FOR READING AT LEISURE Working in a Field of Tensions 2:
Targeting and the Paradox of Recognition

"Like any social project, the project of recognition overall and specific projects of recognition individually have to be understood in relation to the specific ways they relate to systems of power. In the moment it manifests itself as a demand or intention, social recognition excludes [someone]."
(Mecheril 2000)

As discussed in Text 1.RL, one motivation for cultural mediation that has long been felt is the demand that the arts be accessible to all members of a society as a common good. In recent decades, publicly funded cultural institutions have come under growing pressure to demonstrate their achievements in this respect in terms of visitor numbers and broadly based audiences. Over the same period, competition with other offerings in the leisure and educational sector has heated up. One result is that cultural institutions, even those for whom democratization is not necessarily a priority, have adopted a → *visitor-oriented* approach and expanded their cultural mediation programmes to target specific groups, with the aim of expanding their audiences. In this context, institutions focus on groups within society which are not represented in their usual audiences; groups which are thought to require an active invitation. The sections of the population at issue possess relatively little → *cultural and economic capital* and are thus viewed from a privileged position as "disadvantaged", [bildungsfern, having little exposure to education].

The targeting of these groups by cultural institutions entails a field of tensions which the scholar Paul Mecheril, an expert in issues of education and migration, calls the "paradox of recognition", with reference to Hegel (→ *Mecheril 2000*). On the one hand, targeting of this kind is, allegedly at least, intended to result in the elimination of discrimination, or at least open up the possibility of eliminating it. On the other hand though, targeting implies an identification and thus a definition of the persons targeted as being different, "the other", and as a consequence, not as equals. The identifications themselves, for their part, are neither random nor neutral: they are made from the points of view and in the interests of those who do the targeting. Thus they serve not only to create the "other", but also to confirm the self as the standard to be aspired to. The terms "low exposure to education" or "bildungsfern" [trans. literally: "remote from education"], for instance, beg the question of how education can be defined in a way which allows people to be characterized as being located at distance from it. The latter term, "bildungsfern", crops up often in the German-language debate about the use of culture and the arts and it refers (usually tacitly) to a lack of affinity with the recognized, bourgeois educational cannon.[1] "Bildungsfern" is also used as a label placed on one group

→ *visitor-oriented* see Glossary

→ *cultural and economic capital* see Glossary entry on Capital, forms of

→ *Mecheril 2000* http://www. forum-interkultur.net/uploads/ tx_textdb/22.pdf [14.10.2012]; see Resource Pool MFV0201.pdf
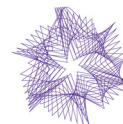
by another group of people who assume that the education they possess would be also beneficial for other people. Seen in this way, the "equality" being aimed at in the context of this and many other forms of targeting appears to be less the elimination of discrimination than the right (or the duty?) to assimilate to those doing the targeting. In the discussion about access to the job market, "bildungsfern" describes a person who has not undergone certified training or earned school leaving certificates. The scholar Erich Ribolits, an expert in the philosophy and practice of education, objects to this use, pointing out that "education" does not mean job market compatibility and suggests an alternative understanding of educated as having "the ability [...] to hold one's own vis-à-vis the constraints in the system that result from existing power structures". People "educated" in this sense would "oppose the totalitarian orientation of life geared at optimally successful employment and consumption" and see "nature as more than just an object to be exploited and other people as more than competitors" (→ _Ribolits 2011_). From this perspective, one would be forced to consider the majority of the population to be "remote from education", according to Ribolits. He points out, though, that people who exhibit the relevant attitudes can be found in a very broad range of groups in society and that there is no causal association between a high-level school or vocational degree or bourgeois conceptions of culture and those attitudes. In Ribolits' view, his concept of education might even allow the knowledge and skills possessed by people with little cultural or economic capital (who as a result have an enhanced ability to improvise and subvert) to be interpreted as the mark of an educated elite.

