising as the book's genre is more of a handbook providing basics of the approach and its methodology and includes only a few practical case studies.

The organizational dimension of culture is also rarely addressed (two general references, one more specific) but other forms and mentions of culture are proportionally most frequent (14 mentions) in this book. The fuzziness of the notion of "culture" made the classification of certain KWIC tags very challenging. For example, in the sentence: "*It [pleasurability] relates to a sum of details within your service, and often relates this to culture from the world outside*." (p. 79) the word "culture" could be interpreted to refer to national cultures in general or to human life in general. In this case, the latter seemed more obvious, judged from the wider content and it was thus classified under "other forms and meanings" (OFM).

The role of cultural understanding is, however, recognized and highlighted in the book by presenting design ethnography as an important competence field facilitating service design and offering "a bridge between the service users, the service providers and the service designers" (van Dijk pp. 108–115). van Dijk introduces design ethnographers as important connectors who have a place in the middle of the design process by increasing user empathy and helping to uncover

"deeper motivation for certain social practices and preferences". Design ethnographers may be anthropologists, social researchers or designers by education, using various methods and techniques to gain understanding of people's practices, routines and service preferences in their everyday lives. Van Dijk also sees a strong connection between design and ethnographic research approaches and considers design ethnographers as irreplaceable inter-disciplinary members of design teams where deep expertise of various specialist fields is needed. Many of the tools used by design ethnographers are described later in the book's Tools section.

Cultural probes and mobile ethnography serve as examples of such tools increasing local user knowledge. These tools are as such not developed to yield culture-specific knowledge and understanding but are well suited for such purposes. Cultural probes are service users' self-documented information packages, such as a diary or a video around specific and instructed service situations (p. 167). The KWIC occurring with this compound word resulted in many hits but as the method is not specifically linked to national, regional or ethnic cultures it was always categorized with the OFM code (other forms and meanings). Mobile ethnography is a similar method to cultural probes but differs in that the participants are not directed and the results of the gathered insights depend on how the participants choose to present and structure their own research (p. 172).

As an early manual providing basic knowledge about the field, the book provides information on methods and tools which can be applied in all kinds of (cultural) contexts. The relatively low amount of KWIC findings in this book did not come as a surprise as the maturity level of the practice was still relatively low. However, the book's sequel "This is Service Design Doing" in 2018 does not show any increase in interest to cultural factors but takes a similarly general approach. Again, the authors merely remind service designers to always "adapt the process to the people, culture, and goals of the project" without elaborating what is meant with culture or how this adaptation should be done (Stickdorn, Hormess, Lawrence & Schneider 2018, 82).

(III) Design for Services
Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011, 272 pages

This book turned out to provide good research material for the content analysis; returning a total of 87 hits on the KWIC tags: culture, cultures, cultural, culturally, intercultural, multicultural or sociocultural.

SD researchers Anna Meroni's and Daniela Sangiorgi's book consists of three parts, the first one focusing on defining Design for Services as a new discipline (see also section 2.4). The first introductory part included 12 KWIC findings, mostly referring to the concept of "design culture". As part of this phenomenon, the book distinguishes between design of services and design for services. The introduction authored by Manzini emphasizes the difference between those two concepts stating that the "for" encloses the idea of "transformation in progress" and the "of" has a more completing meaning indicating that the result of a design

process is more in the designer's control (p. 3). Both definitions fall close enough with the central concept of "service design" in this dissertation.

The most extensive middle part of the book focuses on 17 practical case studies shedding light on the practical and theoretical aspects of design for services, based on a phenomenological and grounded theory approach. The majority (69) of the KWIC findings are located in this part. As Table 12 above indicates, there was a lot of variety in the KWIC occurrence categories. This book yielded the highest relative frequency of the large culture categories (in abstract and concrete, LCA, LCC). The majority of them were, however, abstract mentions (25) and only three mentions referred to national or regional cultures in concrete.

The last part of the book takes a brief look at the future developments of design for services by interviewing several visionary authors, researchers or experts in the field of service design or service research. This part included 6 KWIC tags. Based on the interviews, the authors discern an emergence of a new kind of economy that is impregnated by strong social characteristics. This social dimension of the new economy allows and requires people to take an increasingly active role in co-producing services and participating in their development (pp. 219–220). This distinctive social character of the economy calls for recognizing social and environmental concerns as determinants for value generation, besides the traditional economic value. The authors claim that "s[S]ervices are becoming a paradigm for a more relational economy and society" (p. 226). This statement is interesting from the point of view of this dissertation stressing the importance and role of culture in service-related interaction. Meroni and Sangiorgi also claim that the discipline needs to grow stronger and call for different actions. Among these actions (pp. 223–225) are management of distributed networks and development of a creative and collaborative societies which both are likely to benefit of intercultural competence. They do not name this competence specifically but some of their interviewees formulate it as a need to

- "– – learn more about culture- and market-specific needs for the design of services" (Mager p. 233)
- "– – study how service design deals with and helps multicultural dialogue and interchange." (Malaguti p. 235)
- "– – increase the adoption and diffusion of original service ideas and stimulate entrepreneurial creativity based on cultural specificities, cultural heritage and tacit knowledge of individuals and groups." (Staszowski p. 236.)

Besides the key word in context (KWIC) search, the book presented two cases focusing on aspects of cultural differences. The second case study looked into developing collaborative tools in international projects (53–58). The e-learning platform was "informed by an investigation into cultural differences among students' learning practices". However, neither the theoretical or practical approach was described in more detail. The outcome of the mainly Italian-Japanese co-development was a virtual desk where the linguistic gap between the participants was deduced by use of "images with sketches, symbols and text".

The book's fifth case study "Exploring mobile needs and behaviors in emerging markets" by Vanderbeeken (pages 101–109) reports how mobile phone services were developed for new markets by gaining understanding for local sociocultural contexts via ethnographic research, local design centers, participatory field design, grass roots innovation and remote research in various technology companies. These research activities resulted in practical services directly applicable and needed in the local markets. For example, one enterprise developed a mobile tracker service allowing people to track down their stolen or lost phones. One key argument of this sub-study is that "contextually relevant design is often better practiced by local designers" (p. 74).

Overall, 28 of the KWIC findings referred to national or regional cultures and are thus relevant to this study. The words referring to large cultures in general (LCA) were all isolated remarks on the impact of national or regional culture without elaborating its meaning any further. Despite a few obscure cases, all these KWIC tags seemed to deal with the service user's culture. The culture of the service provider or that of a service designer or design team members was not considered. Culture seemed to be rather a characteristic of the "service target" than that of an "actor". No mention was made to reflect the impact of the cultural background of a service provider or another stakeholder.

The search included three KWIC tags that were classified under the code LCC (large culture in concrete). Similarly, each of the three findings of a detailed reference to a large culture dealt with the service users' culture. Even though these KWICs were listed as detailed referrals to certain national or regional culture they also remained superficial. The first two mentions referred to cultural differences in storing and archiving, and what the concept of home or sharing means in Asian cultural context without elaborating these differences with other cultural contexts. The third mention referred to embedding certain service scenarios into Australian culture.

Organizational culture was well represented in the research material with 6 abstract (OCA) and 16 concrete (OCC) occurrences. As briefly discussed above, Meroni and Sangiorgi introduce a particular element of culture which has not been touched upon in the other target literature of this research. They speak a lot about "design culture", meaning by and large, a certain attitude showing motivation and competence to address better human-centered issues in design for service. They do not define the term "design culture" in detail but let the reader understand that it is wider than a "small" organizational culture and a characteristic of a larger professional culture. The eight mentions of "design culture" were coded under OFM (other forms or mentions of the KWIC) since the concept seemed to refer to an aspired state-of-mind or preferred attitude within a varied group of people involved in developing services in general. While this key word pair seemed to be a transcending concept of the book and a fundamental characteristic of design thinking, it is beyond the focus of this research. As a conclusion, it can be claimed that the authors of the book and various case studies recognize the role of large cultures during design processes but do not reflect on it in detail.

(IV) Service Design with theory: Discussions on change, value and methods Miettinen & Valtonen (Eds.) 2012, 223 pages

Academics Satu Miettinen's & Anu Valtonen's (Eds.) book offers discussions and debates from three thematic areas of service design research and practice: societal change, value co-creation and development of service design. It features essays and case studies from top service design authors contributing to the field's theory development.

Overall, the book includes 61 mentions with the KWIC tags. As the previous book, this publication included more KWIC tags referring to national and regional cultures than to organizational culture, and thus offers support for the assumption that large cultures such as national, regional or ethnic cultures carry relevant roles during customer value formation and service design processes. The 19 abstract mentions of large cultures (LCA) illustrate a wide variety of cases when a designer should be aware of cultural factors. The role of cultural factors seem to be acknowledged, yet it seems that the field has not found approaches to fully work out its importance, as stated earlier by Downs: "As designers, we know how to inscribe cultural meaning into objects and interfaces, but we don't know how to inscribe cultural meaning into a service" (p. 167; original quote in Moggridge 2006, 421).

Two cases dealt with a large culture in a concrete way (LCC), and referred to local ways of living in Milan, Italy, or a food culture in America. The two mentions do not elaborate these cultural phenomena and how they reflect on service design in any further detail. Similarly, one of the three different mentions of large cultures (DM) rather just points out certain cultural characteristics about living conditions in different European cities but does not describe the cultural practices, values or their meanings further. An essay by Ersin Alaca (pp. 55–64) deliberates on the governance of service design in light of a Finnish model and its cultural rationale and origins. The third DM case presents different cultural heritages of service design, namely those in the USA, the UK and the German-speaking Europe where Polaine (p. 160) identifies diverse affinities and focus points. The American practice appears to be close to user-experience design, the UK service design field links with interaction and product design, business innovation and design for public services and policy, while in German speaking Europe strongly draws on customer experience, design management and service marketing.

Young (p. 86) recognizes design creativity, including a service design approach, as part of a Western-hemisphere culture, design relying on "iconoclastic intelligence of the ancient Greek philosophers". The articles of this and the other reviewed books have, indeed, been authored by representatives of Western cultures, mostly from Europe or North America.

In conclusion, the book's relatively high amount of KWIC findings reinforce the discourse of relevance of cultural aspects in service design. Nevertheless, it again fails to elaborate on how cultural issues could be approached or operationalized during a service design process.

(V) Service design: From insight to implementation
Polaine, Løvlie, & Reason 2013, 189 pages

This book is written for a multidisciplinary group of professionals carrying out SD related activities. It contains a mixture of theory and practice of SD by providing a good framework for the discipline and outlining a set of tools and case studies for the readers.

The electronic search activity resulted in 23 hits with the KWIC: however, only three hits dealt with large cultures. Two occurrences were general mentions referring to large culture (LCA). Thackara stated in the introduction (p. xiv) that knowledge of local culture is a critical success factor in the quest for a radically lighter and sustainable economy based on services; the other mention instructed for culturally appropriate ways of interviewing minors. The only concrete mention about national cultures pointed to cultural expectations of punctuality in some English and German speaking cultures (p. 70). No other national, regional or ethnic culture (DM) related discussions were revealed.

The authors claim to have catalogued every service they have become aware of (number or type not disclosed) and then grouped the services in relation to three core values (p. 28–31) for a customer. These values are "care, access and response" which may be overlapping in many instances. The care-value focuses on people themselves (e.g. healthcare) or on their belongings (e.g. car repair). The access-value means that with help of services people are provided with opportunity to access or use something, or be part of something (e.g. travel, education or entertainment services). The third service value category responds to people's needs (e.g. emergency health care, restaurant waiter, insurance service). Whether and how these values may relate with cultural evaluations is not discussed. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that, for example, "care" is delivered and perceived differently in various cultures. It would, thus, be very interesting to study how these generic service values are perceived and experienced in different cultural contexts and what the factors contributing to good service experiences in each generic value category may be. Overall, the authors claim that a key in answering similar questions is to understand people and relationships better. But the book never dives deeper in the cultural aspects of value formation.

(VI) Service Design for Business –
A Practical Guide to Optimizing the Customer Experience
Reason, Løvlie & Brand Flu 2016, 179 pages

The most recent book at the time of the analysis is a business guide book. The first section offers basic knowledge of service design, and then proceeds to discuss twelve customer related business or organizational challenges for which service design can offer solutions and effective results (p. viii). The book is aimed at people in business or large organizations in business-to-consumer, business-to-business, and government services.

Due to the lack of an electronic edition, the book was searched and read through page by page manually. This reading resulted in finding one KWIC mention only. This usage refers to organizational culture in general. The book does not address national, regional or ethnic cultures in any way. However, with close reading of the chapter "The Customer Story: Understanding Customers Better Provides the Basis for Customer-Driven Service Improvement and Innovation" the reader will understand that culture can be one factor impacting the way service is experienced. To discover culture's case-specific relevance or role, a service designer can use various customer insights into gathering methods presented in the book.

As its title indicates, this book focuses on improving the customer experience. Each customer group may prefer different service types or styles, make different choices and behave differently. In order to better understand these needs the book offers the concepts of human, consumer, customer and user lifecycles (pp. 33–37). The human lifecycle model could be applied to identify cultural behavior, too. This model describes generational behavior and service needs from birth to death, and the customer life cycle stages may be strongly impregnated culturally. Even though the book does not deal with cultural factors as such, it becomes evident that culture is something that is to be considered: a characterizing part of a service user's identity that needs to be taken into account in each service design case. Without using the word "culture" the book comes to the conclusion that culture is a variable among other features affecting customer needs, preferences or expectations. The book focuses mainly on the customer or a service user so cultural factors affecting the service provider or other stakeholders within the service development process, co-production or delivery of the service are not discussed.

5.4.2 Conceptualizing culture: the professional journal article review

Volumes 1–7 of the professional publication Touchpoint – The Journal of Service Design, issued during 2009–early 2016 were included in the KWIC literature review and thematic content analysis. The journal is a triannual edition and altogether 21 issues were reviewed. Touchpoint is the only service design related journal published regularly in English, launched in 2009 and published since by Service Design Network, a global professional community of service designers from companies, agencies and academia (SDN 2016). The journal "provides a window into the discussion of service design, facilitating a forum to debate, share, advance and codify the field and its practices" (SDN 2016). Each issue is co-edited by a changing editorial board, representing writers, merited practitioners and researchers in the field. The publisher of Touchpoint is Birgit Mager, professor for service design at Köln International School of Design, Germany, and co-founder and president of the Service Design Network. The editor-in-chief is Jesse Grimes, a management board member of Service Design Network, and a service designer and consultant, based in the Netherlands. Both responsible actors have held their positions since the beginning of the publication.

The PDF formats of all relevant articles were available and the search was initially conducted digitally using the KWIC format "*cultur*" as in the books review. All articles were additionally read through page by page to spot topics related to culture but not using the KWIC as such. All KWIC occurrences were analyzed within their sentence or paragraph contexts. The summarized KWIC results of the journal articles are indicated in Table 13. The table indicates the number of occurrences per each thematic KWIC category. The same coding categories were used as in the book reviews and are presented above in Table 11 (section 5.4).

TABLE 13 KWIC (key word in context) code occurrences in the Touchpoint journals, volumes 1–7.

Touchpoint issue / KWIC	**LCA** Large culture abstract	**LCC** Large culture concrete	**OCA** Org. culture abstract	**OCC** Org. culture concrete	**OFM** Other forms & meanings	**DM** Different mentions	**Total**
7_3	3	1	1	2	2	2	**11**
7_2	0	0	17	33	17	0	**67**
7_1	2	0	0	2	18	0	**22**
6_3	1	0	17	8	5	0	**31**
6_2	7	4	2	2	8	1	**24**
6_1	1	0	3	0	7	0	**11**
5_3	1	0	1	0	7	0	**9**
5_2	1	1	1	2	10	0	**15**
5_1	0	3	0	0	6	0	**9**
4_3	0	1	12	7	11	0	**31**
4_2	5	0	2	2	4	0	**13**
4_1	19	1	0	3	12	0	**35**
3_3	1	0	3	6	6	0	**16**
3_2	0	0	4	11	4	0	**19**
3_1	0	0	7	2	15	0	**24**
2_3	2	0	6	1	9	0	**18**
2_2	0	0	2	3	5	2	**12**
2_1	8	2	6	0	0	2	**18**
1_3	2	0	2	1	8	0	**13**
1_2	1	0	4	1	9	1	**16**
1_1	2	2	1	3	6	1	**15**
Total	**56**	**15**	**91**	**89**	**169**	**9**	**429**
	13.1 %	3.5 %	21.2 %	20.7 %	39.4 %	2.1 %	**100 %**

Culture was discussed or mentioned in less than half (3 –10) of the articles of each issue, with the number of articles per issue ranging between 15–25 (except for the very first issue with only seven relevant articles). As shown in Table 13, the most interesting categories for this research represent a distinct minority of the journal review KWIC occurrences. Referrals to large cultures (LCA) in general totaled 56

hits (13.1% of all KWICs). Only 15 mentions (3.5%) referred to national or regional culture in concrete or more detailed ways (LCC). Referrals to different cultural mentions (such as case studies on selected local cultures, category DM) were also relatively rare with nine occurrences (2.1%).

A substantial number (91) of the KWIC occurrences referred to organizational culture in abstract (OCA) or in concrete (OCC, 89 hits), totaling 41.9%. The category of other forms and meanings (OFM) was also relatively large with 39.4%. Although these categories would be interesting to analyze, it will need to be the topic for further research.

The classification of the key words in context (KWIC) in Touchpoint journals was similarly challenging as in the books review and again leaves space for interpretation. For example, the key word pair "cultural change" may have been categorized under "organizational culture abstract (OCA) or "other forms and meanings" (OFM) depending on the context. If the meaning clearly referred to cultural change within an organization, the KWIC was interpreted as being in the category of "organizational culture in abstract" (OCA), but if there was no indication of any organizational or defined large culture setting the corresponding KWIC was coded under the "other forms and meanings" category (OFM). In many cases, a close reading of the whole article was necessary – not just of the actual sentence or paragraph.

There seemed to be no systematics or regularity in addressing culture's role during a service design process. No connection to certain service design methods or tools, or specific types of service contexts were presented. An examination of the KWIC occurrences of large cultures (LCA and LCC) reveals that culture is not perceived a central theme among the Touchpoint authors. Only 16.6 % of the occurrences related to national or regional cultures, the majority (56 out of 71) of which referred to national culture in general (LCA, 56 hits). The following Touchpoint (TP) sample sentences of these abstract or general mentions (LCA) demonstrate that the form of the KWIC tag as such was not significant – they may have been a noun or another grammatical form – but the reference to the certain cultural theme was important for the categorization:

> *Movies especially provide a lot of value when sharing information with stakeholders who come from various cultural backgrounds and language groups. (TP 7–3)*
> This adjective form refers to large cultures such as national, regional or ethnic cultures in general (LCA).

> *'Always connect to the final destination' and 'Use the local culture as part of the service'. (TP 7–1)*
> This KWIC refers to a regional culture in abstract, without describing it in any detail (LCA).

> *Thus, sense-making, design mindset, social intelligence and cross-cultural competence can be seen as increasingly critical future work skills. (TP 5–3)*

This KWIC, as part of a compound adjective, refers to different national cultures in an abstract way and was thus categorized under LCA (large culture in abstract).

The 15 concrete references to national, regional or ethnic cultures (LCC) included the following mentions:

- hierarchical corporate cultures in Latin America (TP 7–3)
- intimate familial relationships of a collective culture with strengthened relationships with neighborhoods in a Chinese village (4 mentions, TP 6–3)
- a culture of social dialogue in Denmark (TP 5–2)
- American culture with distaste for big government, highly quantitative values, quantitatively oriented managers (3 mentions, TP 5–1)
- British culture based on the belief "my home is my castle encompassing status, ownership, privacy and identity (TP 4–3)
- meeting people with genuine Finnish culture in a library setting (TP 4–1)
- a dynamic culture with intimate connection with the environment and self-sufficient community values in a Canadian resource economy (2 mentions, TP 2–1)
- the culture of queuing in France and the USA (TP 1–1)
- bustling metropolitan culture of Pittsburg, USA (TP 1–1).

According to these 15 mentions national, regional or ethnic cultures were found to be relevant factors, and evaluated and considered at least to some extent during service design processes. However, no further elaboration on a specific cultural behavior, how insights were gained or how cultural issues were addressed and operationalized during the design process were presented in the articles.

Besides the word-based review, a thematic analysis was also conducted based on different mentions and references to national, regional or ethnic cultures (category DM). In this approach, all content dealing with large cultures but without using the actual search KWIC word "*cultur*" was searched for. The result of this search remained, however, quite scarce: there were nine (9) separate articles dealing with detailed national or regional culturally distinct behavior. The "Costumer profiles" in the early Touchpoint volumes (1–2) especially explored deeper into the cultural characteristics regarding service consumption or preferences: a family in Melbourne, Australia; a single professional man in New York, USA; a middle-aged woman caring for her elderly father in Kuopio, Finland; a young "Yupster" in Pittsburg, USA. The purpose of these consumer or customer profiles was to immerse the reader into the lifestyle of the invented personas and yield knowledge over a national, regional or ethnic culture. Other articles dealing with sociocultural factors included service design case stories of a rural Canadian resource community, of a Chinese remote village community, of a company case in Taipei, Taiwan and of a service design sales case in Chile. If containing a KWIC term, these article occurrences are also included in the categories LCA and LCC. Articles dealing with a geographical spread or application

of service design as a practice or just reporting on an event in a certain national context were not included in the category of different mentions (DM).

There seems to be no significant variation in the number, regularity or spread of LCA and LCC occurrences during the Touchpoint publication years where the occurrences ranged between 0 and 20. The relatively high number of occurrences (11, 20, 10) in some issues (6–2, 4–1, 2–1) can be accounted for by the theme of the issue or a certain article topic. For example, the theme of issue 4–1 with 20 LCA and LCC occurrences was hospitality, tourism, food and leisure industries.

The concept of culture was not defined in the journal articles. None of the KWIC mentions questioned the characteristics, meaning or scope of national, regional or ethnic cultures, nor any cultural approaches, ways of operationalizing it or cross-cultural frameworks were mentioned. It seemed to be a notion that was taken for granted as an abstract omnipotent influencing people's behavior and preferences, but the impact remained unspecified.

The question of whose national, regional or ethnic culture matters did not leave any doubt. When the cultural theme was raised in the articles, it was without exception about the service user's culture (large or organizational). However, in discourses about organizational culture's relevance also the service providers' organizational culture was recognized. The service provider's or the service designers' national, regional or ethnic culture was not discussed at all, indicating that in design or service development contexts the provider organizations and service designers are perceived as objective and culturally neutral agents. Only the customer or service user was seen to be a "cultural human being".

5.5 Limitations of the review and content analysis

The aim of the professional literature review and content analysis was to gain meaningful insights about large cultures' role in service design. After having already interviewed practicing service designers, a review of professional literature was considered a worthwhile approach to widen the exploration of the topic. Professional literature was supposed to reflect fairly accurately the most central and current topics and discourses in the field, and thus the review can be considered valid. However, the selection of professional literature to be reviewed was quite challenging, and choices needed to be made to keep the corpus narrow enough to be able to be reviewed but also wide enough to represent general and topical discourses in the field. This partially random and partially purposive selection obviously has an effect on the findings which therefore cannot be generalized. Yet, I consider the findings indicative of the field's discourses related to culture. For a larger reliability, a literature review with a wider scope would be necessary.

Service design is considered a rather international approach, with a considerable amount of research, articles and books published in English. Nevertheless, the focus on review material only in English may have provided a one-sided and

also culturally slightly biased view on the phenomenon. Another review would be needed for observing how culture is approached in professional SD literature in other languages and non-English speaking cultural areas. Although the aim was to provide internationally credible results by choosing a journal published by a global network and books from internationally recognized authors from various countries, the scope of the research is not wide enough to grant globally representative knowledge.

The double review methodology by electronic key word searches and manual page-by-page readings increase the validity and reliability. The selected key words were justified and helped discover most topics related to culture's role in service design. The manual reading complemented the search in case the key words were not used. The key word in context (KWIC) approach enabled a meaningful analysis of the occurrences and their relevance. The textual contexts was extended to cover as much material (i.e. even full chapters) as needed to interpret actual meanings related to culture.

5.6 Summary of the review and content analysis findings

In the following paragraphs, I will briefly summarize the KWIC findings in the professional service design literature comprising the book and journal reviews and reflect on them in the light of the research questions. The aim of the literature review and thematic content analysis was to find out how professional service design literature approaches large, i.e. national, regional and ethnic cultures. Table 14 illustrates the occurrences in total and in percentages.

