

**How does an individual's culture trigger barriers of communication
in a diverse environment?**

The case of a European Enforcement Network

AN ACTION RESEARCH INQUIRY

This thesis is submitted in accordance with the requirements of the
University of Liverpool for the degree of
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Declaration

The researcher, Cari Lynn Leyshon, declares that this thesis research study represents original work that has not been previously submitted in support of an application for degree or academic qualifications. All work pertaining to other authors used within this thesis is identified as such, with appropriate citations, references and acknowledgement of the authors.

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Abstract

How does an individual's culture trigger barriers of communication in a diverse environment? – The case of a European Enforcement Network

By: Cari Lynn Leyshon

The following qualitative study explores how the role of culture within the individual schema impacts barriers of communication with a group of diverse stakeholders for a European enforcement network.

Utilizing both insider-researcher and cooperative inquiry while collecting multiple diverse perspectives with an online pretest survey, in-depth interviews, an online focus group, meeting facilitation and participant observation. Using four insider-researcher cycles to gain collective input to expose how the role of culture impacts participant's personal biases, stereotypes and judgments that are potentially contributing to barriers of diverse communication. The collective data informs the implementation of actionable strategies to confront barriers such as language, lack of trust, conflict, and unacknowledged schemas that disrupt multicultural communication. This study validates the importance of individual acknowledgment of how culture influences their schema before diverse communication can be improved for collaboration to occur.

The key findings further indicate how it is possible to change existing beliefs, stereotypes and biases by acknowledging first what they are within a trusting environment. A focus on the individual's unique schema overcomes the complexities of stakeholders' multiple cultural identities to realize collaborative action. Actionable knowledge is generated by collective stakeholders' perspectives to generate a new European business initiative. Sustainable change occurs by placing the impact of culture at the heart of inquiry when conducting a diverse stakeholder analysis combined with a situational leadership approach. In conclusion, culture does impact stakeholders' perceptions of reality, making change more effective at an individual level first, to confront the barriers of diverse communication in this European enforcement network.

Dedication

To my husband and soulmate; Martin

My Children;

Melissa, Melanie, Maalia and Mason

My Grandchildren;

Ava, Jayden, Aria, and Everly

To my very proud parents:

My mother, Carol

My late father, Richard

and

My dear late grandmother, Vera

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1.0 Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Background of the European Network

The European enforcement network in focus is comprised of eighteen different companies representing Belgium, France, England/Wales, Italy, Poland, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Germany, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Ireland, Latvia, Spain, and Portugal. Each member represents a unique country that provides the expert legal services to collect amicable debts and debt enforcement.

The network started in October, 2012, when a need was identified by the founding chairman, that collaboration of enforcement services is required for cross-border collection of warrants in Europe. Without the creation of this network each European country will be unable to collect the millions of Euros of outstanding debt owed simply due to relocation of the debtor to a country where their jurisdiction ends. Through this European network it is possible to continue to pursue the debtor in different countries, which is a key competitive advantage in retaining and attracting local clients with European reach. The network only allows one company per country to be exclusively represented. This is identified by the stakeholders as a very attractive benefit for companies accepted into the network, enabling them to offer this exclusive service to their clients.

The network provides further value to the existing members through sharing knowledge and collaborating enforcement strategies to achieve clients' needs for European enforcement, although the barriers of communication are suffocating desired objectives. For effective knowledge transfer and sharing information between members and clients, communication is a fundamental aspect. In addition to the members' capabilities of understanding English, every diverse cultural lens provides a different interpretation of common terms such as trust, promptness of responses, and client management that are currently causing conflicts within the network.

My role is to identify barriers to communication through a collaborative investigation with participants to enhance collective understanding of the network's benefits, and their individual experiences and perceptions of the meetings. Ignoring the role of culture in this diverse network potentially continues to increase barriers inflaming further risk of lack of engagement and conflict.

Barriers of communication block experiential learning of another culture which could be a fundamental aspect of synergizing stakeholders in the network. Every meeting rotates to a different European country, revealing the risk if the role of culture fails to build rapport between stakeholders. Barriers could additionally be contributing to the lack of perceived value of acknowledging how the role of culture impacts individual perceptions.

The next section shares further insight into understanding the particularities of how poor communication is adversely impacting the networks' operation and stakeholders experience.

1.2 How Poor Communication is Impacting the Network

Poor communication is happening within the network when the members' express dissatisfaction on the response times of other members in regards to their inquiry for services. This problem is identified by the board who are receiving regular complaints from the members on existing warrants. There is an assumption that all members possess the same interpretation of what a prompt response time means, which is not the case. Therefore, when this expectation is not met the member perceives other members are apathetic causing further internal conflict due to this misunderstanding.

This is a poor reflection on the member's clients service standards consequently effecting the relationships between the network members. When this issue is investigated, it is discovered that every country has a different definition of what is an acceptable response time. For example, in the United Kingdom a prompt response means some form of acknowledgement of receipt of the inquiry within the same

business day if not within hours. On the other hand, in Spain, an acceptable response time is three weeks or more. This discrepancy needs to be explored further to inquire what other differences are between the cultures in regards to communication expectations that appear to be causing conflict between members of the network.

My organization is growing organically, although collectively the stakeholders desire to resolve the barriers to communication that are stagnating actions towards achieving desired strategies. There is a lack of understanding the specific causes for the misunderstandings that this research must investigate or this issue could sabotage the efforts of the network. As an insider researcher, I must acknowledge my own perceptions, biases and stereotypes as I engage with the participants to collectively challenge the barriers of communication within the network (Moore, 2007). All stakeholders within the network travel and work with people from different cultures regularly, possibly coping by adapting their communication skills on the surface to stimulate polite dialogue (Crowne, 2013). When they fail to acknowledge how their own schema could be a barrier to building authentic diverse relationships, it can be preventing a deep understanding between stakeholders (Crowne, 2013; Leung and Morris, 2015).

The initial discussions between stakeholders identify a focus is needed on member engagement and growth. By focusing on the problem of poor communication, it is uncovered that engagement is perceived differently by each participant depending on communication skill levels. With further inquiry, it is necessary to gain multiple perspectives to identify what barriers are preventing effective communication. Language and trust appear to be fundamental aspects to building multicultural relationships. Conversely, it is necessary to explore what the differences are between establishing a multicultural relationship versus one where both parties share the same cultural background. When a member receives a delayed response to an inquiry from another member the trust levels deteriorate influencing overall network engagement.

It is my interpretation that during the past six years of attending the meetings I have nurtured relationships with each member based on trust, social interaction, willingness

to communicate, and openness to learn about their culture. I use personality traits such as openness to experience, conscientiousness, level of extroversion, emotional stability, and agreeableness to improve relationships in diverse settings (Ang et al., 2006). On the other hand, without sufficient trust levels participants do not share uncomfortable perceptions of other cultures authentically.

The process of managing unconscious personal biases relies on a safe environment to acknowledge individual schemas. By openly sharing my own biases, judgments and stereotypes during the initial stages of inquiry inspires others to do the same using the process of critical self-reflection (Zhao et al., 2013). An empowering leadership style simultaneously creates a trusting environment to provoke other members into understanding how their own schema influences their perceptions of reality (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2018). The process of inquiring into members' perceptions of benefits, engagement and growth opportunities reveals the core problem of how stakeholders view their reality. This implication needs to be addressed before it is possible to break the pattern of miscommunication and to stop hindering change.

As I begin my insider-researcher inquiry as a scholar-practitioner, my understanding of how the role of culture impacts communication is central to individual perceptions of the world from a different cultural lens that influences their personal judgments, biases, and stereotypes, also known as a "schema". The role of culture within the individual schema also poses challenges with creating a mutual understanding of shared terms and actions that could potentially have different meanings in each culture, which could pose as a potential barrier to collaboration that needs to be explored further. It is collective consensus that all members want to solve this poor communication problem to maximize the benefits of belonging to the network.

1.3. The Identified Problem Statement

The barriers of language, trust, and internal conflict are blocking the collaboration of stakeholders to implement desired strategies by improving skills to nurture diverse relationships. Understanding how learning begins at an individual level first, through

the ability to recognize and acknowledge their own personal biases, judgments and stereotypes instigates the journey towards achieving higher cultural intelligence.

Therefore, the evolving focus is on the role of culture within the individual schema to understand how barriers of diverse communication are affecting stakeholder relationships. I observe how the different countries perceive response times and trust differently, indicating the need for further inquiry on how culture influences individual perception. This focus moves past the original initial perceptions that our problem is about engagement and growth towards the following identified problem:

How is the role of an individual's culture triggering barriers such as language, trust, conflict and unacknowledged schemas, that impact communication in a diverse environment? – The case of a European Enforcement Network.

1.4 Research Questions to Inquire into Barriers to Diverse Communication:

To investigate how culture influences stakeholder's schemas, which is potentially impacting engagement and growth, it is necessary to ask further questions. I create the following questions to structure my inquiry to investigate individual stakeholder perceptions, which is necessary for collective input. These questions assist with my exploration of individual knowledge or awareness of their own schema to interpret the influence of culture.

1. What are the participant's perceptions of the benefits of the network?
2. How do the participants perceive barriers of communication?
3. How do the participant's individual schema help/hinder with multicultural relationships versus same culture relationships?
4. How do the participant's cultural stereotypes influence communication?
5. What are the participant's perceptions of engagement and growth opportunities of the network?

1.5 My Background and Interest in the Inquiry

I am a scholar-practitioner, raised in Canada, living in Spain, married to a Welshman and working with the members from the eighteen different cultures. I am learning how the role of culture influences diverse communication combined with my own multiple cultural identities. My developing core skills are the willingness to be vulnerable, authentic, and curious, so I am open to new experiences while simultaneously being actively mindful to adapt. I am the appointed marketing consultant for the network, embracing my insider role to provide this investigation. I seek to understand each participant's schema, including the role of culture, and at the same time to acknowledge my own schema. I work from my home office in Spain. The research is conducted online with physical attendance at meetings in Milan and Vilnius.

1.6 Thesis Map and Structure

The following thesis uses a traditional structure as follows. Chapter 1, the introduction, conceptualizes the barriers of communication stakeholders are currently experiencing with the network. This section describes my background and role while emphasizing the reasons for this intervention by simultaneously acknowledging the consequences if no action is initiated. Chapter 2 is the literature review which identifies existing research to develop a deeper understanding into how the role of culture stimulates barriers such as language, trust, conflict and unacknowledged individual schemas. Furthermore, it elaborates on how these barriers of communication impact leadership approaches and a diverse stakeholder analysis. Chapter 3, the methodology, provides the foundations for choosing the methods for this study by describing the processes for each of the four action cycles. Chapter 4 presents the findings from the data collection, summarizing each of the four action cycles with ongoing reflections and critical analysis of how interpretations are applied by myself, as the scholar-practitioner and insider researcher. Chapter 5 provides a further discussion on the findings describing how stakeholders respond, framed with first, second and third person practice. A discussion focuses on the evaluation of action for all four cycles by describing why performance is changing and if it is sustainable, supported by ongoing reflections. Chapter 6 reviews the research outcomes on how the role of culture influences diverse communication while sharing how interpretations of the findings are

integrated into actionable strategies for the network. In addition, research implications and future research opportunities are identified.

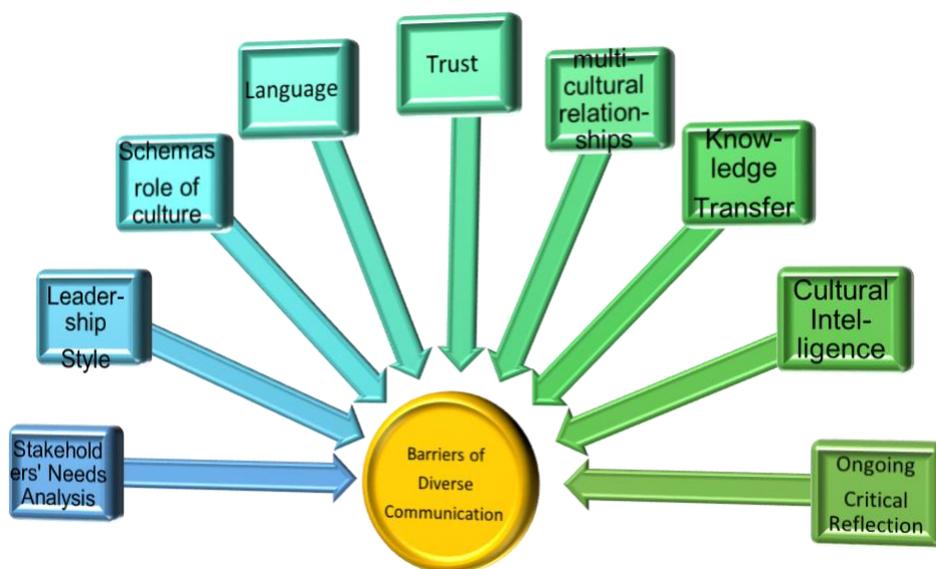
It is now necessary to review how existing literature informs further on the barriers of diverse communication, which can assist the network with confronting these challenges.

2.0 Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to Identified Barriers of Communication

Confronting the barriers of diverse communication requires further investigation into the combination of the nine contributing concepts as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Theoretical Concept Map of Barriers to Diverse Communication



This thematic review of existing literature frames how barriers such as language, lack of trust, conflict and unacknowledged schemas impact diverse communication. If communication is inefficient between multicultural stakeholders it is not possible to develop rapport needed for relationships. The interrelationship between barriers of diverse communication beginning from the individual perspective could expose unacknowledged schemas. The role of culture could be potentially imperative to

confront barriers of communication which are central to leadership styles, stakeholders' analysis and collective action.

The role of culture in disrupting the management of unconscious biases results in miscommunication and conflict between diverse stakeholders. Globalization emphasizes the complexities of leading and synergizing multicultural teams. International migration is growing faster than the world's population reaching 258 million in 2017, with over 78 million living in Europe (United Nations, 2018). Multicultural teams ambush generic management approaches, shifting focus on how the role of culture influences engagement (Ramthun and Matkin, 2012). Specifically, in my organization where there is no dominating culture, there is a ubiquitous craving to personalize leadership skills to align diverse stakeholders with objectives (Zander and Butler, 2010). Mindfulness (Brown, 2012; Parkin et al., 2015) and leadership skills (Covey, 2004; Nagda, 2006) must be amalgamated to cater to the uniqueness of each stakeholder due to the potential influence culture has on their schema (Hofstede, 1983; Young, 2007; Gut et al., 2017).

The European network is experiencing the challenges of diversity, remote working locations, and collaborating knowledge demanding a realignment of strategies with effective actions (Gratton and Erickson, 2007). Gelfand et al., (2017) suggests a renewed focus on cross-cultural interactions versus cross-cultural differences, with emphasis on conceptualizing a global culture through the acknowledgment that individual schemas can adapt in differing scenarios caused by globalization, and that traditional theories can no longer accommodate these complexities (Gelfand et al., 2017).

The following thematic literature review investigates existing knowledge on the following theoretical concepts: stakeholder analysis, leadership styles, individual schemas, the role of culture, language, lack of trust, multicultural relationships, knowledge transfer, cultural intelligence and critical reflection. More recent research (Earley and Ang 2003; Thomas et al. 2008; Ott and Michailova 2018; Caputo et al. 2018) has advanced the relevancy of the concept of "cultural intelligence (CQ)", which centralizes the role of culture at the heart of a stakeholder analysis, communication

barriers, building multicultural teams and leadership to meet the demands of globalization (Spitzberg, 2000; Thomas and Inkson, 2017).

2.2 Stakeholder Analysis and Connections to Culture

Globalization impacts how practitioners utilize a stakeholder analysis, which has adapted to expand from only focusing on the organizational needs to shifting more on the individual stakeholder, holistically as a person including the role of culture (Bryson, 2004; Reed et al., 2009; Kivits, 2011). A stakeholder is defined as a person or group of people that are either directly or indirectly touched by organizational decisions and overall performance (Bryson, 2004; Reed et al., 2009).

A stakeholder analysis can focus on any specific group to understand key issues as required. To influence change, it is necessary to ensure everyone is invited to be involved from the beginning, motivated and empowered to influence the process (Reed et al., 2009; Kivits, 2011). A stakeholder analysis is effective in synergizing diverse points of view by using a cognitive mapping tool to understand organizational problems such as complex factors influencing communication, specifically the individual schema and the dynamics of stakeholder relationships (Ferretti, 2016).

Stakeholder relationships rely on effective communication strategies that will significantly contribute to the acknowledgment and contribution of organizational value (Duncan and Moriarty, 1998). It is essential to practitioners to understand the positive impact of including key stakeholders in the problem-solving process, such as fast-tracking implementation of strategies and identifying key concerns from different perspectives which are vital in this multicultural economy (Bryson, 2004; van Offenbeek and Vos, 2016).

A stakeholder analysis that is combined with cognitive mapping to guide through the decision-making complexities while simultaneously using individual input to create accountability for achieving agreed objectives is most effective (Ferretti, 2016).

A new tool was introduced by Bourne and Walker (2005) called the “stakeholder circle” to determine the power/influence of each group of stakeholders to improve leadership strategies for relationship development. At the same time, it is essential to consider various tools, approaches and combinations that will serve to categorize stakeholders to investigate the existing organizational challenges efficiently (Bryson, 2004; Reed et al., 2009; Bridoux and Stoelhorst, 2014). Bryson (2004) again emphasizes that leaders must familiarize themselves with the multiple stakeholder analysis approaches as each situation can change and require a different technique. Understanding the different techniques are essential for effective knowledge sharing by managing the different values, habits and behaviors of culturally diverse stakeholders (Siakas, et al., 2010).

Some existing research cautions using a stakeholder analysis as it can be viewed as time consuming, although it is recommended to compare the resources lost if an organizational objective is not met, a strategy is not implemented or relationships are in conflict (Bryson, 2004; Kivits, 2011; Reed et al., 2009). However, centralizing the corporate focus on dialogue, interaction and collaboration is effective with connecting stakeholders to build solid, trustworthy relationships with a consensus for actions that create desired value (Tencati and Zsolnai, 2009). Ramaswamy and Gouillart (2010) reinforce that to stimulate co-creation of strategies, it is vital to put stakeholders at the core of the development phase to promote engagement. Jepson and Eskerod (2008) also contribute that using stakeholder interviews to collect necessary data initiates a deeper personal connection to understand individual expectations, to launch essential dialogue, and begin to build relationships that will promote further engagement into the process. De Bono (1985) introduces the “six thinking hats” as a tool that can benefit creating team synergy by focusing discussions labelled by the color of the hats, enabling rapid collection of stakeholder perspectives that can be put into action immediately.

Cots (2011) introduces a new dimension to stakeholder theory by considering “social capital” that adds intrinsic value to gain collective action, disperse knowledge, and a shared purpose based on trust to achieve synergized relationships between all stakeholders and the company. Crane and Ruebottom (2012) further expand on

existing stakeholder research to include “social identity”, a cross-mapping of traditional business roles such as members with social identities that include culture. This new framework of stakeholder analysis is more comprehensive, adding more information than simply the business role to connect social groups together to improve engagement and action (Crane and Ruebottom, 2012). Cultural identities are a very influential aspect of the individual stakeholders’ schema that will require significant attention and skills to build cross-cultural interpersonal relationships to develop the trust required for collaboration to occur (Smith and Fischbacher, 2005).

A person’s schema encompasses all the beliefs assumed by an individual that have been influenced by culture and perception of experiences since birth (Schon, 1983; Kivits, 2011). Kivits (2011, p.323) elaborates that even though individual schemas are independent of each other, there are similarities between them known as “policy discourse” that provides a deeper understanding of stakeholders’ perceptions of the topic including the behavior and attitude chosen when communicating. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that motivations between stakeholders may be consistent although the outcomes desired could be different (Kivits, 2011). A diverse group of stakeholders can hinder the amalgamation of multiple perspectives (Ferretti, 2016). On the other hand, diverse perspectives can overcome barriers for the best interpretation for strategy selection and for building consensus with mutual understanding (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000; Kivits, 2011; Ferretti, 2016). Once all stakeholder perspectives are combined, it could be possible to confront barriers of communication to support the vision to engage members to generate desired growth. Covey (2004, p.195) argues that it is essential to seek to understand what the views are and the reasons behind a specific perception, to clarify the core meaning since people see the world “*as they are*” not “*how it is*”.

A further research contribution by Huang (2016) identified the importance for leaders to synergize multi-cultural perceptions through a stakeholder-culture management approach. Bourne and Walker (2005) share similar perspectives with van Offenbeek and Vos (2015), discussing the findings of how project managers with a high emotional intelligence (EQ) improve the interactions between stakeholders. Potentially with stronger rapport between diverse stakeholders it could confront conflict in a safer

environment based on trust. Jepsen and Esckerod (2008) similarly identify that using a stakeholder analysis supports a participatory action research approach through collaborative knowledge generation with a clear communication strategy that can be implemented imminently. House et al., (2014) also reinforce the importance of stakeholder engagement to collaborate efforts to achieve a growth strategy, define goals, and clarify individual expectation.

The following inquiry indicates stakeholders' perceptions could be barriers to communication (Duncan and Moriarty, 1998). By dissecting individual schemas to expose how their unacknowledged biases, stereotypes and judgments are negatively influencing stakeholder relationships is a priority (Ochieng and Price, 2009). The challenge is to build enough trust between stakeholders to share these deep, unconscious beliefs to understand how they are engrained within the schema (Harvey and Griffith, 2002).

I analyze the literature further to understand the implications of neglecting the role of culture and how this can be a barrier to communication. The next section elaborates further on the barriers of communication and culture.

2.3 Communication and Culture

Communication encompasses tools to interact with others, central to knowledge sharing for the creation of meaning (Ochieng and Price, 2009; Duncan and Moriarty, 1998). Communication is a very complex topic on its own without adding the further complications of interactions between individuals from different cultures that involve intrapersonal, interpersonal and social skills to create a mutual understanding (Oliveira, 2013; Ochieng and Price, 2009).

Communication is vulnerable to multiple barriers, such as unacknowledged schemas, trust, language and overcoming conflict and therefore to culture, which is explored below.

2.3.1 Schemas

A key point in this research is the discussion that communication encompasses more than language; it is also our own individual interpretation of the information that triggers judgments based on previous experience (Oliveira, 2013; Alvesson and Skoldberg,

2018). Culture influences important cues within communication such as appropriate non-verbal actions, personal space between communicators, voice inflection and many other meaning making boundaries (Oliveira, 2013; Neuliep, 2018). When individuals are involved from a diverse range of cultures it is important to dissect and frame individual schemas with a focus on differences as opposed to homogeneity (Fine, 1991). The differences between cultures contribute to blueprints of individual perceptions based on selective, learned, culturally determined, consistent and inaccurate assumptions that increase the risk of miscommunication (Adler, 1991).

Knowledge sharing begins with the individual's tacit knowledge combined with explicit knowledge to generate synergistic solutions (Siakas et al., 2010). Siakas et al., (2010) have identified that a strategy-led team achieves desired objectives based on the level of individuals "soft" skill development such as attitude, critical reflection, and overall ability to communicate effectively. Ford and Chan (2003) indicate that knowledge sharing directly relates to the quality of the learning environment and further caution that failure to acknowledge cross-cultural differences poses another risk of failure to blocking communication. Isaacs (1999) argues that when there is a hierarchal organization there is a higher opportunity to perceive wrong decisions are to be blamed on the person(s) in charge, as opposed to creating a natural dialogue that promotes shared responsibility on actions and consequences.

As discussions progress individuals willingly discover that the conversation is uncovering new knowledge about both themselves and others which is called "reflective dialogue" (Isaacs, 1999, p.272). Schon (1983) emphasizes the importance of the individual acknowledgement of our own schemas, including our automatic judgments so change can occur and knowledge can be transferred with awareness. In addition, Adler (1991) confirms that misinterpretation stems from lack of cross-cultural awareness reinforcing the importance of critical self-reflection to instigate an openness towards others. Creating a pathway for individual reflection by triggering unacknowledged judgments for the conscious mind to become actively aware of beliefs that have been formed over the person's lifetime is essential for intercultural communication to defeat barriers.

Building on this existing knowledge, Coghlan (2008) introduces the significance of being authentic to the individual self to truly evaluate and challenge interpretations for all aspects of the action research process to create effective solutions. Coghlan and Brannick (2014, p.29) shares authenticity is categorized into “four essentials: be attentive (to data); be intelligent (in inquiry); be reasonable (in making judgments); and be responsible (in making decisions and taking action)”. Coghlan and Brannick (2014) continue to caution that if these stages are ignored this could threaten authenticity in the whole research process creating insufficient results based on inaccurate details. Booher and Innes (2002) confirms that authentic dialogue enables diverse stakeholders to establish new synergies and solutions creatively to meet the needs of the interested parties to work collectively. If authenticity is threatened this can potentially spiral into a loss of trust between parties, and communication will come to an abrupt halt (Coghlan, 2008; Covey, 2004; Livermore, 2015).

Therefore, in the next section I explore how trust is at the core of the foundation of sharing insight into the individual schema and building diverse relationships.

2.3.2 The Role of Trust

Trust is defined from a stakeholder relationship perspective as a measure that each person can count on the other to honor commitments made (Ochieng and Price, 2009; Tencati and Zsolnai, 2009). Kim and Van Dyne, (2012) suggests trust coincides with loyalty and is equally important across cultures. On the other hand, Deardorff (2009) argues that it is paramount for leaders to clarify the meaning of trust to each stakeholder, as every culture perceives different meanings. Lewis (2006) contributes further that even though trust is equally important across cultures, in a multicultural team it is essential that general cultural traits such as level of information sharing, are also considered. Lewis (2006) continues to share that the interpretations of certain characteristics are assumed under a different meaning, depending on the cultural lens applied.

Lewis (2006, p.144-5) proceeds to provide a guideline of trust-building strategies for multicultural teams to include setting clear goals with specific directions that are

communicated mindfully with simple language and tools that promote transparency in a collaborative environment. Berardo and Deardorff (2012) similarly posits it is essential to build trust and rapport with each stakeholder group to engage in authentic communication, which is based on sharing their own individual critical reflection about core values, fears and perceptions. Adler (1991) elaborates that individual perception is very powerful, influencing how events are interpreted based on what has been learned in the culture where the individual was raised and acknowledges the challenge of changing one's viewpoint even though it is selective, not based on reality.

Intercultural communication requires special attention to individual abilities to decode the intended message through detailed planning, knowledge transfer and ongoing assessment; otherwise, the barriers risk hindering diverse stakeholder relationships (Harvey and Griffith, 2002). Trust is the glue that binds intangible confidence between stakeholders, the work group and to the organization (Meyer, 2014; Ochieng and Price, 2009). The impact of high trust levels directly influences levels of integrity and honoring what is committed (Swift and Littlechild, 2015). Although, trust is a phenomenon that needs to be specifically defined by stakeholders for a collective and transparent understanding of the term, so individuals can take necessary actions to build this bond (Jahansoozi, 2006). Dumitru (2012) reinforces that trust supports authentic multicultural relationship building and is more important than political correctness.

Trust issues like lack of communication, knowledge sharing and dishonesty were cited by fifty-nine percent of one thousand leaders interviewed to be the main reason for disengagement or leaving the organization (Blanchard, 2017). Blanchard (2017) encourages leaders to be an example of a trustworthy person to generate an environment where truth is central to communication through behaviors such as accountability, transparency and knowledge sharing. Lewis (2006) argues that **truth** has different meanings to different cultures, which is causing significant conflicts based on perceptions of ethical conduct from the different lenses of truth. Lewis (2006) elaborates further, emphasizing the need for stakeholders to determine jointly approved definitions for truth and specifying what is considered ethical, to reduce conflicts in business.

Effective communication is defined by the success between the sender and receiver to interpret the message as intended with a developed skill set to adapt to diverse cultural situations (Adler, 1991). Jahansoozi (2006) suggests that if miscommunication occurs, trust can also evaporate, although it can be restored or built stronger with ongoing transparency between the multicultural stakeholders experiencing relationship barriers.

Miscommunication can also be based on the use of language, another key barrier that needs to be overcome for diverse relationships to be developed that is discussed in the next section (Spitzberg, 2000).

2.3.3 Language

Language is an essential part of both communication and building intercultural relationships (Thomas and Inkson, 2017). The network chooses English as the language used to communicate in meetings. However, all except two members are using English as a second language, which needs to be considered when evaluating the effect of this barrier. Globalization is compelling organizations to move towards “language standardization” to improve efficiency, although it is necessary not to threaten non-English speaking stakeholders, causing the perception that their contribution is of a lesser value (Thomas and Inkson, 2017). Poncini (2003) suggests that when participants have different competence levels in English that communication can be enhanced by introducing small work groups and supporting other native languages to be used for clarification.

While language is important for effective communication, Ochieng and Price (2009) argues that awareness of the differences in cultures, empathetic leadership and trust are also pillars for successful multicultural collaboration. Going deeper into the individual schema, Brown (2012) introduces how vulnerability is a key characteristic of a strong leader who is willing to critically self-reflect to overcome barriers of personal perception. Each individual schema contributes to the overall engagement to achieve organizational objectives focusing on stakeholders input to achieve symmetry for an effective communication strategy that provides satisfaction and commitment (Men and

Stacks, 2014). Logan, Steel and Hunt (2015) argue if time is not invested into team members to improve cultural awareness the result will be increased individual anxiety that causes avoidance and withdrawal as communication barriers.

Cultural awareness is critical to creating an effective multicultural communication strategy; if this process is ignored Neuliep (2018) warns both intercultural communication apprehension (ICA) and ethnocentrism have a negative impact on reducing stakeholder uncertainty and satisfaction. Ethnocentrism gauges a person's belief that their culture is both superior and is the marker to judge other cultures (Neuliep, 2018). Lewis (2006, p.21) questions that if every culture believes that their own tendencies are normal, then it must mean that other cultures are perceived as abnormal, although with the recognition that our "cultural spectacles" require self-reflection to understand other cultures is mandatory to empathize with each other.

Ramthun and Matkin (2012) conversely discovered that when individuals shift from blindly ignoring cultural differences towards acceptance, adaptation and integration, they are experiencing the stages towards becoming ethnorelative. The development process to become ethnorelative is acceptance, adaptation and integration (Ferraro and Briody, 2017; Yershova et al., 2000). These traits become central to the individual acknowledgement of the variety of behaviors and core values that exist with different cultures, with the capability to transfer perceptions to accept multiple viewpoints (Meyer, 2014; Yershova et al., 2000). At the same time, individuals with intercultural communication apprehension (ICA) are highly likely to avoid people from other cultures, and is prevents a further barrier for mindful communication to occur (Neuliep, 2018).

Mindful communication techniques are increasingly valued in business due to globalization. Mindful communication occurs when an individual is consciously acknowledging limiting automatic judgements while openly considering others' perceptions authentically using critical self-reflection (Rigg and Trehan, 2008; Coghlan and Brannick, 2014; Jiacheng et al., 2010; Schon, 1983). Mindful communication sieves into authentic dialogue when combined with critical self-reflection to produce genuine data collection and/or interpretation (Coghlan, 2008).

Dumitru (2012) further elaborates that intercultural communication is deeper than just understanding generalizations about a certain culture with the intention of openness; it is about embracing authentic communication through a conscious exchange of dialogue. Raelin (2017) recommends that constructive dialogue techniques are used to synergize knowledge transfer with a diverse range of stakeholders to enhance collective leadership for improved team engagement. Thomas and Inkson (2017) suggests that when engaging in dialogue in business it is important to speak clearly with simple language, with ongoing clarification if the meanings are relayed as intended to overcome language barriers that could block multicultural communication.

Isaacs (1999) argues that miscommunication also stems from individual's prejudging or simply not listening actively so the information exchange is misunderstood, out of context, or interpreted differently than intended. House et al., (2014) elaborates from a different perspective, confirming that miscommunication also occurs due to lack of cultural intelligence, which is significantly impacting organizational failures in various situations such as acquisitions, market penetration and team performance. In the next section I explore how miscommunication contributes to organizational conflict.

2.3.4 Confronting Conflict

The globalized business environment is fuelling rapid change in leadership requirements as multicultural teams are increasingly causing an assortment of challenges from fundamental misunderstandings that result in conflict, creating numerous negative consequences (Lewis, 2006; Thomas and Inkson, 2017; Hammer, 2005). Creativity, openness, active listening and empathy are necessary characteristics to understand others' perceptions to overcome miscommunication, which is normally at the root of conflict (Livermore, 2015; Covey, 2004). Isaacs (1999) shares that individuals need to be heard and listening together. Active listening is key while mutually deciphering between perceptions and facts with empathetic active awareness during dialogue to promote a deeper connection (Block, 2011).

Raelin (2010, p.37) introduces the "left handed column" tool to assist with critical self-reflection by acknowledging judgments or interpretation for further clarification to

overcome conflicts. Lewis (2006) elaborates further to confirm that listening skills are essential, although he also cautions that every culture has a different perception of what a good listener is. Stone et al., (2010) argue that it is a normal reaction for individuals to assume that their perceptions are correct or best, without acknowledging the conflict is based on different interpretations of the situation. Brown (2012) and Adler (1991) contribute to explore the emotional side of conflict by identifying that it is easy to use “blame” to divert the individual from the core issue of feeling any form of discomfort or inadequacy.

Eccles and Nohria (1992) argue that active listening skills are essential and emphasize how we need to focus on what is being “said” to discover the difference in what is “heard”, once it is decoded by everyone’s perspective. Isaacs (1999) and Stone et al., (2010) also adds that it’s a natural individual instinct to make automatic judgments immediately followed by believing that those assumptions are now a true reality without questioning them further, usually believing in the worst scenario. When stakeholders are experiencing conflict during solution seeking, it is important to be aware that every moment every person is gaining more experiences (Eccles and Nohria, 1992). Furthermore, these experiences contribute to their own identity, although it is not something that is regularly acknowledged (Eccles and Nohria, 1992). To shake up this thought pattern it is necessary to be self-aware and listening actively at the time, so it is possible to separate emotional triggers from the past to consciously experience the moment clearly (Rigg and Trehan, 2008; Isaacs, 1999).

To instigate further development of being an active listener, stakeholders should initiate a shift in focus towards acknowledging feelings to develop positive relationships (Stone et al., 2010). Intergroup dialogue is defined as a method to engage individuals with learning about themselves while seeking to understand differences and diversity (Meyer, 2014; Nagda, 2006). Nagda (2006) continues that intergroup dialogue is an effective approach to improving diverse stakeholder relationships through instigating engagement and collective discussions by understanding each person’s social identity.

Dialogic listening is when the individual can concurrently evaluate their own views while processing the others (Nagda, 2006). Dialogic listening is a mandatory process,

especially in multicultural communication where individuals will be experiencing different verbal and non-verbal cues than accustomed to (Rigg and Trehan, 2008; Nagda, 2006). Resolving conflict within an organization is always a constant challenge, especially without considering the impact of multiple cultures when it is desired to create synergy.

Deardorff (2009) agrees that managing intercultural conflict competence for stakeholders requires a mindful approach with flexible behavior to skilfully apply techniques to diffuse conflict by reframing the problem to include multiple interpretations while being sensitive to emotive cultural identities. Hammer (2005) continues to validate conflict management is a critical skill to understand individual strategies which are formed by early cultural experiences that indicate how to deal with emotional reactions from conflicting opinions. Managing conflict is a mandatory skill for stakeholders within diverse environments to bridge perspectives to synergize objectives using ongoing critical self-reflection (Meyer, 2014; Deardorff, 2009; Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2018).

Communication is a key component in the foundation of building intercultural relationships that will be investigated further in the next section.

2.4 Building Intercultural Relationships

Technology is increasing global communications and the availability of information from other countries is exposing individuals to a variety of cultures not experienced before (Keegan and Green, 2017; Poncini, 2003; Spitzberg, 2000). Building intercultural relationships is a priority for organizational growth in this current global economy that requires a new focus on management skills to nurture a diverse group of stakeholders for organizational competitiveness (Livermore, 2015; Harvey and Griffith, 2002; Ang et al., 2006).

Intercultural relationships include interaction between stakeholders with different cultural backgrounds that may still be still living in the same country or in different

countries (Harvey and Griffith, 2002). Diversity has become a central focus due to the advancement of technology bringing different individuals together that have varying perceptions of life events, skill levels, priorities, and knowledge (Booher and Innes, 2002; Livermore, 2015). Intercultural relationships require more patience and commitment than with people of a similar culture due to shared beliefs, customs and language (Hofstede, 1980; Livermore; 2015; Berardo and Deardorff, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate further into the influence of national culture to identify core strategies to develop intercultural relationships (Earley & Ang, 2003).

The amalgamation of diverse cultural lenses requires a further investigation into the influences of national culture, which is explored in more detail in the next section.

2.5 Influence of National Culture

Culture is defined as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one category of people from another”, also the essential foundation of acceptable behavior (Hofstede, 2006; Gelfand et al., 2018). House et al., (2014) provides a more comprehensive definition of culture that was used for the GLOBE project stating shared motives, values, beliefs, identities and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives that are transmitted across generations. Deardorff (2009, p.298) further identifies that culture can be divided into two categories 1: Cultural values, which are the individuals’ core beliefs that are learned as a child to determine behavior, and 2: Cultural assumptions, which are the perceived expectations of what is deemed acceptable behavior that influences communication and behavior.

Seminal research instigates the importance of understanding our own subconscious actions, as individual personality equates to integration success with other cultures, considering the belief was adults were unable to change their personalities (Hall and Whyte, 1960). Empirical research has generated significant knowledge about each different culture and the impact it has on our personal schemas, although the gap is understanding how to nurture intercultural relationships, not just memorize cultural characteristics (Hofstede, 1983; Dumitru, 2012; Lewis, 2006).

Hofstede and McCrae (2004) highlight the renewed interest in how personality and culture are interrelated as part of our social conditioning beginning as a young child on what behavior is accepted that is determined by the society where we were raised. This link between culture and personality suggests the impact one has on the other and further investigation is required to explore the complexities of each, while understanding there are many other contributors to the individual schema (Lewis, 2006). Hofstede (1983 and 1980) is a key researcher to investigate core differences between cultures and their understandings of how the world is by identifying four basic dimensions: 1. power distance 2. uncertainty avoidance 3. individualism versus collectivism and 4. masculinity versus femininity. This research contributes to knowledge about understanding the differences between cultures at a time during the industrial age, which is prior to the internet and when people had limited exposure to other cultures than their own (Vitell et al., 1993; de Mooij, 2004; Jiacheng et al., 2010)). Nevertheless, Hofstede's dimensions continue to be applied in cultural research (Nueliep, 2018; de Mooij, 2004, Jiacheng et al., 2010).

McSweeney (2002) challenges Hofstede's findings from his research outcomes that are derived from IBM's employees, that were mainly from the marketing or sales department, to be limited considering all participants shared the same organizational culture and role (Hofstede, 1983). Lim and Ahn (2015) also argue that historical research emphasizes the differences as opposed to discovering synergies and skills to overcome barriers of establishing intercultural relationships. McSweeney, Brown and Lliopoulou (2016) jointly dispute Hofstede's assertion that the dimension scores lead to the ability to calculate behavior in other cultures as there are many other aspects that contribute to individual schemas besides cultural influence. Deardorff (2009) also concurs that although Hofstede's contributions provide a framework for generalized cultural behavior patterns, more knowledge is required to formulate a strategy that can promote a more personalized form of cultural intelligence.

On the other hand, Luring (2009) shares that culturally diverse stakeholder groups are more thorough when seeking multiple perspectives to an existing organizational problem. In general, differences between all types of people continue to be an unsolved puzzle for academic researchers seeking for an all-encompassing solution

(Lauring, 2009; Hofstede et al. 2010). Gut, et al., (2017) also support individuals seeking awareness of cultural differences to initiate an understanding of others and pursue synergy towards overcoming communication barriers, that are rooted in misperceptions, to achieve organizational objectives.

Conversely, Harvey and Griffith, (2002) support Hofstede's findings by highlighting that if cultural distance is ignored it could be the core cause of intercultural miscommunication, since understanding differences can overcome the complexity of building relationships between diverse stakeholders. Harvey and Griffith (2002) continue to elaborate when cultural differences are encountered individuals generally perceive them negatively, if not informed how to approach them, consequently leading to increased anxiety, reduced level of trust with a higher risk of disengagement directly influencing overall productivity.

Globalization has propelled diversity management into a priority for organizations that strive to remain competitive although, the practitioner tool box remains low when it comes to figuring out an effective formula to strategically manage a multicultural organization (Podsiadlowski et al., 2013). Huang (2016) builds on existing research and provides tools to adapt this knowledge towards global project managers to bridge cultural differences while confirming intercultural skills are transferable. Nueliep (2018) applies cultural dimensions to generalize how to interact on a business level with various cultures; for example, when interacting with Germans it is encouraged you are punctual as opposed to in Spain where scheduling is more flexible. Published research (Keegan and Green, 2017; Hofstede, 1983) that provides insight into generalizations of culture are important for a basic understanding, although it fails to provide tools to assist with the unique complexity of the individual schema.

Research to date reveals the gap in the literature appears to be determining the discrepancy of how the combination of increased migration with technology is exposing individuals to multiple cultural experiences (Lim and Ahn, 2015). Exposure to different cultures can impact individual schemas, creating a transcultural identity versus effective, customized tools that master capturing the essence of diversity to

inform the amalgamation of different perspectives to form organizational strategy (Lim and Ahn, 2015). At the same time, Leiberman and Gamst (2015) identified three key trends developing in how to evaluate skills for building multicultural relationships through the measurement of intercultural communication competence, focusing on the relationship between personality and cultural intelligence.

Van Der Zee et al., (2000, p. 293) developed “The Multicultural Personality Questionnaire” as a diagnostic tool to identifying gaps in the multicultural training programs or to select the best person able to cope with diversity based on seven factors that determine international success as:

- Cultural Empathy
- Open-mindedness
- Emotional Stability
- Orientation to Action
- Adventurousness/Curiosity
- Flexibility
- Extraversion

Matsumoto et al., (2001) developed the “Intercultural Adjustment Potential Scale (ICAPS)”; this assessment tool provides a framework for evaluation of the quality of training programs and the individual adaptability measurement in diverse environments that focus on critical thinking, flexibility and emotion regulation as key psychological requirements.

Ang et al., (2006) agree that it is paramount to understand the reasons some individuals are more effective with diverse teams in different environments when compared to others. They further contribute that the main personality trait that is proving to link with the four components of cultural intelligence is the individual’s ability “to be open for new experiences” as a key indicator for success with diverse environments (Ang et al., 2006, p.118; Li et al., 2015).

Booher and Innes (2002) encourage authentic dialogue between members so each participant can speak openly to clarify their perspective with the others listening actively to complete an effective verbal exchange to understand and clarify the intended message. Nagda (2006) confirms that if group members share personal experiences, the feeling of connectedness improves relationships by allowing individual inquiry into others' perceptions and cultural influences. The research further introduces "critical-dialogic empathy" that invites the verbal exchange between members to envision the experience of the other person, which instigates reflection, communication, and openness to others views as well as our own (Nagda, 2006). Shepherd et al. (2015) cautions that the role of emotions is vital in building multicultural relationships since the implications of experiencing any form of "fear" due to lack of understanding individual's culture can result in avoidance of the situation as opposed to how "happiness" promotes engagement.

Antons and Pillars (2015) concur and elaborate that when intense emotions are being experienced by the individual it is natural to seek comfort in their automatic judgments and biases that result in a complete misinterpretation of the situation, which puts them at risk of disengagement from the situation. House et al., (2014) expands on the role of emotions by contributing that leadership behaviors are influenced by the individual's schema on how leadership is actioned simply with the understanding and ownership of emotions to create positive interpersonal relationships.

However, Thomas (2006) emphasizes social and emotional intelligence is directly influenced by the core culture of the individual, reducing the relevance of these forms of intelligence without the consideration of the role culture plays. Thomas (2006) further highlights how emotions support the value of linking academic knowledge with mindfulness training to enhance holistic personal growth through action and critical self-reflection, that will ultimately assist in the realization of achieving organizational objectives (Vogus and Welbourne, 2003; Thomas and Inkson, 2017; Brown, 2012; Covey, 2004). The role of mindfulness encompasses a holistic perspective that the role of culture can influence, which the next section expands on.

2.6 The Role of Mindfulness

Mindfulness is described as a deep awareness and focus on developing meaningful connections with stakeholders observing non-verbal and verbal cues, with the ability to engage differently than the individual is automatically conditioned to do so (Bogus and Welbourne, 2003; Rosenberg, 2015). Mindful communication is essential during the complex interactions between individuals from different cultures, as it provides a necessary pause for alternative interpretation to lead towards creative solutions and takes situations to new levels of understanding called “collective mindfulness” (Bogus and Welbourne, 2003).

Deardorff (2009, p.108) contributes further by adding individual socialization patterns include “self-construal” that refers to the attention to the unique individual traits that exist within the original culture or when dealing with other cultures, including feelings, cognitions and motivations. Emotions are triggered by our perceptions, that are mainly discerning, absorbed, incorrect and culturally biased when developing any form of relationship (Rigg and Trehan, 2008; Adler, 1991). Adler’s (1991) research continues to elaborate that individual perception can be like a fog that filters our experiences to meet our expectations created by our cultural beliefs.

The GLOBE study attempted to expand on Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and included more researchers with a mixture of participants from across sixty-two societies that also discovered the importance of understanding emotion is pivotal to creating positive interpersonal relationships by informing a leadership approach (House et al., 2014; Alon and Higgins, 2005). Perception is indeed a complex area that contributes to our emotions, which is key to building multicultural relationships (Nueliep, 2018). The challenge is how to encourage individuals to acknowledge their automatic judgments to impact how they judge others to overcome these barriers for communication (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000, Nueliep, 2018).

Alon and Higgins (2005) argue that to thrive in this global economy leaders need to have a combination of both emotional and cultural intelligences to support culturally diverse teams. The development of integrated communication strategy is fundamental in establishing cross-cultural relationships between diverse stakeholders to stimulate

knowledge sharing in a learning environment (Harvey and Griffith, 2002). Knowledge sharing within diverse teams can be complicated by cultural patterns and values considering individuals are more inclined to perceive situations with “cultural filters” (Siakas et al., 2010, p.378). Acknowledging our automatic judgments is a process and skill developed through ongoing critical self-reflection (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2018). This skill can only evolve when the participants are willing to question their existing beliefs with the courage to accept different information to formulate a change in behavior or a willingness to adapt (Rigg and Trehan, 2008; Nueliep, 2018).

Facilitating a corporate culture that encourages a safe learning environment requires an adaptive leader that shows how vulnerability, mindfulness and engagement create a leaderful organization that will be expanded on in the next section (Brown, 2012; Raelin, 2003; Raelin, 2011).

2.7 Leadership

Leaders today need to adapt to face the challenges of implementing strategies within multicultural teams that have been categorized as being at the core of globalization and the underpinning of balancing global strategies with localized knowledge (Zander and Butler, 2010; Rotheracker and Hauer, 2014). Leadership is defined as the capability of individuals to impact stakeholders by motivating effective actions towards achieving desired organizational objectives (House et al., 2014). However, Deardorff (2009, p.96) argues that leadership has different meanings within different cultures and recommends using a “moral circle” to create a set of mutually agreed boundaries on expected group behavior for collaboration to occur.

Furthermore, a global leader requires a high cultural intelligence level that can inspire a diverse team through customized local knowledge to generate collaborative action to achieve organizational objectives (Gelfand et al., 2018; Ozguler, 2016). McGrath and Gunter (2012) confirm that leadership in today’s global economy requires highly adaptive individuals that can change roles easily to meet new demands to stay competitive by engaging stakeholders to retain them. Deardorff (2009, p.71) uses the word “edgewalker” to describe global leaders embracing this “new century leadership paradigm” to manage the complexities of leading diverse teams. Literature to date has

been unable to create the perfect recipe of leadership behaviors and actions to serve an all-encompassing solution that is successful across all cultures (Meyer, 2014; Zander and Butler, 2010). Multicultural leadership is now in the forefront of organizational success, although little research has been conducted to identify how to manage multicultural teams and the additional skills such as cultural competence balanced by empathy to gain the expertise required to lead (Huang, 2016; Oztugler, 2016; Ott and Michailova, 2018).

This gap in the literature exposes the opportunity for a deeper investigation into the application of the “situational leadership, distributed leadership or a collaborative approach” that is potentially more responsive by engaging individuals as opposed to traditional “directive behavior” that is proving less successful in motivating multicultural teams (Zander and Butler, 2010; Rothacker and Hauer; 2014). Raelin (2010) adds that organizational leadership is more than individual traits; it is now becoming acknowledged that the focus is engaging participation from all stakeholders collectively to co-create goals as opposed to relationships based on dependency. Stock et al., (2017) similarly identify co-development strategies can fast track results with a higher success of implementation due to stakeholder involvement with transformational leadership providing the vision to help discover the chosen path.

Raelin and Trehan (2015) emphasize that leadership is no longer about a sole individual initiative, whereas now it is what people can achieve collectively with ongoing group reflection with an action-learning approach that is improving the organization just by participation. Zander and Butler (2010) concur that leadership has evolved with the added complexities multiple cultures create although, it is also noted that teams are developed to manage complicated problems with collective responses and require a leaderful leader that can support their initiatives (Raelin, 2011; Raelin, 2006). House et al. (2014) argue that leadership research has evolved from a rational study towards seeking further understanding by investigating the relationship between the leader and the follower with a new focus on the overall influence of individual emotions.

A challenge is that leadership is skewed by many different interpretations that depend on the individual's perception of life experiences and schema (Bryson, 2004; Gelfand et al., 2018). Huang (2016) further contributes that multicultural leadership is key for project success including an understanding how to balance the objectives with the individual as well as their culture. Raelin (2011) emphasizes that leadership perspectives have shifted from objective to emotional and moral motivators. Considering leadership from this perspective, using the four 'c's identified as collective, concurrent, collaborative and compassionate, maximizes engagement from keen participants to access knowledge as needed for immediate work results (Raelin, 2003).

Knowledge is continuously building as both the individual and the organization overcome daily challenges to conquer overcome barriers of diverse communication (Siakas et al., 2010). The twist for leaders is to seek to understand through a leaderful lens focusing on how individual cultural coding potentially distorts the intended meaning so miscommunication can be avoided (Siakas, et al.,2010; Raelin, 2011). Brown (2012) elaborates further, that engagement promotes leaders that are accountable for discovering individual potential and looking at processes collectively defining leadership outside of any role or perceived power.

Many organizations are still using traditional hierarchical leadership where one person is considered the leader and the others await specific orders, which can be a barrier to knowledge sharing with time delays for information to reach the decision maker (Raelin, 2011; Jiacheng et al., 2010). Alternatively, the aim is to stimulate participants towards a leaderful organization that encompasses collective, collaborative, compassionate and concurrent leadership to generate timely results (Raelin, 2017). McGrath and Gunther (2012) also agree that quick adaptability with a keen focus on nurturing stakeholder relationships with transparent knowledge sharing strategies, with shared leadership prevailing, will achieve a successful multinational company. In addition, Alon and Higgins (2005) identify how global leadership skills must not underestimate further barriers of cultural diversity such as feeling lonely in foreign environments, constantly having to adapt, diffusing conflict or decoding confusing communication.

Deng and Gibson (2009) argue that leadership training has shifted from being focused on the logical side towards a deeper understanding of how to motivate stakeholders through emotions and values. This transformational leadership style requires both emotional and cultural intelligence to inspire others to learn about themselves while benefiting overall company objectives (Deng and Gibson, 2006; Raelin, 2010; McGrath and Gunther, 2012). Alon and Higgins (2005) add that global leadership success also depends on the level of emotional intelligence as part of the framework to establish a more comprehensive view of cultural intelligence by inspiring behavioral change in others while changing themselves. Zhao et al., (2013) elaborate that intrapersonal intelligence is a significant contributing aspect of creating a strong leader-follower relationship, especially in a multicultural environment where adaptability is at the core of action.

Maccoby (2004) observes the relationship between advancing technology and exposure to different cultures is causing conflict requiring deliberate efforts to manage unconscious biases. On the other hand, Raelin (2010) shares the powerful impact of “leadership as practice (LAP)” which encompasses collective activities such as shared learning and sense-making as a foundation to build engagement between stakeholders for the intention of exchanging information. Knowledge must be accessible and perceived by the receiver as it is intended by the sender, which can be complicated by multicultural teams that require a leader with the appropriate skills to orchestrate action (Ford and Chan, 2003). Leaders who reflect-in-action, experience more positive outcomes considering the main lessons usually come from what went wrong and why, so new knowledge can be applied immediately (Deardorff, 2009).

Historical research on leadership has not been effectively applied to multicultural teams, creating an opportunity for this research to contribute to the understanding of the relationship between skills, behavior and motivating individuals from different cultures (Rothacker and Hauer, 2014; Harvey and Griffith, 2002). Raelin (2011) confirms that globalization is impacting the pace of change in organizations and to remain competitive stakeholders must be intersected with reflexivity to create leadership evenly distributed throughout the organization. Ramthun and Matkin (2012) concur that the interrelationship between collaborative leadership and transcultural teams is an important contribution to both existing literature and practice. Globalization

has exposed the gap between traditional leadership and leaders with the skills and intelligence to adapt to multicultural teams, that is required immediately to match the challenges organizations are currently facing (Kitayama and Cohen, 2007; Alon and Higgins, 2005). The focus of this research is to identify how the role of culture influences the individual schema, which could be valuable information as a situational leader (Zhao et al., 2013; Deng and Gibson, 2009; Raelin, 2003).

Global leadership capabilities are strongly influenced by the role of culture within each of stakeholders' schemas (Zhao et al., 2013). Therefore, developing leadership skills involving diverse stakeholders requires an additional focus using cultural intelligence, to be discussed further in the next section.

2.8 Cultural Intelligence

Cultural intelligence (CQ) is an evolving multidisciplinary concept for researchers to understand how to meet the current organizational demands of increasing complexities of diverse stakeholders in the current global economy (Ott and Michailova, 2018; Fang et al., 2017; Thomas, 2006). Due to rapid modernization, cultural diversity is now at the forefront of personal interactions that affect daily organizational transactions where CQ is now considered a necessity (Thomas and Inkson, 2017; Leung and Morris, 2015; Adair et al., 2013; Alon and Higgins, 2005). CQ is composed of four aspects of intelligence to include metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioral (Goncalves et al., 2016; Lorenz et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2008; Early and Ang, 2003; Young et al., 2017). Alternatively, Thomas (2008) identifies CQ as cultural knowledge, cultural metacognition and multicultural skills.

The cognitive aspect is defined by Lorenz et al, (2017) and Korzilius et al., (2016) as knowledge that an individual already has, based on historical experiences and education. The metacognitive aspect to CQ is not only understanding one's own cognition but also the other individual, while consciously aiming to achieve proficient management of a culturally influenced situation to meet the desired outcome (Ang et al., 2007; Lorenz et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2008). Lorenz et al., (2017) elaborate further by explaining high culturally intelligent individuals have mastered the capacity

to have both mental flexibility and adaptability by knowing how to discriminately apply their schema. CQ can be summarized as the individual ability to communicate and behave accordingly with culturally diverse individuals or stakeholder groups (Michailova and Ott, 2018; Deardorff, 2006). In addition, simultaneously applying the necessary skills and knowledge, combined with an overarching cultural metacognition to adapt to the cultural influences of their environment (Thomas, 2006; Adair et al, 2013). Furthermore, not neglecting the importance of reflecting in action with mindful awareness of how their own individual schema is influencing the situation (Leung and Morris, 2015; Thomas et al., 2008).

The combination of various forms of knowledge and skills that are established in a cross-cultural context is emerging as a key indicator of the success of diverse communication and team building (Kitayama and Cohen, 2007; Adair et al., 2013; Thomas et al., 2008). Crowne (2013) shares that the more cultures a person can experience will benefit the individual's CQ by enabling them to understand the differences between cultures. Alon and Higgins (2005, p.507) define cultural literacy "as the ability to value and leverage cultural difference" as a key skill for successful leaders when combined with CQ. Deng and Gibson (2009) and Thomas (2006) concur and elaborate that cultural intelligence is more than acknowledging differences or similarities between cultures; it encompasses knowledge, mindfulness and behavioral skills to adapt to effectively in a multicultural interaction.

Thomas (2006) emphasizes the role of mindfulness is paramount for cultural intelligence and involves individuals to be acutely aware of their own emotions while openly assessing external situations. They share further that being mindful integrates cultural knowledge with actions for effective communication between diverse stakeholders with a deeper understanding of variations with cognitive processing, resulting in the creation of new ways to categorize experiences to achieve an array of perceptions (Thomas, 2006). Ott and Michailova (2018) agree that a high CQ encompasses cognitive and behavioural skills as well as motivational capabilities to adjust in multiple cultures efficiently.

Conversely, if cultural intelligence is lacking there is a high risk of miscommunication resulting with an increase in potential stakeholder conflicts due to the reliance on automatic judgements and stereotyping (Kim and Van Dyne, 2012). Cultural intelligence influences individuals' approach to managing conflict by either avoiding, problem solving or forcing, which is dependent on cultural identity and must be a priority for leaders to assess for effective communication to occur (Caputo et al., 2018).

Gelfand et al., (2018, p.251) elaborate that the global work context has shifted from a dominating single culture with a steady working environment to a dynamic, multicultural complex one that is seeking new knowledge to establish the necessary skills to manage globalization. Cultural intelligence training begins with the quest to understand your own individual schema first to adjust to the situation and implement new knowledge to function accordingly through experiential learning (Thomas and Inkson, 2017; Leung and Morris, 2015). Rosenberg (2015) posits every person is comprised of information passed down by influential people like parents or teachers that can be damaging, although it is difficult to identify as it is so deeply a part of our schema it takes sincere critical reflection to acknowledge it.

Researchers have labelled this new concept as cultural intelligence (CQ) due to the interrelated relationship with emotional and intrapersonal intelligence that encompass cultural adaptation through the lens of intelligence theories (Zhao et al., 2013). Deng and Gibson (2009, p.347) argue that the foundational skills of CQ also include “transformational leadership (TL), emotional intelligence (EQ) and cultural intelligence (CQ)”. This formula is a priority for leaders to shift from managerial skills to a focus on personal development and cross-cultural interactions versus solely on cultural differences to achieve a higher cultural intelligence to contribute to a global culture (Caputo et al., 2018; Gelfand et al., 2017; Korzilius et al., 2016). Intrapersonal intelligence coincides with individual reflection and understanding how to analyze judgements, skills and areas of weakness to determine positive outcomes in cross-cultural situations (Zhao et al., 2013).

Most of the research contributions to date about CQ support a “conceptual perspective” or attempt to measure effectiveness through a quantitative means and lack further investigation into the interdependency of the components to create a multi-cultural organizational strategy (Zhao et al., 2013). Deardorff (2006) argues using a variety of qualitative techniques is required to evaluate an individual’s level of cultural intelligence, although this is an ongoing process of testing as opposed to a one-time event. Berardo and Deardorff (2012) discuss intercultural competence which is defined as “knowledge, skills and attitudes” towards understanding our own cultural identity and others. Ott and Michailove (2018) further argue that it is necessary to add that a person with a high CQ must not only seek and apply knowledge regarding new cultures, they must also be motivated to apply the knowledge. Adair et al., (2013) define motivational CQ as an open-minded individual with a keen interest in diversity with the determination to discover and adapt positively to new cultures.

Further research also confirms personality traits do have an influence on increasing individual cultural intelligence, indicating how willingness and openness are key traits for learning different cultures (Li et al., 2015; Remhof et al., 2014). Alternatively, Peng et al., (2015) argue that if an individual has a strong culture identity it can influence the individual to retract to their own culture, and restrict any form of experiential learning as the overall motivation is suppressed. Crowne (2013) contributes the influence of cultural exposure and its relationship to cultural intelligence by identifying the link between direct experience and generating new knowledge. Crowne (2013) further identifies people as “multiculturals”, who have a high CQ due to their willingness to learn, openness to experience other perspectives, empathetic disposition, and adaptability (Remhof et al., 2014; Adair et al., 2013). Ramthun and Matkin (2012) argue that cultural exposure or knowledge does not equate to successful multicultural interaction if the skills or attitudes are not developed accordingly.

One of the objectives with increasing intercultural competence is to look inwardly to evaluate behavior and reactions to progress past individual assumptions (Li et al., 2015; Berardo and Deardorff, 2012). Berardo and Deardorff (2012) also express caution that individual bias exists in us all, created from birth based on cultural values we learned in our environment and through our life experiences. The power for

adaptation comes from acknowledgment of these automatic judgments and biases (Rigg and Trehan, 2008). Intrapersonal intelligence is acknowledging your own limitations, patterns, what is possible from your perspective and how to interrupt your automatic reactions with the strength to share your perceptions with others (Zhao et al., 2013). Being a global leader requires the ability to decipher various cultural needs at a local level while simultaneously weaving in global strategies through a personalized collaborative action approach (Gelfand et al., 2018).

There has been recently a development of several tools available to assist leaders with navigating the process of developing cultural intelligence that are still in the early stages of validation, although they provide a framework that can be adapted to specific organizational needs (Deardorff, 2006). Deardorff (2006) recommended framework highlights the importance of the attitude of the individual, which is the starting point in the process of intercultural competence. On the other hand, Deardorff (2006) cautions that evaluation models and cultural training requires a multidimensional strategy that is based on an agreed definition while observing individual cultural perceptions to achieve a holistic analysis of culturally component team members.

Once the general process is understood on how to achieve intercultural competence it is possible for further analysis to use the framework: Observe, State, Explore Evaluate (OSEE) created by Deardorff (2009), which means: O—observe (and listen to) what is happening; S—state objectively what is happening; E—explore different explanations for what is happening; E—evaluate which explanation(s) is the most likely one(s). In addition, Deardorff (2009) shares how leaders can utilize a “cultural due diligence” for projects involving a diverse range of stakeholders to identify potential areas of internal conflict by understanding both the context of the situation and how individual culture influences behavior.

Caputo et al., (2018) expose conflict between stakeholders is pervasive in a diverse environment, creating the need for leaders to prioritize understanding cultural identities and individual schemas for knowledge to be shared to reduce potential miscommunication based on lack of cultural intelligence. Deardorff (2009, p.299)

continues to emphasize that for leadership success, skills are required to deal with cross cultural stakeholders to reinforce behavior and identify potential sources of conflict by assessing the following ten key areas:

1. Sense of Self
2. Communication and Language
3. Dress and Appearance
4. Food and Feeding Habits
5. Time and Time Consciousness
6. Relationships
7. Values and Norms
8. Beliefs and Attitudes
9. Mental Process and Learning
10. Work Habits and Practices

Achieving cultural intelligence is a lifelong process that begins with the acknowledgement of each individual schema and how cultural identity influences behavior that is constantly evolving with the combination of experiences in different cultures, accumulated cultural knowledge, and with ongoing critical self-reflection (Caputo et al., 2018; Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2018; Leung and Morris, 2015; Deardorff, 2006;). Thomas (2006) and Lorenz et al., (2017) reinforce that the development of cultural intelligence is initiated through cognitive experiences that turn into knowledge when the individual is using ongoing reflection to influence how behavior is adapted and developed.

Cultural intelligence encompasses many different intrapersonal skills enabling the individual to suitably and willingly adapt to diverse situations (Kim and Van Dyne, 2012). Diverse stakeholders are at a higher risk of conflicts based on lack of questioning perceptions and failing to create a consensus on ethical definitions that block collaborative behavior (Kim and Van Dyne, 2012; Young et al., 2017; Remhof et al., 2014). A global culture is based on managing cultural dynamics that are no longer only applied to individuals transferred to another culture (Gelfand et al., 2017). Cultural diversity affects all individuals due to globalization and existing research reinforces the valuable role of cultural intelligence (Gelfand et al., 2017; Fang et al., 2018).

Cultural intelligence encompasses a set of skills that permeates the individual's schema to overcome barriers of diverse communication. The next section provides a chapter summary of existing literature.

2.9 Summary of Existing Literature

The thematic analysis reviews existing literature on the barriers of diverse communication such as language, trust, overcoming conflict, and unacknowledged schemas (Ochieng and Price, 2009). The literature exposes the complexity of building multicultural stakeholder relationships by considering how the role of culture impacts all aspects of diverse communication (Keegan and Green, 2017; Neuliep, 2018). Neglecting the impact of the role of culture on the individual schema is a central barrier to diverse communication (Harvey and Griffith, 2002; Oliveira, 2013; Ford and Chan, 2003).

Alternatively, if the role of culture is central to the individual schema when conducting a stakeholder analysis (Crane and Ruebottom, 2012; Luring, 2009), confronting conflict (Meyer, 2014; Deardorff, 2009), building diverse relationships (Harvey and Griffith, 2002; Booher and Innes, 2002), or leadership skills (Huang, 2016; Gelfand et al., 2018) it can possibly improve the collaboration of the network. In addition, culture influences mindfulness (Bogus and Welbourne, 2003; Rosenberg, 2015), trust and reflection (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000) that is interlinking existing knowledge on individual schemas with viable applications into business studies for diverse stakeholder development (Gelfand et al., 2017).

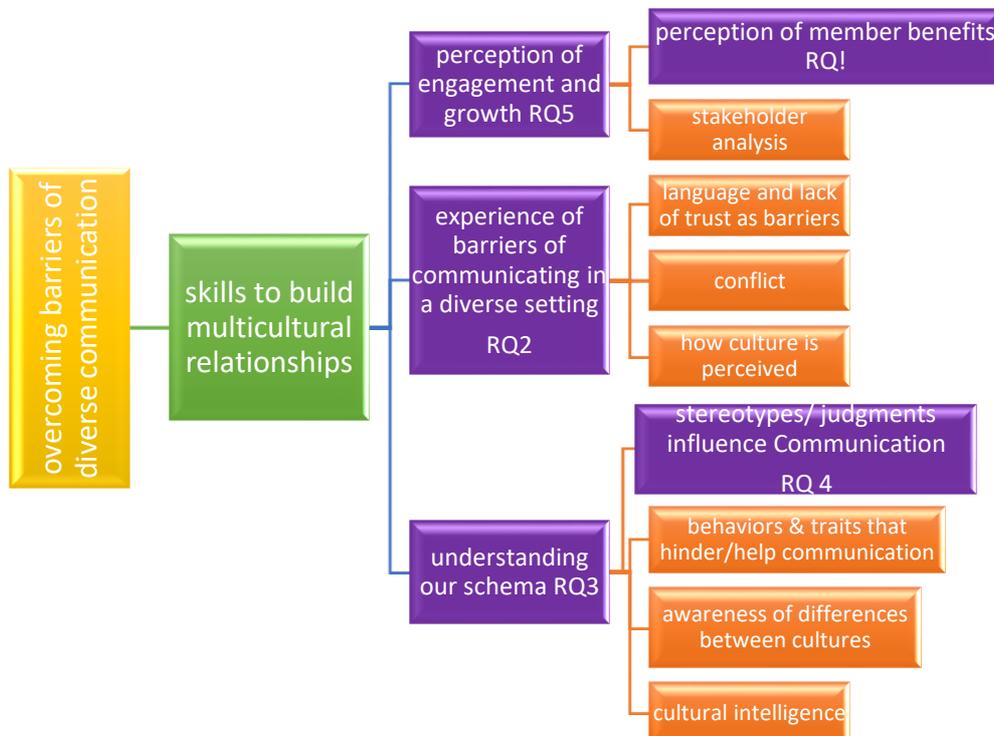
The role of culture is a central concept to overcoming barriers of diverse communication by thinking of the whole person (Li et al., 2015; Leung and Morris, 2015; Brown, 2012; Matsumoto et al., 2001; Young, 2007). For example, the cultural intelligence level of the situational leader conducting the analysis of a diverse group of stakeholders is critical to understand various cultural cues. If cultural acknowledgments are ignored there is a risk of causing further conflict (Meyer, 2014). The leader must have the correct formula of skills to create trust before digging into a person's schema. Without trust, the process could jeopardize the interpretation of

responses through lacking cultural knowledge to explore differing perceptions while encouraging individual reflection on existing biases (Leung and Morris, 2015; Raelin, 2010; Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2018).

The literature evolves by developing a focus on barriers of diverse communication and the importance of not underestimating the role of culture within the individual schema (Leung and Morris, 2015). Further contributing to the relevance of existing research instigates a holistic perspective of improving intrapersonal interactions with a deep cultural understanding to engage diverse stakeholders (Bucker et al., 2016; Leung and Morris, 2015; Gelfand et al., 2017).

The literature explicitly correlates with the research questions by providing a framework into the barriers of diverse communication shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Theoretical Concept Map of Barriers to Diverse Communication Relating to Research Questions (in purple)



Accordingly, the literature suggests how all the conceptual themes are interdependent and directly link to the research questions, beginning with how understanding our own schema influences our experiences in diverse environments which forms our perceptions. Barriers such as language, lack of trust and unacknowledged schemas can potentially increase conflict between diverse stakeholders. The role of culture can have a profound impact on our individual schemas by penetrating how reality is perceived. This individual perception spirals further to affect the quality of multicultural relationships, which is a fundamental aspect to diverse communication. Using a stakeholder analysis and leadership approach with a focus on the role of culture applies the individual's perspective as a key contribution to the collective input.

Finally, how pursuing skills for cultural intelligence guides individual development of acknowledging cultural impact on the schema to overcome barriers of diverse communication. Essentially, the empirical evidence suggests how the individual schema is at the center of the conceptual themes. Furthermore, the literature emphasizes the importance of utilizing the role of culture to confront the barriers of diverse communication. Ignoring the role of culture is at the peril of confronting barriers to diverse communication leading towards further stakeholder conflict if not acknowledged. On the other hand, the role of culture does not encompass multiple cultural identities, which highlights the reasons to focus on every individual's schema for a deeper understanding of how culture is influencing at a personal level. I decide to explore how the literature informs and influences the data collection process in the next section.

3.0 Chapter 3: Methodology

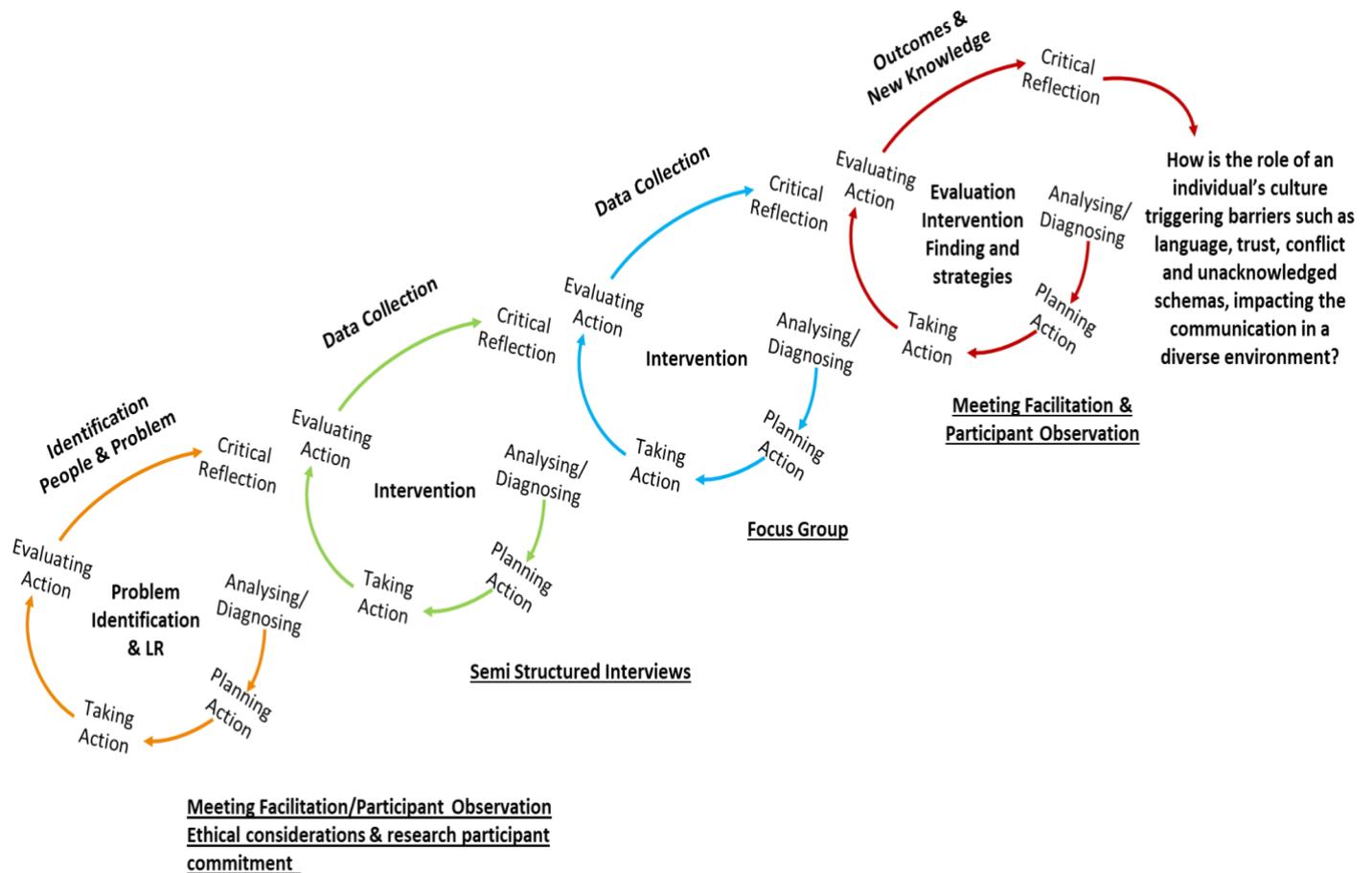
3.1 Inquiry into Barriers - A Research Design and Methods Introduction

The purpose of this study is to evaluate how the role of culture impacts barriers of multicultural communication within the network being investigated. The research methodology is identified based on my interpretation of the most suitable collection and analysis techniques to inquire into how the role of culture impacts diverse communication (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

Action research (AR) is a collaborative process involving stakeholder participation to collectively develop practical knowledge with the scholar-practitioner (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). In addition, AR intervenes collectively on the barriers of diverse communication which evolves through inquiry, reflection and action cycles (Greenwood and Levin, 2007; Alvesson and Deetz, 2000; Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). Action research views knowledge as a verb that is always evolving from everyday experience (Reason and Bradbury, 2008).

Four cycles of insider-researcher inquiry progressively generate collective perspectives from the ten participants for the duration of the study. The research process shows how each cycle informs the inquiry into the next cycle, beginning with identifying the problem statement of how the role of culture is impacting barriers of diverse communication progressing towards further participant’s perspectives, which is outlined in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Insider-researcher Cycles of Inquiry (Adapted from Coghlan and Brannick, 2014)



The network involves stakeholders from eighteen different European countries, contrasting with my Canadian, British and Spanish cultural identities. Ten members volunteer to participate in the process of confronting the barriers of diverse communication to overcome existing conflict between stakeholders. Conducting a stakeholder analysis for this diverse group poses multiple risks for me as a scholar-practitioner. If I ignore the uniqueness of the participant's schema, including the role of culture, I could fail to interpret feedback in the context as it is intended (Ott and Michailova, 2018).

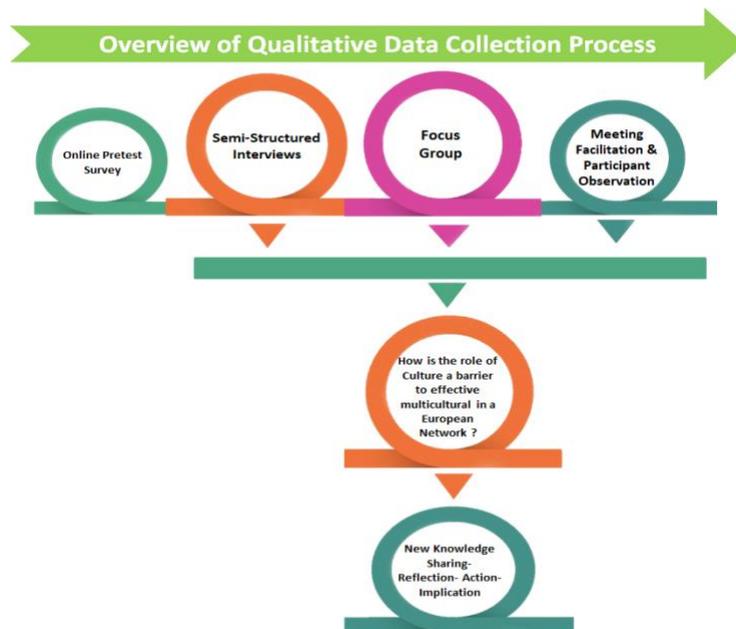
I am taking each participant on a journey to discover their own individual biases, stereotypes and judgments which requires a high level of trust between us and a willingness to be authentic (Knoll et al., 2015; Swift and Littlechild, 2015). It is necessary to understand how individual perception is developed through critical self-reflection and authentic self-awareness (Lewis, 2006; Knoll et al., 2015). Collecting the different participant's perceptions involves mindfully peeling back the psychological layers by using the research questions to acknowledge what their existing beliefs, biases and stereotypes are in the first place (Thomas, 2006; Deardorff, 2009).

Due to the diverse group of participants, representing ten different cultures, it is important to collect individual perceptions on culture, the network, meetings, the knowledge exchange processes and barriers of building relationships to engage and grow the membership (Gut, Wilczewski and Bonaiuk, 2017). The methods must capture the necessary data to answer how the role of culture impacts diverse communication between stakeholders, which requires further investigation into the individual schema. I collect interactive data based on collective participants' input to focus on how barriers are interrupting diverse communication for strategy implementation (Ericksson and Kovalainen, 2016; Easterby-smith et al., 2012; Creswell, 2013).

Figure 4, provides a visual representation of the research data collection processes and how each relates to the identified problem to produce collective actions based on

the collaboration of perspectives. The main efforts of data collection are within the semi-structured interviews, focus group, and meeting facilitations with participant observations. The online pre-test is only a small introduction to the participants to initiate dialogue. These data collection methods are interrelated to confronting the barriers of diverse communication and producing new knowledge.

Figure 4: Overview of Qualitative Data Collection Process



The following section will further elaborate on epistemological and ontological research position, research strategy, design, modes of inquiry, data collection and analysis techniques, participant selection, ethical considerations and a summary.

3.2 Epistemological and Ontological Research Position

The philosophical position frames my approach to both the process of inquiry and methods applied. Ontology encompasses the assessment of how things are operating or interlinking in the world's reality, where each perspective correlates to different perceptions such as realism, relativism, and nominalism (Potter, 2006; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). The key difference between realism, relativism and nominalism is based on the researcher's position regarding truth and facts (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Realism is based on the position that there is one specific truth that can be verified by

existing facts that need to be discovered versus nominalism, which protests there is no truth and the facts are created by people (Easterby-Smith et al, 2012).

Epistemology is a theory about the foundation of how knowledge is acquired and evaluated to understand what is acceptable such as positivism, realism and interpretivism (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Potter, 2006; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Positivism is based on proving existing facts or verifying data with measurements from the outside, whereas in contrast realism and interpretivism are subjective with a standpoint based on multiple views with different interpretations (Anderson et al., 2015). I assess my philosophical position by considering the task of accumulating multiple perspectives from the participants, focusing on their varying perceptions of the barriers of communication as an explicatory research initiative (Potter, 2006).

There are several different views of how each of us see other people, which is central to determining my ontological position (McNiff, 2014). Do I view others as a separate entity outside of myself or as an extension of myself, who are an important part of my reality? Deliberating on my existing relationships with the participants, I recognize I view each person as an extension of myself. By viewing the participants intertwined with myself as a scholar-practitioner transpires as an insider researcher (McNiff, 2014). Our joint interest to confront the barriers of diverse communication entails all participants to share their perspectives to construct our collective version of the situation (Potter, 2006). Social constructionism is therefore selected as my epistemological position (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). The reason for this choice is it encompasses all participants' perspectives to create multiple versions of reality, which is necessary to explore the barriers of diverse communication (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012; Creswell, 2013).

Amalgamating perspectives requires an explicatory approach to purposefully search for the uncomfortable aspects of the barriers of diverse communication, like voicing our deeply-guarded biases and stereotypes (Potter, 2006). Alternatively, if I view others as a separate entity outside of myself, looking to discover knowledge based on facts, as opposed to participants' perceptions, I would select a positivist epistemological position (Potter, 2006). As I am actively involving myself with the participants and not detached in the process of inquiry a positivist position is not

suitable for this research (Anderson et al., 2015; Johnson and Duberley, 2000). Furthermore, a positivist position is more applicable in quantitative studies where data is based on scientific boundaries, explanations and facts verified by tested hypothesis (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Similarly, objectivism views social experiences as externally happening to the participants (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Applying an objective position is framing the role of culture as an experience that is powerlessly internalized by the participant. Alternatively, constructionism views culture as an evolving, continuous process that is impacting participants' perception of reality (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

There are also various theories regarding what knowledge is and how it is generated and validated that I need to consider for my epistemological position (Potter, 2006). Focusing on the complexities of the problem of diverse communication requires gathering various perspectives, as there is not a single formula to overcome barriers. Dealing with people, from my perspective, is not a straightforward cause and effect experiment which eliminates using a realist position. In addition, a realist position frames the research questions objectively with tangible facts to verify findings (Bryman and Bell, 2015). On the other hand, from a relativist position, it accepts how multiple perspectives have different realities which can evolve depending on the context of the situation (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Furthermore, collecting multiple perspectives are subjective to the participants (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Therefore, to capture the perceived reality from the different perspectives on diverse communication, I have determined a relativist epistemological position is best suited for this study.

The next section explores the most suitable research design to generate and analyze data to address the barriers of diverse communication.

3.3 Research Design – Four Cycles of Insider-researcher Inquiry

Creswell (2013) identifies five research designs for inquiry including narrative, phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory and case study. The research design identifies what data is required and elaborates on the process of analysis to address the problem (Easterby-Smith et. Al., 2012). The focus of this study is to discover the different views of truth each of the participants hold and how this is contributing to their

perceived reality in day-to-day life (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Considering the individual schema encompasses the role of culture; it is important to dissect individual biases, stereotypes and judgments to confront the barriers of diverse communication. Through identifying the psychological aspect of investigating individual perspectives in this study a phenomenology design could be useful (Thorpe and Holt, 2010). Although, the study is centered around the individual schema, a phenomenological design fails to explore the expanded impact of the schema on the collective process of overcoming barriers of diverse communication the stakeholders are experiencing. Using an ethnographic design is another consideration based on the inquiry of sense-making into how participants views unfold (Thorpe and Holt, 2010). Although, as the network only meets twice per year my contact with participants is not on a day-to-day basis, limiting sporadic discussions and observations combined with the time restraints on this project, so it is not the most suitable option. Further investigation into a grounded theory design I also discover that they do not provide the framework to answer my research problem thoroughly due to the small unique sample group (Charmaz, 2014; Thorpe and Holt, 2010).

Using a case study design is also possible although not selected as it requires that during the data collection and analysis stages that I maintain a position that is relentless towards ongoing interpretation of data generated by multiple methods (Stake, 1995). A positivist approach creates generalizable aspects of the case by aiming to triangulate data using numerous case studies plus an array of collection methods to increase measurable validity, which is not suitable in this study (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Conversely, alternative approaches are available to determine various interpretations or reveal conflict by exercising multiple methods of data collection validated by stakeholders' perception of value (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Anderson et al., 2015).

On the other hand, using a narrative design captures the stories of individual perceptions of stakeholders within the network while exposing how identities influence their experience in the context of multicultural communication (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Furthermore, the objective of this study is to collect individual input that emerges into collaborative action to achieve the overall objectives of the network by

confronting the barriers of multicultural communication (Creswell, 2013). As an insider-researcher I am collecting data to instigate organizational learning and the management of change that emerges from this inquiry (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). An Insider-researcher inquiry is selected to investigate the barriers of diverse communication, due to my focus of gaining an in-depth collective perspective into specific stakeholder interactions unique to this network (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

The next section discloses the decision process of selecting a qualitative, quantitative or mixed method research approach.

3.4 Qualitative Research Versus Quantitative and Mixed Methods

To investigate how the role of culture impacts diverse communication within the network requires a decision to use a qualitative, quantitative or mixed research strategy (Bryman and Bell, 2015). A qualitative research strategy is used to explore complex organizational issues through the collective input from stakeholders to share their perceptions by collaborating with the scholar-practitioner to understand the context and to frame the problem (Creswell, 2013). In addition, the research problem in focus involves participant's emotions and perceptions of reality, which requires in-depth description and interpretation to assess impact.

Alternatively, a quantitative research strategy views social reality as objective, which is not suitable for this network. In addition, there is no scientific formula to be solved suggesting quantitative is not appropriate to confront this identified problem, as it cannot be statistically measured or analysed and involves embracing participants' uniqueness (Creswell, 2013). Quantitative research divides the researcher and participants as opposed to instigating collective inquiry (Ericksson and Kovalainen, 2016).

It is also possible to consider mixed methods which utilizes a variable combination of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches (Buchanan & Bryman, 2009). Although, a mixed method research strategy could dilute the focus on the subjective

aspect of individual participants in this study. This case uses a small sample size to increase in-depth investigation into the individual participant's schemas that is not conducive for quantitative measures (Thorpe and Holt, 2010).

However, qualitative research is central to an interactive relationship between the researcher and participants to build trust to gain collective insight (Ericksson and Kovalainen, 2016). Using a qualitative method will also support an inductive approach when linking theory with the research outcomes as opposed to a quantitative method that would be prone to utilize a deductive approach (Bryman and Bell, 2015). After analysing available research strategies, I choose to implement a qualitative approach to focus on how the participants perceive and create their reality (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

The next section elaborates on the action research.

3.5 Action Research

An action research approach enables me, as the scholar-practitioner, to dive into the complexities of diverse communication from multiple angles. Using action research, I can capture diverse interpretations, adding to a richer picture of the issue at hand and discovering the key to more effective resolutions for the long term (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). Using action research (AR), it is important to understand how the findings can be both internally and externally credible as per Greenwood and Levin (2007, p. 67), when compared to conventional social research that aims to provide generic outcomes. In addition, AR validates knowledge production in practice which is more relevant in the context of the network.

Choosing action research as a methodology embraces the resourcefulness of the cyclic process of learning from knowledge created by collaborative inquiry with practical experiences to inductively link theory (Anderson et al., 2015; McNiff, 2014). The cycles of inquiry include research activities, data collection process, template analysis, interpretations and reflections (Cassell and Bishop, 2019; Coghlan and Brannick, 2010).

The framework that supports actions is combined with ongoing reflection to improve my interpretations by applying an outline of first, second, and third person practice to reflect on knowledge generation instigated during each cycle of the process of inquiry (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). First person practice provides an opportunity to focus on my own experience and how I engage in the research process through ongoing reflection between my actions, behaviors and inquiry (Reason and Bradbury, 2008); Second person practice encompasses collaborative inquiry between myself and the participating stakeholders by jointly inquiring into the problem (Reason and Bradbury, 2008; McNiff, 2014).

A key benefit of using action research is that the knowledge generated is unique to the situation and engages participants throughout the research process in the network in focus (Bradbury, 2015). Additionally, the knowledge generated through this process can possibly be relevant in other organizations to assist in the understanding of the barriers of diverse communication, which is referred to as third person practice in an action research framework (Bradbury, 2015; Reason and Bradbury, 2008). Figure 3.3 provides a visual of the framework discussed.

Figure 5: Action research Framework 1st, 2nd and 3rd person practice (Adapted from: Reason and Bradbury, 2008)



AR involves considering my position within the research process as either an outsider or insider (McNiff, 2014). It is necessary to evaluate my position within the organization and my objectives as a scholar-practitioner. As I am seeking a joint inquiry to learn together about our shared problem, as opposed to an outsider which is a “me versus them” scenario; therefore, I determine my role as an insider researcher. Furthermore, an outsider perspective is utilized in a consultant’s role where information is directed at stakeholders as opposed to a collective initiative (McNiff, 2014).

The reason I position myself as an insider action-researcher is that it encompasses my role in this study with direct access to the stakeholders and my pre-understanding of the political environment of the network (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). In addition, I am inquiring into the cycles of action to generate knowledge supported by individual and group reflection (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). My role as an insider-researcher is further validated by my existing relationships with each of the participants. As an insider, I can evaluate how new knowledge is generated based on the collaborative interactions through the chosen methods (Bradbury, 2015; Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). As an inside- researcher, I have access to a variety of modes of inquiry, which are discussed in the next section.

3.6 Modes of Inquiry

There are several modes of inquiry available for action research such as narrative, mindful, clinical, cooperative and insider-researcher (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). Contemplating my problem of the barriers of diverse communication between stakeholders in a network requires careful consideration of my approach to inquiry. I must consider the dynamics and characteristics of the participants to ensure the mode of inquiry can generate collaborative input. A key consideration is that the participants pay a fee to belong to the network, unlike an organization that pays the employees. In addition, in the network all members have equal power and decision-making is done by consensus. Another aspect for my consideration is that all participants are established senior level business owners or managers which can potentially contribute to individual views on authority or willingness to be open to new perspectives.

A narrative inquiry effectively shares a research story with a specific focus on the participants' experience guided by the research questions, which I perceive contributes to actively engage stakeholders during such a deep personal development. On the other hand, further inquiry approaches may be more encompassing for this research project. Therefore, I continue to consider using mindful inquiry due to the large psychological aspect of this study, although the study is not centered around myself as a researcher; it is collectively with the participants (Anderson et al., 2015). As this study is not of scientific nature with a system focus on dynamics of interactions of a puzzle, clinical inquiry is also less suitable for this case from my perspective (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014).

Further deliberation on how to inquire into acknowledging an individual's personal biases, stereotypes and judgments requires a balance between applying cultural intelligence skills by offering a positive reinforcement during one-to-one dialogue and being cooperative to gain collective perspectives. For this reason, I use both cooperative and insider-researcher inquiry to expose how the role of culture is disrupting diverse communication in the network. I invite a group of diverse participants to share their experiences to gain group consensus towards action by focusing positively on what is already working well for the network (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014; Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014).

Cooperative inquiry is useful in this research context as inquiry involves all stakeholders to self-reflect and take agreed actions to improve both individual experiences as well as improving the network (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). The skill I require as the scholar-practitioner is to be aware of my own individual schema with ongoing critical reflection to understand that various interpretations can lead to new forms of collective action while being fully engaged, empathetic, and open as new information is generated during this self-discovery cycle of reflections and action (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012; Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). I am using cooperative for this research project based on the collaborative relationship between myself as the scholar-practitioner and the members of the network to jointly engage on their experiences for group input (Bradbury, 2015; Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014).

The next section provides more information on my approach to sampling and the participant profiles of this study.

3.7 Research Participants, Coding and Sampling

Each participant who volunteers for this study is an active member of the European network, with some members participating who also hold roles on the executive board. Active members that directly contribute to generating input into how the role of culture impacts diverse communication are considered a purposeful sample (Creswell, 2013, p.156). As I am using a constructionist lens for this qualitative insider-researcher inquiry, it is necessary to select multiple participants that represents different aspects of the network (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012, p. 56). The participants in the study provide an array of situations, ranging from a member who does not regularly attend meetings, to another who has never missed a meeting, with a further mixture of new members and long-term board members. There are eight males and two female participants who are all over the age of thirty, except for one male participant who is twenty-eight years old. Every participant has extensive experience in the debt enforcement industry and is either the owner or a senior manager of the company representing one European country.

After I conduct a brief presentation of the perceived problem of lack of engagement and growth of the network, participants receive a clear outline of expectations to specify the time commitment, ethical considerations stipulated, with the expression that the individual can withdrawal from the study at any time without consequence. One of the perceived challenges is the participant's fear of their feedback being recognized by others, considering there is only one representative from each country. To confront this fear, it is necessary to stipulate that all data collected from the participants will be immediately anonymized, although it is not possible to withdrawal their individual contribution after that point. Therefore, confidentiality is a key concern as member contributions are easily identified as there is only one company, or in some instances only one person representing each country. It is necessary to emphasize that all data collected is strictly confidential and will be anonymized immediately after the interview. Anonymizing the data is a key priority considering participants are

sharing confidential personal biases, stereotypes and judgments about different cultures.

The coding for each individual interview begins as A1-A10, focus group is B1-B5 and survey participants is S1-S10. It is not possible to provide specific demographic information about the participants due to confidentiality and the ease of identifying the individual by sharing the country of origin.

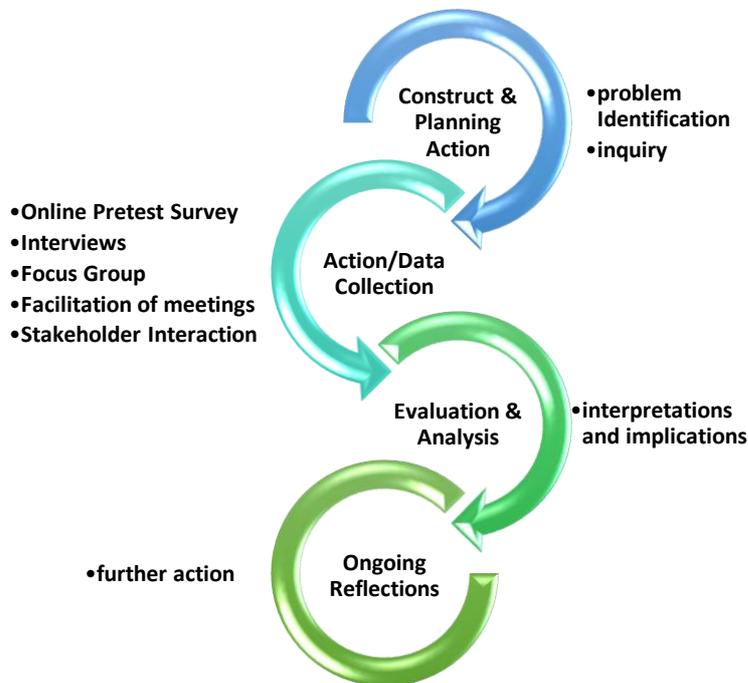
3.8 Overview of the four cycles of insider-researcher inquiry

This section indicates how the cycles of insider-researcher inquiry are instigated by the initial problem statement through ongoing cycles of the researcher process, analysis, findings, interpretations and reflection. The meta-cycle is the focus of this thesis, as the action research project is intertwined and provides the necessary rigor through the four stages of ongoing reflection, premise/construction phase, planning action, instigating action, and evaluating action (Bradbury, 2015; Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). The premise of this inquiry is based on the identified problem to investigate the role of culture within the participants to discover if it is a potential barrier during diverse communication within the network. Secondly, it is necessary to describe the planned intervention process of research activities to focus on the problem statement. Thirdly, is to generate new knowledge through the methods identified such as the survey and interviews, focus group, meeting facilitation and participant observation.

Finally, the evaluation of the intervention with ongoing reflections and interpretations takes place throughout the cycles. This insider-researcher inquiry is based on a planned intervention to a current challenge the European network is facing (Coghlan, 2001). The basis of this inquiry is to instigate personal learning opportunities as an insider-researcher, triggering organizational learning while contributing to existing knowledge as action is occurring towards addressing the identified problem statement of barriers to diverse communication (Moore, 2007). The following diagram (3.4) provides a visual of the process of planning, action, evaluation and ongoing reflections

that are being applied to inquire into how language, trust, conflict and unacknowledged schemas are barriers to diverse communication.

Figure 6: *Insider-researcher Cycle of Inquiry*



3.9 Ethical Considerations

Prior to the commencement of this study a research proposal is submitted to the University of Liverpool for ethical approval. All participants who have volunteered to be a part of this study sign a Participant Consent Form for informed consent. This form outlines all the specific expectations, how confidentiality is respected and how the data is anonymized directly after data is received. In addition, in my position as the scholar practitioner, I am authentic with interviewees and commit to confidentiality of the participants as agreed with the University of Liverpool Ethics Committee, the researcher and all participants (Perry, 1998).

3.10 Summary of Methodology

This unfolding insider-researcher inquiry is focusing on how the role of culture impacts diverse communication between stakeholders to engage and grow the network. The

online pretest survey, semi-structured interview (via SKYPE) and the online focus group are the methods chosen to generate the desired data that is applied into four cycles of inquiry.

The ontological and epistemological position determines how the data is interpreted by myself, as the scholar practitioner (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009). Thematic template analysis of facilitated meetings, as well as participants' behavior observations are combined to validate interpretation and naturalistic generalizations (Creswell, 2013). Interpretation of the data collected by the chosen methods is combined with ongoing reflexivity to understand how each individual schema influences perception of what details are disclosed (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2018; Ericksson and Kovalainen, 2016). The collective data contributes to understanding multiple perspectives on the barriers of diverse communication within the network.

I discuss the research activities, thematic template analysis, findings, interpretations and reflections of the four cycles of insider inquiry in the next section.

4.0 Chapter 4: Research Activities, Data Analysis, Findings, Interpretations and Ongoing Reflections of the Inquiry

4.1 Overview of the four cycles of Insider-researcher Inquiry

This section shares the research activities, data analysis, findings, interpretations and reflections of this investigation. The data generated is by utilizing each of the following methods that include online pretest survey, semi-structured interviews, focus group, meeting facilitation and observing participants' behavior with ongoing reflections. The objective is to use multimode data collection to gain an in-depth, collective understanding of the members' individual perceptions regarding how the role of culture can be a barrier in diverse communication.

The findings are based on four cycles of insider-researcher inquiry by describing the stages of research activities, the analysis of data, interpretations and reflections. The

data is analyzed using thematic template analysis (Cassell and Bishop, 2018) and interpretations. I use ongoing critical self-reflection to ensure that my own judgments, biases and stereotypes are acknowledged in the process to validate and frame my interpretations (Greenwood and Levin, 2007). The final section summarizes the analysis and findings with next steps identified.

4.2 Cycle 1 - Insider-researcher inquiry: Milan Meeting

4.2.1. Description of research activities

Prior to the meeting I create a plan to engage stakeholders to collaborate efforts with myself to understand what the main barriers are to communicating with members from multiple cultures. As this is a unique situation with all stakeholders representing different countries, I acknowledge that it is not possible to personally adapt to all cultural expectations as a facilitator. This is a challenge that poses the next question on how do I encourage individual stakeholders to acknowledge their own cultural stereotypes, biases and judgments to enable them to adapt to people from other cultures? First, it is necessary to acquire the group's perception of communication and leadership using small groups or learning sets to be sure all stakeholders contribute.

I identify my role as an insider action-researcher within the network, meaning that I am familiar with the organization and have completely authorized access to participants (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). On the other hand, it is necessary to be mindful of the difference between what I think I know intuitively versus what is based on data collected (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2016). Furthermore, I must acknowledge and challenge my pre-understanding with ongoing reflection to establish where my beliefs are established (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2016). I engage with the literature to understand how the existing literature can provide context to the barriers of diverse communication to construct a research design for this investigation.

This is the first time the stakeholders are divided into small working groups; therefore, it is important that each group is comprised as evenly as possible of different cultures. For example, a few members bring other business partners to the meetings, hence dividing them up into separate groups could provide more opportunities to interact with others from the network. In addition, as this is a new meeting format, I plan to allocate

sufficient time for interaction. It is also necessary to ensure that I have enough time to listen and observe every group during the process. Another consideration is that I have a limited amount of time allocated on the itinerary, therefore I plan to appoint a group leader to present the results and provide a written visual of all perspectives on a flip chart. The next step involves using the data to introduce the concept of an individual schema and how this can impact individual perceptions by questioning 'why' certain views exist.

During this meeting in Milan, I provide a brief introduction on communication and leadership before dividing the stakeholders into four small groups to allow all individual stakeholders time to contribute their perspective. I dig deeper and engage into the perceived problem by working collaboratively with the stakeholders through the complexities of the situation to understand the barriers of communication from different perspectives. After the four teams return to the group, I summarize all the different perspectives on a flipchart to provide a visual of all feedback. Visualizing the collective input enables all stakeholders to achieve a consensus regarding the importance of understanding how individual perception is an encompassing barrier to a diverse communication strategy for the network. More specifically, to focus on language, trust, conflict and unacknowledged schemas which are possibly causing miscommunication between stakeholders, that requires further inquiry.

At the end of my presentation on the meeting day, I plan on inviting members to volunteer to participate in this research project. Prior to the meeting it is necessary to request and receive ethical approval from the University of Liverpool, and prepare a participant consent form that specifically outlines the ethical guidelines of the study (please see Appendix 1). To complete the participant consent form, it is necessary to reflect on what is required from the participants to generate appropriate data. Reflecting on the complexity of diverse communication to influence engagement and member retention, I review data collection options. Considering the time restrictions of the research project along with the limited twice per year meetings, I decide to use an online survey, a thirty-minute skype interview and an hour and a half online focus group. These actions are planned and included in the participant consent form for every member to understand what will be required of them.

I proceed to openly invite all attending stakeholders to volunteer to participate in the study by sharing the details of all the expectations such as time investment and ethical approval from all stakeholders, including the University of Liverpool. I verbally review the details of the participant consent form including the management of data before distributing the forms to all attending members. Transparency of the research process, including how the data is anonymized is a priority to encourage participation. Anonymizing the data protects the identity of the participants considering there is only one person or company per European country represented in the network, making it easy to identify each stakeholder. After the meeting, participants interested in being involved in the study return the signed participant consent forms.

4.2.2 Data Collection Process

The network's 14th European meeting is held in Milan, Italy and hosted by our Italian partners. There are fourteen different European countries represented at this meeting. My perception is that the evening event prior to the meeting is an opportunity to reconnect with members socially, which is an enjoyable aspect of the network based on the lively interaction between everyone. I observe how each member shares a bond with one another as everyone is very friendly, smiling and laughing. The meetings are short and productive while being integrated with local cultural experiences arranged by the host. The chairman enthusiastically opens the meeting with several greetings in Italian, French, and English.

It is my turn to be invited up for my presentation on leadership and effective communication to introduce the members to some 'soft skills' of running an enforcement or legal office. I proceed to segment the members into four working groups and separate partners from the same country. Each group is invited to select a leader to present the results back to the group and to brainstorm on what they each perceive to be a good leader and communicator. After approximately twenty minutes, each group returned to the general meeting room to share their findings. Each spokesperson reported the summary of their perceptions, which I wrote on a flip chart in the front of the room so everyone could see what the other groups reported. There is a different array of answers which led to the introduction of how their own individual schema influences their perception of leadership and communication.

I then proceed to invite feedback which encourages focus on the fact there is currently no evaluation of how these perceptions could potentially contribute or sabotage communication messages within the network. After further discussions, it is agreed that creating an effective communication strategy for the network should be further investigated, especially considering the diversity that exists. I begin to explain my research project, what is expected from the participants, the ethical considerations and provide the information and consent form for those that would like to volunteer in the study. The chairman also reinforces the value of this research project to the network and encourages participation.

Further feedback from multiple stakeholders indicates how barriers to communicating could be reduced using experiential learning like the process of collecting all stakeholders' perspectives. Putting the members into working groups is a new format that allows a deeper interaction between members, which simultaneously promotes a rich relationship-building opportunity. On the other hand, I must be mindful of rising conflicts due to cultural barriers that exist. Going through the process of sharing biases, stereotypes and judgments at an individual level initially, appears to reduce the possibility of taking offence in a group setting.

During the second evening, I observe how each member mixes with others as there does not appear to be separate groups, although there are times when communication happens in different languages other than in English. I also observe that the two members who speak English as their native language communicate using simple words and more body language to insure the other person has understood the meaning of the message. An additional observation is how body language and non-verbal cues are key during interaction between all members with careful eye contact to confirm an understanding. The meeting is concluded.

The inquiry is triggered by analyzing the stakeholder's perception of lack of engagement with the members within the network. As the presentation progresses with further collective stakeholder input during the meeting, I discover that there could be additional communication barriers contributing to misunderstandings between

stakeholders resulting in conflict or lack of engagement. Limitations of members' comprehension of English is exposed during the group work as individuals seek clarification on the different perceptions expressed. The discussion discloses that it is possible that the lack of engagement is a consequence of misunderstandings between members who lack the language skills necessary to overcome the ongoing conflicts.

4.3.3 Data Analysis, Findings and Interpretations

During this first cycle of inquiry stakeholders identify poor communication is a core problem for the network due to the diversity of the membership. Each member is from a different European country, using English as the main language, although most members are not native speakers, increasing the risk of misinterpretation. It is necessary to dig into existing research to establish potential barriers that exist in the topic of effective diverse communication.

After the meeting, I begin to use the existing research to frame a theoretical understanding of perception of barriers to communication. I use a mind-mapping technique, with post-it notes, so I can visualize the links between the individual schema and the role of culture in building multicultural relationships based on existing research (Leung and Morris, 2015). Understanding how learning begins at an individual level first through the ability to recognize and acknowledge individual's personal biases, judgments and stereotypes instigates the journey towards a higher cultural intelligence (Deardorff, 2009). Cultural intelligence is based on the individual's cognitive and metacognitive abilities, while assessing motivation levels with adaptable behavior to thrive in diverse environments (Thomas and Inkson, 2017). The literature suggests that using ongoing critical self-reflection to develop CQ could be an encompassing skill to overcome the barriers of participants' core beliefs if consciously pursued (Thomas, 2006).

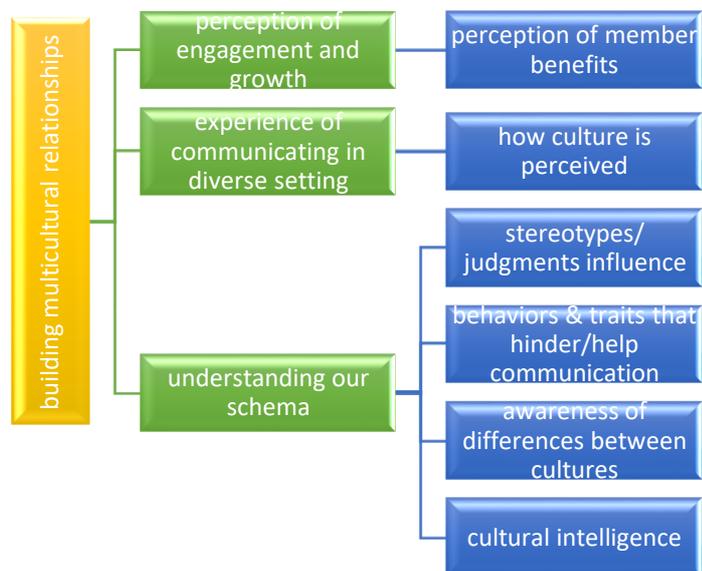
I conduct a search of the literature to provide a theoretical framework of what kind of barriers exist in relation to communicating in diverse environments. The literature suggests language, trust, conflict and unacknowledged schemas are potential barriers to diverse communication. At the beginning of the inquiry into the network, the surface problem is perceived to be lack of engagement and growth. I invite all stakeholders' perspectives to gain multiple viewpoints on communication and leadership, to sift

through the initially perceived problem to discover the core challenges are with miscommunication. Misunderstandings are possibly linked to the individual schema that is potentially complicated by the role of national culture.

I proceed to dig deeper into the existing literature using the following key search terms: diverse stakeholder analysis, developing multicultural relationships, multicultural communication, trust, language, mindfulness, overcoming conflict, what is culture, the individual schema and the role of culture, and how to develop cultural intelligence. The literature indicates a potential connection between barriers of communication and diverse stakeholders. For example, establishing a relationship with another stakeholder from the same culture could be more sustainable than from a different culture, if suitable skills are not achieved. Furthermore, the literature emphasizes the risk of engaging in personal dialogue without sufficient trust levels could also pose a risk of causing deeper conflict.

Many of the theoretical labels are combined to dissect the steps I identify to achieve the research objective. The theoretical labels such as stakeholder analysis, leadership, and trust are implemented in the green column. By segmenting the flow of data required highlights how the blue labels explore how the role of culture influences multicultural relationships as in figure 4.2

Figure 7: Framework of Labels for Data Collection



I begin to evaluate what happened during the meeting based on collaboration between stakeholders and myself as the scholar-practitioner using ongoing reflection focusing on participants' behaviors and my own interpretations. For example, it is unexpected to discover that the members that are less vocal could be perceived as not engaged in the meetings. On the other hand, their participation increases during small group sessions which is necessary to investigate the reasons why this occurs. I continue to evaluate how the existing research on the sub-topics contributes to the perceived understanding of the barriers of diverse communication. For example, if I continue this investigation without referring to the literature I would be at risk of neglecting existing knowledge that can assist with framing the problem the network is currently experiencing.

This is the first meeting that members have been divided into working groups. The feedback supports how stakeholders can experience more time to clarify and share individual perspectives. An interesting finding that emerges from the small groups is that there are potentially different perceptions of acceptable response times of cases, which could be contributing to lack of engagement. Furthermore, this finding highlights the criticality of understanding the different cultural lenses used to perceive meanings.

The stages of inquiry based on my pre-existing relationships and by openly sharing the process of ongoing critical self-reflections simultaneously create a trusting environment. By providing examples from my own personal experiences introduces the concept to other members to understand how their own schema influences their perceptions of reality (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2018). Members express the consensus that they have not previously been aware of their own schema with some recognizing that they did not consider this in the past. This information is key to understand how the acknowledgement of the individual schema impact conflict and communication within the context of this network? Overall, this meeting opens dialogue between myself and the members to identify potential possibilities to overcome communication barriers by generating collective input to assess the current situation. I generate a keen interest in this investigation by confirming the ten volunteers to continue in the process. In addition, I evaluate how both myself and the

stakeholders interpret the knowledge generated to identify how to inform the next cycle of interviews after the consideration of the critical reflections process.

4.2.4 Reflections

I critically self-reflect on the interpretations about the interpretations generated at different levels of perceptions considering first, second and third person practice (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2018, p. 11). In addition, I also utilize ongoing reflections throughout the cycle to analyze how the meeting is conducted, dialogue between myself and the stakeholders, what behaviors are observed by the participants and what consensus is established based on all stakeholder input. I am also using these reflections to inform the next cycle of inquiry.

The literature proceeds to expose the value of critical self-reflection to acknowledge individual beliefs and judgments that provide a barrier to effective intercultural communication (Hofstede and McCrae, 2004; Hajro, et al., 2017). My presentation generates the required participants to proceed with the process to investigate how to confront the barriers of language, trust, and overcoming conflict to improve communication in the network. The discussion on introducing the concept of the individual schema is something that has not been consciously acknowledged; therefore, this is a new process for the stakeholders of the network. Stakeholders respond with curiosity and indicate they are all open to learn from this investigation.

Upon further reflection, there are indications that it could be a higher priority to achieve membership engagement to encourage retention and to potentially attract new members. The barriers such as language and trust need to improve so communication with diverse stakeholders is authentic. Diverse relationships require the basic understanding of generalized culturally specific differences, habits, and customs. It is my own assessment that I am an effective communicator with the necessary cross-cultural skills to function in a diverse environment by acknowledging the impact of my own automatic judgments, biases and stereotypes.

Initial observations of participants also challenge how members are willing to connect with one another, although they are unaware of how their own schema either

contributes or contaminates to building relationships with people from different cultures. It is my interpretation that during the past six years of attending the meetings I have established relationships with each member based on trust, social interaction, willingness to communicate, and openness to learn about their culture. I acknowledge that language is a challenge to understand intended meanings by the stakeholders that interacts directly with trust. It is necessary to continue explore multiple perceptions of the member experience to learn more about how the role of culture impacts the complexity of diverse communication.

4.2.5 Summary of the first cycle of insider-researcher Inquiry

During the meeting member perspectives are shared from the small groups sessions to identify that further inquiry is necessary on the problem of poor communication and how language, trust, and individual culture contribute to existing conflict. Misunderstandings are causing conflicts between members that are being reported to the executive committee, such as response times of referred cases. Poor communication resulting in the different perceptions on members' expectations of processes that vary based on individual culture. This is an unexpected finding as my perception is that all stakeholders would share similar perceptions of performance expectations. Using existing literature to investigate these concerns provides a framework for continued inquiry.

This cycle of inquiry has framed the perceived problem within existing literature in the context of the network. It is necessary in the next cycle to further inquire to the reasons member response times are not meeting perceived standards or why the misunderstanding is occurring. Therefore, to investigate what poor communication means in the context of the network it is necessary to dissect the barriers to building multicultural relationships with three further sub-topics:

1. Understanding our schema;
2. Experience of communication in diverse settings;
3. Perception of engagement and growth within the network.

The next cycle of inquiry needs to achieve a deeper understanding of the problem of poor communication within the network by collecting individual input from the stakeholders using an online pretest and semi structured interviews. It is essential that one to one dialogue occurs between myself, as the scholar-practitioner and the participating members to assess how individual culture influences perceptions. If the inquiry fails to capture individual perceptions and only continues in a group setting there is a risk of missing vital data that can only be understood with one-to-one dialogue.

4.3. Inquiry Cycle 2 – Online Pretest and Semi Structured Interviews

4.3.1 Description of research activities

The second cycle is based on the knowledge generated by the first cycle that provides a more informed perspective regarding the barriers of diverse communication framed theoretically. I gather all stakeholder perspectives from the meeting in Milan, to inform the data collection process by using both the online pretest survey and semi-structured interviews. The focus is dissected towards the barriers to building multicultural relationships with three further sub-topics of 1. Understanding our schema; 2. Experience of communication in diverse settings; 3. Perception of engagement and growth within the network.

I continue to reflect on and compile the data generated from the first cycle that confirms the identified problem of poor communication which is framed theoretically by existing literature. By linking existing literature with the problem statement, I segment the approach for this cycle of data collection by using the five research questions.

The five research questions applied to analyze the data generated by the online pretest survey and interviews are;

1. Participants views on existing benefits of the network;
2. Participants experience communicating in a multicultural setting;
3. Participants personality traits and behaviors that hinder/help communication with diverse stakeholders;

4. Participants views regarding cultural judgements and how that perception influences communication;
5. Participants views on engagement and growth of the network.

These questions are the springboard into creating the interview topic guide that insures main topics of interest are covered, while providing flexibility for new knowledge to be generated during the process.

The questions for the online pretest survey must interrelate to the interview guide for the semi-structured interviews which stem from the links to the existing research identifying potential barriers for diverse communication. In the planning phase, I organize and confirm the date and time of each participant's interview. Prior to the agreed appointment, I email the link created for the online pretest survey with the intent to discover any further topics that require clarification during the interview and to assist with preparing the mind-set of the participant by shifting their attention from their daily roles towards the network.

I plan how the questions can be compiled to inquire further into understanding the barriers that are blocking diverse relationships and causing conflict. To support a thorough analysis, it is important to record the interview, which also enables deeper critical self-reflection. Therefore, after receiving a recommendation during a Doctoral symposium, I plan on recording each interview using AudioNote. AudioNote is simple to use and allows note taking during recording the interview, which is very beneficial to make key observations. As I have never used this recording application before, I chose to practice and test it out on a friend to avoid any unexpected technical difficulties during the live interviews. Once I am comfortable with the recording application, I also plan to actively review the topic guide prepared for the interviews to ensure that I am actively listening to the interviewee as opposed to listening to respond or solely concentrating on the questions. Being confident in knowing the topics, it is more likely I can steer the process to maximize inquiry during the interview.

Using social surveys such as the pretest online and the semi-structured interviews contain potential risks outlined as different interpretations of the questions by each participant, lack of focus on the question being asked, lack of remembering situations clearly in regards to their own behaviors or others, as well as the perception of how people think they act as opposed to their actual actions (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to be mindfully aware of all participants' body language and answers to minimize the influence of the above risks. On the other hand, conducting the interviews on skype can reduce my visibility on body language.

4.3.2 Data Collection Process – Online Pretest

The online pretest survey is a tool used as part of the information gathering process in a qualitative study to clarify the perspectives of the stakeholders using simple English for ease of participants' understanding (Kim, 2010). The purpose of having the online pretest survey completed prior to the interview is to prepare the mind-set of the participant (Kim,2010). The online pretest survey allows more time for the stakeholders to consider their responses and for the researcher to identify areas that could require deeper investigation during the semi-structured interviews or the focus group (Perry, 1998).

The questions are created by considering the objective of understanding how the participant views the network and perceives or experiences interaction with fellow stakeholders. The questions aim to prompt attention on how participant's individual schema is impacting barriers of communication within the network. The software selected to generate the survey is called Survey Monkey, which is easy for both the participants and myself to use and access via email. In addition, this software also monitors and compiles responses to assist in determining themes for the analysis of the data.

The survey is intended as a pretest to prepare participants for the interview by triggering the thinking process towards considering perspectives about the network and their own individual schema to expose any potential areas of interest that could be explored during the interview or focus group (Perry, 1998; Kim, 2010). I created the

online pretest survey and distributed to each of the ten participants via email prior to their scheduled interview.

4.3.3. Online Pretest: Data Analysis, Findings, Interpretations and Reflections

Following is a summary of the integrated data received describing how I interpreted the findings and the relevant link to existing research. The data generates further insight to apply to the interview and focus group using thematic template analysis to identify topics and sub-topics evolving with inquiry (Cassell and Bishop, 2019).

Using the theoretical labels discovered during the initial inquiry and literature review, I analyze how to organize each label to frame my understanding of the data required to engage with the barriers of diverse communication.

During cycle two the focus of confronting barriers of diverse communication is based on building multicultural relationships with three main topics (in green) 1. perception of engagement and growth of the network, 2. experience of communicating in diverse settings, and 3. understanding individual schemas. These topics form the foundation of the inquiry using the online pretest.

The following flow chart provides a visual of the complexity of diverse communication by showing how each sub-topic (in orange) requires further investigation to engage with the identified barriers as outlined in Figure 4.2.

Figure 8: **Sub topics for Inquiry using online pretest**



On the question of - are members a satisfied member of the network - all the ten members indicate that they are satisfied. This data does not explain why some members are inactive, which needs further investigation during interviews and focus group. In addition, it is necessary to discover the core reasons conflict is occurring. It is important to understand what, if anything, can improve the member experience and in what ways can the network engage more directly with their members to promote continued growth and retention. Understanding the reasons the stakeholders are dissatisfied can be investigated more deeply during the one-to-one interview and focus group as part of the analysis which includes individual contributions to co-create strategies (Ramawamy and Gouillart, 2010; Jepson and Eskerod, 2008).

The members' opinion is similar, indicating how they feel are all confident to share their opinion openly during meetings. If this is the case, how does individual confidence override barriers such as language or does their individual perception of power and leadership influence behavior? I interpret this level of confidence is based on the social relationships between the members which have created a high level of trust and mutual respect of individual's cultures (Crane and Ruebottom, 2012; Lewis, 2006).

However, this high opinion on being satisfied as a member and being able to share opinions, does not equally translate to members recommending the network to potential partners. This sharp contrast is a result of the differences in the perception of the meanings of the word "recommend". It is explained by the participant S4, who shares a different perception of the meaning of the word "recommend", which this individual has a personal belief that this is associated with advertising. Furthermore, he elaborates by stating it is acceptable to share their own story about the network without the intention of influencing the other person and leaving the final decision as their own choice is acceptable.

Upon reflection, I found this interpretation of the term "recommend" as intriguing as it is a completely different perspective than my own. Whereas, I personally always share either my positive or negative experiences about an organization or product with others naturally. I am aware of the connection of word of mouth advertising and recommendations although I have never associated this activity with the possibility of being "blamed" if the other person had a negative experience, as I believe ultimately we all are responsible for the choices we make with the information available. Is it possible if I changed the wording of the question to the willingness to share your experience about being a member of the network with others, would responses change? It is important to share that the data from the interviews indicate member recommendations was the way most members have heard about the network.

The question discussing how important culture is to each participant invoked a strong consensus. By reinforcing that culture is important for many members provokes further inquiry into determining the impact this role has on effectively communicating with

people from different cultures. Globalization is impacting the role of culture on our individual schema which will aid everyone in deciphering a global culture through ongoing reflection to seek to understand ourselves before we can integrate and understand others (Gelfand et al., 2018).

Upon further reflection, I perceive myself to have multiple cultural identities influenced by being raised in Canada, and living in Wales and Spain, while working with different cultures for most of my adult life, creating a global mind-set that has contributed to creating a high level of cultural intelligence (Gelfand et al., 2018). Inquiry into participants' cultural identities during the focus group could be valuable in understanding their individual schemas.

A strong commonality between all participants is that each person enjoys learning about other cultures than their own. The willingness and individual motivation to learn about different cultures is a key trait to achieve cultural intelligence (Earley and Ang, 2003). Although motivation and willingness to learn are key, it is more vital to apply and engage which influences behavior, for the full development potential of cultural intelligence (Ott and Michailova, 2018; Berardo and Deardorff, 2012).

Conversely, participants are dichotomized about the major differences between cultures. The differences in the perception of each participant is an interesting perspective that requires further investigation into the core cause of this belief. This indicates that the individual awareness levels of the differences in cultures are blinded depending on exposure frequency to multiple cultures. Cultural intelligence begins with the acknowledgement that everyone is impacted by the role of culture and some have more than one cultural identity that contributes to an understanding of the differences in cultures to find synergy (Crowne, 2013; Alon and Higgins, 2005).

Alternatively, if the commonality is high exposure to other cultures appears to reduce stereotyping or judging others based on their culture, there is a perception in the network that culture is voiced as a reason to avoid these individuals directly. These results indicate that most members are feeling welcome or accepted in the meetings,

although the remaining responses indicate there could be an opposite perception that needs further investigation into why this exists. Education in becoming culturally intelligent could be very useful to overcome potential ethnocentrism, where one's culture is perceived as superior or the marker to judge others (Neuliep, 2018). In addition, this could also indicate a certain element of intercultural communication apprehension (ICA) where individuals seek to avoid people from other cultures simply based by their own fear of the unknown (Neuliep, 2018).

Upon reflection, this is another potential indicator that reinforces the need for understanding the role of culture. With further inquiry into potential barriers of diverse communication it is necessary to dig deeper into members' perception of using English as the common language of the network. The responses can be interpreted that the consensus is language could be a potential barrier to effective communication that needs further investigation. Poncini (2003) suggests that different competence levels in English can be overcome with smaller work groups so participants can take more time to understand the context of the discussion and have the possibility for multilingual members to translate meanings if possible. Berardo (2007) and Thomas and Inkson (2017) reinforces that effective dialogue in business uses simple language with ongoing non-verbal cues and clarification as needed.

Upon further reflection, I acknowledge that the question wording could be improved as I am assuming English is a second language to members based on my own language abilities. The reality is that most members speak several languages before English, which exposes my personal bias and judgment that I based my interpretation and perception on how the role of language is used in this context of the network. Understanding that language is a potential barrier to communication is also necessary to highlight that the consensus is members perceive their cultural background is respected within the network. Although, there is indication that a couple of members do not agree and this difference is important to understand from my perspective as a scholar-practitioner.

These results need further investigation to understand why members do not feel respected by other members, as it could be a source of potential conflict. Ochieng and Price (2009) highlight the link between respect of cultural differences, empathetic leadership and trust as foundations to building nurturing diverse relationships. Upon reflection, this could also indicate the need for further training to improve individual cultural intelligence to overcome differences in perceptions of others.

The network is aiming to be a collaborative European enforcement solution where all members' talents are used to their full potential. The question regarding if the executive committee eagerly includes all stakeholders in the decision-making process generated a split response. The difference in the responses is significant based on my interpretation that could be a potential barrier for full member engagement. These results need further investigation as they could be a potential indicator that not all stakeholders perceive their input is valued or requested, which is a conflict from the intended message from the executive committee. Covey (2004) reinforces the importance of understanding individual perceptions is essential to understand their view of the situation, compared to what other views are to resolve miscommunication or misinterpretation from occurring. Upon reflection, this is a good message to understand further during both the interviews and focus group.

The next question regarding how individual skills are used to improve the network generated a split response among the participants. This information is very valuable and needs further investigation as a significant number of stakeholders do not feel their skills are being used effectively, which contributes to engagement of the identified problem statement. House et al., (2014) reinforce engagement to collaborate efforts is essential to achieve growth strategies, goals and clarify individual expectation.

The final question asking if participating members are interested in learning more about communicating with other cultures indicated a high level of interest. A neutral response exposes potential apathy or lack of interest in improving communication skills. Overall, the response could be interpreted that communication is an encompassing core barrier to engagement and growth of the network. This links

directly to how the literature emphasizes how it is essential for individuals to have a high level of motivation and possess a “willingness to learn” in regards to increasing skills for improved cultural intelligence (Crowne, 2008; Rehg, et al.,2012; Li et al., 2015; Remhof et. al., 2014).

Upon reflection, I should have excluded the rating of neutral as it does not provide clear data from what the participant is thinking as it could be interpreted as either a lack of understanding the question, no opinion either way, or that the question is not perceived as relevant to the individual. On the other hand, as the online pre-test surveys are completed prior to the one-one interviews solely to identify who uses the rating neutral and further investigate into their selection directly, which ended up with a thorough explanation or an opportunity for me to clarify any misunderstandings. All participants submit the completed surveys promptly.

4.3.4. Data Collection Process – Semi Structured Interviews

The interview process is intending to trigger deeper descriptions of stakeholders’ experiences and perceptions of being a member of the network (Ericksson and Kovalainen, 2016). The next decision is to determine if structured, semi-structured or unstructured interviews is the most suitable to address the barriers of diverse communication (Bryman and Bell, 2015). A structured interview is with closed questions used in quantitative studies for valid, tangible and reliable results that can be easily coded (Ericksson and Kovalainen, 2016), versus an unstructured one where an open-ended question is given so the respondent is free to share their individual experience like a conversation used in qualitative studies (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The semi-structured interview uses a topic guide, although questions can be used in any order and allows flexible responses (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

Flexibility is equally important as prepared topics to interview participants and to accommodate the exploration of perceptions and experiences; therefore, I am using semi-structured interviews. This entails preparing the questions in advance as a topic guide that provides the necessary flexibility I require to explore different ideas that evolve during the interview process (Ericksson and Kovalainen, 2016; Stake, 1995). The tone of the interview must have a relaxed atmosphere and be more informal

considering my existing relationship with each participant. The intention of the interview is to gain an in-depth perspective into the participants' schema involving sharing personal biases, stereotypes and judgments of other cultures as part of the process of acknowledgement (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009). Personal change is more likely if shifts in perceptions occur after the participant acknowledges what their biases, stereotypes and judgments are, to proceed to question their validity in the context of the network. It is essential that trust exists between myself and the participants, to insure confidentiality without fear of being judged in any way for an authentic dialogic exchange.

The questions focus on aspects of the barriers to communication and provide an opportunity for stakeholder input to contribute multiple perspectives, using simple wording to accommodate all levels of the English language (Creswell, 2013; Ericksson and Kovalainen, 2016). The interview questions are carefully created to correlate to existing research questions by engaging the participants to begin to acknowledge how their biases, stereotypes and judgments are influencing their perceptions.

The literature guides my question selection by emphasizing how the role of culture influences all aspects of stakeholder management (Nagda, 2006; House et al., 2014; Gelfand et al., 2018; Smith and Fischbacher, 2005). Furthermore, how trust and rapport are the initial steps to engage sharing collective mindfulness (Ochieng and Price, 2009; Lewis, 2006; Vogus and Welbourne, 2003; Deardorff, 2009; Nueliep, 2018). In addition, the flow of the questions begins with network member benefits and moves into deeper personal questions as the rapport is building to explore personal biases, then finally progressing to ways each stakeholder can contribute to improve the network. The question flow connects directly with confronting the barriers to diverse communication, allowing authentic dialogue to share the journey of personal discovery of unacknowledged schemas (Fine, 1991; Schon, 1993; Isaacs, 1999).

The interviews are conducted via SKYPE on a mutually agreed time and date. SKYPE is the preferred communication tool as it is the most logistically efficient approach to contact each stakeholder. The interviews are recorded using AudioNote, which also

allows note taking on the computer screen during the interview. The interviews have been allocated a maximum time of thirty minutes, as each stakeholder is a business owner with limited availability. All recordings are saved on my personal computer with a passcode access and backed up in the cloud-based service called Dropbox. Immediately after the interview is completed the data is coded, anonymised and then transcribed.

The interview questions are created to specifically integrate with the encompassing themes of the research questions, to further understand participant perceptions of the barriers of communication. I use the following questions 4 through 9 to explore participant's perception of their reality and level of awareness of their individual schema. The questions are outlined below in figure 9.

Figure 9: *Semi Structured Interview Topic Guide*

Qualitative Semi-Structured (guided) Interview Questions	
10 Member Interviews (12 open- ended questions)	
<i>Participants views on existing benefits of European Network Membership</i>	<i>Participants views on cultural diversity in communication</i>
1.What attracted you to become a member of the network?	4.What is your experience in communicating with members from different cultures?
2. What is your favorite part of a meeting?	5.How do your personal beliefs and judgements influence your experience in meetings?
3. Please share your experience on the effectiveness of communication between the executive committee and yourself as a member.....	6.How do you feel about expressing or communicating your opinion in meetings in front a variety of cultures?
<i>Participants views on how cultural judgements influence communication</i>	<i>Participants views on how their skills can enhance the network</i>
7.How do you overcome any cultural stereotypes that you may have?	10.What would you like added to the itinerary during meetings that would benefit yourself as a member?
8.What is something you have learned about a different culture since joining the network?	11.How can you participate with improving the network?
9.What challenges do you have when communicating with people from other cultures?	12.What roles in the executive committee could benefit with your skills?

Using the online pretest survey is to prepare the participants to begin thinking about the topics to be discussed in the following interview and to help identify any areas that require further investigation or clarification. Each question triggers the participant to consider their perception of their experiences of the network and how the role of culture influences their schema which differs from others. In addition, it provokes thoughts on perceptions of others in relation to barriers of diverse communication such as language, trust, conflict and unacknowledged schemas.

I interact with the participants of the study to build the necessary rapport prior to conducting the semi-structured interview within the allocated thirty-minute time frame. I actively listen to each participant's responses and take notes during the interview process, while also observing body language, tone and facial expressions. I am focused on creating a relaxed tone for the interview, observing how SKYPE interviews can hinder privacy considering I have no control over potential distractions in their offices. I gather, transcribe and anonymize all participant's responses, ready to shift into the evaluation part of the cycle.

4.3.5 Semi-structured interviews: Data Analysis, Findings and Interpretations

Evaluating the data involves establishing patterns or repetitions in the participants' responses to identify conceptual labels that encompass the sub-questions that I have inductively identified after correlating the input from both online pretest survey and the transcribed interview data. Simultaneously while reviewing the transcripts I am directly interpreting the data and seeking the sense making of the larger context combined with ongoing reflection that is linking the findings with existing literature (Creswell, 2013). Interpretation is centered around my awareness of the pre-understanding and theoretical assumptions that I constantly question to keep the research focus balanced between myself as the researcher and the context of the research (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2018).

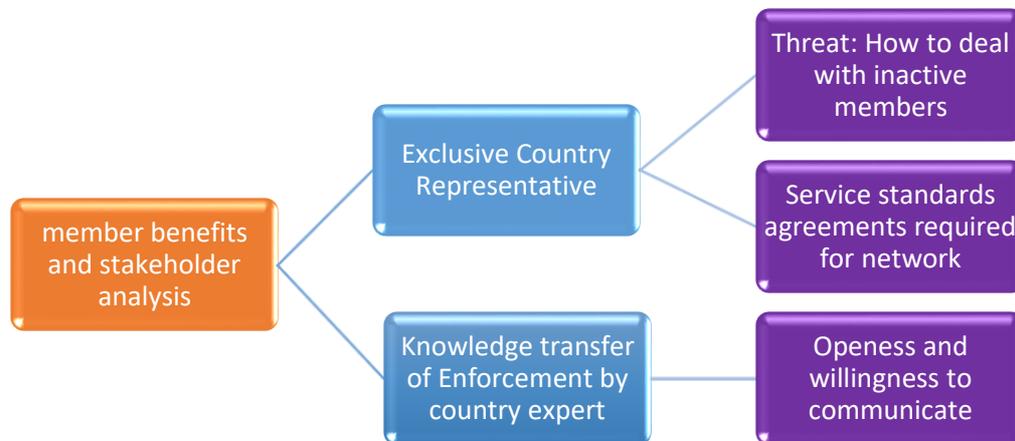
Ten interviews are conducted that represent members from ten different European countries. The participants include eight males and two females, who all hold senior positions within their organizations that are involved in the enforcement or legal professions. The participants provide a good sample of the network, from both the membership and executive committee who can mitigate bias and provide diverse perspectives (Dasgupta, 2015).

Each semi-structured interview is conducted within the thirty-minute allocated time via SKYPE, with one interview face-to-face, all recorded with the participant's consent. Although, one interview did not fully record as the participant and myself were disconnected in the middle. As an insider researcher, I had an existing established relationship with each of the participants which provided an advantage of rapport building and trust. A further advantage is the insight I have from being a part of the network since conception and participating over the past six years as the membership has grown.

Conversely, I am aware of any existing biases, judgments or perceptions that I may have about a participant based on my perceptions of either the individual or their culture to gather intended information. With reflection, as one of the only native English speakers, I need to be conscious of finishing others' sentences or filling in words for the participant without clarification of intended meaning, although it was necessary during some interviews to explain the question in a different way without jeopardizing the core purpose of the question while creating an understanding of the words. On several occasions participants asked me for the word in English that described what they said or wanting to say.

Key Findings:

Figure 10: Thematic template Analysis –Interview data on network benefits



Using template analysis of the interview data unexpected findings are discovered that involve further investigation into handling inactive members, service standards and communication skills. The findings identified that members share similarities between members' perceptions and experience of the European network, specifically in the reasons they became members. This is an important finding to establish the relevancy and benefits of the network.

“Being the exclusive country representative to collaborate with other European partners, creating added value for clients” (Participant A5, 2018).

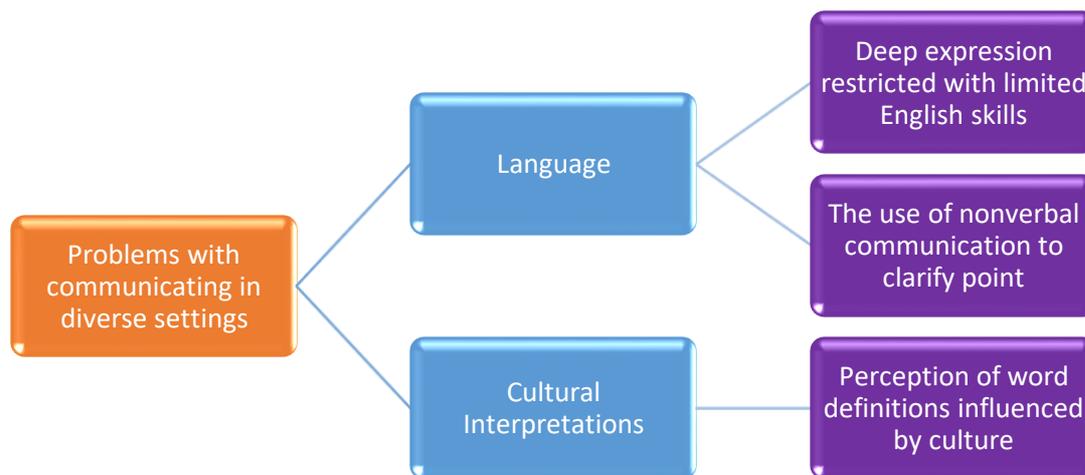
“Sharing updates on changes in legislation, policies or procedures in each different European country with access to an industry expert” (Participant A8, 2018).

In addition, the following summarises further comments that suggest the meeting information is the most value, along with the social aspect. Furthermore, the openness and willingness of members' attitudes towards communication increases friendliness. This collective perception also links to how trust is created between members and how this relates strongly to member benefits of the network. Another key benefit is access to the enforcement representative in any of the member countries supported by the networking opportunities available while experiencing different cultures.

“Willingness and openness is most important and this already happens with members” (Participant, A3, 2018).

The findings also appear to correspond with existing literature as the openness and willingness to communicate can be correlated to the fact that most members travel extensively, which has influenced their individual schema (Crowne, 2008; Young et al., 2017). These findings emerge through the interview process on how exposure to multiple cultures is a common trait of participants although, it does not equate to effectiveness. Without establishing the links to why communication breaks down in diverse stakeholder groups the process of improving skills could be unsuccessful. Using thematic template analysis in figure 11 to show how themes are evolving.

Figure 11: *Thematic template Analysis – Interview data on communication*



On the other hand, the findings also indicated that more skills could be developed as a group to overcome language barriers that could be contributing to miscommunication or misinterpretations. In addition, the data indicates most of the participants acknowledge the need to support their words with body language and eye contact to ensure the dialogue is interpreted correctly (Poncini, 2003; Adler, 1991).

“Language is a barrier for deep expression and meaning – I use lots of body language and eye contact to see if we share understanding” (Participant, A3, 2018).

The intention of this group of diverse stakeholders that have similar professions share the vision to collaborate their services across Europe; the challenge is synchronizing actions in different countries with different legislations and enforcement policies while recognizing the moderating role of culture.

It is a direct interpretation that communication is a fundamental aspect of the networks' success to achieve collaboration towards desired objectives. It is essential to manage the diverse stakeholders' expectations to avoid misinterpretation or conflict that could be contributed from the influence of an individual's culture (Caputo et al., 2018; Ochieng and Price, 2009). All members indicate an awareness of the need to keep an open mind and to be willing to try to send or interpret the intended message which are key personality traits required to increase cultural intelligence (Peng, et al., 2015; Adler, 1991). The patterns of communication traits to improve effectiveness is directly linked to efficiency of using English as well as cultural interpretations.

“Finds communicating frustrating as its difficult to get the intended message clearly so takes more patience and tolerance” (Participant A6, 2018).

In addition, all participants feel comfortable to share their opinions in front the group and indicate the friendliness of the members, which is also fundamental in creating a learning environment for knowledge sharing in a leaderful organization (Raelin, 2011; Nagda, 2006). Using template analysis further patterns are identified to understand that member confidence is related to the level of trust that is established by improving diverse communication skills.

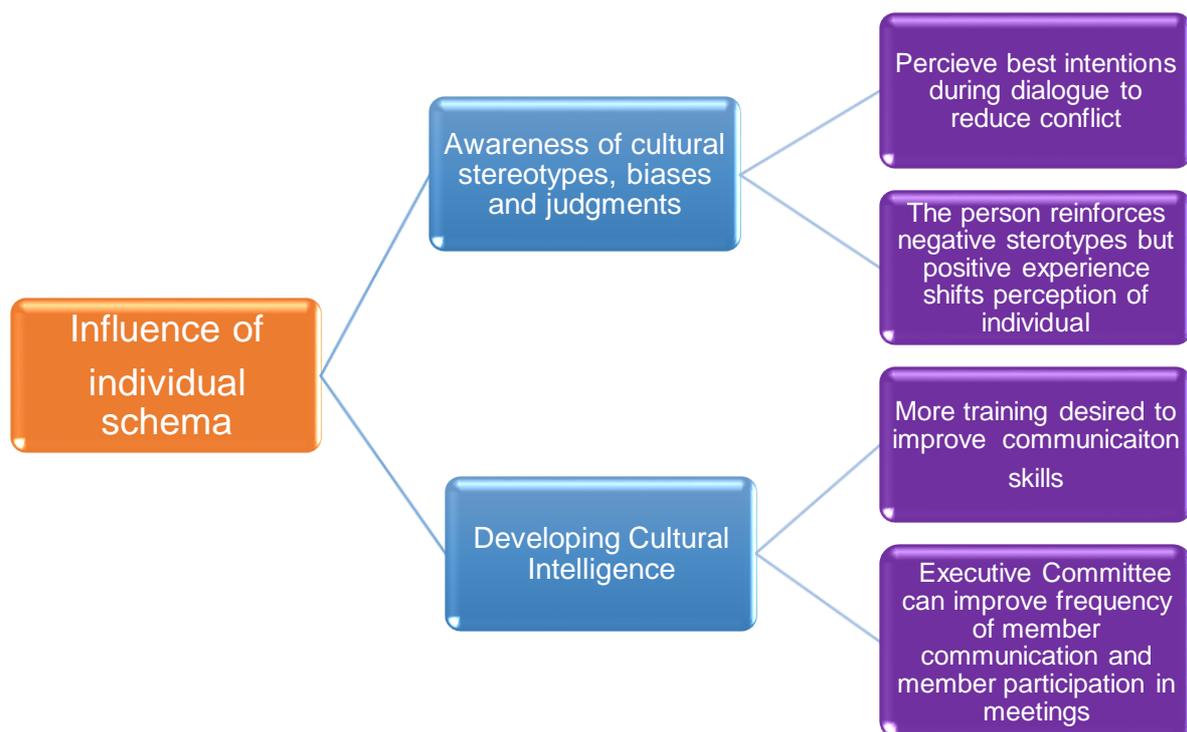
“Very comfortable to share opinions – everyone is welcoming- focus on using simple words” (Participant A10, 2018).

Each member indicated varying levels of acknowledging their own individual schema although all members focus on building the relationship with the individual and not focusing on the stereotypes of their culture (Hajro et al., 2017).

“I give the benefit of the doubt that intention is good from the other person and let them create my impression of them not the culture” (Participant A3, 2018).

Opposingly, if the member has a negative experience with the individual it also filters over to their perception of the culture. Is it possible to consider that based on these findings culture contributes to the individual identity and behaviors, so therefore is it possible to separate the two?

Figure 12: Thematic template Analysis – Interview data on Schema



The findings also indicate that each stakeholder holds a flexible approach to the itinerary and are open for change as introduced during the meeting in Milan, when I

put everyone into groups so members interacted with others they may not have before in that way.

“Likes how itinerary is adapted to current needs/topics/issues; would like to have more workshop style topics discussed with a focus on communication to help improve dealings with different cultures” (Participant A9, 2018).

The findings also confirm that most members are interested to improve their communication skills across cultures. This finding emerged from the data by considering stakeholders' levels of cultural intelligence through key interview and pretest questioning combined with my interpretations. Furthermore, identifying stakeholders' willingness to learn is a positive result of this study and will only improve the strength of the network holistically.

The findings indicate that there is a consensus that, in general, participants are satisfied with the existing executive committee. Other perspectives include participants' desires to attract more member countries to increase value to their clients.

“The executive committee is excellent and could improve communication between meetings, especially if there a change happening or updates on changes. If any member is not attending the meeting the country update should still be provided” (Participant A8, 2018).

The findings suggest members interviewed are willing to participate more in meetings by giving presentations that share their expertise or more specific country information that supports collaborative efforts and shared leadership strategies based on authenticity (Men and Stacks, 2014; Zander and Butler, 2010; Bryson, 2004; Booher and Innes, 2002). This finding is linked through template analysis by establishing the patterns of how stakeholders collectively view individual member engagement and network growth.

“Willing to help out in meetings and give presentations” (Participant A1, 2018).

As an insider researcher, during the meetings it is necessary to be mindful that I acknowledge my automatic judgments of others to interpret their actions authentically. This skill is very challenging to master and requires constant awareness of my automatic judgments as I begin to interview participants. An unexpected finding is how three participants assured me confidently that they are non-judgmental of people from other cultures and minutes later disclosed an unacknowledged stereotypical judgmental view of a different culture. On the other hand, the interviews instigated critical self-reflection with the participants, as each one considered their views and being introduced to being aware of their schemas for the responses to the questions. Of course, linking to existing literature it is confirmed for triple learning to occur the participant also must learn to question and challenge existing beliefs to understand how these judgments are formed while determining if they are still valid or can be adapted (Bradbury, 2015).

Participant feedback during the interview questions poses insight into their own schema indicating how most participants are not consciously aware of their biases, judgments and stereotypes. It is my interpretation that my established relationship with the participants provides the trust required to share this process together.

Directly after the interviews are completed, I evaluate and identify any areas that could benefit from further investigation and use those as the topics for the focus group. The results indicate a need to dig deeper into how our judgments, beliefs and biases are forming our individual perception and to trigger an understanding that these can be changed. The conceptual labels I have identified from the survey and interview process are used as a topic guide for deep investigation in the focus group (Creswell, 2013; Dasgupta, 2015). The next part of the cycle is to consider my reflections.

4.3.6. Inquiry Cycle 2 - Critical Reflections

After each recording, I document a brief reflective note that focuses on my perception on the dynamics of the relationship between myself and the interviewee, with an overall interview experience (Creswell, 2013). The reflection process includes my pre-understanding of participants to acknowledge personal bias, stereotypes or judgments

I am having during the interview process based on my prior existing relationship with each participant (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2018).

This process of self-discovery provides new actionable knowledge at the level of the individual. At the beginning of this process I perceive myself as a competent facilitator and leader who thrives in diverse environments. I travel extensively with a close multicultural social circle. During this inquiry, I discover that I possess a high level of cultural intelligence based on my own cognitive, metacognitive, motivation and behavior adaptability to communicate with diverse stakeholders. During the interviews, I actively listen, gently choosing words to encourage the participants to reflect and think about why they answered the way they did.

Further reflections on how each of the participants' willingness to share their opinions openly helps me as an interviewer to focus on investigating the key points of this inquiry in more depth. I perceive each participants' willingness to openly share confirms that we share a solid level of trust between us. The enthusiasm about the network is an effective indicator of member satisfaction that can potentially contribute engagement towards growth objectives. The insider inquiry also frames a positive tone for the interview from my perspective. I also perceived that having an existing relationship with the participants influences a conversational and informal tone to the interview dialogues (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009; Harvey and Griffith, 2002).

It is my interpretation from one interview that the participant indicates that it is their personal policy not to make judgments about others, and then proceeded to compare cultural stereotypes and what individual feelings are triggered during this comparison. It is my perception this is a great example of lack of awareness of the power of the automatic judgments that occur, and the importance for critical self-reflection specifically when communicating with people from different cultures. Another participant indicated they perceive no differences between cultures, which is interpreted by myself as an indicator more knowledge needs to be shared on how to manage unconscious bias. The overarching interpretation is evolving towards the challenges of managing unconscious biases. During the focus group, further inquiry

is needed to understand the difference perspectives between how the participants think they should act versus the reality.

The data is interpreted from these ten interviews as an indication that the collaboration of ten different people from ten unique cultures is potentially possible if the role of culture within the individuals' schema is explored in more depth.

4.3.7. Summary of Inquiry cycle 2 – pretest and online interviews

The two aspects of inquiry during cycle two, involve both the online survey pretest and semi-structured interviews of the ten participants.

The pretest provides an opportunity for the participants to prepare for the interview and trigger their thinking about the network. The responses identified initial perceptions of the participants' cultural identities, member benefits, miscommunication, conflicts and on to begin to understand the impact culture plays. The participants' perceptions on if their culture is respected could be a source of internal conflict that needs to be investigated further during the interviews. The data generated during the pretest, presented an initial perception of the participants for the interview to investigate. Furthermore, the findings indicate that further training is desired on diverse communication and how to acknowledge individual stereotypes, biases and judgments could be beneficial. This finding links to existing theory on how recognizing the impact the role of culture plays and how cultural intelligence could assist with overcoming barriers of diverse communication. This concept requires further inquiry regarding how the cultural lens influences perception of others.

The interviews continue to explore and expand on the data generated by the online pretest. Each individual interview reinforced how the role of culture contributes to differences in perception of diversity. The role of culture impacts the individual schema that further contributes to perceptions of members from different cultures. Using thematic template analysis to evaluate emerging data to develop identified concepts and to discover new areas of interest is key to understanding the complexities of the

role of culture. Through direct individual dialogue it emerges how each participant has different perceptions, specifically on what is acceptable service response times. This data indicates that discrepancies could exist in other areas of operation of the network that requires further inquiry in the next cycles.

To overcome conflict, misunderstandings and poor communication it is necessary to further investigate a process that initiates individual acknowledgement of biases, judgments and stereotypes by understanding how, when and why these are formed during life experiences. Further inquiry into understanding the impact of the awareness that we all have these automatic judgments, then it is possible to question them or at least becoming open to the possibilities that other perspectives exist. These findings need to be further investigated during the focus group to establish a collaborate process that is safe to share openly each individual schema. I argue that this information could be fundamental in shifting individual perspectives to improve diverse communication in the network. I argue that the individual shifts within their schema could be collectively beneficial to the change initiatives of the network based on the data generated to this point of the research process.

4.4 Inquiry Cycle 3- Online Focus Group

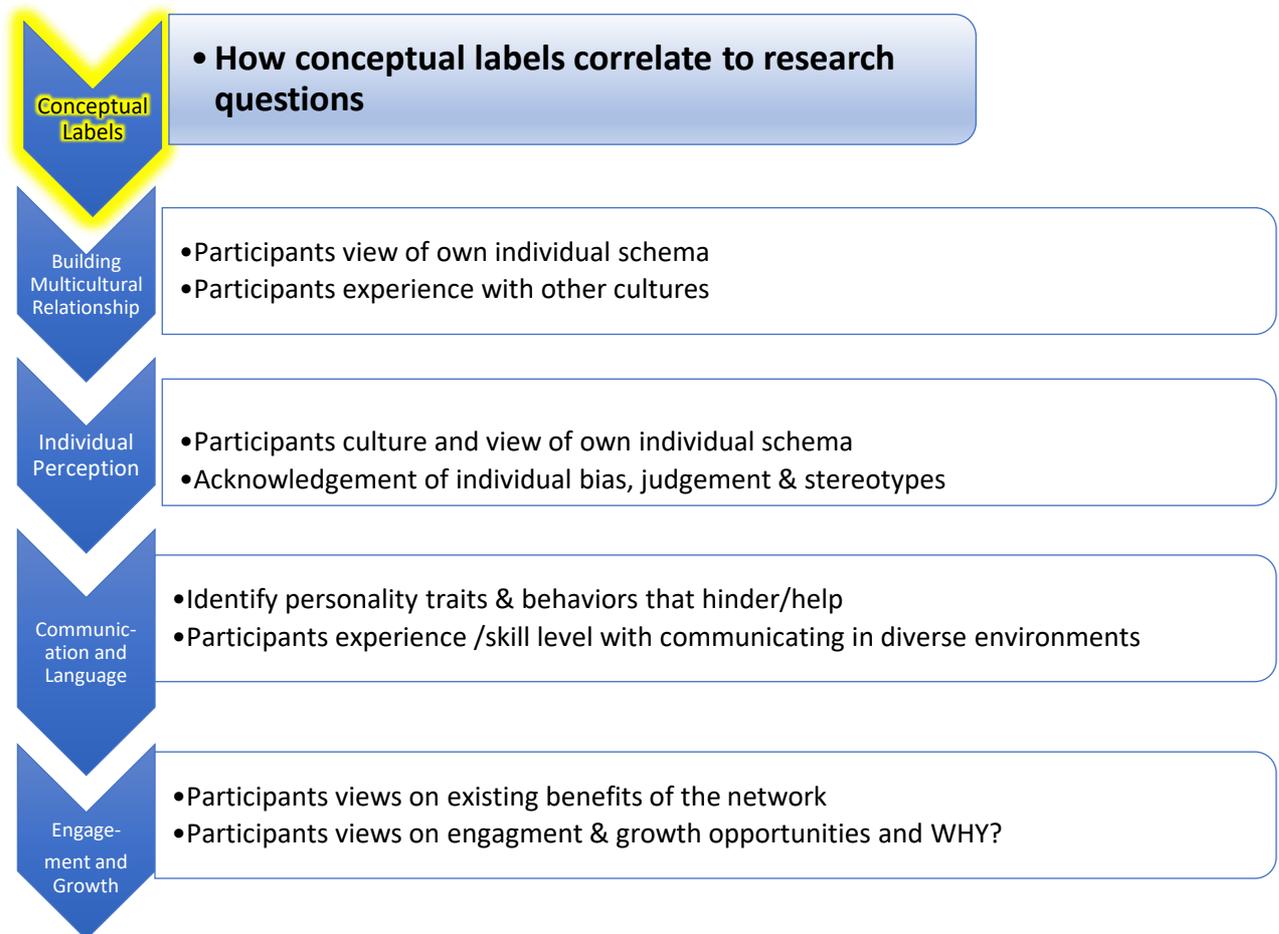
4.4.1. Description of Research Activities

During the third action cycle I utilize the conceptual labels identified from the interview process as a topic guide for the focus group. Conceptual labels are identified when the transcribed data is reviewed that discloses patterns of data inductively provided by the research participants that provides the outline for the findings section (Creswell, 2013). The data inductively exposes different patterns in the data that assists with exposing themes (Creswell, 2013).

The focus group is exploring in more detail the influence of culture on individual schema and how this impacts creating multicultural relationships using the conceptual labels identified. The data analyzed from the second cycle establishes repetitive patterns. The conceptual labels (Figure 3.6) that are derived from the sub-questions for the interviews are: Building intercultural relationships; Individual perception;

Communication barriers focusing on language; Engagement and Growth; to gain collective input on how the role of culture impacts these barriers.

Figure 13: *Conceptual Labels Correlated to Research Questions*



The planning for the third action cycle requires the coordination of the five participants for an agreed date and time for the online focus group to occur. The participants share their perception of new information generated during the interviews, which contributes to existing knowledge of the topics that are discussed in the group environment for further investigation. The topic guide is based on the conceptual labels discovered in the previous cycle.

I invite the members to participate in the online focus group that will utilize SKYPE for business, so everyone can have a visual of each other and I can actively observe

body language, facial expressions, and tone. The focus group is composed of four males and one female that all hold senior level positions with their organizations that specialize in the enforcement or legal profession. I prepare three different discussion topics for this focus group that is conducted on SKYPE with a total of five participants for an allocated time of ninety minutes. I review the data from the individual interviews to reflect on key areas that could benefit from deeper investigation such as a deeper focus on unacknowledged schemas and how to create a collective process of discovery.

The reflections on the quality of focus group is complex considering all participants share perspectives and must be individually combined to construct their view of reality. I begin identifying what the consensus is and what the differences are while seeking to understand my own personal biases, judgements and stereotypes in the process (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2018).

4.4.2. Data Collection Process

This cycle of inquiry involves how I facilitate the focus group with the five participants. During the focus group, it is essential that I actively listen to responses and balance the discussion so everyone has equal time to share their perspectives. I am available online ten minutes before the official start time of the focus group ready to welcome and assist participants. At the beginning of the focus group I introduce myself, state the purpose and time allocation for the meeting, set the rules of engagement to include there are no right or wrong answers, respect and listen to other participants, and it is important everyone has a turn to contribute.

I proceed to reaffirm confidentiality along with confirming permission to record the meeting, reinforcing all data generated will be anonymized and transcribed for further analysis. During the focus group, I explore emergent themes and prompt further examination of diverse views and experiences while simultaneously challenging consensus. As each participant shares, personal biases, judgments and stereotypes it is important I monitor others' reaction to reduce the risk of offending the participants. It is also necessary to balance my approach as the facilitator to observe when it is time to redirect the conversation or to let it continue off point for new information to emerge.

On the other hand, it is essential that I maintain the schedule of discussions as each person has only allocated ninety minutes. At closing time for the group, I thank all participants and ask for any final concluding remarks before ending the discussion on time.

The evaluation of the focus group involves analyzing what new information emerges and on my facilitation approach. It is necessary to evaluate how the group dynamics create further emergent themes, diversity of views and experiences. The evaluation of my facilitation approach includes; how did I challenge the apparent consensus, probe participants further, lead topics and balance participation.

4.4.3 Data Analysis, Findings and Interpretations

The focus group is recorded with each participant's permission, transcribed and then anonymized. We started a few minutes late as there was one participant with technical difficulties and one participant was late logging on so we proceeded without them as they joined the discussion after six minutes. During the focus group two participants had connection issues that were overcome by recapping discussions and repeating comments. Despite the technical glitches the flow of focus group is not interrupted from my perspective.

At the beginning of the focus group I introduced some boundaries to remind participants that there are no right or wrong answers, to please respect others as we all have different perspectives so please listen without interrupting. The focus here is surrounding soft skill development, which is about your individual perception and how we think about building relationships with people in different cultures.

Topic 1: Discussion on Building Intercultural Relationships:

I invite the participants to think about existing relationships with people from different cultures. I pose a discussion regarding a focus on the differences between building a relationship with somebody from your own culture as opposed to somebody from a different culture.

Key Findings:

One participant shares that other cultures are not as direct as theirs, creating a perception of a personal challenge to build close relationships with people from other cultures. Due to lack of directness this participant finds it difficult to understand the intended meaning of the message. There is a preference to confront the issues to achieve clarity so all parties understand each other. On the other hand, this approach could offend someone who does not like confrontation or is culturally tuned to be more passive.

“...there are some cultures that are very direct, like my own, but in business terms, yes is yes, no is no and what your feeling with more sophisticated societies that been doing business for centuries, no is not always no and yes is not always yes, so you have to be very careful of these customs”, (Participant B1, 2018).

This finding indicates a potential root of conflict linked to the theoretical understanding of the differences of perception of how communication occurs effectively. One culture prefers to avoid confrontation and one prefers to be more direct. This discussion progresses to discover the importance of understanding differences in culture to reduce personal interpretations to be offended without considering the various cultural lenses applied. I further inquire to gain insight from the other participants considering this is an interesting perspective that contradicts my own cultural conditioning of perceiving directness as potentially rude. A different participant shares how being raised as an expatriate by parents from different countries created an openness towards multiple perspectives. The perception is that the focus is on the uniqueness of individual as opposed to a generic cultural stereotype. Building multicultural relationships is natural as the participant never experienced any other way.

“My parents were both from different countries to the one I was raised, so dealing with people from other countries is all the same to me”, (Participant B4, 2018).

This finding deepens the differences in perspectives based on how a participant was raised and how this contributes to individual perception regarding culture. From a different perspective, another participant shared how being raised in a small country with limited exposure to other cultures creates more perceived stereotypes passed down from their circle of influence. Over time these stereotypes are overcome based on personal experience with international business dealings with people from different cultures. Exposure to different cultures could challenge unconscious biases, changing their view point through these experiences of building close multicultural relationships.

On the other hand, one of the participants who had limited exposure to other cultures, perceives people need to be “forced” to interact with people from other cultures. Continuing to disclose that different cultures is not a natural attraction, although the participant enjoys learning about other cultures, even though the language barrier causes blocks to the emotional connection of multicultural relationships.

“It is quite difficult to make a good connection between different cultures.... when I was living abroad, I met people from other cultures because I was forced to.... when you go to another country you get to know a little bit about their culture and habits.... you can break down barriers and start conversations. So, I think travelling is the key of how to cope with other cultures”, (Participant B3, 2018).

A different participant is raised in a multicultural environment and possesses complete openness to multiple perspectives. Emphasizing awareness of the importance of clarifying acceptable boundaries for mutual understanding of intended messages to nurture multicultural relationships. This finding links to the importance of overcoming language, trust barriers in dialogue that requires further input in the next meeting.

My own personal reflections on this dialogue is how it supported that people exposed to a variety of cultures or with multiple identities achieve a greater level of cultural intelligence based on their openness to the experience and the motivation to discuss differences. I realize to establish a consensus to build relationships that can be

nurtured through trust (Thomas and Inkson, 2017; Crowne, 2013; Deardorff, 2006). This discussion triggered individual acknowledgments of existing stereotypes they each held or experienced, and I could instigate the group to reflect on how these are created, which was agreed that it is a combination from our circle of influence as children, through the environment we live and the main culture that impact our individual schema that confirms research findings by, Gut et al., (2017); Kim and Van Dyne, (2012); Alvesson and Skoldberg (2018). It is interesting that within such a small group there are strong opposing experiences on building intercultural relationships. The findings also contribute to developing the themes on the importance of trust and language. I am interested to learn more about how each participant perceives their own schema and if it is possible to recognize stereotypes.

Topic 2: Discussion on Individual Perception:

I proceeded by bridging the topic of stereotypes that were created by our circle of influences when we are young and culturally reinforced to inviting the participants to take a moment to think about what stereotypes they have. This is a very risky question that requires facilitation to keep responses in context so no participant feels offended. I proceed to initiate discussions for the participants to share how or if perception can be changed. Also, do individual participants challenge these perceptions based on new experiences or information? I proceeded to invite each participant to think about a certain belief they had that has changed since becoming an adult and why or how it happened? The group was guided to think about other beliefs, biases and judgments, have they acknowledged these before? If not, what has happened? I also insured that everyone understood the terms used and the group agreed.

Key Findings:

One participant shared an interesting personal experience that being raised in a multicultural environment contributed to their openness and ability to not judge others based on the understanding that there are multiple perspectives with many different approaches available. Since becoming an adult, this openness has shifted to more of an intolerance and avoidance of certain cultures based on negative experiences with people from that culture.

“From birth I was exposed to multiple cultures and was open to everyone...now that I’m older I’ve come to a place where I don’t really enjoy all the backgrounds...I started avoiding certain cultures” (Participant B4, 2018).

Participant B3 shared a personal experience of how perception of a culture can be changed when personalizing that culture by building friendships and through visiting a new country with a local person as the inside guide for the best experience possible. This finding links to the identified benefits of the network and the impact of understanding different cultures and the awareness of personal perceptions.

Participant B5 shares the importance of travelling and experiencing different cultures to meet different people to help break down the perceived barriers. The consensus within the group is that every participant acknowledges that stereotypes, judgments and biases exist around culture in general, although it is possible for a person to change the views of the culture by building relationships with people from that culture.

“We were raised to hate one specific culture based on historical actions, although I have many friends now from that culture, so the person can erase the cultural stereotype”, (Participant B2, 2018).

This is a significant finding of this inquiry that directly links to the problem statement that individual biases, stereotypes and judgments can be influenced once these are acknowledged. Failure to acknowledge the individual schema first could spiral into reactive interactions that contribute to ongoing conflict, lack of engagement and misunderstandings. On the other hand, a member who is mindful of their own individual schema is more open to different perspectives and curious of different perspectives.

Topic 3: Communication and the Importance of Language:

I invited the group to reflect on how much time is personally invested into improving our communication skills with other people and to consider why misunderstandings occur while considering whose responsibility is it.

Key Findings:

This topic is a very quick discussion as all participants agreed that language is critical to communication for multicultural relationships. Furthermore, that English is the global language although, it is important to use simple words to insure mutual understandings. This finding again, links to the theoretical understanding of the importance of clarifying basic terms to navigate the different interpretations of the meanings of words that could contribute to ongoing conflict between members. All participants agree that more time needs to be invested to improve communication skills, more specifically to build intercultural relationships. Most participants have never considered that misunderstandings could be due to their own individual schema and shared this was an insightful finding that they would like to be explored further, as opposed to becoming frustrated with the other person. This is a key finding that emerges from template analysis on how individual change is necessary before gaining momentum for collective change is possible.

Topic 4: Engagement and Growth Opportunities:

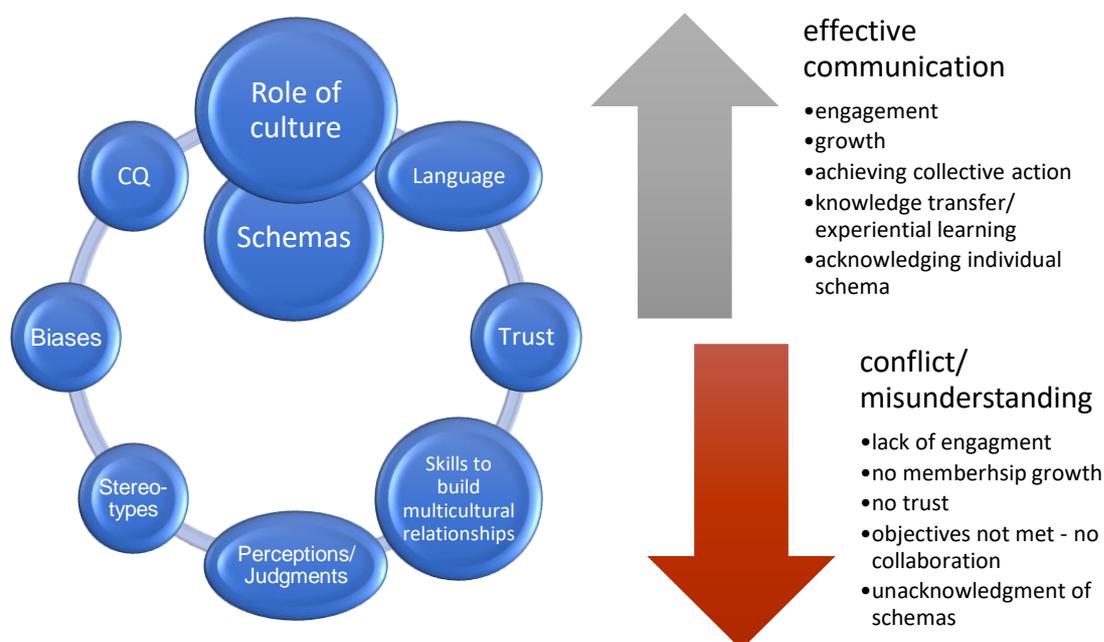
I first introduce the concept of engagement and asked if everyone understood the term and described the context for this discussion which is “to be personally invested in the network” (Leyshon, 2018). I also acknowledged that volunteering to participate in this process is a great example of engagement, as each perspective is very important to improving the member experience. In addition, it is important to gain a deeper insight into perceived opportunities on how to grow membership through identifying the benefits.

Key Findings:

It appears to be a collective perception that member engagement is working with the partners on cases and supporting the process by reporting results, attending meetings twice a year and hosting meetings. It is discussed that some members are not responding to cases in a timely manner, which is a key concern that needs to be addressed, as this is the reason for being a member. This finding is key as this research focus is on understanding barriers in diverse communication which is exposed directly to member response times. This concern needs urgent clarification on a collective definition of what is an acceptable response time, or this issue can continue to cause perceived conflict. This is a vital finding that requires further

investigation in the next meeting to gain a collective perspective on a member's service charter. Terms like trust are discovered to have a variety of interpretations that need clarification collectively to diffuse or reduce misunderstandings that could be causing conflict. During the focus group the discussion emerges with findings interrelated to building multicultural relationships and confronting the barriers of diverse communication, using the role of culture to understand the level of individual's cultural intelligence to initiate the acknowledgement of the impact schema. Data patterns repetitively validate and develop into how the initial topics contribute to our schema, which influences the individual ability to overcome barriers of communication as indicated in Figure 4.4.

Figure 14: The contributors that impact our schema and communication skills



In addition, it has been suggested that time is allocated on the agenda that addresses practical issues such as “what happens when I receive a judgment” to assist other members to understand the process that is unique in each country, it could be one – two members in focus per meeting as an idea. Again, this finding links to the importance of communication and understanding of unique country processes for member engagement. If members do not understand different processes in each

country, it could impact on potential referrals of cases that will in turn contribute to lack of engagement of the membership. It is also suggested that a member resource is compiled with basic information regarding enforcement of judgments with average time expectations that other members can use to inform clients of the process of that specific country. In summary, more information needs to be made available to the members regarding common enforcement questions (which need to be identified by all members) to insure a high client service delivery for each partner.

The consensus moves on to confirm that the value of membership increases with more countries that are a part of the network. A large membership base provides a valuable resource of European connections for a local competitive advantage giving the network more credibility while providing opportunities to experience more cultures. The consensus is that the best way is for members to work on referrals with other European networks or associations that they belong to and invite people to meetings to experience what the network can do for them. Many existing members are already doing this sporadically and can improve on consistency.

The discussion progresses to include ideas on adding a “member liaison” to the executive committee to assist with more direct marketing efforts such as trade shows, advertising, PR, and overseeing member to member case exchanges as a touch point with access to all members to insure efficient communication. However, cost is discussed as a potential barrier as some member organizations are larger than others, as well as what is the core purpose of the network, is this role necessary, and how would it be represented at the shows? In addition, the consensus is that trade shows are a good idea in concept although more information is required.

Closing the Focus Group

I invite any further questions, comments or feedback before this session ends. I thank everyone for taking time out of their busy schedules to contribute to this focus group and remind everyone that everything discussed is confidential. I confirm that all data will be presented to the members at the next meeting in September 2018 in Lithuania.

The participants had positive feedback and one commented;

“I want to thank everyone as I am leaving this discussion feeling quite enriched”
(Participant B1, 2018).

4.4.4 Reflections on Inquiry Cycle 3 – Focus Group

Upon reflection, the combination of mindful awareness of individual schemas with more countries that each member gets to experience will improve individual cultural intelligence as discussed, which could contribute to developing the skills to improve multicultural relationships. All participants indicated that each of them travels extensively, although their perceived patience with other cultures is not enough to induce authentic change and adaptation based on the feedback from the focus group.

This process is interpreted to be very productive for both personal and organizational growth. It is my interpretation that the focus group produced very insightful interactions with a large “pause” for participants to consider their individual schemas with a brief introduction to the power of acknowledging their own beliefs, biases and judgments while simultaneously challenging them if change is desired (Rigg and Trehan, 2008). During the discussion on member benefits, engagement and growth opportunities were discussed in detail providing some valuable information to present to the other members for further discussion. Evaluating myself as a focus group facilitator, I perceive that I accomplished balance between participants equally and instigated a deeper inquiry when key points were raised while exploring new perspectives respectfully. On the other hand, I would change the time allocated for each theme and invest more time exploring the individual schema.

My personal relationship with each participant provided historical knowledge of their individual schema, although through ongoing reflection, I remained open to learning more about each person, which proves the importance of awareness of judgments as new information is available as people develop their own cultural intelligence by changing old patterns (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2018). Everyone knew each other prior to the focus group; that improved the authenticity of the dialogue, as I perceive that each participant trusted each other and myself. Therefore, everyone was comfortable to share honest experiences such as their personal biases or judgments (Huang, 2015).

Another advantage of being an inside researcher is that I could utilize information previously known to guide discussions (Roth et al., 2007). For example, I am aware of my perceptions from previous meetings who is prone to dominating discussions and who is generally quiet to insure all voices were heard in the focus group. Overall, the focus group provides valuable insight and ideas to improve the network, while inviting each participant to consider their own individual schemas and the value of the role of culture to achieve collective goals.

4.4.5 Summary of Inquiry Cycle 3 – Focus Group

In summary, all participants share candidly some of their personal judgments of other cultures, acknowledge openly to the group some stereotypes that exist and show how these perceptions can either contribute to or contaminate building relationships with people from other cultures. Most of the participants acknowledge these stereotypes are transferred from parents and society from a young age. The acknowledgement of their schema is a vital aspect to impacting the barriers of communication that is being experienced.

Additionally, participants agree that they are open to set aside existing stereotypes to get to know the person, although if they don't end up liking the person it can just confirm the initial belief. The trust levels between myself and the participants is high enough to share individual stereotypes and to encourage an authentic discussion. Each participant understood the context of the situation, with the objective being to exhibit how everyone holds these automatic judgments. This discussion validates the power of perception and the potential barriers that could be created if left unacknowledged.

This cycle of inquiry also argues the value of the need to clarify terms collectively as a group which will be a key focus during the next cycle. If terms are not collectively defined misunderstandings will continue that may hinder member engagement and fail to meet individual member expectations resulting in ongoing conflict. Further information is required from the next cycle of inquiry to establish a member service charter that outlines the processes for core activities of the network. This discovery is

based on template analysis of the identified themes of the data generated through this cycle of inquiry focusing on the role of culture within the individual schema.

Mindful facilitation of the focus group generated a safe environment for the participants to share and acknowledge personal biases, judgments and stereotypes. This discussion has indicated a profound influence on individual learning through the realisation of the possibility of change of perception.

In the next cycle, it is important to utilize these participants in the main meeting with all members and to share the outcomes of these previous cycles to generate further action towards overcoming barriers of diverse communication. Failure to apply the knowledge generated up until this point could continue to paralyze the network by repeating ineffective patterns identified in this process.

4.5 Inquiry Cycle 4 – Vilnius Meeting

4.5.1 Description of Research Activities

This cycle includes meeting participation in Lithuania to present the findings from the online pretest survey, interviews, and focus group. I accumulate the transcribed data generated by the three previous cycles and continue to analyse the findings to encapsulate the consensus and differences identified by the participants. Engaging with the data and linking it with existing literature using template analysis, frames my interpretations to present the findings and proposed actions to all attending stakeholders (Cassell and Bishop, 2108). Cultural intelligence (CQ) is a construct that is evolving within this study as it encapsulates the skills required to potentially confront the barriers of diverse communication (Adair et al., 2013). I segregate the emerging data with the construct model of CQ to clearly understand the potential benefits or deterrents to this diagnosis using template analysis (Cassell and Bishop, 2018).

I carefully plan my presentation of the findings for the intervention to all the stakeholders attending the meeting in Lithuania by reviewing the data generated from the three previous action cycles. I plan how to divide attending members into action

learning sets to gather individual input on what perceptions are held regarding diverse communication within the network and towards key organizational issues. Each group chooses a leader to present the results back to the main group.

My role as the facilitator is to formulate the groups, monitor progress during the sessions, write out all results, probe group leaders for clarification on points if needed and provide a summary of agreed actions while encouraging ongoing reflection on the process (Pedler, 2008). Action learning sets are supported during this investigation with cooperative inquiry towards stimulating action through the process of engaging into the identified problem statement (Bradbury, 2015).

I prepare the objectives of the meeting and adapt the agenda to include the new possibility of creating a business endorsed by collaborating members that justifies a further investigation into understanding the consensus of the stakeholders.

I am facilitating discussions by creating action learning sets with all stakeholders attending the meeting, to add additional value to the research process that generates a consensus for the next step desired based on collective input. Interacting, questioning, and summarizing stakeholder input for clarification is a key objective for meeting facilitation. During the action learning set discussions, I sit with each group to actively listen to discussions, observe interactions and language to evaluate dialogue between stakeholders. I call all the groups back to the main area after the allocated time to present the feedback. I summarize the points back to the group of stakeholders to confirm a consensus that my summary reflects their intended message. I initiate a vote on the proposed future actions determined by the collective data generated through the research process.

4.5.2. Data Collection Process

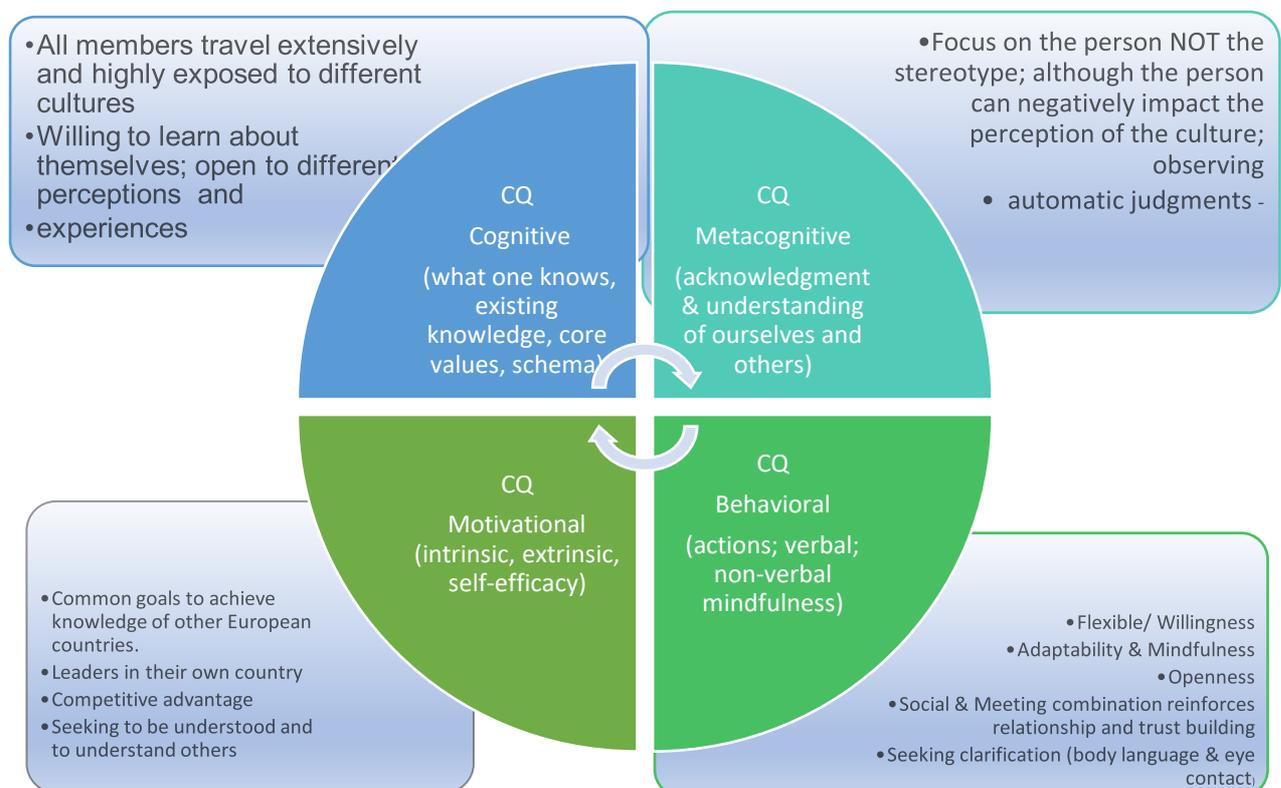
The 16th general meeting begins in Vilnius, with eighteen members in attendance. I proceed to share the summarized findings and key points derived from the online pretest, semi-structured interviews and focus group with proposed actions to be further investigated during this meeting. I share the experiences of the participants in the study by using anonymous quotes to emphasize perspectives. I also share how collective data and my own interpretations inductively produce the new knowledge that

continues building from each cycle of inquiry regarding the barriers of diverse communication between stakeholders.

The consensus is that a diverse environment poses a higher risk of conflict due to unacknowledged biases, stereotypes and judgments. By sharing participant experiences and feedback during the data collection process, it is possible to exhibit how the role of culture influences individual schemas. By focusing on the different cultural biases, stereotypes and judgments that are disclosed it is possible to reduce inhibitions to taking the first step of acknowledging every person has their own.

I proceed to introduce the concept of cultural intelligence and how extensive exposure to multiple cultures does not equate to being an effective communicator in diverse groups. I connect the findings of the data collection into the four aspects of CQ which are cognitive, metacognitive, behavioural and motivations to provide a visual on how these skills can confront barriers to diverse communication, as shown in Figure 4.9.

Figure 15: CQ Model and Members Key Findings
(Adapted from Earley and Ang, 2003; Conceptualization of CQ).



I divide the members into five learning sets with the task to appoint a leader to present the outcomes after the allocated time of thirty minutes and insure all participants equally share their perspectives on the topics in focus. The three topics for deep discussion are:

1. To identify five key points to be included in a new member/client service agreement to insure high service standards for all cases between members. Using the moral circle approach (Deardorff, 2009) to create collective meanings generated by stakeholders to define: honesty, promptness, and expected service standards between members;
2. Get group input on the question: "Do we need a dedicated Member Liaison on the executive committee? If so, list 3 items for the job description/discussion points";
3. Get group input on the question: "Should the network become a business? What is the vision as either a Network/Company? Advantages/disadvantages";

During the learning set sessions, I actively listen and observe each group during their discussion. I observe how some voices are getting louder when members want to make their point, exaggerated body language to clarify intended meanings, and how the group leaders are challenged to maintain the balance of discussions to include all stakeholders. After the allocated thirty minutes, I call the group sessions to an end and invite each learning set leader to present the input from all stakeholders to compile a list to inform future actions

I combine both cooperative and inside-researcher inquiry to engage all participants to be on the same level of importance and openly contributing to an overall strategy to overcome barriers of communication while simultaneously seeking to understand their own individual schema (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014; Bradbury, 2015). Trust, shared goals, common profession and motivations provide a foundation for inquiry to focus on how the role of culture differentiates participants to begin to confront barriers of diverse communication. I also invite a vote to take place to formalize the consensus that the majority agree that the network members would benefit by formulating a business out of the interested membership base.

4.5.3. Data Analysis, Findings and Interpretations

Evaluation of findings occurs by determining consensus of most stakeholders to integrate perspectives to understand what the constructed reality is desired to achieve organizational objectives. I evaluate the communication process between stakeholders and myself by interpreting collaborative actions initiated. I evaluate the effectiveness of the learning sets and feedback from stakeholders by interpreting the multiple perspectives.

The presentation of the analysis of the findings presented in Lithuania instigated awareness and acknowledgement by the stakeholders regarding cultural barriers that are negatively influencing communication. Based on the amalgamation of the participants input, this prompted a consensus to integrate more educational time into meetings to focus on improving members' cultural intelligence.

The feedback from each learning set indicates how conflict between diverse members is generated by unacknowledged stereotypes or biases that influence individual perception both rightly and wrongly. The role of culture is perceived by the members, to play a significant part of the individual schema. By investing the time individually with the participants, I understand individual schemas encompasses multiple cultural identities and how this influences their level of cultural intelligence (Peng et al., 2015). Working initially with individual participants produces positive input during the group sessions.

Key Findings

Dividing the stakeholders into small groups provides extra time for everyone to share their perspective and listen to others (Kivitis, 2011). Facilitating collective feedback is enhanced as the representing group leader summarizes their groups' input which made it easier to gauge the consensus or concerns. It is a surprising finding to discover the different interpretations of what an acceptable response time, which is influenced by the varying cultural lenses. For example, in some cultures there is an expectation for same day responses versus other cultures that consider a response within fourteen days very acceptable.

This discrepancy is an unexpected finding as it contradicts my assumption that a prompt response is expected same day or the next. Sharing these discrepancies on flip chart during the meeting sparked a shocking realization of a fundamental cause of miscommunication between members. Working with this data it is possible to establish a group consensus that each member is required to acknowledge receipt of a member request within a seventy-two-hour time frame, while additionally providing a timeline of proposed actions so each party has clear expectations.

Another surprising finding is the discrepancy of interpretations of meanings of common terms such as trust. During the meeting, I gathered the various definitions from individual members on the flip chart and from the group input we all collectively agreed what trust meant for the network. Using the template method, this finding emerged over the previous cycles of inquiry which resulted in a consensus to overcome a key problem not previously identified. For example, trust is a fundamental theoretical driver of diverse communication although it is unexpected to learn each member has a different interpretation of what trust is. Establishing a meaning acceptable to the group could improve member interactions now that the expectations are defined in the member service charter (Deardorff, 2009). Without this research process, it is difficult to say if this discrepancy would have been identified.

Stakeholders in attendance unanimously approve to consider creating a European enforcement business comprising of existing network members. It is also necessary to consider this new direction in another cycle of inquiry, not included in this study. The network will continue to operate as it is and agrees to apply the improvements identified by the participants of this study.

Additionally, participants are just beginning to understand how their schema can be limiting their perceptions. It is necessary to continue to provide ongoing training sessions for personal change to occur. Beginning at the individual level is indicated to transform into organizational change by focusing first on personal acknowledgement of biases, judgments and stereotypes. It is through this process of acknowledgement that the individual can be inspired to change these views with new information.

4.5.4. Reflections

Reflective journaling is a tool commonly used in action research to achieve a focused reflection on the acknowledgment of how the research process is perceived by the researcher, for deep analysis on personal growth opportunities and professional understanding (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014; Bradbury, 2015). Reason and Bradbury (2008) also emphasize that reflective journaling instigates critical self-reflection, which is a valuable skill in qualitative action research to identify gaps that exist between what I know versus what I think I do or do not. Reflective journaling is used during this research cycle to keep track of the meeting experiences to instigate ongoing reflection on the stakeholders' input and observable responses during the action learning sets or interviews (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014).

At the same time, my journal entries are limited to my perceptions as the scholar-practitioner's interpretation of what is occurring. I cannot understand motivations or the individual schemas of participants without applying other methods for further direct inquiry such as interviews and focus groups (Ericksson and Kovalainen, 2016). During this process, it is essential that I utilize ongoing critical reflection to acknowledge my own assumptions, judgments and biases, and how I have changed as action has been initiated throughout the duration of this project (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014).

My interpretation is based on critically reflecting on my individual personality traits, personal experiences, and high level of exposures to different cultures that all contributed to my perception of high competence levels of cultural intelligence. Inquiry into the barriers of communication as a scholar-practitioner with a high level of cultural intelligence provides the necessary leadership skills required to mindfully interact with diverse stakeholders, reducing conflict due to misunderstandings. It is my perception that the risk of inviting stakeholders to share or acknowledge personal stereotypes, biases and judgments could have a negative result by increasing conflict. Understanding how encompassing the skills of a highly cultural intelligent facilitator can minimize the risk by framing the process as an individual experience first. Trust is essential for authentic participation to feel secure that there are no ramifications for sharing. My own interpretation of trust is shifted based on the collective member input using different cultural lenses. Shifting my own definition to establish a group

consensus to improve the collaboration of the network is a vital experience of working as an insider-researcher.

In addition, ongoing self-reflection assists to acknowledge how my own individual schema influences interactions with participants (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2018). It is difficult to be objective while acknowledging any form of judgment during the process of dialogue, especially in diverse environments complicated by further barriers of language and trust (Ott and Michailova, 2018; Crowne, 2008; Kim and Van Dyne, 2012). For example, reflecting after the meeting I realized how my comfort zone is challenged by communicating more directly than I would in my own culture. This personal experience exposes the vulnerability of communicating with diverse stakeholders, although if each person shows an openness to different perspectives collective actions are more likely to happen.

4.5.5 Summary of Cycle 4 – Meeting in Vilnius

The results indicate that working in learning sets is an effective approach to gaining clarity of diverse individual perspectives and fast tracks a group consensus in this network. For example, the realization that each member perspective and interpretations of foundational concepts such as trust and response times varied, instigated action to create a member service charter using the application of the moral circle (Deardorff, 2009). The member service charter created using this process clarifies discrepancies of terms and expectations that has been a core cause of member conflict. This is a major finding and action resulting from this research process. If data collection did not entail investigation with each individual participant with deeper inquiry into their schema, seeking to understand how the role of culture influences personal perception it is possible this would not be discovered. By working in learning sets, members that did not participate in the previous cycles of inquiry have an opportunity to contribute their perspectives to the process.

The consensus of proceeding with the formation of the European enforcement business is another key result of this meeting, which is the focus of the next inquiry not included in this research due to time restraints. Effective collaboration of diverse

stakeholders' hinges on the themes and patterns identified by the members on overcoming barriers of communication applicable for this network.

The meeting exposes how all diverse members share similar power both in their organizations and within the network. Power is a loud, although silent factor in how participants are responding to situational leadership, which is flexible and adapts to collective perspectives of diverse stakeholders with the objective of stimulating collaboration (Rothacker and Hauer, 2014). Upon further reflection, this group of leaders require a customized style from myself as the facilitator. The real effectiveness of this presentation did not arise from my ability to adapt to the diverse group, it happens due to the individual understanding of their own schema and willingness to be open to alternative perspectives during the collective dialogue. Introducing the construct of cultural intelligence and linking the four components to the findings from the previous cycles of inquiry identifies the importance of further training on diverse communication, which is supported collectively by the members.

4.6 Summary of Findings Chapter

The key findings of this research, after conducting a stakeholder analysis of ten members representing ten different European countries provides deep insight into how the role of culture influences individual perception. The findings suggest it is necessary to overcome barriers such as language and trust to embark on building multicultural relationships by challenging each individual schema. This is a complex process that depends on trust between myself and the participants during the inquiry in the quest to acquire the skills of cultural intelligence to confront barriers of communication.

The findings indicate if members pursue achieving the skills to increase their cultural intelligence, it supports a learning environment to co-create mutually beneficial objectives. The role of culture is impacting how judgments, stereotypes and biases are formed over the individual's lifetime experiences, which requires a mindful awareness for change to occur. The findings show how individual perception of existing stereotypes by other cultures profoundly impacts how stakeholders respond and

engage with the network. Furthermore, participants indicate a personal interest to improve their own communication skills to be more efficient in diverse environments.

Additionally, these findings confirm the acknowledgement that language is perceived by the stakeholders as a barrier to communication. The findings also indicate regardless of how participants have travelled extensively, developing a strong willingness and openness to learn about other cultures can reduce the barriers of communicating in a diverse setting. Participants indicate the value of building strong relationships with other members through the social aspect of the network that bridges over a level of trust and respect to the meetings.

A key finding is the discovery that terms like trust have subjective meanings based on the individual's perception. This finding inspires further investigation into different aspects of functioning and terms that require collective input by the members to agree on definitions in the context of the network. Creating a member service charter during the meeting in Vilnius supports how clarifying terms and operation expectations as a group could contribute to reducing conflict or misunderstandings. In addition, the findings suggest that multicultural relationships prosper when culture is acknowledged at the heart of inquiry by the researcher, facilitator or leader to generate successful knowledge transfer of skills to manage diverse situations in this European network.

The above findings are integrated with the literature and research questions to provide an in-depth discussion in the next section.

5.0 Chapter 5: Discussion Chapter

5.1 The Findings Correlated with Research Questions and Literature

The data collected through this insider-researcher inquiry uses thematic template analysis and interpretation (Cassell and Bishop, 2018). The data is generated from a pretest survey, semi-structured interviews, focus group and meeting facilitations with participant observations, links to the literature to address the research questions with ongoing reflections. Ongoing reflections share my research journey whilst challenges

my own biases, judgements and stereotypes while acknowledging unexpected learning (Rigg and Trehan, 2008). Furthermore, focuses on how the findings confirm that confronting communication barriers enables learning to occur at first, second and third person in action research. This section continues to share how the findings, based on collective input impact the networks' communication process between stakeholders.

5.1.1 Findings Correlated with Research Question One

Research Question 1: What are the participant's perceptions of the benefits of the network?

The stakeholder analysis of the participants' input using the online pretest and interviews focusing on the individual perception of the benefits of the network matches the strategic intention. This research question initiates the research process and opens dialogue with the participants. The network offers a collaboration of enforcement experts from eighteen different European countries, which provides a competitive advantage to the member.

The initial inquiry cycle highlights miscommunication between members is a concern which is also causing the benefits of membership to become blurred. Moving through the cycles of inquiry uncovered new benefits of formally creating a company with the members of the network. This finding is a direct result of the research, without digging deeper into identifying the benefits this opportunity could have been neglected.

On the surface the network benefits are the intended purpose of the network. It is only after further inquiry and focus on individual members' perception of their experience of the network are the core reasons for conflict exposed such as multiple interpretations of trust and member response times. This is a significant finding that is critical for the collaboration of the members. Creating a member service charter creates an opportunity for continued collective efforts to define terms and actions in the context of the network by the members. This unexpected finding could be the main source of conflict and misunderstandings when each member perceives a different interpretation of these terms or actions. Working through this process collectively

unified the members therefore, resulting with each participant experiencing the benefits as intended. Furthermore, clarification of participants' perceptions is vital to achieve collaborative action towards achieving network objectives.

5.1.2 Findings Correlated with Research Question Two

Research Question 2: How do the participants perceive barriers of communication?

The participants' input during the inquiry indicated that traits such as willingness and openness to learn, along with the ability to actively listen to people from other cultures can improve personal growth from their individual perspective (Li et al., 2015; Rehg et al., 2012). Communication is the core means to exchange information between members therefore, understanding the barriers in the context of individual perception contributes to seeking solutions. The findings indicate that there is discrepancy in the interpretation of what trust means through the varying cultural lenses applied. The level of cultural intelligence varies between participants and must be continually supported by a coaching leadership style for the change process to be sustainable (Ang et al., 2006; Gelfand et al., 2018; Caputo et al., 2018). Individual participant exposure to other cultures within the network initiates mindful approaches to adapting and thriving in diverse situations which can confront barriers to multicultural relationships (Crowne, 2013). Although, only when the individual pursues to improve their cultural intelligence skills in a supportive and trusting environment.

Although, I still face the challenge of how can I help stakeholders overcome the language barrier when confronted by the role of culture that the findings inform. Language is a barrier to expressing deep feelings or thoughts due to the stakeholders' lack of efficiency in English, posing risks of misunderstandings. The findings from one participant (C1 participant, 2018) indicates that by using different languages other than English, it is possible to express thoughts and feelings effectively. Although, for this to occur the members must have a proficiency in the alternate language or this approach could cause further conflict. The creation of the member service charter is proving to be a process that is clarifying key meanings for the operation of the network.

The findings also align with the literature indicating that non-verbal communication is relied on to clarify verbal communication in English when the participant is unsure how to efficiently translate (Oliveira, 2013; Neuliep, 2018). The barrier of language in multicultural communication prompts the individuals' responsibility to be more mindful to insure the message received is the one intended (Adler, 1991).

5.1.3 Findings Correlated with Research Question Three

**Research Question 3:
How do the participant's individual schema help/hinder with multicultural relationships versus same culture relationships?**

Unexpectedly, a new opportunity for the network is identified instigated by the initial inquiry into the barriers of communication to improve multicultural relationships. Investigating the skills to develop multicultural relationships shifted to a focus to identify what the specific barriers are in diverse communication. Digging deeper into the problem it is uncovered that the core barriers are language, trust, conflict and unacknowledged schemas. Without mindful dialogue between stakeholders that share trust it is not possible to dig deeper into understanding their individual schema (Thomas, 2006; Leung and Morris, 2015). If participants do not acknowledge existing biases, judgments and stereotypes, consequently will continue to perceive their reality without any changes or possibilities to adapt to diverse environments (Gelfand et al., 2017; Young et al., 2017).

The findings on confronting the identified barriers of communication such as language, trust, conflict, and unacknowledged schemas do hinder the ability to nurture relationships in a diverse environment (Alon and Higgins, 2005). The impact of the role of culture within the schema cannot be neglected, as indicated by the findings in the results of this research (Oliveira, 2013). In addition, centralizing culture at the heart of inquiry assists with overcoming the barriers of diverse communication (Siakas et al., 2010). These findings emphasize how the role of culture, within the individual schema impacts stakeholder analysis, leadership, cultural intelligence, trust, and skills to build multicultural relationships (Bucker, et al., 2016; Gelfand et al., 2017; Deardorff, 2009).

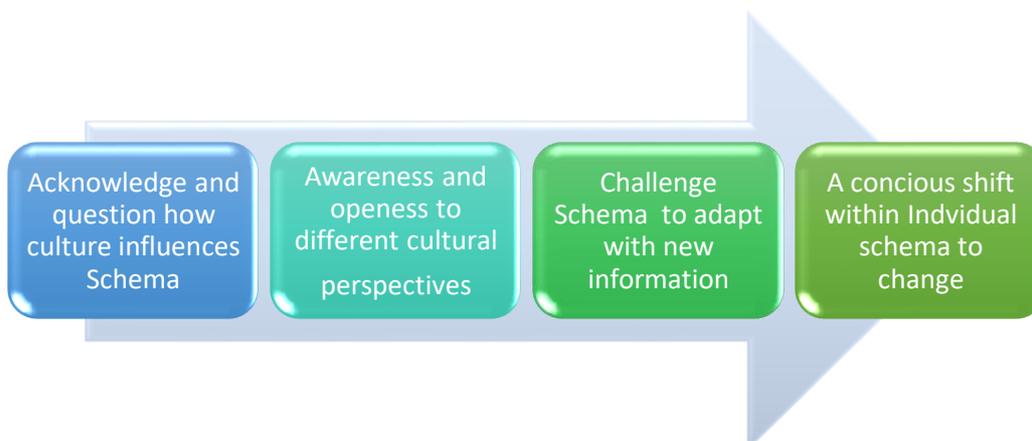
5.1.4 Findings Correlated with Research Question Four

Research Question 4: How do the participant's cultural stereotypes influence communication?

The participants in this study are experiencing communication barriers such as language, lack of trust, and conflict. Cultural stereotypes are not new, although I attempt to shift individual perspectives by focusing on their schema to overcome barriers collectively in this diverse approach. The amalgamation of existing literature with multiple participants' perspectives can improve diverse communication problems between stakeholders. The findings indicate that stereotypes can influence communication either negatively or positively depending on the individual perception of the other culture. On the other hand, it is imperative that the individual first acknowledges and identifies the stereotypes they hold before it is possible for change.

In my role as an insider researcher, I use ongoing critical self-reflection throughout the cycles of inquiry to mindfully acknowledge how my own biases, stereotypes and judgments that are impairing my interpretations of participants' perceptions. Simultaneously, I guide the participants through the disruptive individual process of learning to acknowledge personal biases, stereotypes and judgements as shown below in Figure 16.

Figure 16: *Individual Schema Change Process Based on Findings*



Throughout the four cycles of inquiry, the data indicates how participants begin to attempt to shift their perspectives with critical self-reflection (Leung and Morris, 2015). Acknowledgment of the role of culture within the schema is identified as an integral aspect of inquiry to spark acknowledgment of how beliefs, biases and stereotypes are influencing individual stakeholder perceptions (Fine, 1991; Duncan and Moriarty, 1998). Per the findings and supported by the literature the perception of stakeholders is directly influenced by their culture, generating their personal views of reality, with no right or wrong as suggested by Stone et al., (2010) and Oliveira, (2013). Collective participant perspectives are informing each new cycle during ongoing inquiry into existing literature deciphering the barriers of diverse communication framed by the research questions.

The findings clarify that misunderstandings are causing conflicts between stakeholders. The conflicts arise based on the different perceptions of each of the participants and confusion of expectations that are based on the role of culture. A key finding identifies how each participant interprets the meeting interactions by using their cultural lens. At the same time, the findings indicate how most members consider themselves open to different approaches and perspectives. Although, with further inquiry it is apparent that unconsciously participants do make automatic judgments about other cultures that have been engrained into them over their lifetime (Meyer, 2014; Isaacs, 1999).

Does diverse stakeholder management require vulnerability to be effective (Brown, 2012)? During the data collection participants are encouraged to mindfully share or acknowledge personal cultural stereotypes, which exposes them to be vulnerable in a diverse group. Although this process of acknowledgment is very uncomfortable and poses an emotional risk to experience change with individual beliefs, biases or stereotypes, it is deemed beneficial in this study. A key finding confirms that participant C2, did not put themselves forward to be on the Board of the network due to the belief that his national culture is not respected enough. This finding confirms the power of the role of culture has on stereotypes and individual perception.

It is necessary to reflect on how stereotypes could be penetrating this individual's schema to trigger a belief that their culture is not respected by other cultures in Europe. The role of culture is having a significant impact on this participant's perception of how their beliefs influence further barriers when communicating with other stakeholders from different cultures (Meyer, 2014; Stone et al., 2010). The role of culture is interpreted as impacting how this participant views others, which is validating that the role of culture does contribute to an individual's schema. Barriers of diverse communication are influenced by the role of culture within the individual schema interrelating directly with engagement and growth of the network.

During the inquiry participants expose their stereotypes during the data collection. On several occasions the findings share how participants verbally confirm they consider themselves open to all cultures and then in the next sentence contradict this by stating a stereotype to justify their viewpoint. The findings further indicate the individual realization of how understanding when, how and why these stereotypes are formed it is possible to change them with new information.

As the facilitator, I realize that it is essential to have a trust-based relationship with the participants to engage in authentic dialogue before I can mindfully challenge their viewpoint (Livermore, 2015). By using authentic dialogue combined with active dialogic listening and repeating the message back with an explanation, that assists me to fully comprehend what the intended message is (Booher and Innes, 2002; Harvey and Griffith, 2002). During this dialogue, collectively participants begin to learn about the impact of their individual schemas on their view of others and how this knowledge can be a powerful change in perception during the integration of multiple perspectives about shared reality. I interpret the findings to suggest how the participants evolved personally by sharing in a trust based dialogic exchange through the interviews, focus group and meetings.

The findings further highlight trust is a core barrier to sharing deep personal information triggering natural defence mechanisms such as denial or sticking to existing beliefs (Stone et al., 2010). The findings confirm the establishment of trust

between participants is aided with the use of critical-dialogic empathy to encourage reflection and consideration of different perspectives shared (Nagda, 2006). During the focus group, critical dialogic empathy frames the discussion on sharing personal stereotypes, with each participant being open to alternative perceptions or collective mindfulness (Vogus and Welbourne, 2003).

To establish this balance is a delicate process that could turn into conflict if not conducted mindfully (Raelin, 2011; Thomas, 2006). During the moments of vulnerability, it is necessary to be cautious in how context is provided so feelings are acknowledged to guide participants through the discomfort without causing conflict during the focus group or interviews (Raelin, 2017; Jiacheng et al., 2010). It is not possible to stimulate such a deep level discussion without trust. It is my interpretation that all participants did begin to acknowledge their schema while identifying the sources of their beliefs, which are founded from the culture they are raised in (Deardorff, 2009; Hofstede and McCrae, 2004; Dumitru, 2012).

This journey of joint discovery of our schemas simultaneously is supported with ongoing critical reflection to bring unconscious decisions to the conscious mind (Rigg and Trehan, 2008; Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2018). The findings confirm that living and working in different cultures also impacts their individual schemas with multiple cultural identities (Meyer, 2014; Smith and Fischbacher, 2005). Regardless of how many cultures the participants expose themselves to, it did not equate to possessing cultural intelligence (Crowne, 2013). Therefore, it is necessary to begin at the individual level to understand how their culture influences their reality for collective impact.

5.1.5 Findings Correlated with Research Question Five

Research Question 5;
What are the participants' perceptions of engagement and growth opportunities of the Network?

The purpose of the meeting in Milan is to identify the problem the network is experiencing. During this initial beginning of the research project in this meeting, the role of culture is neglected with a sole focus on investigating ways to improve stakeholder engagement and growth of network. Communication evolves as a core concern, although sifting through various ideas language is identified as a barrier. At this stage, I am aware of the different cultures although, I do not consider how the role of culture is influencing stakeholder perceptions. Alternatively, I seek collective input which aids in the discovery that the problem goes beyond communication skills. The literature is pivotal to provide insight into identifying further barriers of diverse communication that informs the inquiry and data collection as the findings confirm.

The findings highlight the individual shifts of perception between the initial meeting in Milan and in the final fourth cycle of inquiry in Vilnius. As the cycles progress the findings show how with a focus on the barriers to communication, previous perceptions are disrupted. Furthermore, the findings validate how mindful awareness of the role of culture penetrates the individual schema and influences participants' perceptions of reality. By challenging individual perceptions, it is possible to change original beliefs, biases and stereotypes to overcome barriers of language, trust and conflict. The participants of the study integrated with the remaining stakeholders in the Vilnius, indicated an evolved understanding of diverse interactions by the participants. On the other hand, the participants are in the infancy stage of discovery which requires ongoing training for the change to be sustainable.

Stakeholders are at different stages of personal awareness, ranging from being completely unaware differences between cultures exist to another who avoids diverse situations as much as possible. Furthermore, trust is nurtured between stakeholders when personal information about cultural norms are disclosed during the social part of the meetings and the small group sessions. These findings coincide with the research by Nagda (2006) who suggests when stakeholders share personal information it is possible to gain insight into other cultures. Alternatively, if stakeholders experience fear simply from a lack of understanding another culture can result in avoidance as confirmed by the findings and supported by the research contribution by Neuliep (2018). The findings indicate stakeholders are shifting towards adapting within the

diverse environment, which is referred to as ethnorelative (Ferraro and Briody, 2017; Yershova et al., 2000).

In the fourth cycle of inquiry at the meeting at Vilnius, collective input establishes the network's first moral circle (Deardorff, 2009) to define terms as acceptable service standards by all. The moral circle is a useful concept which links trust, leadership and cultural intelligence with stakeholder analysis based on diverse relationships to overcome barriers. In addition, the moral circle outlines shared definitions that supports the findings that if expectations are not clear trust evaporates when members do not respond in a certain manner or time frame. Now that all members fully comprehend and agree to the service terms that they participated in defining, member engagement is impacted positively. I interpret that this collaboration creates a synergy and bond between stakeholders. I further interpret that the research process contributes to the confidence in formalizing a business with participating members. Failure to work through this process and collectively contribute stakeholder perspectives result in conflict and lack of engagement.

The findings also confirm that stakeholder conflict arises when regular updates are not provided when members neglect their responsibilities as members. On the other hand, further inquiry stimulates the investigation to discover that cultural expectations differ on interpreting the acceptable response times between members. For example, in one culture it is acceptable to respond within fourteen days versus another culture where the expectation is to respond within the same day. This is a key finding that supports the need to create a member service charter that stipulates the consensus of all members on the agreed response time for the network. Working in groups during the meeting in Vilnius, it is agreed that for any correspondence between members' confirmation of the request must be in writing within seventy-two hours. The member service charter outlines specifics so there is a mutual understanding based on the collaboration of input by the members. This is a positive finding for the network that could overcome existing sources of conflict and misunderstandings to improve engagement and growth.

In addition, my own facilitation of the meeting has a different approach with my new understanding of the importance to consider the role of culture. Understanding how my facilitation skills improve after I confront my own perceptions to be authentic and open and to actively listen to all input, as opposed to simply attempting to persuade the group to my way of thinking. By sharing some examples of my own stereotypes, biases and judgments subliminally provides permission for other to do the same (Zhao et al., 2013). In my role as the leader and facilitator, it is useful to conduct a cultural due diligence to understand how culture influences the behavior of each participant and the context (Logan, Steel and Hunt, 2015; Deardorff, 2009).

The findings indicate using insider-researcher inquiry provides a positive advantage to discussions with each participant based on an existing relationship, with a focus on what they like about the network and what can be improved. Structuring the questions in this flow provides an easy conversation starter. On the other hand, another interview session with participants after disclosing the findings in Vilnius, could have provided more insight into how members perceive the process of acknowledging their schema. Although, verbal feedback during the social evening indicates participants did have some surprises by shifting their perspectives based on new information. This is encouraging progress, while we continue this learning journey together to improve our cultural intelligence for collaborative action towards creating a new European enforcement company (Gut et al., 2017).

To interpret the relevance of how this intervention is collectively perceived it is important to integrate first, second and third person practice in action research (Bradbury, 2015) in the next section.

5.2 First Person Action Research

Conducting one-to-one dialogue or group interactions is collectively challenging our schemas simultaneously which I perceive as very difficult to navigate. On the other hand, if the participants did not trust me or each other, it would not be possible to experience authentic interactions. As participants start to voice their stereotypes bravely, I am conscious of the acknowledgements of the automatic judgments that

trigger in myself. I also struggle to balance my own judgments to insure the context of the discussion is interpreted by the participants as an opportunity to share how everyone has biases and stereotypes. If this process is not conducted mindfully and with high levels of cultural intelligence there is significant risk the dialogue could be taken personally, causing conflict. Although, the candidness of the participants did surprise me as I was apprehensive of my skills to manage this sensitive topic and to test the trust levels of the group.

As we all share our deeply guarded stereotypes openly, it is my interpretation that it is a relief to say these thoughts out loud and be heard without judgment. Listening without jumping into a judgment or becoming defensive is easier to diffuse by acknowledging how I developed these beliefs with the power to change them with new information. During the various dialogic exchanges with participants changes my previous perspectives by shifting my stubbornness of being right, into opening myself up to different interpretations of situations. For example, in the past when someone speaks slowly, I associate this with lack of intelligence. Now with my exposure to diverse situations my perception has changed, as I understand that it is due to a language skill, not level of intelligence. I experience the value of individual schemas, including how the role of culture influences perceptions to develop multicultural relationships.

My understanding of the unique cultural role of the individual may facilitate collective action with deep engagement of the stakeholders when I implement or create future strategies. Simultaneously, during this process it is essential to engage in critical self-reflection to be mindful of my own potential barriers to communication by acknowledging and challenging my core beliefs. Specifically, I acknowledge the shift in my perception of the importance of the role of culture when comparing my facilitation of the meeting in Milan, versus the meeting in Vilnius. My understanding of the participants is developing as I engage into their individual schema. This insight changes my ability to adapt and connect to overcome barriers of diverse communication. Without acknowledging my own beliefs, it would be impossible to change them.

Multicultural relationships require deeper knowledge other than surface stereotypes to effectively facilitate and engage diverse stakeholders. I learn the importance of investing the time to understand how culture influences individual schemas for a more effective stakeholder analysis. Investing this time up front improves the process of reaching an informed consensus with accountable diverse stakeholders.

As I work through the insider-researcher cycles of inquiry, I continue to apply this methodology for successful intervention into organizational problems considering the improvement into stakeholder engagement. The richness of the experience suggests that regardless of the differences between cultures, the similarities remain in the desire to have individual input acknowledged. The findings suggest the role of culture is pivotal with understanding the core of the person that is further complicated by multiple cultural identities. With culture at the heart of leadership, communication, stakeholder analysis and building diverse relationships it is possible to overcome the complications of multiple cultural identities. I engage with the participants to insure all ethical considerations are upheld, especially the value of anonymity to generate trust and authentic input.

The next section discusses second person action research interpretations.

5.3 Second Person Action Research

As I begin to interact with each participant using insider-researcher inquiry, I experience a genuine interest to provide personal input into improving the network. In addition, I acknowledge how my perception of one member shifts after I hear their perception and cultural influence. For example, participant A5 is normally dominating conversations and talking over me, although during the interview and focus group my judgment changes as I understand how their cultural customs combined with their personal interpretation of the environment. By changing my perception of the individual our dialogue is more transparent as we can both share trust to exchange what our judgements are before and after getting to know each other a little better.

Engaging with authentic dialogue with an openness to understand the other person creates a safe environment to exchange information without unacknowledged judgments. It is possible that our perceptions of people can change with honest inquiry and awareness that we all hold automatic judgments. Every participant experiences the process differently although also similarly; all acknowledged positive personal changes by recognizing how they each contribute to creating the reality before action can be taken.

The core differences appear to be around the role of culture. I experience how the value of shared leadership inspires collective action considering each stakeholder shares similar roles as leaders in their own organization and representatives within the network based on my interpretation. On the other hand, participant C2 perceives that due to their national culture it is not possible to be on the board. By openly sharing this perception, the participant and myself discuss how it may be possible that others' do not share the same perspective. This is a significant verification of the power of cultural stereotypes impact perceptions.

Applying learning sets enables stakeholders to directly communicate with each other, which did not happen previously during the meetings. This lack of interaction could contribute to misunderstandings simply due to not getting to know the other members. The participants are responsive to the initial discovery of their own biases, judgment and stereotypes as previously are consciously unaware of the potential possibilities of different perspectives that reinforce learning opportunities.

Diverse stakeholders are not unique to this network and the actionable strategies can potentially apply to other groups, which is expanded on in the next section.

5.4 Third Person Action Research

The experience of focusing on the role of culture as a lens to magnify collaboration between diverse stakeholders suggests that the findings indicated in this study can benefit groups with similar diverse dynamics. The findings facilitate how the role of

culture is complex, although when used at the core of stakeholder analysis can inspire collective action by generating triple loop learning (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). Learning through experience triggers the flow of action towards the discovery of new knowledge from gathering and implementing multiple perspectives. Although, it is important to consider the additional role of critical self-reflection to question perceptions of experiences (Schon, 1983).

Moving through the four cycles of inquiry indicates how stakeholders' engagement is empowered through personal accountability, with the perception of the power to make a difference influencing barriers to communication. When individual stakeholders internalize the problem identification process enables deeper engagement to sustain both personal and organizational change.

The stakeholders of the network respond very positively to learning sets, which improves relationships, and then collectively confronting the barriers of language, trust and conflict in a diverse environment. Using small groups enables each stakeholder to share their perspective and provides more time to challenge their perceptions with others. In addition, during the small group sessions it makes it easier to gain a consensus with the larger group. This interpretation occurs from the feedback in the findings from the data collected during the interviews, focus group, and reflection process.

Similarly, it is necessary to observe the existing levels of cultural intelligence of the stakeholders who are willing to be open to new experiences and share a high level of trust with each other. This willingness and trust levels may not exist in different groups, which will require an altered actionable approach.

The next section shares how this intervention improves the network.

5.5 How Intervention Improves the Network

The implications of this research process on the management and organization of the network involve identifying how to incorporate the role of the member's culture to

confront barriers of diverse communication. Drawing from the evidence, this research process exposes it is possible to change individual perception of different cultures by acknowledging and challenging their own schema. The literature supports and instigates personal change by applying the skills to improve cultural intelligence at the individual level first (Deardorff, 2009; Yershova et al., 2000). The findings continue to emerge how influencing individual shifts in perception impacts increased synergy in this network of diverse stakeholders (Caputo et al., 2018; Hairo et al., 2017).

The data confirms that communication in diverse settings is perceived as more challenging compared to same culture situations. Although, I argue that the integration of cultural intelligence training within the network is reducing barriers by also incorporating the skills to manage members with multiple cultural identities (Earley and Ang, 2003). As the cycles of inquiry progress, the findings emerge to confirm that diverse communication requires more skills than simply accepting different cultures (Gut et al., 2017). This is a surprising finding considering at the beginning of the research I automatically assume that the frequent travelers would share better diverse communication skills, which is not indicated in the findings. The network members benefit increasing trust and building relationships when the meetings are combined with a social event. This itinerary of the network assists with overcoming barriers of communication, stereotypes, biases and judgments by hosting meetings in different countries when the members are willing to learn about themselves as well as the cultures (Anton and Piller, 2015; Ang et al., 2006).

Managing diverse stakeholders, in the context of this European network, suggest that investing time individually assists with collaboration of perspectives in the meetings (Knoll et al., 2015). This is confirmed during the last meeting of the study when the participants share a deeper understanding to navigate potential conflicts by seeking clarity and not making assumptions (Logan et al., 2015). In addition, this research journey discovered the varying interpretations of words and body language that emphasizes the importance of ongoing critical self-reflection when interacting with members of the network. This data is valuable actionable knowledge to improve communication skills of all stakeholders to achieve the collective objectives of the network (Michailova and Ott, 2018).

Learning sets are now integrated into the meeting format to insure stakeholder input into strategy making and implementation, which supports the research by Poncini (2003). Knowledge is shared inspiring collective action towards achieving objectives in a timely matter. For example, prior to using learning sets the network would tend to solely rely on a presentation followed by a vote. Now with active participation from stakeholders in the smaller learning sets, it is possible to deeply discuss viewpoints and collaborate ideas promoting engagement. With stakeholders engaged in the process it is possible that accountability will drive the desired change with conviction based on informed decision making (Ramthun and Matkin, 2012).

In addition, the learning sets are supporting the relationships between stakeholders, encouraging more interaction to get to know others better based on the interest to build trust levels and sharing perspectives to bond as a group (Swift and Littlechild, 2015). The process facilitates interaction with all stakeholders, understanding that each person offers a unique interpretation based on differences of culture making diversity not so intimidating compared to the initial part of this research. Being open to the learning opportunities that our own individual perceptions are centrally developed by the role of culture; it could be possible to shift initial judgments or biases to improve communication. Experiential learning appears to expose the impact of this intervention simply by understanding how personal reflection on cultural barriers can influence the diverse communication strategy in the network.

A key improvement is the creation of the member service charter that encompasses a collective input from the members on communication expectations and definitions of terms for the context of the network. Without this intervention, there is a risk that the identified misunderstandings would continue unrecognized. The findings share the importance of minimizing the risk of conflict by explicitly questioning our individual schema and seeking clarity of meaning during dialogue in diverse environments such as this network.

The next section evaluates the rigor in this study.

5.6 Evaluation of Rigor using insider-researcher inquiry

All participants' input is collectively applied to confronting the barriers of diverse communication by instigating new knowledge through the relentless effort to untangle the multiple perspectives into an actionable strategy for the network. The joint effort between myself and the participants to acknowledge the value of reflection on interpreting our interpretations openly can contribute to collective perspective of findings (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2018). In addition, using ongoing critical reflection throughout the four cycles of inquiry identifies individual subjective development into tangible organizational improvements. Transparency of the full research process is a significant aspect to a quality action research initiative. Honoring confidentiality of participants, abiding by the strict ethical consideration of all stakeholders involved is a vital phase of proving a quality project.

The next section provides a summary of the above discussions.

5.7 Summary of Discussion Chapter

The intervention prompted all participants to consider and reflect on their own schemas, which is contributing to confronting the identified barriers through individual shifts in perception. Overall, the data confirms the impact of the role of culture has on the individual schema is significant per the findings of this study.

Furthermore, it informs how my leadership approach and stakeholder analysis can be more effective by placing the role of culture at the center of the inquiry to improve a diverse communication strategy (Raelin, 2011; Livermore, 2015). This qualitative study indicates possible collaboration towards an agreement on potential strategies to improve engagement and growth, by first understanding how stakeholders' own perceptions, judgments, biases, and stereotypes support or hinder effective communication between individuals from different cultures (Lim and Ahn, 2015). A critical finding is how using collective input to create the member service charter to

clarify terms and actions in the context of the network confronts previously ignored undercurrents of conflicts from simple misunderstandings between members.

First person practice involves how my individual perceptions are challenged through the acknowledgment of my own biases, judgments and stereotypes triggered by the role of culture integrated into my schema. I am improving my capabilities to instigate change through focusing on an organizational problem and applying the cycles of action research. Critical self-reflection is at the heart of change initiatives, invited mindfully through challenging existing perceptions with new knowledge.

Second person practice encompasses the power of change through collective learning by sharing knowledge with others without judgment to fog perception of the reality presented in authentic dialogue. Learning sets provide a safe environment that promotes authenticity and trust between stakeholders when combined with a leaderful approach (Raelin, 2003). Learning sets provide a safe environment that promotes authenticity and trust between stakeholders. Learning sets provide a new approach for my organization to gain collective stakeholder input directly for strategic decisions. Participants engagement levels improve with the opportunity to contribute. In addition, the learning sets initiates the opportunity to communicate in smaller groups, allowing each stakeholder to adequately express their opinions, which is potentially perceived as riskier in the larger group.

Third person practice highlights the impact of the role of culture on the individual schema and how this knowledge can be generalized towards other organizations comprised of diverse stakeholders. This intervention contributes to existing knowledge by acknowledging change begins with the individual's perception of reality, and the willingness to consider other perspectives to generate collaborative efforts to empower shared knowledge. The results appear convincing towards the dissection of how diversity begins with the individual's schema and expands into a collection of the groups' perspectives that can potentially reduce perceived barriers of the role of culture in diverse communication.

The next section provides an overview of the research process to investigate on how diverse stakeholders can confront the barriers of diverse communication and the impact on my organization.

6.0 Final Overview of Research

6.1 Overview of Research on Barriers of Diverse Communication

Confronting the barriers of diverse communication during this insider- researcher inquiry validates the role of culture does impact the individual schema that directly influences diverse communication. In addition, it interrelates to stakeholder analysis, leadership approach and building multicultural relationships. To lead and communicate with diverse stakeholders, it is impossible for me as the facilitator to adapt one approach to appease the group. Therefore, if each individual stakeholder acknowledges how their own culture influences their schema, it is possible to adapt to other cultures. The delicate process of acknowledging the individual schema requires a deep level of trust between stakeholders to avoid conflict. When stakeholders are accountable for their own perceptions and aware that their schemas can change, it is possible to confront the barriers of diverse communication. Awareness of culture combined with a willingness to learn about different cultures is a good start to develop stakeholders' cultural intelligence. Using a combination of insider-researcher and collective inquiry with critical ongoing reflection, individual and organisational learning occurred.

A social constructionist lens invites all participants to provide input from multiple perspectives regarding barriers to communication, such as of language, trust, and unacknowledged schemas. On the other hand, a positivist lens only assesses results on empirical data which could not encompass the participant's unique subjective contribution to the process. The intervention outlines the value of learning by experience and acknowledgement of the change in ourselves to launch continuous personal and organizational growth. Participant evaluation continually evolves using reflection when acknowledging personal perception with each action cycle engaging inquiry into the barriers of communication.

The actionable knowledge initiated expands the practical application of focusing on the role of culture within the individual schema to stimulate engagement and growth for the network. An overview ensues to describe how the learning changed the perceptions and behaviors of participants, concluding reflections on my personal growth as a scholar practitioner, how the intervention improved the network, and unexpected outcomes and implications of this research.

6.2 The Process of Knowledge Creation

The research process is initiated to confront the obstacle of barriers of diverse communication through the focus on the role of culture within the individual schema. The theoretical labels frame the inquiry using an online pretest, interviews, focus group and meeting participation to conduct four cycles of action research. The complexity of the problem is exposed upon initial inquiry as I sift through existing research to begin the data collection process. Although the practical focus appears to be a clear objective, the individual change journey is very messy and must be mindfully facilitated to insure a trusting environment is established. The participants in the study are all business owners or senior management in the legal or enforcement sector. The expert skill set requires strict adherence to policy, laws and procedure. Upon reflection, it is outside of the participants' comfort zone to focus on soft skills of business management, specifically exposing their individual biases, judgments and stereotypes.

As an insider researcher with existing relationships with each participant I can dig deeper into their individual schemas based on the trust that exists, which is fundamental to the authenticity of this inquiry. In addition, all participants share equal power in the network; that eliminates external perceived risks of losing their job or minimizing their leadership capabilities in front of their team. The objective is to improve the network, which is already a valued concept producing solid business opportunities and marketing advantages for the existing membership. The participants support and trust to be involved in this project is a significant indication of the level of engagement that exists in this team.

My interpretation of the findings discloses the importance of acknowledging the impact the role of culture imposes on the individual schema. Alternatively, some individuals with high exposure to different cultures have multiple cultural identities, complicating generic assessments. In addition, it is impossible for me to solely adapt my approach to appease the group of diverse stakeholders. It is necessary to transfer the knowledge and skills to improve individual skill levels of cultural intelligence. I am attempting to overcome misunderstandings with a diverse group of stakeholders which requires different skills to inspire every individual to acknowledge their own schema. It is confirmed by the data that with individual acknowledgment of what their biases, stereotypes and judgments are, personal change can occur. The literature interrelates with the problems that barriers of communication cause with further elaboration in the context of a group diverse stakeholders.

The literature continues to reveal that skills such as flexibility, authenticity and accountability could improve the pursuit of cultural intelligence. Merely understanding similarities and differences between cultures is no longer adequate when dealing with diverse stakeholders with multiple cultural identities. In addition, engaging diverse stakeholders requires acknowledgement of how my own biases, stereotypes and judgments impair my perception of reality. It is only after I work through this uncomfortable process of disclosing my own biases and stereotypes, I can mindfully be more open to different perspectives.

In my leadership role, it is necessary to share a trusting relationship to reveal the raw truth of each person's perceptions. Without going through this process with critical self-reflection guided by a trustful leader who will not pass judgment, it could be a challenge to learn about how we all think differently based on personal experiences. When a leader places the role of culture at the heart of inquiry, is it possible to expose stakeholders to other perspectives through understanding their own limitations?

Diverse communication is complex and without navigating through the swampy land of self-discovery it could contribute to further barriers of communication. Culture can potentially be related to as the compass that guides our core values and beliefs

(Meyer, 2014). Neglecting the impact of culture will continue to block trust, causing conflict resulting with lack of collaboration of diverse stakeholders (Kim and Van Dyne, 2012; Caputo et al., 2018; Korzilius et al., 2016; Thomas et al., 2008). All the above themes are intertwined to synergize into a group of skills that encompass trust to achieve a multi-cultural organization with high CQ stakeholders and leaders who are “edgewalkers”, that will thrive in this global economy (Deardorff, 2009; p.71; Yershova et al., 2000; Rehg et al, 2012).

Key outcomes linked to the barriers of diverse communication are discussed further in the next section.

6.3 Key Outcomes Linked to Barriers of Diverse Communication

The combined evidence from the online pretest, interviews, focus group and facilitation of meetings indicates how the role of culture is a key influencer to reducing the barriers of diverse communication.

Participants of the study applied the following knowledge actively:

- A shift of individual perception of the importance of first understanding their own schemas and how the role of culture is pivotal to their perception of other cultures through acknowledging stereotypes within the one-to-one and group dialogues.
- An understanding that extensive exposure to other cultures does not equate to a high level of cultural intelligence, although is helpful to improving cultural sensitivity.
- Working in learning sets during meetings improves collaboration of stakeholders’ contributions into the decision-making processes for key strategic objectives.
- Uncovering the power of acknowledging existing judgments, beliefs and biases initiates personal development of alternative perspectives.

- The knowledge that it is possible to change stereotypes and core beliefs with ongoing critical self-reflection.
- Language is an essential focus and barrier to effective communication, especially with diverse stakeholders.
- Improving communication skills requires ongoing training with a culturally intelligent facilitator.
- Trust is a fundamental aspect to leading and inspiring individual learning, especially when language is a barrier.
- Building multicultural relationships is more complicated than with someone from similar cultures, but it is possible.
- Relationships require both business and social exposure to develop deep trust and overcome language barriers.
- Learning the value of critical self-reflection for leadership development.
- Shift in behaviour occur with more patience and mindfulness when communicating in diverse environments.
- Exposing the difference between nationalism and shifting towards being a global citizen acknowledging multiple cultural identities.

During the inquiry into the barriers of communication and changing the format of collaborating stakeholders' input, radically shifts the productivity of the meetings with increased stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder engagement and unexpected outcomes are attributed to utilizing learning sets within the meetings to collaborate perspectives. Investing more time during the meeting to discuss pertinent decisions using action learning sets fast tracks clarity and collective input. The decision to pursue further information on structuring a corporate entity for European enforcement is a result of each stakeholder gathering the required information within the group. Once each group presented their input it is easier to identify stakeholder concerns or consensus.

Interpretations are subject to how I process the information accumulated from the participants of the study. First, I am mindful that every participant has their own perceptions based on their schemas. To facilitate learning utilizing all stakeholders' input creates an environment where sharing knowledge is aiming to be unfiltered by the acknowledgment of our own biases, judgments and stereotypes.

This research journey has profoundly impacted my own perceptions of other cultures as I realize the commitment to improve cultural intelligence is not something that is achieved but an ongoing process.

The next section discusses my final reflections and leadership initiatives.

6.4 Final Reflections and Leadership Initiatives

I am empowered by the new experience of collecting multiple perspectives in a diverse environment by focusing on the role of culture within the individual schema. As an insider action researcher, I have learned more about myself through my interactions with each participant and by focusing on multi-cultural communication with conscious awareness of how the role of culture impacts interactions (Adair et al., 2013). By engaging with the same participants through all modes of data collection, I receive a deeper understanding of each individual schema. The interaction between myself and the group inspired personal growth while merging multiple perspectives into actionable strategies as each action cycle displays (Antons and Piller, 2015; Creswell, 2013).

Prior to this experience I would take for granted that my view of the world is like others. When communicating with other cultures I fail to consider how their cultural beliefs, biases and stereotypes influenced how we view each other. Sharing deeply guarded stereotypes as a group, diminished the negativity of that stereotype through the understanding that we all have them and it is possible to change them. Navigating communication skills in a diverse environment requires different skills that encompass how to acknowledge the role of culture, which is something I never understood so deeply.

On the other hand, I only speak English and can still build trusting relationships based on my openness to clarify boundaries patiently to insure my intentions are clearly understood. In the fast pace of business, it is easy to miss out on cultural cues that effectively could sabotage diverse relationships. Gaining collective input dramatically improves stakeholder engagement and commitment to the proposed change. It is my

interpretation that the meetings are already rapidly improving as every individual embrace and acknowledge their own schema. Participants' enthusiasm is sustaining action towards achieving the vision of establishing the network as a business resulting from the inquiry into barriers of diverse communication.

Building multicultural relationships appears to be more complex than with people from the same culture, exposing significant consequences if barriers are not confronted. My organization is at risk of failing or becoming stagnate if barriers fester. Overcoming the barriers of the role of culture when communicating with diverse stakeholders is a developing skill that continues to be improved with the integration of cultural training, beginning with acknowledgement of individual schemas. The knowledge and understanding of how acknowledging individual schemas combined with ongoing reflection for personal learning to occur is potentially disrupting barriers to diverse stakeholder's communication in this specific case. Diverse stakeholder management requires a willingness and curiosity to explore different perspectives openly.

The focus on trust, language, and the acknowledgment of the individual schema to reduce conflicts by improving relationships between diverse stakeholders is proving beneficial in this case. In the future, my approach to a stakeholder analysis will put the role of culture in the center of inquiry to understand the individual schemas of the team. Regardless, that this approach may require more time in the beginning, once the relationships are solidified by trust, it is possible to reach collective decisions more rapidly with stakeholder commitment. In addition, I have acquired a shift in my leadership skills to move from essentially persuasive to authentic engagement between myself and the participants to generate the trust required for collective input to grow the organization.

6.4.1 My Leadership Initiatives

The next steps are to continue to build the moral circle which provides the collective definitions of honesty, ethical behavior, and stakeholder conduct for clarity between stakeholders. I continue to integrate small groups or learning sets into the meeting structure to support nurturing stakeholder relationships by investing the necessary

time to gather collective perspectives to confronting the network's challenges. Furthermore, it is my commitment to continue creating a learning environment to improve cultural intelligence of all stakeholders that will generate a network of "edgewalkers" (Deardorff, 2009; p.71).

6.5 Research Limitations

As this research is conducted using participants from ten different European countries, the findings are related to a network environment as opposed to a commercial one. The network environment is different to commercial organizations where salaries and responsibilities are part of the dynamics. In a network environment, members pay to be involved and are keen to achieve value from attending meetings, which influences the willingness of participants to improve stakeholder relationships.

Further limitations of this research are based on my established relationships with the participants and the trust that exists between us, which is a unique variable for this case. In addition, the dynamics between the stakeholders of the network share a high level of trust for each other with a willingness to be open to new experiences that is essential for these actionable strategies to be transferrable. These relationship interpretations are subjective based on my perception as the scholar-practitioner.

Another limitation is the time allocated for this study, as it is not possible to disclose the longer-term impact of integrating cultural intelligence training and evolving development of stakeholders, as schema acknowledgement progresses. In addition, more time could have allowed for further contact with the participants to gather feedback on how acknowledging their individual schemas impacts on diverse communication within other contexts. In addition, no measurement tools are applied in this study, the evaluation of the role of culture within participant's schemas is based on my subjective interpretations.

The next section discusses future research opportunities.

6.6 Future Research Opportunities

Cultural identities add another dimension to consider in future studies. For example, I am born in Canada, married to a Welshman, and lived and worked in the USA, UK, Caribbean, Europe and Spain. If I am compared to another person who has never left Canada with minimal exposure to different cultures, this could provide interesting findings to investigate the impact of multiple cultural influences on the individual schema.

These findings are also interpreted to indicate a future research opportunity to identify tools that measure cultural intelligence that also accommodate the unique impact of multiple cultural identities within a person to begin the individual assessment levels. To begin shifting a focus on similarities between cultures to establish a global culture other than stereotypical cultural differences.

Understanding the impact culture plays within the individual schema, future studies can begin applying stakeholder analysis and leadership strategies from the beginning of the study to expand on these findings.

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APPENDIX 1

Committee on Research Ethics

Participant Information Sheet Guidelines

1. Title of Study

'Creating an intercultural communication strategy to increase membership retention and growth in a European Enforcement Network – An intrinsic case stud

2. Version Number and Date

- Version 1.1
- September 2017

3. Invitation Paragraph

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide if you would like to participate, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and contact me if you would like more information or have any questions. It is also important to understand that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only participate in this study if you would like to.

Thank you for your time.

4. What is the purpose of the study?

To gather data on existing member perceptions of the service provided by the network to determine if the intended message is being communicated effectively. The goals of the study are aimed at producing some form of actionable knowledge that not only contributes to the academic field, but also aids other businesses that struggle with the deploying of communication and leadership duties in the day-to-day operational scene.

5. Why have I been chosen to take part?

You have been chosen because you are an active member of the executive board and/or a member of the Connex network. An active member has attended a minimum of two network meetings. You have been carefully selected to participate in this study because of your relevant experience and influence that will contribute to the feasibility of the research project. It is vital that participants selected for the study possess sufficient capacity and adequate know-how to address the workplace situation.

6. Do I have to take part?

Participating in this research project is voluntary. Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without providing an explanation. This includes the right to decline to questionnaires, interviews, or withdrawing from an initial drafted action plan related to the research. In

addition, participants also have the right to raise queries or questions to the researcher at any time. Participant information including name, organization, and contact details will not be shared or revealed in any report. Data collected during the study will be kept confidential and will be anonymized immediately after collection. All data collected will only be strictly available to academic personnel.

7. What will happen if I take part?

The members who have expressed consent to take part in the research will be invited to participate in an action research methodology using the following methods:

- i. Participate in an Action Research (AR) Set. This refers to a group of participants who will undertake an active role in advancing the workplace situation in collaborative fashion. This includes a process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting on the changes in the specific issue to document and cogenerate new insights / learnings.
- ii. Attend periodic one-on-one interviews with the researcher. This will include answering a set of questions relating to the study and sharing of perspectives that sheds light on the workplace situation. Interviews will not take more than 30 minutes each session. All interviews will be audio recorded.
- iii. **Taking Part in the study as an active member will require:**
- iv. Participation in 1 online survey (estimated 10 minutes)
- v. Participation in one focus group with Cari Leyshon (researcher) as facilitator (estimated 1 hour)- this focus group will be video recorded.
- vi. The focus group may be part of an upcoming meeting or Online
- vii. **Taking part in the study as an Executive Board Member will require:**
- viii. Participation in 2 online surveys (estimated 10 minutes). The written data collected will be stored on a password protected computer.
- ix. Participation in a one to one interview with Cari Leyshon (estimated 30 minutes) this interview will be voice recorded. The audio file will be for the researcher's use only and will be appropriately disposed of when the study is complete. Until such time the video file will remain in a password protected computer within the home office of Cari Leyshon.
- x. Participation in a focus group with Cari Leyshon as the facilitator (estimated 1 hour) this focus group will be video recorded. The video file will be for the researcher's use only and will be appropriately disposed of when the study is complete. Until such time the video file will remain in a password protected computer within the home office of Cari Leyshon.
- xi. Permission for Cari Leyshon to observe both an executive and general meeting
- xii. Permission for the researcher to have access to any relevant information that may contribute to the study.
- xiii. All participants are to provide responses before the agreed deadline and be available if further information is required during the study.
 - Audio recording will be conducted during both AR Set discussions and interviews.

8. Expenses and / or payments

As this research is conducted on a basis where participants take part on a voluntary manner, they will not be required to pay for anything, nor will they be eligible to be paid for participating in this study.

9. Are there any risks in taking part?

Based on the consideration that information attained from the study to be remain confidential and anonymized, it is expected that no risk to be incurred as a result of your participation. In addition, participants have the right to withdraw from the research should they feel any discomfort or disadvantage during the study.

10. Are there any benefits in taking part?

Participants will gain a deeper understanding of their contextual workplace environment while contributing to new knowledge by reflecting on their views, applying their experiences to a real-life practical situation, and generate actionable knowledge that serve as recovery workplace solutions. These implications apply to both practitioners and academics within the field of family businesses.

11. What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let us know by contacting Dr. Nii Amoo, Supervisor, +447786877401 or nii.amoo@online.liverpool.ac.uk, and we will try to help. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact the Research Governance Officer at ethics@liv.ac.uk. When contacting the Research Governance Officer, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

12. Will my participation be kept confidential?

Participants' responses will be kept strictly confidential and anonymized. Participant names will also not be associated or acknowledged in the research material or any publication related to this study.

13. What will happen to the results of the study?

All collected (and analyzed) data delivered by the participants will be warehoused on a PC/secured electronic storage maintained by the researcher and the academic team at the University of Liverpool. The results generated from the study will become assessable through the library of the university and may be presented in seminars, conference, and/or peer reviewed by academic journals, if required.

14. What will happen if I want to stop taking part?

Participants are free to withdraw from the research at any time without providing any reason. Withdrawal from the study will not affect the rights of the participants in any manner. Participants are also free to decline to respond to any questions posed by the researcher. All participants understand that data collected is immediately anonymized, therefore I am unable to withdraw my data once it is submitted.

15. Who can I contact if I have further questions? If you are unhappy or there is any problem, please feel free to contact Cari Leyshon at 0034 658 538 951 and I will try to help

APPENDIX 2

Table 2: Summary of Interviews

P	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10
Q										
1	Network with similar professionals from other countries & find out new information about other countries	Network with similar professionals from other countries & find out new information about other countries – exclusivity to represent country-value to clients	Connections to other countries, exclusive service and added value to clients	Being only person/company to represent country – great competitive advantage – network with similar professionals	Being only person/company to represent country – great competitive advantage – network with similar professionals	Exclusive country representative; collaboration of European partners – client value-networking with similar professionals	European Collaboration to add value to clients, knowledge sharing, network with similar professionals	Network with similar professionals from other countries & find out new information about other countries – exclusivity to represent country-value to clients	Exclusive country representative; collaboration of European partners – client value-networking with similar professionals	European Collaboration to add value to clients, knowledge sharing, network with similar professionals THAT ALSO SPEAK ENGLISH which is a very important selling point for large clients
2	Sharing updates on changes in legislation, policy procedures; access to European expertise (resource to the country) *Social side- like a family of Connexx	Sharing updates on changes in legislation, policy procedures; access to European expertise (resource to the country) *Social side- always welcoming	Sharing updates on changes in legislation, policy procedures; access to European expertise (resource to the country) *Social side experiencing new culture with friends of Connexx	Sharing updates on changes in legislation, policy procedures; access to European expertise (resource to the country)	Sharing updates on changes in legislation, policy procedures; access to European expertise (resource to the country) *Social side	Sharing updates on changes in legislation, policy procedures; access to European expertise (resource to the country) SOCIAL & networking – Connexx is like a family	Sharing updates on changes in legislation, policy procedures; access to European expertise (resource to the country) *Social side –very fun, warm and good friends	Sharing updates on changes in legislation, policy procedures; access to European expertise (resource to the country) *Social side – made good friends too	Sharing updates on changes in legislation, policy procedures; access to European expertise (resource to the country) *Social side- people are easy to connect with	Sharing updates on changes in legislation, policy procedures; access to European expertise (resource to the country)
3	Happy with Exec Committee Reports could be more to the point would like to see working group of marketing role in Connexx as brand seen to grow membership to more value	Exec Committee doing excellent job, happy with contact & info received	Need more communication in between meetings or possible forum or website to keep updated more regularly – twice a year is not enough	Exec Committee doing excellent job, happy with contact & info received	Exec Committee doing excellent job, happy with contact & info received	Exec committee is excellent – could be more communication between meetings – there is a change happening or updates on changes – also if members are not attending meetings should still give the country updates	Need more communication between meetings or possible but overall evaluating what can improve	Exec committee is excellent – could be more communication between meetings – there is a change happening or updates on changes – also if members are not attending meetings should still give the country updates	Exec Committee doing excellent job, happy with contact & info received	Exec Committee doing excellent job, happy with contact & info received
4	Very open to experience new cultures, ways of thinking, a big advantage of	Members are all open and willing to communicate and seek to be understood and	Willingness and openness is most important and this	Lots of experience communicating with other cultures – sometimes difficult to understand real meaning	Different service standards and response times that have affected our client services in	Finds communicating frustrating as its difficult to get the intended message	Multi lingual- likes everyone tries and is open to mistakes	Everyone has a basic level of English to communicate sometimes its hard to find the right word or it	Members are all open and it easier to understand each other	Each member has different approaches laws and structures to follow – some are very efficient some are not so much –

	Connexx – sometimes difficult to get understood	like to learn about other cultures	already happens with members	some cases – others are good	clearly so takes more patience and tolerance	could mean something different and then a misunderstanding happens actually language can really be a barrier to really express yourself as you want to	the majority of my experiences are good and I trust the members with my clients it is good for my company			
5	Members are all very open, non-judgemental and willing to overcome conflict the best way they can	Listening to others first – I am open to different perspectives and willing to change my views with new info	Acknowledges we all have judgements– I learn from others about myself – I must consider what could their message mean to them first then reconsider my perception	Always set aside stereotypes to focus on understanding the person – it's the professional way	Open to setting aside stereotypes to discover the person	I am open and willing to speak to anyone from any culture although now that you mention it, I do choose who to talk to based on their communication skills and personality – it's the person not the culture	I always look at the person, if there is a misunderstanding I adjust my approach & try to improve to be more clearly understood; have to relate the person – think about their motivations understand them listen- the challenge is at work they are a different person than socially –	Having a relationship with another member makes it better to understand over time how their culture, legislation etc is working so have to be open minded and willing to learn about them to change perception and be more understanding	Not aware of any judgements/stereotypes – Doesn't see any difference between cultures – just happy to learn from others	Does not apply to Connexx members as focus on the people
6	Very comfortable to share opinions	Very comfortable to share opinions – everyone is welcoming	Very comfortable to share opinions – everyone is welcoming – focus on using simple words	Very comfortable – easy audience –very open and friendly	Very comfortable – use simple language to be understood by everyone – lots of body language	Very comfortable – use simple words to be understood –lots of body language	Very comfortable and keep message relatable to the group	Very comfortable – Connexx members are friendly	Very comfortable-respect everyone's opinion –very fair as majority wins although all opinions heard	Very comfortable – everyone is very friendly – advantage of Connexx
7	The network is very friendly big advantage, lots of singing – it's about people not stereotype	The individual creates the relationship and overrides any perceived stereotypes	Give the benefit of the doubt that intention is good from the person, let them create my impression of them not the culture	The individual creates the relationship and overrides any perceived stereotypes	The individual creates the relationship and overrides any perceived stereotypes	I focus on listening openly to learn something new about the person and culture- I find differences interesting	I do not like to be judged so I don't judge – I am open to learn about the person both the corporate one and the social one to understand the whole person	I prefer to slowly to get to know people the more then I understand them and can interact – I have to remain open and willing to hear them	Always remains open to the person, the stereotype doesn't apply to individual- always keep an open mind	Keep an open mind, adjust my expectations to match the service time with what the other member can deliver
8	Member each hosting is a big advantage to see new places, travels extensively.. places visited has changed perception	Experience the best places in each city by recommendation, advantage of Connexx, new culture info, changed perception; travels extensively	I have travelled and worked extensively internationally I like to always learn about cultures – I like hosting countries making best recommendations and tours/shows	I have travelled and worked extensively internationally I like to always learn about & see new cultures – I like hosting countries best about Connexx	I already travel extensively and been exposed to a variety of cultures and love to learn about more the Connexx way – with personal connections – better experience	I have lots of exposure to different cultures as I travel internationally, Connexx is great way to see the best of the city and create personal connections- I'm always learning	I learn a lot especially when I compare myself to other cultures – ie: I feel liberal next to a british person – I have to be tolerant of different values	The best part is to visit other countries with a member who lives there as the guide is super – I am always learning new things about places and cultures	Nothing new has been learned – but after 1-2 meetings everyone is friends- Connexx is very welcoming and enjoy the time to come to meetings. Likes visiting different places.	Nothing new as travels extensively, likes mutual respect members share changing the country every meeting
9	Language is not a barrier as multilingual; but important for chairman to speak another language other than English	Language is important – easy to have misunderstanding as English is used but not main language for members usually – I use lots of body language	Language is a barrier for deep expression and meaning – I use lots of body language and eye contact to see if we share understanding – Always remain open to	Language is important –easy to have misunderstanding as English is used but not main language for members usually – I use lots of body language	Language is important – easy to have misunderstanding as English is used but not main language for members usually – I use lots of body language	Language is the most challenging to understand the message – takes patience, willingness, and body language	First I look for common ground, conflict is last resort to preserve my point of view, I really try to understand different ideas then keep asking for explanations until we	Language can be a barrier but I look to build a relationship to understand the person the better and use simple words, lots of body language.	Language is the main challenge to express the meaning. Its good that the chairman can also translate words sometimes	Language – its an advantage that all members have some level of English but still miscommunication happens so must keep to simple language

10	To add a short presentation about the current situation of the country the meeting is in – as a brief intro, ie: how legislation is different and how they adapt services	Likes how itinerary is adapted to current needs/topics/issues; Would like to have more workshop style topics discussed focus on communication to help improve in dealings with different cultures	new perspectives and tolerant in the face of frustration More marketing initiatives and branding to help with awareness of Connexx – participate in tradeshows, put on itinerary ideas and plans to grow	Happy with existing itinerary – good balance with social activities with productive/informative meetings - would like to see something different – more info on a country ie: legislation and direct effect on member, how member copes with changes	Like the itinerary – enjoyed the group work in Milan a chance to directly interact with other members I didn't really know or speak to before – I like to learn more about soft skills and communication to help my business and relationships	The itinerary could be improved with more member interaction like group work, more member presentations to share on practical issues and topics to improve businesses, I like also more communication help	both get it. Then if no common ground is established –let it go The itinerary is efficient – I liked the group work and interaction with different members – would like to hear from different members give presentation on topics from different laws, how to overcome political changes	Need to be doing more business together and grow the network – support our clients needs – more time on ideas to build the Connexx brand and do marketing for benefit of membership to collaborate services – more learning from each other	Likes current itinerary – would like to add more workshop interactions – likes to learn more about improving intercultural communication skills	Itinerary is great – has flexibility to focus on what is needed – meetings are precise – keep to one day – likes only meets 2x per year and if you miss one its ok – very professional people
11	Willing to help with presentation for meetings	Interested to assist with meeting presentations	Willing to be accountable for any action required to help network grow	Willing to help give presentation or in meetings	Willing to be more involved in meetings – give presentations	Willing to do presentation or help with meetings	Willing to do presentation or help in meetings	Willing to do presentations – Knowledge sharing on expertise	Willing to do presentations – help in meetings	Will do presentations occasionally if needed
12	No time for executive committee -	Does not perceive their national culture to have the respect from other cultures for them to be on the board	Lots of skills available – whatever is needed	Happy with executive board – no time to help	If elected would be interested to be on executive board –	Lots of skills available to help with anything needed	Happy with existing executive committee – no time to help	Happy with executive committee but thinks we need a central business/member liason person added to monitor/assist information and exchanges between members	Very satisfied with executive committee – no time to help more	Happy with executive committee –no time to help more

