

Communicating Across Cultures

SECOND EDITION



Stella Ting-Toomey

Tenzin Dorjee



ebook

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Preface

We have written this book for use as an intermediate text for undergraduate courses and complementary reading for a graduate seminar in intercultural communication. This book is for students, teachers, and practitioners who would like to integrate knowledge and skills in practicing mindful intercultural communication. Mindfulness means being particularly aware of our own assumptions, viewpoints, and ethnocentric tendencies in entering any unfamiliar situation. Concomitantly, mindfulness means paying focused attention to the perspectives and interpretive lenses of *dissimilar others* in viewing a problematic intercultural or intergroup interaction encounter.

The second edition of this book presents a new framework—the integrative identity negotiation theory (IINT)—and draws from both the scholarly works of intercultural and intergroup communication and diverse disciplines such as cross-cultural psychology, social psychology, ethnic studies, anthropology, sociolinguistics, sociology, multicultural counseling, international management, and international education. IINT attempts to explain why we experience emotional vulnerability in communicating with dissimilar others due to identity complexity and intergroup boundary-regulation issues. Our sociocultural membership identities (e.g., cultural and ethnic identity or religious identity), sociorelational role identities (e.g., intimate and professional role identities), and person-based identity attributes (e.g., personality traits) influence our particular ways of perceiving, thinking, and behaving in our everyday cultural milieu. However, our habitual ways of seeing and thinking are often thrown into disequilibrium with *dissimilar others*.

As cultural beings, we are like fish in an aquarium who can live comfortably inside their aquatic milieu without realizing the importance of the water or the tank that surrounds them. While communicating with culturally dissimilar others, their dissimilar ways of thinking and behaving challenge our fundamental ways of experiencing. Thus, our identities experience turmoil and transformation. With external and internal tugs-and-pulls and turbulent pressures, emotional vulnerability is part of an inevitable

identity change process, especially for outsiders entering a cultural community and for host members who perceive the influx of changes around them.

The key for all of us intercultural learners, however, is to prepare ourselves mindfully by developing culture-sensitive and identity-sensitive knowledge, a flexible mindset and resonating heartstring, and competent interaction practices so that we can enjoy the intercultural learning journey together and, simultaneously, marvel at the mystery of human diversity. This book offers you the essential intercultural and intergroup communication knowledge blocks and skills that will enable you to travel effectively across a diverse range of intercultural situations. Through the framework of IINT and the theme of mindfulness, we put a map and a GPS in your backpack to guide you through your different intercultural and intergroup encounter excursions.

This book uses ample examples from many different cultures to illustrate or clarify various concepts. Since many of you will be engaged in different types of intercultural excursions, this knowledge-packed guide book will prepare you to cross diverse cultural boundaries flexibly and adaptively. The ideas presented here are drawn from our years of diligent intercultural and intergroup communication research and were inspired by the work of renowned scholars in the intercultural and intergroup communication disciplines. They are also reflective of some of our combined 50-plus years of lived experiences in different countries and different parts of the United States and our informal “ethnographic” observations of people and behaviors in many intercultural–intergroup encounter scenes.

Our own research and that of other distinguished theorists led us to this one observation: In order to communicate competently across cultures, we have to be mindful of our own identity issues and the identity issues of others. We have to learn to understand and respect identity-based issues in any communication process—whether it is within culture or across cultures. Identity-based issues (whether they are sociocultural membership, sociorelational roles, and/or personal identity attributes)—constitute the substance of “who we are” and act as the focal points that guide our verbal and nonverbal actions. Identity-based issues are influenced by our cultural and group membership beliefs, values, norms, expectancies, interaction scripts, and constructed meanings—all of which we use to interpret our own and others’ behaviors.

The book is organized in three parts. Part I, *Conceptual Foundations and Contextual Settings*, includes four chapters. Chapter 1 offers the reasons why we should pay close attention to intercultural communication and examines the urgent need to study the subject in depth. It also addresses the prime questions of what is culture and what is intercultural communication. In Chapter 2, we open with the discussion of the three paradigms (i.e., the functional, the interpretive, and the critical paradigm) that shape the contemporary field of intercultural–intergroup communication research studies. Following a detailed discussion of each paradigm, the pros and cons of each paradigm are also assessed. In the second part of Chapter 2, the key assumptions of IINT, along with IINT-based updated research studies, are showcased. The chapter also describes how the various core identity sets (e.g., stigmatized identity and generational-based identity sets) may create potential intergroup misunderstandings if we

continue to communicate in a habitually mindless fashion. This chapter is longer than other chapters because it lays a strong theoretical foundation and blueprint (i.e., IINT) that will help you, the reader, to gain a holistic picture of the book's content, design, and rhythm. Chapter 3 tracks and reviews the contextual setting of sojourners (e.g., international students, U.S. students studying abroad, international employees, or Peace Corps volunteers) and their anxiety-prone relocation experiences. The underlying factors and the developmental patterns of the W-shaped cultural adjustment model are presented and illustrated. Furthermore, the phenomenon of reentry culture shock is discussed, and the question of "Where is home?" is raised for many global citizens. In Chapter 4, in the context of discussing immigrants' and refugees' acculturation processes, an updated systems-process model covering the systems-level and individual-level factors, intergroup contact and adaptation process strategies, and acculturation outcome factors are systematically laid out. Cultural and ethnic identity issues affecting immigrants and co-culture members' ethnic identity evolvment and transformation are also addressed. Also investigated are various intergroup membership adaptive strategies, such as social mobility and social creativity to change one's status or role strategically in a new society or in an intergroup encounter setting.

Part II, *Navigating Intercultural and Intergroup Communication with Mindfulness*, consists of four chapters that explicate the essential concepts of developing a mindfulness lens in communicating verbally and nonverbally with culturally dissimilar others. This section also emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural and personal value dimensions that shape our operational behaviors, such as the use of particular language codes, verbal interaction styles, and nonverbal nuances and subtleties. Thus, Chapter 5 echoes and extends some of the key motifs in Chapter 2 (i.e., IINT, the book's blueprint). It lays out the major criteria and components of intercultural and intergroup communication competence. The chapter emphasizes that in order to cultivate intercultural and intergroup competencies, communicators need to acquire culture-sensitive and identity-sensitive knowledge, develop a flexible mind-set and heart-set, and also connect their astute knowledge and ethnorelative attitudes with skilled communication practices. Mindfulness is the key hook that connects all of these competence components. To be a mindful communicator, one needs to attend to the present interactional moment fully and without reactive judgment, attune to one's arising and anxious emotions, and practice metacognitive "thinking about thinking." One also needs to engage in self-monitoring reflexivity and other-attuning reflectivity, and preplan intentionally to express our bewildered ideas and anxious emotions with mindful words and heedful nonverbal actions. Chapter 6 highlights the importance of understanding cultural values as a starting point in practicing mindful intercultural communication. Cultural values such as individualism–collectivism and power distance shape our various identities, which in turn sculpt the way we communicate. Beyond culture-level value dimensions, the chapter also emphasizes the importance of individual personality attributes and situational landscapes in framing our views and interpretations of the social worlds around us. In Chapter 7, the importance of knowing the features and functions (e.g., multilayered rules and pragmatic rules; group identity function and

social evaluative function) of language is discussed. It presents bountiful intercultural examples to compare and contrast low-context (i.e., direct and to-the-point) and high-context (i.e., indirect and spiral) verbal style differences. It also draws out implications for how different cross-cultural verbal styles can create communication bumps, frictions, and head-on clashes. In Chapter 8, we address the complex system of nonverbal communication. While language is the *key* to the heart of a culture, nonverbal communication is the *heartbeat* of a culture. The chapter highlights the multiple perspectives on the contemporary study of nonverbal communication across cultures: bioevolutionary, sociocultural, and neuroculture theory perspectives. In addition, different functions (e.g., reflecting identities and expressing emotions) of cross-cultural nonverbal communication are reviewed. The spatial boundary regulation function of proxemics, and the temporal regulation of time or the study of chronemics are probed. Topics such as interpersonal interactive synchrony versus nonverbal deception and deviance are juxtaposed and analyzed. A set of cautionary guidelines in analyzing cross-cultural nonverbal communication judiciously and with situational sensitivity is also proffered.

Part III, Boundary Regulation and Intercultural–Intergroup Relationship Development Processes, includes four chapters. Chapter 9 utilizes social identity theory as a guiding framework and reviews the key concepts of social identity theory, social categorization, and intergroup social comparison and attribution processes. Essential constructs such as ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism, together with mindless versus mindful stereotypes, are explained. Drawing from these baseline concepts, the chapter extends forward and addresses the question of why individuals engage in ingroup favoritism and outgroup biases and why they tend to commit intergroup attribution biases such as blaming outgroup members' negative racial/or personality traits for their faulty conduct. The chapter concludes with discussion of a host of “P” factors such as prejudice, power, and privilege in intergroup relationship development and also includes some contemporary research studies on the role of “microaggressions” in co-culture members' lived experiences. Chapter 10 discusses intercultural and intergroup conflict. This chapter is more extensive and distinctive from other chapters in two ways: (1) It notches up the theoretical ladder of writing, elucidating the key assumptions, conditions, essential constructs, and research findings of the conflict face negotiation theory from its conceptualization in 1985 to the present; and (2) it includes a proposed culture-based situational conflict model and discusses research insights gleaned from various conflict communication styles. New directions for future research in the arena of intercultural and intergroup conflict are also proposed. Chapter 11 maps out an updated model of sociocultural membership factors and their associated attraction and challenging topographies. Intercultural–intimate communication research studies are used to highlight some of the diverse expectations that can complicate matters in dealing with intimate–intercultural relationships. Included are concepts such as cross-cultural self-disclosure, developmental stages in intercultural–interracial romantic relationships, ways to counter racism and prejudice, and the rearing of secure bicultural children. Lastly, in Chapter 12, contemporary issues about making mindful intercultural ethical choices are tackled. Three ethical positions—ethical absolutism, ethical relativism, and

ethical universalism—are reviewed and assessed. A useful framework of meta-ethics contextualism, and some specific reflective step-by-step choice-making questions, are offered. Furthermore, ethical considerations that concern conducting intercultural communication research and also intercultural training are addressed. The chapter concludes with the importance of promoting global social justice and peace-building as a lifelong learning process for all intercultural–intergroup scholars, students, and practitioners. It also presents a review of several applied and constructive intercultural–intergroup communication practices that have been discussed throughout the book.

Within each chapter, a chapter summary of the key issues discussed and a set of mindful and doable guidelines are presented for everyday contemplation and application. This book seeks to fill the need for an upper-division intercultural communication text that is based on a solid theory–research foundation and that is also accessible and practical in everyday application.

This book has seven distinctive features:

1. It is guided by a practical theme, namely, mindfulness. Through mindful thinking, experiencing, expressing, relating, and meaningfully engaging, individuals can make a qualitative difference in their own lives and the lives of dissimilar others in different cultural terrains.
2. It is multidisciplinary. It draws from diverse research sources such as work in cross-cultural psychology, social psychology, ethnography, sociolinguistics, language, multicultural counseling, international management, international education, and intercultural and intergroup communication, among others.
3. Within the human communications studies field, research insights from distinguished scholars in the areas of interpersonal communication, organizational communication, conflict communication, rhetorical communication, nonverbal communication, and social media have been drawn and utilized.
4. Across the book, as a “big-picture” explanatory framework, IINT has been employed, emphasizing the importance of integrating identity-sensitive knowledge, flexible mind-set and heart-set, and adaptive communication skills in promoting intercultural–intergroup interaction competencies.
5. It is practical in orientation, strongly emphasizing the systematic practice for adaptive intercultural and intergroup interactional competencies along a range of essential intercultural–intergroup relationship development topics—for example, from workplace to community-building to development of romantic relationship competencies. These applied ideas are also clearly reflected at the end of each chapter as doable “mindful guidelines.”
6. It contains tables and figures that capture key ideas and concepts concisely. While some of the figures presented are for easy-to-grasp visual mapping purposes, other figures (e.g., the systems-process acculturation model in Chapter

- 4) offer explanatory values of the antecedent, process, and outcome factors of major intercultural or intergroup topics that can be tested by researchers in multiple disciplines.
7. While the book is theoretically directed, the accessible writing style should appeal to students, teachers, and practitioners who want to learn more about and also cultivate mindful and competent intercultural–intergroup communication practices.

This new edition significantly differs from the first edition in several ways. The first edition of *Communicating Across Cultures* was published in 1999. With a time lapse of almost 20 years, it is indeed time to give birth to the second edition of this intermediate-level intercultural text to reflect the changing nature of the field. The most important change in this book is the addition of a coauthor, Tenzin Dorjee. Dr. Dorjee’s scholarly work has emphasized the importance of an intergroup communication perspective and also immigrants’ and refugees’ diaspora lived experiences. He also has a lifelong interest in writing and practicing a nonviolent approach to peace-building and conflict management through a spiritual lens. In pairing up with Dr. Dorjee and focusing on the theme of mindfulness, we have the amazing opportunity to conduct a more in-depth dialogue about the current status of the intercultural–intergroup communication field. This dialogue also enhances our hopes and dreams for the future of the human communication studies discipline.

While we have retained some of the classic perspectives, ideas, and insights from the first edition text, all of which have been endorsed by a wide range of teachers and practitioners, this second edition has made five substantive changes:

1. It presents an updated new framework, namely, IINT, and draws on a contemporary body of intercultural and intergroup studies and research findings probing the theme of sociocultural identity complexity and adaptive communication patterns. Beyond the discussion of ethnic/cultural identity change processes, an inclusive–intersecting identity viewpoint (e.g., on stigmatized group membership identity and intergenerational identity) is developed throughout the book.
2. Two new chapters early in the book (Chapter 3 on intercultural adjustment and Chapter 4 on immigrants’ acculturation) serve as the foundational contexts or settings for developing mindful intercultural–intergroup practices. These two new chapters were developed from Chapter 9 of the first edition. We believe the topics of sojourners’ short-term and medium-term *adjustment process* and immigrants’ long-term *acculturation process* should be treated as separate topics in their own right (albeit both groups experienced various “culture shock” factors), as shown by numerous research studies on these two fascinating boundary-crossing contexts.
3. We also separate out the discussion of “mindfulness” and “intercultural–intergroup communication competence” (in the first edition, the “mindfulness”

motif appeared in Chapter 2 together with the “identity negotiation perspective” heading). We develop these twin concepts more fully as a picture frame (Chapter 5) in order to stress the importance of mindful attention to understanding various underlying cultural/personal value dimensions (Chapter 6) and developing the capacity to be a mindful verbal (Chapter 7) and nonverbal (Chapter 8) communicator.

4. Since both authors have had extensive research training and are fully engaged in the topic of intercultural–intergroup conflict competencies, the “perceptual filters and intergroup biases” chapter (Chapter 9) and the conflict chapter (Chapter 10) present many updated contemporary ideas on “prejudice, power, privilege, and microaggression” and the “intercultural–intergroup face negotiation process and outcome” issues.
5. Freshly added to this second edition are three unique features: (a) an opening story in each chapter that provides an applied context for intercultural learners to be more intentional in their learning process in reflecting on the essential applicable ideas in each chapter; (b) a final section, “Chapter Summary and Mindful Guidelines,” that reinforces the “lessons imparted” in each chapter and some behavioral doables for intercultural learners to internalize and practice competent intercultural–intergroup communication skills; and (c) an end-point section, “Critical Thinking and Connective Application Questions,” that prompts teachers, practitioners, and their students or trainees to engage in deeper dialogue about the multidimensional issues presented in each chapter.

All in all, this second edition reflects new and substantive material, fresh insights, new experiences, up-to-date research, and practical application guidelines based on our integrative intercultural–intergroup perspectives and many years of teaching, along with collaborative theorizing and research efforts. We hope that by reading this book, some of the identity-based competence concepts and skills will resonate with you and that you are able to translate facets of the knowledge and skills into mindful intercultural–intergroup communication practice.

Acknowledgments

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We wish our readers a lifelong journey of intercultural discovery. May you navigate this journey with infinite curiosity, creative imagination, and social activism. We urge all our students, teachers, colleagues, intercultural theorists, and practitioners to continue to express their diverse voices in building an inclusive and ethically just social world, moving forward in interlocked steps via collaborative empowerment, hope, and heart-to-heart humanistic connections.

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PART I

Conceptual Foundations and Contextual Settings

CHAPTER 1

Intercultural Communication

An Introduction

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Introduction

Today we live in an unprecedentedly dynamic global world. Globalization has intensified our interdependence, and new media engagement has enhanced our interconnectedness. As individuals coming from diverse sociocultural identity backgrounds, we are constantly communicating with each other via face-to-face interactions and many social media connections. In this 21st-century global era, avoiding intercultural interaction or diversity interaction is almost unimaginable. There is also a growing sense of urgency that we develop and enhance intercultural and intergroup communication competence.

With rapid changes in the global economy, technology, transportation, and immigration policies, we find ourselves in increased contact with people who are

socioculturally different from us in various contexts. From interpersonal relationship to workplace heterogeneity, different cultural beliefs, values, and communication styles are here to stay. In order to communicate appropriately and effectively, we have to learn to manage diverse sociocultural identity memberships adaptively. Intercultural and intergroup communication competence involves optimal integration of the necessary identity-sensitive knowledge, ethnorelative attitudes, and adaptive interaction skills. Ethnorelativism means seeing things from the other person's cultural perspective, lens, or identity, or at least giving another's perspective courteous consideration as an alternative explanatory option.

The study of intercultural–intergroup communication focuses on learning about both similarities and differences within and between cultures, as well as acquiring the conceptual tools and skillsets needed to manage such differences adroitly. This chapter has three aims: (1) to outline some of the pertinent reasons why intercultural communication matters and why we should mindfully attend to them; (2) to explain what intercultural communication is and to describe its essential characteristics; and (3) to present a summary of the five core assumptions concerning intercultural and intergroup communication. The chapter ends with summary highlights and mindful guidelines to direct your attention to understanding complex, multilayered identity issues within and across cultures.

Why Study Intercultural Communication?

There are many practical reasons for studying intercultural communication; we offer five reasons here: global boundary-crossing trends, domestic diversity trends, new media trends in intercultural communication, intergroup–interpersonal discovery opportunities, and cultivation of mindful communication practice.

Global Boundary-Crossing Trends

Millions of people cross national boundaries to seek pleasure, to fulfill magical dreams, and to find job opportunities. Multinational corporations spend billions of U.S. dollars sending managers overseas and training their employees from diverse sociocultural backgrounds for international relocation assignments. For example, U.S. corporations are estimated to spend approximately \$25 billion annually for corporate relocation assignments (Global Trends Relocation Survey, 2010). Global workplace heterogeneity presents both challenges and opportunities to individuals and organizations (Moosmuller, 2017).

While U.S. global employees have the technical competence to do their jobs, they often lack intercultural communication skills to adjust and succeed in their new environment (Moran, Youngdahl, & Moran, 2009). A considerable percentage (about 20%) of U.S. employees fails in their overseas assignments and returns home prematurely (Global Mobility Effectiveness Survey, 2009). Thus, individuals and organizations in

the forefront of workplace diversity must rise to the challenge of developing professional savviness and sociocultural adjustment in dealing with their culturally dissimilar others.

Adler and Gundersen (2008) suggest that global leaders in today's world need to work on five cross-cultural competencies: (1) understanding the worldwide political, cultural, and business environment from a global perspective; (2) developing multiple cultural perspectives and approaches to conducting business; (3) being skillful in working with people from many cultures simultaneously; (4) adapting comfortably to living in different cultures; and (5) learning to interact with international colleagues as equals, rather than from a superior–inferior stance. More recently, studies have shown that global managers and employees in international human resource development, global marketing, and global customer service can gain tremendous cross-cultural creative problem-solving skills via the astute application of intercultural communication competencies (Gupta, 2009).

In this 21st-century mobile world, the need to master intercultural communication competence is even more pressing. Corporate global managers and employees, as well as persons working in overseas assignments such as government service, humanitarian service, peace corps context, and international education, need to succeed in fulfilling their tasks and goals and, simultaneously, building trust in intercultural–intergroup relationships. To communicate competently with diverse cultural strangers, every 21st-century citizen needs to master the foundational concepts and operational skills of mindful intercultural communication. Intercultural communication knowledge and skills are pertinent to effectively solving problems, managing conflicts, developing positive relationship rapport, and forging creative global visions. Beyond the importance of applying adaptive intercultural communication knowledge and skills in the international arena, these are equally important to the U.S. domestic diversity scene.

Domestic Diversity Trends

The study of intercultural communication on the U.S. domestic front is especially critical for several reasons. First, according to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau, we are now a nation with increased multicultural complexities and nuances. Of the nation's approximately 307 million people, 65% are Whites/non-Hispanics, 16% are Latinos/Hispanics, 13% are African Americans/Blacks, 4.5% are Asian Americans, 1 percent reported as American Indians/Alaskan Natives, and 0.2% identified themselves as Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. Note also that 1.7% of the population chose to identify themselves as two or more races.

The most sweeping demographic change in the United States is occurring in the Latino/a population. It is projected that in the year 2050, the Latino/a population in the United States will more than double in size (to approximately 30% of the total U.S. population), followed closely by an increase in the Asian American population (to approximately 9%). The African American population will remain stable (estimated at 15%), while the non-Hispanic White population will decline significantly (to approximately

46%) on the national level (Passel & Cohn, 2008). Hawaii, California, and New Mexico are the three most racially diverse states in the United States. Conversely, Vermont, Maine, and West Virginia are listed as the three most homogeneous states, with the highest percentage being non-Hispanic White residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).

Second, the number of foreign born in the nation is increasing at an accelerated pace. According to U.S. census data for 2010, 36.7 million people representing 12% of the total U.S. population are foreign-born nationals. Another 33 million (i.e., 11%) are native-born with at least one foreign-born parent, which means that more than one in five people in the population is either a first- or second-generation U.S. resident or citizen. Among the foreign born, more than half were born in Latin America, and almost one-third were born in Mexico. Other foreign born were either from Asia or Europe, and the remaining small percentages were born in other regions of the world. Basically, current and future generations in the United States include many individuals whose parents or grandparents were born in a Latin American, Asian, or European region. Thus, the influence of multicultural and diverse customers is expanding in every industry. The housing industry, automaking, retail, banking, and media and entertainment industries must learn to reach out to these multiethnic customers with customized nimbleness. Meanwhile, teachers must also learn to use culturally sensitive engagement skills when dealing with the increased identity diversity in their classrooms. Social service and health care providers must also learn to communicate responsively with their foreign-born clients and their 1.5 generations (i.e., immigrants who arrived at a new country as children or adolescents).

Third, highly educated and skilled immigrants, especially in the areas of computer science (e.g., Silicon Valley, California), medical, and engineering service industries, play a critical role in advancing U.S. technological-related industries. The payrolls of leading information technology (IT) companies such as Apple and Microsoft include many highly skilled and foreign-born employees. Many U.S. immigrants have also contributed positively to the dynamic social and economic development of the nation. The richness of cultural diversity in U.S. society has led to dramatic breakthroughs in the fields of physics, medicine, science, and technology. U.S. immigrants are innovative business entrepreneurs, tenacious problem solvers, vibrant job creators, responsible taxpayers, and active consumers who contribute trillions of dollars to the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP; Center for American Progress, 2017). Even if we decide not to step outside U.S. borders, we will inevitably encounter coworkers or classmates from a wide range of socioculturally diverse elements in our own backyard. Learning to understand and relate to different aspects of such diversity will serve as a major step toward building a more inclusive, multicultural society.

In one sense, domestic diversity can be framed as a rich spectrum of human identity variations in response to internal and external conditions. The term “diversity” can consist of *primary dimensions* and *secondary dimensions*. The *primary dimensions* refer to those “human differences that are inborn and/or that exert an important impact on our early socialization and an ongoing impact throughout our lives” (Loden & Rosener, 1991, p. 18), for example, race/ethnicity, sex/gender, age, social class, physical

abilities, and sexual orientation. Comparatively, the *secondary dimensions of diversity* refer to conditions that can be changed more easily than the primary dimensions, including “mutable differences that we acquire, discard, and/or modify throughout our lives, [most of which] are less salient than those of the core” (Loden & Rosener, 1991, p. 19), for example, socioeconomic status, including educational level, work experience, and income level. From an intergroup perspective, these social group memberships may influence the identity perceptions of self and others, including stereotypical image formations and associated communicative behaviors in an interpersonal or workplace context. Mastering intergroup membership communication knowledge and skillsets (e.g., intergenerational age-based identity communication) can ease any awkwardness in intergroup interaction and increase communicative confidence and enjoyment in diverse workplace and relational development settings.

Of course, it is critical to remember here that “valuing diversity” does not equate with “practicing inclusion,” and vice versa. We can have a diverse workplace in a corporation, with multiple faces culled from diverse racial and ethnic or age backgrounds. However, if we do not learn from such diverse identity individuals, diversity will be just statistics with individuals representing diverse identity quotas or rosters. To practice inclusive diversity, we need to engage in responsive identity negotiation communicative work. Culture-sensitive knowledge, ethno-relative respectful attitude, and operational skills that are necessary in engaging in competent identity negotiation work are explained more fully in Chapters 2 and 5, and are also offered as mindful guidelines at the end of each chapter.

The basic premise of this book is that all human beings want to be understood, respected, and affirmatively valued. However, understanding the other, respecting the other, and affirming the other’s salient sociocultural membership and personal identities require mindful effort, astute observational ability, and pliant verbal and nonverbal interactional skills. Exquisite attention to inclusive diversity issues bolsters employee morale, creates an inclusive climate in the workplace, fosters intergroup–interpersonal rapport and trust, and sparks dynamic innovation and positive societal change.

New Media Trends in Intercultural Communication

Our world has become dynamically interconnected and intertwined owing to globalization and technological advancement. According to World Internet Users Statistics (2017), over 3.7 billion people—almost half of our global population—are Internet users, and the top regional users are found in Asia. Chen (2012) contends that “[w]ith its distinctive and unique nature, new media has brought human interaction and society to a highly interconnected and complex level” (p. 2). According to Chen (2012, pp. 2–3), the term “new media” has five distinctive features: digitality, convergency, interactivity, hypertextuality, and virtuality. Digitality refers to the idea that large data sets can be stored, retrieved, and manipulated in a very limited digital space based on mathematical operations. Convergency refers to the coming together of both the forms and functions of information, media, electronic communication, and electronic

computing (e.g., via the Internet). Interactivity refers to the active flow of information resources between users and various connective network operations (e.g., eBooks, Netflix). Hypertextuality refers to how fields of information can be linked together and mass distributed via different connective nodes in the digital network and hold low production and distribution costs (e.g., Wikipedia, YouTube links). Lastly, virtuality refers to how individuals can experience virtual reality in the invisible cyberspace via text messages, images, sounds, and avatars (e.g., online games such as League of Legends, World of Warcraft, Second Life). “Social media” (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Weibo) is a subset of new media that emphasizes the importance of connective interactions among individuals who generate, share, discuss, and exchange information through virtual communities or segmented networks and communicate via mobile and web-based technologies (Chen, 2012).

While there are indeed digital divides between the “haves” and the “have nots,” digital technologies are becoming more available across the globe, enabling people to live in the age of hyperconnectivity. Indeed, Shuter (2017) discusses the important role of new media and its implications for immigrants’ acculturation process and the codevelopment of adaptive intercultural competencies in both immigrant and host national groups. New media also reshuffle how individuals in different cultural groups and diverse identity groups want to be perceived and offer them an opportunity to reconstruct their projected personas or profiles. New media, especially through social media connections, allow diverse individuals to reconstruct their primary identity dimensions into more fluid and situational-based identities—depending on the particular social media platform they are employing and with which set of segmented audience. Millions of people are crossing intercultural boundaries daily via digital/new media/social media, communicating both *asynchronously* (e.g., emails and Facebook) and *synchronously* (e.g., instant messaging, skyping, and live casting). In this regard, competent mediated intercultural communication requires the adroit management of at least three types of dialectics: local identity–global identity dialectics, hybrid identity dialectics, and cultural values versus social media values dialectics (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012). Dialectics are defined here as confronting paradoxes or contradictions due to the coexistence of two oppositional push and pull forces—or yin and yang factors—interfaced with social media.

First, new media users and social media communicators face the challenge of managing the dialectics of local identity and global identity. On the one hand, local identity is made up of the emotional attachment to, and strength of, their identification with the local ethnic culture and concomitant practices that provide a distinctive ethnic identity flavor. On the other hand, global identity is constituted by the emotional attachment, and strength of, their identification with global culture and associated practices. Active new media users need to negotiate these identity dialectics appropriately and effectively because too much emphasis on either of these identities can create intercultural communication schisms such as eroding local identity distinctiveness. *Local identity* is made up of distinctive ethnic values, practices, and traditions of the local identity communal group, whereas *global identity* is made up of individuals who adopt

and embrace international practices and values over local practices. Global culture as exported through new media platforms tends to keep up with the latest trends, fashions, technological advances, international programming, and consumer materialism.

For example, the international children's television landscape is a shared new media experience, with children having the same interests, watching the same programming, playing the same games, and sharing in the same media preferences available on their smartphones or wireless tablets. The most dominant global networks are Nickelodeon (Viacom), the Cartoon Network (AOL/Time Warner), and the Disney Channel (Disney). All have managed to internationalize their brand with a packaged variety of media products to international markets around the globe such as *Dora the Explorer*, *Spiderman*, or *Spongebob Square Pants*. The aura of global cultural values tied to consumerism and pop culture may then persuade local children to incorporate these "Western-exported" values. The accelerated new media consumerism trends can also create communication divisions between the older and younger generation living in the same household across the globe. Through the explosion of new media, the intersection of local and global identities is on the edge, standing at a crossroads (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012). Thus, the process of identity negotiation is a complex phenomenon, and new media allure us into deciding what we should value or devalue, what we should desire or forgo, and how we can lead a fulfilling lifestyle on a local versus a global scale.

Second, social media allow redefining, exploring, and reinventing identities, and new generations of individuals are forming a hybrid "third-culture" identity constituted by the fusion of local and global cultures, as discussed earlier (Casmir, 1997; Shuter, 2017). This hybrid identity as expressed in the "third space" social media culture can create further intergroup dissonances and, at the same time, collaborative opportunities between individuals who have never met face to face. These individuals are not likely to follow a particular traditional ethnic script to relate to and communicate with one another. They may fuse their local culture's communicative expectancies with the global culture's probable outlook and thus create either decoding confusions or renewed intergroup-interpersonal connective understanding. Furthermore, the social media platform itself has its own value ideologies, pacing and rhythms, settings, global players, avatars, interactional moves and countermoves that mediate local culture identity construction and global identity enactment and further impact on the intercultural-intergroup communication process itself. Thus, it has become more urgent to master the essential skills of intercultural and intergroup interactional competencies as we move forward connectively in this networked society in the 21st century.

Finally, social media communicators need to attend to cultural-ethnic values versus social media values dialectics. While individuals may use the same social media communication channel (e.g., WhatsApp, Viber), cultural value manifestations such as linear-sequential versus spiral-relational reasoning patterns, communication styles, emoticons selection, and cultural context influence how people interact in electronic media. Cultural value orientations may also influence the attitude and communicative behavior of social media users (such as collectivists seeking social support and

individualists seeking self-promotion) (Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2011; Stefanone, Lackaff, & Rosen, 2011). Even with individuals texting or speaking the same language (English is the dominant language for global social media users), they may use it in low-context style (being explicit and straightforward in conveying their intent) or high-context style (being implicit and relying heavily on nonverbal hinting), which requires mindful decoding of the meaning level of the cryptic message exchange process (Hall, 1976, 1983).

New media empower individuals and organizational systems to exchange, share, and distribute information using a wide range of social media connective platforms (e.g., Facebook, Google Plus, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat) and to engage in different uses of messaging applications (e.g., WhatsApp and WeChat). Based on the capacities of different social media and skills and users' interest and needs, cultural partners can form intercultural alliances and relationships, promote common-interest social networks, collaborate on global projects, engage in social activism such as climate change and poverty reduction, and create virtual reality. In and for all of these areas, understanding intercultural–intergroup communication and practicing adaptive cultural-sensitive competence skills is all the more important because of the communication challenges we have discussed.

Intergroup–Interpersonal Discovery Opportunities

In a global workplace, people bring with them different work habits, time rhythms, and cultural practices. For example, in collectivistic cultures, staff members tend to wait for their superiors' or supervisors' instruction on how to do their jobs, but in individualistic cultures staff are expected to know how to do their jobs without having to wait for supervisors' instruction. Also, in collectivist cultures, people tend to think of time as elastic, as expressed in the notions of “Indian time” and “Filipino time,” which are different from the notion of technical and clock-based mechanical time in individualistic cultures such as the United States and Switzerland. Being exposed to these cultural differences provides learning and growth opportunities to promote the development of a well-rounded, balanced intercultural person. Immersing and soaking up the distinctive cultural experiences in different cultural communities stretches the different digital and analogic aspects of our brain, imagination, heart strings, enjoyment, and expandable behavioral repertoires.

It is through the mirror of others that we learn to know ourselves. By facing our own discomfort and anxiety, we learn to stretch and grow. In reality, however, most of us prefer to spend time with people who are like us rather than different from us for predictable interaction, security, and comfort (Gudykunst, 2005a). Being in contact with an unfamiliar other often makes us feel vulnerable, exposed, and at times quite disoriented and unsettled, a feeling stemming, for example, from language differences, nonverbal awkwardness, and distinctive work habits and interactional styles. It takes time, hard work, patience, and focused attention to really know a cultural stranger with

deep intergroup–interpersonal understanding and empathy. However, the time and energy we invest in learning to deal with our own feelings of ambiguity *and* in reducing the discomfort of others do pay off substantially in the long run.

Encountering a dissimilar other helps us to question our routine way of thinking and behaving and to consider alternative options. Connecting with a dissimilar other deeply is a discovery process of whirlwind adventures, mystery encounters, and surprising learning moments. According to creativity research (Maddux & Galinsky, 2009; Sternberg, 1999), we learn more from people who are different from us than from those who are like us. At the individual level, creativity involves taking in new ideas and being thrown into disequilibrium. If the uncertainty is managed with an open-minded attitude and a willingness to change department, multicultural team members can develop a synergistic perspective (Buzzanell, 2017). A synergistic perspective means combining the best of all cultural approaches in solving a global or domestic workplace problem. More specifically, our ability to evaluate different problem-solving approaches (e.g., inductive, deductive, spiral, metaphoric, or visualization/mapping) and to move away intentionally from traditional “either/or” binary thinking can expand diverse creative options in a multicultural team’s deliberation process and outcome.

Indeed, at the small-group level of research, it has been shown that experts rate the quality of ideas produced in ethnically/culturally diverse groups significantly higher than those ideas produced in ethnically homogeneous groups (McLeod, Lobel, & Cox, 1996). Of course, ethnically heterogeneous work teams also experience more conflicts or communication struggles than homogeneous work teams. If such conflicts are managed competently and constructively, however, the interaction outcome of heterogeneous teams often results in a higher quantity and quality of solutions than that of homogeneous teams. Culturally and ethnically diverse teams bring a greater variety of viewpoints to bear on the issue, a higher level of critical analysis of alternatives, and a lower probability of groupthink owing to the heterogeneous composition of the group (Oetzel, 2005). Thus, one’s commitment and willingness to experience a new cultural community and to engage with new cultural members connectively can prompt more alternative ways of learning and experiencing.

Cultivating Mindful Communication Practice

In mastering some of the key intercultural and intergroup communication competence knowledge sets and skillsets in this book, you as an intercultural learner can assume a personal leadership role in facilitating team meetings, coaching your culturally diverse coworkers, informally mediating intercultural or intergroup conflicts, and serving as a “cultural bridge” between your intercultural friends or multicultural families. At the root of “personal leadership,” according to Schaetti, Ramsey, and Watanabe (2008), is “understanding and managing our internal experience” (p. 4). They summarize their particular “Personal Leadership” practices as “notice our automatic reactions and untangle from them. . . . The more mindful and creative we are, especially when we’re

in an unfamiliar environment, the more chance we have of being effective. All it takes is the commitment to be the leader of our own lives and a willingness to engage in the moment-to-moment practice” (p. 4).

Mindfulness practice is rooted in the contemplative practices common to both Eastern and Western spiritual traditions. It is, at once, a spiritual, meditative, reflective, psychological, ethical, and applied way of intentional living and communicating (Ting-Toomey, 1999). According to Buddhist practice, *mindfulness* means attending to one’s own internal assumptions, arising emotions, intentions, cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors. Mindful reflexivity requires us to tune in to our own cultural and personal habitual assumptions in scanning a communication scene. It also means “emptying our mind-set” and decluttering internal noises so that we can listen with an in-the-moment pure heart. As presented in the works of Thich Nhat Hanh (1991) and Jon Kabat-Zinn (1994), mindfulness means tracking an unfolding communication episode with one-pointed wakefulness and watchfulness.

When viewed through a Western psychological lens, *mindfulness* means attuning to the other person’s communication assumptions, attitudes, perspectives, and communication styles (Burgoon, Berger, & Waldron, 2000). Langer’s (1989, 1997) concept of mindfulness includes the following characteristics: (1) learning to see the unfamiliar behaviors presented in the communication situation as novel or fresh; (2) learning to view the interaction situation from multiple viewpoints or angles; (3) learning to attend to the communication situation and the person with whom we are interacting holistically; and (4) learning to create new categories through which the unfamiliar behavior may be understood. Applying this mindfulness orientation to intercultural and intergroup interaction situations suggests a readiness and commitment to shift one’s frame of reference from an ethnocentric lens to an ethnorelative viewfinder and increases the possibility of interpreting events from the other person’s cultural frame of reference (Ting-Toomey, 1999, 2005a).

More specifically, in the absence of intercultural knowledge and cultural sensitivity, we tend to use a mindless–ethnocentric lens to perceive and relate to cultural strangers. *Ethnocentrism* refers to the mind-set of holding the views and standards of our own ingroup (Us) as superior to those of the referent outgroup (Them) and using ingroup standards to evaluate intercultural strangers’ seemingly “bizarre” behaviors. Alternatively, ethnorelativism refers to the mind-set of looking at things, including communication, from the other person’s cultural perspective or cultural frame of reference (Bennett & Bennett, 2004; see also Chapter 9).

For example, there is no one right way of greeting each other across cultures. On a global level, people greet each other with infinite variations, such as different types of handshakes, hugs and kisses, or types and degrees of nodding or bowing. On the one hand, ethnocentric-minded individuals generally see their own way of greeting as much more natural, spontaneous, logical, or easy to enact because of their own daily cultural practice. Ethnorelative-minded individuals, on the other hand, are more open-minded, flexible, and adaptive to situational needs between intercultural communicators. When they practice new behavioral skills in the new cultural community, they do not find the

new rituals “cumbersome” and “backward,” or “illogical” and “uncivilized.” Ethnorelative mind-set does not necessarily entail abandoning one’s cultural perspective, but it does at least require giving alternative cultural perspectives the benefit of the doubt in that they could be as good as one’s own cultural perspective, or even better. Studying intercultural and intergroup communication more deeply and acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills to function competently in a new culture can circumvent overreliance on rigidly held sweeping stereotypes and also inaccurate reactive judgments.

Here it is important to note the specific distinctions between the terms “generalizations” and “stereotypes.” The knowledge blocks in this book offer “reasonable generalizations” based on well-grounded research data in the intercultural, intergroup, and related interdisciplinary fields studying the aggregate patterns of individuals and group membership communication. Sound and well-argued theoretical frameworks, coupled with well-supported research evidence, can help shape the directions of “reasonable generalizations” based on multiple data convergent points. Of course, through use of an interpretive and critical research lens, it is also important to preserve the meaningful distinctive voices of divergent identity groups and unique individuals. The concept of “stereotypes,” in contrast, refers to overgeneralizations based on hearsay or slim (or even no) evidence and apply sweeping categories to typecast an individual or an entire identity group due to closed-minded interpretive processes. On the one hand, the language of “reasonable generalization” is open-ended, tentative, and subject to updated revision based on the latest research data gleaned from multiple academic sources. The language of “intergroup stereotype,” on the other hand, is close-ended, absolute, and categorically imposing, and with the associated implication that the particular individual or group member is “always” behaving in such a manner and with 100% rigidified certainty and predictability.

Mindful intercultural communication will enrich our understanding of a diverse range of meanings and communicative situations concerning both face-to-face and social media interactions. Mindful communication takes patience, commitment, and practice. Our willingness to explore and understand such cultural differences and group identity complexities in both face-to-face and mediated contexts will ultimately enrich the breadth and depth of our own lived experiences and also enhance the quality of the communicational lives of culturally different others.

What Is Intercultural Communication?

The word *culture* is an elastic, dynamic concept that often takes on several different shades of meaning, depending on one’s perspective. The word *communication* is also fluid and subject to different interpretations. While both culture and communication reciprocally influence one another, it is essential to distinguish the characteristics of the two concepts for the purpose of understanding the complex relationship between them. In this section, we answer the following two questions: “What is culture?” and “What is intercultural communication?”

Conceptualization of Culture

Definition of Culture

Culture is an enigma. It contains both concrete and abstract components. It is also a multifaceted phenomenon. What is culture? This question has fascinated scholars in various academic disciplines. As long ago as the early 1950s, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) identified more than 160 different definitions of the term “culture.” The study of culture has ranged from the study of its external architecture and landscape to the study of a set of implicit principles and values to which a large group of members in a community subscribe.

The term “culture” originates from the Latin word *cultura* or *cultus*, as in “*agri cultura*, the cultivation of the soil. Later, culture grabbed a set of related meanings: training, adornment, fostering, worship. . . . From its root meaning of an activity, culture became transformed into a condition, a state of being cultivated” (Freilich, 1989, p. 2). D’Andrade’s (1984) conceptualization of “culture” embodies three important points. First, the term “culture” refers to a diverse pool of knowledge, shared realities, and clustered norms that constitute the learned systems of meanings in a particular society. Second, these learned systems of meanings are shared and transmitted through everyday interactions among members of the cultural group and from one generation to the next. Third, culture facilitates members’ capacity to survive and adapt to their external environment.

Drawing from D’Andrade’s conceptualization of culture, we define *culture* in this book as *a complex frame of reference that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, symbols, and meanings that are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of an identity community.*

Culture is like an iceberg: the deeper layers (e.g., traditions, beliefs, values) are hidden from our view; we only see and hear the uppermost layers of cultural artifacts (e.g., fashion, trends, pop culture), and we recognize some of the intermediate-level explicit (e.g., foreign language chattering) sounds and sense some of the undercurrent verbal and nonverbal communication gestures and cues (see Figure 1.1). However, to truly understand a cultural community with any depth, we have to match its deep-level, underlying value system accurately with its respective norms, meanings, and symbols located at the middle level of the iceberg metaphor. It is these beliefs and values that drive people’s thinking, experiencing, reacting, and behaving. Furthermore, to understand commonalities between individuals and groups, we have to dig deeper into the shared seafloor-level of universal human needs (such as safety, freedom, security, inclusion, dignity/respect, control, connection, meaning, creativity and play, spiritual striving, peace, and a sense of well-being). While we illustrate many core concepts concerning intercultural or intergroup membership differences in an intercultural–intergroup communication textbook such as this, we also need to always keep the seafloor-level shared humanity and common human fate in mind: our vast similarities of needs, interests, dreams, hopes, goals, and the well-being of our families and our loved ones.

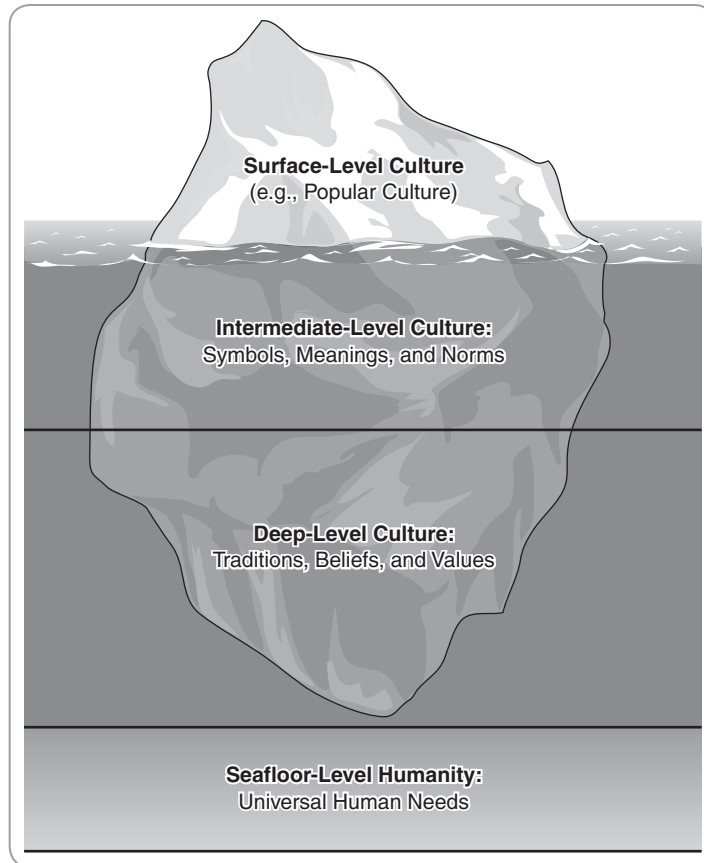


FIGURE 1.1. Culture: An iceberg metaphor.

On a communal level, culture refers to a patterned way of living by a group of interacting individuals who share similar sets of traditions, beliefs, values, and communicative practices. This can be considered the *normative culture* of a distinctive identity group (Triandis, 1972). On an individual level, members of a culture can attach different degrees of importance to this complex range and layers of cultural traditions, beliefs, values, and norms. This is known as the *subjective culture* of an individual with her or his distinctive personality traits, thought patterns, and unique life trajectories (Triandis, 1995).

On an aggregate group membership level, *culturally shared traditions* can include myths, legends, ceremonies, and rituals (e.g., celebrating Thanksgiving and New Year) that are passed on from one generation to the next through an oral or written medium. *Culturally shared beliefs* refer to a set of fundamental assumptions that people hold

dearly without question. These beliefs revolve around questions as to the origins of human beings; the concept of time, space, and reality; the existence of a supernatural being; and the meaning of life, death, and the afterlife. Proposed answers to many of these questions can be found in the major religions of the world such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. People who subscribe to any of these religious philosophies tend to hang onto their beliefs on faith, often accepting the fundamental precepts without question.

Beyond fundamental cultural or religious beliefs, people also differ in what they value as important in their cultures. *Cultural values* refer to a set of priorities that guide “good” or “bad” behaviors, “desirable” or “undesirable” practices, and “fair” or “unfair” actions (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). Cultural values (e.g., individual competitiveness vs. group harmony) can serve as the motivational bases for action. They can provide the explanatory logic for behavior. They can also serve as the desired end goals to be achieved. To understand various communication patterns in a culture, we have to understand the deep-rooted cultural values that give meanings to such patterns. (For an in-depth discussion of cultural values, see Chapter 6.)

Cultural norms refer to the collective expectations of what constitute proper or improper behavior in a given situation (Olsen, 1978). They guide the scripts (i.e., appropriate sequence of activities) we should follow in particular situations (e.g., how to greet a professor or how to apologize appropriately and effectively). While cultural beliefs and values are deep seated and invisible, norms can be readily inferred and observed through behaviors. Cultural traditions, beliefs, and values intersect to influence the development of collective norms in a culture. Often, our ignorance of a culture’s norms and rules can produce unintentional clashes between us and the people of that culture. We may not even notice that we have violated another culture’s norms or rules in a particular situation, such as wearing street shoes inside a traditional Japanese home.

A *symbol* is a sign, artifact, word(s), gesture, or behavior that stands for or reflects something meaningful on an individual or cultural community level. The *meanings* or *sense-making interpretations* that we attach to the symbol (e.g., a national flag or a memorial monument) can have both normative and subjective levels. People globally can recognize a particular country by its national flag because of its design and colors. However, people can also hold subjective interpretations and evaluations of what the flag means to them, such as a sense of pride or betrayal. Another such example is the linguistic symbol “home.”

On the relatively objective level, “home” refers to “a family’s place of residence.” However, members of different cultures may give different subjective meanings to this richly textured symbol. For example, for a Tomalithli Native American, “home” means an experiential place where “time and space . . . blur into impressionistic totality. . . . [Home is] the place of our birth vested indelibly in us, an identity, since we have always been and will always be there with the spirits of relatives of past, present, and future” (Grinde, 1996, p. 63). Interestingly, for individuals who see themselves as global citizens (e.g., see Iyer, 2013), “home” is not tied to a physical location but instead implies a sense of belonging to the whole globe.

Thus, for different individuals, the linguistic symbol “home” can connote spirituality, kinship, belonging, identity, a sacred space, and a sacred time. While the word *home* sounds simple, it can conjure diverse cultural and personal meanings. To understand a culture, we need to know in depth the values and meanings of its core symbols. Often, we learn the essential values, meanings, and identity of a cultural community through mastery of its core linguistic symbols, critical nonverbal artifacts, and situational frames. Culture matters in life.

Functions of Culture

What does culture do for human beings? Why do we need culture? As an essential component of human beings’ effort to survive and thrive in their particular environment, culture serves multiple functions. Of all these functions, we identify five here: identity meaning, explanatory frame, intergroup boundary regulation, ecological adaptation, and cultural communication.

First, culture serves the *identity meaning function*. Culture provides the frame of reference needed to answer the human being’s most fundamental question: Who am I? Cultural beliefs, values, and norms provide the anchoring points through which we attribute meanings and significance to our identities. For example, in the larger U.S. culture, middle-class U.S. values emphasize individual initiative and achievement. A person is considered “competent” or “successful” when he or she takes the personal initiative to realize his or her full potential. Realizing this potential means gaining tangible achievements and rewards (e.g., an enviable career, a good salary, a coveted car, a big screen TV, or a dream house). A person who can realize his or her dreams despite difficult circumstances is considered to be a “successful” individual in the context of middle-class U.S. culture. In this individualistic value system, each person is perceived as unique, with free will and responsibility for his or her own growth.

Thus, the concept of being a “successful,” “competent,” or “worthwhile” person and the meanings attached to such terms stem from the fundamental values of a given culture. The identity meanings we acquire within our culture are constructed and sustained through everyday communication. For example, in traditional Chinese culture, a “worthwhile” person is the individual who respects his or her parents at all times and is sensitive to the needs of his or her family. In the traditional Mexican culture, a “well-educated” person (*una persona bien educada*) is the person who has been well-taught by his or her parents the importance of “demonstrating social relationships *con respeto* (with respect) and *dignidad* (dignity)” (Paniagua, 1994, p. 39). Therefore, if a child is called *mal educado* (not well-educated), the implicit assumption is that the child did not receive proper family socialization and education from his or her parents concerning how to treat others, particularly in interacting with individuals in a position of authority and enacting the proper *respeto* (Paniagua, 1994).

Second, culture serves the *explanatory frame function* for why cultural members do the things they do in a given culture. Culture creates a comfort zone in which we experience safety, inclusion, and acceptance. We do not have to constantly explain or

justify our actions. With people of dissimilar groups, we have to be on the alert, and we have to explain or defend our actions with more effort. We also need the mental energy to figure out why they behave the way they do. For example, in the context of cross-cultural nonverbal interaction, nonverbal public display of affection (PDA; e.g., hugging, kissing, handholding) varies across cultures. Cultural strangers may be asked to explain why they do or do not engage in PDA and in what particular situations and relationship types. However, cultural insiders do not require such explanations—they just make those nonverbal gestures spontaneously, naturally, and properly in accordance with their implicit cultural knowledge.

Interestingly, the explanatory function of culture is often taken for granted. Regardless of the depth of knowledge about their own culture, people tend to experience less anxiety and uncertainty in intracultural interactions. In contrast, intercultural strangers tend to experience high levels of anxiety and uncertainty in their interactions owing to different cultural norms and divergent meaning interpretation (Gudykunst, 2005a, 2005b). For example, romantic partnership dating is normative in some cultures but not in other cultures before formal engagement or marriage. Intercultural misunderstandings may occur because cultural strangers cannot produce each other's explanatory frame to explain such a "bizarre" dating or nondating norm. They may not possess the deep-level understanding of the appropriate cultural values to comprehend the other person's "odd or illogical" cultural relationship practice. Intercultural strangers cannot "fill in the blanks" spontaneously to grasp the underlying meaning of a novel cultural custom as practiced repeatedly by the insiders of a cultural community. Importantly, if intercultural strangers make an effort to learn about each other's cultural value systems and mindfully attune to them in interactions, they can manage their own anxiety and uncertainty productively and also help to alleviate the interactional anxiety and unpredictability of the cultural strangers with whom they are communicating.

Third, culture's *intergroup boundary regulation function* shapes our ingroup and outgroup attitudes in dealing with people who are culturally dissimilar. Culture is a web that connects and holds group members together. It is also the basis for differentiating between cultural ingroup and outgroup members. While we feel emotionally close to, and attach some importance to, the ingroups we belong to, we may feel no emotional ties with and attach no importance to outgroups. An *attitude* is a learned tendency that influences our behavior. Culture helps us to form evaluative attitudes toward ingroup and outgroup interactions. Evaluative attitudes also connote positive- or negative-valenced emotions.

According to intergroup research (Brewer, 1997, 2000; Crisp, 2010a, 2010b), we tend to hold favorable attitudes toward ingroup interactions and unfavorable attitudes toward outgroup interactions. We generally experience strong emotional reactions when our cultural norms are violated or ignored. In addition, we experience bewilderment when we unintentionally violate other people's cultural norms. While our own culture builds an invisible boundary around us, it also delimits our thoughts and our visions.

Culture is like a pair of sunglasses. It shields us from external harshness and offers us some measure of safety and comfort. That same protectiveness blocks us from seeing clearly through our tinted lenses. In brief, culture nurtures our ethnocentric attitudes and behaviors. We often consider our own cultural way of seeing and sensing as much more “civilized” and “correct” than other cultural ways. More often than not, we are unaware of our own ethnocentric biases. We also make different attributions in intergroup settings. While we often attribute our own and ingroup success to positive internal traits (e.g., smart and diligent), we oftentimes attribute the success of others and outgroups to external situations (e.g., luck and favoritism). But for negative events we reverse these intergroup attributions. While we tend to attribute our own and ingroup’s failures to external situations (e.g., economic crisis or unfavorable working conditions), we tend to attribute the failures of others and outgroups to their negative internal traits (e.g., they are not smart enough and they are lazy). Unfortunately, we acquire the lenses of ethnocentrism and biased attributions through growing-up socialization and conditioning processes. However, we can learn to intentionally switch our own frame of reference from thinking ethnocentrically to thinking ethnorelatively, and from interacting mindlessly to interacting mindfully—with culture-sensitive attitudes, words, and nonverbal actions.

Fourth, culture serves the *ecological adaptation function*. It facilitates the adaptation processes among the self, the cultural community, and the larger environment (i.e., the ecological milieu or habitat). Culture is not a static system. It is dynamic and changes with the people within the system. Culture evolves with a clear reward and punishment system that reinforces certain adaptive behaviors and sanctions other maladaptive behaviors over time. When people adapt their needs and their particular ways of living in response to a changing habitat, culture also changes accordingly. Surface-level cultural artifacts such as fashion or popular culture or technology change at a faster pace than deep-level cultural elements such as beliefs, values, and ethics. According to Triandis (1994a), the ecologies of a competitive hunting and fishing society are different from those of a farming society. The former connotes a more competitive worldview with perceived short supplies, whereas the latter connotes a spirit of cooperation, interdependence, and blending-in supportive harmony.

In today’s ecology of globalization and social media, the opportunity for both competitive creativity and collaborative creativity is here to stay. Appropriate and effective identity management and negotiation through adaptive global communication and transformative social media engagement can move global humanity one giant step forward or, alternatively, one giant step backward. Culture rewards certain behaviors that are compatible with its ecology and sanctions other behaviors that are mismatched with the ecological niche of the culture, in the particular historical time–space period.

Fifth and finally, culture serves the *cultural communication function*, which basically means the coordination between culture and communication. Culture affects communication, and communication affects culture. The noted anthropologist Edward T. Hall (1959) succinctly states that culture *is* communication and communication *is* culture. It is through communication that culture is passed down, created, and modified

from one generation to the next. Communication is necessary to define cultural experiences. Cultural communication shapes the implicit theories we have about appropriate human conduct and effective human practices in a given sociocultural milieu.

Cultural communication provides a set of ideals of how social interaction can be accomplished smoothly among people within our community (Cushman & Cahn, 1985). It binds people together via their shared linguistic and nonverbal norms, codes, and scripts. For example, people in a particular speech community have established a set of norms of what constitutes a polite or impolite way of meeting strangers. In Western Apache culture, remaining silent is the most proper way to behave when strangers meet. As Basso (1990) observes, “The Western Apache do not feel compelled to ‘introduce’ persons who are unknown to each other. . . . Outside help in the form of introductions or other verbal routines is viewed as presumptuous and unnecessary. Strangers who are quick to launch into conversation are frequently eyed with undisguised suspicion” (p. 308). While norms are implicit expectations concerning what “should” or “should not” occur in an interaction, scripts refer to expected interaction sequences of communication. As already noted, people in the same speech community often subscribe to a shared set of norms and scripts in particular situations.

Cultural communication coordinates the different parts of a complex system. It provides the people in a particular speech community with a shared consensus way of understanding. It serves as the superglue that links the macro–exo–meso levels (e.g., macro level: cultural traditions, ideologies, beliefs, and values; exo level: governmental policy institutions concerning education, health care, social service, or mass media; meso level: the surrounding neighborhood community or workplace interactive setting) together with the micro levels of an individual’s thinking pattern, personal experience, affective reaction, morality stance, and use of particular verbal and nonverbal cues. A change in one part of the cultural system is expressed and echoed in another part of the system through symbolic communication. Thus, communication coordinates and regulates the multiple facets of a culture in a stable, yet dynamic, direction.

In sum, culture serves as the “safety net” in which individuals seek to satisfy their needs for identity meaning, explanatory frame, boundary regulation, adaptation, and communication coordination. Culture facilitates and enhances individuals’ adaptation processes in their natural cultural habitats. Communication, in essence, serves as the major means of linking these diverse needs together. Drawing from the basic functions of culture as discussed above, we can now turn to explore the characteristics and assumptions of the intercultural communication process.

Conceptualization of Intercultural Communication

Definitions of Key Terms

The term “cross-cultural” as used in intercultural literature refers to the communication process that is *comparative* in nature (e.g., comparing conflict styles in cultures X, Y, and Z), while the term “intercultural” refers to the communication process between

members of different cultural communities (e.g., business negotiations between a Dutch importer and an Indonesian exporter). To put it more succinctly, in *intercultural communication*, the degree of difference that exists between individuals is derived primarily from cultural group membership factors such as beliefs, values, norms, and interaction scripts; the term “intergroup communication” implies that a degree of difference exists stemming from distinctive group membership identity factors (e.g., age, gender, status, social class, ability/disability). Intergroup communication is a broad term that includes all kinds of communication based on different group membership identity issues (Giles, 2012). Relatedly, “interethnic communication” refers to communicating between individuals from different ethnic groups, and “international communication” refers to communicating across international borders via media use (Croucher, 2017).

Intercultural communication takes place when our cultural group membership factors (e.g., cultural norms and scripts) affect our communication process—on either an awareness or an unawareness level. Individuals may be aware that some cultural differences exist between themselves and the other group members. Nevertheless, they still need to master culturally relevant knowledge and skills to manage such differences constructively. On the contrary, individuals may not be aware at all that some cultural difference exists between themselves and dissimilar others. They may attribute the communication missteps to factors (e.g., personality flaws) other than culture-level factors. They may also be totally oblivious to the idea that the seeds of intercultural discord have already been sown and sprouted.

If, however, intercultural communicators continue to ignore group-based *and* person-based factors that impact their encounters, their misinterpretations may spiral into major escalatory conflicts. Alternatively, individuals may stay in a superficial relationship without ever moving the relationship to a satisfactory level. To develop a quality intercultural–intergroup and interpersonal relationship, communicators need to integrate identity-sensitive knowledge, ethnorelative attitude, and constructive interaction skills and integrate these components into everyday mindful communication practice. According to Ting-Toomey (2015b), mindfulness is “introspective attunement with the self and being transparent about the self’s intentions, motivations, sociocultural identity, and personal identity security/vulnerability issues” (p. 421). It is also about extending such open-hearted awareness and attunement in responding to the other person’s identity struggles with vulnerability in an uncertainty space. Ting-Toomey considers mindfulness to be the “key link” connecting culture-sensitive knowledge with actual communication competence skills. To become astute intercultural communicators in diverse cultural situations, we must first be mindful of the different characteristics of the process itself and include different regional and faith-based perspectives on intercultural communication (e.g., a South American, South African, Iranian, Israeli, Muslim, or Buddhist perspective) as opposed to the “typical US, and Western, connotations provided in most intercultural communication textbooks” (see Croucher, 2017, p. 1). For example, from a Buddhist perspective, intercultural communication is considered “a process of encoding and decoding messages in an intercultural context characterized

by understanding interdependent origination, nonviolence, and mindfulness, among other things” (Dorjee, 2017, p. 71).

For the purpose of this textbook, *intercultural communication* is defined as the symbolic exchange process whereby individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities attempt to negotiate shared meanings in an interactive situation and in a larger sociocultural–macro environment. Furthermore, the shared meaning construction and coordination process between two persons (e.g., between Person A and Person X from two diverse cultural communities) are profoundly shaped by their *normative cultural expectations* and *intergroup perceptions*. The major characteristics of this definition include symbolic exchange process, different cultural communities, negotiation of shared meanings, interactive situation, intergroup perception, intercultural expectation, and sociocultural–macro environment (see Figure 1.2).

Explanations of Intercultural Communication Characteristics

In any intercultural encounter process, people use verbal and nonverbal symbols to get their ideas/messages across. The first characteristic, *symbolic exchange*, refers to the use of verbal and nonverbal symbols between a minimum of two individuals to accomplish shared meanings. While verbal symbols represent the digital aspects of our message exchange process, nonverbal symbols or cues such as smiles represent the analogical aspects of our message exchange process. Digital aspects of communication refer to the content information that we convey to our listener. The relationship

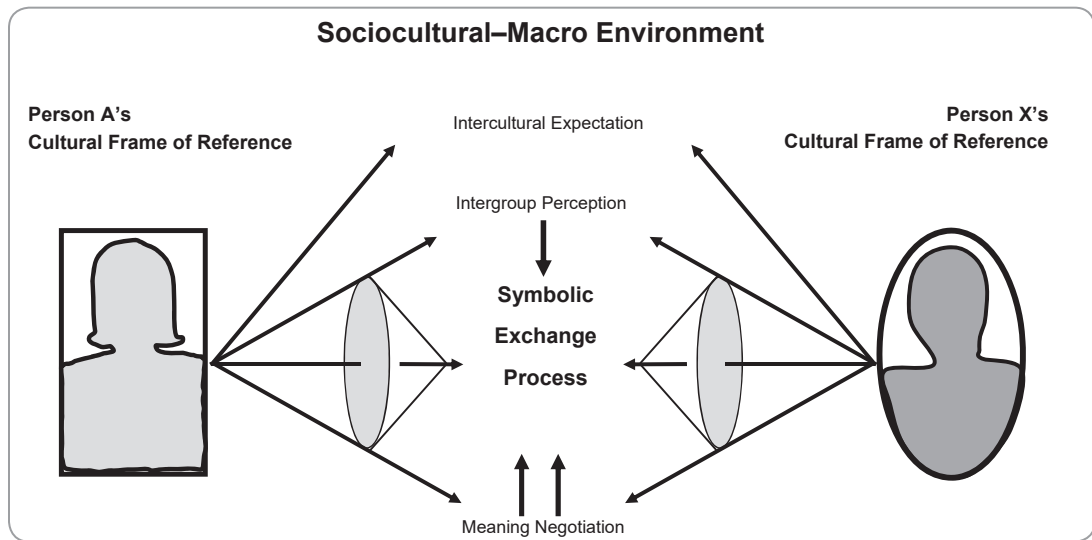


FIGURE 1.2. Intercultural communication: A transactional model.

between a digital code (e.g., the word *angry*) and its interpretation is arbitrary. The word *angry* is a digital symbol that stands for an intense, antagonistic feeling. The word itself, however, does not carry the feeling; it is people, as symbol users, who infuse the word with intense emotions. It is the same for all words, including words such as *love* and *hate*, *compassion* and *contempt*.

In comparison, analogical aspects of communication refer to the “picturesque” meanings or the affective meanings that we convey through use of nonverbal cues. Nonverbal cues are analogical because of a “resemblance” relationship between them and their meaning such as a frown and disliking something. Furthermore, while verbal cues are discrete (i.e., with clear beginning and ending sounds), nonverbal cues are continuous (i.e., different nonverbal cues flow simultaneously with no clear-cut beginning and ending) throughout the message exchange process. While verbal messages always include the use of nonverbal cues such as accents and vocal intonations, we can convey nonverbal messages independent of verbal cues such as eye contact (oculesic) and touch (haptic). As babies, we acquire or soak up the nonverbal cues from our immediate cultural environments before we actually learn our native tongue.

The second characteristic, *process*, refers to the interdependent nature of the intercultural encounter. Once two cultural strangers make contact and attempt to communicate, they enter into a mutually interdependent relationship. A Japanese businessperson may bow, and an American businessperson may be ready to shake hands. The two may also quickly reverse their nonverbal greeting rituals and adapt to each other’s behavior. This quick change of nonverbal postures, however, may cause another awkward moment of confusion. The concept of process involves the transactional and irreversible nature of communication (Barnlund, 1962; Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967).

The *transactional* nature of intercultural communication refers to the simultaneous encoding (i.e., the sender choosing the right words or nonverbal gestures to express his or her intentions) and decoding (i.e., the receiver translating the words or nonverbal cues into comprehensible meanings) of the exchanged messages. When the decoding process of the receiver matches the encoding process of the sender, the receiver and sender of the message have accomplished shared content meanings effectively. Unfortunately, more often than not, intercultural encounters experience misunderstandings and second guesses because of language problems, communication style differences, and value orientation differences.

Intercultural communication is an *irreversible* process because the receiver may form different impressions even in regards to the same repeated message. Once a sender utters something to a receiver, he or she cannot repeat the same message exactly twice. The sender’s tone of voice, interaction pace, or his or her facial expression will not stay precisely the same. It is also difficult for any sender to withdraw or cancel a message once the message has been decoded. For example, if a sender makes a remark such as “I have friends who are Japs!” and then quickly attempts to withdraw the message, this attempt cannot succeed because the message has already created a damaging impact on the receiver’s decoding field. Thus, intercultural communication

process is irreversible (Barnlund, 1962). Throughout this book, we will use examples of intercultural–intergroup acquaintance relationships, business relationships, friendships, and dating relationships to illustrate various intercultural communication processes. We also encourage you to think of additional examples and questions to clarify your own understanding of important concepts that affect the intercultural communication process. By reading each chapter mindfully *and* by practicing the concepts and skills recommended in each chapter, you will uncover constructive choices and multiple pathways that lead to competent intercultural communication practice.

The third characteristic, *different cultural communities*, is defined as a broad concept. A cultural community refers to a group of interacting individuals within a bounded unit who uphold a set of shared traditions and way of life. This unit can refer to a geographic locale with clear-cut boundaries such as a nation. This unit can also refer to a set of shared beliefs and values that are subscribed to by a group of individuals who perceive themselves as united even if they are dispersed physically. An example would be diasporic communities around the world who feel a sense of belonging and identification with their respective heritage cultures (such as religion, language, and lifestyles) but do not reside in the same space or even the same time zone.

Broadly interpreted, a cultural community can refer to a national cultural group, an ethnic group, or a gender group. It is, simultaneously, a group-level construct (i.e., a patterned way of living) and an individual's subjective sense of membership in or affiliation with a group. The term "culture" is used here as a frame of reference or knowledge system that a large group of interacting individuals share within a perceived bounded unit. The "objective" boundaries of a culture may or may not coincide with its national or political boundaries. The term can also be used on a specific level to refer to a patterned way of living by an ethnocultural group (i.e., an ethnic group within a culture).

The fourth characteristic, *negotiate shared meanings*, refers to the general goal of any intercultural communication encounter. In intercultural business negotiations or intercultural romantic relationships, our first level of concern is that we want our messages to be understood. When the interpretation of the meaning of the message overlaps significantly with the intention of the meaning of the message, we have established a high level of shared meanings in the communication process. The word *negotiate* connotes the creative give-and-take nature of the fluid process of human communication. For example, if both communicators are using the same language to communicate, they may ask each other to define and clarify any part of the exchanged message that they perceive to be unclear or ambiguous. Every verbal and/or nonverbal message contains multiple layers of meanings. The three layers of meaning that are critical to our understanding of how people express themselves in a communication process are content meaning, identity meaning, and relational meaning.

Content meaning refers to the factual (or digital) information that is being conveyed to the receiver through an oral channel or other communication medium. When the intended content meaning of the sender has been accurately decoded by the receiver, the communicators have established a level of mutually shared content meanings.

Content meaning is usually tied to substantive discussion or issues (e.g., business contract details) with verifiable, factual overtones (i.e., “Did you or did you not say that?”). It also involves what is appropriate to say in a particular cultural scene. For example, in many Asian cultures, it is impolite to say “no” directly to a request. Thus, people from Asian backgrounds will tend to use qualifying statements such as “I agree with you in principle, however . . .” and “Maybe if I finish studying and if you still want to borrow my lecture notes . . .” to imply a “no” or “maybe” answer. In most encounters, people more often operate by negotiation of content meaning than by negotiation of identity or relational meaning. Intercultural communication is not only about what is said (the content), but also about how we say what we say (metacommunication or relational communication). Although content meaning is easy to “fix,” it is the intricate layers of identity and relational meaning that carry powerful information about our “selves” and about the relationship (see Chapters 2, 7, and 8).

Identity meaning refers to the following questions: “Who am I, and who are you in this interaction episode?”; “Do I define myself as an individual or a social group member in this interaction scene?”; “Do I define you as an individual or social group member in this interaction scene?” (Hocker & Wilmot, 2018; Tajfel, 1978). Identity meaning involves issues such as the display of respect or rejection or inclusion and exclusion and is thus much more subtle than overt, content meaning. Decoders typically infer identity meanings through the speaker’s tone of voice, nonverbal nuances, different facial expressions, selective word choices, and perceived physical traits (e.g., skin color). The statement “Tomoko, come over here!” can be rephrased as “Ms. Sueda, when you have a minute, I would really like to talk to you” or “Ms. Sueda, don’t you understand my English? I need to talk to you right now!” or “Dr. Sueda, please, when you have some time, I would really appreciate hearing your advice on this.” These different statements indicate different shades of respect and politeness accorded to the addressee.

The verbal and nonverbal cues, the interaction styles, and the salient identities of the communicators are part of the identity meaning construction and negotiation process. Identity is a composite self-conception that encompasses different facets of self, such as culture, ethnicity, gender, and personality issues. This important theme is further explored in the discussion of integrative identity negotiation theory in Chapter 2.

Relational meaning offers information concerning the state of the relationship between the two communicators. Relational meanings are inferred via nonverbal intonations, body movements, or gestures that accompany the verbal content level (Watzlawick et al., 1967). It conveys both power distance (i.e., equal–unequal) meanings and relational distance (e.g., personal–impersonal) meanings. For example, the professor says, “I want to talk to you about your grade in this class,” which can be inferred as either “You’re in serious trouble” or “I’m concerned about your grade in this class—let me know how I can help you.”

On the relational level, the above phrase can be decoded with a mildly requesting tone, a strongly demanding tone, or a sincerely caring tone. It can also be decoded with compliance or with resistance. Relational meaning of the message often connotes how

the relationship between the communicators should be defined and interpreted. It is closely linked with identity meaning issues. It is also often reflective of the expected power distance dimension of the relationship.

The fifth characteristic, *an interactive situation*, refers to the interaction scene of the dyadic encounter. An interactive scene includes both the concrete features (such as the furniture or seating arrangements in a room) and psychological features (such as perceived formal–informal dimensions) of a setting. Every communication episode occurs in an interactive situation—it can be face-to-face or via mediated channel (e.g., text message). Burgoon, Buller, and Woodall (1996, p. 193) conclude that an interactive situation typically includes these gestalt components: (1) Elements of behavior (specific verbal and nonverbal communicative behaviors), (2) goals or motivations of the participants (instrumental or social goals), (3) rules of behavior (formal or informal rules), (4) different roles that people must play (role expectations), (5) the physical setting and equipment (location, artifacts, and seating arrangement), (6) cognitive concepts (the perceived social-psychological features of the situation), and (7) relevant social skills (effective goal-oriented communication skills).

The interpretations that we attach to the various components of an interactive situation are strongly influenced by the meanings we attach to these components. We acquire the meanings of these situational components through the primary socialization process within our own culture. For example, whether we define different rooms in our home environment as “public” or “private” spaces (reserved for guests or family members) can vary tremendously from one culture to the next. Furthermore, our expectations of what interaction scripts (i.e., patterns of communication or activities) and how interaction sequences should be carried out (e.g., asking a guest if she or he wants tea, coffee, or an extra bowl of rice) are highly culturally and situationally based. In essence, intergroup perceptions and intercultural expectations influence our sense making of interactions and communicative responses to each other. If the symbolic exchange process is not attended to mindfully and intentionally, minor intercultural irritations can often turn into major frustrations and conflicts in intercultural and intergroup interaction contacts.

The sixth characteristic, *intergroup perception*, refers to the process of selecting cues quickly from our social environment concerning intergroup membership issues, organizing the decoded cues into a coherent pattern and automatically labeling it as “positive” or “negative,” and subsequently interpreting it in accordance with our intergroup expectation and possibly overgeneralized stereotypic notion.

In general, human perception is typically a rapid three-step process of *selective attention*, *selective organization*, and *selective interpretation*. Each of these steps is heavily affected by our cultural conditioning process and intergroup expectancies and slim knowledge (see Chapter 9). Thus, intercultural and intergroup communication often involves varying degrees of biased perceptions such as overgeneralizations and stereotypes as well as preconceived intergroup knowledge. The term “intergroup” means viewing the person as a representation of a group membership category and deemphasizing the person’s unique attributes.

When we communicate mindlessly, we fall back on our stereotypes to reduce our guesswork and, perhaps, trying to reduce our emotional fear or vulnerable state. Although the contents of our stereotypes can be positive or negative, rigidly typecasting selective members of a cultural group into “triangles” and “squares” can perpetuate inaccurate impressions and myths. If we are unwilling to question our rigidly held stereotypes, our intergroup relationships will stay only at a superficial level of contact. Stereotyping, together with an ethnocentric attitude and a prejudiced mind-set, can often perpetuate misinterpretation spirals and intergroup conflict cycles. In this regard, being mindful of intergroup perceptual biases is vital for negotiating shared meaning in intercultural and intergroup communication.

The seventh characteristic, *intercultural expectation*, is conceptualized as a normative guideline for how individuals should or should not act in an interactive situation as derived from the larger sociocultural values and anticipations. It is about communicating appropriately or inappropriately. For example, every culture has developed some guidelines for how to say hello, how to maintain a conversation, and how to say goodbye appropriately and effectively. Every cultural community has also developed some ways of how to make an appropriate request, how to show hospitality or rejection, or how to “apologize” in a culturally responsive manner. When we encounter miscommunication in an intercultural interaction episode such as initial greetings and introduction or extending culturally based hospitality (such as offering someone tea or food and being rejected), we often experience emotional awkwardness or mild frustration that may stem, in part, from intercultural mismatched expectations, or ignorance. To prevent intercultural miscommunication, we should be mindful of how our cultural group membership factors affect, in part, our communication process on either a conscious or unconscious level. Expectation confirmation or violation often conveys our positive or negative attitudes (Burgoon & Ebesu Hubbard, 2005) through the intonations we used and the nonverbal gestures we conveyed.

Lastly, the eighth characteristic, the *sociocultural–macro environment* (or with a combination of macro–exo–meso factors), refers to the multilayered “big picture” lived environmental factors such as intergroup history, intergroup relationship climate, politics, economics, social class, formal institutions and policies, and also the community or organizational contexts that shape the process and the outcome of the actual intercultural and intergroup communication encounter. Communication accommodation theory (Gallois, Ogay, & Giles, 2005) theorizes that these sociocultural macro factors impact interpersonal and intergroup communication. Transactional human communication always takes place within an interactive situation and is subjected to the influence of the above multilayered factors.

We encourage you to think of additional examples and questions to clarify your own understanding of important concepts that affect the intercultural–intergroup communication contact’s conditions, processes, and outcomes. The next section examines the five core assumptions of the intercultural communication model to enhance your understanding of the dynamic and interlocked transactional process of intercultural and intergroup interaction.

Five Core Assumptions of Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication is viewed as a symbolic exchange and meaning negotiation process between persons of different cultural communities. The general goal of effective intercultural communication is to create shared meanings between intercultural strangers in an interactive situation in a sociocultural–macro environment. However, in Chapter 2, we argue that in addition to creating shared content meanings between two cultural communicators, we need to be mindful of the identity and relational meanings that are being expressed in an intercultural–intergroup situation. Identity support work is viewed as an essential perspective in promoting mindful intercultural communication. Mindful intercultural communication requires that we support others' desired self-images, including their preferred cultural, ethnic, gender, age, profession, ability, and unique personal identities. The following assumptions are presented to increase your understanding of the dynamic intercultural communication process.

** Assumption 1: Intercultural communication involves varying degrees of sociocultural group membership differences.* When individuals from two cultural groups communicate, both differences and similarities exist between the two individuals. Intercultural communication takes place when our sociocultural group membership factors affect our communication process on either a conscious or unconscious level.

The sociocultural membership differences can include deep-level differences such as cultural traditions, beliefs, values, and generational gaps. Concurrently, they can also include the mismatch of applying different norms, ascribed status, and interaction scripts in particular sociocultural settings. In practicing mindful intercultural communication, we need to develop an understanding of the valuable intergroup differences that exist between identity groups. Yet at the same time, we need to continuously recognize the commonalities that exist on a shared global-humanistic level that thread through idiosyncratic individuals and distinctive communities.

** Assumption 2: Intercultural communication involves the simultaneous encoding and decoding of verbal and nonverbal messages in the exchange process.* From a transactional model viewpoint, both intercultural communicators in the communication process are viewed as enacting the sender and receiver roles. Both are responsible for synchronizing their conversational process and outcome, especially in regard to communication appropriateness and effectiveness. Appropriate verbal and nonverbal message exchange processes reflect cultural sensitivity to the situational norms and expectancies of what one should or should not do in a given intercultural context. While the effective encoding and decoding process leads to shared meanings, ineffective encoding and decoding by one of the two “transceivers” can potentially lead to intercultural or intergroup misunderstanding.

Beyond the accurate encoding and decoding of messages on the content level, however, communicators need to cultivate additional awareness and sensitivity along

multiple levels (such as identity meaning and relationship meaning coordination) of intercultural and intergroup understanding. With the aim being clarity of mutual understanding, we can mindfully choose words and behaviors that make dissimilar others feel included, respected, and embraced. With synchronized meaning coordination on multiple levels, effective intercultural or intergroup task outcome can also be reached more amiably and productively.

*** Assumption 3: Many intercultural encounters involve well-meaning clashes.**

Members of different cultural communities have learned different interaction scripts in, for example, how to offer effective feedback or how to compliment someone in a particular situation. They tend to use their own cultural scripts, often on an unconscious level, to evaluate the aptness of the other person's feedback message or the timeliness or properness of the other person's verbal compliment. Many intercultural miscommunication episodes start off from well-meaning clashes (Brislin, 1993).

"Well-meaning clashes" basically refer to misunderstanding encounters in which people are "behaving properly and in a socially skilled manner *according to the norms in their own culture*" (Brislin, 1993, p. 10; emphasis in original). Unfortunately, the behaviors that are considered proper or effective in one culture can be considered improper or ineffective in another culture (e.g., using direct eye contact is considered a sign of respect in the U.S. culture, whereas direct eye contact can signify disrespect in the Thai culture). The term "well-meaning" is used because no one in the intercultural encounter intentionally behaves obnoxiously or unpleasantly. Individuals are trying to be well mannered or pleasant in accordance with the politeness norms of their own culture. Individuals behave ethnocentrically—often without conscious realization of their automatic-pilot verbal and nonverbal actions.

Competent intercultural communication starts with the practice of mindful intrapersonal communication. Concurrently mindful intrapersonal communication starts with the conscious monitoring of our own reactive-defensive emotions and ethnocentric judgmental attitude in evaluating the problematic intercultural clash. From practicing mindful intrapersonal communication, we can extend this introspective attunement and consider the other person's cultural explanatory frame, communication habit, identity complexity, and situational context.

*** Assumption 4: Intercultural communication always takes place in context.**

Intercultural communication does not happen in a vacuum. Intercultural interaction is always context bound. Patterns of thinking and behaving are always interpreted within an interactive situation or context.

In order to understand intercultural communication from a contextual viewpoint, we have to consider how different cultural value dimensions influence the symbolic exchange process between communicators in an interactive situation. Additionally, the roles of the players, the interaction goals, the scripts, the timing, and the physical/psychological features of the setting can influence the mood of the interaction. Lastly, cultural knowledge, past cultural visiting experience, and relevant application

of competent communication skills form the gestalt components of the context. In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the intercultural communication process, we have to mindfully observe the linkage among communication patterns, context, and culture.

** Assumption 5: Intercultural communication always takes place in embedded systems.* A system is an interdependent set of ingredients that constitute a whole and simultaneously influence each other. Our enculturation process (i.e., our cultural socialization process from birth) within our own culture is influenced by both macro-level and micro-level elements in our environment. On a macro level, we are programmed or enculturated into our culture via our family and educational systems, religious and political systems, and government and socioeconomic systems, as well as the paramount influence of old/new media and social media in our everyday life. On a micro level, we are surrounded by people who subscribe to similar ideologies, values, norms, and expectations. We are the recipients and also the keepers of our culture via the daily messages that we exchange. However, culture is not a static web, but a dynamic, evolutionary process. Human beings are also not static individuals—they are simultaneously societal role performers and also change agents/innovators in different historical and situational time periods.

To become mindful intercultural communicators, we have to develop fresh visions, new ways of listening to others and of dialoging, and a soulful alertness. In viewing a problematic communication situation via diverse multiple lenses, we may perceive our own routine cultural practices with fresh insights. In learning about another cultural group or dissimilar group responsively, we open more doors and pathways to experience the rich spectrum of human diversity and soak up the interconnection of distinctive individuals from the larger humanistic community.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND MINDFUL GUIDELINES

The world we live in today is tightly interdependent due to the shrinking of time and space by global economic transactions, international travels, and technological advancement. Millions of people are crossing intercultural and intergroup boundaries for a variety of reasons, including business, pleasure, study, work, and relocation. In this chapter, first we discussed five primary reasons why intercultural communication matters today. Global and domestic sociocultural diversity trends and social media connections undergird the ubiquity of intercultural interactions and the need to develop intercultural communication competence. We need to learn to suspend mindless-ethnocentric attitudes and instead adopt mindful-ethnorelative stances in crossing intergroup boundaries adroitly and elastically. Second, we defined and discussed culture and intercultural–intergroup communication. We concluded this chapter by discussing five core assumptions such as the involvement of sociocultural group membership differences and well-meaning cultural clashes in intercultural interactions.

To become competent intercultural–intergroup communicators, we present five mindful guidelines based on the chapter’s discussion:

1 We should be mindful of the tremendous sociocultural diversity that exists at both global and domestic levels. It seems unbecoming to use ethnocentric lenses to communicate with people from diverse sociocultural membership backgrounds in different cultural workplace or intimate relationship settings. We need to learn to intentionally adopt an ethnorelative mindset and flexible behavioral repertoires in communicating competently with culturally dissimilar others in this 21st-century global hyperconnective world.

2 We should also be heedful that while we may use the same social media communication channel (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter), cultural value patterns still shape our messaging expression modes, sharing/responding styles, punctuation or emoticon usage preferences, texting versus audio or visual engagement, and photo posting tastes. Furthermore, the challenge of managing multiple sociocultural membership identity, social media persona identity, and personal identity becomes more complicated as new wireless gadgets are invented on a daily basis. We need to be constantly vigilant about the negotiation of global and local identity dialectics, morphed and hybrid identity development in the social media “third space,” and the struggles between cultural–ethnic value maintenance and social media ideological value formation.

3 We also need to pay exquisite attention to the interdependent, transactional nature of the intercultural and intergroup communication process. Competent intercultural communications assume a culturally inclusive stance in making individuals from diverse identity groups feel welcomed and included through the intentional application of the knowledge blocks in this chapter and also through our own immersion cultural experiences and first-hand discoveries.

4 We need to mindfully attend to culture as a meaning system at different levels: from superficial level (e.g., pop culture) to intermediate level (e.g., symbolic meaning and norms) to deep level (e.g., traditions, beliefs, and values) to transcendental level (e.g., universal values and shared humanistic fate). We need to understand how different cultures and group memberships impact our perception, relationship, and communication with each other and how we can authentically confront intercultural–intergroup communication barriers and promote constructive, peace-building dialogues.

5 We should mindfully attune to the five core assumptions as identified in this chapter to understand the intercultural communication process better and through that understanding improve our capacity to communicate respectfully and responsively with individuals from diverse sociocultural membership backgrounds.

CRITICAL THINKING AND CONNECTIVE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways does intercultural communication matter from your personal point of view? Which of the five reasons discussed in this chapter connect to your personal experiences of intercultural communication? Select two out of the five reasons and argue for their importance.
2. Culture is a broad concept, but how do you understand it? What metaphor or image will you use to explain the concept of “culture” to a 6-year-old child? Using an iceberg metaphor of culture, find out how much you know about your own culture or cultural community at the three levels and how much you know about your dissimilar relational partner, friend, or coworker’s culture at the three levels. How does your understanding go beyond the pop culture level (superficial level)?
3. Attending to the transactional process model of intercultural communication, how do you think we can better our communication with each other in interpersonal and workplace situations using the core ideas in this model?
4. Which of the five assumptions about intercultural communication do you find most insightful and challenging in everyday intercultural–intergroup interactions?
5. Assumption 3 of intercultural communication states that “[m]any intercultural encounters involve well-meaning clashes.” Do you agree or disagree with this assumption? Can you provide some interesting intercultural misunderstanding or clash examples from your everyday life to illustrate this assumption?

CHAPTER 2

Intercultural–Intergroup Engagement

An Integrative Identity Negotiation Theory Framework

- Introduction
- Theorizing and Researching Intercultural–Intergroup Communication
 - *Functionalist/Social Scientific Paradigm*
 - *Interpretive Paradigm*
 - *Critical/Cultural Studies Paradigm*
- An Integrative Identity Negotiation Theory Framework
 - *Identity Negotiation Theory: Key Backdrop Ideas*
 - *Identity Negotiation Theory: Key Assumptions*
- Understanding Core Composite Identity Domains
 - *Sociocultural Membership Identities: Cultural Identity and Ethnic Identity*
 - *Religious/Spiritual Identity*
 - *Gender Identity*
 - *Stigmatized Group-Based Identities*
 - *Sociorelational Role Identities: Family Role and Generational Role Identities*
 - *Relational Role and Professional Role Identities*
 - *Personal Identity Attributes*
 - *Symbolic Interaction Identities*
 - *Complex Sociocultural Identity Intersection: A Summary*
- Chapter Summary and Mindful Guidelines
- Critical Thinking and Connective Application Questions

AN INTERCULTURAL JOURNEY: A CASE STORY

Three American universities accepted my undergraduate applications—one in Hawaii, one in Ohio, and one in Iowa. Because I had no clue as to how one university differed from another, I wrote down the names of the universities on three pieces of paper and

asked my then 9-year-old brother, Victor, to pick one with his eyes closed. He picked Iowa. I decided fate had called me to the University of Iowa. Iowa City, in those days, was an all-White campus town. The university campus was huge—spread out and cut off by a river running through it. I was one of the first group of international students being admitted to the university from Asia. Life was composed of a series of culture shock waves in my first few months there. From overdressing (I quickly changed my daily skirts to jeans to avoid the question “Are you going to a wedding today?”) to hyper-apprehension (e.g., the constant fear of being called upon to answer questions in the “small power distance” classroom atmosphere). I experienced intense homesickness at times. I definitely felt “different or experiencing distinctiveness” in all my years at Iowa City especially via the nonverbal stares or odd questions directed to me. There were not many Asians, let alone Chinese, in town. I encountered constant curiosity questions such as “Where are you from?” and “Who gave you the name Stella?”

Both the questions and my responses to them were equally innocent. My role was that of a Hong Kong international student. My name, Stella, came from a British teacher in my first grade school because she had a hard time pronouncing all the Chinese names (e.g., my Chinese family name is: TING Wun Chu. “Wun” denotes my generational cohort group, and “Chu” means “pearl of the family” as I’m the only daughter with three beloved brothers) in the class, so she started to point to the first row and gave each girl a name: A is Alice, B is Betty, C is Cathy, and so on, and by the time she counted to me, she said S = Stella! and thus from then on, my English-language identity became “Stella!” So yes—I’d the lived experience of the British crown colony life in Hong Kong. I even had to take a foreign language requirement (I took German) at the University of Iowa because they thought that both English and Chinese should be my mother tongues. Although honestly, while we learned textbook-English in some classes, we all reverted back to speaking Chinese (the Cantonese dialect) to our friends inside and outside the classroom. We also used only Chinese to speak to our own parents and grandparents at home.

Five years later from Iowa City, and fast forward to my PhD program studies at a top-notch university up in the northwest U.S. region. . . .

I remember one incident, in particular, in which my graduate advisor’s support was critical in encouraging me to move on. The incident was an exchange between myself and a professor when he explained why I did not receive a full-year teaching assistantship like the rest of the TAs. The exchange went something like this: “Stella, it’s not that you’re not good. It’s just that life is like a horse race. Some horses get the first prize, and others are runners-up. . . . *With your accent, it’s just very difficult for you to make it to the first place. What I’m trying to say is . . .*” My heart sank upon hearing those words. My heart was pumping fast, my face was flushed red, and I was in a daze. At that moment, I genuinely had serious doubts about whether I belonged to this very Americanized “speech” communication discipline. It was my advisor’s (Dr. Mae Bell) supportive words and her academic faith in me that held me together in those days. It was also what my husband Charles said to me that echoes still: “*Stella, you should go back and tell your professor, what happens in a real horse race is that most people bet on the wrong*

horse—they have chosen poorly.” At that point and thereafter, I continued to field questions from others such as: “Where did you come from?” “Don’t you miss your home?” The questions accentuated my sense of being “not at home.” It made me long for a “home” to settle in and an address to claim as my own.

As I sojourned onward to my first Assistant Professorship job on the East Coast at Rutgers University, I continued to encounter racial epithets (such as “Jap! Go back to your own country!” or “Chink Chang Chong! Go back to Chinatown where you belong!”) directed at me especially on off-campus streets. While those remarks typically produced a humiliating shock and numbing effect thereafter, the impact was shorter. The rebound was faster. I guess the years (by that time I had lived in the United States for 10 years and was in the process of applying for my U.S. citizenship) of living the “American Dream” made me realize that dreams can include hopes and indulgences, plus nightmares and disillusionments. My ethnic identity was “hardened”—you learn to grow a shell to protect yourself. More importantly, my “professional identity” at school and my “relational identity” at home with my husband Charles and baby son Adrian superseded any of my other identities.

—STELLA, college instructor

Introduction

Stella’s story reflects her personal academic journey in the United States—the land of immigrants—from international student to professor at American universities, at least partially fulfilling the “American Dream” that involved nightmares and success. What do you think of Stella’s personal narrative story? When you make an important decision, would you rely on your fate or destiny, or surely you would make your own choice? What do you think about her first-grade teacher naming her “Stella” without consulting her parents or even herself? What were some of the critical turning point events that you notice in the story? Stella’s story provides insights into her core composite identity domains and identity negotiation. Can you parse out Stella’s personal identity struggle and/or sociocultural membership identity struggle issues? Do you perceive that some of the similar issues still exist on and off campus? Do you resonate with any events she described in her story?

In our everyday interaction before we can introduce ourselves to each other, avowed identity (i.e., an identity you yourself claim) perceptions and ascribed identity (i.e., an identity others assign you) perceptions already define who we are. We may see ourselves as individuals (personal identity) or as social group members (social identity), or most likely as both. Concurrently, others may perceive us in either way or both. Usually in cultural strangers’ interactions, we do tend to see each other first and foremost as sociocultural identity members more so than on an interindividual level. These coordinated or misaligned identity perceptions can define and change the dynamics of our

communicative interaction in the forms of convergence and divergence interactional moves (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2014).

If both self and others perceive and relate to each other as social group members, we are engaged in an intergroup identity negotiation process. If both self and others perceive and relate to each other as individuals, we are engaged in an interpersonal identity negotiation encounter. Of course, sometimes we can have mismatched expectancies of the identity facets in which the other person is operating from. In actuality, communication shifts back and forth between intergroup and interpersonal interactions and, therefore, we need to develop communication competence to navigate between sociocultural identity interaction and personal identity interaction in various contexts and across various cultural boundaries.

Given the ubiquitous nature of the intercultural and intergroup factors that influence our communication in interpersonal and social settings, this chapter provides an integrative theorizing identity framework that is largely drawn from intercultural and intergroup communication research. First, the three paradigms of functional, interpretive, and critical research are discussed with exemplars drawn from the identity and communication research domain. Second, an extensive integrative theorizing framework is proffered to provide insights into complex identity negotiation processes in contemporary sociocultural worlds. Third, core composite identity domains such as cultural–ethnic identity, religious identity, gender identity, and stigmatized identity, and sociorelational role-based identities such as family and intergenerational role identities, intimate relationship and professional role identities are examined. In addition, distinctive personal identity and symbolic interaction identity are probed. The chapter concludes with a chapter summary and mindful guidelines.

Theorizing and Researching Intercultural–Intergroup Communication

The issue of how identities are negotiated and managed across and between sociocultural communities has been investigated by a variety of scholars using different theoretical lenses and methods. On the metatheoretical levels of studying intercultural and intergroup communication, there exist the functional/social scientific, narrative/interpretive, and critical paradigms (Gudykunst, Lee, Nishida, & Ogawa, 2005; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2011). Within each of these paradigms, there are some distinctive philosophical differences, divergent and convergent theoretical points, and methodological particularity and overlaps.

This section presents an overview of these three approaches by exploring how each defines the concepts of culture or group membership, identity, conflict communication (as illustrative examples), and conflict competence, and ends with addressing the larger research goals and methods (see Appendix A at the end of the book for an overview of the three paradigms) in the context of researching intercultural and intergroup communication phenomena.

Understanding the key features of the three paradigms is imperative. As consumers of intercultural–intergroup studies, you will thereby learn why some of the research findings emphasize overall patterns and regularities of how individuals communicate across cultures, while other studies emphasize the distinctive voices or even muted or empowering voices of a distinctive sociocultural identity group (see Baldwin, 2017).

Functional/Social Scientific Paradigm

The functional paradigm was the predominant approach to the study of intercultural–intergroup communication in the 1980s, but today it is one of the three major approaches being used in the study of intercultural and intergroup communication. From the functional/social scientific perspective, there exists an “objective reality” of culture that can be scientifically studied, explained, and measured. The overall goal of the social scientific approach is to explain and predict patterns or regularities in communication across or between cultures. The overall method relies on preestablished scientific protocols and objective criteria for research study. Often, studies also identify patterns of communication and connect these patterns to underlying cultural value dimensions.

More specifically, researchers who study intercultural or intergroup communication often use a cross-comparative cultural lens (i.e., a cross-cultural communication study) to examine a communication phenomenon (e.g., comparing conflict styles between two or three national cultures or groups). Alternatively, they may use an a priori intercultural–intergroup identity encounter lens (e.g., German in conflict communication with Russian; or intergenerational–age identity conflict encounters between young and old) to study intercultural or intergroup convergence–divergence interactional style.

Social scientists who study cross-cultural communication and intercultural communication share a number of research perspectives and methodological tools. Some exemplar theories under the functional umbrella of cross-cultural communication theorizing process are identity negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 2005a), conflict face negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 2005b), and conversational constraints theory (Kim, 2005). Some exemplar theories under the intercultural–intergroup communication umbrella are anxiety/uncertainty management theory (Gudykunst, 2005a, 2005b), communication accommodation theory (Gallois et al., 2005), identity management theory (Imahori & Cupach, 2005), and integrative communication theory (Kim, 2005).

From the social scientific point of view, individuals are socialized day in and day out in proximal space from birth to adolescence or adulthood within a value-laden cultural community. Within this period of deep cultural immersion, people soak up the underlying traditions, customs, beliefs, values, norms, and communicative scripts of their group membership community. They develop their sociocultural membership identities and, concurrently, their distinctive personal identities through active interactions with surrounding others. They also master how to behave appropriately and effectively in routinized interactions in repeated situational settings. Thus, their verbal

and nonverbal communication patterns and the underlying cultural values often influence one another.

Culture is often regarded as a priori membership in a group. Individuals who are enculturated or socialized within this group identity membership unavoidably take on some of the underlying value characteristics and communication tendencies. To this end, social scientific researchers study culture by identifying and operationalizing the variables associated with cultural patterns. The most popular social scientific perspective on culture was offered by Hofstede (1991, 2001) and is known as the cultural variability perspective (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; see also Chapter 6). For example, Hofstede's cultural variability framework included the following five value dimensions based on an aggregate cultural membership-level analysis: individualism–collectivism (the broad value tendencies of people to emphasize individual identity vs. communal identity); small/large power distance (broad value tendencies of asymmetrical power distributions, e.g., between employees and managers in a hierarchical corporate system); uncertainty avoidance (the extent to which members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations); femininity–masculinity (the extent to which a society emphasizes sex role flexibility or differentiation); and short-term versus long-term orientation (orientation toward short-term gains and immediate tangible outcomes versus traditions and long-term relationship building; Hofstede, 2001).

A key component of culture is identity. The traditional social scientific research approach tends to focus on static national identity or racial–ethnic background as the key frame of identity analysis. Thus, for example, some studies compared conflict facework styles in Japan versus those of the United States (Cocroft & Ting-Toomey, 1994), or conflict styles in African Americans versus those of European Americans (Ting-Toomey, 1986). Cultural–ethnic identities are variables that can be measured and used to predict and explain communication in a variety of settings. Contemporary social scientific research, however, has conceptualized more complex identity differentiation, such as degree of cultural–ethnic identity affiliation or social identity complexity facets (e.g., see Brewer, 2010) as they relate to conflict styles or other communication-related issues (e.g., see Ting-Toomey et al., 2000).

Overall, the social scientific perspective seeks to explain and predict the effect of culture (or cultural variables) on communication variables and communication outcomes, such as intercultural–intergroup deterioration or reconciliation. Under the intergroup theorizing umbrella, intergroup researchers (e.g., Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Stephan & Stephan, 2001) also map out specific intergroup contact conditions that can improve intergroup relations and trust-building interactions. The functional perspective also uses existing theoretical lenses to explain the interrelationship among communication phenomena such as sociocultural group membership, particular communication styles or strategies, and communicative competence or cooperation. In this manner, social scientific researchers utilize etic (as opposed to emic) approaches for studying cross-cultural and intercultural–intergroup communication. Etic approaches involve the use of an explanatory schema to explain and predict the relationship among variables under study. The researcher also positions her- or himself as an “objective”

social scientist to study culture from a scientific and outsider’s point of view. Comparatively, emic approaches emphasize an emergent-grounded view in eliciting data and first-hand stories from the participants inside a cultural community. The researcher solicits interpretive accounts or acts as an ethnographer in observing the local cultural scenes and attempts to understand culture and communication from an insider’s point of view (see the next section).

Methodologically, the two predominant methods used by most social scientific researchers are the survey questionnaire and the experimental design methods. The survey questionnaire is by far the most frequently used (e.g., Oetzel et al., 2001; Zhang, Ting-Toomey, & Oetzel, 2014). For example, Oetzel et al. (2001) surveyed 768 college students in four national cultures—China, Japan, Germany, and the United States—to analyze the conflict communication patterns of university students in managing interpersonal conflicts.

Experimental designs are the gold standard of social scientific research because of the control condition, which allows examination of causal relationships. However, culture is not a tangible variable that lends itself well to experimental manipulation; thus experimental designs are relatively rare (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2011). Researchers typically manipulate the intra or intercultural–intergroup composition of group or dyad members and collect a combination of self-report information (e.g., cultural and individual variables) as well as videotaped interactions. For example, Cai, Wilson, and Drake (2000) examined 80 U.S. and international students in a conflict negotiated task. The researchers coded their interactions for information sharing, offers, and distributive tasks and correlated the participants’ self-report questionnaires on individualism–collectivism with their behavior and negotiated outcomes.

Intergroup communication scholars also used experimental design. For example, Dorjee, Giles, and Barker (2011) investigated the relationship among Tibetan identity, language, and communication accommodation in the Indian diaspora. They used the matched-guise technique (see Lambert, 1967) to manipulate taped messages for three experimental conditions. While the speaker and his message content remained the same across the three conditions, he spoke in three different language styles: *U-Kad* or Central Tibetan dialect (for the normative condition); *Zhe-Sa* or pure honorific Tibetan (for the pro-normative condition); and mostly Hindi mixed with some Tibetan words (for the antinormative condition). The manipulation check indicated the effectiveness of the manipulation, and as predicted the individuals who were perceived as pro-normative speakers (those speaking pure honorific Tibetan) were accommodated more to than those perceived as normative (those speaking mostly Tibetan mixed with Hindi), who, in turn, were more accommodated to than those perceived as antinormative (speak Hindi) speakers.

The functional paradigm has both strengths and limitations. Theoretically, its strength lies in discovering patterns and regularities within and across cultures and the large population, such as the cultural dimensions that Hofstede (1991, 2001) originally derived or Hall’s (1976) low- and high- context communication framework. These patterns and styles have been useful in guiding thousands of intercultural and

cross-cultural communication research studies. The research findings have also guided intercultural training such as managing conflicts with more cultural sensitivity and responsiveness. On the intergroup research level, many studies have also contributed to understanding strategic communication on the perceived ingroup versus outgroup interaction level. Methodologically, its strength lies in experimentally controlling researchers' value biases in the study of their communication interests. Through well-designed experimental studies and with the aid of valid and reliable survey instruments to collect data, rigorous statistical data analysis can be performed and results can be objectively derived. These systematically tested results from a variety of quantitative data sets and also repeated tests/measures can help explain why and how people behave the way they do culturally and on an aggregate patterned level. These findings also provide knowledge predictability and applied tools to guide or train intercultural interaction competencies and help people to behave responsively in a new cultural terrain or community.

With regard to the theoretical limitations of the functional paradigm, it often uses culture as an a priori (national culture) static category and does not usually provide a deeper understanding of culture in its specificity. Moreover, most of the theories used in intercultural and cross-cultural communication research have been designed in the Western cultural context and therefore, they are Western-centric in their approach and understanding of identity, culture, and conflict management styles, for example. Indeed, a cultural reflexive inquiry process is needed when using a Western- or U.S.-centric theoretical lens in investigating cultural and communication patterns in the world at large. Otherwise, the proposed study may result in theoretical imperialism or an "imposed etic" bias. "Imposed etic" bias means that a narrow cultural perspective is applied in explaining and measuring another culture's communication phenomena. Methodologically, a systematically "derived etic" research endeavor (e.g., in translating a survey and if the survey appeared to be applicable to another cultural setting) and an astute team of bicultural and bilingual translators are needed to engage in forward translation and blind backward-translation work (Brislin, 1986). Bilingual team meetings are needed at each stage to ensure the meaning of convergent points of construct and functional equivalences of wordings, meanings, functional relevance, and relevant situational contexts between the source and target survey instruments.

Overall, when studying cultures, communication patterns, and people from around the world, intercultural and intergroup communication scholars should be more self-reflexive and mindful in the use of established Western-centric theories and measurements. To improve Western-based research studies, we need to maintain an ethnorelative-investigative attitude to learn from indigenous cultural perspectives, divergent voices, and versatile methods. We also need to seek out multiple identity group perspectives in order to make our intercultural scholarship work more inclusive, multilayered, and balanced. We strongly encourage international-interethnic research collaboration to explore new ways of doing and advancing intercultural-intergroup and cross-cultural/cross-ethnic communication research. We now turn to a discussion of

the interpretive paradigm and its overall goal, together with its theoretical and methodological emphasis.

Interpretive Paradigm

The interpretive paradigm gained increased attention in intercultural communication or *cultural communication* research in the 1980s, an interest that continues into the present. From this perspective, culture refers to the lived experiences and meaning coordination processes among individuals in a sociocultural community. There exists an “intersubjective reality” of how people coordinate and “make sense” of meanings within their co-constructed community. Within a larger national culture or co-culture, there are distinctive ways of communicating, interacting, and valuing between the co-participants of a speech community. The overall goal of the interpretive paradigm is to describe and understand the shared meaning system and situational-based system of how insiders of a sociocultural community interpret identity construction and distinctive shared communication codes as embedded within a cultural membership community (Ting-Toomey, 1984).

Interpretive researchers are interested in providing detailed descriptions or soliciting stories and meaning accounts of how an insider views culture and *in situ* cultural communication issues. As Geertz (1973) has stated: “[Culture] denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols” (p. 89). He explained that these systems of symbols are webs of significance that we have created to make sense of our lives on the meaning negotiation level. This sense-making focus lies at the heart of a variety of definitions of culture that have taken their lead from Geertz’s work. Understanding the subtle nuances and deep meanings of salient communication concepts in a cultural community is vital to interpretive research scholars. Insiders’ repeated communication vocabulary and the situated meanings they attach to symbolic motifs reflect the recurrent melodies that members of a particular speech community deem important and relevant (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2011).

Under the interpretive perspective, cultural communication theories such as speech code theory (Philipsen, 1992; Philipsen, Couta, & Covarrubias, 2005), cultural codes theory (Carbaugh, 1996), and coordinated management of meaning theory (Pearce, 2005; see also Fisher-Yoshida, 2013) have been developed. For example, Philipsen (1992) stated that culture is a “socially constructed and historically transmitted pattern of symbols, meanings, premises, and rules” (p. 7) within a speech community. A speech community refers to a group of people who share a distinctive code (linguistic features) and situated norms for expressing and interpreting communication. Drawing from the Ethnography of SPEAKING framework (i.e., S = Speech Acts; P = Participants; E = End Goals; K = Keys/nonverbal tone; I = Instrumentalities or communication channels; N = Norms/expectancy rules; G = Genre/larger speech frame; Hymes, 1972), researchers can use the ethnographic fieldwork method or participant observation method to study and analyze salient concepts such as “gossip” or “complaint,”

or “apology” or “forgiveness” speech act in a cultural community. The sense-making process of culture is recognized as something that is passed on to others over time and helps to offer those individuals a sense of communal identity and in dialectical tension with the individual identity. As noted in the interpretive description of culture, communication in the interpretive perspective consists of a variety of salient speech codes for making sense of the sociocultural world (Philipsen et al., 2005; Philipsen, 2010a, 2010b). Thus, communication performs a communal function as the critical means for linking individuals into a shared sense of collective identity-hood. In sum, communication and culture are inextricably linked, and interpretive scholars seldom attempt to separate the two concepts. For example, Carbaugh (1989) identified 50 terms for talk (i.e., communication) in six different cultural communities and compared four levels of communication—act, event, style, and function—and the salient messages within the cultural categories of speech (messages about communication, social relations, and personhood).

From the interpretive perspective, communication competence has a similar conceptualization to that of the social scientific perspective, but there is one distinction: to truly participate in a cultural community, one must know what it feels like to be an insider. Thus, competence is also the ability to feel as members do—the emotional resonance level—rather than simply the ability to communicate in appropriate and effective ways on a behavioral level. Overall, the interpretive paradigm emphasizes the importance of an insider’s lens in meaning construction and emotional resonance at multiple levels of the symbolic exchange process. Further, the specific means of performing competent communication are unique to a cultural community.

For example, Philipsen (2010a) identified, through a literature review, patterns of competent communication in several distinct communities. In “Teamsterville” (a working-class suburb of Chicago), for example, community members needed to perform a distinctive communication code that exemplified their community membership because performing appropriately and effectively in such a “neighborhood place” is important. Factors such as recognition of hierarchical relationships among men, speaking as an insider, and nonverbal physical responses to insults and threats are part of the “speaking like a man in Teamsterville” interactional ritual (Philipsen, 1992). Similarly, Covarrubias and Windchief (2009) illustrated how silence helped to perform three key functions for Native American students attending a mainstream U.S. university: maintaining traditional cultural practices, distinguishing cultural practices from those of non-Native Americans, and safekeeping cultural elements. These functions help to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships (i.e., the particular communication practice reinforces cultural identity).

Compared to the social scientific research approach, the interpretive research approach emphasizes the importance of “thick description” and drawing out “sensitizing concepts” from cultural community insiders. This approach also tends to study each speech community on its own (hence, the label *cultural communication approach*). Interpretive researchers utilize emic approaches for studying cultural communication. The researchers position themselves within the cultural system and derive competence

criteria generated by speech community insiders. However, from the critical theorist lens, insider members can be differentiated as dominant versus nondominant groups and in setting the approved communication agenda for all (see the next section). Under the interpretive research paradigm, general research topics vary, but some common topics include: (1) identifying cultural norms of communication; (2) investigating native terms and the meanings these convey; (3) examining identity construction as it relates to cultural communities; and (4) investigating intercultural couples' negotiation of cultural differences (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2011). For example, Leeds-Hurwitz (2002) studied 112 intercultural weddings—interracial, interethnic, interfaith, international, and interclass—to identify how the couples coped with cultural differences. She examined how couples simultaneously displayed different cultural identities in their wedding ceremonies. Her purpose was to describe how these diverse couples reconciled distinctive cultural identity facets and not to actually predict the factors that lead to a successful wedding negotiation outcome (the latter being a social scientific research focus).

Interpretive research methods involve different types of qualitative data collection approaches such as ethnography field studies, participant observation context studies, in-depth case studies, and semistructured interviews. Regardless of which approach is used to collect data, analysis of the data centers on interpretive frameworks such as grounded theory, the theoretically guided frame approach, ethnography of speaking, and phenomenology. In the realm of contemporary intercultural–intergroup communication research, there exist two schools of thought: using grounded theory's emergent approach or the open-ended theoretical-guided frame approach.

The advantages of grounded theory approach are as follows: it illuminates emergent communication data from the insiders' viewpoint with no preconceived, superimposed concepts; it captures insiders' relevant stories and everyday speech activities; and it connects relevant situational dynamics with insiders' system of meaning interpretations (see also Miike, 2017). The approach also has a number of disadvantages: it generates myriad grounded data, with often overloaded stimuli in an immersion field study; it encounters wide open-ended interpretation possibilities; and it takes immense time and effort to immerse oneself in a speech community to understand the situational dynamics surrounding the emergent field concepts.

Alternatively, on the positive side, the theoretically guided frame approach sets the theoretical inquiry parameter of a study; it uses core "sensitizing concepts" in a theory to guide the rationale of a study; it employs relevant theoretical concepts to design meaningful interview questions or observational protocols; and it provides theoretical design and content guidance in the data interpretation and data analysis phase. On the negative side, it superimposes communication concepts that may not be relevant to the speech community under study; it narrows the interpretive scope of an emic-derived data set; and the theoretical filter may hamper the discovery of emergent voices and sense-making accounting processes from the local experts of the cultural community, that is, the insider versus the researcher as the expert (as in the social scientific paradigm).

Like the functional paradigm, the interpretive paradigm has its strengths and limitations. Theoretically, interpretive scholars are not interested in discovering communication laws, but rather are in search of situated meaning and, overall, their work provides a deep understanding of a specific cultural community's situations and practices (e.g., distinctive communication codes or webs of significance of cultural weddings). Using an intergroup communication term, interpretive scholars do not sweep the positive distinctiveness of cultural identity under the rug of dominant culture. Rather, they tend to accentuate the cultural community's positive distinctiveness in thick description and situational analysis. Methodologically, not only do they allow indigenous voices to be heard, but these voices are privileged as insiders' voices without superimposing outsiders' ideas on them. Grounded theory analysis or thematic analysis tends to yield new and useful insights into a particular community's meaning construction of culture and its practices. They discover both commonalities and uniqueness related to a community and its members.

The interpretive research perspective also has some limitations. While, in principle, being a participant–observer seems an enticing idea, in reality gaining access to a cultural community and its cultural-specific knowledge is not easy. From an intergroup perspective, social groups regulate intergroup boundaries differently in that they do not easily admit outsiders into their tight-knit groups (especially when conducting research in a collectivistic cultural community). In some cases, the doors are closed off completely to outsiders (impermeable boundary condition). Trust is a crucial factor in gaining access, and it takes much time and resources to develop trust-based relationships between participant–researchers and research participants in many distinctive identity communities (not to mention communities that have been consistently stigmatized). Relatedly, we may ask: Can cultural outsiders decode cultural-specific meanings as accurately as cultural insiders? What does it take for cultural outsiders to be able to competently decode cultural nuances just like cultural insiders do? What and how much is lost in the translation or decoding process?

Methodologically, lack of culture-sensitive knowledge and linguistic skills will greatly affect interpretive work. For example, without competency in the Chinese language and its dialects, interpretive scholars have to rely on bilingual/bi-dialect interpreters for sense-making. That means that the interpreter's interpretation is mediating the interpretive scholar's understanding of a cultural community. To do their jobs well, interpretive researchers need sharp eyes and ears to spot cultural themes, deep listening skills to capture cultural meaning subtleties, and keen interpretation skills to render the meanings as accurately as possible and in alignment with the cultural insiders' interpretations. Even when interpretive–narrative scholarship provides deep and accurate understanding of a given ethnocultural community, its scope remains limited because that understanding (e.g., based on 5–25 cultural insiders) cannot be generalized to beyond the situated meanings on a case-by-case cultural interpretation angle. Of course, interpretive researchers are interested in deriving particularization of situated meaning rather than generalization of distinctive communication codes across contexts.

Overall, interpretive scholars are not interested in prediction but rather in discovering deep meaning within and across cultures. Their emic lens and research protocols empower research participants and privilege their voices with regard to representing and understanding their culture and its practices. To be able to derive deep understanding of a given cultural community and its members, interpretive researchers need to acquire culture-sensitive knowledge, linguistic competencies, nonverbal decoding capacities, refined listening skills, and versatile tools for data analysis. They also need to be resourceful and creative in extending the scope of their research to include a wider range of research participants from multiple strata (i.e., pending on research questions posed). They also need to use multiple interpretive methods (e.g., the ethnographic observation method together with semistructured interview method). They can start conducting more comparative interpretive studies (utilizing similarly situated contexts and similar participants' backgrounds) to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning comparisons and contrasts between key cultural motifs that are valued in respective cultural systems.

Critical/Cultural Studies Paradigm

Starting in the 1990s, a third paradigm emerged in the study of intercultural–intergroup communication: the critical/cultural studies perspective. This perspective interprets culture as a site of power struggle and contested grounds; the dominant/mainstream group wields power, and the co-culture or minority groups are viewed in the oppressed or stigmatized positions (Hall, 1986). Critical scholars also focus on the macro level of power dominance (e.g., colonial history—remember Stella's opening story on how she got her name "Stella")—through its oppressive institutional structure and existing policies in intergroup inclusion/exclusion interactions. This contrasts with the interpretive and social scientific perspective of striving for shared or coordinated meanings among cultural members—with the implicit assumption that multicultural members are on an equal-power footing of wanting to learn and understand each other's culture. To critical researchers, the starting standpoint of meaning negotiation exists on an uneven playing field, and the power resources already tip toward the dominant group—for example, in the interracial context in the United States, the European American dominant group (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2011).

Critical theorists prefer to challenge the hegemonic concept of culture in order to explore voices that have not been represented in the mainstream intercultural–intergroup communication literature (Moon, 1996; Sorrells, 2016). According to Sorrells (2016), "hegemony or domination through consent . . . is dominance without the need for force or explicit forms of coercion . . . it operates when the goals, ideas, and interests of the ruling group or class are so thoroughly normalized, institutionalized, and accepted that people consent to their own domination, subordination, and exploitation" (p. 8). Thus, culture involves the social context and structures in which power struggles and clash of meanings exist between the dominant and nondominant group forces starting on the macro level of polarized tensions.

Cultural identity also centers on issues of privilege and contextualization. When viewed from the critical theorist lens, research on cultural identity emphasizes the (lack of) power in which members of traditionally underrepresented groups find themselves in given structural oppression in the system. Critical scholars emphasize the importance of resisting mainstream perspectives of identity. Further, they emphasize the framing of context on cultural identities. The plurality of identity intersected with power is an important distinction as it represents the fact that individuals have multiple cultural identities that change and reflect the influence of context. In intercultural–intergroup relationships, this point emphasizes that relational partners have many cultural identities intersected with power and that these vary in different situations.

Communication, from the critical perspective, tends to center on discourse. Discourses are written and verbal texts that reflect a way of thinking about a subject. Discourse is a way of framing communication from the critical perspective and is linked to theoretical and analytical approaches to the study of phenomena. Some theoretical exemplars that reflect the umbrella of the critical/cultural studies paradigm are cultural identity theory (Collier, 2005), standpoint theory (Smith, 1987), muted group theory (Kramarae, 1981), and co-culture theory (Orbe & Spellers, 2005). For example, according to Orbe, Everett, and Putnam (2013), co-cultural theory is derived from the “lived experiences of a variety of ‘nondominant’ groups, including people of color, women, persons with disabilities, gays/lesbians/bisexuals, and those from a lower socioeconomic background” (p. 673). Two epistemological assumptions guided the development of the co-culture theory and research agenda: (1) multiple co-cultural group members share a similar stigmatized position that renders them marginalized and muted within a society; and (2) in order to navigate oppressive dominant forces and achieve any measure of success, co-cultural group members adopt certain strategic communication orientations and practices in their everyday interactional lives (Orbe et al., 2013, p. 673). While the co-culture theory attempts to address the identity concerns of marginalized group members generally, it has primarily studied the lived experiences of people of color in the United States. For example, organization communication researchers have utilized co-cultural theory to study the communication of different co-cultural groups based on race/ethnicity (e.g., Buzzanell, 1999; Orbe, 1998, 2011, 2012) and also how co-culture members negotiate cultural difference within and between group memberships with individuals who are perceived to be both similar and dissimilar to them.

Given the strong interest of critical studies to unmask all forms of domination and oppression as they occur in everyday lives, the ultimate goal of critical researchers is to bring awareness to the taken-for-granted oppressive structures that exist in a hierarchically loaded society. These forms of oppressive structures and contents can manifest themselves via the grounded cultural terrain of everyday practices, such as watching television, listening to music or everyday talk shows, texting, wearing brand-name clothes or clothes with slogans, tourist consumerism and impact on local culture, eating fast food or dining out (Sorrells, 2016). A further goal of critical scholars is to identify how culture is used to privilege and reinforce the power of certain groups at the expense of other groups. This focus on power/privilege and potential reform are

the distinguishing features of critical scholarship in comparison to most social scientific and interpretive research. For example, Halualani (1995) examined how the perspectives of romance reinforce patriarchal power relationships, male dominance, and female subordination in an Asian mail-order bride catalog. Thus, she called attention to the unequal power dynamics of interpersonal relationships that begin through the patriarchal-dominant and female-oppression mail-order practice.

From the critical scholars' theorizing lens, communication competence has particular meaning within the context of power relations among different cultural groups. "Distorted communication" and the unilateral power dominance viewpoint from the dominant group lens are associated with incompetent intergroup communication, "rational or unconstrained communication" exchange (i.e., communicating authentically via dialogue format) coupled with the shared power stance is associated with competent intergroup communication (Habermas, 1987). Furthermore, when viewed from the co-culture lens on conflict communication, competent conflict communication practice may include situational fluid code switching via the use of diverse conflict styles and strategies and the enactment of a fully integrated bicultural identity (e.g., in the case of biracial Black/White individuals in enacting a mixture of adaptive conflict styles with ingroup and dominant outgroup; see Hamby, 2003/2004).

Methodologically, the data collection methods of critical scholars are largely consistent with those of interpretive scholars. Critical scholars use ethnography, open-ended interviews, and case studies to collect data. The actual analytical approach of critical/cultural studies scholars is different from that of interpretive scholars because of their different research goals. Critical scholars are interested not in describing but rather in critiquing data. As a result, approaches include discourse analysis, textual analysis, and phenomenology. For example, Collier (2009) studied the discourse of female Palestinian and Israeli teens who were participants in a peace-building project. The discourse was captured through interviews with the participants, and the author then identified themes of the discourse. In general, critical discourse about culture focuses on thematic discourse units such as history, power relations, white privilege, ideology, communicative experiences of cultural processes, and communication contexts of race, gender, sexuality, class, caste, and nationality (Hall, 1986). Thus, in intercultural relationships, critical scholars attempt to flush out salient discourses that privilege certain groups and lead to imbalanced relationships and distorted communication processes. The conversational partner from the group with less privilege often has to adapt to the more privileged person to maintain the relationship rather than the other way around (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2011).

The ultimate applied goal of critical theorists is to move toward local and global social activism and level the communication playing field of power dominance and subjugation among different sociocultural identity groups in a society and on a global level. As Sorrells (2016) aptly observes: "In the context of globalization, our choices and actions are always enabled, shaped, constrained by history; relations of power; and material conditions that are inextricably linked to intercultural dimensions of culture, race, class, religion, sexual orientation, language, and nationality. Intercultural praxis,

offers us a process of critical, reflective thinking and acting and enables us to navigate the complex and challenging intercultural spaces” (p. 23).

As is true of the other two paradigms, the critical paradigm has both strengths and weaknesses. Unlike functional and interpretive standpoints, theoretically, critical scholarship tends to call for taking a stand on domination, oppression, and social injustice in society, culture, and discourses. Often, critical scholars criticize social scientific scholarship and interpretative scholarship for not addressing power and privilege and social injustice issues and taking a stand on them (e.g., Clifford Geertz’s ethnographic-interview approach to the study of Balinese cockfighting in Indonesia has been criticized for privileging the male-dominant voice and interpretive perspective to the neglect of the female voice in interpreting this illegal yet widely practiced social event; Geertz, 1973). Critical scholarship calls attention to pervasive but neglected concepts such as power, privilege, and oppression, dominance and submission, sociohistorical contextualization, marginality and muted voices. They also call for advocacy to even out the playing field for all membership groups in interpersonal relationships, workplace situations, political environment, and the media world (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2011). Methodologically, as stated earlier, they largely use the same methods as the interpretive scholars do, notably ethnography, case studies, and discourse analysis. The power–privilege–oppression lens guides critical scholars’ methodological practices.

The critical paradigm also has theoretical and methodological limitations. Theoretically, critical scholars have largely adopted the Western-centric power–privilege–oppression lens to study culture and communication practices around the world. For example, the Marxist notion of class struggle is superimposed on other cultural communities to discover power, privilege, and class struggles. It appears that their research agenda is also based on a strong a priori categorical lens to find exactly what they are looking for: that is, power, privilege, and oppression in a given society and culture. Indeed, it is rather difficult, if not impossible, to find a society or culture that is free of power imbalance, privilege, haves and have nots, and oppression. While critical scholars have criticized functional paradigm scholars for essentializing culture in the forms of cultural dimensions (e.g., individualism–collectivism and power distance), it seems they, too, have essentialized concepts such as power, privilege, oppression, and social injustice in and via their scholarship. It appears that discovering power imbalance, privilege, oppression, and social injustice is already a predetermined agenda and a conclusion. However, each concept always has a counterpart (as in the yin-yang Taoist philosophical approach) or multiple counterparts such as in examining any asymmetrical power–oppressive power relationship. We can also always find symmetrical power of collaboration and humanistic teamwork and mutual respect, inclusion, and interdependent resonance and compassion.

Methodologically, critical scholars need to be creative and think outside the box to unearth power imbalance, privilege, oppression, and social injustice in cultural communities. For this purpose, in accordance with their wish to give voice to the voiceless/muted voices, they should not impose concepts of power, privilege, and oppression on indigenous communities but rather should ask them for their understanding and

definitions of power, privilege, oppression, and multilayered situations and strategic counterresponses. They need to think about the use of holistic, facilitative, multivocal, well-balanced, and open-ended schemas to organize and present their critical analysis report so that preconceived discourse types do not become constricting categories.

Overall, critical scholarship is unique within the three paradigms in that they proffer advocacy with power imbalance, privilege, oppression, and social injustice. Indeed, societies and cultural communities must be aware of these issues and find ways to address them. However, critical scholars can also counterbalance their approach to broaden their scope of interest by conducting more detailed analyses of often neglected yet important concepts (e.g., compassion, forgiveness, and peace-building conflict resolution) and also understanding and diagnosing bottom-up (or even top-down, or both) authentic empowerment processes to offer hope and positive activism energy to the new generation of intercultural scholars and researchers. Furthermore, in the interest of improving the social world, they can connect more with the intergroup contact research literature (see Chapter 9) and also integrate issues of intergroup prejudice reduction with positive intergroup contact conditions when addressing issues of power imbalance and social injustice.

Academically, the intercultural and intergroup communication fields can move ahead constructively and productively if researchers from each paradigm can practice cultural humility and draw learning lessons and useful findings from each paradigmatic domain, while engaging in cross-fertilization of ideas and team collaboration. Having discussed the three research paradigms of functionalist/social science, humanistic/interpretive, and critical studies, we contend that each paradigm has its own meaning and rhythm much as is the case with different genres of music. While academics may at times rigidly adhere to their particular paradigm, we strongly feel that the better decision concerning which paradigm to adopt depends on the purpose of one's research, hypotheses (for the functionalist folks), meaning-centered approach (for the interpretivist scholars), or social advocacy/critique approach (for the critical studies folks), and the type of research questions being asked. If one is interested in predicting and hypothesizing about the relationships among identity, culture, and communication, one must choose the functionalist/social science paradigm and its theoretical perspective and quantitative methodology. However, if one is interested in attaining a deep and unique understanding of identity, culture, situated meanings, and communication, one must follow the interpretive paradigm and its theoretical perspective and qualitative methodology. Or if one is interested in exploring power imbalance, privilege, and oppression related to identity, culture, and communication, one must follow the critical paradigm and its theoretical perspective and critical methodology.

Knowledge generated through these paradigms can also be complementary. Researchers can be innovative in their own reflexive decision, integrate different perspectives, and parallel multimethods (or the triangulation method) in their research as long as the theory–research design components do not violate the core assumptions, epistemology, and ontology of that particular theoretical application. For example, both identity negotiation theory and face negotiation theory (and different paradigmatic

scholars) have drawn much from functional and interpretive paradigms, especially on the research design and methodological data collection levels. Although we do not think one paradigm is better than the other, researchers should decide which paradigm to adopt based on their research topic, the guided theory used, the study's objectives and goals, and the research questions being addressed. To make a difference in the field, they should also mindfully consider what they consider as meaningful data to collect. Lastly, novice scholars should be well trained in all three paradigms and hold an "ethnorelative mind-set" in skillfully articulating (and even utilizing) the theories and methods of all three paradigms and then decide on the particular research contributions they would like to make, in order to advance both intercultural and intergroup communication competence research/theoretical domains forward.

An Integrative Identity Negotiation Theory Framework

An integrative theorizing effort in explaining intercultural–intergroup communication dynamics paves the first step in enhancing our awareness, knowledge, open-minded attitudes, and skills in dealing with sociocultural membership groups both adroitly and flexibly. The integrative identity negotiation theory (IINT) framework draws heavily on both the functional and interpretive paradigms in the research questions raised and the methods utilized in the last 30 years (Ting-Toomey, 1986, 1993, 1999, 2005a, 2015a; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2014, 2015).

With the accelerating identity diversity of immigrants and co-culture members operating in both heterogeneous and even homogeneous societies, identity transformation and complexity is here to stay (see Chapter 4). Co-culture members or communities, according to Orbe et al. (2013), refer to the lived experiences of a variety of "nondominant" groups, including "people of color, women, persons with disabilities, gays/lesbians/bisexuals, and those from a lower socioeconomic background" (p. 673). Furthermore, millions of international students, cultural exchange students and teachers, Peace Corps volunteers, business folks, military personnel, diplomats, humanitarian advisors, and tourists also travel to the four corners of the earth to learn, teach, perform, serve, conduct business, and simply play and enjoy (see Chapter 3).

People experience culture shock whenever they uproot themselves from a familiar setting. Experiencing culture shock is an inevitable affective occurrence for both long-term immigrants and short-term sojourners, but how they confront and manage culture shock stressors and how they communicate strategically and responsively will determine the adaptive process and outcome. Understanding the distinctive overlapping features of intercultural and intergroup communication, especially from an integrative identity negotiation theorizing framework, can pave the way to a fuller picture of helping immigrants, co-culture members, sojourners, and host nationals to communicate appropriately, effectively, and adaptively.

This section is organized in three parts. The first part introduces IINT and its key backdrop ideas. The second part delineates the IINT key assumptions. Finally, the

third part explores the notion of core composite identity, with the four identity domains of sociocultural membership identities, sociorelational role identities, personal identity attributes, and symbolic interaction identities drawn from the updated IINT-based intercultural and intergroup communication studies (see also Liu, 2017).

Identity Negotiation Theory: Key Backdrop Ideas

The updated IINT framework concerns the importance of negotiating sociocultural membership identity, sociorelational role identity, and personal identity issues in intercultural–intergroup and interpersonal communication settings via symbolic interaction exchange processes (Ting-Toomey, 1999, 2005a). The term “identity” in the IINT framework (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2015) refers to an individual’s composite cultural, ethnic, religious, gender, and stigmatized identities, as well as family and generational role identities, intimate relationship and professional role identities, and individuated personal image(s) based on self-reflection and other-ascription identity construction processes in a sociocultural world.

The IINT framework is a compound theory that draws from the work of social identity complexity theory (SICT; e.g., Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Brewer, 1991, 2010; Brewer & Miller, 1996); communication accommodation theory (CAT; e.g., Gallois et al., 2005; Giles, Reid, & Harwood, 2010); symbolic interactionism theory (SIT; e.g., McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stryker, 1981, 1991); identity negotiation theory (INT) and face negotiation theory (FNT) lenses (e.g., Ting-Toomey, 1993, 1999, 2005a, 2005b); and relational dialectics theory (RDT; e.g., Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008; Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). The framework also draws heavily on both the interpretive and functional paradigms’ intercultural–intergroup communication research studies and, concurrently, on the amplified discussions of intergroup-biased perceptual filters (see Chapter 9), intercultural–intergroup conflict challenges (see Chapter 10), and meta-ethics guideline issues (see Chapter 12). The amplified analysis of intergroup biases embraces the discussion of global/cultural social justice/injustice issues, power dynamic issues, and alliance-building and intergroup peace-building issues, which are essential concepts covered under the critical paradigm.

While SICT and CAT theorists derive their ideas from the social psychological and intergroup relations disciplines, SIT theorists draw their ideas from the sociological arena. The INT, FNT, and RDT approaches reflect theoretical, research, and applied work in the intercultural and interpersonal communication fields. Since historical study of intercultural communication is an open-boundary field based on theory and research, it seems fitting that the study of intercultural and intergroup communication processes relies on the triangulated knowledge bases of multiple academic disciplines. (For the evolutionary background history of IINT, see the review chapters and encyclopedia entries in Ting-Toomey, 2014, 2015b.)

The fine-tuned version of the original INT (Ting-Toomey, 2005a) appeared as a chapter edited by Dr. William Gudykunst (2005) in *Theorizing in Intercultural Communication* (see also Ting-Toomey, 2014, 2015b, 2017b, ICA conference paper). The most

recent version, especially covering the integrative intercultural–intergroup framework on the topic of INT-based (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2015) communication competence, appeared as a chapter edited by Annegret Hannawa and Brian Spitzberg (2015) in their *Communication Competence* monograph.

The fundamental basis of the original INT posits that individuals in all cultures desire to be competent communicators in a diverse range of interactive situations. They learn to be competent communicators within their own cultures through repeated exposure and practice. They also learn to deal with others appropriately and effectively through habitual interaction routines. According to social identity theory, two sources of identity typically influence an individual's everyday interaction: social identity and personal identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). *Social identity* can include ethnic membership, religious/spiritual, gender, family role and age, relational and professional role identity issues (to name a few examples). In contrast, *personal identity* can include any unique attributes (e.g., personality traits, personal habits and hobbies, personal dreams and wishes, and personal self-concept and self-esteem) associated with our distinctive or individuated self in relation to others.

Our awareness of these identities stems primarily from the internalization of the viewpoints of others around us. For example, when relevant others and the larger societal-multilayered environment consistently regard us in a favorable light, we tend to develop positive conceptions of ourselves. However, if they consistently view us or treat us in an unfavorable light, we tend to develop negative self-concepts. Of course, many mediating factors (e.g., individual resilience, educational upward mobility, situational opportunity) may mitigate this direct pathway connection.

In essence, the INT posits that the core processes of individuals' reflective self-conceptions are formed through symbolic communication with others (McCall & Simmons, 1978). It is through communication that we acquire our generalized views of ourselves and others, as well as particular ways of thinking about ourselves, our roles, and other's roles in different situations. The SIT further posits that we typically relate to others through two types of perception: intergroup-based versus interpersonal-based perceptions (Tajfel, 1981). In our updated IINT lens, we also consider a wider range of group membership categories in our everyday relatedness processes, for example, religious/spiritual, stigmatized, generational role, and professional role identity. In later chapters (e.g., see Chapter 4), we also discuss some strategic convergence and divergence moves that co-culture members use to change their group membership status, and we also address the emphasis on practicing the competent intergroup identity negotiation process strategically. In an intergroup-based relationship, we often tend to focus exclusively on sociocultural group membership markers or individuals' sociorelational role features. In an interpersonal-based relationship, we often attend selectively to the idiosyncratic traits or unique attributes of the particularized individuals.

In actual intercultural–intergroup encounters, however, both types of relatedness are present. Intergroup-based perceptions are salient, for example, when we experience ingroup–outgroup membership distinctions that arise from the preconditioned social stereotypic process (e.g., Black and White racial group memberships and intergroup

conflict history). Interpersonal-based perceptions are salient when we get a chance to share or find out more unique information about the person in the encountering process or information based on strong interpersonal emotional arousal or the attractiveness (or repulsiveness) factor. Both types of perception can contribute to either an astute or obtuse interaction outcome, depending on whether we use the group-based or person-based attribution and impression formation processes constructively or detrimentally.

The social identity and symbolic interaction theories both show that the process of defining a personal self is inevitably a social process. Personal identity is developed in conjunction with the evolution and reinforcement of sociocultural and sociorelational role membership. Sociocultural identity, relational role identity, and personal identity traits are acquired and developed within the larger webs of our cultural socialization process. Under the updated IINT umbrella, the broad “social identity” category is further divided into two identity membership labels: sociocultural group membership identities (e.g., master identities such as race/ethnicity, sex/gender, religious identity; Deaux & Verkuyten, 2014) and sociorelational membership identities (e.g., family/relational role or professional role identity) in order to give each identity domain its due value and attention in conjunction with analyzing different communication implications.

The metatheoretical premises underlying the intercultural–intergroup IINT state first that each individual has three core composite identity domains that they value and deem important: sociocultural membership identity, sociorelational role identity, and distinctive personal identity. Second, these intersecting identity domains are culturally and situationally primed, intrapersonally constructed, and interpersonally marked and coordinated. Third, for culturally distinctive members or co-culture members, their *core sociocultural identity domain* often includes cultural/ethnic/gender/religious distinctiveness issues. For other identity stigmatized groups, their core sociocultural group membership sets can include, but are not limited to, LGBT identity, socioeconomic class, able-bodied/disabled identity, and age, to name a few. Fourth, the other two composite identity domains—*sociocultural relational role identity* and *personal identity attributes*—can also include family/relational roles or professional roles and unique personal identity attributes. Fifth, from a developmental lifespan perspective, the tripartite composite identity domains and the associated identity features change and evolve, with shifting foreground/background weight at different developmental life stages. Sixth, all the various identity performance and expressions are conveyed via symbolic communication with others or decoded by others. These codes of conduct and practice and meaning construction processes are expressed in the *symbolic interaction identity domain* and reflect our complex sociocultural, sociorelational role, and personal-individuated selves in conjunction with particular situational expectancy norms and the larger cultural belief and value systems.

Overall, culture is the prime regulator in influencing how we attach meanings, develop labels, negotiate roles and identities, and draw boundaries in constructing others’ and our own social identities and personal selves (Rosaldo, 1984). Regardless of our degree of awareness, these identities influence our everyday behaviors. An individual’s

polygonal identity shapes her or his social cognition, affective being, behavioral tendencies, and ethical choices in particular adaptive situations. Understanding an individual's tripartite sociocultural membership identity, sociorelational role identity, and unique personal identity, together with their associated lived experiences, is an essential undertaking designed to promote quality intercultural–intergroup relatedness and connection.

Identity Negotiation Theory: Key Assumptions

The particular IINT version (Ting-Toomey, 2005a; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2015) presented here highlights five cultural boundary-crossing identity dialectical themes (identity security–vulnerability; inclusion–differentiation; predictability–unpredictability; connection–autonomy; and identity consistency–change across time) and three identity negotiation competence outcomes (i.e., the feeling of being understood, the feeling of being respected, and the feeling of being affirmatively valued and supported). The term “dialectics” in IINT refers to a tension between opposing or competing forces within a discourse communication system. It also means that whenever we communicate, we are invoking multiple systems of meaning from a contextual and positional lens. Concurrently, the term “negotiation” refers to the dynamic process of verbal and nonverbal message transaction and meaning attribution coordination between the two (or more) communicators in maintaining, threatening, or uplifting the various sociocultural group-based, role-based, or unique personal-based identity images of the other. Individuals mostly acquire their composite identity through sociocultural conditioning processes, individual lived experiences, and repeated intergroup and interpersonal interaction experiences.

The current IINT version consists of the following 10 key assumptions, which explain the antecedent, process, and outcome components of intercultural–intergroup identity-based communication competence:

1. The core dynamics of people's group membership identities (e.g., cultural and ethnic and religious/spiritual memberships, or stigmatized identities), role-based identities (e.g., family roles, or intimate relationship roles), and personal identities (e.g., unique attributes, interests, hobbies, and dreams) are formed via symbolic communication with others.
2. Individuals in all cultures or ethnic groups have the basic motivation needs for identity security, inclusion, predictability, connection, and consistency on both group-based and person-based identity levels. However, too much emotional security will lead to tight ethnocentrism, and conversely, too much emotional insecurity (or vulnerability) will lead to fear of outgroups or strangers. The same underlying principle applies to identity inclusion, predictability, connection, and consistency. Thus, an optimal range exists on the various social identity group membership and personal identity negotiation dialectical spectrums.

3. Individuals tend to experience identity emotional security in a culturally familiar environment and experience identity emotional vulnerability in a culturally unfamiliar environment.
4. Individuals tend to feel included when their desired group membership and role-based identities are positively endorsed (e.g., in positive ingroup contact situations) and experience differentiation when their desired group membership identities are stigmatized (e.g., in hostile outgroup contact situations).
5. Individuals tend to experience interaction predictability when communicating with culturally familiar others and interaction unpredictability when communicating with culturally unfamiliar others. Interaction predictability tends either to lead to further trust (i.e., within the optimal level) or to become rigid stereotyped categories (i.e., beyond the optimal level). Constant interaction unpredictability tends to lead to either mistrust or negative-valenced (or in some cases, positive-valenced) expectancy violations.
6. Individuals tend to desire interpersonal connection via meaningful close relationships (e.g., in close friendship support situations) and to experience identity autonomy when they undergo relationship separations. Meaningful intercultural–intergroup and interpersonal relationship interactions can create additional emotional security and trust in cultural strangers.
7. Individuals tend to experience identity consistency in repeated cultural routines in a familiar cultural environment and identity change (or at the extreme, identity chaos and turmoil) and transformation in a new or unfamiliar cultural environment.
8. Situational complexity dynamics intersect with salient cultural–ethnic identity notions, salient role-based identity facets, and unique personal identity qualities and shape the meanings, interpretations, and evaluations of these identity-related themes.
9. The competent identity negotiation process emphasizes the importance of integrating the necessary intercultural and intergroup identity-based knowledge, mindfulness, and interaction skills to communicate appropriately, effectively, and adaptively with culturally dissimilar others.
10. Satisfactory identity negotiation outcomes include the feeling of being understood, respected, and affirmatively valued on both the social identity group membership and personal identity level.

IINT posits that human beings in all cultures desire positive identity affirmation in a variety of communication situations. However, what constitutes the proper way to show identity affirmation and consideration varies from one cultural context to the next and one situation to the next. The IINT emphasizes particular identity domains in influencing individuals' everyday interactions. It is a meso- or middle-range theory because how immigrants/refugees or co-culture groups develop their cultural–ethnic

and personal identities in an unfamiliar environment is based on a range of macro-host national reception factors, structural–institutional support factors, and immediate situational and individual factors. The current IINT perspective also covers the importance of gender, religious/spiritual, stigmatized membership, and intergenerational identity in navigating the labyrinths of intercultural–intergroup encounter, above and beyond cultural/ethnic/racial identity issues.

In a fast-paced multiracial/multigroup identity formation society, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, generation, age, religion, and social class culture will become an increasingly integrative or fragmented focal point for identity negotiation and renegotiation. Newly arrived immigrants, refugees, minority members, biracial/multiracial individuals, and global adopted kids often need to learn to swing between the various dialectical-thematic poles adaptively and creatively in crafting their strategic identity self-presentation and in counteracting other-typecasting imposition.

Three recent research studies have provided additional evidence on the dialectical nature of identity negotiation themes and the situational nature of the enactment of particular cultural and ethnic identity features. The first study (Collie, Kindon, Liu, & Podsiadlowski, 2010) investigated the acculturation process of Assyrian women in New Zealand. It revealed the complex emotional experiences of the Assyrian women and their sense of identity attachment to Iraq, the local Assyrian community, and their adopted homeland, New Zealand. Based on 400 hours of a participatory action ethnographic research design (i.e., face-to-face interviews and focused group sessions with 60 young Assyrian women and 72 Assyrian adults), three themes emerged: (1) Iraq emerged as a beautiful place of happy memories versus a place of fear and hardship; (2) New Zealand emerged as a place of opportunities versus discrimination; and (3) New Zealand identified as a threat to the Assyrian culture. Using the INT as a major guiding framework, the researchers noted that these Assyrian women used mindful identity negotiation strategies (e.g., social identity creative strategies) to position themselves strategically to achieve an optimal connection with their families, the wider Assyrian community, and their Assyrian and non-Assyrian peers in schools. The interviewees expressed the importance of *optimal identity distinctiveness* in the interviews when asked to comment about Assyrian ethnic traditions versus the Kiwi cultural practices (e.g., how to raise their children). They were mindfully cautious in expressing their narrative viewpoints in order not to alienate the older people in their community and risk being accused of turning their back on their Assyrian ethnic heritage.

The second study (Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013) focused on examining the cultural adjustment narratives and friendship stories of 20 international students. The findings revealed three themes: a predominant upward trend or M-shaped adjustment trend; the role of cultural expectancy and personal compressed time sense in intercultural friendship development; and identity shock issues and friendship dialectics. The *upward trend* or *M-shaped trend* means that international sojourners swiftly encountered a “frustration–hostility period” in their sojourning experience before incrementally picking themselves up through a variety of socioemotional strategies (e.g., via multinational friendship formation patterns) and instrumental strategies in achieving

their degree goals and, finally, landed in a more “in sync” cultural adjustment period (see Chapter 4).

During the “frustration–hostility period,” some international student interviewees felt that U.S. American students perceived the foreign students as being too different from them and, therefore, the international students felt intergroup–interpersonal rejection. Concurrently, some of these international students also craved some particularized identity recognition process as “worthy guests” and felt that they actually had rich intercultural resources to share. For many of the interviewees, their storytelling narratives emphasized the repeated melodies of IINT along the notion of the identity dialectical struggle of *feeling being differentiated versus wanting to be included*. Unfortunately, more often than not, these international students do not perceive their “special guest status” as being validated or welcomed. In fact, in the extreme case of identity differentiation, international students often felt stigmatized or marginalized (e.g., discriminated against) in various classroom settings or shared apartment situations.

The third study (Toomey, Dorjee, & Ting-Toomey, 2013) focused on investigating the meaning construction of “bicultural identity” of Asian-Caucasian individuals and their intergroup communication strategies. The formation of the bicultural identity of Asian-Caucasian individuals was conceptualized as a multilayered, complex lived experience. Both self-perceptions and perceptions by salient others (especially in intercultural dating relationships) have a pronounced impact on the participants’ construction of bicultural identity meaning. Results indicated eight thematic patterns: bicultural construction of integrated identity; an “I–We” sense of selfhood; distinctive communication practice; feelings of being misunderstood in intergroup relationships; intergroup distance attitude/racist jokes; expectancy violations and the use of identity buffering strategies; enactment of identity segmentation strategies; and use of age-related self-identity affirmation talks to reaffirm their own bicultural identity significance. These same bicultural individuals often experienced *emotional security* and, simultaneously, *emotional vulnerability and identity fragility* in perceived intergroup identity-threat situations. They are also keenly aware of the situational and relational role cues in the social settings that prompt their own identity code-switching and frame-switching processes.

The next section explores more in depth the concept of core composite identity domains. According to the updated IINT framework, we all have primary and situational identity role sets. Some of these identity sets are ingrained and consistent across time, and others are relationally and situationally induced. The IINT also emphasizes the importance of a co-orientation view in understanding identity negotiation issues. For example, an intergroup communicator may not see her or his age identity as being salient in the workplace conversation, but others may view age identity as critical to their perceptual field. To further our discussion of identity negotiation issues, we will now turn to analysis of the four core composite identity domains: sociocultural membership identities, sociorelational identities, personal identity attributes, and symbolic interaction identities.

Understanding Core Composite Identity Domains

The core composite identity set is conceptualized as an individual’s self-definitional emphasis of salient sociocultural group membership identities, sociorelational role identities, distinctive personal identity attributes, and symbolic interaction identities that he or she holds as important and desirable, and communicatively significant (see Figure 2.1).

Echoing the iceberg model metaphor, some of these identities are quite visible or have visible markers (e.g., race, sex, age, physical disability, accents), while other identities (e.g., ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious/spiritual affiliation, mental health) can be submerged under the water and are intrapersonally constructed and socially coordinated.

Sociocultural membership identities comprise cultural/ethnic, spiritual/religious, gender, and stigmatized group-based identities, and the broad camp of sociorelational

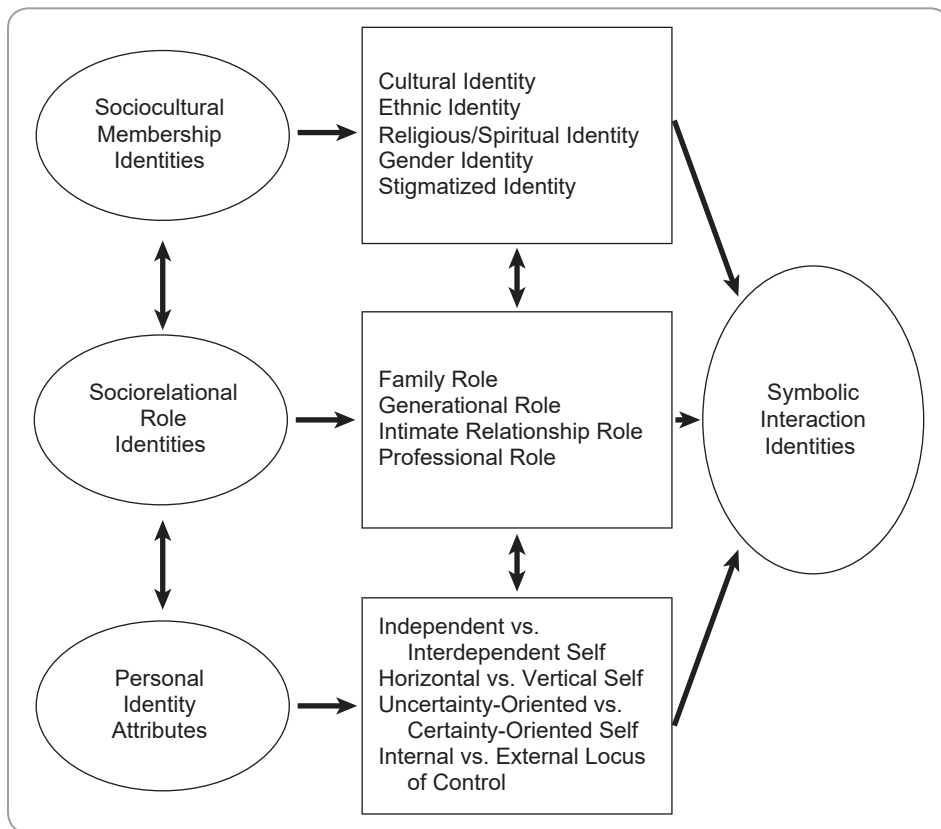


FIGURE 2.1. Integrative identity negotiation theory: Core composite identity domains.

identities includes family, generational, intimate relationship, and professional roles. The concept of “role” is a theatrical metaphor that is shaped by expectancy norms within a particular situation and between two role enactment actors in a symbolic interaction negotiation scene (Burke, 1945; Goffman, 1959; Stryker, 1987, 1991). Furthermore, under the canopy of “personal identities,” we emphasize distinctive personality attributes and some exemplars. Lastly, under the “symbolic interaction identity” domain, we emphasize the importance of conveying cultural sensitivity and interpersonal responsiveness to sociocultural group membership, the sociocultural relational role, and personal identity issues. In being aware of these various identity domains of self and others, we can begin to mindfully notice and listen to the concerns that surround a person’s identity stories in a communication episode at intercultural and intergroup levels.

Sociocultural Membership: Cultural Identity and Ethnic Identity

All individuals are socialized within a larger cultural membership group. For example, everyone born and/or raised in the United States has a sense of being an “American” (in this book, to avoid ambiguity, we use the term “U.S. American”). Our cultural identities can be so ingrained that unless we encounter major cultural differences, we may not even notice the importance of our cultural membership badges.

Individuals acquire their cultural group memberships through parental guidance and responses during their formative years. Furthermore, physical appearance, racial traits, skin color, language usage, education, mass media, peer groups, institutional policies, and self-appraisal factors all enter into constructing one’s cultural identity. The meanings and interpretations that we hold for our culture-based identity groups are learned through symbolic interaction with others.

Cultural identity, when viewed from the IINT perspective, is defined as the emotional significance that we attach to our sense of belonging or affiliation with the larger national culture. To illustrate, we can talk about the larger Brazilian cultural identity or the larger Canadian cultural identity. Salience of cultural identity refers to the strength of our affiliation with the larger culture. Strong or weak associations of membership affiliation reflect high or low cultural identity salience. The more our self-image is influenced by our cultural identity salience, the more we are likely to practice the norms and interaction scripts of our culture. The less our self-image is influenced by our cultural identity salience, the more we are likely to practice norms and scripts of our own inventions. For example, as an immigrant society, residents in the United States may mix some of the larger cultural values with those of their ethnic-oriented values and practices. In order to negotiate cultural and ethnic identities mindfully with diverse cultural–ethnic groups, we need to have an in-depth understanding of the value content and salience of cultural *and* ethnic identity issues.

Ethnic identity is “inherently a matter of *ancestry*, of beliefs about the origins of one’s forebears” (Alba, 1990, p. 37; emphasis in original). Ethnicity can be based on national origin, race, religion, or language. For many people in the United States,

ethnicity is based on the countries from which their ancestors came (e.g., those who can trace their ethnic heritage to an Asian or a Latin American country). Ethnic heritage may or may not be easily traced.

Most Native Americans—descendants of people who settled in the Western Hemisphere long before Columbus arrived, sometime between 25,000 and 40,000 years ago—can trace their ethnic heritage based on distinctive linguistic or religious practices. However, most African Americans may not be able to trace their precise ethnic origins because of the pernicious slavery codes (e.g., a slave could not marry or meet with an ex-slave; it was forbidden for anyone, including Whites, to teach slaves to read or write) and the uprootedness forced on them by slaveholders beginning in the 1600s (Schaefer, 2009). As for many European Americans, they may not be able to trace their ethnic origins precisely because of their mixed ancestral heritage. This phenomenon stems from generations of intergroup marriages (say, Irish American and French American marriages, or mixed Irish/French American and Polish American marriages, and the like) starting with the great grandparents or grandparents.

Ethnicity, of course, derives from more than the country of origin. It involves a subjective sense of belonging to or identification with an ethnic group across time. In order to understand the significance of someone's ethnicity, we also need to understand the content and salience of that person's ethnic identity in particular. For example, with knowledge of the individualism–collectivism value tendencies of the originating countries, we can infer the value contents of specific ethnic groups. Most Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Latino/a Americans, for example, who identify strongly with their traditional ethnic values, would tend to be group oriented. European Americans, who identify strongly with European values and norms (albeit on an unconscious level), would tend to be individualistic oriented. African Americans might well subscribe to both collectivistic and individualistic values—in blending both ethnic African values and assimilated U.S. values—for purposes of survival and adaptation (see Chapter 4).

Ethnic identity has both objective and subjective layers. The objective layers can include racial classifications, shared religion, or shared language. From such a layered outlook, ethnicity is an inheritance and an immutable historical fact. On the individual identification level, members who identify strongly with an ethnic group believe that they share a common history, heritage, and descent. In essence, ethnicity is, overall, more a subjective experience than an objective classification. Ethnic minority group members, in the context of intergroup relations, tend to be keenly aware and sensitive to the intersecting issues of ethnicity and national identity culture. For ethnic minority members, the perceived imbalanced power dimension and power inaccessibility dimension within a society lead them to draw clear boundaries between the dominant “powerholder” group and the nondominant “fringe” group (Orbe, 1998; Yinger, 1994).

Religious/Spiritual Identity

In many countries, especially those countries whose immigrants have dispersed and settled in different European countries, religious identity intersects with their ethnic

background to form a primary sociocultural identity packet. For example, in Germany, the largest immigrant population is of Turkish origin; in France, the largest immigrant groups are from Algeria and Morocco; and in the Netherlands, the largest groups originated from Turkey and Morocco. The majority of these immigrants belong to the Muslim religious faith (Deaux & Verkuyten, 2014).

In the United States, religious identity has been bracketed as an ethnic heritage maintenance process, and most immigrants keep their religious faith and practice in accordance with their family tradition or personal preference. After 9/11, the fear of terrorism by Muslim extremists sparked some racist incidents such as the burning of a Quran by a Florida minister and public protest over the development of an Islamic Center near the site of the World Trade Center bombings. More recently, in December 2015, in reaction to ISIS terrorist threats in Europe, a presidential frontrunner, Donald Trump, declared that “all Muslims should be banned in travelling to the U.S.,” and he also called for surveillance against all mosques and the establishment of an exclusive database for all Muslims living in the United States. This public message prompted an immediate outcry from the Obama administration: the call to ban all Muslims from traveling to the United States was seen as “contrary to our values as Americans.” The Obama administration pointed to the Bill of Rights’ protection of freedom of religion and emphasized the “extraordinary contributions Muslim Americans have made to the U.S.” (see www.CNN.com/2015/12/07). Almost immediately upon becoming president, Donald Trump signed an executive order banning travel from seven Muslim countries to the United States, leading to both controversy and legal challenges that continue to date.

The intersection of cultural national identity development, ethnic identity maintenance, and religious identity practice will only become more prominent in the intercultural–intergroup communication studies field. It will serve as a nation’s pivotal force of either fragmentation or united strength. The religious identity fragmentation can either divide immigrant and host groups into different polarized camps or unite them based on some core shared transcendental religious beliefs such as hope, forgiveness, and compassion.

Two trends have been observed with regard to the struggle for religious identity maintenance in host environments. First, immigrants tend to cherish and preserve the distinctiveness of their religious identity through unique religious practices such as religious education, seminars, rites and rituals, and gatherings. They tend to invest more effort in these practices, especially when the host environment is unfavorable to their faith (see the above examples regarding Islam) and demand that immigrants conceal their religious identity or assimilate into the dominant faith-based identity. These push and pull factors contribute to the fragmentation of religious identity in a host environment. Second, interfaith meetings and dialogues and interfaith pilgrimages and favorable host environments for promoting equal respect, tolerance, appreciation, and support of such initiatives and efforts contribute to interfaith unity and harmony. For example, the Dalai Lama, the 1989 Nobel Peace Laureate, in his teaching and meetings throughout the world, has actively promoted his view of our entire humanity as

one family and has emphasized that all religions have the same message: respect, tolerance, love, compassion, and forgiveness. In this way, he has fostered the idea of inter-religious understanding and global harmony (see www.dalailama.com).

Gender Identity

The meanings of gender terms such as “feminine” and “masculine” reflect how the larger culture or ethnic group constructs the images of females and males. While sex is a biological attribute that is determined by genetics and hormones, gender is a phenomenon learned through our primary cultural socialization process (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Wood, 1996, 1997). Whereas sex is a static concept, gender is a dynamic construct. We can learn and unlearn gender role expectations.

In short, gender identity refers to our meanings and interpretations concerning our self-images and expected other-images of “femaleness” and “maleness.” For example, in some cultures females are expected to act in a nurturing manner, to be more affective, and to play the primary caregiver role. Males in some cultures are expected to act in a competitive manner, to be more emotionally reserved, and to play the breadwinner role (see Chapter 6). The orientations toward femaleness and maleness are grounded and learned through cultural and ethnic socialization practices. As we interact with our family members, friends, and coworkers, we participate in the cultural and ethnic construction of the meaning of differentiated gender roles and communication expectancies (Wood, 1996; Wood & Fixmer-Oraiz, 2017).

Although gender difference is pervasive in our everyday lives, it is difficult to pinpoint its effect. As Wood (1996) observes insightfully, “Just as we seldom notice air and fish are unaware of water, for the most part we do not realize the myriad ways in which gender infuses our everyday lives as individuals and our collective life as a culture. This is because the meanings of gender that our [U.S.] society has constructed are normalized, making them a constant taken-for-granted background that can easily escape notice” (pp. 8–9). Our gender identities are created, in part, through communication with others. They are also supported and reinforced by existing cultural structures and practices. The gender identities we learned as children affect how we define ourselves, how we encode and decode messages, and how we develop expectations of what constitute appropriate or inappropriate sex role behavior. We can choose to behave differently or to reframe our evaluations in viewing gender-based identity performance.

Stigmatized Group-Based Identities

Identities are constructed and negotiated through symbolic interaction with others. According to an intergroup perspective, stigmatized sociocultural membership ascription and perception can lead to intergroup communication predicament. Stigmatization can be socially constructed based on ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and others. For example, since 9/11, Muslims residing in the United States

have often been stigmatized; they are frequently perceived to be terrorists or potential terrorists. At the airports or on planes, Muslims, because of their stigmatized group membership, are frequently eyed with suspicion. Even many Sikhs (Punjabis from India who believe in Guru Nanak and Sikhism, not Islam and Muhammad) have been detained at airports; based on a confused demographic profile which highlights their turbans, long beards, skin color, and loose clothing, they are misidentified as Muslims. Thus, both Muslim immigrants and their look-alike Sikh immigrants have faced prejudice and discrimination in their symbolic interaction with others in interpersonal and social settings.

All in all, dominant members of nonstigmatized social groups tend to see individuals with stigmatized identities as representative of their respective collectivity, while deindividualizing their personal identities. In other words, given the antinormative visibility of transgender individuals, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ members, dominant group members may often ascribe stigmatized social identities to them, which they relate to them accordingly. Thus, interactions in these cases are primarily intergroup in nature and present a communication predicament. One way to improve communication among dominant able-bodied heterosexuals and individuals who belong to stigmatized groups is to relate to each other interpersonally at the micro individual level, such as sharing unique life experiences and identity vulnerable stories.

Sociorelational Role Identities: Family Role and Generational Role Identities

Role identities are closely linked to the situational parameters of the intercultural–intergroup encounter. The term “role” refers to a set of expected behaviors and associated values and meanings that a culture or ethnic group defines as proper or improper, approved or disapproved, in particular situations.

Family Role Identity

People in every culture are born into a network of family relationships. First and foremost, we acquire the beliefs and values of our culture within a family system. The rules that we acquire in relating to our grandparents, parents, siblings, extended families, peers, and teachers contribute to the initial blueprint of our relational role images. For example, through our primary family socialization process, we learn to deal with boundary issues such as space and time and authority issues such as gender-based decision-making activities and power dynamics. From similar others in our own socio-cultural setting, we also acquire the scripts for emotional expressiveness or restraint, as well as for nonverbal immediacy or gestural nuances.

To illustrate the intersection among ethnic identity, gender role, and family role, in the traditional Mexican culture, child-rearing practices for socializing girls and boys

differ significantly. At the onset of adolescence, the difference between girls and boys becomes even more markedly apparent. The female is likely to remain much closer to home and to be “protected and guarded in her contact with others beyond the family. . . . The adolescent male, following the model of his father, is given much more freedom to come and go as he chooses and is encouraged to gain much worldly knowledge and experience outside the home” (Locke, 1992, p. 137). Growing up as second-generation Mexican Americans in a traditional household, adolescent males may enjoy more freedom, but adolescent females usually experience more stringent family rules and compliance expectations. Ethnic family socialization and gender role expectancy often converge, becoming part of the family system, linking family role identity images and communication practices.

Generational Role Identity

For the first time on a global scale, four distinctive identity generations (i.e., the Silent Generation: born 1929–1945; Baby Boomers: 1946–1964; Generation X: 1965–1978; and Generation Y or Millennials: 1979–1997) can be working side by side in an international office. A generation is defined as an identifiable group that shares birth years, age, location, and significant life events, as well as value patterns in the era in which they were born and raised (Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag, 2013). To illustrate, U.S. Baby Boomers, having been socialized in a prosperous postwar economy, value hard work and sacrifice, which are key to their self-image and their respect for hierarchical status relationship in the workplace. However, Generation X was the first generation to grow up in a world where the expression “more choices mean better choices” became a watchword and to adapt to complex “blended-family” dynamics. They prefer to work to live, and they generally seek more autonomy and instant self-recognition than the Baby Boomer generation. They are also skeptical of the status quo and hierarchical work relationships, and they believe they can earn interpersonal respect through personal credibility and competence. Generation Y or the Millennial generation has grown up with technology, where nearly every waking moment is dominated by social networking interactions via text messaging, instant messaging, and multiplayer games. Millennials prefer flexible work schedules but also crave supervisory role models (or mentors or “workplace parents”) and work structure. They also enjoy teamwork coupled with their own strong-willed leadership skills so that they can move things through speedily (Gursoy et al., 2013; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Millennials appear to have paradoxical needs for both a guided workplace structure and freedom and, simultaneously, teamwork and self-expressive personal leadership and autonomy.

Thus, beyond ethnic intergenerational gaps, intercultural–intergroup researchers and practitioners may also want to pay close attention to global trends showing generational cultural gaps along a longitudinal, historical period time span—especially with the demarcation of the Millennial generation versus the here-to-stay Z generation (1998–2014) in their connection to savvy social media usage as digital natives coupled with an innovative “can do” spirit, a strong sense of self-direction and purpose

with some mild hand-holding expectancy, and in the U. S. context, the most ethnically diverse and multicultural generation of all.

Relational Role and Professional Role Identities

Relational Role Identities

Beyond forming relational identities within the family and across generations, we also develop voluntary social relationships, such as love relationships and friendships. The self-conception support from intimate friends and significant others can be a powerful form of identity approval (Cupach & Metts, 1994). However, the development of an intimate relationship between persons of two contrastive cultures is a complex phenomenon. The cultural and personal expectations and definitions of “close friendship” or “intimate partner” may also vary from one culture to the next and from one person to the next. In addition, some relational partners may move quickly from culture-based group membership interaction to person-based interaction with rapid sharing, fast-paced rhythms, and self-disclosure depth. Other partners may spend a lifetime negotiating the meanings of cultural or religious identities, on the one hand, and the meanings of relational/personal identities, on the other.

For example, research indicates that many collectivists value companionate love (strong friendship intimacy and commitment) more than passionate love in romantic relationships (Gao, 1991). Some traditional collectivist cultures (e.g., India, Iran, and northern Nigeria, in which arranged marriages are still the norm) prefer to get married and then take their time to “fall in love.” In these cultures, ingroup harmony and cohesiveness are emphasized over individual needs and desires. From this particular communal-relational value system, the value of intimacy or incremental love is expressed through dedicated caregiving, doing things for one another, and long-term reciprocal loyalty and trust (Kline, Horton, & Zhang, 2008). For some collectivistic relational partners, the meaning of being *in love* takes long-term commitment and relational patience. During the intimacy development process, intercultural partners often encounter different dialectical tensions between supporting their own cultural membership practice and that of their intimate partners (see Chapter 11).

Professional Role Identities

Role expectations and identity also intertwine in the global workforce. According to Stohl, McCann, and Bakar (2013): “Globalization *creates a work context in which social identities, normative expectations, and societal institutions must continually be negotiated as they can no longer remain spatially and communicatively distinct*” (p. 731; emphasis added). Norms refer to expectations about what “should or should not” happen in an interactive situation; they govern the interpretations of workplace roles, responsibilities, accountability, and work and friendship boundary issues in the professional arena. Norms are prescriptive in nature and guided by the values and expectancy

standards of a cultural community. For example, in individualistic workplace organizations, friendship and professional relationships should be compartmentalized and clearly differentiated (e.g., in German and Swiss individualistic workplace environments). Friendship has to do with private interaction, whereas workplace relationships should be kept professional and role specialized. In some collectivistic workplace communities (e.g., in South Korea and Venezuela), close/intimate relationships and professional relationships are often commingled. Supervisors may play the benevolent big brother/big sister roles, and the employees may also cover for their bosses when workplace problems arise. Thus, friendship and professional relationships are intertwined, and there is not necessarily a clear-cut professional boundary between them. Cultural normative expectations also frame the interactional scripts of what constitute appropriate or effective behaviors in relation to one's supervisors, colleagues, or employees. However, in a global workplace, where members come from different cultural backgrounds, their cultural–ethnic or gender identities shape their expectations and preferences for the various ways in which “individuals perform their roles and related to one another . . . and various approaches to problem solving; and multiple instantiations of spatial/temporal boundaries” (Stohl et al., 2013, p. 715).

Cultural values such as individualism–collectivism and power distance (see Chapter 6) undergird the interpretations of appropriate role performance of different actors in a given intimate relationship or workplace setting. For role performance to be appropriate and effective, the actors need to internalize their role scripts for different situations and move forward strategically in order to achieve their intergroup–interpersonal communication goals. Beyond the emphasis on sociocultural memberships and/or sociorelational role identity domains, individuals can also value their personal identity attributes above and beyond the various social identity complexity categories.

Personal Identity Attributes

Beyond group membership identities, individuals develop distinctive personal identities owing to their unique life histories, experiences, and personality traits. We develop our personal identities—our conceptions of a “unique self”—through our observations of our role models and our own drives and reinventions. Personal identity is defined as the individual's sentiments and information which form personal self-images linked to her or his unique personalities, drives, goals, dreams, and values. Personal identity can have two facets: actual personal identity and desired personal identity.

On one hand, the term “actual personal identity” refers to those unique attributes that an individual exhibits frequently and that are also perceived by others (e.g., traits such as assertiveness, talkativeness, decisiveness). The labeling of such attributes may vary markedly between one's own perception and that of others (e.g., others may label the self-perception of being “decisive” as being “pushy”). The term “desired personal identity,” on the other hand, refers to the preferred attributes that an individual considers to be assets in an interaction (Cahn, 1987). The more others affirm such desired identities in the interaction, the more the person feels that he or she is being understood,

respected, and supported. The premise of the identity negotiation approach rests on the importance of supporting others' desired, salient identities more than their actual identities. Beyond actual and desired personal identity facets, we should also consider specific personality trait factors in the identity negotiation process. To differentiate trait-level analysis versus culture-level analysis, Markus and Kitayama (1991) coined the terms “independent construal of self” and “interdependent construal of self” (see Chapter 6).

“Independent-self” individuals tend to be motivated by personal goal achievements, personal assertion, and personal fairness and rewards. Comparatively, “interdependent-self” individuals tend to be motivated by group-oriented goal achievements, collective consensus, and ingroup harmony and rewards. According to past research, the independent-self pattern tends to predominate in individualistic cultures, and the interdependent-self pattern tends to predominate in collectivistic cultures (Triandis, 1995). Thus, on the one hand, on a desired identity level, independent-self individuals tend to strive for personal self-esteem validation, such as by someone acknowledging their unique attributes and distinctive competence. On the other hand, interdependent-self members strive for collective self-esteem validation through their team effort and collective group success. Moving beyond the discussion of desired personal identity validation, the intercultural research literature also presents the study of individualized personality traits such as horizontal versus vertical self (Triandis, 1995), uncertainty-oriented versus certainty-oriented personality features (Sorrentino & Roney, 2012), and internal versus external locus of control self (Rotter, 1966; Smith, Bond, & Kagitcibasi, 2006). These personal identity attributes are explored further in Chapter 6.

Symbolic Interaction Identities

All core composite identity domains are implicitly or explicitly expressed through symbolic interaction. Symbolic interaction identity refers to the verbal and nonverbal communication processes through which we acquire our reflective and desired self-images on group-based, relational role-based, and personal identity levels (Blumer, 1969; Blumstein, 1991; Mead, 1934). Through our communication with others and the viewpoints they embody and project, as well as through our understanding of the sociocultural life around us, we develop our composite self-conceptions. Symbolic interaction consists of the exchange processes of distinctive verbal and nonverbal messages that strategically express the composite self-identity, the inferred composite other-identity, the ongoing relationship itself, and the situation. Distinctive verbal and nonverbal symbolic cues serve as the emblems of our composite identities. For example, in Montreal, Francophones prefer to use French to converse, whereas Anglophones prefer to use English in their interactions. The language or dialect we use are social identity markers that reflect our group membership affiliation or a sense of membership pride and solidarity. Additionally, individuals tend to use certain styles of linguistic and nonverbal codes in relating with others to signal or minimize their group membership identity or to project their personal self-identity insignia (see Chapters 7 and 8).

Individuals in all societies use ethnic-based language and its distinctive accents, archetypal verbal interaction styles, and emblematic nonverbal movements to manage impressions, to persuade, to develop relationships, to seek approval and recognition, and to evoke and elicit their desired identity motifs. These verbal and nonverbal patterns tell others something about ourselves and how we want others to perceive us and form impression of us. In the first few minutes (and some say in 7 seconds) of interaction with cultural strangers, we form impressions of them, develop attraction or repulsion, and draw ingroup/outgroup boundaries based on respective symbolic interaction identity assessments. Thus, in order to increase the likelihood of positive interaction outcomes with unfamiliar others, we must become mindful of our own symbolic interaction process with cultural strangers and also continue to cultivate responsive interaction with our professional colleagues and close friends.

In essence, IINT posits that the core processes of individuals' reflective and desired self-conceptions—whether the emphasis is on the social identity level or the personal identity level, or both—are formed through strategic symbolic communication with others. It is through communication that we acquire our generalized views of ourselves and others, and also particular ways of thinking about ourselves, our roles, and others' roles in different situations. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, in an intergroup-based relationship, we tend to pay selective attention to sociocultural group membership markers or sociorelational role features of the individuals and, often, we draw from our preconceived stereotyped categories, which may hamper a quality intergroup rapport-building process. In an interpersonal-based relationship, we often pay focused attention to the idiosyncratic traits or attributes of the particularized individuals, and we may neglect (or minimize) the salient social identity membership or sociorelational role identity conceptions that are vital to our intergroup conversational partners. We may also experience emotional vulnerability or communication apprehension owing to our lack of requisite communication skills to discuss or disclose social identity or stigmatized membership identity issues with communicative ease or confidence.

In actual intercultural–intergroup encounters and interactions, both group-based identity and individual-based identity are manifested. Both social identity and symbolic interaction theories, as well as the current IINT theoretical lens, make it clear that the process of defining a personal self is inevitably a social process. No single individual person on Planet Earth can develop a sense of self in a vacuum. Personal identity attributes are developed in conjunction with sociocultural and sociorelational role membership maturation; sociocultural and sociocultural relational role identities also shape our personal identity conception and developmental growth. By mastering the various knowledge blocks and tools related to the formation and expression of symbolic interaction identity (e.g., see Chapters 7, 8, and 10), intergroup identity and interpersonal identity perceptions/attribution (see Chapters 9 and 11), and the cultivation of mindfulness (see Chapter 5), the deep mastery of the key premises and core identity domains of the IINT will help you to become a more elastic and dynamic intercultural and intergroup communicator in various sociocultural situations.

Complex Sociocultural Identity Intersection: A Summary

Individuals may change their conceptions of composite identities at different age brackets, at different life stages, and with different life experiences. When one facet of our self-conception encounters stress (e.g., initial cultural identity shock in an overseas assignment), other facets of our composite identity can experience the vibrations. A threat to our cultural identity can be perceived as a threat to our personal self-esteem level. For example, saying to a non-native speaker, “I don’t understand your heavy accent. How did you ever get this job in the first place?” the hearer’s cultural identity can be threatened, and simultaneously her or his personal self-esteem level can plummet. Likewise, a perceived threat directed at our personal identity level can also evoke defensive alarms in our other identity domains. For example, when someone says in a belittling tone, “Are you sure you’re competent enough to handle this job yourself?” the hearer’s personal self-esteem level can suffer, and he or she may also wonder whether the speaker is acting out of racist or sexist bias.

While some core sociocultural identities and family role identities, for example, are culturally bound and scripted to a high degree, other core identities (e.g., invisible stigmatized identities) and professional roles are vastly situational-dependent phenomena. Dependent on the configuration of the skillful conversation negotiation processes, interaction goal movements, individual wants and needs, and their roles/statuses and interaction activities in the situation, some core identities are fairly malleable and adaptive, while other identities are more entrenched, rooted, and internalized. People bring many social identities (e.g., social class, sexual orientation, age, disability and others) into an interaction. In this book, however, we emphasize the core composite identity domains as constituting the nucleus of the identity negotiation framework. Having discussed the sociocultural identity, sociorelational role identity, personal identity, and symbolic interaction identity domains, we now turn to a discussion of some mindful guidelines in promoting intercultural–intergroup communication identity awareness.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND MINDFUL GUIDELINES

In this chapter, we emphasized and discussed the identity perspective for responsive identity negotiation in intercultural–intergroup engagement settings. We started off with a discussion of the functional/social scientific, humanistic/interpretive, and critical paradigms used in intercultural and cross-cultural communication research studies. We highlighted both the strengths and limitations of each paradigm. Against this backdrop, we proffered an integrative theorizing effort to synthesize intercultural and intergroup perspectives using the updated version of IINT as an exemplar that has also drawn much from both functional and interpretive paradigms.

We discussed IINT’s key assumptions and research works guided by it. Following this discussion, we extensively discussed core composite identity domains, splitting it into four categories: sociocultural membership, sociorelational role identity, personal

identity attributes, and symbolic interaction identity. In our daily social interactions, we face both the challenges and excitements involved in managing and conducting identity negotiation work on these various identity domains: cultural identity, ethnic identity, religious/spiritual identity, gender identity, stigmatized social identity (all of these are subsumed under sociocultural membership), family role identity, intergenerational role identity, intimate-relationship role identity, workplace/professional role identity (all of these are subsumed under sociorelational role identity), and personal identity attributes. In order to manage any of these identity domains competently, mindfulness is a key connective factor (see Chapter 5) in prompting the development of identity-sensitive knowledge and also practicing culturally responsive symbolic communication with others in order to build deeper engagement with unfamiliar others and promote quality intergroup interactions. We encourage intercultural–intergroup strangers to consider the following mindful guidelines drawn from the chapter:

- 1** Be mindful of how both self and others' sociocultural membership identity, sociorelational role identity, and personal identity are influencing our intergroup perceptions, relationships, and communication dynamics in a given situation. Communication shifts between these tripartite identity management and how we pay mindful attention to these intersecting identity domains will affect the interactional process and outcome.
- 2** Be mindfully attuned to the core composite identity or a combination of the identity domains (e.g., culture identity, religious identity, and professional role identity) that is being accentuated in a social interaction and is also intentionally changing the dynamics of communication via personal identity connection (priming personal identity) and vice versa. Mindful attunement means really listening and reflecting deeply to the repeated vocabulary that your speaker is using and being more intentional in developing communication competence.
- 3** Be aware that the core composite identity domains are not fixed or static but rather are dynamic in nature; they provide both self and others a wide range of options for identity connection and identity negotiation.
- 4** By way of mindfulness, we can acquire and utilize culture-sensitive knowledge, flexible attitudes, and versatile skillsets so that we can competently negotiate intercultural–intergroup relationships, conflicts, and communication while demonstrating respect, identity affirmation and support, together with voracious curiosity to learn and appreciate each other's identity domains and cultural resources.
- 5** Researchers should be mindful of ethnocentrism with regard to each of the three paradigms and should be ethnorelative in giving at least the benefit of the doubt to a contending paradigm to provide alternative or complementary insights into intercultural and intergroup communication learning.

CRITICAL THINKING AND CONNECTIVE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Let's revisit Stella's story, which reflects her core composite identity domains and social identity complexity. Using each of the three paradigms—functional/social scientific, narrative/interpretive, and critical/social justice—what insights can you provide about Stella's identity negotiation outlook in her U.S. adjustment experience? Can you identify dialectical themes such as security–vulnerability and inclusion–exclusion in Stella's story? In what ways does identity negotiation theory enable you to understand Stella's social identity complexity or that of your own complex identity negotiation navigation?
2. Of the 10 key assumptions from the IINT, which three key assumptions resonate with you? How so and why?
3. Which identity domain is more important to you at this stage of your life: sociocultural identity, sociorelational role identity, and/or personal identity? Does your sociocultural and sociorelational role identity shape your everyday communication more so than personal identity, or vice versa? Can you offer some concrete examples?
4. What are your experiences of communicating with individuals from stigmatized group memberships such as people with disabilities?
5. If you're interested in studying the topic of "Peace Corps volunteers' intercultural adjustment process overseas," can you articulate the researcher's standpoint and emphasis from each paradigm: functionalist paradigm, interpretive paradigm, and critical paradigm? What would you be interested in theorizing and studying about?
6. Each research paradigm has its own identity and parameter. What do you think are the future trends of each paradigm? Convergence or divergence of perspectives? Argue for your point of view.

CHAPTER 3

Sojourners' Culture Shock and Intercultural Adjustment Patterns

- Introduction
- Different Types of Sojourners: Motivations and Expectations
 - *Adjustment Motivations and Expectations*
 - *International Students and Cultural Exchange Student Sojourners*
 - *Global Workplace Transferees and Global Mobility Families*
 - *Third-Culture Kids/Global Nomads*
 - *Tourists as Short-Term Sojourners*
- Culture Shock: Conceptualization and Implications
 - *Culture Shock: An ABC Model*
 - *The Pros and Cons of Culture Shock: Implications*
- Navigating Intercultural Adjustment: Underlying Factors and Models
 - *Underlying Factors*
 - *Intercultural Adjustment Models: Developmental Patterns*
- Reentry Culture Shock: Surprises and Resocialization
 - *Surprising Elements*
 - *Resocialization: Profiles of Different Returnees*
 - *Where Is Home?*
- Chapter Summary and Mindful Guidelines
- Critical Thinking and Connective Application Questions

CULTURE SHOCK: A CUP OF TEA INTERVIEW CASE STORY

My first visit abroad was to Missoula, Montana. I was a visiting Tibetan Buddhist Scholar at a small Tibetan Buddhist Center. One day Carleen, my friend, took me to Starbucks in the downtown. I had to go through an interview to get a cup of tea! I stood in the line to

order a cup of tea, and the girl at the counter asked me, "What kind of tea?" She listed a couple of teas, including herb tea that I had no clue about. She had no Lipton Tea, which I wanted, so I settled for English Breakfast Tea. I assumed she would provide milk in my tea, but she did not. So I asked for milk to which she said, "Do you want half and half, whole milk, or 2 percent?" I had never heard these choices in my life so I asked for regular milk. She looked baffled and waited for my answer. I looked at Carleen, who said half and half would be fine. I like sweet tea so I asked if I can get some sugar, and she asked me, "Would you like sweetener or this or that?" I had no idea of all these choices so I said, "Sugar, please." Finally, I sat at a table with Carleen who had gotten her coffee. When Carleen finished her coffee, the girl refilled her cup, but she did not ask me if I wanted more tea. I said, "Could you give me some more tea?" She said, "You need to pay first." I was a bit shocked and frustrated. I told Carleen that I would rather buy tea materials and make good tea for myself than go through this "tea interview and discrimination experience." We both had a good laugh. She took me to Safeway to buy tea materials, and I could enjoy my tea in peace. In India, "tea" or "chai" means black tea leaves or tea dust cooked in boiled water with real milk and sugar. Being a newbie in this strange land, I did not know all the American options for tea and milk and sugar varieties!

—TENZIN DORJEE, *college instructor*

Introduction

Millions of individuals cross cultural boundaries every year to study, to work, to engage in government service, and to volunteer their time in global humanitarian work. When individuals move from their home cultures to a new culture, they bring with them their cultural habits, familiar scripts, and interaction routines. For the most part, these home-based cultural habits may produce unintended clashes in the new culture due to dissimilarity and unfamiliarity of foreign language usage, nonverbal situational enactment, and contrastive value assumptions. If you are visiting or sojourning to a new culture for the first time, it is likely that you will experience some degree of cultural shock.

Tenzin's "Tea Interview" case story is simple, yet insightful, about his culture shock experience in Missoula, Montana. What do you think about his culture shock experience? In India, tea stalls are everywhere just like Starbucks in the United States. In India, you can simply ask for tea, and it is prepared with black tea, milk, and sugar; hardly any questions are asked about tea preference. Would you be shocked if you were given sweet-milky tea without being asked first about your preferences for tea, milk, and sugar? Tenzin grew up on a farmland with cows, and they made tea with fresh milk from their cows. He had no concept of different types of milk as found in the United States, and he probably considers 2% milk, which lacks rich, creamy taste, to be more like water than milk.

Culture shock is about the stress and the feeling of disorientation you experience in a new culture. The tropical hot weather, crowded public transportation, hustle and bustle of street life, bargaining prices of goods and services, and the need to navigate your way through alleys and backstreets can at times be overwhelming and emotionally draining. Even if you do not plan to go overseas to work in the next few years, international classmates and coworkers may be sitting right next to you—working side by side with you. Today, even social media can bring cultural shock experiences (e.g., shocking images and YouTube postings, and culturally insensitive comments) to your home or almost anywhere you are on your iPhone, laptop, and tablet.

You may also experience culture shock when you move away from home and live on your own for the first time or move from the East Coast to the West Coast of your country. You may also experience culture shock when you switch jobs or schools. By learning more in depth about your own and others' culture shock experiences, you can be better prepared for the unanticipated culture shock and up-and-down adjustment processes. In this chapter, you can acquire some culture shock vocabulary, models, and strategies to help to buffer your own or your friend's culture shock experiences and increase your cultural adroitness in dealing with an unfamiliar cultural turf. This chapter asks four questions: Who are the sojourners crossing cultural boundaries on the global level? What is culture shock? Can we track meaningful factors and patterns of the intercultural adjustment process? What are some surprises awaiting the returnees as they return home?

The chapter is developed in five sections. First, we set the background context of adjustment motivations and expectations of different types of sojourners; we also discuss some characteristics of cultural exchange college students, global workplace transferees, third-culture kids/global nomads, and tourists as short-term sojourners. Second, we address the conceptualization of the affective–behavioral–cognitive model of culture shock, and analyze the pros and cons of culture shock. Third, we explain the factors that impact the culture shock roller-coaster experience and explore two intercultural adjustment models that have intuitive appeals to many sojourners or international students who cross cultural boundaries. Fourth, we examine the surprising elements of reentry culture shock and different returnees' resocialization processes and end with the question: "Where is home?" In the last section, we summarize the key ideas in the chapter and offer a set of mindful guidelines for the sojourners to derive optimal benefits and rewards in their sojourning experiences.

Different Types of Sojourners: Motivations and Expectations

Indeed, millions of international students, cultural exchange students, and teachers, artists, scientists, and businesspeople go to the four corners of the earth to learn, teach, perform, experiment, serve, and conduct business. People experience culture shock whenever they uproot themselves from a familiar setting and move to an unfamiliar one

(e.g., relocating from Odensk, Denmark, to Shanghai, China, or making the transition as a high school senior to a college freshman). Culture shock is unavoidable, but how we manage it will determine the adaptive process and outcome. Culture shock is, first and foremost, an emotional experience. Intense emotions are involved in combination with behavioral confusion and inability to think clearly. Both short-term sojourners and long-term immigrants can experience culture shock at different stages of their adaptation.

Sojourners such as cultural exchange students, businesspersons, diplomats, Foreign Service officers, journalists, military personnel, missionaries, and Peace Corps volunteers often enact temporary resident roles with a short to medium span of stay in the new country destinations. While sojourners often refer to individuals who stay in a new culture (this can be anywhere from a 6-month to a 5-year period) and then return home (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001), *expatriates* are individuals who move to a “foreign land” and initially have no clear intention to stay but, nevertheless, stay in their foreign abodes for a much longer duration or for an unspecified period of time. Comparatively, *immigrants* are individuals who have made the commitment to move from their original homelands and intend to take up permanent residence and eventual citizenship in their adopted homelands (see Chapter 4). In this section, we discuss the general motivations and expectations of the sojourners in traveling overseas, and we also identify the profiles of the three types of sojourners: international students and cultural exchange sojourners, international workplace sojourners, and tourists.

Adjustment Motivations and Expectations

Sojourners' *motivational orientation* to leave their home countries and enter a new culture has a profound influence on their culture shock attitudes. Individuals with voluntary motivations (e.g., Peace Corps volunteers) to leave a familiar culture and enter a new cultural experience tend to manage their culture shock experience more effectively than do individuals with involuntary motivations (e.g., refugees). Furthermore, sojourners (e.g., international students, tourists) encounter less conformity pressure than do immigrants because of their temporary visiting role. Host cultures often extend a friendlier welcome to sojourners than to immigrants or refugees. Thus, sojourners tend to perceive their overall international stay as more pleasant and the local hosts as friendlier than do immigrants or refugees.

Furthermore, their motivational orientation can be understood from their success or failure in achieving an instrumental goal, a socioemotional goal, or a combination of the two. *Instrumental goals* refer to task-based or business or academic goals that sojourners would like to accomplish during their stay in a foreign country. For example, military personnel are often posted overseas for shorter “tours of duty” and have a specific mission or task-based goal to accomplish during their sojourn. *Socioemotional goals* refer to relational, recreational, and personal development goals during their sojourning experience. A tourist, for example, may seek out a socioemotional sightseeing goal and sample the local cultural scenes, people, and cuisines as their foci. A *mixed*

motivational goal orientation connotes the importance of both pursuing an instrumental goal and experiencing cultural enjoyment and a relationship rapport-building goal. Thus, a Peace Corps volunteer might take an overseas assignment for two years for instrumental service and also seek out relational/personal enrichment satisfaction. Furthermore, a businessperson with family might accept an international posting for a medium-term stay and strive to reach for the mixed motivational goal orientation. A missionary might also stay for a longer period of time in his or her new assignment and hope to satisfy both task-based and socioemotional motivational goals.

Personal expectations have long been viewed as a crucial factor in the culture shock management process. Expectations refer to the anticipatory process and predictive outcome of the upcoming situation. Two observations have often been associated with such expectations: The first is that realistic expectations facilitate intercultural adaptation, and the second is that accuracy-based positive expectations ease adaptation stress (Pitts, 2009). Individuals with realistic expectations are psychologically prepared to deal with actual adaptation problems more than are individuals with unrealistic expectations. Furthermore, individuals with positive expectations tend to create positive self-fulfilling prophecies in their successful adaptation (e.g., believing relocation is a great move as well as a positive adventure and growth experience); negative expectations (e.g., loneliness and unwelcoming hosts) tend to produce the opposite effect.

Most international students tend to carry positive expectation images concerning their anticipated sojourn in the new culture (Sias et al., 2008). Overall, realistic and positively oriented expectancy images of the new culture can help to facilitate intercultural adjustment for both business and student sojourners. Expectations influence newcomers' mind-sets, sentiments, and behaviors. A positively resilient mind-set helps to balance the negative stressors that a newcomer may encounter in her or his adaptive efforts.

International Students and Cultural Exchange Student Sojourners

According to the latest UNESCO—Institute for Statistics Report (UNESCO, 2016), about 4.1 million students worldwide have chosen to study outside their countries. The top five sending countries are China, India, France, the United States, and Saudi Arabia. The top five destination hosting countries are the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, France, and Ireland. Right now, there are approximately 975,000 international students studying in different U.S. colleges with the explicit aim of getting their college degrees here. They also bring \$24.7 billion into the U.S. economy via out-of-state tuition and living expenses.

The top five countries sending international students to the United States are China, India, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Canada (Institute of International Education, 2016). Indeed, well-over 50% of international students studying in various U.S. colleges are of collectivistic cultural backgrounds. They are also studying in the fields of business and management, engineering, and math and computer science. The top three hosting U.S. states are California, New York, and Texas.

Comparatively, there are approximately 305,000 U.S. students nationwide who embark on short-term (summer or 8-week program), midlength (one semester or 1–2 quarters), or long-term (one academic year) study abroad programs. The favorite study abroad destinations of U.S. college students are the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, France, and China (IEE, 2016). The students surveyed cited personal growth, new perspectives on world affairs, and career enhancement as some of the reasons for opting to go abroad to study. Beyond instrumental goals, international students and cultural exchange sojourners also emphasize the importance of pursuing socioemotional goals or fun activities, such as developing new friendships with the local students and hosts, visiting local marketplaces and museums, and learning about local histories, sports, and folk crafts.

Global Workplace Transferees and Global Mobility Families

With growing new global markets, the greater economic affluence of developing countries, and the accelerated demographic changes in different cultural regions, there is a high flux of global workplace transferees who move across multiple country borders. According to Gundling and Kaleel (2015), working abroad is one of the ways to develop effective global leadership skills. They identified the following as part of the transferees' international assignments: to establish a new country operation, to lead an established subsidiary, to transfer knowledge or skills, and/or to lead or complete a technical report project. They also noted contemporary global assignment trends: (1) employees from locations such as China, India, Brazil, or the Middle East relocated to headquartered countries; (2) transferees tasked with growing operations in other fast-growth markets (Africa, South and Central Asia); (3) professional workers who are transferred as skilled yet inexpensive talents to aid new workplace operations; (4) third-country assignments and traveling between multiple subsidiary locations; (5) an increased number of women assignments and dual-career assignments; and (6) the rise of short-term, frequent-traveler project assignments due to personal or family reasons and the employees cannot live abroad for a longer duration.

For those global employees who brought family members with them, Copeland (2015) observed some of the challenges and rewards awaiting them in their overseas assignments. Culture shock challenges can include the following: (1) family boundary disruption due to a sense of disconnection from their respective extended family systems; (2) a strong sense of loneliness and not knowing whom to turn to for support or being disoriented by the sudden presence of maids, nannies, drivers, and nosy neighbors; and (3) change of family roles due to the relocation process and also a change in the income status of one spouse, thereby compounding the other spouse's loss of professional identity. However, the rewards in managing culture shock as a family system include: (1) family members develop a broad, multidimensional worldview and become more socially attuned and adaptable; (2) the opportunity arises to rear bilingual or multilingual children in foreign countries and enhance their metalinguistic skills such as flexible perception and creative problem-solving outlook; and (3) the chance to become

effective intercultural bridge-builders in conflict situations and mediate misunderstandings and culture clashes with cultural sensitivity. Some of the key factors that affect a family's satisfying versus dissatisfying sojourn in another country have been identified as follows: the spouse's interest and willingness to relocate; active involvement of the spouse in planning the move; strong support for children's education overseas; a strong social network support abroad; and instrumental and socioemotional support via sound intercultural communication training for the entire family system (Copeland, 2015).

Third-Culture Kids/Global Nomads

Third-culture kids (TCKs) and global nomads (GNs) are individuals who have been raised internationally usually because of a parent's overseas occupation. Such overseas assignment occupations or professions can include international business employee kids, international education teachers' kids, diplomatic employees' kids, military kids, nongovernmental organization (NGO) employees' kids, and missionary kids. More specifically, the terms "TCKs" and "GNs" are used "interchangeably to describe people of any age or nationality who have lived a significant part of their developmental years outside their passport country(ies) because of a parent's occupation" (Schaetti, 2015, p. 798).

Developmentally, the primary socialization age range between 2 and 7 appears to be a critical period wherein the child acquires a sense of world awareness or a more fluid global identity. High mobility and the readiness for change appear to be the hallmark characteristics of TCKs or ATCKs (adult TCKs). In addition, the term "cross-cultural kids" (CCKs) has been used to describe children of intercultural-international families, such as bicultural/biracial kids or adopted kids from another culture and immigrant children. Through bicultural or multicultural immersive socialization processes, some of these children have also developed some TCKs' traits.

While TCKs and GNs have to deal with some challenging identity issues growing up (e.g., not feeling fully rooted in one place; losing friends and anchoring family members in one integrative spatial locale; and an uncertain and unpredictable home-based future), they also tend to possess the following global-minded tendencies: panoramic observational skills, a multidimensional worldview, socially astute interpersonal communication skills, and sensitive intercultural mediation skills in handling different conflict situations.

Tourists as Short-Term Sojourners

Over the past six decades, tourism has experienced rapid expansion and diversification to the tune of U.S. \$1245 billion in 2014 (United Nations World Tourist Organization—UNWTO—Annual Report 2015 (UNWTO, 2016)). Indeed, tourism and intergroup-intercultural contact has become one of the fastest and largest economic sectors in the world. Tourists are individuals who depart their normal place of residence and voluntarily visit another country or multiple countries for a short-time duration and for non-work-related purposes such as leisure, recreation, relaxation, enjoyment, and novelty

(Harris, 2015). Every year, more than one billion tourists across the globe travel to some far-flung tourist destinations to enjoy, relax, and daydream.

According to the latest United Nations World Tourist Organization (UNWTO) Report (UNWTO, 2016), international tourist arrivals grew by 4.4% in 2015 and reached a new height of an estimated 1.184 billion international tourist arrivals. The top five international tourism destinations in 2015 were France, United States, Spain, China, and Italy. China remained the top tourism source market. Chinese tourists contributed an estimated U.S. \$165 billion worldwide during their recreational sojourning experience, while U.S. tourists spent an estimated \$111 billion and German tourists around \$92 billion.

Most tourists usually do have a fun-filled, relaxed time during their trips, especially when their socioemotional goals of enjoying a new culture and sampling different local scenes have been met. However, when unpredictable events occur in an unfamiliar culture, such as theft of one's passport, or a sudden health issue, the negative expectancy violations may jolt the visiting tourist from a leisurely mood to a defensive–ethnocentric posture. Ward and Berno (2011), in a unique tourism survey ($N = 663$ research participants), conducted a research project that focused on the reactions of two host countries to tourism. Using integrated threat theory as an explanatory framework, they probed the intergroup perceptions and attitudes of the host residents (i.e., Fijians and New Zealanders) toward incoming tourists. They found that while the Fijians were receptive to tourists in high-density tourism areas with regard to relative economic benefits, they showed ambivalence on the personal contact satisfaction criterion. With respect to the intergroup contact hypothesis, the more the New Zealand residents had positive contacts with the incoming tourists interpersonally, the more their negative stereotypes diminished and their positive attitudes toward the influx of visitors increased. In the give-and-take of the intercultural adjustment process, both visitors and host nationals also seem to experience some form of culture shock, as well as “identity defensiveness” based on perceived unfamiliarity, dissimilarity, and cultural and intergroup attitudinal distance.

Culture Shock: Conceptualization and Implications

An anthropologist named Kalervo Oberg (1960) coined the term “culture shock” over five decades ago. He believed that culture shock produces an identity disorientation state, which can bring about tremendous stress and pressure on an individual's well-being. Culture shock involves (1) a sense of identity loss and identity deprivation with regard to values, status, profession, friends, and possessions; (2) identity strain as a result of the effort required to make necessary psychological adaptations; (3) identity rejection by members of the new culture; (4) identity confusion, especially regarding role ambiguity and unpredictability; and (5) identity powerlessness as a result of an inability to cope with the new environment (Furnham, 1988). An identity disorientation state and a sense of isolated vulnerability (in accordance with the integrative INT; see Chapter 2) is part of the culture shock experience.

Culture shock basically refers to a stressful transitional period that occurs when individuals move from a familiar to an unfamiliar environment for a short, medium, or long-term duration. In this unfamiliar cultural environment, the individual's identity appears to be stripped of all protection. Previously familiar cues and scripts are suddenly inoperable in the new cultural setting. In this regard, Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001) discuss the *ABCs of culture shock* in terms of affective, behavioral, and cognitive disorientation dimensions.

Culture Shock: An ABC Model

According to Ward (2015; Ward et al., 2001), culture shock and its accompanying intercultural adjustment process can be understood by considering the three components of the ABC (affective-behavioral-cognitive) model. *Affectively*, sojourners in the initial culture shock stage often experience anxiety, bewilderment, confusion, disorientation, and perplexity as well as an intense desire to be elsewhere. However, culture shock is viewed as a normal affective phenomenon in dealing with change and challenge in the new environment. Personality traits such as emotional stability and socioemotional outreach skills such as developing close social network support may help to moderate such initial strains and stress (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2013). *Behaviorally*, sojourners are at the confusion stage in terms of the conventions, norms, and rules that guide communication appropriateness and effectiveness. They are often at a loss in terms of how to initiate and maintain smooth conversations with their hosts and how to conduct themselves properly with correct nonverbal cadences. Sojourners at this stage need to master culture-specific communication skills to operate appropriately and effectively in the new cultural arena. *Cognitively*, they lack the cultural interpretive competence to explain many of the "bizarre" behaviors that are occurring in their unfamiliar cultural settings. In the opening story, Tenzin *affectively* experienced anxiety and bewilderment when confronted with a tea interview. *Behaviorally*, he did not know how to respond to the tea interview questions. *Cognitively*, he lacked the ability to make sense of different types of tea and milk. In particular, he could not understand why a tea drinker must pay for more tea but a coffee drinker could get a free refill. In his confusion over the tea versus coffee refill, he even joked with his friend Carleen concerning the meaning of the American equality principle. The sojourners now need to dig deep into the explanatory framework of value dimensions in the new cultural system and "make sense" of the wildly dissimilar behaviors with new schematic categories and understanding. This "cultural sense-making process," or the construction of "isomorphic attribution," demands an open mind-set and an ethnorelative, nonjudgmental lens. Isomorphic attribution means the capacity to come up with a similar "reasoning schema" to explain the observed problematic incident as an insider would in the new culture (Triandis, 1995).

Culture shock is sparked by the anxiety that results from losing all one's familiar signs and symbols of everyday social interaction. These signs or cues include "a thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life: when to

shake hands and what to say when we meet people, when and how to give tips” (Bochner, 1986, p. 48). We, of course, have repeated practice in these interactions in our own culture, but we are not aware of how much we take these interactions for granted until we are away from our native culture. Only when we start feeling inept in the new cultural environment and our peace of mind is suddenly shattered do we begin to realize the importance of intercultural learning and the development of intercultural competence skillsets (Berg & Paige, 2009).

The Pros and Cons of Culture Shock: Implications

Culture shock can have both positive and negative implications. The negative implications involve three major issues: (1) psychosomatic problems (e.g., headaches, stomachaches) caused by prolonged stress; (2) affective upheavals consisting of feelings of loneliness, isolation, depression, drastic mood swings, and interaction awkwardness caused by the inability to perform optimally in the new language; and (3) cognitive exhaustion caused by difficulty in making accurate attributions.

If managed effectively, however, culture shock can have positive effects, notably: (1) a sense of well-being and heightened positive self-esteem, emotional richness, and enhanced tolerance for ambiguity; (2) behavioral competence in social interaction, cognitive openness, and flexibility; and (3) increased optimism about self, others, and everyday surroundings. Culture shock creates an environment and an opportunity for individuals to experiment with new ideas and coping behaviors. It critically challenges individuals to stretch beyond the usual boundaries of thinking and experiencing.

New arrivals can defuse their perceived threat and, hence, their anxiety level by (1) increasing their motivations to learn about the new culture; (2) keeping their expectations realistic and becoming more familiar with the new culture (e.g., conducting culture-specific research through readings and diverse accurate sources, including talking with people who have spent some time in that culture); (3) increasing their linguistic fluency and learning why, how, and under what situations certain phrases or gestures are appropriate, plus understanding the core cultural values linked to specific behaviors; (4) working on their tolerance for ambiguity and other flexible personal attributes; (5) developing both strong ties (close friends) and weak ties (acquaintanceships) to manage identity stress and loneliness; and (6) being mindful of their interpersonal behaviors and suspending ethnocentric evaluations of the host culture.

Navigating Intercultural Adjustment: Underlying Factors and Models

The following factors have been found to influence why individuals manage their culture shock experience differently: cultural distance, multicultural personality trait dimensions, psychological adjustment, sociocultural adjustment, and communication competence. Being a first-time novice traveler or a seasoned globetrotter will make a

significant difference in someone's sojourning experience overseas. Furthermore, the magnitude of cultural distance may be key in shaping an individual's initial culture shock experience in the unfamiliar culture.

Underlying Factors

Sojourners tend to encounter more severe culture shock when there is a large cultural distance between their home cultures and the host society. *Cultural distance* factors can include differences in cultural values, language, verbal styles, nonverbal gestures, learning styles, decision-making approaches, and conflict negotiation styles, as well as in religious, sociopolitical, and economic systems. Interestingly, however, when sojourners expect low cultural distance (e.g., Koreans traveling to Vietnam or U.S. Americans traveling to western European countries), they may actually encounter more intercultural frustrations or cultural buzz. Because of this "assumed similarity" factor, cultural differences may be glossed over; guests may overlook the vast differences in political, business, or communication practices. They may start using biased intergroup attributions and engage in disparaging remarks about the "backwardness" or the "uncivilized manners" of their new cultural hosts. From the standpoint of perceived similarity of language/culture (e.g., the British dealing with Aussies in Australia; Colombians dealing with Mexicans in Mexico), for example, sojourners may hold on to their initial ethnocentrism in their interactions with their local country hosts. Both hosts and guests may experience increased intergroup frustrations without realizing that they are caught up in an understated culture clash spiral and that they are seeing things from their mindless, reactive ethnocentric lenses.

Sojourners can also encounter emotional frustrations and dissonances based on their *personality traits* and competence orientations. According to Leong (2007) and Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee (2002), the following five personality traits predicted competent or incompetent adjustment in international students and professionals in 11 countries: emotional stability, flexibility, open-mindedness, cultural empathy, and social initiative. Two higher-order factors emerged that grouped emotional stability and flexibility as a "stress-buffering competence" factor and open-mindedness, cultural empathy, and social initiative as a "social-perceptual competence" factor.

Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2013) explained that in the initial culture shock stage, stress-buffering traits such as emotional stability and flexible tendency can help protect newcomers against the sense of loss of control and the feeling of uncertainty in the unfamiliar culture. In subsequent developmental adjustment stages, social-perceptual competence traits such as open-mindedness, cultural empathy, and social initiative can help sojourners to acquire the new local language, construct alternative cultural meanings, enjoy everyday local scenes, and finally reach out and befriend local host nationals in a meaningful way.

In addition to the five multicultural personality traits discussed, other particular personality traits such as high tolerance for ambiguity (i.e., high acceptance of

ambiguous situations), internal locus of control (i.e., inner-directed drives and motivations), and self-efficacy mastery can contribute to generally good adjustment and positive psychological well-being. Interestingly, Ward (2004) also suggests a “cultural fit” proposition, which emphasizes the importance of a good match between personality types (e.g., extraversion and introversion) in the sojourners and host cultural norms. For example, we can speculate that independent-self sojourners may be more compatible with individualistic cultural norms, whereas interdependent-self sojourners may be more compatible with collectivistic cultural norms. On the one hand, the independent-self personality basically prioritizes personal self-interest and self-need over other-oriented interest or desire. The interdependent-self personality, on the other hand, tends to stress other-oriented or group-based interest above and beyond own self-interest and own self-need (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 1994a, 1994b). By the same token, biconstrual individuals (with a balanced self-construal of independence and interdependence self-construals) may fit well into both individualistic and collectivistic cultures. The synchronized match between a particular personality type and the larger cultural norms produces a “goodness of fit” and possibly cultivates a positive adaptive experience for the visiting residents.

In addition, Ward (2004) identified two adjustment strategies that sojourners can use to deal constructively with their new cultural milieu: psychological adjustment and sociocultural adjustment. *Psychological adjustment* refers to feelings of well-being and satisfaction during cross-cultural transitions (Ward et al., 2001). Chronic strain, low self-esteem, and low mastery have a direct effect on adjustment depression. As the cultural distance widens and the stress level increases, newcomers must use different strategies to deal with such differences.

To counteract psychological stress, researchers recommend the use of positive self-talk strategies and positive situational appraisal strategies (Chang, Chua, & Toh, 1997; Cross, 1995). Positive self-talk strategies (e.g., giving yourself a pat on the back for being adaptive in the new culture) and rewarding yourself with a nice treat (e.g., for mastering the intricacies of saying “no” in the new culture without actually using the word “no!”) are two good self-validation strategies to keep in mind. A sense of light-hearted humor in laughing at your own cultural *faux pas* or missteps and taking oneself lightly in a stressful situation can also help to create more positive momentum and enlightened energy. Constructive incremental steps in moving forward psychologically can strengthen self-confidence and personal resilience.

Positive situational appraisal strategies also involve changing perceptions and interpretations of stressful events or situations. For example, you can talk yourself into taking more Italian-speaking classes from the “seemingly mean” teacher and reframe the harsh situation from the new viewpoint that the same teacher is caring and actually helping you to master your Italian faster than the “nice” teacher. For example, in many traditional Asian cultures, such as Tibetan and Indian cultures, teachers are purposefully very strict and adopt stern looks in order to reflect their care and the seriousness of their profession’s mission to discipline their students. Research indicates that the use

of cognitive coping strategies (i.e., positive self-talk and situational reinterpretation) is associated with lower levels of perceived stress and fewer symptoms of depression in East Asian students in Singapore (Ward, 2004). Thus, cognitive reframing appears to soften the psychological stress level for East Asian students who are attempting to adapt to a new cultural environment. The nature of the stressful event and the degree of control and success that students can assert with regard to the distressing situation may explain this finding. Beyond the use of psychological adjustment strategies in the new cultural setting, individuals can also pay more attention to the sociocultural adjustment factor.

Sociocultural adjustment refers to the ability of the newcomer to fit in and execute appropriate and effective interactions in their everyday lives in a new cultural environment (Ward et al., 2001). It can include factors such as the quality or quantity of relations with host nationals and the length of residence in the host country (Gareis, 2000; Kudo & Simkin, 2003; Mortensen, Burleson, Feng, & Liu, 2009). International students, for example, report greater satisfaction with their host culture when host nationals take the initiative to befriend them. International students' friendship networks typically consist of the following: (1) a primary, monocultural friendship network that consists of close friendships with other compatriots from similar ethnic/cultural backgrounds (e.g., Nigerian international students developing friendship ties with other African students) (Brown, 2009; Matusitz, 2005); (2) a bicultural network that consists of social bonds between sojourners and host nationals, whereby professional aspirations and goals are pursued (Holmes, 2005; Lee, 2006); and (3) a multicultural network that consists of acquaintances from diverse cultural groups for recreational activities (Furnham & Bochner, 1982). Research further indicates that greater sociocultural adjustment and social support in the new cultural environment are associated with lower levels of depression and hopelessness in international students (Lee, 2006, 2008; Lin, 2006; Paige & Goode, 2009).

In heeding the call from Shuter's (2012) critique that the current literature lacks information on how different forms of new media shape the international sojourners' adjustment process, Ju, Jia, and Shoham (2016) investigated the use of new media by Chinese international students and their adjustment process in the United States. In the research study, Chinese international students completed a questionnaire about their sociocultural adaptation and logged into their diary details on how much and how they communicated with their local hosts. On average, they were found to communicate with their hosts 1 hour and 18 minutes on a daily basis via social media, including Facebook and Twitter; the majority of this time involved browsing other individuals' social statuses and interactions on Facebook and Twitter. According to Ju et al. (2016), this finding made sense because international students predominantly engaged in face-to-face interactions with the host nationals on campus and in the classrooms or during class-related activities. It is also noteworthy that all their face-to-face encounters were in the context of mandatory academic activities. However, with regard to the social media usage platform, all these online activities were voluntary (e.g., social chit-chats

and exchanges of common interests and hobbies) and were often based on anonymous, self-selective interactions. It appears that while the actual interpersonal face-to-face contact offers depth of intercultural task learning, the mediated social media channel offers a safe space for international students to pose cultural questions and to learn about their host nationals without the stress of performing and interacting in their second language, English (i.e., verbal English communication). Based on these findings, the researchers suggested that educational institutions should promote more online interactive communication opportunities and tools between the international students and host culture students, which may ease the initial culture shock stressors for the international newcomers. For longer term adjustment, it is also critical to create face-to-face contact opportunities (e.g., cultural mixers, cultural role-play fun activities, short intercultural sightseeing trips, or nature exploration) between the international students and the domestic students, enabling them to gain greater and more meaningful, in-depth knowledge about each other's culture.

Two additional research studies provided more evidence for the above research investigation. Drawing from social network theory (Bakardjieva, 2003; Marsden & Campbell, 1984), Ye (2006a) collected survey data from Chinese international college students in the United States and explored the relationship among psychological adjustment stress, interpersonal social network support, and use of online ethnic social groups. Interpersonal social networks were defined as friends and/or relatives who were living in the United States. Online ethnic social groups were conceptualized as online groups developed for people who have the same national origin and are currently living in a foreign country. Research results suggested that students who were more satisfied with their interpersonal support networks had less perceived discrimination and negative feelings caused by cultural change. Among the international students who had used online ethnic social groups, those who reported receiving higher amounts of online informational and emotional support messages from their own ethnic groups experienced lower levels of acculturative stress. As a follow-up study, Ye (2006b) conducted an online survey of Chinese students in the United States concerning their sociocultural adjustment processes. The results suggested that perceived support from interpersonal networks in the host country and from online ethnic social groups was related to less sociocultural everyday adjustment difficulties. These "weak ties" (i.e., acquaintanceship ties) provided the international students with online informational support through protective anonymity and voluntary selective interactions. With time, the international students in the host country also reported more interpersonal network support from face-to-face relational friendship circles.

Obviously, future research studies need to diversify their research sample and move beyond measuring just the Chinese international students' adjustment process in the United States and include other cultural-ethnic sojourning groups and other countries and cultural settings in their research studies. Future studies can also investigate different context domains of adjustment (e.g., the use of new media in the international workplace adjustment context or the sociocultural adjustment process of Peace Corps

volunteers) as well as associated appropriate and effective interactional strategies that are being employed in diverse settings. More longitudinal-developmental studies (or pre-, midpoint, and poststudies) to explain the relationship among psychological, socio-cultural, communicative adjustment, and levels of emotional stress and satisfaction may offer a fuller picture of the sojourners' overseas adjustment experience.

Overall, culture-specific knowledge, language fluency, more extensive contact with host nationals, and a longer period of residence in the host culture are associated with lower levels of sociocultural difficulty in the new culture (Kohls, 1996; Ward, 1996). In addition, the host culture's receptivity to new arrivals, the degree of cultural conformity expected, and the current political climate of open-door versus closed-door attitudes toward international students and visitors can also either facilitate or create roadblocks to sojourners' sociocultural adjustment process.

In the *intercultural communication competence* field, researchers have identified the following components as critical to sojourners' adjustment process (Deardorff, 2009; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009): culture-sensitive knowledge, motivation to adapt, appropriate and effective communication skills, mastery of culture-based contextual rules, and achievement of conjoint outcomes between the intercultural communicators (see Chapter 5). On the behavioral tendency skills level, intercultural competence scholars also emphasize the following attitudinal tendencies and skillset (Gudykunst, 2005a, 2005b; Pusch, 2009): mindfulness, cognitive flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, behavioral flexibility, and cross-cultural empathy. Whereas intercultural communication scholars emphasize the importance of communication competence skills and sociocultural and psychological adjustment factors, cross-cultural psychologists tend to emphasize the importance of psychological adjustment and then sociocultural adjustment and communication competence skills (Gudykunst, 2005a, 2005b; Matsumoto, Yoo, & LeRoux, 2010). Sojourners can achieve improved intercultural adjustment to the host environment if they attend to and practice intergroup communication identity-sensitive competence skills (see Chapters 2 and 5).

Intercultural Adjustment Models: Developmental Patterns

The term "intercultural adjustment" refers to the short-term and medium-term adaptive process of sojourners in their overseas assignments. Tourists are different from sojourners. On the one hand, tourists are visitors whose length of stay exceeds 24 hours in a location away from home and who have traveled for voluntary, recreational holiday-enjoyment purposes. A tourist, while visiting another country, can be a welcomed guest, a nuisance, or a downright intruder in a sacred land. Tourists, their hosts, and business/service providers all weave together interdependently to form impressions, trade, and share some memorable moments through brief encounters and amusing contacts. Sojourners, on the other hand, are temporary residents who voluntarily go abroad for a set period of time that is usually related to task-based or instrumental purposes. Both tourists and sojourners can, of course, experience culture shock—especially when the country they visit is very different from their own culturally and on many other levels.

The U-Curve Adjustment Model

A number of researchers have conceptualized the sojourner adjustment process using various developmental perspectives. An interesting consequence of these stage-oriented descriptive models centers on whether sojourners' adaptation is a U-curve or a W-curve process. Interviewing over 200 Norwegian Fulbright grantees in the United States, Lysgaard (1955; see also Nash, 1991) developed a three-phase U-curve intercultural adjustment model that includes the following stages: (1) initial adjustment, which is the optimistic or elation phase of the sojourners' adjustment process; (2) crisis, which is the stressful phase, when reality sets in and sojourners are overwhelmed by their own incompetence; and (3) regained adjustment, which is the settling-in phase, when sojourners learn to cope effectively with the new environment.

In extending the U-curve model, Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) proposed a six-stage W-shaped model, with successive honeymoon, hostility, humorous, at-home, reentry culture shock, and resocialization stages. Expanding on these authors' ideas, we have developed the following seven-stage revised W-shaped adjustment model to explain sojourners' short-term to medium-term adjustment process (see Figure 3.1).

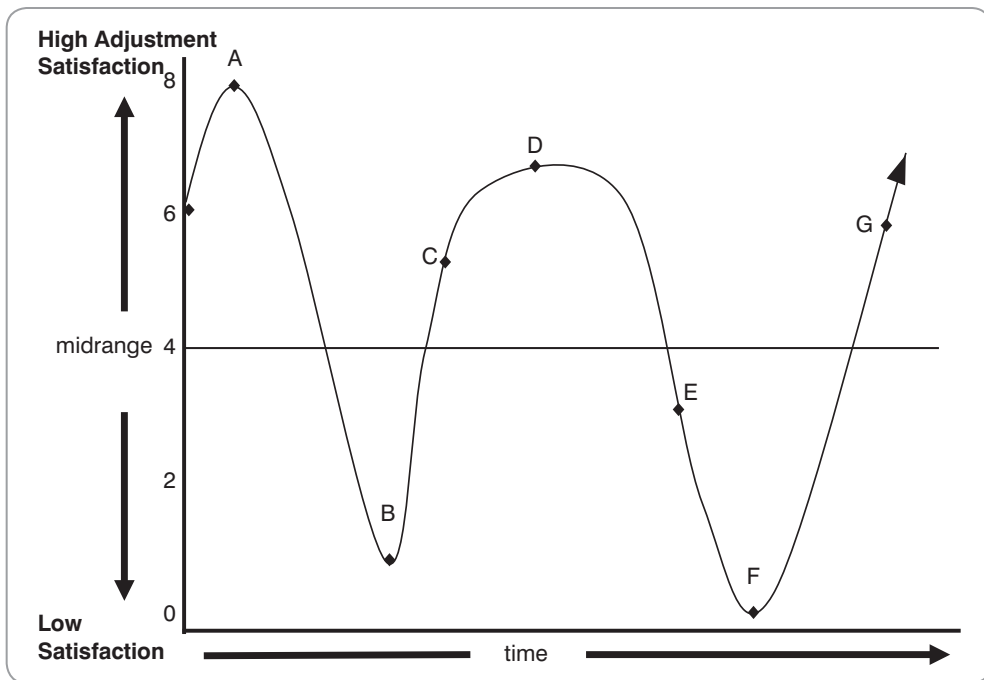


FIGURE 3.1. The revised W-shaped cultural adjustment model. A: honeymoon stage; B: frustration/hostility stage; C: rebound/humorous stage; D: in-sync adjustment stage; E: ambivalence stage; F: reentry culture shock stage; G: resocialization stage.

The Revised W-Shaped Cultural Adjustment Model

The revised W-shaped adjustment model consists of seven stages: the honeymoon, frustration/hostility, rebound/humorous, in-sync, ambivalence, reentry culture shock, and resocialization stages. The model applies especially to international students' experience abroad.

In the *honeymoon stage*, individuals are excited about their new cultural environment. This is the initial landing phase in which everything appears fresh and exhilarating. Sojourners perceive people and events through pleasantly tinted (or rose-colored) glasses. Nonetheless, they do experience mild bewilderment and perplexity about the new culture; they also experience bursts of loneliness and homesickness. However, overall, they are cognitively curious about the new culture and emotionally charged up at meeting new people. They may not completely understand the verbal and nonverbal behaviors that surround them, but they are enjoying their initial "friendly" contacts with the locals.

In the *frustration/hostility stage*, sojourners experience major emotional upheavals. This is defined as a hurdle–culture shock stage in which nothing works out smoothly and emotional frustration and resentment set in. This stage can occur rapidly, immediately after the glow of the honeymoon phase is over and reality sets in sooner than expected. At this stage, sojourners experience a major loss of self-esteem and self-confidence. They often feel emotionally drained and overwhelmed, and they experience intense communication stressors in many aspects of their lives. Many of these sojourners can either become very aggressive/hostile or totally withdrawn when facing these stressful episodes. Anderson (1994), for example, identifies three types of "culture shockers": (1) the early returnees—those who tend to use aggressive or passive–aggressive strategies and blame the host culture's "hostile environment" for their increased anxious state and often return prematurely to their home cultures; (2) the time servers—those who are doing a minimally passable job with minimal host contact and who are emotionally and cognitively "serving their time," but eagerly looking forward to returning home; and (3) the participators—those who are committed to adjust optimally and to participate fully in their new culture and who take advantage of both instrumental and socioemotional learning in the new environment.

The "early returnees" tend to use *pounce* strategies or passive–aggressive strategies and blame all their problems on the new culture. They constantly use their ethnocentric standards to compare and evaluate the local practices and customs. They exit their overseas assignments prematurely because of the "uncivilized" people they have to deal with on a daily basis (Brown, 2009). Yiping, a young woman from China who had been studying in the United States for seven months, complained to her Chinese friends:

We have three parts of the earned grade in this class. One third is discussion participation, the other two-thirds are writing articles. So if you don't talk, you lose one third of your points. So you have to talk. Talking is so exhausting! And it's not just talk, you know, from

the material. You need to say what you *think* about it. But in China, you just remember the expert answer. That's my educational experience in China. But here it's like, okay, no right answers. Every answer is correct. You just need to give your own perspective loudly and with back-up evidence. I'm so worn-out from talking and stressed all the time. I'm here to learn from the expert professors; why do they care about my opinions? I'm so ready to go home to China now! (in Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013, p. 556).

The “time servers” tend to use *avoidance* strategies. They adopt either physical avoidance or psychological withdrawal strategies to avoid interacting with host members. They do their job or they fulfill their role in attaining their instrumental goals. However, they are fairly dissatisfied in the socioemotional connection area and feel quite isolated. They also tend to engage in wishful-thinking strategies and count the days until they can go home. In an intercultural adjustment interview study (Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013), Mariko, who had been studying in the United States for 17 months, described her problem with her roommate and how she handled it:

Sometimes when I'm tired or not feeling very well, it appears on my face. And my American roommates started to tell me how small my eyes are. “You are Japanese, and your eyes are usually small, but it's getting smaller, and smaller, and I couldn't see them.” I took it as a joke at first. But the problem is, she didn't stop even though I tried to show that I was becoming annoyed. . . . However, whenever I tried to tell her about my problems, she started telling me it's my cultural background, or tried to talk about her own problems instead. She was never really respectful or caring of me. I now tried to avoid my roommate and stayed in the library more. I'm now counting down my months when I can go home and sleep on my own cozy futon bed (in Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013, p. 561).

Finally, the “participators” use active commitment strategies to realign their identities with the new culture. They try to engage in positive self-talk and positive situational appraisal strategies. They also intentionally develop new communication competence practices to connect with their new culture. They are committed to using an ethnorelative lens to view things from the other culture's frame of reference (Iyer, 1989). With the help of supportive networks, incremental task goal progression, and their personal emotional resilience, many sojourners can pull themselves out from the frustration/hostility stage and arrive at the recovery curve. Natalia, a Colombian student who has been in the United States for 18 months, talked about how her attitude changed so that she became more of a participant in the U.S. culture:

I think [my attitude] changed when I started applying (for the master's program). Because I see that I will stay here for two years or more. So that's a lot of time. Then in this process, I have to start to make new American friends, and not to talk too much with the same friends in Colombia. . . . I make a decision to participate more in the American culture—watch more American news, talk more to American students in class, and learn to visit Professors in their office which I'm not used to back home. I want to really know how the American mind ticks, why they all seem so confident and carefree! (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012, pp. 103–104; see also Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013).

At the *rebound or humorous adjustment stage*, sojourners learn to laugh at their cultural *faux pas* and start to realize the pros and cons of each culture—just as there are both good and bad people in every society. They experience a mixture of stress–adaptation–growth emotions (Y. Y. Kim, 1988, 2005), such as small frustrations and small triumphs. For example, on his first-ever sojourn in Missoula, Montana, Tenzin was invited to lunch by his U.S. American friend. He ordered salad but did not know anything about salad dressing (such as Blue Cheese and Italian), so he politely said no to dressing. He nibbled at the salad while waiting for the main course (in his culture, salad is a side dish; never a main dish). Nothing came and he sensitively asked his friend about the main food to which he said, “Did you order anything? If not, that’s it.” Tenzin was too shy to order another main dish (to save his face and also give face to his friend), so to be polite he ended up eating just a bit of the dry, flavorless salad and returned home to cook lunch for himself. It was a stressful and awkward experience then, but looking at the incident retrospectively, he finds humor in it. Later, he learned to enjoy different types of salad with different types of dressing. At this stage, sojourners are able to compare both their home and their host cultures in realistic terms; they no longer take things as seriously as they did in the hostility stage. They can now take a step backward and look at their own behavior and reactions objectively and with a sense of light-heartedness and amusement. Taskwise, they are making progress in attaining their instrumental goals (e.g., achieving their MBA degree or acquiring new business skills). They are beginning to form new friendships and social networks. These sojourners eventually arrive at the next stage.

At the *in-sync adjustment stage*, sojourners feel “at home” and experience identity security and inclusion. The boundaries between outsiders and insiders become fuzzier, and sojourners experience social acceptance and support. From an identity negotiation perspective, not only have they gained identity respect and identity validation but also intergroup convergence and harmony. They are now easily able to interpret “bizarre” local customs and behaviors from an isomorphic attribution viewpoint. They may be savvy enough to speak the local language with flair, even catching some verbal jokes and puns and perhaps responding with a one-up joke. They may now even act as role models or mentors to incoming sojourners from their home cultures. During the *in-sync adjustment stage*, sojourners develop a sense of trust and empathy and a wide spectrum of other positive emotions. They become much more creative and adaptive in the new environment. They are capable of making appropriate choices in any new situations that may arise, being at a “comfort level” of their sojourn. However, they must get ready to pack their bags and go home.

In the *ambivalence stage*, sojourners experience grief, nostalgia, and pride, with a mixed sense of relief and sorrow that they are going home. They recall their early awkward days when they first arrived, and they count all the new friends they have made since then. They also look forward eagerly to sharing all their intercultural stories with their family members and old friends back home. They finally say goodbye to their newfound friends and their temporarily adopted culture. They may already start to miss them and are not sure when they will meet again.

At the *reentry culture shock stage*, sojourners face an unexpected jolt (see the next section). Because of the unanticipated reentry shock, its impact is usually very severe, and returnees usually feel more depressed and stressed than they did during their entry culture shock stage. There is a sharp letdown (e.g., their friends or family members have no time, patience, or vested interest or curiosity in hearing all their wonderful overseas intercultural stories) and identity chaos occurs: the greater the distance (i.e., on the cultural values and communication dimensions) between the two cultures, the more intense the reentry shock. Additionally, the more integrated into and time spent abroad, the more difficult this stage becomes. As the sojourners became more integrated in their sojourning cultures, their identities accordingly underwent change and perspective shift. But since most sojourners have become resourceful and resilient individuals, having adapted to their changing social environments, they can recycle some of the commitment strategies they used abroad to pull themselves through to the next stage.

In the *resocialization stage*, some individuals (i.e., the resocializers) may quietly assimilate back into their old roles and behaviors without making much of a “wave” or appearing different from the rest of their peers or colleagues. They bury their newly acquired ideas and skills together with the pictures on their Facebook and/or Instagram pages and try not to look at them again. Looking at these pictures can only cause identity dissonance and disequilibrium. Other individuals (i.e., the alienators), however, can never “fit back” into their home cultures again. They are always the first to accept an overseas assignment. They feel more alive abroad than at home. For example, Jenny, a college junior, has been to Spain, Italy, Mexico, and Hong Kong on study abroad programs. She confessed feeling uneasy and restless at her own university and will spend the next semester in Argentina. Jenny, an alienator, may eventually become a global nomad who claims the global world as her home base rather than any single place as her national cultural affiliation.

Yet other individuals (i.e., the “transformers”) are the ones who act as agents of change in their home organizations or cultures. They mindfully integrate their new learning experience abroad with the positive qualities of their own culture (Brown & Brown, 2009; Brown & Holloway, 2008). They apply multidimensional thinking, enriched emotional intelligence, and diverse angles to solve problems or to instigate change for a truly inclusive learning organization. Geeta, from India, studied in the United States for two and one-half years and reflects on the experience as she returns to her home culture: “The U.S. has helped me become more assertive in a respectful way, not aggressive though. The ways of the U.S., this whole concept about space, about individualism versus collectivism, that certainly has merits. Although it has its demerits, it has some merits, too. . . . Placing my own needs as important as the needs of others, and considering my own wants and needs as a priority is an eye-opening experience for me” (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012, p. 105; see also Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013).

Transformers are the change agents who bring home with them a wealth of personal and cultural treasures to share, actively and responsibly, with colleagues, friends, and families. They do so with interpersonally sensitive and responsive skills—something

they have learned in the foreign environment. They have no fears of acting or being perceived as “different” or being situated in the “outgroup” category; they now have a “taste” of what it means to be different. (However, this taste of difference is qualitatively different from the “difference” that many minority members experience in their everyday lives.) They are comfortable in experiencing the cultural frame-shifting process, for example, being individualists and becoming collectivists (and vice versa), interacting in a low-context style with one set of individuals and switching to a high-context approach with another set of folks. They practice a “third-culture” approach in integrating and activating the best practices of both cultures and creatively fuse them into a third-culture perspective in decision making and problem solving (Casmir, 1997). They are more compassionate and committed than before about global social justice and human rights issues. Transformers are the interculturally competent individuals who have acquired (and are always in the process of acquiring) mindfulness, compassion, and wisdom.

In sum, the revised W-shaped cultural adjustment model basically emphasizes the following characteristics, which can influence the progress of the sojourners’ identity change process:

1. They must understand the peaks and valleys, and positive and negative shifts, that constitute identity change in an unfamiliar environment, realizing that the frustration-and-triumph roller-coaster ride is part of the change-and-growth process.
2. They must be aware and keep track of their instrumental, relational, and identity goals in the new culture; success in one set of goals (e.g., making new friends) can affect triumph in another set of goals (e.g., newfound friends can help to solve a school-related problem).
3. They must give themselves some time and space to adjust; they should keep a journal or blog to express their daily feelings and random thoughts, and they should also keep in touch with people in their home culture via letters, emails, and/or social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Skype.
4. They must develop both strong ties (meaningful friendships) and weak ties (functional social connections, for example, with supportive teachers, caring counselors, or friendly grocers) to cushion themselves and seek help in times of crisis.
5. They must reach out to participate in the host culture’s major cultural events—art and music festivals, parades, local museums, or national sports—and immerse themselves in this once-in-a-lifetime experience and learn to enjoy the local culture as much as possible.

The patterns of the revised W-shaped cultural adjustment model consist of back-and-forth looping movements within and between stages. Length of sojourn, alone or

with family or companion, degree of adaptation commitment, degrees and types of communication competence (e.g., linguistic competence), first-time visit versus repeated visit, and realistic versus unrealistic goals are some other factors that will propel either progressive or regressive loops along the W-shaped model.

Church (1982) and Ward (2004), in reviewing the literature on these developmental models, observe that both the U-curve and the W-shaped models appear to be too general and do not capture the dynamic interplay between sojourners' and host nationals' factors in the adjustment process. In addition, sojourners adapt and learn at different rates. The support for both models is based on one-time cross-sectional data (i.e., one-time surveys of sojourners) rather than longitudinal data (i.e., collection of surveys at different points during sojourners' two-year adjustment). More controversial is the debate as to the initial phase (i.e., the *honeymoon stage*) of adjustment. Research (Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013; McLachlan & Justice, 2009; Osland, 1995) indicates that both international students and managers tend to experience severe identity shock (i.e., the *frustration/hostility stage*) comes very early, side by side with the fleeting *honeymoon stage*) in the early phase of their sojourn abroad. However, the overseas stressors also motivate them to become more resourceful and resilient in their search for new knowledge and skills in managing the alien environment.

Overall, while previous objective-based survey research studies (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Trice, 2004) on intercultural adjustment patterns have emphasized some generalized patterns of international students' adjustment process, recent interpretive studies have uncovered some diverse intercultural adjustment patterns, including a predominant uphill-trend or *M-shaped adjustment pattern* in some of the interviewees (Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013). Basically, the majority of the interviewees had only a fleeting honeymoon/euphoria stage and quickly dipped into experiencing the frustration/hostility/self-doubt stage with a low degree of adjustment satisfaction. More specifically, based on the INT framework and the hand-drawn cultural adjustment sketches and narrative accounts of 20 international students, the research findings of Hotta and Ting-Toomey (2013) revealed that nearly three-fourths of the interviewees (14 out of 20) viewed their initial entry adjustment phases as filled with challenges, stress, and emotional frustration. However, the longer the international students or sojourners stayed in the host culture, the more likely they viewed their sojourning experience as going uphill and pulling upward to the in-sync stage in a positive and productive direction. Furthermore, the longer the international students stayed in the United States, the more complex or differentiated their views of their adjustment experiences became (e.g., they saw their sojourning processes as represented by multiple M-shaped curves).

Another distinctive thematic pattern uncovered in this interview study concerns the IINT's identity dialectics of being included–being differentiated. Some of the international student interviewees felt that U.S. host students perceived them as being too different from them and, therefore, the international students felt interpersonal rejection. Concurrently, some of these international interviewees also craved some kind of particularized identity recognition process as “worthy guests” (or cultural ambassadors)

inasmuch as they had rich intercultural resources to offer their roommates, classmates, and professors. Unfortunately, more often than not, these international students did not believe their “special guests’ status” was validated or welcomed. In the extreme case of identity differentiation, international students often felt marginalized (e.g., being discriminated). Desiring to belong to, and be accepted by, a group in their new environment, some emotionally secure international students are more likely to continue interacting with dissimilar others and seek to establish intercultural friendships in the new culture. Over time and contingent on the degree of satisfaction with their intercultural friendships and adjustment, these international students may gradually undergo positive identity transformation.

Another intriguing finding from the interview data was the idea of compressed time as a friendship motivator. Although most of the international student participants were from predominantly collectivistic cultures, all of these students valued the amount of time invested in their friendships in their homelands. Time allowed them to “grow together” with their friends. Many individuals in the United States do not realize that international students have a limited stay. The pressures of their compressed time in the United States can negatively affect international students’ motivation to develop quality friendships with others. Closing themselves off from friendship networks can be detrimental to their psychological health and emotional growth.

Using Ting-Toomey and Dorjee’s (2015, 2017) IINT lens to investigate the intercultural adjustment experiences of international students was beneficial for several reasons. Through the identity negotiation lens, it was possible to identify the international students’ identity-based emotional challenges, rewards, and difficulties pertaining to their intercultural adjustment journey in the United States. With the identity security–vulnerability dialectical viewfinder, the researchers (Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013) were able to track the international students’ identity fluctuating process as they adjusted to the host culture. With the identity inclusion–differentiation sensitizing lens, they were able to hear at first hand some of the culturally insensitive, hurtful comments and discrimination stories of the international students on U.S. campuses. Finally, through the identity consistency–change dialectic, they were able to locate themes associated with the importance of identity continuity and change processes taking place in some of these interviewees; they were also able to explain why some of them preferred to stick close to their “ingroup members” for emotional support, while others tried to branch out to create intercultural friendship with U.S. American classmates.

Despite some of the limitations of the developmental models (such as the honeymoon or identity shock in the beginning stage), there are positive implications: notably, they offer a developmental portrait of the culture shock experience, they illustrate that the culture shock process is filled with peaks and valleys, and they contribute to a holistic understanding of the psychological, affective, behavioral, cognitive, and, ultimately, identity transformations on both group membership and personal identity evolution levels in the sojourners’ sojourning experiences. The spiraling tugs-and-pull and strain-and-stretch experience in dealing with internal and external changes and struggles form part of the larger human evolution story. Based on our integrative theorizing

on intercultural and intergroup communication competence (see Chapters 2 and 5), sojourners can acquire and further their competency components to prepare and manage intercultural shock adjustment effectively.

Reentry Culture Shock: Surprises and Resocialization

At the outset, reentry culture shock seems counterintuitive because the sojourner is returning to the home cultural environment in which the sojourner had primary socialization and familiarity with culture values and role expectations. However, the phenomenon of reentry culture shock has received increased attention from intercultural researchers (Martin & Harrell, 1996, 2004; Sussman, 1986). In light of how cultures and people change, reentry culture shock seems real. Reentry shock involves the realignment of one's new identity with a once-familiar home environment. After living abroad for an extensive period of time, reentry culture shock appears inevitable.

The identity realignment process can sometimes be more stressful and jarring than entry culture shock because of the unanticipated nature of one's own identity change and the accompanying change of one's friends and family.

Surprising Elements

According to research (e.g., Chang, 2009; Osland, 1995), the often unanticipated, surprising elements that affect reentry culture shock include the following:

1. Sojourners' identity change—the newly acquired values, emotions, cognitions, role statuses, managerial methods, and behaviors are, surprisingly, not a “good fit” with the once-familiar home culture.
2. Sojourners' nostalgic and idealized images of their home culture—sojourners tend to remember the positive aspects of their culture and forget its negative facets during their experience abroad, and thus, the reentry reality often produces a strong shock.
3. Sojourners' difficulty in reintegrating themselves into their old career pathway or career roles because of their new cultural lenses.
4. Sojourners' letdown in their expectations as to close ties with family members and friends who have become more distant because of the long separation.
5. Family and friends' lack of interest in listening to the sojourning stories of the returnee and their growing impatience with her or him.
6. The home culture's demand for conformity and expectations for performing old roles.
7. The absence of change in the home culture (e.g., the old system or workplace looks stale and boring in comparison with the overseas adventure) or too much

change (e.g., political or corporate upheavals) which can also create immense identity disjunction for the recent returnees.

Thus, reentry culture shock can be understood from the perspective of three domains: the returnees' readiness to resocialize themselves in the home environment, the degree of change in the returnees' friendship and family networks, and the home receptivity conditions. Sussman (1986) recommends that, on the individual level, awareness of change should be a major component of reentry training as individuals face a wide range of psychological and environmental challenges. Pusch and Loewenthal (1988) further recommend that preparation for a successful return should include: (1) recognition of what sojourners are leaving behind and what they have gained in their assignments abroad; (2) the emotional costs of transition; (3) the value of worrying (i.e., anticipating and preparing for difficulties that may occur); (4) the need for support systems and ways to develop them; and (5) the necessity of developing one's own strategies for going home.

Resocialization: Profiles of Different Returnees

Adler (1997) identifies three profiles of returnee managers in relationship to the specific transition strategies they employ: resocialized returnees, alienated returnees, and proactive returnees. *Resocialized returnees* are those who fit back into their home countries with moderate satisfaction. They try to blend themselves back into their previous professional roles, and they are also psychologically distant from their international experience. They try to use the fit-back-in strategy and resocialize themselves quietly into the domestic corporate structure. They typically rate their reentry experience as moderately satisfactory.

Alienated returnees, in contrast, are keenly aware of the new skills and innovative ideas they gained in their experience abroad. However, they have difficulty applying their new knowledge in the home organizations. Rather, they try to use the "distance-rejective" strategy of being onlookers in their home culture. Of all the three types, they are the most dissatisfied. They find themselves "misfits" in their original home culture.

Proactive returnees (or transformers) are highly aware of changes in themselves and the new values and skills they have learned overseas. They try to adopt a synergistic perspective that can integrate the new values and practices learned from the sojourning culture into the home culture, and they develop an integrated outlook in their reentry phase. While abroad, the proactive managers tend to use proactive communication to maintain close ties with the home organization via formal and informal means. They also have a home-based mentor to look after their interests and pass on important corporate information. Their mentor keeps the home-based headquarters informed of the sojourner's achievements while abroad.

Proactive managers might report the acquisition of the following skills in their assignments abroad: alternative managerial skills, tolerance of ambiguity, multiple reasoning perspectives, and ability to work with and manage others. They further report

that their new intercultural communication skillsets improve their self-image and self-confidence. Not surprisingly, returnees who receive validation (e.g., promotions) from their bosses and recognition from their colleagues in their home-based organizational culture report higher reentry satisfaction than do returnees who receive no such validation or recognition (Adler, 1997). The notion of home is indeed an intriguing and evolving phenomenon.

Where Is Home?

Home is a complex concept, and returning home is an elusive idea for many sojourners (see also Chapter 4, on immigrants' acculturation processes). Some returned sojourners may experience a sense of "reverse homesickness." Just as in their overseas culture, symbols and interaction rituals incrementally moved from perceived "strangeness" to perceived "familiarity," these returnees now have to find their way back into their own home turf to feel connected, to experience a sense of familiarity and of identity belonging. The more challenging the overseas assignments were, the more cognitive and emotional resources expanded in the abroad culture and the more challenges the returnees may face upon returning to their own homelands. Notably, men and women in uniform stationed abroad, especially those who have participated in a war for their country, find it very hard to return to civilian life. As LaBrack (2015) noted: "Globally, tens of millions of men and women have served in their nation's conflicts and returned home to find positive readjustment elusive. Given the realities of war, it is not surprising that not only does a return to civilian life often proven [*sic*] difficult to soldier[s], but it may also require a significant amount of time and appropriate intervention to successfully reintegrate" (pp. 726–727). It is obvious that for those experiencing reentry culture shock, developmental training, timely mental and physical health support facilities, and responsive network support groups and sacred dialogue spaces are needed to make the returned military individuals feel welcomed and appreciated.

Another group who struggles with the question "Where is home?", involves the TCK group. The young TCKs rarely know their home-based passport country as intimately as their parents or older siblings do. They also may hold dual nationality passports, and their sense of "home-based country" boundary may be much more fluid and elastic than their parents' nostalgic "root-country" connection. There are also ATCKs living in countries not their own and numbering over two million.

According to Pico Iyer's (2013, June) TedGlobal Talk, "Where Is Home?" the British-born, California-raised essayist and travel writer referred to a growing tribe of floating people "living in countries not their own numbering 220 million." He further mentioned: "The number of us who live outside the old nation-state categories—a population that increased by 64 million just in the last 12 years—that soon there will be more of us than there are Americans." These are astounding numbers indeed about a "portable tribe" who represent, in Iyer's terms, "the fifth-largest nation on Earth." They see themselves as global citizens, and their sense of home is not tied to any particular national boundary or map. From an intercultural and intergroup perspective, their

identity and communication styles are not necessarily tied to or shaped by either individualism or collectivism or low-context or high-context communication socialization. They flexibly crisscrossed intercultural boundaries and adapted nimbly to the expected demands and norms of a particular cultural milieu. They tend to have a broader vision of global social justice and global responsibility issues than their generational cohorts who have not traveled as extensively.

Thus, the meaning and connection of a home-based culture are in increased fluctuation and fluidity. Static notions of identity, nationality, and home culture may give way to a fluid construction of the meaning of home boundary with clearly defined geographical or fixed spatial borders. By the mid-half of the 21st century, more individuals will claim the global culture as their home ocean, and they will most likely see their temporary locales as their transitional “home rafts.” They will also likely be the core group who emphasizes secular ethics and all-encompassing humanistic values (such as compassion, forgiveness, and inclusive empathy; see Chapter 12) that guide their moral well-being and their sense of global social justice direction. Indeed, for this fifth global portable tribe, home is becoming more lithe and yet more cartable—from one soulful connection to another, and from one precious karmic meeting encounter to the next. In the global encountering space–time continuum, what seems unfamiliar can become instantaneously familiar, and what seems invisible can become immediately noticed, affirmed, and reciprocally embraced.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND MINDFUL GUIDELINES

In this chapter, we explored the motivations and expectations of sojourners crossing diverse cultural boundaries. We defined culture shock and probed the pros and cons of culture shock. We argued that culture shock is an inevitable experience but that the sojourner’s affective attitude, behavioral adaptation, and metacognitive “sense-making” process in the new culture will help sojourners manage their culture shock process and outcome competently. We examined the different factors of why some individuals deal with their intercultural adjustment process effectively, while others have a miserable time. We also talked about the developmental ups and downs of the sojourning adjustment experience across time and suggested concrete strategies to manage culture shock responsively. Last, we emphasized the importance of paying attention to reentry culture shock issues and considered the intriguing question “Where is home” in this mobile, in-flux 21st century.

Here are some final mindful tools for managing sojourners’ culture shock competently—whether you are going overseas for business, study, enjoyment, or culture learning immersion purposes:

- 1 Newcomers should realize that culture shock is inevitable. It is an unavoidable experience that most people encounter when relocating from a familiar environment to an unfamiliar one.

2 New arrivals should understand that culture shock arises because of the unfamiliar environment, when one is bombarded and saturated with unfamiliar cues. Developing a realistic and positive-oriented learning outlook in viewing their new cultural environment may help to lower their stress level.

3 Making an effort to establish broad-based contacts with members of the host culture and learning to communicate with them can increase local knowledge, communication fluency, and reduce apprehension and vulnerability. Cultivating some deep friendship ties with both coethnic nationals and host nationals can, in the long run, ease loneliness and increase emotional vitality and connectiveness.

4 New media should be used with balance: maintaining online ethnic ties for informational and emotional support is a good start in initial adjustment. For long-term adjustment effectiveness, however, it is critical that sojourners mingle with multicultural individuals from different identity sectors in order to understand the cultural mosaic in the host society.

5 Likewise, the more members of the host culture extend a helping hand and the more they attempt to increase their familiarity with the new arrivals, the more they can increase the newcomers' sense of security and inclusion. The more host individuals learn about and associate with dissimilar others, the more they widen their scope of the human experience.

6 Culture shock is induced partly by an intense feeling of incompetence. By seeking out positive role models or mentors, newcomers may be able to find reliable and competent cultural bridge persons in easing the stress level of their initial culture shock experience.

7 Newcomers should realize that culture shock is a transitional affective phase of stress that ebbs and flows from high to low intensity. New arrivals must hang on to a resilient sense of humor and emphasize the positive aspects of the unfamiliar cultural environment. Rather than prolonged focus and concentration on its negative aspects, it is important to realize that these "growing pains" may lead to long-term personal and professional growth and development.

CRITICAL THINKING AND CONNECTIVE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What are the ABCs of culture shock, and how have you experienced them in different situations such as study abroad, abroad work assignment, or domestic relocation (e.g., East Coast to West Coast in the United States or vice versa; different schools and workplace situations), and international and intercultural collaborative initiatives?
2. Relating to the opening story, what advice would you give Tenzin to deal with or reduce his cultural shock experience with the "Tea Interview" case story? How would

you explain to him the different treatment between tea drinker and coffee drinker and the cultural values attached to tea drinking versus coffee drinking practices in the larger U.S. society?

3. Which of the culture shock models—the W-model or the M-model—better explains your experiences of culture shock? How did you deal with your culture shock, and what has or has not worked well? How can you improve these models?
4. What do you think of reentry culture shock, and have you experienced it? Based on research insight, your reentry culture shock experience, or observed reentry culture shock experiences of others, can you create a graphic model of reentry culture shock and mark and connect all the essential concepts?
5. How would you answer “Where is home?” and how is your answer similar to or different from that of the floating-tribe people like Pico Iyer? What lessons can we learn from each other’s notions of “home” with regard to managing culture shock adjustment issues?
6. Discuss how the competent intercultural and intergroup identity negotiation process (review Chapters 1 and 2) can enable us to manage culture shock adjustment adaptively in different unfamiliar cultural community settings—whether you are crossing international boundaries or navigating domestic ethnic boundaries?

CHAPTER 4

Immigrants' Acculturation Process and Intergroup Contacts

- Introduction
- Intercultural Acculturation: Antecedent Factors
 - *Systems-Level Factors*
 - *Individual-Level Factors*
 - *Interpersonal-Level Factors*
- Intergroup Contacts and Adaptation Strategies
 - *Identity Change Models for Immigrants and Minority Members*
 - *Intergroup Social Identity Complexity*
 - *Intergroup Communication Challenges and Adaptation*
 - *Intergroup Interaction Strategies: Strategic Adaptation*
- Immigrants' Acculturation Outcomes
 - *Systems-Level and Interpersonal-Level Outcomes*
 - *Personal Identity Change Outcomes*
- Chapter Summary and Mindful Guidelines
- Critical Thinking and Connective Application Questions

AN INTERCULTURAL DATING DILEMMA: IMMIGRANTS' INTERGENERATIONAL CLASH CASE STORY

Meena is a South Asian Indian American and has been dating Alex (a Caucasian male) for two years. Her sister is getting married to a traditional North Indian Hindu boy this December. Because most of Meena's family and relatives live across different cities in the United States, it is hard to find a common time when everyone is present. So, her sister's wedding seems like a perfect occasion for everyone to be together and meet her boyfriend.

Meena would like to invite Alex to the wedding, but her parents will not allow her to do so. Her parents do not approve of the relationship, and they think that inviting her boyfriend would bring “shame” to the family name. They say that they do not approve of the religious differences, but she knows that they are color-conscious because Alex is Caucasian. Meena also understands that her parents’ friend circle will be shocked by her dating preferences, and they will blame her parents for being so lenient with her and not instilling traditional Indian values in her upbringing. She does not want her family to be the center of all gossip at Indian events and bear this burden she has brought upon them due to her dating choices.

Meena is facing a dilemma now because she is caught between both worlds that are pulling her in opposite directions. Unfortunately, her sister does not have a say because her in-laws are very close-minded and they too do not approve. Meena’s boyfriend, Alex, assumes that he would be invited to the wedding. She is having a hard time telling him the truth. As you may know, Indian weddings can be very long, lavish, and fun, and she wants her boyfriend to see the fun side of her family. Since Alex is aware that Meena’s parents do not approve of the relationship, he has a negative perception of them. But Meena thinks that the wedding celebrations and festivities will change her boyfriend’s opinions about her family.

How should Meena address this intercultural relationship dilemma situation? Should she be more assertive and forthright to approach her parents about it? What should she tell Alex? Are there some creative ways to tell Alex to show up or not to show up for this upcoming festive event? Should she break the news to Alex that her parents do not want to invite him?

—NOORIE BAIG, *graduate student*

Introduction

Can you relate to Meena’s dating experience? Can you relate to Alex’s? Can you paraphrase Meena’s dilemma in your own words? Can you paraphrase Meena’s immigrant parents’ standpoint? Is this case story about intercultural–interracial, interpersonal–romantic, or intergenerational–family adaptation? Drawing from the different models you have learned in Chapters 1 through 3, can you apply a model or perspective to analyze the underlying adaptation issues in this “Intercultural dating dilemma” story? In this chapter, we will provide you with several new conceptual and application tools to analyze this opening case story from an identity responsive perspective.

In today’s globalized world, international movements, including pleasure and business trips, study and work abroad, migration, and immigration, have become routine and much more convenient. All individuals who participate in these international movements, especially sojourners and immigrants, must learn how to cross cultural boundaries flexibly and adaptively. Sociocultural group memberships matter because

they influence how diverse individuals negotiate and manage group-based boundaries, form intergroup perceptions, and use various intergroup strategies to adapt and survive in their fluctuating cultural environments. While we use the term “adjustment” for sojourners’ (e.g., international students or business folks abroad) short-term adjustment process to a new environment (see Chapter 3), the term “acculturation” is used for immigrants’ long-term transformative identity change-and-stretch process. Meanwhile, for the purpose of this chapter, we use the term “adaptation” in reference to minority–majority group relationship building and also co-culture group membership behavioral contacts and their respective use of particular strategies to fit in or even outdo the dominant cultural system.

More specifically, *acculturation* has been conceptualized as “the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members. At the group level, it involves changes in social structures and institutions and in cultural practices. At the individual level, it involves changes in a person’s behavioral repertoire” (Berry, 2005, pp. 698–699). In this chapter, we will use the term “acculturation” when referring to the broader patterns of immigrants and refugees’ identity change process (on systems, individual, and interpersonal contact levels) during their developmental settlement in their new adopted homelands. From an intergroup contact outlook, both acculturation and adaptation processes include the necessity of examining the immigrants’ attitudinal or behavioral shifts and, concurrently, the host nationals’ accommodation or dismissal stances (Berry, 2008, 2009; Kim, 2005, 2007).

Intercultural acculturation, however, does not happen overnight. It is a gradual transformation process on both the group membership macro level and the psychological, interindividual level. The long-term acculturation process involves an oscillating intercultural boundary-crossing journey—from identity security to insecurity and from identity familiarity to unfamiliarity (Ting-Toomey, 2005a; see Chapter 2). It is a long-term process that takes years, generations, and even centuries. The journey can be a turbulent or an exhilarating process. Many factors influence the intercultural acculturation process—from systems-level factors (e.g., receptivity of the host culture) to individual-level (e.g., individual expectations) and interpersonal-level factors (e.g., formation of social networks). It also involves managing identity and intergroup communication challenges via strategic intergroup communication adaptation.

Immigrants or refugees and asylum seekers, for example, have to constantly negotiate the theme of *identity being-and-becoming* as they learn to acquire new roles and new adaptive skills in their freshly adopted homeland. The new settlers need the appropriate knowledge and communication skills to deal with identity changes, intergroup encounters, and adaptation. In the chapter’s opening story, Meena and her immigrant family reflect these themes. The larger the cultural distance or difference between the two cultures (such as Iran and the United States), the higher the degree of identity vulnerability immigrants will experience in the new culture (Chen, 2010; Halualani, 2008). For most individuals, as Anderson (1994) comments, adaptation is “not only a cyclical process where ends fade out into new beginnings, it is also often a . . . roller-coaster ride,

with depression and elation, successes and failures in overcoming obstacles providing the hills and valleys” (p. 307). Along with identity stress come possible identity stretch and resourcefulness (Ting-Toomey, 1993). Many complex factors, of course, influence this identity tug-and-pull experience in the host intergroup environment.

This chapter is developed in four main sections. The first section examines the antecedent factors that influence the newcomers’ acculturation process. The second section explores immigrants’ identity change process, as well as intergroup communication challenges and behavioral (plus psychological) adaptation strategies. The third section presents some of the findings related to immigrants’ acculturation outcomes. The last section offers a chapter summary and a set of mindful guidelines to facilitate an optimal co-learning process between the co-culture members and the host members. The chapter ends with discussion questions promoting critical thinking and connective application about intercultural and intergroup adaptation issues.

Intercultural Acculturation: Antecedent Factors

Strangers come to a new land in different roles—as visitors, sojourners, immigrants, or refugees. Generally, tourists play the visitor role with an anticipated short span of stay. Sojourners (e.g., businesspersons, military personnel, Peace Corps volunteers) play the visitor–resident roles with a medium span of stay. In comparison, immigrants and refugees play the long-term inhabitant role, whereby they have uprooted and transplanted themselves to their adopted homelands. Since the intercultural adjustment of sojourners was discussed in an earlier chapter (see Chapter 3), this chapter section focuses on the long-term identity change process of immigrants as they attempt to acculturate to their new homelands.

While the immigrant group comprises those who generally have voluntarily moved across cultural boundaries, those in the refugee group often have involuntarily done so (for reasons of political, religious, or economic oppression). Unlike tourists and sojourners, immigrants and refugees usually desire a permanent stay in their adopted country. While there are some similar adaptation patterns (e.g., initial stress and culture shock) in these diverse groups, there are also very different motivational patterns in these newcomers’ means and goals of adaptation.

Generally, *intercultural acculturation* in this chapter refers to the incremental identity-related change process of immigrants and co-culture groups in moving from their outsider status to becoming insiders of their claimed homeland. While most immigrant and co-culture studies focus on how minority group members should acculturate to the dominant group’s values, norms, and practices, less attention is given to the host/dominant culture’s responsibility to adopt an inclusive stance whereby they welcome and aid cultural outsiders. Indeed, much less attention has been paid to the changing fabric of the host society owing to the influx of immigrants and refugees. This chapter emphasizes the need and responsibility of both the host society and newcomers to learn from each other in order to create an inclusive, socially just multicultural society. We

contend that both acculturation and enculturation processes will influence immigrants' adaptation to the new homeland. The change process of immigrants (hereafter, the term "immigrants" will also include refugees and people in the diaspora) often involves both subtle and overt change on the systems level and individual and interpersonal levels.

Systems-Level Factors

On the one hand, *acculturation* involves the long-term conditioning process of newcomers in integrating the new values, norms, and symbols of their new cultural environment and developing new roles and skills to meet its demands. *Enculturation*, on the other hand, often refers to the sustained, primary socialization process of strangers in their original home (or natal) culture wherein they have internalized their primary cultural traditions, values, and communicative practices. From a systems-process perspective, three sets of *antecedent factors* typically influence newcomers' acculturation process: systems-level factors, individual-level factors, and interpersonal-level factors (see Figure 4.1).

Systems-level factors are those elements in the host environment that influence newcomers' acculturation to the new culture (Kim, 2005). Based on the findings of existing acculturation research, the following five observations were made.

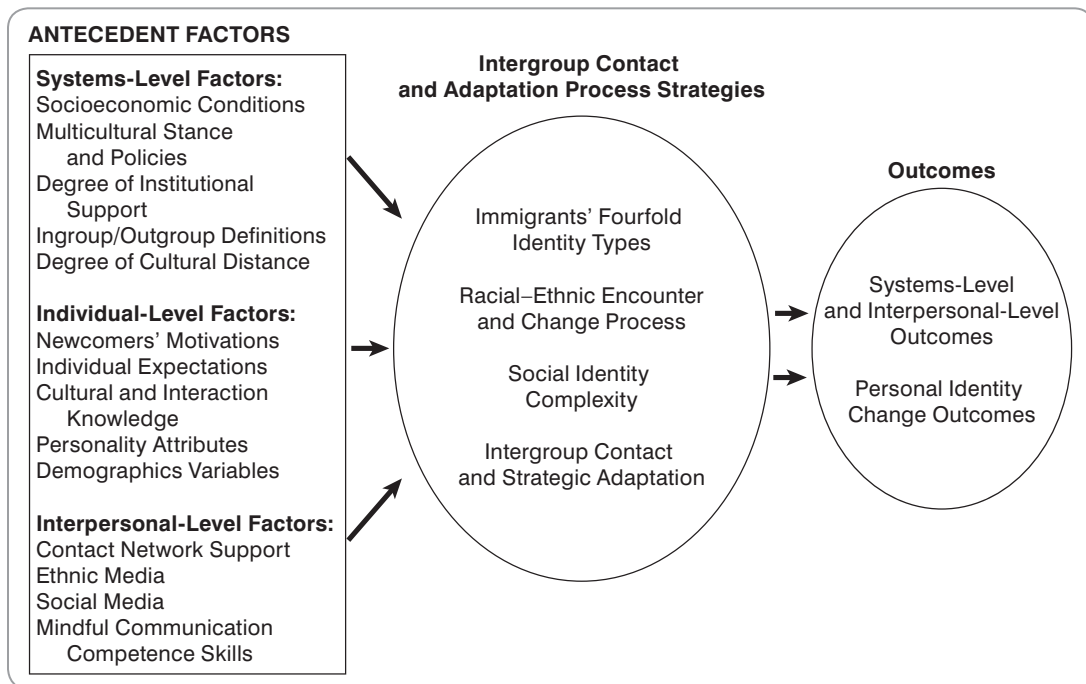


FIGURE 4.1. Immigrants' acculturation systems-process model: Underlying factors.

First, the host culture's *socioeconomic conditions* influence the climate of adaptation (Diaz et al., 2011; Esses, Brochu, & Dickson, 2012; Puentha, Giles, & Young, 1987). When the host culture is operating under economically affluent conditions, its members appear to be more tolerant and hospitable toward newcomers. When socioeconomic conditions are poor, strangers become the scapegoats for local economic problems. For example, during the Great Recession in the United States from the end of 2007 to mid-2009, immigrants in California, especially the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants from Mexico, became the scapegoats for scarce jobs and promotion opportunities, as well as for social crimes and for the host members' poor living conditions.

Second, a host culture's *attitudinal stance* and its members' attitudes toward strangers affect newcomers' adaptation process (Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2010; Mangan & Borooh, 2009). The cultural assimilationist stance demands higher conformity from strangers in adapting to the host environment (e.g., as urged by the U.S. "English-only" movement) than does the cultural pluralist stance. The dominant metaphor is that of "the melting pot," which holds that the immigrants' sociocultural diversity is expected to be melted into the host culture melting pot. For example, the British government has enforced strict requirements for immigrants regarding English language competency (D'Emilio, 2011). In France, French Muslim women have officially been banned from wearing "*niqab*" or the traditional face veil in public. In contrast, the cultural pluralist stance encourages a diversity of values (as supported by Canada's "multicultural" policies) and hence provides strangers a wider number of norms from which to choose in their newfound homeland. The dominant metaphor in Canada is that of a "salad bowl" or "quilt" or "rainbow." This montage of taste, fabric, or colored metaphor stands for and communicates identity respect and valuation for distinctive sociocultural identity preservation and, simultaneously, it also emphasizes unity through diversity. The "salad bowl" metaphor, for example, signals that both host culture and immigrants' sociocultural memberships can retain their complementary cultural visibility and flavors and, concurrently, are also united together to form something tasty, colorful, and captivating.

In an assimilationist society, ethnic identity formation is strongly influenced by the dominant group's values, and immigrants are often expected to conform quickly to local cultural practices such as the case for Muslims in France. In a pluralistic society, ethnic identity formation rests on the choices between maintaining the customs of the heritage culture, on the one hand, and inventing a new identity, on the other. As Berry (2005) aptly observes, at the cultural level: "We need to understand the key features of the two original cultural groups (A and B) prior to their major contact, the nature of their contact relationships, and the resulting dynamic cultural changes in both groups and in the emergent ethnocultural groups during the process of acculturation" (p. 702).

It is plausible to assume that cultural newcomers can thrive more readily in a pluralistic societal system than in an assimilationist societal system. In this pluralistic or multicultural host environment, immigrants can be bicultural or multicultural without being forced to shun their ethnic heritage and identity continuity. For example,

immigrants in Canada can be both culturally Tibetan and Canadian, Syrian and Canadian, or French and Canadian. Societies with a pluralist stance tend to display more responsive attitudes and inclusive acceptance toward immigrants' ethnic traditions and practices. Overall, in a true multicultural society, sociocultural diversity or distinctiveness is not perceived as a threat to the larger society but is recognized as a valuable added resource, pride, and strength to the fabric of the nation's vibrant cultural identity landscape.

Third, *local institutions* (such as schools, workplaces, social services, and mass media) serve as firsthand contact agencies that facilitate or impede the adaptation process of immigrants (Mortland & Ledgerwood, 1988). For example, the government of India established separate Tibetan communities and schools in different Indian states, especially in Karnataka State, that facilitated the adaptation process of the Tibetan refugees and preservation of their cultural heritage, including the Tibetan language and religion (Dorjee, 2006; Dorjee et al., 2011). Hardly any Tibetan child is left uneducated, and the younger generation Tibetans can speak and write at least in three languages: Tibetan, English, and Hindi or regional Indian language such as Kanada. Thus, Tibetans in India have established themselves as successful refugees in their host environment and are able to preserve nearly all things Tibetan. Two possible primary reasons for host India's receptivity to the Tibetan diaspora are (1) centuries-old sociocultural ties between Tibet and India (i.e., Buddhism was imported from India to Tibet in the seventh century; India is *Guru* and Tibetans are disciples—*Chela*), and (2) India's status as a truly multicultural, multilingual, and multireligious nation with a secular constitution that allows for the peaceful and respectful coexistence of immensely diverse peoples. Tibetan Buddhism is followed by millions in the Himalayan states of India, including Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh.

Following the prevailing national policies, local institutions can either greatly facilitate strangers' acculturation process (e.g., via language help programs or job training programs) or produce roadblocks to the newcomers' adaptive experience. For example, at schools, varying degrees of receptivity and helpfulness of teachers toward immigrant children can either help the children to feel "at home" or leave them to "sink or swim" by themselves in their adopted homeland. Whether the attitudes of local teachers in the classrooms are favorable or unfavorable can also produce a pleasant or hostile climate for these immigrant children during their vulnerable adaptive stages. Getting used to a strange language, unfamiliar signs, and different expectations and norms of a new classroom can be overwhelming for recent immigrant children.

Fourth, the host culture's *meaning definition* concerning the role of "strangers" can profoundly influence immigrants' initial adaptation process. Whether members of the host culture perceive strangers as nonpersons, intruders, aliens, guests, others, or adopted family members will greatly influence their attitudes and behaviors toward the strangers. For example, in the United States permanent residents are officially issued a card identifying them as "Resident Aliens." Accordingly, they are treated as such in social interactions at immigration offices, hospitals, educational institutions, and others.

Another good example is the immigrants who are identified as “undocumented immigrants” (altogether estimated at 11.2 million and including people of all ages) residing and working hard in the United States for most of their lives. The largest number of “undocumented immigrants” (about 25% of the total group) resides in California (Storlie, 2016). Out of the total identity membership group, it has been estimated that there are 2.1 million college-bound “undocumented students” in the country. Given this status, they face legal uncertainties and limitations in academic institutions. Relatedly, members of host cultures that view outsiders as “intruders” are likely to be hostile to them, whereas host nationals that use an adoptive family metaphor for the incorporation of newcomers are likely to display positive sentiments toward them. For example, recently, the California Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act of 2011 (the Dream Act) allowed qualified AB 540 (i.e., Assembly Bill 540) students to access state and nonstate resourced funds to finance their college and university education. Thus, some host nationals may offer proactive help, as opposed to reactive resistance to the adaptation process of newcomers.

Although some cultures make greater intergroup distinctions between insiders and outsiders, some groups have built-in mechanisms to facilitate the socialization of newcomers. Immigrants often feel marginalized or alienated in a new culture. They need help and coaching to learn a culture’s inner workings. To the extent that newcomers are treated with dignity and respect by insiders of a new culture and a trusting climate is developed, they experience identity validation and inclusion. To the extent that newcomers (including second- or third-generation families) are long treated as outsiders (e.g., by asking third-generation Asian Americans where they came from and when they will return “home”—but the United States is their home), they experience resentment, frustrations, and identity exclusion.

Finally, the *cultural distance* between the two cultures—that of the newcomers and that of the host—has a strong impact on the newcomers’ adaptation. Cultural distance refers to the degree of group membership effort and psychological adjustment effort needed to bridge the dissimilarities between the culture of origin and the culture of entry (Ward, 2008). As cultural distance increases, newcomers and their family systems need to use greater affective, cognitive, and behavioral resources to cope with such differences. Cultural distance dimensions can include differences in political, economic, social class, and religious systems, as well as cultural value distinctions, self-conception variations, and language and communication style discrepancies. The wider the cultural distances, the more efforts and supportive resources the immigrants will need to tackle such differences.

The combined systems-level factors can create either a favorable or an unfavorable climate for newly arrived strangers. Obviously, the more favorable and receptive the cultural climate for strangers, the easier it is for strangers to adapt to the new culture. The more help the newcomers receive during the initial cultural adaptation stages, the more positive are their perceptions and evaluations of their new cultural environment.

Individual-Level Factors

At the individual psychological level of acculturation, Berry (2005) notes that we need to pay close attention to the “[p]sychological changes that individuals in all groups undergo, and their eventual adaptation to their new situations. Identifying these changes requires sampling a population and studying individuals who are variably involved in the process of acculturation. These changes can be a set of easily accomplished behavioral shifts (e.g., in ways of speaking, dressing, eating . . .) or they can be more problematic [changes], producing acculturative stress as manifested by uncertainty, anxiety, and depression” (Berry, 2005, p. 702). The following individual-level factors have been found to influence intercultural acculturation: individual motivations, expectations, cultural and interaction-based knowledge, and personality attributes.

Newcomers’ *motivational orientations*, allowing them to leave their home countries and enter a new culture, have a profound influence on their adaptation modes. Individuals (e.g., professionals such as academics and nurses) with voluntary motivations to leave a familiar culture and enter a new cultural milieu have fewer adaptive problems than do individuals with involuntary motivations (e.g., refugees). Voluntary immigrants can prepare themselves through research, reading, and social networking for the new homeland adaptation. They can improve their language proficiency and communication competence and do job search among other things for smooth adaptation. However, involuntary immigrants such as refugees are often forced to enter a new homeland (e.g., Syrian refugees who fled to Germany) with much anxiety and unpreparedness. They certainly need much help to adapt and acculturate to their newfound homeland. For immigrants, permanent residence status produces a mixture of affective and instrumental stressors. Involuntary immigrants often also have more family worries and identity dislocation problems than do voluntary immigrants.

Acculturation research indicates that many immigrants uproot themselves owing to a mixture of “push” factors (e.g., political and economic reasons) and “pull” factors (e.g., the host culture’s economic and academic opportunities) (Ward, 2008; Ward et al., 2001; Van Oudenhoven & Ward, 2013). Many immigrants are forced to leave their home countries because of cultural, religious, or political persecution, or because of environmental calamities as well as economic strains. By immigrating, they strive to create better opportunities for themselves and their families. Additionally, the new culture’s attractions (“pull” factors) include better chances for personal advancement, jobs, educational opportunities for their children, improved quality of life for the family and democratic cultural values. In sum, immigrants’ motivations can greatly affect their expectations and behaviors in the new culture.

Individual expectations have long been viewed as a crucial factor in the intercultural adaptation process. Expectations refer to the anticipatory process and predictive outcome of the upcoming situation. Two observations are indicated here: realistic expectations facilitate intercultural adaptation, and accuracy-based positive expectations ease adaptation stress (Pitts, 2009; Ward, 1996; Ward & Kennedy, 1994).

Individuals with realistic expectations are better prepared psychologically to deal with actual adaptation problems than are individuals with unrealistic expectations. Furthermore, individuals with positive expectations tend to create a self-fulfilling prophecy in their successful adaptation (e.g., they think this is a great move and their thinking affects their positive actions); negative expectations tend to produce the opposite effect.

Past research (McGuire & McDermott, 1988) indicates that immigrants often have negative, apprehensive images regarding their major relocation move. Overall, realistic and positively oriented expectancy images of the new culture can help to facilitate their intercultural adaptation. Expectations influence the mind-sets, attitudes, sentiments, and behaviors of newcomers. Research indicates that a positively resilient mind-set helps to balance the negative stressors that newcomers may encounter in their adaptive efforts. The more realistic expectations the newcomers have concerning the new environment, the more psychologically prepared they are to handle the external and internal pressures of their new adventure.

Newcomers' *cultural knowledge* and *interaction-based knowledge* about the host culture serves as another critical factor in their adaptation process. Cultural knowledge can include information on cultural and ethnic diversity history, geography, political and economic systems, religious and spiritual beliefs, multiple value systems, and situational norms. Interaction-based knowledge can include language, verbal and nonverbal styles, diversity-related communication issues (e.g., regional, ethnic, gender, and age differences within a culture), and various problem-solving and decision-making styles. Fluency in the host culture's language, for example, has been found to have a direct positive impact on sociocultural adaptation, such as developing relationships with members of the host culture. In contrast, language incompetence has been associated with increased psychological and psychosomatic symptoms (e.g., sleeplessness, severe headaches) in Asian Indian immigrants to the United States (Krishnan & Berry, 1992). For many senior immigrants, language incompetence is correlated with social isolation, feelings of insecurity, and difficulty in making friends (Mui, Kang, Kang, & Domanski, 2007). Beyond language fluency, interaction-based pragmatic competence such as knowing "when to say what appropriately, under what situations" is critical in adapting to a new environment. Last but not least, the option to access health care for self and family members is also critical to alleviate immigrants' acculturative stress (Fassaert, Hesselink, & Verhoeff, 2009).

In regard to *personality attributes*, personality profiles such as high tolerance for ambiguity (i.e., high acceptance of ambiguous situations; Cort & King, 1979), internal locus of control (i.e., inner-directed drives and motivations; Ward & Kennedy, 1993), and personal flexibility and openness (Ruben & Kealey, 1979; Kim, 2005) have been consistently related to positive psychological functioning in a new culture. Ward (1996) suggests a "cultural fit" proposition that emphasizes the importance of a good match between personality types (such as extraversion and introversion) of the acculturators and the host cultural norms. For example, we can speculate that immigrants with independent self-construal may be more compatible with individualistic cultural norms, whereas immigrants with interdependent self-construal may be more compatible with

collectivistic cultural norms. The synchronized match between a particular personality type and the larger cultural norms produces a “goodness of fit” and may cultivate a positive adaptive experience for strangers.

Demographic variables such as age and educational level have also been found to affect acculturation experiences, with the younger children having an easier time adapting to the new culture than adults. Individuals with higher educational levels tend to adapt more effectively than do individuals with lower educational levels (Ward, 1996, 2004). Individuals with internal locus of control (i.e., a belief that events are under one’s influence, internal drive, and control) appear to adapt more smoothly to a new cultural setting and show less acculturative stress than individuals with external locus of control (i.e., beliefs that events are situationally predetermined) (Leung & Bond, 2004; Ward, 1996). Notably, most of the acculturation studies cited in this book are based on immigrant and refugee experiences in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States. Thus, the research conclusions summarized in this section generally reflect acculturation norms in individualistic rather than collectivistic cultures. Obviously, more acculturation research needs to be conducted in other world regions and on global dispersion and multiple identity complexity levels. Additionally, interpersonal-related factors affect newcomers’ adaptive change process.

Interpersonal-Level Factors

Interpersonal-level factors can include relational face-to-face network factors (e.g., social network), mediated contact factors (e.g., use of mass media and social media), and interpersonal skills factors (Kim, 2005; McKay-Semmler & Kim, 2014a; McKay-Semmler & Kim, 2014b). Both relational contact networks and the mass media and social media can enhance newcomers’ interpersonal coping skills in their culture-learning journey.

By *contact network*, we mean a combination of personal and social ties in the new culture in which affective, instrumental, and informational resources are exchanged (Adelman, 1988). “Affective resources” include the exchange of identity support and relational empathic messages (e.g., “It must be difficult for you, especially without your parents and friends here”) in supporting the cultural strangers with caring words and nonverbal tones. “Instrumental resources” include task-related goal support, practical assistance (e.g., offering rides), and tangible resource support (e.g., finding jobs, assisting tax preparation and filing, and mentoring/specific tangible coaching support). Finally, “informational resources” include sharing knowledge and keeping the other person informed of important host country and country-of origin news (e.g., information on financial aid, medical aid, immigration status change, and major news from enculturated home countries; see Furnham & Bochner, 1986). Most personal or social networks in the immigrants’ developmental acculturation process serve all three social support functions.

Through supportive personal and social networks and supportive systems-level treatment, strangers’ vulnerable identities are incrementally protected. A supportive social network serves as a buffer zone between a newcomer’s threatened identity on

the one hand and the unfamiliar environment on the other. Overall, studies on immigrants' network patterns have yielded some interesting findings. Ethnic-based social and friendship networks provide critical identity support during the initial stages of the immigrants' adaptation process (Mortland & Ledgerwood, 1988). This observation is based on the idea that the density (i.e., ethnic clusters such as Chinatown, Little India, and Little Saigon in California) of the ethnic community is strong and is available as a supportive network. For newcomers, established individuals from the same or similar ethnic background can serve as successful role models because they have gone through a similar set of culture shock experiences and have survived intact. These "established locals" can engage in appropriate and affective identity-validation messages (e.g., "I experienced the same confused feelings and loneliness when I first came here, but I'm doing very well right now") that instill hope and confidence in newly arrived immigrants and refugees. They can also provide immigrants with mentoring, coaching, and other vital instrumental and informational support.

Moreover, immigrants' network ties with members from the dominant cultural group facilitate learning of the mainstream cultural norms (Adelman, 1988). Research studies (Kim & McKay-Semmler, 2013; Searle & Ward, 1990) indicate a positive association between newcomers' participation in dominant cultural group activities and favorable attitudes toward the host culture. In sum, studies have revealed that in its initial adaptation stages an ethnic-based social/friendship network is critical to newcomers in terms of identity- and emotional-support functions. Similar ethnic friendship networks (especially those with linguistic ties) in initial adaptation stages ease strangers' adaptive stress and loneliness (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). Researchers further encourage such bonds to include eventually bicultural and multicultural networks in order to enrich the mutual learning processes between host nationals and new arrivals. Research studies have also consistently found that the frequency and quality of personal contacts between host nationals and newcomers increase adaptive satisfaction and perceived competence (Ward & Kennedy, 1993). The higher the quality of personal contact between locals and newcomers, the more the new arrivals experience adaptive satisfaction. These contact networks are often viewed as the "healing webs" that nurture the adaptive growth and inquiry process of cultural newcomers.

Ethnic media (such as ethnic publications and broadcasts) also play a critical role in the initial stages of immigrants' adaptation. Because of language barriers, immigrants tend to reach out for ethnic newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV programs when such media resources are available in the local community (Y. Y. Kim, 2005). For example, in Little Saigon, California, Vietnamese Americans have their own ethnic media, including Saigon TV, Vietbao Daily, radio, and multimedia stores, catering to the adaptation needs of their immigrant community members. Similarly, Univision caters to the needs of its Spanish-speaking audience, which ranges in age from 18 to 49 and has a viewership surpassing that of NBC and CBS (Radio and Television Business Report, 2011). Ethnic media tend to ease the loneliness and adaptive stress of the new arrivals. The familiar language and images are identity affirming and offer newcomers a sense of comfort and identity connection in their unfamiliar environment.

Research indicates that host media (such as radio and television) do play a critical educational role in providing a safe environment for newcomers to learn the host language and socialization skills (Chaffee, Ness, & Yang, 1990). Overall, the mass media's influence on newcomers' adaptation process is broad but not deep. In comparison, the influence of personal relationship networks is deep but not broad. Through the mass media (especially television), immigrants receive a smorgasbord of information concerning a broad range of host national topics but without much informational depth. In contrast, through personal network contacts, newcomers learn about the host culture from a smaller sample of individuals, revolving around a narrower range of topics, but with more depth and specific personal perspectives.

According to research, of all the variables, language competence plays a significant role in host media consumption (Chaffee et al., 1990; Kim, 1980). The more sophisticated newcomers are in their host culture's language, the more likely they will select host-based media (i.e., host-based newspapers or TV news). While new immigrants tend to watch more entertainment-oriented television shows during their early stages of acculturation, they veer toward more information-oriented shows (e.g., TV news and documentaries) during their later stages of acculturation (perhaps because of their increased host language competence and incremental ingroup membership commitment as well as their strong motivation to change from resident to citizenship status) (Kim, 1988).

In terms of the role of *social media* in the acculturation process of immigrants, here are some interesting research findings. Chen and Choi (2011) studied the role of computer-mediated social support (CMSS) in the context of Chinese immigrants' acculturation process in Singapore. The survey asked how often the respondents sought, both via face-to-face and CMSS, different types of social support (informational, emotional, tangible, and companionship) and also asked about their satisfaction level in their new adopted homeland. According to the findings, Chinese immigrants sought more online informational support, followed by tangible, companionship, and then emotional support. Moreover, most of them were satisfied or very satisfied with the social support, particularly informational and tangible support. Notably, regardless of the duration of their stay, the Chinese immigrants continued to seek online informational support while striving hard to adapt to their adopted Singaporean homeland. However, the more immigrants had face-to-face personalized interactional opportunity for soliciting these diverse support resources, the less frequently they relied on CMSS for outreach purpose. The study also showed positive correlations among received CMSS, satisfaction with CMSS, and future use of CMSS.

In a related follow-up study, Chen and Kay (2011) examined the influence of online social support on Chinese immigrants' adaptation process in Singapore. They defined intercultural adaptation in terms of both sociocultural adaptation (everyday adaptation, including perceived interpersonal social support) and psychological adaptation (ability to manage intrapersonal anxiety and frustration) and conducted telephone interviews with their participants. They found that online social support (via the responses of anonymous ethnic ingroup members), especially informational support, had a positive

impact on both sociocultural adaptation and psychological adaptation. Furthermore, the longer the Chinese immigrants resided in Singapore, the more they increased their sociocultural adaptation process. It appears that the online social media channel was more effective in facilitating sociocultural relationship support in the initial adaptation stage, while perhaps individual personality traits and the degree of perceived intergroup contact play a greater role in the deeper psychological acculturation process for these immigrants. Immigrants' acculturation process involves a long-term adaptation–stress–stretch growth trajectory (Kim, 2001, 2005, 2013). It is easier to first change one's individual behavioral repertoire on both the language/verbal and nonverbal level; then cultivate the cognitive capacity to understand the logic or the cultural schema of the adaptive behavior; and, finally, with increased competence, one may feel more emotionally secure and psychologically more confident in navigating the intricate pathways, detours, and overpasses of their adopted homelands.

In another notable recent study, Croucher and Rahmani (2015) explored the use of Facebook among Muslim immigrants to the United States. The sample included first-generation Muslim immigrants, mostly women, who were adapting to Midwest culture in the United States. All immigrants were residing in the United States for the long term, and they completed online and paper questionnaires that measured Facebook use, motivation to culturally adapt, perception of the U.S. dominant culture, and intergroup contact issues. The significant findings showed that the Muslim immigrants (who arrived from 2006 to 2012) who used Facebook more frequently for ingroup socialization and social interactions were less motivated to culturally adapt to the larger U.S. dominant society. Simultaneously, this helped the Muslim immigrants to maintain their ingroup membership vitality and sense of solidarity. These same immigrants were also more likely “to have a negative perception of the US dominant culture as their Facebook use increased” (Croucher & Rahmani, 2015, p. 339). The findings also imply that these immigrants' high-volume Facebook usage with their ingroup members results in their ratification of Berry's (2005) ethnic-oriented identity or intergroup separation identity option. It appears that reliance on social media to connect with one's own ethnic ingroup can bolster one's sense of ethnic-based identity connection and inclusion in the new society. However, overreliance on social media and processing news exclusively from one's own ingroup voices may cultivate further biased intergroup stereotypes and also create further identity separation in the host environment.

More importantly, in any successful and challenging intercultural co-learning process, members of the host culture need to act as gracious hosts and make a greater effort to make strangers feel genuinely welcomed and embraced, while newcomers need to act as the willing-to-learn humbled guests. Without a collaborative handholding effort, the hosts and new arrivals may end up experiencing great intergroup frustrations, miscommunications, and identity misalignments and resentments. In learning from people who are culturally different, both hosts and new arrivals can stretch their identity boundaries to integrate new ideas, expand affective horizons, and respect alternative lifestyles and practices with an open mind-set and transformational heart.

Intergroup Contacts and Adaptation Strategies

Intergroup contact and adaptation processes involve identity change and challenges for both newcomers and host members in host societies. The challenges include: (1) differences in core beliefs, values, and situational norms between the home and host cultures; (2) intergroup communication challenges and adaptation; and (3) improvement of immigrants' status and situations in host environments through use of particular intergroup adaptive strategies.

This section examines immigrants' identity change experience and options (see Figure 4.1); reviews intergroup communication challenges and adaptation; and discusses intergroup adaptation strategies (mobility, competition, and social creativity) for situational and status improvement in host environment.

Identity Change Models for Immigrants and Minority Members

Intergroup contact between incoming immigrants and host members and their subsequent interactional adaptation is a multigenerational process that involves peaks and valleys in systems- and individual-level process change features. With regard to macro-level systems change, the temporal dimension is reflected through the relationships of immigrants and their subsequent generations with the dominant culture, and they may ultimately perceive themselves to be part of the dominant-mainstream culture and becoming the host members. With regard to the individual process-change level, this individual transformation process can occur in either a monocultural or pluralistic society. In a monocultural society with a high demand for conformity (e.g., Japan), adaptation for long-term inhabitants (e.g., Korean Japanese) is typically unidirectional (e.g., minority members attempting to assimilate into the dominant culture). In a pluralistic society (e.g., New Zealand or Australia), acculturation can take many forms and directions. Relatedly, the concept of intergenerational intercultural adaptation involves issues such as ingroup–outgroup contact boundaries, conformity pressure, majority–minority group attitudes and relationships, and ethnic heritage maintenance and larger culture assimilation issues. Meena's case story reflected some of these issues.

Many majority–minority group identity models (e.g., Berry, 1994, 2004; Cross, 1991; Helms, 1993; Parham, 1989; Phinney, 1989; Ruiz, 1990; Sue & Sue, 1990; Waters, 1990) have been developed to account for the developmental stages of identity consciousness in majority and minority group members. Berry and associates' fourfold typological model seems to capture the essence of immigrants' acculturation process (Berry, 1994, 2004; Berry, Kim, & Boski, 1987; Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989) (see Figure 4.2).

According to Berry et al. (1987; Berry, 1994, 2004), immigrants who tend to favor maintaining ethnic tradition, while attaching low significance to the values and norms of the new culture and having low contact with the dominant group members, practice the *traditional-oriented* or *ethnic-oriented option* (i.e., strong ethnic identity and weak cultural identity), which is sometimes also known as the “identity separation” option.

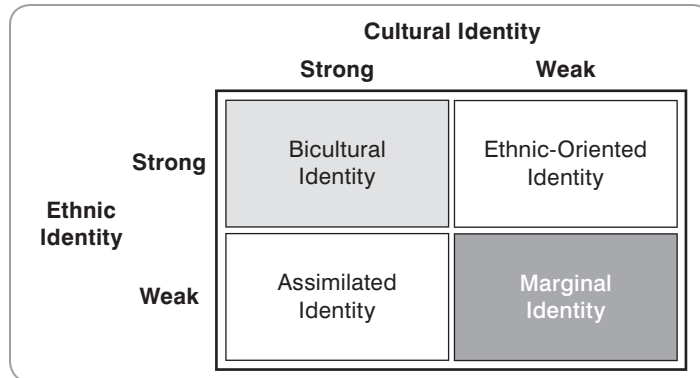


FIGURE 4.2. A cultural–ethnic identity typological model.

Conversely, individuals who attach low significance to their ethnic values and norms but tend to view themselves as members of the larger culture and consider the dominant group as their reference group, or even ingroup, practice the *assimilation* option (i.e., weak ethnic identity and strong cultural identity). Interestingly, individuals who favor maintaining ethnic traditions while displaying patterned movements (i.e., on the cognitive, affective, and/or behavioral level), becoming an integral part of the larger society, and who have social peers and close friends from both their ethnic network and the dominant societal group practice the *bicultural-oriented* or “integrative” option (i.e., strong on both ethnic and cultural identity). Finally, individuals who attach low significance to both their own ethnic group and the larger dominant cultural group, and who also do not feel that they belong to either group and, concurrently, experience a high degree of intergroup disconnection practice the *marginal identity option* (i.e., low on both ethnic and cultural identity) (see Figure 4.2).

Immigrants often face the dual challenges of adapting to their new culture while preserving their ethnic heritage. They also have to think about whom they want to be associated with and in what languages they should express themselves. For example, