

CONCEPTUALISING COSMOPOLITANS

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COSMOPOLITANS

(noun, people)

“individuals [with a cosmopolitan disposition] **see the world as one big, boundless space**, where geography, place, countries, and other traditional location-based characteristics do not limit their opportunities to live, work, venture, experience, and learn”

(Nummela et al., 2024, p. 145)

“...an individual's **orientation** or **identity horizon** that **transcends the conventional local boundaries** of social entities such as corporations, communities, nation states, or the countries of origin.”

(Lee, 2015)



Openness-**T**ranscendence-**B**etweenness



Testing the water...

Digital Nomads

Public group · 210.9K members



Anonymous participant

November 5 at 9:05 AM · 🌐



Hi Digital Nomads, do you consider yourself as a citizen of the world (or cosmopolitans) as you have been living in various places and seeing different ways of life?

You and 6 others

31 comments

Yes



Yes,
but...



No



Antonella

Of course! What's the point of living if you are stuck in ONE way of thinking?



Nat

I don't like to share where I'm from anymore. I'm a citizen of the world.



Andrew

I am a citizen of Earth. I don't identify with the country of my citizenship anymore, I am not one of them. However the system requires me to be sponsored by a government for a passport to travel so it's an involuntary business relationship we have out of necessity. The deal is I pay them \$500 for a passport and they,...um.... well that's it, they won't even let me back in during a pandemic.

1w Like Reply Share

7



Paras

Andrew same 😊

1w Like Reply Share 2



Nat

Andrew same ...

6d Like Reply Share



Simon

I can't become a citizen of the world with a weak passport. 😂



Erin

After spending 10 years jumping through the hoops of a difficult country's immigration system to become a citizen there, I find the term "citizen of the world" a little thoughtless and unaware of a little thing known as citizenship privilege.



Alex

I dont put labels on myself 😊



Gloria

Nop, I'm Peruvian but I'm an international person



Roy

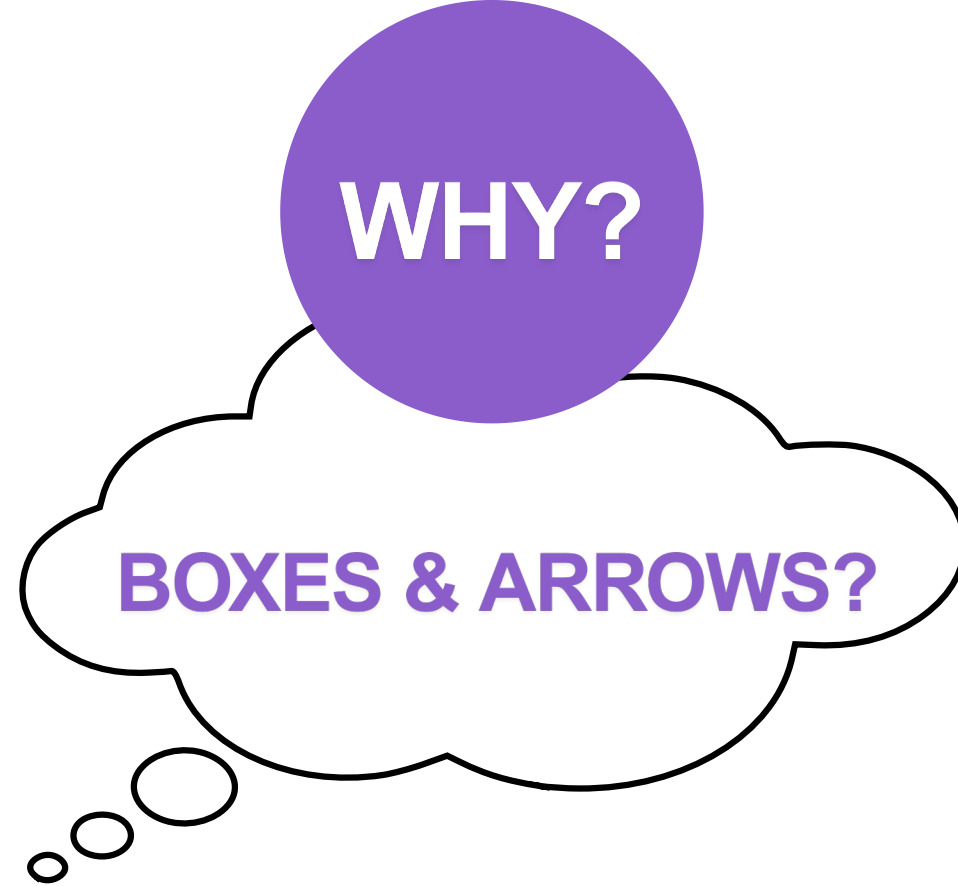
Nah! I am Costa Rican who happens to be living in different countries.

“ Who are cosmopolitans?
and
How do they differ? ”

a “boxes-and-arrows” explanation (cf. Whetten, 1989)



- **multipolar** debates on cosmopolitan(ism) (*Delanty, 2006; Skrbis & Woodward, 2007*)
- **synthesise** multidisciplinary ideas to **identify/ generate interesting perspectives** (*MacInnis, 2011; Gilson & Goldberg, 2015; Jaakkola, 2020*) that might **challenge preconceived assumptions** (*Davis, 1971*)

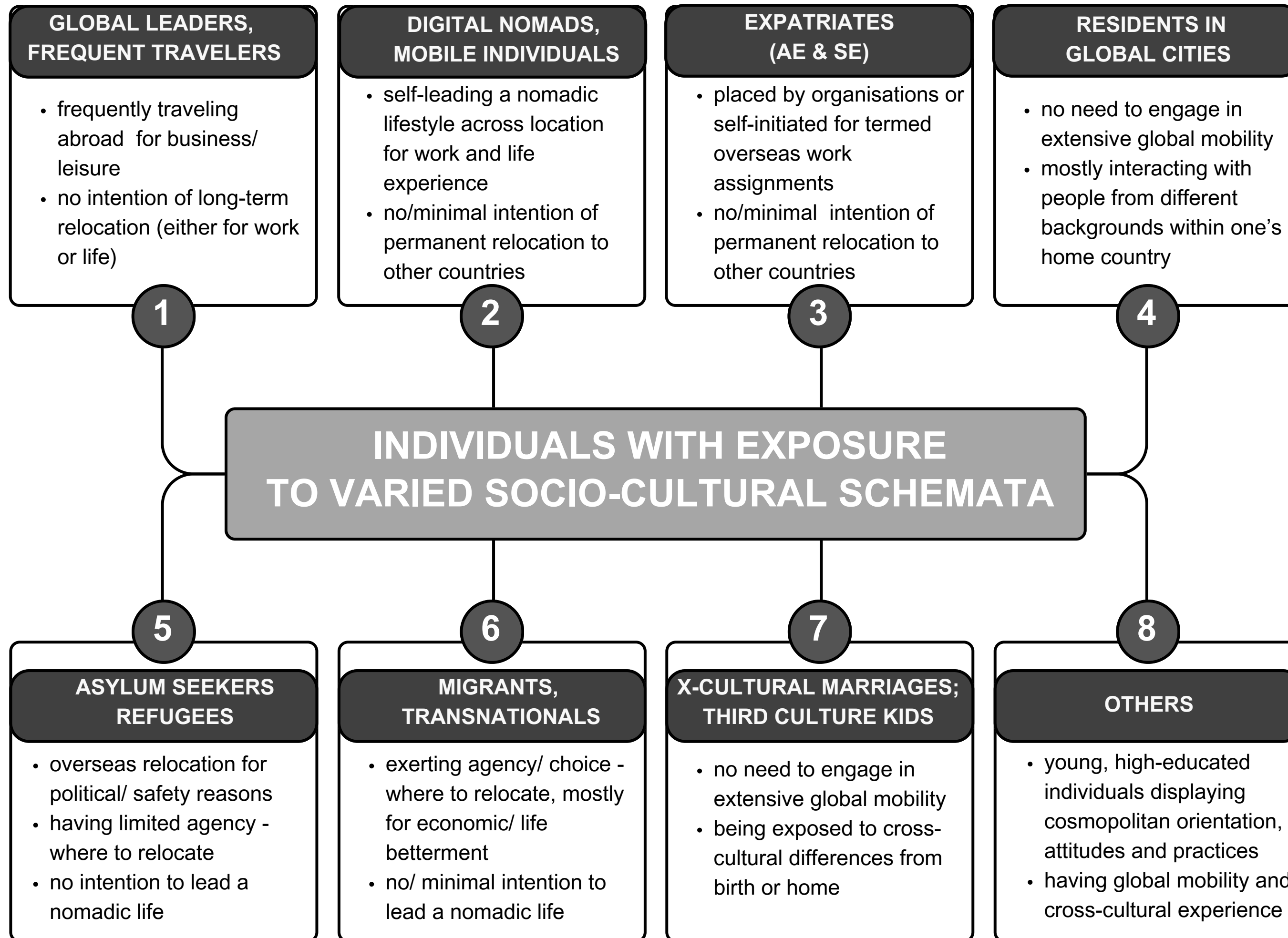


- existing work primarily focuses on **features, lacking casual explanations**
- to **explain relationships**: *what leads to what and why?*
- to distinguish **explanatorily relevant factors** from irrelevant ones, i.e., counterfactual conditionals (*Ruben, 1990; Woodward, 2003; Lukka & Modell, 2010*)

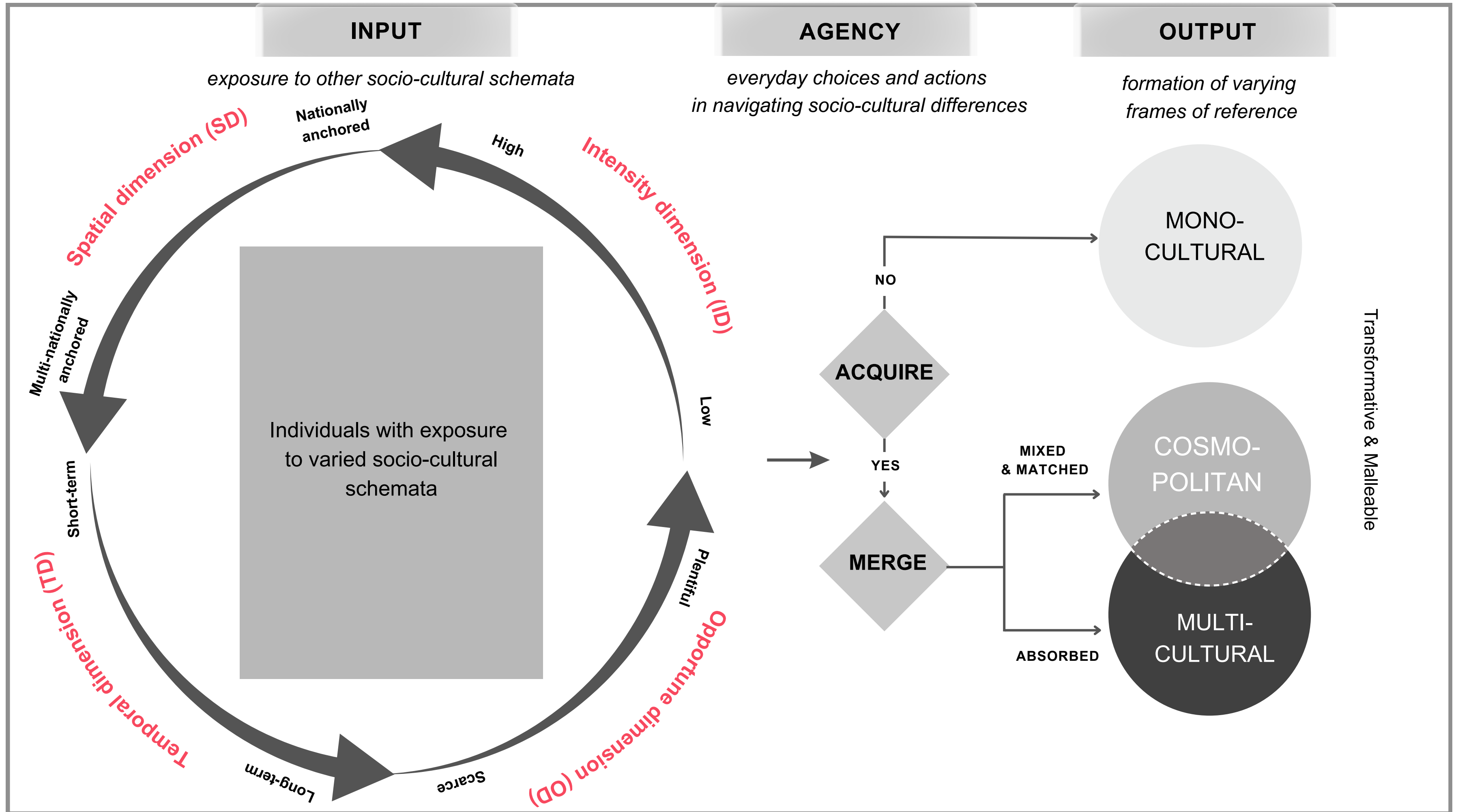


- micro-foundation views: need to understand how **specific/ unique individuals influence IB activities** (*Santangelo et al., 2024*)
- **scarcity** of cosmopolitan-related research. A few existing conceptual work (*Lee, 2015; Levy, Peiperl & Jonsen, 2016*)
- **no distinction** between cosmopolitans and other groups of cross-cultural individuals (expats, migrants and so forth)

Who could potentially be cosmopolitans?



How do they become a cosmopolitan?

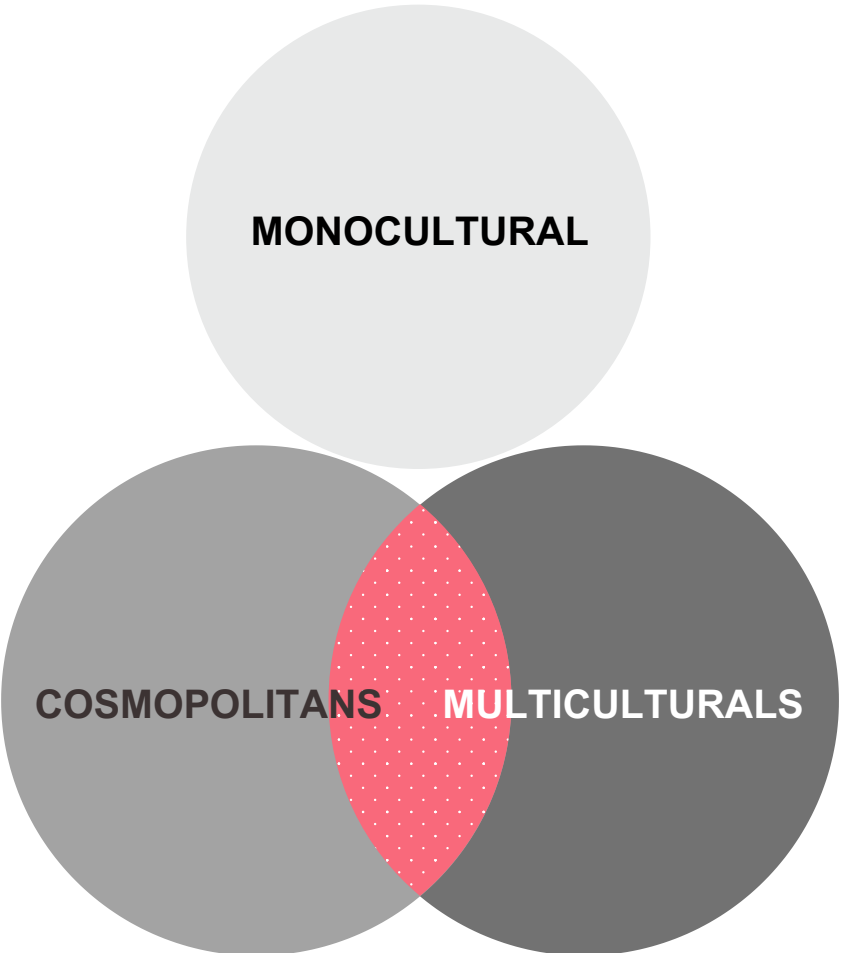


Who are cosmopolitans and how do they differ?



"I'm like a chameleon. I can jump to the leaves, I can jump to the rock, I can jump like that. I don't know. For me, life is so wonderful without any barriers."
 (An interviewee)

- Cosmopolitans** are a subset of cross-cultural individuals distinguished by:
- **Transformative Agency**: actively navigating and shaping their interactions within diverse socio-cultural contexts.
 - **Kaleidoscopic Frames of Reference**: transforming exposure to various socio-cultural schemata into dynamic, multifaceted perspectives on the world, others, and themselves.
 - **Socio-Cultural Independence**: comfortably negotiating cultural differences without subscribing to any specific socio-cultural identity. The world is but a global village.



	Cosmopolitans	Multicultural	Monocultural
Sources	construct their lives and cosmopolitan identities through continuous mobility	can develop multicultural understanding and adeptness from birth or at home	engage in global mobility but 'ignore' or choose not to acquire new cultures
Cultural identity	may <u>not identify</u> with any cultural groups	can strongly associate themselves with <u>more than one</u> socio-cultures	just associate themselves with <u>one</u> socio-culture
Global concerns	express concerns for matters beyond their own personal lives	do not necessarily treat global issues, humanity as their immediate need or a priority in life	do not necessarily treat global issues, humanity as their immediate need or a priority in life

Relevance and Significance in IB/IHRM

Time to **bring cosmopolitans back** to IB/IHRM discourse?

- Humans: the cornerstone of (international) business. Burning issues:
 - having **right people for the right roles/places** (*Beechler & Woodward, 2009; Tung, 2016*)
 - navigating **complex global realities, multipolar world, “us vs. them” divide** (*Tung, 2024*)
- Cosmopolitans:
 - not the same with other groups
 - functioning as **transcultural brokerage**, bridging structural and cultural holes (*Levy et al., 2018*)
 - possessing **diverse forms of capital** (*Figueira et al., 2016*)



Food for thoughts ?

1. Why should organizations identify cosmopolitan individuals among their workforce? And, how?
2. What organizational or managerial policies and practices should be implemented to effectively manage their cosmopolitan workforce?
3. How can we evaluate the compatibility between cosmopolitans and organizations using classic theoretical lenses, such as person-organization fit, person-job fit, and organizational citizenship behavior?
4. What is the potential relationship between cosmopolitans and global talent?
5. In which ways can cosmopolitans serve as valuable assets to organizations, given the diverse range of skills, networks, and experiences they have gained through constant mobility?
6. What are the dark sides of being cosmopolitan?
7. What strategies can be employed to oversee and convert the cosmopolitans' negative aspects, e.g., yearning for new adventures, rootlessness, etc., into valuable resources?
8. What factors influence the decision-making and/or thought process of cosmopolitan and non-cosmopolitan individuals?
9. How would cosmopolitans, in their capacity as leaders, entrepreneurs, changemakers or simply members of society, act as catalysts for managing changes and addressing grand challenges?
10. How does cosmopolitanism influence or shape the future of work and the future of people management?
11. What are the possible connections between cosmopolitanism and the young generation, specifically Gen Z as the primary workforce?



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