The terms "bildungsfern", [low exposure to education] and their ilk are often used to identify target groups, but they are never used explicitly to communicate with them, as it is unlikely that anyone would feel that they were being addressed in a favourable light with such terms. The same does not apply to another form of address which is no less problematic and ever more common: "immigrants and their families" or, in EU-speak, "people with migrant backgrounds". In the first decade of the 21st century (more precisely: since the attack on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001), the question of the position and principles forming the basis for the activities of cultural institutions in the → _migration society_ has taken on great importance, as a great many projects, studies, handouts and conferences have borne out.[2] Targeting of people with "migrant backgrounds" by individuals and institutions engaged in cultural mediation – associated in no small degree to funding policy requirements – fails to reflect the enormous diversity and complexity of identity constructs in a migration society. This is because such programmes are targeted at a very specific group, which is marked ethnically and nationally as "other". Specifically: cultural mediation programmes are not intended to bring high-earning → _expats_ into the art world, they are aimed at people "remote from

→ _Ribolits 2011_ http://www.gew-berlin.de/blz/22795.php [16.8.2012]; see Resource Pool MFV0202.pdf

→ _migration society_ see Glossary

→ _expats_ see Glossary
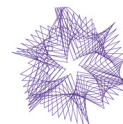
education" who have "migrant backgrounds". Mecheril and other authors make it clear that this form of identification constitutes a "culturalization" of structural and social injustices. Rather than examining the effects of social, legal and political discrimination caused by the structures of the → *majority society*, the pre-defined cultural differences attributed to the people who are invited become the most important model for explaining their absence in the institutions. Thus it is hardly surprising that people are increasingly loathe to be addressed with such terms (Mysorekar 2007), an issue explored for instance, in a workshop held by → *Tiroler Kulturinitative* [Tirolean Intitiative for Culture] in the autumn of 2011 under the title "Anti-racism and Cultural Work":[3]

In 'critical' or anti-racist contexts there is a fairly solid consensus that the focus of public debates about immigration should shift their focus from the immigrants to society's problems: they should address the education system's ineffectiveness and racist structures rather than speaking of immigrants with little exposure to education; mechanisms which result in exclusion rather than immigrants who exploit the social system, etc. Moreover, the debate on immigration has shifted dramatically to concentrate on immigrants from Islamic countries: whereas a few years ago people spoke about immigrants whose parents or grandparents were Turkish, now they speak about Muslim immigrants.

Questions based on the fact that cultural work shapes discourse:
– What contributions does free cultural work make to the debate on immigration?
– How can one do anti-racist cultural work without getting into in the current immigration debate?
– Is it possible to submit grant proposals, e.g., without getting caught up in this debate?
– Can one avoid "migrant" *? Or: AntiRa work beyond identity attributions.
In addition to these questions, the workshop will address the following issues:
– How do people deal with forms of racism within and outside of their own activities in independent cultural work?
– Is there a link between anti-racism work and resource allocation?
– What criteria are used to define racism?"

A petition entitled → *Stopp mit dem falschen Gerede vom Migrationshintergrund* [Cut the Bogus Talk About Migrant Backgrounds] was started in 2012. It is rare to find host institutions which entertain the idea of creating, or rather, exhibit willingness to create space at the level of their programme design or job activities for the people they are targeting. Switzerland is not the only country where key positions in cultural institutions are filled almost exclusively by members of the → *white* majority.[4] Here we see another dimension of the paradox: targeting results in the creation of

→ *majority society* see Glossary

→ *Tiroler Kulturinitative* http://www.tki.at/tkiweb/tkiweb?page=ShowArticle&service=external&sp=I363 [26.8.2012];
see Resource Pool MFV0203.pdf

→ *Stopp mit dem falschen Gerede vom Migrationshintergrund* https://www.openpetition.de/petition/online/stopp-dem-falschen-gerede-vom-migrationshintergrund [25.8.2012];
see Resource Pool MFV0204.pdf

→ *white* see Glossary
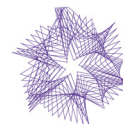
"other", i.e. the manifestation of inequalities, but it is only by actively tackling these categories of inequality that existing inequalities can be redressed. Citing Simone de Beauvoir[5], Mecheril (2000) emphasizes that pretending that differences do not exist cannot serve as a rational way of dealing with the paradox of recognition. Ignoring categories contributes to the continued existence of discrimination no less than codifying them does. Mecheril argues that although it is vital to avoid reducing people to affiliations, we must respect the human need to differentiate oneself and define one's position by way of affiliations. This is in no small part due to the fact that self-identifying through membership of a group can represent a form of psychological and physical self-preservation in the sense of → *strategic essentialism* (Spivak 1988). Moreover, identifications are the product of society as a whole: immigrant artists face expectations that their artistic output will relate to their ethnicity or origin (→ *Terkessidis 2011*). Reference to one's ethnic origin is the most frequent occasion for categorization created by the majority society and one that cannot be avoided. → *People of colour* are forced to answer the question "where are you from" throughout their lives, regardless of whether they hear it as expressing polite interest in themselves as individuals or as insulting and annoying. Simply responding "Switzerland", "Bern", or "Mummy's tummy" is very seldom taken as a satisfactory answer by the asker (→ *Winter Sayilir 2011*; → *Kilomba 2006*).

The absence of a way out is one of the defining features of a paradox. Contradictions are inevitably entailed in any endeavour to create fair access in the cultural field, in every effort to combat the creation of minorities, discrimination or exclusion through education. Yet some ways of coping with these contradictions are more appealing and better informed (more contemporary, more appropriate) than others. Mecheril proposes "communicative reflexivity" as a professional approach for acting within the paradox:

"Professional activities and structures are scrutinized to determine the extent to which they contribute to exclusion of the "other" and / or a reproductive creation of the 'other'. […] Communicative reflexivity – as the medium in which an education of recognition can develop […] also means that change-oriented consideration of conditions impeding or producing the other should characterize a communication process which […] should involve the 'others' […]" (Mecheril 2000, p. 11).

Thus Mecheril's communicative reflexivity entails not only a capacity to analyze one's own vocabulary, structures and courses of action, but also connecting with the people being targeted to analyze and take action together. What implications does this have for cultural mediation invitation policies i.e. if the aim goes beyond generating higher audience numbers (while having as little impact as possible on the arts and their institutions), and the creation of fair access is a declared objective? First, it becomes clear that the language of target-group communications is insufficient for

→ *strategic essentialism* see Glossary

→ *Terkessidis 2011* http://www. freitag.de/autoren/der-freitag/ im-migrations hintergrund; see Resource Pool MFV0206.pdf

→ *people of colour* see Glossary

→ *Winter Sayilir 2011* http://www. woz.ch/1131/antirassismus training-fuer-europa/ wo-kommst-du-her-aus-mutti [16.8.2012]; see Resource Pool MFV0207.pdf

→ *Kilomba 2006* http://www. migration-boell.de/web/ diversity/48_608.asp [16.8.2012]; see Resource Pool MFV0208.pdf
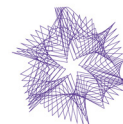
an approach based on communicative reflexivity. If we agree that reflection and cooperation with the people being targeted are basic prerequisites for the creation of equity of access in the artistic field, then the compilation of empirical knowledge about predefined groups can no longer suffice as a basis on which to design programmes for those groups. Under these conditions, the target audiences are no longer the potential consumers for a cultural offering: they are partners in a collectively shaped process of change which will not leave the self-image of those offering the cultural mediation undisturbed.

The audience development model of the "arts ambassadors" (→ *Arts Council England 2003*) proposed by Arts Council England is an example of a concept which builds on the approach described here. Arts ambassadors are people representative of local population groups that are of interest to an institution which wants to diversify its audiences. Arts ambassadors work to spread information about an institution's programmes by word of mouth. More importantly for this discussion though, they also communicate the perspectives and needs of the interest groups in question back to the institution. For the cultural institution, the idea is to use an approach to consumer research based on → *action-research* methods to acquire information about the interests and needs of the population group in question and to develop appropriate offerings within the framework of this consultation. The Arts Council notes that the approach can best reach its full potential when the relationship between the representatives of the institution and its ambassadors is based on an exchange of knowledge and information in which both parties are equally interested in what the other has to say. Arts ambassadors are representatives of their interest groups or social interest groups, and in the best case, they have an impact on practices in the artistic field. This form of cooperation concentrates on the needs of the interest group in question and thus on the potentials for changing the institution: "The ambassador approach requires commitment and can even bring about fundamental changes in the host organisation" (Arts Council 2003, p. 3). With respect to the function of the art ambassador as a representative of the institution to the outside world, the Arts Council expressly recommends that ambassadors be hired, i.e. provided with guaranteed remuneration and social security. The Council describes the use of volunteers, which only serves the purposes of stabilizing or reinforcing existing institutional conditions and the institution's self-image, as inadequate from the standpoint of reciprocity.

This last statement is intended to help avoid another problem that frequently arises, the exploitation of the knowledge and abilities of "others" for the continued existence and edification of cultural institutions in exchange for compensation which consists only of the symbolic value the institution has to offer. Thus, although the ambassador approach is more
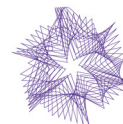
strongly rooted in the marketing area than in education, one key aspect of educational reflexivity is crucial to its success: knowledge about the → *power to harm* (→ *Castro Varela*, undated) which cultural institutions or even cultural mediators possess due to their symbolic capital, and a responsible approach to dealing with this power. To avoid paternalism, communicative reflexivity is again called for: working with the targeted population to identify mutual interests and clearly stipulate who is to benefit how from the collaboration. In addition, it is necessary to ensure that there is always space in which to forge this understanding and address conflicts – space for the "ability to let yourself be confused" (Castro Varela undated, p. 3). In this model, reflecting about power also leads to the questions of how and by whom the representatives of the community in question (who will serve as the interface with the cultural institution) are selected and what effects the selection process will have on the collaboration.

   This approach does not sidestep the paradox of recognition, described above, which requires an identification and thus a definition: some categorization must take place in order to identify a group to contact about working together. Through the forms of address it chooses to use, though, a cultural institution can communicate that it is actively grappling with the problems of categorization and the definition of identity positions which are associated with defining target groups. This starts with the vocabulary it chooses to use or not to use. These choices can make it clear that the institution is aware of the dangers of → *essentialization*. A programme for "people with experience of life", for instance, addresses anyone who identifies that way; the constellations which result might be more interesting than would be the case if only "seniors" were to participate. Attempts to reach people in terms that replace common categorizations with unexpected categories take a similar approach. For instance, potential interest groups could be invited on the basis of programme or cultural mediation content, rather than commonplace demographic traits (ethnicity, age, marital status), as was the case in the cultural mediation projects of the exhibition documenta 12 in Kassel, including one in which people who are confronted with death in their professional lives were invited to a workshop about the motif of "bare life" in the exhibition (Gülec et al. 2009, p. 111 ff.).

   A cultural institution which sees itself less as a producer of a programme to be marketed and more as one stakeholder helping to shape a collective endeavour – not only in the artistic field, but also in its local community – will need to find forms of address that go beyond a target-group orientation and aim at initiating cooperation between the institution and various different publics. The questions from the Tiroler Kulturintiative workshop, cited above, clearly suggest that the most consistent and effective way in which an institution can cope with the targeting paradox in the case of "migrant background" is to shift the focus away from "immigrant

→ *power to harm* see Glossary

→ *Castro Varela* O. D. http://www.graz.at/cms/dokumente/10023890_415557/0a7c3e13/Interkulturelle%20Vielfalt,%20Wahrnehmung%20und%20Sellbstreflexion.pdf [12.10.2012]; see Resource Pool MFV0210.pdf

→ *essentialization* see Glossary
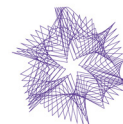
others" and on to the cultural institution itself as part of a migration society, to the structural mechanisms of exclusion in it and to its potential for transformation. From there the cultural institution can move on to its role as a stakeholder in society that identifies with the concerns of the people it is approaching rather than expecting them to adapt to suit it or trying to inject a bit of "colour" into itself by way of the "otherness" of the people it invites.

1   Here, one example among many, published while this text was being written: "Thus some German-speaking music conservatories offer training and continuing training programmes in music education designed to prepare [students] for the various activity fields for target audiences from young to old, from "locally born" to "post-migrant" and from *bildungsnah* to *bildungsfern* [italics added, low to high exposure to education]" (Wimmer 2012).
2   A few examples: *Conferences:* "inter.kultur.pädagogik", Berlin 2003; "Interkulturelle Bildung – Ein Weg zur Integration?", Bonn 2007; "Migration in Museums: Narratives of Diversity in Europe", Berlin 2008; "Stadt Museum Migration", Dortmund 2009; "MigrantInnen im Museum", Linz 2009; "Interkultur. Kunstpädagogik Remixed", Nürnberg 2012; *Research / development:* "Creating Belonging", Zurich University of the Arts, funded by SNF 2008 – 2009; "Migration Design. Codes, Identitäten, Integrationen", Zurich University of the Arts, funded by KTI 2008 – 2010; "Museums as Places for Intercultural Dialogue", EU project 2007 – 2009; "Der Kunstcode – Kunstschulen im Interkulturellen Dialog", Bundesverband der Jugendkunstschulen und Kulturpädagogischen Einrichtungen e. V. (BJKE), funded by the German Ministry of Education and Research 2005 – 2008; "Museum und Migration: Kinder und Jugendliche
mit Migrationshintergrund als Zielgruppe von Museen", Linzer Institut für qualitative analyzen (LIquA)[Linz Institute of Quality Analysis], on behalf of the City of Linz and the Province of Upper Austria, Department of Social Affairs and Institute for Art and Folk Culture 2009 – 2010. *Publications and handouts:* Handout on the Swiss Day of Museums 2010; Allmanritter, Siebenhaar 2010; Centre for Audience Development of FU Berlin: Migranten
als Publika von öffentlichen deutschen Kulturinstitutionen – Der aktuelle Status Quo aus Sicht der Angebotsseite, 2009, → http://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/v/zad/news/zadstudie.html [16.4.2012].
3   The workshop was led by Vlatka Frketic.
4   "People belonging to the majority" used in this text refers to Swiss citizens of any language region.
5   "To decline to accept such notions as the eternal feminine, the black soul, the Jewish character, is not to deny that Jews, Negroes and women exist today – this denial does not represent a liberation for those concerned, but rather a flight from reality." Beauvoir 1953, p. 14.

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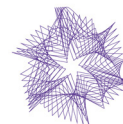
Literature and Links

The text is based in parts on the previously published paper:

– Mörsch, Carmen: "Über Zugang hinaus. Nachträgliche einführende Gedanken zur Arbeitstagung 'Kunstvermittlung in der Migrationsgesellschaft'", in: IAE, IfA, Ifkik (pub.): Kunstvermittlung in der Migrationsgesellschaft / Reflexionen einer Arbeitstagung, Berlin: series ifa-Edition Kultur und Außenpolitik, 2011, pp. 10 – 19

Further reading:

– Almanritter, Vera; Siebenhaar, Klaus (eds.): Kultur mit allen! Wie öffentliche deutsche Kultureinrichtungen Migranten als Publikum gewinnen, Berlin: B & S Siebenhaar, 2010
→ Arts Council, England: A Practical Guide to Working with Arts Ambassadors, London: Arts Council, 2003; http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/a-practical-guide-to-working-with-arts-ambassadors [12.10.2012], see Resource Pool MFV0209.pdf
→ Castro Varela, Maria do Mar: Interkulturelle Vielfalt, Wahrnehmung und Selbstreflexion aus psychologischer Sicht (not dated); http://www.graz.at/cms/dokumente/10023890_41 5557/0a7c3e13/Interkulturelle%20Vielfalt,%20Wahrnehmung%20und%20Sellbstreflexion. pdf [12.10.2012], see Resource Pool MFV0210.pdf
– Gülec, Ayse et al.: Kunstvermittlung 1: Arbeit mit dem Publikum, Öffnung der Institution, Zürich: Diaphanes 2009
→ Kilomba, Grada: "Wo kommst du her?", in: Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Dossier Schwarze Community in Deutschland (not dated); http://www.migration-boell.de/web/ diversity/48_608.asp [16.8.2012], see Resource Pool MFV0208.pdf
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→ Terkessidis, Mark: "Im Migrationshintergrund", in: der freitag 14.1.2011; http://www. freitag.de/autoren/der-freitag/im-migrationshintergrund [15.2.2013], see Resource Pool MFV0206.pdf
→ Wimmer, Constanze: "Kammermusik-Collage oder Babykonzert – von den vielfältigen Wegen der Musikvermittlung", in: KM. Das Monatsmagazin von Kulturmanagement Network. Kultur und Management im Dialog, no. 67, May 2012, p. 15; http://www. kulturmanagement.net/downloads/magazin/km1205.pdf [25.8.2012], see Resource Pool MFV0211.pdf
– Winter Sayilir, Sara: "'Wo kommst du her?' – 'Aus Mutti'. Antirassismustraining für Europa", in: WOZ Die Wochenzeitung, no. 31, 14. August 2011; see Resource Pool MFV0207.pdf

Links:

→ Petition "Stopp mit dem falschen Gerede vom Migrationshintergrund": https://www. openpetition.de/petition/online/stopp-dem-falschen-gerede-vom-migrationshintergrund [25.8.2012], see Resource Pool MFV0204.pdf
→ TKI, Tiroler Kulturinitiativen / IG Kultur Tirol: http://www.tki.at/tkiweb/tkiweb?page=Show Article&service=external&sp=l363 [25.8.2012], see Resource Pool MFV0203.pdf