TABLE 14 KWIC occurrences in the chosen books and journal articles

	LCA Large culture abstract	**LCC** Large culture concrete	**OCA** Org. culture abstract	**OCC** Org. culture abstract	**OFM** Other forms & meanings	**DM** Different **mentions**	Category total
Books	**55**	**6**	**28**	**30**	**86**	**13**	**218**
% of total	25,2 %	2,8 %	12,8 %	13,8 %	39,4 %	6,0 %	100 %
Journals	**56**	**15**	**91**	**89**	**169**	**9**	**429**
% of total	13,1 %	3,5 %	21,2 %	20,7 %	39,4 %	2,1 %	100 %

The relational percentages give a good overview on the quantitative differences, showing that the books discuss large cultures substantially more often than the journal articles: 34 percent of the book KWIC occurrences referred to LCA; LCC or DM categories (large culture in abstract or in concrete, or different mentions), as opposed to 18.7 percent of the journal KWIC occurrences. This might be due to the length of the text in the book articles and chapters that allow a deeper look into the chosen topic. The cultural focus in journal articles was in organizational

cultures (41.9 percent), as opposed to 26.6 percent organizational culture mentions in the books. Other than the length of the writing, there is no obvious reason for the difference, and it warrants separate further study.

The frequent mentions of organizational culture may reflect the fact and the very characteristics of service design being a novel approach demanding radical behavioral change within many service provider organizations. Heapy & McManus (2011) stress this by mentioning "*– – that great services need great organisations. So it often happens that, by designing a service, we address an organisational challenge.*" Consequently, if was not surprising that even whole journal issues, but also many articles or book chapters were dedicated to discussing organizational culture. This was done by reflecting on how supporting service design requires a change in organizational thinking and behaving in order to allow a new human-centered and more user-driven mindset in developing services.

Both books and journals had a similar representation of the miscellaneous (OFM, other forms and meanings) KWICs (39.4%). This category included a wide array of referrals to culture (e.g. compound words, high culture, small cultures such as sectoral, occupational or project culture). There were some consistent patterns among these mentions, but due to the nature of this study, a more detailed categorization was not considered relevant.

In the following synthesis, mainly the LCC category (mentions of national, regional and ethnic cultures in concrete or detailed ways) and the DM category (different mentions of large cultures without using the key words) occurrences are discussed to answer the detailed research questions. These two categories seem most relevant in providing more understanding of large cultures' role in service design.

The research question for this sub-study (R3) inquired "How is culture addressed in the professional service design literature?" Auxiliary questions to this topic looked for observations about culture-related discourses in general and about the role that cultural factors are given in the literature.

All books and journal issues included mentions of culture, yet less than half of the journal articles addressed the topic. Cultures in general were considered important. For example, cultural diversity is found to be a crucial factor in replicating services (Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011, 23). Malaguti (in Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011, 234) considers it important "*to study how service design deals with and helps multicultural dialogue and interchanges*" and Kylänen (Touchpoint 5–3, 80) states that "*– – cross-cultural competence can be seen as increasingly critical future work skill – –*." Yet, no book chapter or article elaborated on these topics.

The discourses about culture were predominantly neutral. Culture's role as affecting human behavior was acknowledged, even accepted, but its role was not reflected upon in detail. This indicates that the topic is considered relevant although not a priority, as also indicated by the interviewed service designers in Sub-study 1. When an evaluative comment on culture's role was made, it was typically estimated to be a noteworthy component in the overall service experience. Realistic observations were made about contextual and local cultures' relevance. Culture was not perceived to be a specific challenge in a design process.

Positive mentions of culture included a case of offering tourist services in Helsinki Central Library as an opportunity to experience "*genuine local culture*". There were only a few circumstances where the discourse of culture embodied a challenge or was addressed negatively. Two examples of critical stances about culture's impact were a comment of "*American distaste for big government has meant fewer opportunities for service designers to address large civic systems and thereby build awareness of the value of service design thinking*" (Muscat, Touchpoint 5–1, 84), and about Latin American "*hierarchical organizations*" posing a challenge for selling service design (Gajardo & Gerea, Touchpoint 7–3, 62). These two examples also highlight how national or continental cultures were generalized to apply to all (or at least the majority) of the people in the geographical regions. While these comments illustrate the common discourse of essentializing cultures (Dahl 2014, Piller 2011), they also show how national (or continental) cultures are routinely spoken about.

The type of cultures addressed in the literature was also searched for. Certain culture types or categories started emerging from the corpus at the very beginning of the review. Organizational culture was an obvious and clear category from the start. Categorizing other cultures was more challenging, and at first a separate classification based on national culture, other regional cultures and ethnic cultures was formed. However, their boundaries were not clear at all, and in line with the discussion about national culture as an imagined culture (Holliday 2013, Piller 2011), a broader categorization was considered more suitable. Based on the type of occurrences, the categories of large cultures (LCA; LCC) felt soon natural, easily encompassing national, regional, ethnic, and even smaller or bigger local cultures like city or continental cultures. Ethnic cultures or language groups were not mentioned in the corpus at all. Religious groups were not considered in this study. Table 15 summarizes the more detailed and concrete occurrences for various large culture subcategories (concrete large culture, LCC) and short narratives of cultures without using the key words (different mentions for cultures, DM) with some illustrative examples.

TABLE 15 Types of cultures represented in LCC (large culture concrete) and DM (different mentions) occurrences

	Continental	National or country	Regional or local
Books	**1**	**7**	**3**
Exampes	Asian concept of home, storing and archiving	Chinese collaborative service Australian context in services offering new food solution Collaborative tools in university cooperation in Italy and Japan	Social services for elderly in city regions in Milan, Barcelona, Aarhus and Joensuu Hosting students in Milan
Journals	**2**	**9**	**7**
Examples	Talking to the right person is fundamental in Latin America because of the hierarchical corporate culture	The belief "My home is my castle" runs through the British culture Queuing culture in France is different than in the US.	A dynamic cultural heritage and intimate connection with nature in the Canadian region Castlegar. Chinese Dong minority's cultural heritage when planning the village's well-being services.

The question how regular a topic culture is in SD literature is difficult to answer as the scope and content of the books and journal articles are not comparable, nor is there any previous and relevant benchmark material available which would make the comparison of the plain quantitative occurrences justifiable.

The textual context seemed to affect the number of mentions to some degree. The mentions were more frequent in literature contributing to the field's theory building and discussing human-centered goals of service design, such as Meroni's & Sangiorgi's and Miettinen's & Valtonen's books (see Table 12), and in some academically oriented journal articles. Practice-oriented literature seldom dealt with the topic. The book VI of Reason & al. (2016) mentioned the key word only once which is substantially less than the occurrences in the other books (Table 12). Evidently, the focus of the book had an influence on this. Besides the thematic focus, many journal articles can be considered too short to deepen the cultural topic.

Concerning service fields or situation specific contexts, the scrutiny of the research material did not provide any clear patterns for relevance of cultural aspects. Culture seemed to be considered across all fields in business, public services and non-governmental activities. The LCA, LCC and DM occurrences (large culture abstract, large culture concrete, different mention of large culture) give a good overview of this general applicability by relating to a multitude of practical service contexts. The fields and industries represented in the professional books included the following fields: health-care services, elderly well-being services, educational services, knowledge-intensive business services, tourism services, educational services, digital and mobile communication services, public administration and communication, community services, security services, immigration services. The journal articles provided an additional scope across

various fields: sales in general, energy and electricity, health-care (including hospitals, mental health, maternity services), financial services, public transportation, consultancies and smart business services, community services, fitness and gym services, housing and accommodation services, libraries, arts and high culture services. However, there were a few industry-specific emphases. The theme of Touchpoint issue 4–1 focusing on hospitality, tourism, food and leisure industries yielded higher occurrences than in the rest of the corpus. This is hardly surprising, considering the findings of the overall theoretical literature review of this study (section 2.2), and the goal of these types of services to offer cultural experiences.

Service offerings are based on complex service systems consisting of people, technologies and other resources (Patricio & al. 2011, 180). Therefore, this research explored how different stakeholders' backgrounds were considered during the design process. Service designers are profiled "as interpreters of users' experiences" (Wetter-Edman 2014, 26) and it was, thus, expected that service designers focus on the service users' cultural traits or contexts. This proved to be the case: when talking about large cultures the mentions and narratives dealt with service users' cultural environments, when talking about other process stakeholders, the cultural factors dealt mostly with organizational culture. Examples of service users' contextual large cultures were mainly observed or plainly stated as shown in the examples in Table 15. How a service offering would be adjusted to comply with complex facets of cultural practices was not discussed, and even the concrete mentions (LCC or DM) remained rather superficial. Holliday (2011, 29) describes this kind of plain reporting of observations without deeper analysis of cultural meanings as "thin description". The "Customer profiles" in three early Touchpoint issues are the few examples of presenting "thick description" about service users' broader cultural environments. Holliday claims that a thick description would allow a creation of "richer pictures of how things may be, rather than trying to fix how things are according to *a priori* hierarchies" (italics in the original quote, 2011, 29). With previously fixed mental structures he refers to (neo)essentialist approaches to culture, seeing categories of cultural action as a set of confining features (section 2.5.2).

The other actors (stakeholders) of the complex service systems were not much considered from a cultural perspective in the literature. There were only a few mentions of observations or recommendations for multicultural and multidisciplinary teams in service design (Miettinen & Koivisto 2009, 224; Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011, 269; Profile interview with van Dijk, Touchpoint 6–2, 91). Van Dijk (in Stickdorn & Schneider 2010, 110) further emphasizes the need for T-shaped professionals (deep expertise combined with broad understanding of other fields) in service design teams but refers verbatim only to the multidisciplinary expertise, not to intercultural interaction competence, for example. There were no mentions of service providers' cultural backgrounds on any level or stage of the process: development, back-stage or front-stage activities seemed, therefore, to be perceived as culturally void arenas. Even though it was recognized that the SD field is anchored in a Western research tradition and that there

are different emphases in affiliations with neighboring fields in various countries, the role of cultural backgrounds of service provider organizations nor service designers were discussed. It seems that service designers are focused on service users to such an extent that they tend to see only the "target" user as a "cultural being" and oversee other sociocultural contributors. It is also possible that other stakeholders and their cultural backgrounds were not considered relevant enough to be written about. However, as co-design is a critical factor in service design (Steen, Manschot & Koning 2011), it thus becomes even more perplexing why the cultural background of only certain participants of the co-creative process is taken into account.

A further review interest was to find out how service designers approach culture. Is there a prevailing conceptualization or way of operationalizing culture? It turned out that no book or journal article author reflected on the definition or observable characteristics relating to large cultures. There were two instances where the authors gave superficial reflection on the phenomenon of organizational culture. Katz (Touchpoint 7–2; 2015, 20–25) and Pardue (7–2, pp. 64–65) relate to Schein's (2010, 15–16) definition of organizational culture, with Katz stating that "culture, particularly organizational culture, is hard to define but easy to sense. It is made up of values, norms, rituals, language, social structures, material objects and environments".

Sun (2015, 63) claims that operationalization culture is closely related to the conceptualization of culture, and failing to characterize (local or large) culture in particular research will not lead to meaningful, culturally sensitive design practices. Social science based approaches are not easily transferrable to design activities requiring deep understanding of humanistic values and rich cultural data. The interactive nature of culture would require interpretative, critical and dialogical approaches in order to yield usable and meaningful insights in practice-oriented research (Sun 2015, 62; Sadri & Flammia 2011). Based on this review, culture seemed to be taken for granted; something that was considered relevant but without detailing why or how it was important. Large cultures, such as national cultures, were "re-produced" as in common and routinized discourses with a typical reliance on national stereotyping (Piller 2011, 59). This may depend on a lack of service designers' deeper understanding of culture, and they may also find it very challenging to single out one sociocultural component from within complex and rich cultural influences.

While observing the different stages of a SD process, the discovery stage (see section 2.4.1) seemed most often to be connected with cultural inquiry. None of the typical methodological approaches of service design seemed to be specifically connected to gaining cultural insights, though. It is likely that many of the methods and tools (e.g. service safaris, customer journey maps, contextual interviews, cultural probes, expectation maps, personas, design scenarios or cards) are suitable to shed light on needs and preferences shaped by large and local cultures, if used skillfully for that purpose. However, cultural insights gained through common tools may become meaningless if theory-informed concepts or unsuitable operationalization is used in simplistic ways in design practice methodology (Sun 2015). Sun provides an example of a disconnect between action and

meaning in cross-cultural design: a Chinese navigator user would be very likely to look for a "massage salon" under an Entertainment category, whereas a German user would first search for it under a Personal care business category (p. 63).

Summarized, it seems that a rather cursory and one-sided view of culture prevails in the professional service design literature: in most cases only the culture of the "target" user seems to matter, and the notion of culture is addressed on an anecdotal and superficial level. Service designers may be cautious in devoting their efforts to cultural issues due to its challenging conceptualization and the difficulty in operationalizing it for practical design cases. The review results suggest that service designers lack sophisticated understanding of culture and different approaches to it. It also seems that that service designers do not reflect openly on their own social impact in how design supports the creation and communication of culture (cf. Getto & Sun 2017; Sano-Franchini 2017).

The absence of culture in the majority of the texts may, however, also entail a different perspective – namely, that culture was not considered relevant enough a characteristic during service design processes and was therefore not talked about much. Whether this is the case requires further exploration. It was also considered possible that the professional literature would give voice to the service users and communicate their perceptions of culture's role in service design or their definitions for good service from a cultural point of view. Service users' voices were, however, not presented in the professional literature and thus these two research questions (R4, R5) remain to be explored in the following Sub-study 3. It is especially interesting to hear how service users characterize "good service" which according to the new service marketing paradigm embodies the feeling of being well served.

6 SUB-STUDY 3: SERVICE USERS' VIEWS ON CULTURE

Different audiences, including local and global service user groups, are splintering in culturally and ethnically diverse groups, with increasingly differing preferences (Uusitalo 2009). Successful organizations realize that services must reach global audiences and simultaneously have their offerings localized to specific cultures (Sun & Getto 2017, 89). The findings of the first two sub-studies imply that service designers are, nevertheless, dealing relatively little with factors related to large cultures, possibly due to a lack of awareness or knowledge to address them. Previous research, on the other hand, has demonstrated that culture does affect various facets and stages of service processes and that designing with or for another culture comes with unique challenges (Sun 2015; Goncu-Berk 2013; Kamppuri 2011; Leung & al. 2005). Studies also suggest that different cultural backgrounds of the service provider (e.g. the organization or the customer facing staff) and of the service user affect service users' preferences and service choices (e.g. Kong & Jogaratnam 2007).

In parallel, an increasing emphasis on value-based experiences (Grönroos 2008) and experience regarded as co-created value (Vargo & Lusch 2008) call for additional research on what are service users' perceptions of cultural aspects in relation to service experiences. The new service marketing research paradigm emphasizes the service provider's role as an enabler of optimal service experiences (Helkkula & al. 2012b; Heinonen & al. 2010). This requires more knowledge about diverse service users' value creation processes (Voima & al. 2010; Heinonen & Strandvik 2015) in their everyday lives, including cultural aspects and contexts. Service design has emerged as an approach to set the stage for optimal service user experiences by choreographing the service development and use process with co-creative, service users involved approaches (Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011; Miettinen & Koivisto 2009). Despite many advances, more knowledge is needed in order to understand the role of large cultures (such as national, regional or ethnic cultures) during the service development and use processes.

Therefore, the first two sub-studies needed to be complemented with a look at the "other side of the coin" and to explore how service users (consumers, customers and other service end users) consider culture's role in service situations and whether they perceive culture(s) contributing to (or hindering) a good service experience. The third sub-study examines the following research questions posed for this dissertation (see section 1.2.1):

- R4: How do service users characterize the role of culture in service situations?
- R5: How is good service defined from a cultural viewpoint?

Research question 4 (R4) aims to illuminate empirically how people perceive cultural aspects or various stakeholders' cultural backgrounds to matter in service situations. This information will support service designers in taking better cultural aspects into consideration during service design processes. It is also worth hearing service users experiences about service fields or contexts other than those already known to be very relevant for culture-sensitive service development, such as tourism and hospitality or health care services (e.g. Bakir & al. 2017; Fregidou-Malama & Hyder 2015).

The fifth research question (R5) aims to find out whether service as a notion is understood and whether good service is characterized similarly in various cultures. For example, Bodine (2016, 12) claims that there are differences in the term usage across Europe and the United States. The precedent theory has indicated that there may be differences in how the notion of "service" is used and understood across cultures. If the concept of "service" is given different cultural meanings it may have theoretical and practical implications for service design.

The aim of the third sub-study is to recognize how various service users perceive culture's relevance in services in general, not confined to any certain service contexts. The aim is also to gain understanding from inside of a cultural group by interviewing representatives of different cultures about their perceptions, aiming at "thick description" in accordance with Geertz's interpretative approach (Geertz 1983 in Sadri & Flammia 2011, 88; Holliday 2011). The unit of analysis is a "service situation". The term is used here in a processual meaning, including joint value creation and experiences of being served regarding to a certain service offering. It can include activities and experiences during a planning stage where the service user is searching for or considering various service alternatives, or the actual service usage where the service user interacts with the service provider or the offering at a variety of physical or digital touchpoint. The service situation may also include the experiential stage after the service purchase or use but where value-in-use may still be emerging (Strandvik & al. 2018; Helkkula & al. 2012b).

In the following sections, the empirical research process for mapping out service users' perceptions on cultural aspects in service situations is outlined. The analysis of results is based on the themes emerging from the interview data.

6.1 Research design

The aim of the explorative study was to gain understanding on culture's role in services from randomly selected service users representing various cultural backgrounds. A qualitative research approach for data gathering and analysis was considered the most appropriate in order to gather the respondents' perceptions on multifaceted cultural aspects during a processual service situation. A multiple interviewer method was used based on a structured interview questionnaire. Besides gaining access to a large variety of respondents, the use of multiple interviewers helped to take an objective stand and to avoid a dual role of being both a recorder and an interpreting subject which Matteson & Lincoln (2009, 660) claim an interview researcher is in essence holding. Multiple interviewers were assessed as being able to reach a representative and wide enough group of service users with different cultural backgrounds.

6.1.1 Structured multiple interviewer method

The interviewees were chosen randomly, thus presenting "ordinary" service users acquiring many kinds of services in their roles as consumers, customers, citizens or even business partners. An online study group of master's students acted as interviewers and data collectors. The students came from four different universities of applied sciences located in southern Finland and represented multiple study programs such as business development, hospitality management, innovative future services, management and development of social services, service innovation and design, or social services and health care management.

The part-time adult students reported holding full time professional positions such as: business navigator, communication specialist, customer sales support specialist, family support worker, development manager, education service planner, financial business support assistant, interpreter in travel and tourism business, IT business partner, key account manager, manager of teaching services, midwife, public care nurse, registered nurse, service business manager, service supervisor, unit director of an immigrant reception center. This kind of a professionally diverse group had access to a large variety of randomly chosen group of informants who would be able to share general culture-related service experiences from different fields and service situations.

The students were asked to interview three informants, each representing a different national cultural background, and this was the only restrictive condition for the arbitrary selection of the informants. Since the aim of the study was to increase knowledge about culture's role in services in general and across cultures, as culturally a heterogenic informant group as possible was considered to be most suitable to shed light on the above research questions. The interviewing students themselves presented nationalities such as Finland (13), Belgium, Poland, Nepal and Pakistan, of which 14 were female, and three were male.

The structured interviews took place during July–August 2017 as part of a master's degree study unit "Cross-cultural issues in service development" at

Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Finland. Research permission was acquired, and the students were informed about further use of the acquired data as part of this research and were themselves requested to sign a certificate of informed consent. They were also required to obtain a similar certificate from all informant. All but three of the informants gave their permission to use their data in this sub-study. The main role of the students was to act as data collectors as part of an assignment of using qualitative methods and conducting intercultural interviews. It also needs to be noted that as part of the preceding assignments and contents of the study unit, all students shared a pre-understanding of the multidimensional aspect and conceptual ambiguity of culture, preparing them for intercultural communication challenges and making it possible to consider contextual influences and other fluid co-cultural factors in the interview situation.

There was no restriction for the student to act as one of the informants themselves, but only one student ended up "interviewing" herself due to a lack of finding a third interview candidate. The students were asked to take careful notes or to record the interviews. The consistency and dependability of the interviews were assured with a carefully structured interview form and detailed guidance. One test interview had been conducted with a person of Vietnamese background prior to the actual interviews. Consequently, some of the questions were modified or complemented in order to address better a service user's perception about the need for taking cultural factors into account in services.

The interview guidance included the following steps considered important for planning a successful interview (Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2011):

- Preparing a good setting for the interview: comfortable, quiet space or good online connection with video for recognizing non-verbal communication.
- Telling the informants about confidentiality and anonymity of the interviews (gaining trust).
- Reserving enough time for an introduction and for a short warm-up (establishing a rapport) and at least 15–30 min for the actual interview.
- Having a voice recorder or note taking utensils ready (collecting the empirical material).
- About the importance of listening and observing, not assuming or pausing (aiming at interviewee-driven interaction).
- Asking "Why? How? What?" or using other auxiliary or prompting questions (understanding the language and culture).

In order to gain adequately detailed answers and to link the answers to the aimed topics the interview questionnaire also included suggestions for inductive probing in the form of scripted prompting questions.

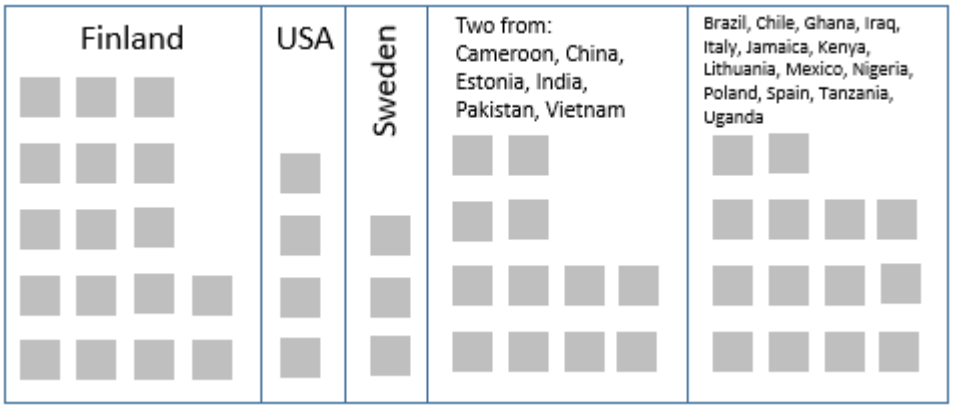
The first seven questions covered the informants' demographic background: country of living, country of birth, cultural identity, native language, age, gender and occupation. The actual interview questions were as follows:

1. Describe a service situation when you last felt that culture had some relevance.
2. How do cultural factors influence your service experience?
3. In which kind of services should culture be taken into consideration in general?
4. Describe in which kind of service situations you feel that your cultural background matters? Why?
5. Relating to the previous question: How do you wish your culture would be considered?
6. What about the service provider's cultural background: does it matter? Why, how?
7. In your opinion, what is good service in your culture?
8. Any other comments?

The last open-ended question was offered to include unexpected topics or issues surfacing during the interviews. The data collectors were allowed to add questions they considered relevant. The structured interview templates can be found in Appendix 2.

Sixteen students returned the interview sheets from three informants, one student from two informants. That makes a corpus of 50 interview note sheets. The 50 informants disclosed the following nationalities (citizenships): Finland (17), USA (4), Sweden (3); two (2) from Cameroon, China, Estonia, India, Pakistan, Vietnam; and one (1) from Brazil, Chile, Ghana, Iraq, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Lithuania, Mexico, Nigeria, Poland, Spain, Tanzania and Uganda respectively (Table 16). Forty-two of the informants were living in Finland, 8 in other parts of the world.

TABLE 16 The informants' nationalities



The informants' cultural identities did not conform completely with their nationalities. Fourteen informants reported to identify themselves as Finns, and two of them identified themselves as Finnish-Swedish belonging to the national language minority. The rest of the informants represented a wide variety of national identities according to their nationality, but also mixed identities (e.g. Finnish-American or Finnish-Indian), continental (African, Latin American), regional or

ethnic (Accran, Kurdish, Punjabi), religious (Muslim) or city identities (Sao Paolo). Three informants did not wish to be identified with any particular nationality and expressed to represent a mixed cosmopolitan, a world citizen or a white male cultural identities.

Twenty-seven of the informants were female, 22 male and one transgender. The occupations ranged from artists to business executives. Of all the informants, only two students reported the same occupation. The informants' ages ranged from 17–63, the average age being 33.4 years and the median age 34 years. The wide mix and variety of identities, ages and occupations of the informants provided in demographic and cultural terms versatile insights into culturally influenced service situations from a general perspective (not field or context specific).

Each student returned interview notes on templates structured by the order of the questions and answering the seven interview questions, as well as the open comments. Only one student had recorded and transcribed the recordings, the rest being written notes. The interview narratives were mostly written in the first person form, mediating directly the narration and feelings of the informant. One student had modified the answers into the third person narrative form. The interview notes included 7–8 responses of 50 informants, making a corpus of 358 responses (some informants had opted to give open comments, a few had not answered all questions). The average length of the notes was 2½ sheets, thus, the whole corpus being a good 40 sheets.

6.1.2 Data analysis

The data analysis was based on applied thematic analysis as outlined by Silverman (2011), Guest, McQueen and Namey (2012) and Ruusuvuori, Nikander & Hyvärinen (2010). The analytical purpose was to explore and to identify relevant and recurring themes that indicate the relevance of culture for service users in various service situations. The cornerstones of the approach are careful reading of the text, identification of possible themes, comparing and contrasting of themes and identifying structure among them (Guest & al. 2012, 12). The authors claim (p. 15) that the approach "embraces key elements of the interpretive school of thought" but comprises traits of "a bit of everything – – grounded theory, positivism, interpretivism and phenomenology". The positivist aspect "involves the reduction of texts to codes that represent themes or concepts" which in turn is "a highly interpretive endeavour". This leads to measurement and quantification of recognized theme patterns.

The data consolidation and analysis were conducted by the researcher. The data forms a corpus where the interviews are regarded as conversations where the informants are constructing cultural meanings for and about their experiences mainly in their roles as service users. In light of social constructionism, the responses are not taken as face value but as the service users' versions of reality which they share during the interviews. The interview notes or transcripts are, in essence, studied as proxy for the experiences (Bernard & Ryan 1998) in which the informants in their roles as service users are sharing their perceptions about culture-related aspects in service situations.

A first reading of the interview notes and transcripts served to identify relevant themes. The initial categorization was conducted with a mind map tool (Mindjet MindManager) which allowed an easy modification of the themes during the categorization. A few further detailed readings allowed locating key, essential, striking and interesting content in the interview responses. Close reading was followed by reflection, and reviewing and refining the codes (Silverman 2011, 83). The categorization and coding were not straightforward processes but needed a lot of analyses since the words used to mark cultural factors and experiences were diverse and the boundaries between the categories turned out to be quite blurred. Jolanki & Karhunen (2010, 399) remark that theme categorization and coding is always an interpretative process and requires constant balancing between recognizing the researcher's own presumptions and being open to the corpus. The categories are partially overlapping and another researcher might end up organizing them differently. However, after a few readings of the interview notes and several weeks between the readings, a clear and logical pattern started to emerge from the interview notes.

6.2 Themes emerging from the data

The corpus was initially thematized according to the interview questions. The themes were then reduced into meaningful segments of text no longer strictly following the order of interview questions. This led into the structure shown in Figure 19. The informants first either confirmed or disconfirmed culture's role in service situations. In a positive case, the causes for the impact were explored among their replies and four positive case categories were formed: One theme category laid out the determining cultural factor affecting a service situation (e.g. language use or another named behavior); Secondly came the service context: in which kind of service situations did the informants experience culture to matter? Thirdly, who were the relevant stakeholders participating in the service situations, i.e. whose cultural background was relevant, and how was it perceived to relate (e.g. positively or negatively) to the service experience? Some informants expressed how they thought cultural factors should or should not be taken into consideration, and finally progressed to evaluate what good service means when observed from their cultural background.

Figure 19 illustrates the above mentioned logic for the thematizing and coding. The structure builds on the topics the informants raised during different questions. Sometimes the questions lead to sprawling conversations with the interviewers, but all relevant data was categorized under the following themes no matter in which question context they had been addressed. Each category will be further discussed in sections 6.2.1–6.2.5.

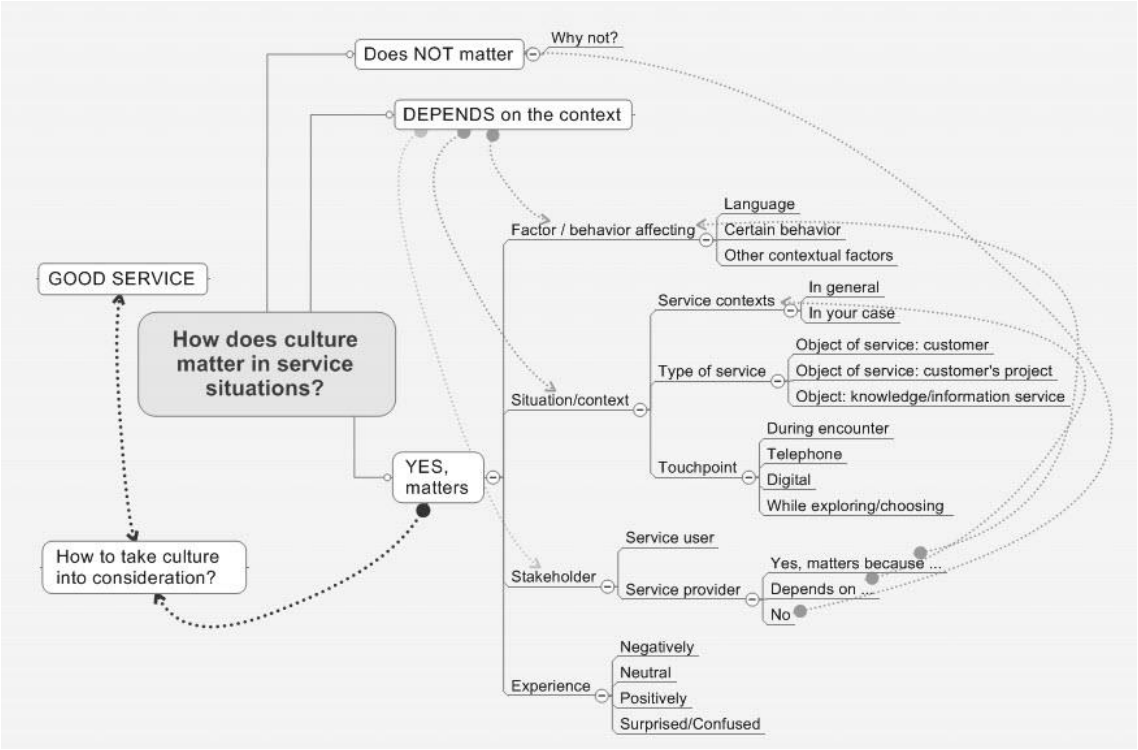


FIGURE 19 The logic of thematizing the interview analysis.

The meaningful text segments were categorized into themes and abstracted into codes (Guest & al. 2012, 52–70; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 70–86). Codes represent a higher abstraction than themes, and a single theme can comprise multiple codes (Guest & al. 2012, 52). The maximum length of a meaningful text segment was one sentence but more often they were composed of a few words or of one word only (example in Figure 20). The most decisive factor in the coding was the interpreted meaning of the informant. The coding was conducted with a computer aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) Maxqda. The use of Maxqda substantially facilitated the organizing, categorizing, coding, and finally analyzing the collected data.

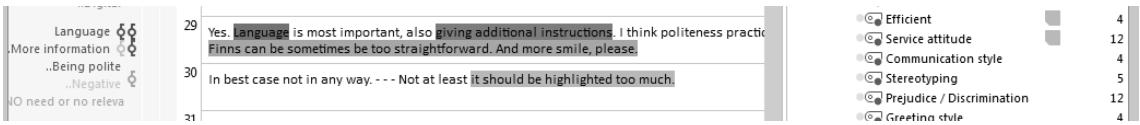


FIGURE 20 An example of coding. Different code categories were indicated by different colors.

The code system included following main codes in the case culture was perceived having a relevant role in a service situation:

- Language
- Service behavior (several sub-codes)
- Factors affecting service (several sub-codes)
- Ways of affecting (several sub-codes)
- Service contexts (several sub-codes)

– Types of services (several sub-codes)
– Touchpoints (several sub-codes)
– Service provider (sub-codes yes, depends, no)
– Feeling of the service experience (sub-codes negative, neutral, positive, confused/surprised)
– Good service (several sub-codes)

If culture was not perceived relevant, the main codes were:

– No relevant/clear answer
– Culture does not matter
– Not possible
– Specific to the service user, not culture.

The example extract of the code book illustrates how the coding was done (Figures 20 and 21). The results are presented in the following sections based on the categorizing process outlined in the previous mind map (Figure 19). The themes are

1) Culture's relevance in service situations
2) Factors that are related to culture's perceived impact
3) Contexts and types of services where culture is perceived to matter
4) The relevance of service provider's culture
5) Ways of taking culture into account, and
6) Good service from a cultural viewpoint.

6.2.1 Culture's relevance in service situations

It may not always be easy to be aware of or recognize a large culture's influence while considering whether to buy, use or enjoy the benefits of a service. Therefore, the informants were first asked to recall a concrete service situation where they had last experienced culture being relevant. The interviewers were requested to use prompting questions such as "why, what, when and how" to lead the informants to reflect on and to discern influences coming from various societal, cultural or contextual factors. A vast majority of the informants (46 out of 50) were able to recall a recent service situation where culture had had some relevance. Figure 21 illustrates the feeling evaluations of the recent culturally relevant service situations. The types of situations were many, and they will be covered in more detail below. Three informants failed to give a relevant answer while only one informant denied culture having affected his service situations recently. At this point, the informants were not yet requested to assess qualitatively their experiences in culture-related service situations, yet most of them automatically described their positive, neutral, negative or confused/surprised feelings in the situation. Therefore, the affirmative answers were categorized based on the emotional evaluation of the service situation. Figure 21 illustrates that the majority of them had been negative experiences (25). Thirteen occurrences were reported in a neutral tone of voice, 7 occurrences were reported as positive experiences, and in 6 cases the informants expressed feelings of confusion or surprise. Some informants shared several recent culture-related issues which explains the higher than 46 emotional evaluations of the affirmative cases.

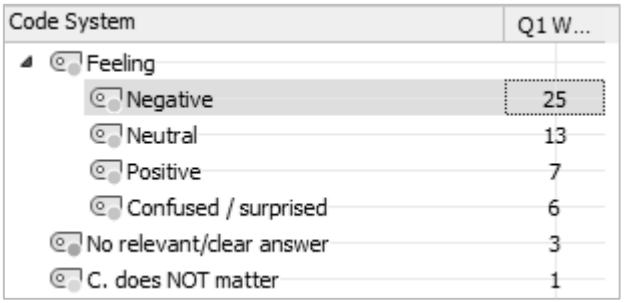


FIGURE 21 Service situations where cultural factors had relevance for the informants, coded according to their emotional evaluation (feeling).

It seemed quite easy for the informants to give examples about situations where culture had mattered. The following examples highlight various ways large cultures were experienced to affect a service situation and the way how these mentions were categorized under the Feeling category:

> *In Western countries, because I look Asian, I feel like it sets the starting point for [every] service situation.* (Informant 6.3; neutral)

> *I get frustrated quite often that customer service personnel wouldn't leave me alone. I am not used to getting service in my country, so I don't expect it from anyone without me asking for it.* (Informant 15.2; negative)

> *When I tried to get myself lunch in Helsinki and, err, the cashier didn't speak any Finnish. – –[Laughing] But, yeah, err, going into a situation where I wanted to get service in my own language in the Finnish way, and then I'm faced with a foreigner, who doesn't understand me. (Informant 6.1; confused/surprised)*

> *I spend half of my time in Finland, half in Brazil, so I've noticed some differences between our service cultures. – – When I was paying for something the first thing the cashier asked me was where am I from she had just been in Latin America and started to talk to me in a very relaxed manner, telling me how much she liked her trip and how Latinos are very open and welcoming. It felt nice. (Informant 15.3; positive)*

The previous quotes are based on replies to the first interview question (Q1: Describe a service situation when you last felt that culture had some relevance). At this point, the majority of informants indicated that they had experienced culture to matter in service situations. It is quite striking that in connection of some later interview questions (Q2–Q7) several informants indicated that culture does not matter (Figure 22). At first glance, this seems to be in contradiction with their earlier replies to the first question (Q1) when they had been able to call back a service situation where they had recently experienced culture to have some kind of an influence. The reason may be the degree of relevance of the experience, a different formulation of the questions or a mindset that culture should ideally not matter.

Code System	Q7 G...	Q6 Pr...	Q5 H...	Q4 Yo...	Q3 In ...	Q2 H...	Q1 W...
No relevant/clear answer		2	1		1	2	3
Culture does NOT matter		8	12	8	1	10	1

FIGURE 22 Denying or unclear perceptions on culture's relevance during various questions.

The first question requested the informants to specifically reflect on a recent service situation where they had observed or experienced culture to matter. The later questions addressed slightly different perspectives and placed culture in a more prominent and active role. For example, Question 2 inquired "How do cultural factors affect your service experience", and 10 informants said that culture did not matter. Interestingly, 7 out of these informants had previously described how culture had had a negative impact on a service situation. When the question was framed differently, they did not seem to find culture relevant. Could this be wishful thinking due to the negative experience, such as biased treatment which some of the informants reported having experienced?

When asking how people wished their cultural background to be considered (Question 5) 12 informants posited again that culture does not to matter. The informants stated that culture does not matter because: "*I am quite adaptive*" or "*I am happy to adapt other cultures*". Responses like these may indicate that the informants had noticed some cultural differences but considered these factors minor or harmless and were thus willing to be flexible. One informant recounted that he didn't feel that culture matters because "*it is not a cultural competition issue but rather an acceptance of a multi-cultural society*" (Informant 9.2).

Cultures come into play when contrasted with other ways of doing things (Scollon & al. 2012). Therefore, it is not surprising that the large number of denials (culture does not matter) in questions 2–7 come from informants living within their own cultures. This was, indeed, the case in about half of the replies, such as in the following:

> *In Finland it doesn´t influence that much – obviously. – – But when abroad, I understand that service experience can be different. So I can adjust my expectations to local culture quite well"* (Informant 11.3, Finnish nationality).

However, the other half of the answers considering culture not relevant were coming from informants living in a different culture to their native one. Some of the informants denying the impact expressively stated that they do not wish culture to affect the service situation in any way. This may be due to their negative evaluation of their former experiences, due to an ideal of a multicultural and inclusive society or due to fear of labeling of their culture, possibly even stereotyping or discrimination. In quite a lot of those service situations where the informants had claimed culture not mattering they reported on discrimination or biased service behavior (18 mentions), mainly based on their appearance or language skills. In one example, while all other passengers had seemed to be of European

origin, one non-European informant had experienced being the only person to "*kept waiting by the flight attendants on the way to the plane*" (Informant 9.2). Another reported that "*some customers had preconceptions because of my language – – they consider me as a hooker. Because of that they treated me with less respect*" (Informant 17.2). A third informant said he has experienced biased service behavior several times "*Many times in many places….. Sometimes I feel so embarrassed myself for being black – – in this Western world"* (Informant 4.2). *O*ne informant reported that, if possible, she tries not to reveal her cultural background in service situations because "*I think Xxx people do not really like Yyy people*." [1] For equality and humane reasons many informants considered culture-free services as an ideal, as stated in one of the comments where the informant had just claimed that culture does not matter:

> *I wish… I think I ummm… I think people should accept person just the way they are and not judge just by their appearance or their language. I just wanted to be treated like human being. I just want the same kind of service that anybody else get.* (Informant 2.2)

The above examples highlight how delicate an issue culture can be in service situations. A large majority of the informants had recognized previously in Q1 culture to be present and matter in service situation, many of them due to biased behavior. Even if this type of service provider behavior is not intentional, the service user may interpret the situation negatively through their previous experiences. Some of the answers were conditional, meaning that culture would matter only in certain circumstances, or culture was considered secondary to service quality:

> *My cultural background doesn't matter in any service situation, as long as the service work, then no problem. (*Informant 9.1)

The majority of the informants deliberated on service situations involving human encounters, mostly in their roles as consumers. In essence, they were only considering the last stage of the service process (see section 2.3), where the value-in-exchange is experienced. Thus, the whole process of co-creating value and the longitudinal emergence of value in use was not considered (see Grönroos & Voima 2013; Vargo & Lusch 2006). This is understandable since the service user rarely has knowledge about the system and process needed for the development of services and focuses on the interactions and other visible touchpoints in the service frontline. Yet, the actual service, including the desired value-in-the-experience (Helkkula & al. 2012a) may already be shaped during the design process. As one informant claims, consideration of cultural factors early on during the development stage is important:

[1] In order not to reproduce some existing stereotypes, the names of the nations are not disclosed.

> *"I think culture should be taken into count every time a service is created or developed. It might be that the culture has no effect on the service but it should never be out of the equation."* (Informant 16.2)

In summary, the informants' accounts reveal that culture matters and does not matter. This paradoxical characteristic of culture for people has been pinpointed previously by many scholars (e.g. Gannon 2008; Harrison & Huntington 2000). Isolating cultural factors from other societal factors is very difficult. The additional contradiction within cultural values and practices (House et al. 2004, De Mooij 2003) makes the recognition of culture's impact challenging. Value and practice paradoxes resonate with the distinction between the desired and the desirable. One might desire to be encountered in a culture-sensitive fashion but at the same time hope for equal treatment of all service users.

6.2.2 Factors that are related to culture's perceived role in service situations

Culture was recognized to matter in many service situations. The decisive factor may have been a specific behavior, use of language, way of interacting or the cultural backgrounds of the stakeholders. Culture was perceived to matter especially in factors conflicting with values and practices of the informants' own culture.

Language related factors were, not surprisingly, the most common reason for perceived issues. Several service researchers have identified language to be more than "merely a tool of communication" and thus evoking feelings of personal loyalty/identity and comfort (Holmqvist 2011, 185). Holmqvist and Grönroos (2012) claim language to be a key component of services and to matter before, during and after the service encounter. This is supported by this study where language was mentioned 50 times in the responses. Language was experienced to pose a complete communication barrier only in two over-the-phone service situations. Otherwise, language was perceived to be some kind of an issue, either specified or not specified (48 mentions). Table 17 lists the specified mentions for language issues, raised by 37 informants.

TABLE 17 Specified comments concerning language issues in services.

Informant comments on language issues	Number of mentions
Service should be offered in multiple languages (at least in English)	8
I prefer English, especially in complicated situations	5
I prefer using my native language	4
I am not understood	3
Service is better in another language (e.g. in Swedish in Finland)	3
I am not confident speaking the local language	3
Service provider switching over to English	2
Foreigners need to learn the local language	2
Service provider's lack of English skills	2
Service provider's lack of local language skills	2
I have to adjust my language	1
Strong accent disturbing	1
I need an interpreter	1

Several non-native informants were hoping that at least English would be a language option in all services. It was considered an international language that should be automatically used and offered as an alternative whenever possible. The intangible nature of services enhances the need to minimize uncertainty, and language can be a major trust factor in many service contexts. Thus, especially in complicated service situations, such as in financial or legal services, the users expressed their wish to speak English or have an English text version available even though they could speak the local language in an adequate fashion for everyday service situations. None of the informants expected to have their native language offered if that was not an official language in the country. However, the emotional impact of language choice is well manifested by one informant:

> *When away of home, if I find that my culture or language is used for conversation or for information or in price tags, I feel home there instantly."* (Informant 4.3).

A few informants who categorized themselves as foreign-looking stated that they are often being served automatically in English. This also evoked contradictory reactions, some finding it understandable or positive, some experiencing it rather negatively.

> *In many places people identify me as foreigner and switch immediately language to English. In general, it is a positive experience – a service person takes into account that I might not speak Finnish.* (Informant 7.2)

> *Due to my looks people always start speaking English to me. This is a bit annoying, as if I wouldn't belong here. My Finnish is clumsy, yes, but it is actually better than my English. I wish I would be let to use Finnish and become better in speaking it.* (Informant 6.2)

The above quote of Informant 6.2 is an example of how language choice may be seen as exclusive even though this choice may be unintentional in many cases. Another example of intentional non-inclusive or even discriminative language use is provided in the following quote:

> *If you visit X [a second-hand store in Vantaa, Finland] – – , there in the counter you will find there different language notices (English, Arabic and Somali) that read if someone found stealing anything, the person will be handed over to the police! Notice is for right purpose, and English language is universal, so it is ok. But, use of Somali and Arabic languages out of so many languages. What does it mean? Do Arabic or Somali not think that it was targeted to them? Why this notice is not in Finnish there?* (Informant 4.3)

In a few cases, the informants reported how they could gain some advantages by their language choice. Choosing to speak a certain language, like Swedish in certain regions in Finland, made them feel they were being served better as opposed to having used the other local language, Finnish. (Swedish used to be the language of former upper social classes in Finland. In the end of 2016, around 5.2 % of the population used Swedish as their mother tongue. The amount is constantly decreasing.)[2]

All these examples illuminate how powerful a role the language choice can be in service situations. The interpretations made by the service user may not match with the intentions of the service providers, yet the service users are constantly interpreting meanings for the language choices and uses. Through these experiences they are constructing their identities as part of the lived realities in the service situations. Based on the presumptions and interactions of the stakeholders in service situations, existing and new cultural practices are negotiated and re-negotiated, involving power relations and political influences as underlying cultural processes (e.g. Holliday 2011, 135; Dervin 2014; Abrams, O'Connor & Giles 2003).

The informants also reported on many other types of behavior that affected the service situations culturally. The list in Table 18 demonstrates the total number of mentions.

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2 Official Statistics of Finland (OSF): Population structure [e-publication]. 2017. Helsinki: Statistics Finland. Accesed: 5.7.2018 at: http://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2017/vaerak_2017_2018-03-29_tie_001_en.html

TABLE 18 Perceived culture-related factors in service behavior affecting the service situations, number of mentions. Language issues excluded.

Personal space / assistance	18
Prejudice / discrimination	18
Equality	17
Politeness	17
Service attitude	16
Small talk	15
Efficiency	10
Information type / amount	8
Communication style	8
Stereotyping	7
Friendly gestures	5
Greeting style	5
Special treatment	5
Culture considered trustworthy	5
Eye contact	4
Use of humor	4
Being trustworthy	3
Service failures	3
Relationship building	3
Religious habits	2
Feedback behavior	1
Flirting	1

Besides the language, there is a clear "Top six" of service behavior perceived to affect service situations culturally, forming a certain pattern of reality. All code categories with 15 or more mentions will be covered in more detail below. With quite blurred boundaries between the categories, also other categories may be referred to if relevant and overlapping with the top categories. Many types of the listed behaviors have been recognized and characterized in several cross-cultural frameworks earlier, yet not specifically as part of service situations. In the following, some references are made to the existing frameworks but as the boundaries between these cross-cultural dimensions or polarities are quite fuzzy, following any rigid framework here would not correspond with the rich cultural complexity experienced by the informants in this study.

Finding balance between offering adequate personal service and not being too pushy was seen to be tricky. The issue of personal space and appropriate level of assistance was mentioned 18 times. Based on these replies, it seems evident that some individuals prefer greater distance between people and a larger physical and psychological personal space in service situations. The theme corresponds to Edward Hall's (1981) theory of proxemics, and the dimensions he called high or low territoriality. Preferences linked to this behavior seem to vary

across cultures and appear to apply to service situations, too. Cultures with tendencies on low territoriality are characterized by people's lower need for personal space while a person needing more territory prefers larger distance. Hall (1981) claims that proxemics correlates with monochronism and polychronism, where in the latter case human interaction is valued over promptness and orderly progression of activities. Even though this interview study does not aim to confirm cross-cultural research these observations seem to resonate to some extent with Hall's discoveries. The three mentions favoring more personal, interaction involving service, came from Asian or Indian informants living in Finland: *"I feel I would deserve more personally addressed services", "I expect that the sales clerk takes a role as my personal assistant*", "*I prefer to be helped*". The 10 mentions calling for more personal space, such as "*I want to be left alone*", "*too service-oriented shopkeeper causes me anxiety", "I don't expect to be noticed unless I ask for help", "wish I could get personal space*" came from Finnish or Estonian informants. However, one of them commented on the topic in three different questions so the aspect of personal space seemed to be a very important matter for this individual. The remaining mentions were neutral observations about different cultural service assistance and distance keeping practices. One informant equaled the need for personal space with preference to self-service.

The type of personal assistance can also vary depending on the focus on one or several customers at a time, reflecting again tendencies towards monochronism (concentrating on one issue or person at a time) and polychronism (taking care of several matters at the same time) (Hall 1981). This kind of behavior was associated with the categories of efficiency and politeness. Two respondents wished that the frontline employees would flexibly attend to several customers simultaneously in order to shorten the waiting time of others. Tolerance for this kind of service behavior was considered culture-related. The following Estonian informant implied herself coming from a more efficient service orientation culture.

> *I've noticed that in Finland customer service situation is really personal and people are being served one at a time. Sometimes it drives me crazy! If you have a queue of twenty people, there is no need to chat about the weather for twenty minutes just because the customer wants it. Efficiency is forgotten, I like that the customer service situations are short and quick, for me and for everyone else.* (Informant 15.2.)

The above quote illustrates the hazy boundaries between the code categories and, as a matter of fact, this reply was coded both under personal assistance and efficiency. The first recording is justified by the fact that the informant had noticed cultural differences in attending customers in different styles, the second recording by the fact the informant was clearly referring to time usage. In the efficiency category the leading logic behind the ten comments was, indeed, that the service should be offered in a way not wasting the customer's or service user's time. Besides serving several customers at the same time, respect towards the customers' valuable time could be manifested by keeping exact appointment times, acting

promptly, delivering fast, not "small talking" with customers, and informing customers about waiting time so that they can use it effectively focusing on other activities while waiting. Efficiency and time orientation has been discovered to vary across cultures in several cross-cultural models, for example by Gesteland (2002, rigid time vs. fluid time), Hall (1981, monochronism vs. polychronism), Hofstede (2010, long-term vs. short term orientation), Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997, sequential vs. synchronic time) or Solomon & Schell (2009, time orientation).

Several informants had experienced discrimination or encountered prejudices in service situations (18 mentions). The concepts of stereotype, prejudice and discrimination are interrelated but not equivalent (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, 141). Stereotyping is often seen leading to prejudice which again may lead to discrimination. Stereotyping can be positive, neutral (all Finns drink coffee) or negative (Finns drink to get drunk). As a difference to prejudice stereotypes are not as strongly connected with a hostile or resentful feeling. Discrimination is considered unfair or different treatment due to the person's belonging to a particular social or ethnic group (Chryssochoou 2004, 36). Informants reporting on prejudice also reported on feelings of being treated differently. It is only a thin line separating the actual deed and the feeling of noticing the discriminative activity. This corpus did not provide a possibility to separate these two phenomena, thus justifying the combined code category Prejudice/Discrimination. However, a fairly clear pattern in the responses helped to separate the category "Stereotyping" (7 mentions) from the "Prejudice/Discrimination" (18 mentions) category. Observations without any emotional stand-taking about typical cultural and group-specific behavior were coded under stereotyping. Incidents evoking negative or hostile feelings or servicing that was experienced unfair were always coded as discriminatory and prejudicial behavior. For example, due to the strong feeling of Informant 15.1 the following mention was categorized under discrimination, and the neutral observation of Informant 4.1 under stereotyping:

> *I do not expect that my culture is considered in other countries, but I really appreciate if it is noticed and thought of. That might be just some Asian ingredients in food or small things like that. I think the local manners and cultural characteristics play the main role in service situations, but I like if my cultural background is still considered, so no-one would do something that I find extremely weird or even rude. For example, I'm not Chinese, even though people seem to think so. I like to travel individually, but I'm not super rich. That's how Chinese are seen in some countries, and I really hate to be connected to these stereotypes.* (Informant 15.1)

> *– – this society believes that "white people" from western world are rich in terms of money, so I frequently receive requests for monetary donations – –* (Informant 4.1)

Discrimination and equality are two different sides of the same phenomenon. Informant 2.2 verbalizes this in the following quote which was coded under equality. In his previous answer he had explained about often experiencing negative attention " – – everywhere, in the bank, train station, bus stop, airport".

> *– – I think people should accept person just the way they are and not judge just by their appearance or their language. I just wanted to be treated like human being. I just want the same kind of service that anybody else get.* (Informant 2.2)

Besides general human equality, gender equality was also connected with culture. Especially female informants had experienced it while traveling or living in a different country. But men also were bothered about gender inequality. This example is from a man traveling in an Arabic country with a female colleague:

– – I felt strange, I was not used to it and it was difficult to understand why she wouldn't get the same level of service. It didn't make me angry, but I felt that it was unfair towards her. (Informant 16.1)

There were 17 mentions about politeness to be culturally relevant in service situations. There is a universal consensus that politeness is an integral part of good service. In common language, a person is described polite if showing good manners and respect toward the others. As simplified advice, it is often claimed that intercultural interaction can be successful just by being polite. Yet, this ethnocentric statement assumes that respect and good manners are defined, displayed and experienced similarly in all cultures. That is not the case, and the notion of politeness varies largely across cultures. The different aspects of politeness have been addressed e.g. by Leech's politeness principles and maxims (1983), Brown and Levinson's study of face (1987, in Scollon & al. 2012, 47–50) and Spencer-Oatey and Jiang's (2003) sociopragmatic interactional principles. Scollon and al. (2012, 47) define face being "the negotiated public image, mutually granted each other by participants in a communicative event". This definition includes shared assumptions about the other and the process of negotiation. In service situations, the identity negotiation process (Ting-Toomey & Chang 2012) is often very quick, based on visible cues or quick signals like the choice of language. The concept of face consists paradoxically of both involvement (positive face) and independence (negative face) (Scollon & al. 2012). Both sides of face need to be considered, and depending on the emphasis and communication context, the politeness strategies of involvement and independence may differ notably in different cultures. The involvement strategy includes discourse strategies such as paying attention to others, showing a strong interest in their affairs, or, for example, using first names (ibid. p. 48). Independence strategies, on the other hand, is shown by discourse strategies of making minimal assumptions about the needs of others, and silence can be seen as the most extreme sign of this strategy. These concepts have partial overlaps with other cross-cultural frameworks such as Hall's territoriality theory, and show how difficult it is to define politeness univocally. To express politeness, this complexity calls for mindfulness and flexibility in intercultural interaction. Ting-Toomey & Chang (2012, 28) characterize intercultural communication flexibility to consist of three components of "integrated knowledge, an open-minded attitude and an ability to put them into adaptive and creative practice" in everyday communication. None of the informants contemplated the various cultural

definitions of the concept or culturally-influenced ways of displaying politeness. Thus, what exactly is meant with "politeness" in these cases, depends on the informants' (cultural) interpretation.

The category "Politeness" could also be much larger had I chosen to include small talk, service attitude, greeting style and other respectful but less often mentioned behavior into this category. Yet, for clarity and accuracy I chose to code these mentions separately and not as subcategories to politeness due to their relatively high occurrences in the corpus. Only mentions including the word polite(ness) or respect(ful) were coded under "Politeness". It is clear, though, that the categories are interdependent and overlapping. For example, one informant pointed out that respect to one's culture is *"– – actually in most cases about small things: greetings; smiling and eye contact*".

Politeness was also equated with professionalism or being attentive of the other "*– – I appreciate that there is someone to assist me and to give me professional answers in a polite manner."* Several informants considered that showing some interest in the other person's culture was polite: *"– – if my culture is respected – –*", "*I like if my culture is noted – – just some basic knowledge of my country*" or "*– – wish my culture would be considered as polite, friendly, – –*". The cultural background seemed to be an important part of some informants' identity, and acknowledging this fact in a service situation related to a good service experience.

Service attitude is another code category which overlaps with the Politeness category. However, since it was specifically mentioned as a separate factor affecting service situations culturally it was coded independently. Service attitude can also be the cornerstone of the user's perception of service quality (Ku, Chen & Lu 2012). Ku et al. define service attitude as being composed of "customer's perception of the affectivity, competence and behavioral tendency of frontline employees along with a service encounter" (p. 945). The attitude calls for communication flexibility mentioned above by Ting-Toomey & Chen (2012) and was recognized by the informants as one of the factors that made people realize about cultural differences.

> *I have noticed that the service doesn't get on so personal level in Western countries, and I'm ok with that, but I do notice the difference. Although the service in other countries is polite and professional, it feels like the service doesn't ever reach the highest possible quality, because something seems to be missing from service situations. (*Informant 15.1*)*

Verbal service quality evaluations were coded under service attitude, for instance: "*– – service was really ice cold*". Direct comments on service orientation and attitude of the service provider "*Frank and helping staff – –*"are other examples of such mentions. Some informants compared the service attitude in two countries: "*Xxx customer service mentality is not as good as in Yyy*". Similarly to the category of politeness, the boundaries of service attitude category are obscure, and one could say that, for example, providing additional (type of) information, including

friendly gestures or greeting in a pleasant way should be included in service attitude. Yet, due to the amount of separate mentions, these formed clear patterns and earned their own code category.

Fifteen separate mentions about small talk led to the creation of their own code category. Mentions about small talk revealed another culturally contradicting category. Similarly to the paradoxical aspects of personal space/assistance or of politeness (face), the informants were not unanimous on an appropriate degree of small talk. One informant stated that "*– – small talk matters most in my culture*" demonstrating how important it is culturally to exchange a few softening comments before the actual service communication. Representatives of some other cultures wished quite the opposite: "*Sometimes, I wish there would be less chit chat*". Analogous observations have been made in cross-cultural frameworks. For example, Gesteland's (2002) relationship focused vs. deal focused classification of business cultures portray the same phenomenon. For representatives coming from a relationship oriented culture a service action without appropriate rapport building would be considered impolite and of low-quality. Philipsen (2003, 47) confirms that communicative details of each interaction indicate preferred ways of being a person and even a model of the ideal society which, evidently, varies across cultures.

Factors influencing service situations culturally can be countless. Therefore, the list in Table 18 only serves as an example of behavior affecting service situations culturally. Each service situation is unique, and in these face-to-face encounters or digital touchpoints each stakeholder brings in their cultural values, interpretations and emotions.

6.2.3 Contexts and types of services where culture matters

Services can be classified in numerous ways, for example by the service field, type of customer, type of service provider, degree of customer's involvement, object of service (see Grönroos 1990, 53–58, also section 2.3). Research demonstrates that culture is especially relevant in certain service contexts, for instance in traveling, hospitality, health care and financial services and to matter above all in knowledge intensive services (see section 2.2.1). The rationale for the third and fourth questions (Q3: In which kind of services should culture be taken into consideration in general? Q4: In which kind of service situations do you feel that your cultural background matters? Why?) was to see whether the informants spontaneously recognize certain service fields, types or contexts as culturally sensitive, and possibly to get indications whether there are any additional service fields or types were culture should be taken actively into consideration. The informants were also prompted to think about different stages of the service process, i.e. whether they perceived culture to matter notably while exploring service alternatives, when choosing to buy a service, or during service interactions. It was also of interest to detect whether the informants could indicate cultural relevance in different ways of serving (face-to-face, over the phone, digital) or in specific service situations, locations or different service user roles.

The informants referred to an array of service contexts or types of services where they had either experienced culture to matter or where they thought culture should be considered. Fourteen informants considered that culture should be taken into consideration "*whenever it's possible and reasonable*", "*[in] all kind of services, especially in face-to-face*", "*in all situations where human contact and personal relationships matter*" or "*– – within every service field – public services, third sector, commercial services – if the provider wants the customer to be happy*". Figure 23 illustrates the wide variety of concrete examples of service contexts mentioned in the interviews.

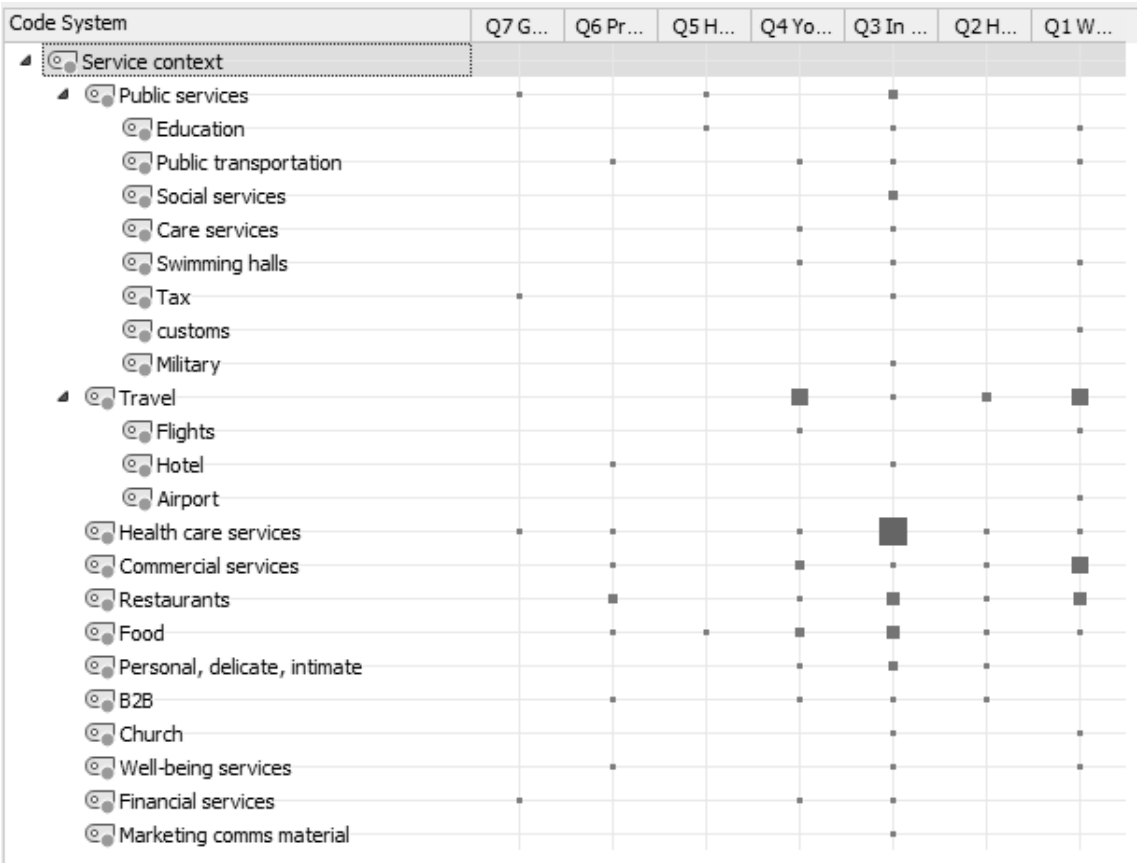

FIGURE 23 Different service contexts where the informants perceived culture to matter. The square sizes represent the number of segments coded with a particular code. The larger the symbol, the more coded segments are assigned to the code in question. The largest square indicates 10 or more mentions, the second largest 8–9 mentions, the medium square 6–7 mentions, the second smallest 4–5 mentions and the smallest 1–3 mentions.

Figure 23 also demonstrates the spread of answers in connection to different questions. The first question inquired about when culture had last mattered in service situations. According to the informants, the most relevant service contexts they had recently experienced seemed to be connected to traveling, commercial services (e.g. grocery shopping) and restaurants. The interview questions aimed to provide complementing information about the general situations and

about a single informant's preferences. Question 3 inquired about service contexts and types of services where culture should be taken into consideration *in general*. Question 4 focused on the *informant's personal needs*, asking when the informant perceived their cultural background to matter. The responses reveal an interesting discrepancy with the lived reality and expected or hoped for realities. It may again be connected to the difference between what people value in general and what they experience in practice. As cited previously, this divergence has been discovered in earlier research (e.g. the GLOBE study 2004). House & al. (2004) claim that culture is often manifested in two distinct ways – by values and by practices. These may diverge substantially from each other. As Figure 23 shows, even this quite limited interview study shows that there were some differences between the "as is" and "should be" modes especially in traveling and health care contexts. Nine informants considered that for them personally, cultural issues were relevant in services while traveling, but failed to mention that the case would be similar in general. In health care services the situation was the opposite, 15 informants considered that cultural factors should be generally taken into account while providing health care services. But when asked about their personal preferences or experiences in practice, only three informants considered it important that their cultural background should be taken into account in health care related service contexts. It is hard to give any explanation for this disparity based on the limited data of this sub-study. In other service types and contexts the differences were not notable.

Seemingly, most informants answered the interview questions seemingly in their roles as consumers. Nevertheless, there were a few who also deliberated on the questions in their professional roles in business-to-business or organization-to-organization services.

> *I think also business services should be more tailored to different cultures. On free time people choose to travel or experience new cultures (and are generally more relaxed) but when on business the service environment should be equally neutral to everyone.* (Informant 3.3)

This comment is supported by Kraak and Holmqvist's (2017) observation of a desire of culturally authentic customer experiences. When traveling for leisure, people are often actively looking for real and genuine experiences. At the same time, they may also be more attentive to cultural factors and willing to experience different kinds of service situations. They are thus also more flexible in adjusting to a local service culture.

The processual aspect of the value formation was addressed by some informants. They explained that culture already mattered while considering to buy a service. The act of choosing and comparing service providers included considerations about the service provider's cultural background, about suitability of the service to their cultural preferences, or even value-based and ethical issues connected with the service, as highlighted by the following informants:

> *At work we needed to choose between several suppliers. One of them came from an Islamic country and I knew that the contact person had several wives. As a Western woman I found the idea of being in touch with this kind of supplier quite disturbing – I admit my personal cultural dislike here – so we did not choose this supplier.* (Informant 6.3)

> *I strongly feel that my culture matters when choosing to buy a service. The level of investigation we put in to buy a service is very big because – – in most of the cases service providers in my country are not honest and you have to find out what they will be offering you at what price.* (Informant 1.1)

The fields already acknowledged to be sensitive to cultural influences, such as tourism and hospitality, were further confirmed but overall, it seems that culture can matter in any kind of service contexts and situations. Different stages of the service process were also addressed. Most interview narratives focused on face-to-face service encounters, only a few addressing digital or over-the-phone touchpoints. Therefore, it is impossible to generalize much about cultural relevance in different ways of providing service. Each encounter at a service touchpoint – be it face-to-face or technologically mediated – is unique and co-produced with the service provider and the service user. As human activities, services are thus always prone to be culturally influenced.

6.2.4 The relevance of a service provider's cultural background

This theme coincides with the other section themes since the cultural relevance in service situations is very often coupled with the cultural background of the other service stakeholders. Nevertheless, in order to find out which party may have a distinctive role during the service user's decision-making, service use or in long-term value creation this theme is also explored separately. While the previous questions asked about the service user's (often the customer) own cultural background relevance in service situations the sixth question inquired about the relevance of the service provider's cultural background. Besides in Q6, the service provider's culture was also mentioned to matter by a few informants in their recent service situations (Q1) or affecting people's service experiences (Q2) (Figure 24). Only a few informants did specifically distinguish between the provider organization or a frontline employee in direct customer contact. The occurrences in the following figure include both the service provider as an organization and as customer-facing employees representing a service organization.

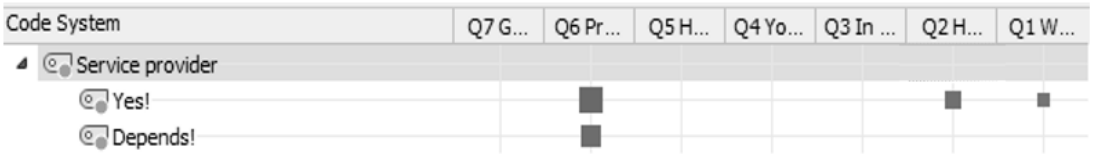

FIGURE 24 Service providers' cultural background was indicated to matter to some extent. The square sizes represent the number of segments coded with a particular code. The larger the symbol, the more coded segments are assigned to the code in question. The largest square indicates 10 or more mentions, the second largest 8–9 mentions, the medium square 6–7 mentions, the second smallest 4–5 mentions and the smallest 1–3 mentions.

Twenty-six informants stated that the background of the service provider makes a difference: "*It matters who is the service provider*", "*It does matter in some term*", "*It matters due to language issues*". It was noted, however, that a service organization can facilitate several different culture-related service experiences depending on the organizational culture but also related to the individual employees' cultural background. The main organizational influencer was the expected quality that affected the service experience. Other reasons for preferring certain cultures among service providers were assistance expectations, trust issues or anticipated politeness. Some informants had very strong anticipations towards the service attitude or quality of service provided by representatives of certain cultures:

> *I have noticed that American people know how to sell things, and it fits my cultural background. I'm here to buy something and I expect assistance, so show me what you got! We match perfectly together. European people give more space for me as a client and it feels, as they don't want my money.* (Informant 15.1)

> *This [prejudice towards a certain culture] can affect so that you will choose the service that is from a different "better reputation" culture if they are the same price.* (Informant 16.1)

> *Yes it [the service provider's culture] does [matter]. – –. I like the fact that it´s regulated business where you know what you get, the ingredients they use are gonna be fresh and stuff like that.* (Informant 11.1)

> *Cultural background of the customer facing employee is really important because first impression there can be the last impression.* [Informant 4.3]

Eighteen informants indicated conditional affirmation, the service provider's cultural relevance depending on things such as the type of service, common language, knowledge of customer's culture, quality expectations, professionalism, non-discriminative attitude, or when choosing a restaurant or if the service seems to be targeted to a certain cultural clientele.

> *It [the cultural background of the service provider] does not matter as long as the service is what the customer expects."* (Informant 5.1)

> *You must be Nepali to prepare good Nepali food, no doubt about it.* [Informant 2.1]

In this kind of provisional answers, the majority of the informants did not define their expectations or what are their criteria for good service. As discussed previously, depending on the service user's background, the very same behavior can be interpreted as good or bad, of supreme quality or annoying. This seem to be part of the relative characteristics of culture. Depending on how big the relative gap in certain behavior or value orientation between two cultures is, the more likely it is to be noticed (Meyer 2014, 18) and to be evaluated as negative or positive. One consistently negative quality assessment was discrimination experienced by several informants. Those informants preferred to choose service providers which they believed not to discriminate against diverse customers, such as coming from a similar cultural background, of same skin color, or wearing visual cultural cues identifying them with a certain cultural group. Several service users stated that they tend to choose the service provider based on cultural preferences but also for emotional reasons. People have a natural tendency to socialize with people they regard similar to them (Stephan & Stephan 2003). Thus, it is hardly surprising that in services, too, people tend to look for people with similar qualities. Sometimes the selection was done on purpose, sometimes rather unconsciously.

> *I went to a shop where there was a black girl serving. I bought things that I actually didn't want to buy because I was happy to see a black girl attending. – – I feel I needed to buy so that she could feel that she is giving a good service and her colleagues could see that.* (Informant 8.1)

> *I might unconsciously choose to buy services from those who look similar to me.* (Informant 9.1)

Several informants recognized the cultural influence of the service provider organization. In this corpus, a few informants indicated that they were working as service providers or front-desk employees themselves. As employees they were expected to comply with the organization's values and policies and not to manifest their personal cultural backgrounds. As provider representatives, they, too, confirmed that cultural backgrounds of their customers mattered at some occasions:

> *This [cultural aspect] happened to me for instance while working over the phone in Australia, with many elderly customers being very impolite and biased when hearing my foreign accent.* (Informant 5.1)

> *I am a sales-girl at XX, – – I often have my shawl around my neck and head that identifies me merely as a Muslim. Westerns are free, so they can to talk to anybody*

> *but traditional Muslim women feel comfortable to talk to me when they come for shopping seeing me.* (Informant 4.3)

While customers and other service users are becoming more diverse, service providers should consider having employees representing varied cultural perspectives. This seems not only to be a trust issue, but also a comfort issue.

The informants mainly addressed their own or the service provider's cultural factors, not deliberating on other service process stakeholders' cultural backgrounds. Only one informant working in the business-to-business context mentioned the relevance of a supplier's culture.

6.2.5 Ways of taking cultures into account

Responses to the question of how the informants wished their culture would be taken into consideration (question 5) correlated strongly with the factors that they claimed to influence service situations. The top seven factors mentioned in section 6.2.2 were language, personal space/assistance, prejudice/discrimination, equality, politeness, service attitude, small talk and efficiency. These factors were repeatedly mentioned in addressing ways of taking culture into account.

Ten informants said that it was not necessary or it would be very difficult to take their culture into account in any way. Five informants gave an unclear answer:

> *My culture doesn't need to be taken into consideration. People serving don't know your cultural background.* (Informant 13.3)

> *I think I have never thought about that. It would be easier to answer if you were in a very different culture.* (Informant 7.1)

The obvious statement of informant 7.1 that their culture became relevant only when they were away from home, traveling in a different cultural environment was confirmed by five other informants. Seven informants wished for equal service treatment and proposed that culture would not be considered at all. This is also a way of taking cultures into account. Based on the negative and often discriminatory experiences of some informants it is evident that many informants were expressing a wish that their cultural background would and should not be regarded at all.

> *In best case not in any way. – – Not at least it [culture] should be highlighted too much. .* (Informant 10.3)

> *People will automatically search for the services they need. In my opinion, I would like to be treated exactly the same that people from that nationality are treated.* (Informant 7.3)

Several informants wished that people would avoid stereotyping them in service situations based on their cultural background. One positive way of taking the

cultural background of the service user into account was showing respect not only for the service user themselves but also for their culture. This could be displayed for example by knowing some facts about the service user's culture or using their language.

> *I wish my culture would be considered to be international, innovative, polite and equal. It is important to me because people might have assumptions of you based on the culture you are from.* (Informant 12.1)

> *It's always nice if people show interest in your culture, and it's super nice if foreign people know how to greet in Vietnamese!* (Informant 15.1)

Ways of taking the service user's cultural background into consideration also correlated with how the users described good service is like in their cultures. This will be discussed in the following section.

6.2.6 What is good service?

Question 7 inquired about what good service was considered to be in the informant's culture. Service providers can be ethnocentric (Stephan & Stephan 2003) and overlook the fact that good service may not be defined similarly in various cultures. Acknowledging cultural differences in this respect is also meaningful considering the new service research paradigm (see section 2.4). While a service provider's role is shifting from a mere seller towards a facilitator of good service experiences (Grönroos & Voima 2013) it is critical for all service designers to know how the meaning and concept of good service may vary in cultures and across service user groups.

Figure 25 lists characteristics of good service mentioned in responses to the seventh question and in a few random mentions in connection with other questions. This illustration is only indicative of the spread of the aspects of good service in various cultures and cannot be generalized due to the fairly small number of informants and an imbalanced national/cultural coverage. It is also important to bear in mind that the description of good service might vary substantially depending on the type of service, service field or situation.

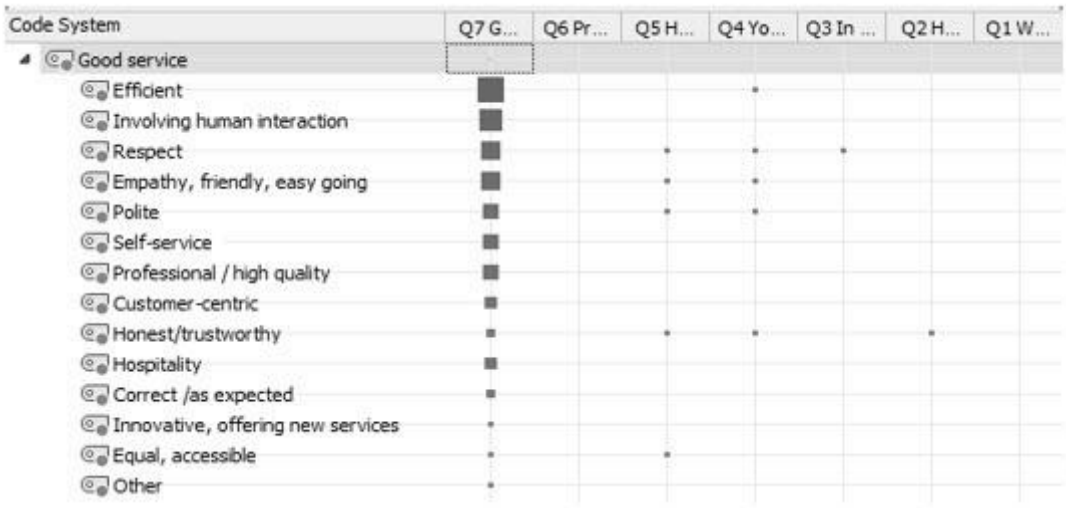

FIGURE 25 Descriptions for good service. The square sizes represent the number of segments coded with a particular code. The larger the symbol, the more coded segments are assigned to the code in question. The largest square indicates 10 or more mentions, the second largest 8–9 mentions, the medium square 6–7 mentions, the second smallest 4–5 mentions and the smallest 1–3 mentions.

The listing corresponds greatly with the factors that make culture matter in service situations (section 6.2.2). Some informants also outlined good service in connection with other questions (smaller dots in the matrix) and all mentions are taken into consideration here. Since the interviews were physically conducted mainly in Finland and with a substantive number of Finnish informants, this listing is only indicative. It suggests that efficiency is valued in many service situations especially in Finland. Efficiency was mentioned by 21 informants (19 in Q7 and 2 in Q4). A relatively small number of informants and a very unbalanced and thin representation of some cultures did not permit a cross-tabulation and further generalization of the results.

Despite these deficiencies, the list of characteristics suggests that good service can be defined quite differently. Good service is also very contextual. Some characteristics apply only to certain situations, e.g. clean (mention in the category "other") or innovative. The three mentions of equality and accessibility were noted to apply to good public services. In some countries, public services were claimed to be below standards and the services delivered to customers as doing them a "big favor", instead of providing them a legally entitled standard service.

The majority of the characteristics seem to be rather universal descriptions of what a good service is like. These depictions also seem very similar to what is considered good human interaction (respectful, friendly, polite, and honest). Some of the definitions may seem overlapping, but for example, respectful and polite were kept as two different categories since the informants used these terms in clear patterns. The term "respect" was used as a meaning of deference towards humanity or dignity of the service user or their culture while politeness seemed to be referring to concrete practices or utterances of showing appreciation.

The following aspects got the most mentions (11–21 mentions each): efficient (available when needed, not wasting the customer's time), involving human interaction (small talk, possibility to ask for instructions and adjust some details, flexibility in give and take), respectful (respect towards the service user and their culture, taking into consideration needs of special groups such as elderly people), empathetic, friendly, easygoing (not too pushy, not too overwhelming, smiling), polite (using polite language, looking into eyes), professional or of high quality (as agreed on terms of value, meeting expectations). Self-service got split mentions both in negative and positive sense:

> *If you are alone with the computer that can give you whatever you want, but you are not satisfied because you cannot talk with the computer. So, definitely self-service should not be the main service. It is out of the question.* (Informant 8.1)

> *Self-service is good service. It is understandable that the world is changing and when there are lines the self-service is quicker.* (Informant 8.3)

However, culturally seen self-service was considered as to be a threat especially in complicated services. For example, public services are often large service entities involving many decision points. Even for a user from the same cultural background alternatives to be chosen or links to be clicked may require implicit knowledge of the choice consequences, and such touchpoints can be very prone to cultural misunderstandings. Complicated self-service entities especially in services related to personal wellbeing, welfare or health were hoped to include personal assistance alternatives.

The following aspects were mentioned 5–9 times: Customer-centric (trying to understand, really helping customer to solve the problem), honest/trustworthy (good relationship, not exaggerating, based on facts), hospitality (personal care, be treated as special), and correct (keep promises, compensating for lacks). All these concepts can be seen to be applicable in every culture but their more specific content leaves space for cultural interpretation.

The culturally relevant interactive process aspect of service was addressed by several informants. This included trust building that was considered to vary substantially in various cultures. In countries with heterogenic population groups and hierarchies [compare with Hofstede's (2010) power distance or Gesteland's (2002) relationship focused business cultures] it was considered that it is very important to start establishing a trustworthy relationship before a service is delivered. A few informants deliberated on the culture-related differences in various parts of the world. Friendliness and relationship building were seen as an integral part of good service in Latin America and Africa, whereas the words hospitability and respect came to the foreground especially by the few Asian informants. Northern European informants tended to stress efficiency and accuracy of services. Despite geographical variations, some mentioned factors may be more related to living standards or political and societal conditions of the regions. Due to lower living standards in some countries, customers can be

treated with special care. For example, availability of a low-paid workforce enables special attention to service users' needs or more emphasis on face-to-face service, in turn leading to a particularly hospitable service attitude but also by additional, even exclusive features which might be standard service elements in some other cultures:

> *Giving additional bonuses is not always a sign of good service it can be also something that is used to fill in the quality gaps in the actual service process.* (Informant 16.1)

Informant 17.2 presented clearly how the political history of a certain culture impacts service expectations, claiming that in the former Soviet Union the customer was never right. It is still influencing the service culture in her native country:

> *If nobody is yelling to you and the salesperson is acting professionally, then I can say that the service in XXX* [3] *was good. It´s totally normal that the salespersons are yelling to you and treating you disrespectfully. (*Informant 17.2)

Overall, good service seems to include many if not all of the listed characteristics and can be considered relatively universal. If it is not possible to offer superb service, the list can be considered as a guidance to what kind of elements to pay attention to from a cultural perspective. Additional emic research would, however, be needed to know more about the order of preference in certain cultures and types of services. All the same, good service includes sensitivity towards cultures, ability to foresee and read needs and wishes of diverse service users, skills to build on these aspects in the service process and a willingness to apply them in practice. This embraces co-creation of services, an ongoing conversation with the users and acting upon feedback.

6.3 Limitations of the structured service user interviews

The objective of this sub-study was to explore the service users' perception about culture's role in various service situations. Using multiple interviewers offered access to a culturally heterogenic group of randomly chosen interviewees but also added layers of complexity because each interviewer presents oneself, gains trust and establishes rapport with the participants differently (Matteson 2009, 660). Despite thorough preparation, not every contingency could be avoided and this may affect the approach's reliability.

If needing to choose between reliability and validity Guest and al. (2012, 82) claim that "validity is by far the more important". I consider the multiple interview approach valid as it achieved shedding light on culture's role in service sit-

[3] In order not to reinforce possibly unjustified stereotypes in some negative mentions the specific country or national culture is not disclosed.

uations in general, as intended. The informants of this explorative study represented an increasingly multicultural society with heterogenic service users. In line with the social constructionist tradition, the sub-study gives voice to various informants in their roles as service users about their perceptions of culture's importance in service situations. It enables them to share their perceptions and meanings which have been co-constructed in interaction with diverse interviewers. The informants generated these insights in interaction with the multiple interviewers. This means a double interpretative process where the interviewers have made their own interpretations during the notetaking and inductive prompting, the second stage of interpretations following during the data analysis. As commonplace in thematic analyses, this may be a concern of reliability. Yet, as Guest et al. (2012, 11) point out, thematic analysis is still "the most useful [method] in capturing the complexities of meaning" in textual data sets and is also "the most commonly used method of analysis in qualitative research".

It was anticipated that an interview situation between representatives of two different cultures would create a cross-cultural (comparative) setting. Pietilä (2014, 415–416) warns that, in this kind of a situation, the interviewees start inevitably to act as representative and voice to their own culture and that the informants start comparing their own culture to the local culture in context or that one of the interviewer. Pietilä also alerts readers that in comparing themselves to others the informants may start embellishing their own cultural features. Even though the interviewers were carefully guided with the structured interviews and to specifically avoid emphasizing culture, Pietilä's forecast came true to some extent. Many informants could not avoid comparing their own cultural backgrounds to the cultural features apparent to them in the surrounding environment – the cultural context for the interviews was a local culture most often in Finland – or to the perceived cultural background of the interviewer. This was not the actual purpose of the interviews and may possibly be seen as affecting the findings of the sub-study. However, as many scholars point out, certain comparative and relative characteristics are built in the notion of culture (Scollon & al. 2012) and are an essential part of etic cultural knowledge, which, in turn, "can be used to discover and compare emic differences and similarities across cultures" (Hall 2002, 67). Thus, the cross-cultural aspects can also be seen to add insights and ease the interpretation of the informants' service narratives.

The word-based categorization of the interview findings and coding can be criticized as being too straightforward. However, doing an interpretative conceptual analysis on each theme category and code would have demanded a different research approach and was therefore not possible within the framework of this sub-study.

The languages used in the interviews were mainly English but also Finnish in a few cases. The fluency of the informants or interviewers in these languages was not always perfect, leading to some ambiguous or imprecise wordings. These quotes were interpreted based on the predominant discourse on services and my previous knowledge of the topic area but are, evidently, affected by my own cultural background. However, I consider this fact and the case that one interviewer misunderstood one question as a rather minor drawback.

This corpus included several Finns (14) living in the country they grew up in. Especially for those people it might be difficult to recognize the link to one's own cultural identity and culture's role in services, as also stated by one informant:

> *I think when you live in your own culture, you don't really think about if your culture is been considered because it is so self-evident and I don't have to think about this day-day basis. It would probably be eye-opening to live in another culture for a while to see what kind issues would really matter.* (Informant 2.3)

For informants living in their own cultural environment the most interesting remarks came from the time they had been exposed to different cultures during traveling, working abroad or in multicultural contexts. The informants not living in their native countries were able to provide a different kind of understanding of culture's meaning in service. These people represent the contemporary increasingly multicultural society and indicate that cultural factors, indeed, may have an influence on the way service is provided and experienced.

Due to the formulation of questions and selection of informants the multiple interviewer study can only shed light on the realities perceived by single respondents. It cannot explain how culture operates as a social entity in service situations in general. The answers were clearly more focused on service encounters, i.e. on interactions with frontline employees and on other physical touchpoints. The preceding stages of service processes were therefore mostly overlooked. Due to a random selection, the informants talked about service situations mostly in their roles as consumers. Furthermore, the business-to-business service aspects were less considered. Thus, the results cannot be generalized to apply to any certain service types or contexts. Additional research would be needed to get a wider or more in-depth perspective. For example, a research on the whole development process, or a more focused study on a specific field, on certain stages or on special aspects of the service situation such as the technological touchpoints are likely to yield deeper insights about culture's role in certain contexts.

The interview questions of this explorative study provided relevant answers to the sub-study research questions. In hindsight, questions concerning service failures and bad service experiences related to culture might have provided an additional dimension and understanding about culture's role in service situations. The few open comments did not provide any additional insights to the research questions.

6.4 Summary of the structured service user interviews

This study veers away from the cross-cultural research common in service business and aims to shed light on service users' lived culture-related experiences. The practical purpose of the analysis is to increase understanding on whether the indicated cultural aspects are relevant (enough) to be taken into consideration

during a service design process. Overall, Sub-study 3 demonstrated that cultural factors are often perceived important for service experiences, but the relevance varies depending on the context and the stakeholders' backgrounds. Despite the limited sample size, the results of this sub-study suggest that service users especially from foreign or different cultural backgrounds perceive that cultural factors should be taken into consideration in most service situations. This is hardly surprising: wherever there is human activity taking place it is likely that there are also cultural meanings being reproduced and co-constructed (Philipsen 2003; Dahl 2014) and cultural identities co-created through interaction (Martin & Nakayama 1997, in: Abrams & al. 2003, 210).

The interviewees' answers paint a picture of multicultural service environments where cultural factors are continuously present. A clear majority of the informants perceived cultural factors also to play a role in many different local service situations. However, an interesting contradiction emerged from the analysis. While many considered culture-free services as an ideal for equality and humane reasons, some informants claimed just the opposite. For example, some informants stated they were positively surprised if their cultural background had been paid attention to (e.g. using their language, knowing something about their country or other cultural features). But differing opinions were also voiced. That raises up an important question: what is the right way and appropriate degree of considering large cultural factors (such as nationality, ethnicity or language related issues) during the design process and at service consumption? Furthermore, some contradicting opinions among the informants show that one service concept or one way of interacting may not fit all service users' preferences. Thus, a "one size fits all" approach is seldom a suitable strategy in services.

Many behavioral variables and sociocultural value-orientations have been found in several earlier cross-cultural frameworks (e.g. Gannon 1997, Hall 1981, Hofstede 1980, Kluckhohn & 1961, Meyer 2014, Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1997, Schwartz 1990). However, Piller (2007; 2011) and Sun (2015) claim that macro-level cultural insights cannot be operationalized and used for gaining micro-level cultural knowledge. Service design is mainly about increasing understanding about service users in their authentic local cultural contexts and, therefore, a social science based, cross-cultural approach easily leads to stereotyping and is seldom suitable as a single approach. Thus, a dynamic social constructionist understanding of local contexts is a better suited approach and coincides with the modern understanding of value co-creation in service marketing research (Grönroos & Voima 2013; Vargo & Lusch 2008).

A sensitivity for multiple cultures perspectives (Gannon 2008, 33) and the ability to switch between "cultural codes" become much needed competences for service designers. Globalization and increasing co-existence of several societal cultures calls for a deeper awareness and knowledge of (inter)cultural communication, practices, values and meaning building processes. Intercultural interaction is an integral component of service in encounters or digital touchpoints.

Based on the interview conversations it seems that it is often the culture of the service provider that defines the service situation. The service users are expected to choose the most suitable provider for their liking. This becomes tricky

in services where there is restricted availability of alternatives, e.g. in public services. No matter what the sector, the new service marketing research paradigm (e.g. Grönroos & Voima 2013) suggests a transformation of a service provider's role towards that of a facilitator of good service experiences.

Large cultures, and especially national cultures as imagined entities are often not relevant (Piller 2011). The challenge lies in recognizing when and how various cultural aspects should be taken into consideration. It is always important for a service provider to understand the cultural aspects in the operating environment. It is similarly vital to acknowledge that service users' expectations and service experiences may be shaped by their cultural backgrounds and other societal factors. As this sub-study showcases, informants reported on different identity affiliations, not just nation-based cultural identities. Moreover, each service situation is contextual and unique. While it is very challenging to consider all variables affecting service preferences and experiences the findings of this sub-study highlight a further need to consider cultures in service design.

Building on the insights of the sub-study and previous knowledge in service research and cultural studies some guidelines can still be given. Figure 26 illustrates service aspects which may be culturally most relevant in services. Each scale positions service aspects that typically matter but may vary culturally. Each service offering can be located at either end of the polarities or somewhere along the continuum.

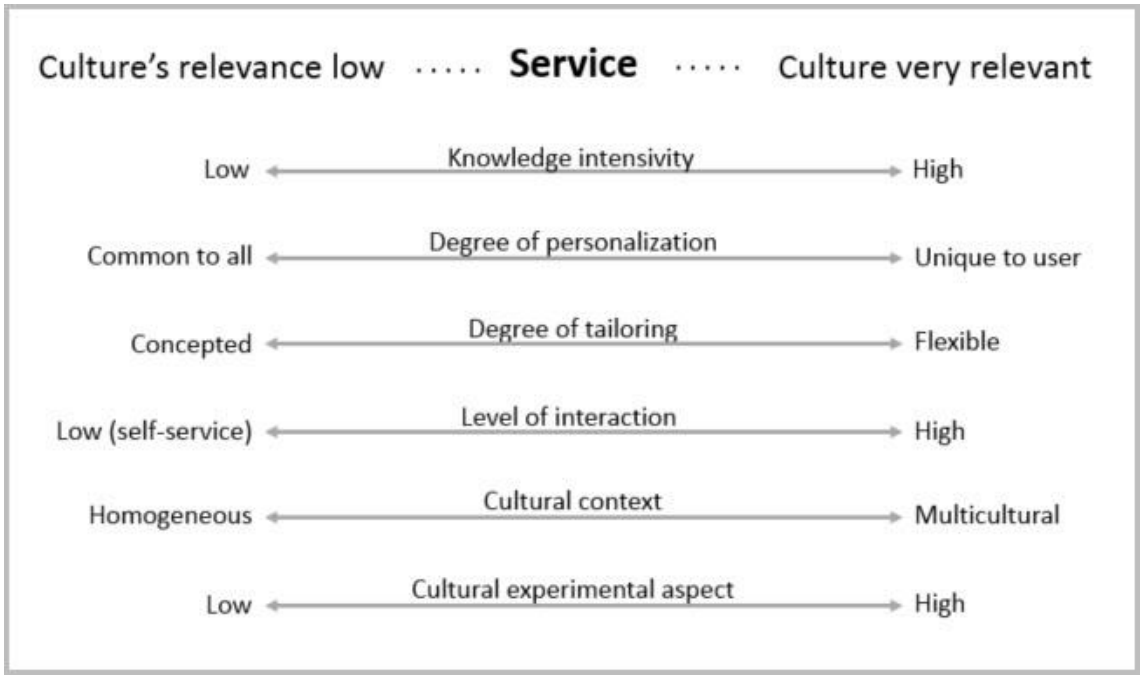

FIGURE 26 The service aspect polarities indicate when and in which kind of service situations culture may be relevant.

The more knowledge intensive and the more interaction involving the service is the more should the service be designed to cater for the service user's needs, including culturally learned preferences. Examples of knowledge intensive services emerging in the interview study were insurance consulting or health care services.

The degree of service personalization is typically high in knowledge intensive services but may also affect services involving creativity or care. The possibility for personalization is typical for specialized services or for so called "bottom-up" or "top-down" services where service users' needs vary a lot or the service is very complicated (Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2008, 63, 159). High personalization affects the service expectations (Zeithaml & al. 2009) and often involves a high degree of interaction. The more unique the service is, the more contextual variables are to be considered. Good service is often about being able to read the service user's preferences which may draw on the service user's own domain outside the interactive service encounter (Heinonen & al. 2010; Grönroos & Voima 2013). Examples of high personalization needs in this sub-study were some social or financial services.

Similarly, the degree of tailoring possibilities may add to cultural relevance. Tightly concepted, standard services, such as telecommunication service packages, will benefit from thorough service user research at the beginning of the design process as standards also deviate globally. But these kinds of services do not allow much of cultural adjustments at the time of service delivery. Frequently, the larger the need and possibility to tailor the service offering for the service user's liking, the more cultural sensitivity is demanded at the stage of service delivery. What is considered a good service in one country may not compare with preferences in another cultural environment.

At their high ends, all the previous service aspects include higher levels of interactions and thus overlaps with the interaction scale of the Figure 26. However, as an important service activity and value co-creation aspect, the level of interaction deserves its own scale of polarities. Human communication is known to vary by the interactants' cultural backgrounds (Ting-Toomey & Chung 2012). The level of interaction was also raised by several informants in this study, and the preferences were quite split (see section 6.2.2). At the low end of this scale are services which do not require a lot of human interaction, such as serial or parallel services (Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2008) which commonly include at least partial self-service. Preferences for self-service can be typical to some cultural environments, as indicated by some informants. While designing for self-service, cultural factors should be anticipated during the development stage of digital interfaces (see e.g. Rau, Okicger & Choong 2013) and other touchpoints but may not be as critical at the stage of service consumption (value-in-exchange).

The scale of cultural context relates strongly to the diversity of the operating environment. The more diverse cultural representations are involved in the service, the more cultural aspects should be considered, and the more intercultural interaction is likely to happen. Therefore, the degree of cultural exposure makes cultures in some services highly relevant, often demanding a lot of intercultural communication competences.

The last scale is the degree of cultural experiential aspect. This includes all kind of services where the main content or ingredient is the opportunity to experience different features related to cultures and where service users have willingly exposed themselves to new cultural environments or situations. For example, touristic and hospitality services, ethnic food and high culture events were mentioned as examples of this kind of services. Unlike in many other service situations, cultural issues or characteristics were usually not considered a disturbance, obstacle or challenge in these cases. On the contrary, cultural experiences were desired and positively expected.

Figure 26 does not articulate how and whose culture should be taken into consideration. It includes only factors that are composed of split preferences that became evident in the data analysis. Service characteristics such as efficiency, politeness, respect or hospitality are not included in these scales of polarities since these aspects can be considered universally agreed upon features of good service. These characteristics can obviously contain culturally different meanings and interpretations as discussed above, but nonetheless, inefficiency, impoliteness or disrespect can hardly be considered as service preferences anywhere in the world.

7 DISCUSSING TENSIONS BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS AND ACTIONS IN TERMS OF CULTURE

Global economies are increasingly service-based. At the same time, understanding service users' value creation has become a competitive advantage for service provider organizations (Edvardsson, Gustafsson, Johnson & Sandén 2002; Vargo & Lusch 2004; Grönroos & Voima 2013), and new approaches are needed to support the value creation of increasingly diverse service stakeholders. Service design as a form of innovating and developing services can be seen as an evolution of economic and societal transformation, replacing product development characteristic to goods-dominant environments. Service design draws on human-centricity and collaborative ways of working, involving service users in co-design, co-production and co-creation processes. These activities are based essentially on human interaction with various stakeholders. This calls for further examination of the cultural characteristics associated with the creative communities (Manzini 2009, 50) and the increasingly diverse service users.

Human activities are often culturally-bound. Service design, too, can be seen as a cultural product – incorporating culturally prioritized standpoints in constructing new service-related realities and carrying cultural meanings (Kamppuri 2011; Dennington 2017). Thus, more comprehension is needed about the cultural premises in terms of framing design activities, decision making, involving stakeholders and in interactions between the stakeholders. Service design as a mindset enables real human-centricity. Deeper understanding of the service users, their needs and dreams, is the essence of design (Sanders & Stappers 2014), hence, a service design approach allows service users to have the power to influence a service (Miettinen 2012, 7). At the same time, the service user focus is combinable with the service provider's economic and sustainability goals (Foglieni & al. 2018).

Services are complex, systemic and relational; service design as an inquiring and creative activity is also very complex (Wetter-Edman 2014; Miettinen & Sarantou 2019). Tackling challenges involving culture during service design, including a myriad of interactions is, therefore, not easy. Adding cultural aspects

into the discussion multiplies the complication since "anything cultural is deeply complex and hard to pin down" (Holliday 2011, 123).

This study explored how culture is approached in service design. A key objective of the study was to find out whether large cultures such as nationality, regionality or ethnicity are perceived to matter in SD and how they are potentially approached. A noteworthy observation based on the service designers' interviews and their professional literature was that large cultures seem to be addressed relatively little during service design. A clear tension could be observed between what is said about culture's relevance and what is done to address it in service design. Sub-study specific research insights have already been discussed in the summaries of each study (sections 4.4, 5.6, 6.4). Below, I will wrap up the research observations in terms of the five research sub questions (see section 1.2).

7.1 Speaking about culture

The first research sub-question pondered *how service designers speak about culture*. Finding answers for this question was the main objective of conducting the service designers' semi-structured interviews in Sub-study 1. Additional insights were expected to be gained from reviewing professional service design literature in Sub-study 2.

All interviewed service designers considered the role of large cultures relevant but challenging to address. They said that they fairly seldom take cultural factors into account in their projects. A certain level of caution could be sensed in the semi-structured interviews. Service designers seemingly lacked knowledge to conceptualize and operationalize culture. This is in line with the observations of Sun (2015, 65) where she found out, among other things, that interaction designers often ignore broader social and cultural contexts while collecting data of users' immediate life situations. Large cultures were only rarely addressed in service design literature (Sub-study 2) while most semi-structured interview respondents claimed to recognize their important role in shaping people's expectations about a service. The discrepancy may stem from the different methodological approaches where the interviews addressed the question specifically and provided a better opportunity for the respondents to pay special attention to culture in human interaction. The interview respondents also pinpointed that cultural factors were challenging to approach since singling out one "culture" among other sociocultural factors was perceived to be difficult, again suggesting the challenge of operationalizing culture.

In all sub-studies, large cultures were mostly spoken about as equating to national cultures. In a few cases continental or ethnic cultures, and slightly more frequently regional cultures were also mentioned to be relevant in the designers work processes. Even though nation-states as units of analysis for research are generally considered outdated (Getto & Sun 2017, 89; Piller 2011), the interviewed service designers did not verbalize this critical view. On the contrary, large (national) cultures seemed to be taken as granted, as static understandings

of believed national traits, such as Germans being punctual, Japanese being hospitable etc., and seeing these characteristics as confining features to apply to most individuals in a large group. Large cultures were predominantly seen as something most people within a nation have, culture was not seen as an action or as meanings constructed jointly (cf. Dahl 2014). In this sense, service designers' approach can be characterized as a (neo)essentialist understanding of culture where large cultures are equated to nation-states (see section 2.5.2). Piller (2011, 60, citing Billig 1995) claims that this kind of stereotypical and "banal nationalism" often goes unnoticed and is enacted and re-enacted daily in many ways. Very few service designers had used any conceptual definitions to approach the phenomenon of culture. The unawareness of different approaches to culture seems to be leading to a lacking operationalizing culture which again may lead to essentializing culture(s). Besides acknowledging the challenge in approaching cultures, the tone of voice in speaking about cultures was mostly neutral.

Different stakeholders and their cultural backgrounds were not equally discussed. Cultures were recognized to be relevant predominantly in relation to the service users. In the literature, only service users' cultural contexts were addressed. Even in those cases, it was mentioned only in connection to the early user research stage. Later phases of the design process or the value creation process (value accumulating before, during or after the service use, Grönroos & Voima 2013) were not discussed in the corpus. Cultural diversities of local service users were seldom discussed. Despite an increasing mix of national, ethnic and regional cultures in local populations very little attention seemed to be given to domestic or local service user diversity whereas especially in Sub-study 3 interviews it became evident that more attention on cultural issues and inclusion would be welcomed. Several service users reported encountering negative service experiences such as confusion, exclusion or discrimination due to cultural factors.

The cultural background or context of a service provider (frontline or back office) was further discussed in Sub-study 3. In those structured interviews, a few service users connected the provider culture with national branding and associated service quality with assumed (often stereotypical) national qualities. Service designers considered providers' large culture in relation to organizational culture, and often equaled the management practices and ways of working with the nationality of the company ownership.

While the role of cultural backgrounds of other stakeholders has been recognized in service business research (e.g. Gnanlet & Yayla-Kullu 2014, Yayla-Kullu & al. 2015), service designers participating in this study did not discuss this role in much detail. In Sub-study 1 interviews, multicultural teams were recognized influencing the work processes in design teams both in positive and negative ways (adding perspectives, slowing processes). Yet, the role of culture in co-design groups' internal interactions was typically not considered relevant. As one Sub-study 1 interviewee stated: "I personally don't think that the culture of the service designers makes a big impact on the type of the work they do. The way of working might differ." This comment highlights the impression that

many interviewed service designers saw themselves as culturally intact and objective professionals where their own, their teams' or other stakeholders' cultural practices and values do not matter. Another interesting remark was that some interviewees considered that cultural aspects were adequately taken into consideration by the fact that many service design teams are international. The international nature of the professional domain, a global mindset, global knowledge sharing networks and internationally shared practices and methods may cause the designers to overlook the subtle yet often forceful cultural beliefs, attitudes or values shared by their own cultural groups or local design contexts.

The role of organizational culture in service design was highlighted both in the interviews (Sub-study 1) and the literature review (Sub-study 2). In the professional books and journal articles, the key words in context yielded a substantial amount of hits on organizational culture. Especially in journal articles, organizational cultural factors were discussed more often than large cultures (41,9 % vs. 16.6 %; see Table 14). The relationship of organizational cultures to national or regional cultures was little discussed.

As part of human interaction, services also actively construct culture, such as new kinds of cultural practices or institutions. With the maturation of the field the social constructionist perspectives need to be paid more attention to among scholars and practitioners. Dennington (2017, 610) has also noted this lack and calls for research exploring "how the service designer acts as a cultural intermediary through the translation of socio-cultural trends into meaning, and how service design acts as a cultural intermediary through the translation of meaning into the service concept and service details".

7.2 Taking cultural factors into consideration

The second research sub-question inquired about how service designers speak about taking cultural factors into consideration during the design process. This research question was aimed to be answered in service designers' semi-structured interviews in Sub-study 1. Further insights were expected from the literature review in Sub-study 2.

In this study, along with many other studies (e.g. Holmqvist & Grönroos 2012), language became the most important factor to consider in services in terms of large cultures. Local language proficiency was found to be a key factor in understanding local service users' needs. This became evident in the interviews only (Sub-study 1 and Sub-study 3); the literature did not discuss language issues at all. This was somewhat surprising, especially considering the importance which the service users (Sub-study 3) attached to languages. Assumedly, language was considered a technical challenge to be easily solved by translation or offering a selection of language alternatives. Service users (Sub-study 3), on the contrary, indicated much more multifaceted views about language and culture related issues in services. The choice of language was considered to be both a service quality and an identity negotiation issue. English as a second language

option was preferred especially in complicated and sensitive service situations. Besides language, understanding culturally constructed meanings was found to be very important. These aspects were, nevertheless, not elaborated on in the corpus. It is likely that language related issues were not considered to be part of service designers' core competences, and to overcome cultural barriers also involving linguistic elements, local experts, interpreters, and professional experts such as anthropologists were reported to be utilized.

Cultural factors seemed mainly to be taken into consideration in the contexts of international projects or in specific service fields, such as hospitality and tourism. In other fronts, cultures were considered much more randomly. A couple of service design projects were mentioned (Sub-studies 1 and 2) to be aimed at diverse service users groups, but in general, service designers did not report paying attention to cultural diversities locally. The service users interviewed in Sub-study 3 provided a more varied perspective. Besides finding consideration of cultural factors important in travel, tourism and hospitality services, health care services were mentioned as the most frequent service situations where users perceived cultural factors to matter. Also many other types of service contexts were mentioned to be culturally relevant, thus implying that the cultural background of any service stakeholder may matter in many kinds of services. Thus, it would be important to consider possible factors proactively and help develop cultural sensitivity for service designers and providers.

Cultural sensitivity was mentioned to be a desirable competence for service designers but the concept was not elaborated on further. It relates to the topic about intercultural communication competence which is one of the most traditional discourses in intercultural studies. However, the inconsistencies in terminology (such as cultural sensitivity, cultural intelligence, intercultural / cross-cultural communication competence) makes the discussion of the concept difficult (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, 51). Spitzberg & Chagnon (2009) present an overall conceptualization of intercultural competence by analyzing and comparing a myriad of different competence frameworks. They conclude by stating that "the more a model incorporates specific conceptualizations of interactants' motivation, knowledge, skills, context, and outcomes in the context of an ongoing relationship overt time, the more advanced the model" (p. 44). This kind of scrutiny on service designers' claimed cultural sensitivity is yet to be conducted.

The methodological approaches to consider culture in service design were related to the early research stage, as mentioned above. Standard service design tools and methods (such as interviews, ethnography, research-based personas as user archetypes or customer journey mapping) were believed to be applicable for gaining cultural insights. However, very few of the interviewed service designers described their research processes. The professional literature elaborated even less on actual projects with cultural aspects from a methodological perspective. This may be due to a lack of knowledge on how to approach or operationalize culture for a specific research purpose. It may also be that an essentialist conceptualization of culture may hinder practical approaches. Service designers may intrinsically understand that an essentializing, static concept of culture is too rigid to be applied, and therefore avoid the whole topic. Concrete methods or

ways of operationalizing culture were mentioned much less often than expected. Nevertheless, a few particular methods for gaining cultural understanding or overcoming language barriers were mentioned, such as various visual tools like emotion cards. One service designer described his approach in using in-depth interviews for gaining deeper cultural understanding. The challenges with interviews included a lack of language fluency from either party, and therefore, a compromised ability to express meanings instead of just translating words and sentences from one language to another.

7.3 Discussing culture in the professional literature

The third question pondered how culture is addressed in the professional service design literature. Sub-study 2 encompassed a wide review of professional service design literature, searching for culture-related discourses within 21 issues of the professional journal of service design, the Touchpoint, and six selected professional books aimed at service designers. As this research question was the focus of one case only and it has already been thoroughly answered and the results analyzed at the end of Chapter 5, I will wrap up the discoveries briefly below.

The focus in the professional literature was predominantly addressing methodological and management perspectives in SD. Notably, small organizational cultures were more in focus than large cultures. Topics discussing organizational cultures were significantly more elaborated than topics related to large culture(s). These were discussed in the professional service design literature only in cursory ways. A lack of deeper and richer pictures of local service practices, culturally distinct service user needs and dreams or working in multicultural design teams or for international clients (service providers) was confounding. This is noteworthy in the sense that all human activities, including services, are embedded in and unfolding within situation-specific cultural contexts (cf. Blomberg & Darrah 2015, 8). The discrepancy between what service designers claim about large culture's relevance (Sub-study 1) and how service users perceive its role (Sub-study 3), and the low presence of cultural topics in the professional literature implies a tension between thinking and action in service design. This tension may originate from a lack of deeper knowledge of cultural processes, practices embedded in the local cultural environments, or uncertainty about how to conceptualize and to operationalize these phenomena (cf. Sun 2015). The fuzziness of the construct of large cultures seems to provide added challenges to grasp its meanings and importance during service design activities. Moreover, as indicated by service designers in Sub-study 1, singling out large culture related factors from other sub- and sociocultural factors was found to be difficult. This may also be reflected in the topic's low prominence in professional literature. Thus, by at least unconsciously being aware of the complexity of cultural issues, the intertwining of emic and etic cultural aspects, the local and global cultural dimensions, service designers addressed the topic with caution and only in a perfunctory manner in the professional literature.

7.4 Service users characterizing the role of culture

The fourth sub-question sought to find out about service users' perceptions of large cultures' role in service situations: how they perceive culture to matter, if at all. The aim was to identify whether and how cultural factors and behavior may matter in service situations in general, thus not focusing on any certain types of services, service fields or contexts. This inquiry was the objective of the structured interviews conducted in Sub-study 3. Possible additional insights were looked for in the Sub-study 2 literature review, yet service users and their actual experiences were rarely discussed in the SD professional literature. Service users' roles were discussed as participating stakeholders but even more often as observable targets of design activities. The emphasis in professional service design literature was seemingly process and management oriented, and the existence of service users as whole, sensing and cultural human beings was not much under scrutiny.

Service users indicated that they perceived cultural factors often to be part of their service experiences (Figure 21, section 6.2.1). Forty-six out of 50 informants were able to recall a service situation where cultural factors had had some relevance. In nearly half of the cases the culture related experiences had been negative (46%). The rest of the incidents were reported being emotionally neutral (24%), positive (13%) or surprising/confusing (11%). Only 7% of the informants claimed that culture is not relevant or does not matter during service situations. This is in contrast to the knowledge gained from the professional literature and service designers who were able to give only a few concrete examples of cultural aspects being part of or considered during service design processes. Service users were able to pinpoint a large variety of factors mattering in service situations which seemed to relate to cultural factors (Tables 17 and 18, section 6.2.2). These factors included issues such as language, politeness and service attitudes, but also preferences about personal space or assistance, (in)equality (feelings of prejudgment or discrimination), and the amount of small talk. These examples manifest that each service situation may simultaneously be an identity and face negotiation situation for a service user, affecting the overall service experience (cf. Ting-Toomey & Chung 2012; Scollon & al. 2012). While the discipline is claimed to draw on human-centered design (Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011, 38; Harviainen & Hyysalo 2019, 35), these aspects are important to consider in service design.

The insights gained from the structured interviews point to the possibility that cultural factors become the more relevant the more knowledge intensive the provided service is, the more interaction is involved, the more tailored or personalized the service is, the more multicultural the service context is and the more cultural factors are expected to be experienced (Figure 26, section 6.4). This observation is in accordance with earlier research in fields such as hospitality and tourism which are known to take cultural factors into consideration and to include cultural aspects in the service offering as part of the aspired service experience (e.g. Bakir & al. 2017; Oelke & al. 2013). Health care services are another

example of meeting most of these factors. The above listed service aspect polarities illustrated in Figure 26 offer a relevant service development perspective and are one of the contributions of this research. The findings of this study suggest that all stakeholders involved in designing and delivering services should have a better awareness and understanding of cultural processes and phenomena contributing to optimal service experiences.

7.5 Defining good service from a cultural point of view

With an increasing emphasis on optimal service experiences both in theory development and practical activities (e.g. Aagja & Bagdare 2016; Grönroos & Voima 2013; Helkkula & al. 2012a; Reason & al. 2016) one research focus here was to inquire how service users define "good service" in terms of cultural factors. Good service is related to satisfaction, quality and value which are seen as hybrid constructs (Gallarza & al. 2011). Value and experiences are interconnected (section 2.3), and value may be perceived differently in various cultural contexts. The final research sub-question was addressed by analyzing the interview data gained from Sub-study 3, but additional insights were also looked for in the two previous sub-studies.

The 50 informants in Sub-study 3 characterized good service with adjectives that may be considered relatively universal. The research question was open-ended, so no pre-set adjectives were proposed. The following characteristics for "good service" formed a general but clear: efficient, involving human interaction, respectful or polite, empathetic/friendly/easygoing, based on self-service, professional/high quality. The terms and categories are elaborated in section 6.2.6. Even though the list looks globally applicable, it must be noted that the terms may embrace culturally very different meanings. For example, efficacy or politeness are defined differently by many individuals but also culturally. Scollon et al. (2012) illustrate how different politeness strategies may be applied and are often practiced differently across cultures. The analysis also revealed a variety of meanings of and evaluations about service-related behavior or communication. While some informants considered that self-service is valued in their culture and perceived as good service, some informants claimed just the contrary. Similarly, the type and amount of human interaction, for instance in the form of small talk, was experienced differently by some other respondents. Some considered it annoying, some as the essence of good service interaction. However, it is important to note that these appreciations may not relate solely to large cultural aspects but depend on other small-culture, contextual or individual factors.

Service designers, too, claimed to see cultural differences in evaluating the quality of service. Similar to service users' perceptions the service designers' statements were rather essentialist in nature, for example, associating good service with high quality and hospitality in Asian cultures, good service in Finland with satisfying a service user's rational needs, or claiming that American customers demand service that supports a display of high social status. These are,

of course, generalized views, but suggest that the concept of "good service" may be defined and evaluated from many different cultural perspectives. Thus, a service designer should be aware of the different meanings and even opposing evaluations of service, depending on the service's sociocultural and situational context.

An additional aspect of "good service" relates to trust. Since services are intangible, being able to trust that the expected service corresponds with the delivered service is crucial. Especially in knowledge-intensive services where service users are uncertain of their ability to judge the quality of the service, the role of trust increases (Zeithaml & al. 2009, 114). Then, the country or culture-related reputation (often associated with imagined qualities) of the service provider may become elemental. Therefore, a service provider should try to find ways of building trust in different ways. For example, in multicultural service environments a service provider can enhance trust-building by culturally-sensitive communication, by providing diverse identity affiliation opportunities by a selection of languages, letting service users choose how they want to be seen in the service encounters or by including diversity within back- and front-office employees.

7.6 Summarizing

The strength of service design lies in its methodological approach of removing assumptive thinking about service users and about their preferences and needs. The co-creative and participatory SD methods and tools allow shared construction of meaning, i.e. meaningful service(s) from the point of view of all stakeholders. In terms of large cultures, however, it seems that there are yet no established ways of approaching cultural phenomena during SD processes which can be seen as a tension between the perceptions and actions. Based on the current research, factors related to large cultures are considered relevant but challenging to take into consideration. This becomes visible especially from the service designers' and service users' interviews (Cases 1 and 3). The Sub-study 2 literature review included mostly cursory mentions about culture and confirms this tension.

The findings indicate that culture matters to SD stakeholders. Its role was often seen as an additional challenge but also many neutral and positive aspects were mentioned. Depending on the stakeholder perspective, the role of culture may be located differently during the service design and value creation processes which are illustrated in the following Figure 27. From a service designer's perspective, cultural factors are often considered to be characteristics "embedded" in the service users. Thus, if and when culture is considered during service design, it seems most often to be connected to the early stages of researching and gathering insights about the service users and their lives (the discovery stage, Figure 27). However, service users consider culture to matter mostly in service encounters or at other touchpoints with the service provider. This implies that issues related especially to intercultural communication should be paid more attention to. Some of the touchpoints (e.g. marketing material) were mentioned but not

discussed in detail in the empirical data. The big clouds illustrating culture's relevant role in Figure 27 reflect the different concerns of service designers and service users. The data of this research does not confirm whether service designers pay adequately attention to both the discovery stage (initial customer and service context research) and delivery stage (often in interaction with the service provider). Thus, more research is needed in this area.

Culture's role during the other stages often involving a lot of internal design team and co-design interaction, were rarely discussed. However, based on earlier research and an understanding that no human activity is culture-free, cultural phenomena may also become relevant during a design team's internal processes and relationships with other stakeholders besides the service users. For example, interactions, team dynamics, ways of collaborating, conflict resolution, decision-making, scope and framing the challenge to be solved are all processes where cultural aspects may have a role (Christensen & al. 2017; Blomberg & Darrah 2015). In practice, culture can have relevance at any stage or in any activity during a design process. Based on the insights of this study, the size of the clouds in Figure 27 indicates the relevance of cultural factors during a service design and a service user's value creation processes. For service designers the critical stage seems to be the early discovery stage where insights are gathered about the future service users and form the basis for the joint value creation. For service users, the experience seems to be focused but is not restricted on actual service encounter (second big cloud in Figure 27). In reality, the value creation processes are intertwined. Value may already start accumulating well before the service consumption decision is taken, based on the service brand, the service provider reputation, marketing communication or word-of-mouth (Grönroos & Voima 2013).

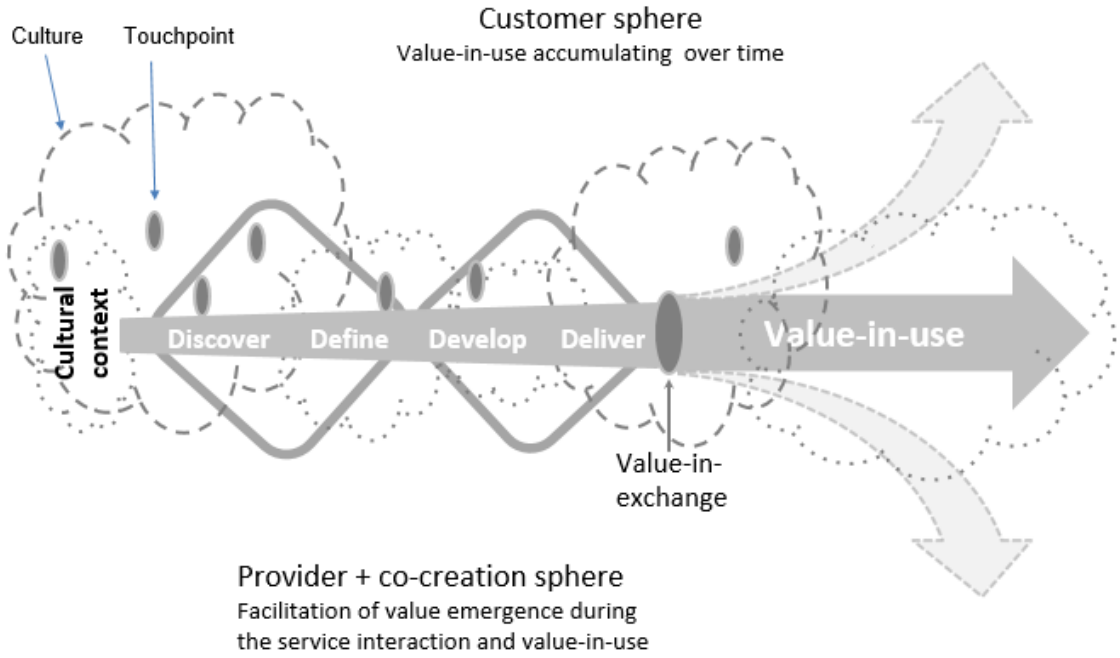

FIGURE 27 The relevance of culture, depicted as different clouds, along the service design "Double diamond" process and a service user's value creation process (thick arrow). Adapted from Grönroos & Voima 2013 and British Design Council 2015.

The cultural context and cultural backgrounds of all stakeholders may be connected to value creation holistically at any stage of the process in the actors' interactions (Vargo & Lusch 2008) and at several possible touchpoints. Also abstract perceptions about a service or a service provider culture may contribute to the experienced value. Depending on the type of the design process and the type of service, the degree of service user involvement varies. Contextual cultural factors may be present and can vary along the whole customer value creation process.

In Sub-study 3 service user interviews, the fluid and often subliminal presence of cultural factors was reported to be most significant at the "moment of truth" which Bitner et al. (2000, 138) call the critical interaction where the customer develops an indelible impression of the service provider. The value, until then embedded in the resources and the labor process of the service provider, will be exchanged into value-in-use for the customer (Grönroos & Voima 2013; Lusch & Vargo 2006). The nature of value-in-use can be positive, neutral or negative (thick arrows in Figure 27) and is solely defined by service users, based on their service experience and actual needs or dreams, which in turn, may be affected by numerous dynamic cultural processes. Examples of service situations were value was created while using the service but was perceived negative were recreational services such as swimming halls with no privacy for nakedness or health-care services where a doctor's instructions from unfamiliar cultural contexts were not trusted.

The empirical data confirmed that a service user's cultural resources (e.g. nation, language, religion, ideology, education) may have an impact on the way the service is experienced (Holliday 2013, 2). At the same time, the recent service theory development indicates that the role of a service provider is ultimately that of a facilitator of a service user's value creation process (Grönroos 2008; Bettencourt, Vargo & Lusch 2014) which signifies that service providers should be more knowledgeable about cultural processes involved in service situations. This need has been best voiced in the customer dominant logic (CDL, Heinonen & al. 2010; Strandvik & Heinonen 2015), which emphasizes the shift into the service user sphere activities. Only deep understanding of a service user's preferences and contextual cultural factors during the service design process and use situations will enable the service provider to fulfill the value facilitator role at best, as illustrated with the growing value towards the actualization of the value in Figure 27.

8 CONCLUSIONS

Culture matters and does not matter. This paradoxical fact has been puzzling many scholars for long, and this study has not been able to solve this dilemma for good. However, this study provides many helpful insights of culture(s) role in service design. In the following chapter, I will draw conclusions based on the findings of the study, and reflect on the theoretical and practical implications of the research project. Moreover, this chapter discusses limitations of the study and makes suggestions for further research.

8.1 Theoretical implications

The research interest was to find out how culture is approached in the emerging domain of service design. Very little research had previously been done combining the fields of service research, design studies and intercultural communication. I see culture as being both created and perpetuated through the means of communication (Sadri & Flammia 2011) and since services always include a communicative component to them, the research interest seemed justified and timely.

Chapter 2 described recent research developments in the fields of service research, design and intercultural communication studies and provides some interesting observations. In all these fields, the focus has been shifting towards an individual instead of approaching people as large groups. This may be related to the rise of overall individualism globally (Santos, Varnum & Grossmann 2017). Instead of talking about target groups based on demographics or about large cultural groups representing unified cultural values, attention has been paid to individuals as service users, as active design participants in interaction and shaping their realities together. The collaborative aspects of involving stakeholders provide an opportunity to better allow actors' cultural repertoires to be recognized and respected but can also simultaneously add challenges.

In the field of design studies, the umbrella term "user-centered" depicts a new era of focusing on the user instead of on the design outcome or form (Segelström 2012, 14). The even more inclusive concept "human-centered" illustrates

the interest in the whole range of human experiences, including human dignity and human rights (Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011, 38). The rise of human-centered design has spurred greater recognition of the extent to which the design outcomes are situated in the lives of individuals and in society and culture at large (Buchanan 2001, 14). Design thinking is described as a "designerly" mindset where professionals can apply this human-centered thinking in order to develop services or products (Tschimmel 2012). These new rationales have enabled designers to design *with* people and not just *for* them as in earlier design traditions (Sanders & Stappers 2014).

In service research, the new paradigm of service marketing has correspondingly adopted an increasingly customer-centric mindset in the forms of service dominant logic (CDL, Vargo & Lusch 2004), service logic (SL, Grönroos 2008) and customer dominant logic (CDL, Heinonen & al. 2010). These new logics have moved the focus from the service provider sphere to that of a service user and emphasize the role of service users as ultimately defining the value (Strandvik & Heinonen 2015). Lusch and Vargo (2006, 283) highlight the process aspect of service by defining service as a verb, as application of specialized competences through deeds, processes and performances. A similarly important distinction is made between the singular and plural forms of service which further emphasizes the co-creative process: "service" as being served or rendered service instead of a "services" as distinct categories of market offerings.

In intercultural communication studies, a similar paradigmatic change can be observed. Culture is seen as a much more complex phenomenon than previously. Instead of seeing culture as an essentializing "label" describing all individuals within a cultural group, the social constructionist and interpretive understandings of culture accentuate cultures as fluid, ever changing processes and being overtaken by a power-sensitive and person-centered approach (Piller 2011; Holliday 2013; Dahl 2014). This makes the predictive approach to culture questionable. As people are seen to be identifying with many different small and large cultures (see Figure 12, section 2.5.2), culture can no longer be seen as something people belong to or what they have (Dahl 2014). Thus, rather than a noun, culture is recognized as a verb, something people do together (Scollon & al. 2012; Dahl 2014). This underlines the process aspect of culture, and the process of interaction becomes the center of interest. Moreover, according to a social constructionist (or constructivist) research tradition, using a plural form "cultures" should be more prevalent than a singular "culture" (Dahl 2014, 5). People as cultural hybrids represent dynamically several cultural identities, and different sets of cultural repertoires are mobilized in interaction in actual, specific service situations. This provides a much more creative and versatile perspective into understanding culture as a dynamic process than the reifying (culture made real in narration) concept of national culture which is seen as outdated (Piller 2011; Holliday 2013).

I see the paradigm shifts in service research and in the field of intercultural communication comparable and even complementary and, therefore, focus on comparing these advancements. Both fields display an emphasis on understanding human beings as active creators of value or active negotiators of meanings in

real life contexts. Table 19 below summarizes these analogous traditional and dynamic, fluid views with some relevant characterizations. This provides a novel and interdisciplinary view combining both scholarly fields. More research across established disciplines has been called for (Gustafsson & al. 2016), hence, this new knowledge may advance mutual theory building and to ease practical and systematic approaches to culture-related issues in service design.

Approach / Element	Traditional view		Dynamic view	
	Culture	Services	Cultures	Service
Description	Descriptive, individuals' behaviour defined and constrained by the culture which becomes the essence they are	Services as separate marketing offerings	Cultural realities constructed dynamically in interaction, communication a subjective and intersubjective experience	A service user's experience of being better (or worse) off. Being rendered a service
Characteristics	Culture is a set of values embedded in the person	Value embedded in the service offering, value mainly monetary	Cultures fluid and contextual, socially constructed in interaction. People as cultural hybrids	Value socially constructed through experiences. Value emerging during the use
Word	A noun: culture something people have	A noun: a service offered by a service provider to a service user	A verb: people constructing meanings and reality together	A verb: stakeholders co-creating value together
Main context	Connected to geographical locations	Emphasis on the provider sphere and processes	Culture dynamic, situational and highly contextual	Emphasis on the service user sphere and value creation processes
Main actor	Observed others	A service provider	Interaction partners	A service user
Core activity	Belongingness, shared values and practices	Value in exchange	Interaction, negotiation of meanings	Value in use, value in experience
Control	Culture governs people	Provider in control of the value formation process	Dynamic, other factors can explain why people act as they do	Service user creates value dynamically in use and in various contexts
Focus	At, observed difference	For, to	With, in interaction	Co-creating with

TABLE 19 Summing up traditional and dynamic approaches to service(s) and to culture(s). Based among others on Grönroos & Voima 2013, Dahl 2014.

Table 19 simplifies the main characteristics in the new paradigms of service research and intercultural communication studies. The reality is, evidently, much more diverse and there are numerous different ontological and epistemological approaches to both disciplines as discussed in Chapter 2.

In the traditional goods-based marketing logic product development was an important success factor for thriving organizations (Gummesson 1990). For service based economic activities, service design can be seen as an equivalent competitive edge. The new service research paradigm has been an important theoretical inspiration for service design (Wetter-Edman 2014; Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2015). In increasingly individualistic environments the role of an individual's service experience becomes important. While service design is clearly based on the modern service marketing logics, both the "traditional" and "dynamic" understandings of culture and their ontological and epistemological approaches can be seen in the research data. Service design as an approach is voicing modern thinking in that it allows recognition of and varied factors motivating people's behavior and life values, more than seeing large cultures as labeling features. This intrinsically modern understanding of cultural processes may also explain the rather sporadic and cursory discourse of large cultures in the professional service design literature. At the same time, both Sub-studies 1 and 2 indicate that culture is often seen from a simplifying and essentialist perspective. Large cultures were distinctly equated to nation-states. Despite acknowledging the relevance of large cultures there seemed to be a certain hesitance and caution in dealing with cultural factors in service design. This implies that many service designers are inherently aware of the dynamic characteristics of cultures, and understand value as a social construct continuously co-created during the service process (Edvardsson, Tronvoll & Gruber 2011). But with a lack of deeper knowledge about operationalizing the dynamic view of culture service designers shy away from approaching it.

The three sub-studies indicate that culture is largely approached as nationality and its essence is not widely questioned in SD. A dynamic perception of culture (being constructed in interaction) would better meet the perception of facilitating value experiences for a service user. For each service user the value creation process is different, and value is constructed and emerges non-linearly in different spatial and temporal settings encompassing various emotional, social, ethical or environmental dimensions (Helkkula & al. 2012a). This problematizes the idea of seeing cultural groups as homogenous and designing for groups or personas based on fixed cultural understanding and generalizable values. The social science based, quantitative approaches can thus only be applied for gaining an overall understanding of and discussions about how service users can have similar and different preferences at the same time, not predicting certain behavior. This means that quantitative methodology is suitable mostly during the initial research phase (discovery stage, the first big cloud in Figure 27). The actual cultural insights require contextually flexible, qualitative approaches – which service design offers already in its "toolset" – but necessitating increasing cultural awareness questioning traditional practices, political or ethical issues. More

value-based discussions are needed to make practitioners understand the ideological and political underpinnings of which cultural elements are addressed and who are included in SD. This requires sophisticated understanding of cultural phenomena. However, the research at hand does not provide evidence that it may be just for these reasons that cultures are already approached cautiously. Overall, a strategic or systematic approach in addressing and operationalizing cultures during service design processes seem to be lacking.

8.2 Practical implications

This dissertation set out to study how large cultures are approached in service design. It was argued that with increasing internationalization and diversification of societies services can no longer be considered as "one-size-fits-all" offerings. It was also proposed that in a complex and diverse world each individual experiences value differently and any given context determines which elements of cultural repertoires and values become relevant. The domain of service design is claimed to be people-oriented (Mager 2004; Miettinen & Koivisto 2009; Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011; Yu & Sangiorgi 2018) and, therefore, it was of special interest to explore how cultural factors and processes are considered in the value creation process during service design.

In the theory development discussed above, I identified parallel paradigmatic transformations in the novel service marketing logics and understandings of culture. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss what these imply for the practice of service design. The findings of this study indicate that a similarly essentialist culture understanding prevails in SD as seen in business economic driven service research (section 2.2.1). In their discourses, neither service designers (Sub-studies 1 and 2) nor service users (Sub-study 3) questioned the descriptive and static character of culture. Large cultures were mostly equated to nation-states and assumed to predict people's behavior or values. The analysis did not indicate that service designers or service users would consider service situations as arenas for creating or maintaining culture. Both service process stakeholder groups observed in this study seemed to lack concepts to see cultures as constructive dynamic processes. Meanings given to culture were in line with essentializing discourses which some scholars call "banal nationalism", perpetuated in every day interactions and strengthened by media (Piller 2011). This perception of reality warrants the large culture approach taken in this research.

In practice, SD echoes the recent theoretical advances by recognizing service users as joint value creators and providing collaborative and co-creative methodology to construct shared understanding of service, in other words, of the value-in-use enabled through the service. SD methodology can genuinely help remove assumptive thinking about the service users' needs and dreams and uncover the value creation processes and opportunities as contextual and holistic experiences (Wetter-Edman 2014; Yu & Sangiorgi 2018, 43). Its co-creative approach enables

socially constructed realities and meanings, and to uncover multiple cultural realities and interconnect different facets of social phenomena to arrive at a deeper complexity of meanings, so called "thick descriptions" (Holliday 2013). Yet, from a cultural point of view, this opportunity seems not to be taken systematically into consideration. The current state in SD seem to be combining modern service research knowledge with an all-defining static nature of culture. The research data showed that service designers regard cultural factors as relevant and worthy of consideration during design processes. Similarly, service users perceived many cultural factors to affect the service situation and their service experiences. Yet in practice, culture seems not to be considered much, and where it is, it is mostly approached through the static and descriptive perspective equating large cultures to nation-states. A discourse of multiple cultural realities seems to be lacking, possibly due to a lack of conceptualization and thus properly operationalizing culture for design use (Sun 2015).

The predominantly qualitative approaches taken in SD are supported by the proponents of the customer-dominant logic (CDL, Heinonen & al. 2010; Strandvik & Heinonen 2015) who claim that value in use emerges in a context and suggest using increasingly qualitative methods to uncover service users' everyday value creation. Strandvik and Heinonen (2015, 122) assert that a distinctive customer logic turns away from aggregate concepts such as general or collective behavior. This means resisting static and often social science driven cultural understandings.

Service designers should consider carefully for which purpose the cultural knowledge being sought is to be applied, and some suggestions are proposed in Table 20. Approaches drawing on social science types of inquiry (Sadri & Flammia 2011) look at large groups of people and aim to form "big pictures" of given service environments. This descriptive perspective has its place in the beginning of the whole process and the service user research stage (Discovery stage) while observing cultures as complex webs of different types of regularities (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, 35). However, this perspective is easily transferred by often unconscious generalizations into the research methodology. For example, one often used tool is a *persona* (a so-called archetype of a user). The current study did not reveal how personas are created from a cultural perspective but the danger is that they may be based on generalized assumptions about members of one national group possessing similar characteristics, e.g. all Americans being loud, or all Finns being silent. On a related note, Olbertz-Siitonen and Siitonen (2015) illustrate how this kind of generalizations and perpetually enforced imagined realities (i.e. Finns being silent) may lack empirical evidence but still be reproduced in both public and academic discourses as a form of self-fulfilling prophecy. Service design methods should thus be used consciously in order not to enforce stereotypical cultural characteristics.

When progressing along the iterative SD process (dotted lines indicating the blurry iterative stages in Table 20), I propose that designers should develop alternative understandings with interpretative, critical and dialectical (Sadri & Flammia 2011) approaches (see section 2.5.2). An interpretive approach allows for dynamic construction of new cultural meanings in interaction with the actors

involved in the research (Dahl 2016, 73). Critical and dialectical perspectives add versatility to the approaches and can offer better opportunities for operationalizing cultural understanding among sometimes even more salient bearers of meaning, such as status, power, history, life situations and other demographic or individual characteristics. The dynamic approaches do not deny cultural realism which acknowledges the influence of large cultures such as a nation (Holliday 2011, 195; Dahl 2016).

Etic, culture-general knowledge goes along the quantitative social science based approaches and may help service designers find a direction where to look at, while qualitatively oriented emic approaches generate contextual cultural understanding. Focusing on social science based approach alone may lead to stereotypical thinking, and seeing service users as representatives of predictable cultural groups.

A design process covers many activities starting from research on service users, the wider use context and business environment, and ending at the implementation of the final service concept by a service provider organization which often involves complex systems and networks (Foglieni & al. 2018; Miettinen & Koivisto 2009, 13). The process can extend several months and include tens of stakeholders. Therefore, cultural matters should be considered throughout the process and in all interaction with several process stakeholders. Based on a simplified but typical service design process, there are numerous instances where cultural issues may arise and where cultural understanding is needed. Table 20 provides examples on how important cultural understanding may emerge during the design process and outlines what kind of cultural approaches and competencies may be needed. The stages in the table follow the Design Council's (2015) "Double Diamond" process which is one of the most used SD approach (Stickdorn et al. 2018).

TABLE 20 Possible approaches to culture during a service design process

SD process stage	Activities related to culture (e.g. interaction, decision-making, values, conventions)	Approaches to culture	Intercultural communication
Project start	- Framing the design challenge, defining the scope - Defining the target service users - Choosing development team members - Choosing and involving stakeholders - Managing the project, leading teams	Social science based, interpretive, criticial, dialectic approaches	
Discovery Researching, identifying, creating knowledge	- Cultural context: historical, political, religious, ideological, economic, technical; languages - Power relations (affluence, power, juxtapositions with others) - Service users: multiple cultural identities, meaning giving and negotiations, value creation	Social science based, interpretive, critical, dialectic approaches	
Define Ideating, specifying, filtering through decision-making	- Making decisions, prioritizing, valuing - Choosing and involving stakeholders - Co-design interactions - Constructing meanings	Interpretive, criticial, dialectic approaches	
Develop Prototyping, building, designing, exploring, evaluating	- Making decisions, prioritizing, valuing - Choosing and involving stakeholders - Co-design and testing interactions - Choosing alternatives - Artefact building, choosing content, communicating, illustrating, using colors etc. - Experiencing, constructing meanings	Interpretive, criticial, dialectic approaches	
Deliver Concepting, implementing, training, evaluating	- Managing organizational processes - Change management - Testing interactions - Training - Constructing meanings	Interpretive, criticial, dialectic approaches	

In the far right column of Table 20, intercultural communication is presented as an overarching mindset that should be taken into consideration during all stages of a service design process. Intercultural communication may play a role in all design stages while communicating across different communities of practice or cultural groups. Successful intercultural communication here means that cultural stereotypes or culturally differing patterns of interpretation do not end up affecting communication in a negative way. Kimbell (in Penin 2018, 324) sees service design as making "new kinds of relations between different participants in some kind of society, system, organization, or economic and cultural context". Kimbell's quote highlights the role of service design as human interaction, i.e. intercultural communication across disciplinary, systemic, organizational or cultural boundaries. As cultures are dynamic and each person can identify themselves simultaneously with many large and small cultural groupings, all communication can be considered intercultural (Tannen 1993; Dahl 2014). Thus, awareness

of cultural processes and intercultural communication competence can be considered as a crucial asset for any professional designing services.

Table 20 includes all stakeholders of a design process. The present study's findings indicate that sometimes just one stakeholder's (albeit that of the most important one, the service user's) cultural background was given any attention to. This consideration was most often connected with understanding service contexts and service users in international service design projects. Concrete service situations highlighting cultural issues in local settings were typically not discussed, nor did the findings point to a recognition of intercultural communication issues within development teams or among other stakeholders. Sub-study 3 interviews nevertheless confirm that even if the service is aimed at local markets, it is important to think about the diversity and inclusion of different service user voices. Similarly, service designers need to be aware of intercultural communication issues within various design teams.

Culture is paradoxical and difficult to pin down (Martin & al. 2002; Gannon 2008). Table 20 indicates examples of some of the many activities where cultural factors may play an important role. I propose that a dynamic understanding of culture may help focus attention on multiple service-related activities which embody co-constructed and vivid meanings in diverse local and global service contexts (Dahl 2014; Sun 2015). Integrating a broader understanding of global and local politics, historical, social and cultural contexts would further deepen the understanding of service users' value creation and cultural meanings. Designers may fail to operationalize the modern cultural understanding and thus fail to apply a critical vision which causes design research to end up "with unsophisticated design recommendations" (Sun 2015, 65). The reasons may be practical such as time constraints, a lack of knowledge or fear of ideological connotations. However, seeing a group of service users as a monolithic cultural entity does not correspond with the dynamic, modern understanding of culture where contextual and individual factors may better explain behavior and preferences. Service design offers methods and tools for uncovering potential culturally relevant aspects but should not be used to predict or confirm stereotypical practices or values.

The kind of sensitivity described above towards cultural issues demands a lot of different types of knowledge and competencies from service designers. However, the advantage of service design is that the approach is, in essence, multidisciplinary and relies on team work. Thus, no one person needs to possess all the knowledge, but different kinds of cultural experts and brokers can be used. Cultural competencies should be intentionally developed among service designers. As practitioners of a young and still evolving profession they have yet to define all competencies required in this domain. If service designers do not know what they are listening to or looking for, the situation may become as one of the respondents in Sub-study 1 formulated: *"If you are not aware of [the cultural meanings and values] as a designer, you are either in a best case designing something that works because people are adaptable, or in a worst case, fail because you missed the opportunity to connect with the customer"*.

8.3 Reflections on the quality of this study

There is a lot of terminological variety when assessing the quality of qualitative studies. In general, the quality of a scientific research can be evaluated by its trustworthiness (Silverman 2011). In the case of qualitative studies, Guest et al. (2012, 82) find validity more important than reliability. They also suggest a more inclusive definition and define valid as sound, defensible and well-grounded (Guest & al. 2012, 81, based on Dey 1993). The validity and reliability of the three separate sub-studies are reflected upon at the end of each Sub-study chapter. This section discusses the study's overall credibility (validity), dependability (reliability) and generalizability.

Silverman (2011, 356, based on Lamont & White 2005) lists criteria for designing and evaluating qualitative research. The main components of high quality qualitative research are: situating the researching in appropriate literature; articulating the connection between theory and data; describing and explaining case selection; paying attention to alternative explanations; operationalizing constructs; providing detailed descriptions of the data collection and analysis; describing the significance of the research; discussing generalizability of the study; and specifying its limitations. With this list Silverman refers to validity, and the items are reflected upon in the following steps taken in this explorative study. This study builds upon existing knowledge in intercultural communication studies, service marketing research and the recent advances in design studies which can be seen providing the theoretical groundings for a stakeholders involving collaborative and constructivist service development approach called service design (Gummesson 1990; Grönroos 2008; Wetter-Edman 2014; Sanders & Stappers 2014).

The main research interest was to explore how large culture(s) are approached and perceived in service design. The general, conceptually inquiring approach enabled service designers to reflect on their cultural understandings and ways of operationalizing them for different SD purposes. The aim was not to focus on certain service sectors or contexts but to explore large cultures' ontological and epistemological role and relevance in SD in general. The use of the collective nouns "culture" and "service" reflect the abstract, fluid and general phenomena, both very challenging to pinpoint. Intercultural communication literature helped in operationalizing the concept of culture as a dynamic, process-based social construction (e.g. Piller 2011, Dahl 2014) and in studying how cultures are understood and approached in professional discourses within service design and perceived to matter in everyday discourses by service users.

The research corpus was collected from two perspectives, both the service designers' world and from the service users' world. By triangulating methods and data sets, I aimed to increase the validity of the study. The size, scope and relevance of the collected data (Eskola & Suoranta 2005) was carefully considered to provide a robust sample of current perceptions of large culture's role in service design. Both the interviews and the professional literature content analysis provided a saturated yet a slightly contradicting view on culture's relevance in the

current service design discourse. Service users perceived cultural factors to matter often and to have an impact on their service experience. Alternative explanations and negative cases, such as perceptions of irrelevance of large cultures' role in service design, were considered and included in the data analysis, yet the amount of positive perceptions confirm that cultural factors often matter in service situations.

One needs to be cautious not to take the mentions by interviewees at face value and as a direct representation of reality. What was said about large cultures when being interviewed about large cultures may only reflect the fact the interviewees said what they assumed they were expected to say about the topic. For example, they may have sensed an expectation to reflect on cultural differences although (large) cultural factors may not necessarily have any relationship with everyday lives and service interactions. In the professional SD literature this kind of psychological impact was not present. That data confirmed cultures' perceived relevance and, due to the rarity of concrete cultural elaboration, also supports the perception that cultural issues are difficult to address.

In qualitative and interpretative research there is always a "researcher effect" (Guest et al. 2012; Silverman 2011). Perceptions and interpretations of reality can be deceiving if one is not aware of the situational, perceptional and personal factors. This is especially true in this study since services are contextual and experienced individually. In line with Guest et al. (2012) this study aims at research process objectivity which the authors see as the only way of pursuing objectivity in cultural studies: focus on methods and processes that do not depend on the researcher's person only, but keep the process as open as possible and make one aware of one's own culturally influenced perceptions. The reliability of this study is most of all about consistency in the research approaches which are elaborated in detail at the end of each sub-study.

This study describes a reality that is constructed socially by the participants. Epistemologically, the results can be placed in the contextual empiricism where criticism will be an essential part in order for them to have any truth value. Ruusuvuori et al. (2010) claim that in qualitative studies validity and reliability are most of all about logics of possibility, truth is thus only relative. Hence, we can claim that the results of this study may apply in similar cases, but are most likely not generalizable. With my critical realistic research philosophy and a social constructionist understanding I recognize that I am able to convey only partial understanding of my research subject.

My own comprehension of culture(s) and its processes has evolved during the study process, which may also have affected the selection and analysis of the data. The popular discourse about large cultures equaling with national cultures is very pervasive and impregnated by neo-essentialist understanding of culture. Although aware of the pitfalls, a rather descriptive understanding of cultures was also my initial theoretical starting point. The development of my own ontological viewpoint may reflect on how the concept of culture was operationalized in the beginning and changed towards the end of the research process. With this in mind, the corpus was re-scrutinized at the end of the study for possible alternative interpretations of the research data.

In conclusion, this research posits that new knowledge has emerged from the results of this study. A clear tension could be observed between what was said in the service designer interviews and written in the professional literature about cultures' role in service design and in service situations. Service users' perceptions indicated that more attention should be paid on the role of large culture(s) in service situations.

8.4 Recommendations for further research

Exploratory studies are commonly used to generate new questions and hypotheses for further research (Guest & al. 2012, 8). This study also generated many new perspectives worth studying in more detail.

The study suggests that a rather descriptive understanding of large cultures prevails. More research is thus needed in order to develop suitable service design approaches to address cultural issues that meet the dynamic social constructionist and more modern understanding of value creation and cultural realities. This requires more research on alternative and fluid characterization for human phenomena that allow interpretation outside categorizing "boxes" and considerations for cultural hybridity. Balancing between not reifying "culture" and still considering it in sophisticated ways may not be a simple task and requires more insights about ideological underpinnings, power relations, identity building and cultural processes.

The results of this study suggest that service is not experienced and evaluated similarly in various cultural settings. As culture(s) and service(s) are both contextual and experienced uniquely by individuals, an important research area is specific but culturally diverse local and global service contexts or certain service categories. This demands more transparent conceptualization and appropriate operationalization of culture that takes into account the everyday practices where service users are engaged (see also Getto & Sun 2017). Thus more research is needed on how to address cultural issues during the various stages and by different stakeholders co-creating value during a service design process. It is not easy and not always even necessary to differentiate small and large cultural and other social factors, but finding out when and how this is appropriate would increase understanding on how to design for service(s) that create value across situated cultural practices. Suitable models and best practice cases using existing and novel service design methods should hence be developed and evaluated.

More research is also needed in understanding the concept of "good service" from a cultural perspective. While value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the involved stakeholders (Vargo & Lusch 2004; Helkkula & al. 2012a) this would require more in-depth approaches. The role of trust building needs further research in evaluating an optimal service experience. How is it achieved in different service situations and cultural contexts? Also, comparative cross-cultural research in similar service contexts might shed light on how "good

service" is perceived globally and how a good service experience may be conceptualized differently in various cultural contexts.

The matter of cultural sensitivity also deserves more attention. There are multiple approaches to conceptualizing intercultural competencies, reflecting "postmodern diversity" (Spitzberg & Chagnon 2009, 44). However, this topic seems to be missing from service design related discourse. The task profiles for service designers varying from a tactical designer for service experiences to strategic responsibility areas to designing for large service system development (Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011) demand different kinds of intercultural competencies or sensitivity. These needs should be analyzed and models be developed to meet the different service design competence areas. What is cultural sensitivity in the context of service design projects? What kind of understanding and skills should be included in cultural sensitivity in terms of services in general, or in service-specific contexts? Since service activities and interactions are very different, can the concept of cultural sensitivity include similar elements as in a variety of earlier intercultural communication competence frameworks (see Spitzberg & Chagnon 2009)? Some answers for these questions may be gained by studying how so-called good service is evaluated in different contexts and local environments.

Service concepts, systems and environments continue to change, and traditional research that focuses on specific service fields or types may become outdated quickly. Instead, the results of this study suggest that more attention needs to be placed on studying the interactional aspects of services in general. This is particularly relevant since value co-creation is based on dialogical interaction (Ojasalo 2010; Grönroos & Voima 2013). Special attention needs to be paid to intercultural inquiry and communication in global and local service contexts. An important research area is to study how the dynamic socio-constructionist understanding of culture and intercultural communication (Dahl 2014; Piller 2011) can be utilized to contribute to and develop service design practices. An additional interest is to study how cultural, service-related practices emerge and how service design could reveal and contribute to value creation in these evolving practices. What would be the role of the trust building in the various cultural practices involving services?

From the interpretative, social constructionist perspective it would be interesting to study how service design, as a cultural intermediary (e.g. Dennington 2017), creates new cultural realities, new kinds of values and cultural practices. As a strongly collaborative and human-centered approach we can see service design contributing to important value-based policy making and societal transformation (Meroni & Sangiorgi 2011). Important research goals are thus the readiness of different service provider organizations in democratic societies but also in more strictly governed societies to construct new collaborative service realities. A similarly intriguing question is what are the conditions under which service provider organizations are genuinely willing to apply a customer dominant logic (CDL, Heinonen & al. 2010) in their service development projects in different cultural settings and match the approach with the organization's profitability objectives?

Service design has emerged in capitalist postindustrial environments. Young (in Miettinen & Valtonen 2012, 82) claims that service design is predominantly a Western approach. This statement should be put to the test and unpacked more clearly. Also, despite the domain's immaturity, there seem to be different "cultural heritages" within service design (Polaine in Miettinen & Valtonen 2012, 160; Blomberg & Darrah 2017). Uncovering how these early traditions are exposed and practiced needs more attention. Do they influence the process, social dynamics or outcomes of design processes globally or locally? How is the common vocabulary, language and meanings of service design applied and interpreted in local development processes? And finally, how is the current discourse about large culture(s) shaping the profession, if at all?

Cultures are in constant flux. The complex, systemic and relational aspects of services call for added perspectives. In many societies, both cultural diversity and the awareness of it is increasing. This means that there will be several opportunities for further research drawing on cultural understanding, inclusion of diverse voices and the ethical issues involved in service design.

YHTEENVETO (FINNISH SUMMARY)

Kulttuuri palvelumuotoilussa

Kansallisten, alueellisten ja etnisten kulttuurien rooli palvelumuotoilussa, ammattikirjallisuudessa ja palveluissa käyttäjien näkökulmasta

Yhteiskunnat ja taloudet perustuvat yhä enemmän palveluihin. Samaan aikaan globaalin talouden merkitys on kasvanut, palveluiden kansainvälinen kauppa on lisääntynyt ja yhteiskunnat monimuotoistuneet. Tutkimus tarkastelee, miten palvelumuotoilun piirissä lähestytään ns. suuria kulttuureita eli kansallisia, alueellisia ja etnisiä kulttuureita (Holliday 1999). Palvelumuotoilu on ihmiskeskeinen ja osallistava lähestymistapa palvelujen kehittämiseen ja arvoa tuottaviin palvelukokemuksiin. Palvelut ja koko palvelumuotoiluprosessi pohjautuvat inhimilliseen vuorovaikutukseen, ja tutkimuksen lähtökohtana onkin ymmärrys, että mikään inhimillinen toiminta ei tapahdu kulttuurisessa tyhjiössä. Kulttuurikäsitysten lisäksi tarkastelun kohteena on, miten kulttuuria huomioidaan palvelumuotoilussa sekä palvelutilanteissa, jotka rakentuvat vuorovaikutuksessa.

Tutkimus sijoittuu tieteenalojen välille (Gustafsson ym. 2016) ja hyödyntää palvelu-, muotoilu- ja kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän tutkimuksen teorioita. Kaikkia kolmea yhdistävää tutkimusta on niukasti, vaikka kirjallisuuskatsauksen perusteella kulttuuriin liittyviä ilmiöitä on tutkittu erikseen sekä palvelujen markkinoinnissa tai muotoilun alalla.

Lähtökohtana tutkimukselle on sosiokonstruktionismiin perustuva kulttuurikäsitys, jonka mukaan kulttuuri rakentuu ihmisten välisessä vuorovaikutuksessa. Ontologisesti työ noudattelee maltillisen konstruktionismin ja kriittisen realismin viitoittamaa tutkimustraditiota, jonka mukaan maailmassa voi olla subjektiivisia, sosiaalisia sekä objektiivisia totuuksia (Järvensivu & Törnroos 2010). Kulttuurisia ilmiöitä siten tulkitaan, neuvotellaan ja ylläpidetään sosiaalisissa vuorovaikutussuhteissa (Berger & Luckmann 1966), ja tiedosta ja totuudesta voi olla useita tulkintoja. Yhteisesti rakentuvaa kulttuurista tietoa voi epistemologisesti tarkastella tutkittavien henkilöiden kuten haastateltavien subjektiivisten huomioiden kautta.

Työn keskeisiä käsitteitä ovat kulttuuri, kulttuurien välinen viestintä, palvelu ja palvelumuotoilu. Tutkimuksella osallistutaan palvelukokemusta ja ihmiskeskeisyyttä sivuavaan keskusteluun ottamalla kulttuurin merkitystä tarkasteleva näkökulma. Palvelun käsitettä lähestytään yleisellä tasolla, eikä työssä rajauduta tiettyihin palvelualoihin, -tyyppeihin tai –konteksteihin. Keskittymistä käsitteen yleiselle tasolle perustellaan sillä, että palvelu-sanaa käytetään usein kollektiivisena substantiivina viittaamaan yhteen ilmiöön (*palvelu*yhteiskunta, *palvelu*sektori, *palvelu*alttius jne.) ja koettuun palveluun eli tunteeseen siitä, että on tullut palvelluksi. Keskiössä on siis palvelun käsite yksikössä (service, tunne saadusta palvelusta), ei erilliset palvelutuotteet tai -tarjoamat (services) (Grönroos 2008). Kulttuurienvälinen vertailu rajataan työn ulkopuolelle eikä työ kes-

kity tarkastelemaan mitään erityistä maantieteellistä aluetta tai kulttuurista ryhmää, vaikka tutkimuksen tekijän ja tutkimuskontekstin suomalaisuudesta johtuen tulokset voivat osin painottua suomalaiseen toimintaympäristöön.

Tutkimus hyödyntää palvelututkimuksen ja erityisesti palvelujen markkinoinnin uutta paradigmaa, jossa korostuu palveluprosessin osallisten rooli yhteisinä arvonluojina. Tämä yhdessä osallistavan muotoilun kanssa (participatory design; Sanders & Stappers 2014) luo teoreettisen pohjan palvelumuotoilulle.

Palvelukeskeisen liiketoimintalogiikan (SDL, service-dominant logic; Vargo & Lusch 2004) ansiosta tarkastelu on siirtynyt tuotekeskeisestä palvelukeskeiseen ajattelumalliin, jossa kaikki tarjoamat nähdään viime kädessä palveluna, joka mahdollistaa asiakasta täyttämään tietyn tarpeensa. Esimerkiksi älypuhelimen arvo ei ole fyysisessä tuotteessa, vaan siinä että se mahdollistaa tiettyjen tavoitteiden saavuttamisen. Samankaltainen palvelulogiikka (SL,service logic; Grönroos 2006) painottaa arvonmuodostuksen siirtymistä vain palvelutarjoajan piiristä myös palvelun käyttäjän toimintaympäristöön. Siten palveluntarjoajan rooli on muuntunut perinteisestä myyjästä tai tuottajasta palvelun käyttäjän palvelukokemuksen mahdollistajaksi. Asiakaskeskeinen liiketoimintalogiikka (CDL, customer-dominant logic; Heinonen ym. 2010) korostaa asiakkaan keskeistä roolia arvontuotannossa. Palvelun koettuun arvoon liittyy koko palvelunkäyttäjän elämä ja käyttökonteksti myös ennen ja jälkeen varsinaisen palvelutilanteen (Helkkula ym. 2012a). Palvelumuotoilu hyödyntää osallistavia ja yhteiskehittämiseen pohjautuvia menetelmiä ja mahdollistaa siten ymmärryksen palveluiden käyttäjien aidoista tarpeista ja toiveista sekä tiedon jakamisen ja hyödyntämisen. Yhteinen arvonluonti merkitsee käyttäjille parempia palveluita tukien samalla palveluntarjoajan (liike)toiminnallisia tavoitteita. Palvelunkäyttäjätermi kuvaa tässä työssä kaikkia palveluita ostavia tai käyttäviä ryhmiä kuten asiakkaita, yritysasiakkaita, kuluttajia, kansalaisia tai loppukäyttäjiä.

Kulttuurin merkitystä palvelumuotoilussa ei ole juurikaan tutkittu (Sun 2015, Manzini 2016, Dennington 2017). Tämä on yllättävää, sillä palvelumuotoilu on osallistavaa, vuorovaikutukseen perustuvaa toimintaa. Palvelumuotoilun tavoitteena on mahdollistaa optimaalinen palvelukokemus (Teixeira ym. 2012), jonka on todettu olevan aina subjektiivinen ja tilannesidonnainen (Strandvik & Heinonen 2015). Siten palvelukokemuksen voidaan olettaa rakentuvan myös kulttuurisiin tekijöihin ja arvostuksiin.

Kulttuurin abstrakti ja dynaaminen olemus tekee siitä vaikeasti lähestyttävän, ja sitä on määritelty lukuisilla eri tavoilla. Tässä tutkimuksessa kulttuuri nähdään jatkuvasti muuntuvina, vuorovaikutuksessa rakentuvina yhteisinä merkityksenantoina, toimintatapoina ja arvostuksina (Piller 2011, Dahl 2014). Abstraktina ja monitahoisena ilmiönä kulttuuriin liittyy osin vastakkaisiakin suuntauksia. Jokainen yksilö identifioituu tilanteen mukaan useisiin kulttuurisiin ryhmiin, mikä tekee ihmisistä kulttuurisia ”hybridejä” (Eriksen 1994, Dahl 2014). Kulttuuria on perinteisesti tarkasteltu kuitenkin ominaisuutena (ns. essentialistinen ja kuvaava kulttuurikäsitys, Holliday 2011). Esimerkiksi lukuisat kulttuurienväliset viitekehykset kuten Hofsteden (1980, 2005), Trompenaarsin ja Hampden-Turnerin (1997) tai Meyerin (2014) mallit pohjautuvat kansallista kult-

tuuria yhteisenä piirteenä pitävään käsitykseen. Monet kriittisemmät ja tulkinnallista kulttuurikäsitystä kannattavat tutkijat (mm. Holliday 2011, 2013; Piller 2011; Dahl 2014) pitävät kuvailevaa ja ihmisen toimintaa ennustavaa kulttuurikäsitystä liian yksinkertaistavana ja stereotypioita vahvistavana. Kansallisen kulttuurin käsitettä pidetään myös ongelmallisena, sillä se käsittää liian suuren ihmisryhmän voidakseen olla yhteistä tulkintaa (Piller 2007). Tutkimuksen mielenkiinnon kohteena onkin selvittää, miten kulttuuria lähestytään palvelumuotoilussa, jonka lähtökohtana ja vahvuutena on konstruktiivinen ja kehittävä lähestymistapa, joka mahdollistaa syvällisen ymmärryksen palvelun käyttäjästä osallistavien menetelmien kautta.

Aihetta lähestytään monimenetelmällisesti. Tutkimus perustuu kolmeen erilliseen, pääosin laadulliseen osatutkimukseen, joilla pyritään vastamaan tutkimuskysymykseen ”Miten palvelumuotoilussa lähestytään ns. suuria eli kansallisia, etnisiä ja alueellisia kulttuureita?”. Kysymyksenasettelu perustuu kokemusperäiseen havaintoon siitä, että ihmisiä kuvaillaan myös palvelumuotoilun piirissä kansallisten kulttuurien perusteella. Tutkimuksen pääkysymykseen sekä siitä johdettuihin viiteen alakysymykseen etsittiin vastauksia eri osatutkimuksissa, joiden tuloksia pohditaan menetelmäprosessin kuvaamisen jälkeen.

Ensimmäisessä vaiheessa haastateltiin 14:ää palvelumuotoilijaa, jotka valittiin lumipallo-otannalla. Puolistrukturoidut haastattelukysymykset pyrkivät löytämään vastauksia tutkimuksen alakysymyksiin: Miten palvelumuotoilijat puhuvat kulttuurista? Mikä on heidän käsityksensä kulttuurin merkityksestä ja olemuksesta? Miten palvelumuotoilijat kertovat ottavansa kulttuuriset tekijät huomioon palvelumuotoiluprosessin aikana? Miten hyvä palvelu määritellään kulttuurisesta näkökulmasta? Haastatteluissa saavutettiin saturaatio noin 10:nnen haastattelun kohdalla, minkä jälkeen data luokiteltiin ja koodattiin soveltavaa temaattista analyysiä varten (Guest ym. 2012).

Toinen osatutkimus suunniteltiin täydentämään palvelumuotoilijoiden haastatteluja. Tässä vaiheessa analysoitiin kulttuurin esiintymistä palvelumuotoilun ammattikirjallisuudessa, tavoitteena vastata osin samoihin tutkimuskysymyksiin kuin ensimmäisessä osatutkimuksessa mutta erityisesti siihen, miten kulttuurista puhutaan alan ei-akateemisessa kirjallisuudessa. Aineisto kerättiin perustellun asiantuntijalausunnon pohjalta valikoituneesta kuudesta suositusta englanninkielistä ammattikirjasta sekä palvelumuotoilun alan ammatillisen aikakausjulkaisun (Touchpoint) siihen mennessä ilmestyneen 21 numeron artikkeleista vuosilta 2009–2016. Kulttuuriin liittyvien aiheiden etsinnässä määriteltiin avainsanat, joiden avulla esiintymät kerättiin aineistosta määrällisesti. Digitaalisen haun lisäksi koko aineisto luettiin myös manuaalisesti, jotta löydettiin myös sellaiset kulttuuriin liittyvät aiheet, joissa ei käytetty määriteltyjä avainsanoja. Määrällinen aineisto tarjosi realistisen kokonaiskuvan kulttuurin esiintymisestä ammattikirjallisuudessa ja auttoi tiivistämään aineiston (Bulmer 2006; Hirsjärvi ym. 2000) laadullista sisällönanalyysiä varten (Guest ym. 2012).

Palvelu on aina vuorovaikutteista, joten kolmas osatutkimus suunniteltiin laajentamaan ymmärrystä kulttuurien merkityksellisyydestä palveluiden käyttäjien näkökulmasta. Strukturoituihin haastatteluihin perustuva ja useampaa haas-

tattelijaa hyödyntävä laadullinen tutkimus etsi vastauksia kysymyksiin siitä, miten käyttäjät arvioivat kulttuuristen tekijöiden vaikuttavan palvelutilanteisiin yleisesti, minkälaisissa tilanteissa osallisten kulttuuritaustalla on merkitystä ja mitä pidetään hyvänä palveluna. Haastateltavina oli 50 satunnaisesti valittua eri kulttuuritaustan omaavaa, eri ikäistä ja eri ammateissa toimivaa henkilöä. Haastatteluaineisto analysointiin Maxqda-tietokoneohjelmalla, joka mahdollisti laajahkon laadullisen aineiston luokittelun ja koodauksen.

Tapaa, jolla palvelumuotoilijat puhuivat kulttuurista, voi kuvailla varovaiseksi. Palvelumuotoilijat tunnistivat kulttuurin merkityksen palvelumuotoilussa, mutta haastattelujen ja ammattikirjallisuuden perusteella kulttuuria huomioitiin käytännössä melko vähän. Sanojen ja tekojen välillä oli selvää jännitettä, mikä näytti johtuvan epäselvistä kulttuurikäsityksistä ja niiden operationalisoinnin puutteesta. Merkittävää oli, että kulttuurin on perinteisesti katsottu olevan merkityksellistä lähinnä tietyillä palvelualoilla (esim. matkailu- ja ravitsemisala), mutta kolmannen osatutkimuksen mukaan palveluiden käyttäjät pitivät kulttuurin roolia merkityksellisenä moninaisissa palvelutilanteissa.

Analyysin perusteella kulttuuristen tekijöiden suodattaminen muista sosiaalisista tekijöistä on vaikeaa. Aineistosta välittyy käsitys, että kulttuuria pidetään useimmiten staattisena ryhmän ominaisuutena (essentialistinen ymmärrys). Kiinnostavana yksityiskohtana organisaatiokulttuureita pidettiin haastatteluissa ja ammattikirjallisuudessa merkityksellisempinä kuin suuria kansallisia, alueellisia tai etnisiä kulttuureita. Suuret kulttuurit taas yhdistettiin valtaosin kansallisuuksiin.

Vaikka sosiokonstruktionistista kulttuurikäsitystä ei tuotu erikseen esille, palvelumuotoilun koettiin tarjoavan mahdollisuuksia rakentaa kulttuurista ymmärrystä yhdessä palvelun käyttäjien kanssa. Kulttuurisiin tekijöihin näytetään keskittyvän kuitenkin vain kansainvälisissä projekteissa tai erikseen maahanmuuttajille kohdistetuissa palveluissa. Tällöin esimerkkeinä mainittiin lähestymistapoja, joiden avulla yhteistä ymmärrystä tutkittavien käyttäjien kanssa pystytään rakentamaan muun muassa kuvakortein, tulkkien tai paikallisten välittäjien avulla. Kulttuurilla todettiinkin olevan merkitystä juuri tämän tyyppisissä hankkeissa. Huomio oli tällöin kuitenkin yksinomaan palvelun käyttäjien kulttuuritaustoissa – palvelutarjoajien tai muiden osallisten kulttuurilla ei aineiston mukaan juurikaan nähty roolia. Erään haastateltavan mukaan kulttuurinen moninaisuus tuli riittävästi huomioitua sillä, että palvelumuotoilijatiimit ovat usein kansainvälisiä.

Kolmas osatutkimus viittaa siihen, että palveluiden käyttäjät antavat kulttuurisille tekijöille paljon moninaisempia merkityksiä kuin mitä ilmenee palvelumuotoilijoiden tai heidän ammattikirjallisuutensa keskusteluista. 46 vastaajaa 50:stä kertoi kulttuuristen tekijöiden vaikuttaneen hiljattaiseen palvelutilanteeseen. Merkittävämpinä kulttuurisina tekijöinä mainittiin palvelutilanteen kieli, kohteliaisuus ja palvelualttius, mieltymykset henkilökohtaisen etäisyyden tai palveluvuorovaikutuksen suhteen, tunne epätasa-arvosta tai syrjinnästä tai jutustelu (small talk). Kulttuuristen tekijöiden merkitys nousi sitä tärkeämmäksi mitä tietointensiivisemmästä palvelusta oli kyse.

Tutkimus viittaa siihen, että palvelun käsite (tunne palvelluksi tulemisesta) saa eri merkityksiä sen mukaan, millainen vastaajan oma kulttuurinen tausta on. Hyvää palvelua kuvattiin yleispätevin adjektiivein kuten tehokas, vuorovaikutteinen, kunnioittava/kohtelias, empaattinen/ystävällinen/rento, itsepalveluun perustuva tai ammattimainen/laadukas. Näille adjektiiveille annettiin kuitenkin eri merkityksiä ja arvotuksia vastaajan kulttuuritaustan mukaan, ja ne saattoivat olla keskenään ristiriidassa. Esimerkiksi ammattimaisessa palvelussa odotukset jutustelun ja tehokkuuden suhteen saattoivat hyvinkin olla vastakkaisia eri vastaajien välillä, ja yhtenä selittävänä tekijänä nähtiin tällöin nimenomaan kulttuuri.

Työn teoreettisena kontribuutiona on havainto palvelututkimuksen ja kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän tutkimuksen paradigmojen yhteneväisestä muutoksesta. Kummassakin huomio on siirtynyt suurista kohderyhmistä yksilöön ja yksilöiden väliseen vuorovaikutukseen. Osallisuuden ja ihmiskeskeisyyden korostus ovat johtaneet myös muotoilun tutkimuksessa korostamaan yhteisesti rakentuvaa arvonluontia sen sijaan, että muotoillaan niin sanotusti muille. Näin ollen prosessin merkitys ja sen ymmärryksen tärkeys painottuvat sekä palvelu-, muotoilu- että kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän tutkimuksessa. Aktiivisten toimijoiden välinen vuorovaikutus on siten keskeinen osa dynaamista ja modernia kulttuurin rakentumista sekä palvelukokemusta.

Palvelumuotoilua voidaan pitää palveluyhteiskunnan vastineena perinteiselle teollisen yhteiskunnan tuotekehitykselle. Yksilöllisyyttä yhä vahvemmin korostavassa toimintaympäristössä palvelumuotoilu tarjoaa yhteiskehittämisen menetelmiä yksilöllisten tarpeiden ja unelmien selvittämiseen ja tyydyttämiseen. Tutkimuksen perusteella sosiaalitieteiden usein määrällisiin menetelmiin perustuva kulttuuristen ilmiöiden tutkiminen soveltuu kuitenkin lähinnä palvelumuotoiluprosessin alkuvaiheeseen, jossa pyritään ymmärtämään palvelunkäyttäjiä ja käyttökontekstia laajasti. Perinteinen suuria kulttuureja painottava käsitys antaa sekä käsitteitä että mahdollistaa kokonaiskuvan rakentamisen, mikä puolestaan voi edesauttaa kulttuurin operationalisointia prosessin seuraavissa vaiheissa, jossa palvelua määritellään, testataan ja viedään käytäntöön. Muotoiluprosessin myöhemmissä vaiheissa tarvitaan kuitenkin enenevässä määrin kulttuurin dynaamisuutta ja prosessimaisuutta korostavia lähestymistapoja, jotka voivat auttaa palvelumuotoilijoita ottamaan huomioon paikallisen kontekstin ja muut sosiaaliset ja kulttuuriset tekijät.

Guestin ym. (2012) mukaan kulttuuria tarkastelevan tutkimuksen luotettavuutta voidaan arvioida vain tutkimusprosessin kautta. Tämän tutkimuksen menetelmällinen lähestymistapa on pyritty avaamaan mahdollisimman tarkasti, jotta lukija voi arvioida sen johdonmukaisuutta ja luotettavuutta. Laadullinen tutkimus ennustaa lähinnä mahdollisuuden logiikkaa (Ruusuvuori ym. 2010), joten tutkimuksen tuloksia voidaan yleistää koskemaan vain samankaltaisia tapauksia.

Tutkimuksen tulokset auttavat nostamaan esiin useita muita jatkotutkimusaiheita. Palveluprosessin osallisten yhteinen arvon luonti perustuu dialogiseen vuorovaikutukseen, joten tarvitaan lisätutkimusta siitä, minkälainen rooli eri kulttuuritaustoista tulevien osapuolten (ei vain asiakkaan) vuorovaikutuksella

on koko prosessin aikana. Hyvän palvelukokemuksen kulttuurisia merkityksiä tulisi tutkia lisää. Samoin tarvitaan lisänäkemystä siihen, minkälaisia kulttuurisia kompetensseja palvelumuotoilijat tarvitsevat. Mielenkiintoista olisi myös perehtyä siihen, miten palvelumuotoilu itsessään luo uudenlaista kulttuurisia merkityksiä erilaisissa konteksteissa.

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Appendix 1

THEMES OF SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH SERVICE DESIGNERS (SUB-STUDY 1)

Background information

- Nationality, country of employment
- Age, gender
- Work title / role at work

THEME 1. **Large cultures**

- What do you mean by large cultures?
- Do you have definitions for culture?
- On which cultural models is your understanding of culture based on? (if on any)?

THEME 2. **Culture's role in service design**

- Does culture play a role in your service design activities?
- When does culture have a role?
- If yes, can you describe the situation?
- If no, why not?

THEME 3. **Stakeholders and their cultural backgrounds' relevance**

- Whose cultural background is typically considered?
- Customers, service providers or service designers?
- Does the cultural environment have an impact on the SD process?
- What about your own cultural background, does it have an impact on your SD processes?
- Can you give examples?

THEME 4. **Service design tools and methods used in culture-related activities**

- What kind of tools or methods are used to address cultural issues?
- Have you noticed that some cultures prefer e.g. certain methods?
- Do you prefer some approaches?
- Can you give examples?

Appendix 1

THEME 5. **Training and intercultural competence development**

- Does your employer train its employees to become culturally competent?
- Have you participated in intercultural competence training?
- Do you think it is relevant to train people for gaining intercultural competence?

THEME 6. **Non-defined topics**

- Do you have any other remarks / opinions related to culture?
- Can you elaborate on that?
- Discussions around organizational culture, framing it out of the interview

Appendix 2

STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS ON SERVICE USERS, MULTIPLE INTERVIEWER GUIDANCE (SUB-STUDY 3)

Guidance for interviewers:

Please fill in one sheet for each interview! Take careful notes or transcribe below your recorded interviews

Interviewer: *Your name* **Interviewee:** *1, 2 or 3 (no names)*

Preparing for the interview

a) Find three people from different cultural backgrounds willing to be interviewed
b) Prepare a good setting for the interview: comfortable, quiet space or good online connection with video (for recognizing non-verbal communication
c) Enough time (1–2 min. for introducing yourself and the interview, 2–3 min for a short warm-up, 15–30 min for the actual interview
d) Tell that the interviews are confidential and will be handled without any names
e) Have a voice recorder or note taking utensils ready
f) Just listen, observe (and take notes, if not recording). Don't tell what you assume or think.
g) Keep asking WHY? HOW? What?
h) If needed, use auxiliary or prompting questions (in gray)

Background data of the respondents

Country of living	
Country of birth	
Cultural identity of the respondent (National, regional or ethnic group identity)	
Mother tongue	
Age	
Gender	
Occupation	

Appendix 2

Interview questions

1	Describe a service situation when you last felt that culture had some relevance. (Why? When? How was culture present?)	*Write the answers here....*
2	How do cultural factors influence your service experience? (Give examples. Tell about your emotions. How do you feel about it?)	
3	In which kind of services culture should be taken into consideration **in general**? (E.g. different service types or fields, specific service situations, locations, different customer roles)	
4	Please describe in which kind of service situations you feel that **your** cultural background matters? Why? (E.g. while exploring for service alternatives, when choosing to buy a service, in service interactions; in certain types of services, in certain places, only when traveling, etc.)	
5	Relating to the previous question: How do you wish your culture would be considered? Is it important for you? (E.g. language use, additional instructions, politeness practices, dressing practices, eye contact, acc6ompanying people etc.)	

6	What about the service provider's cultural background: does it matter? Why, how? (Is it the service provider organization/country of origin or the customer-facing employee?)	
7	In your opinion, what is good service in your culture? (E.g. self-service, involving human interaction, showing hospitality, respect or trust, not wasting your time, offering extra, prioritizing some customer segments etc.)	
8	Any other comments? (Ask if your respondent wants to add something to the topic or pose a question you would like to add.)	

If you do not wish to have your data included in any later research please indicate that by adding a cross "X" here: