Seeing 'the obvious' as Subject and Object of Cross-cultural HCI Design

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Abstract. The aim of this panel is to encourage debate on the idea that the real challenge for cross-cultural design in HCI is part of a science aimed at making the 'obvious' visible. This idea will be presented to the audience from four different perspectives. The different groups involved in the design endeavor operate through their own common sense realms, which tend not to be shared across their boundaries. In cross-cultural design settings, key requirements for the things we design and key assumptions about how we design them tend to be hidden in realities for which we have limited access. This is not only a problem of physical access but also of symbolic access to local and professional cultures. By looking at their language, we can see how other stakeholder groups view their world. What we cannot see easily is their 'point of view', i.e. the frames full of values, tacit knowledge and expectations that shape language and action.

The panelists will talk about the boundaries of concepts and tools in HCI and Cultural Theory used in cross-cultural design and their effectiveness in unpacking 'the obvious', i.e. enabling access to the different 'points of view' in the design process. It is envisaged that the outcome of the panel session will be an increased awareness of the panelists' proposals to address the problems faced in cross-cultural design. After more than a decade of research into culture and HCI we hope the discussion generated in the panel will reflect a high level of nuance and maturity with clear take-away for researchers and designers.

Keywords: cross-cultural design, HCI, interaction design, cultural theories.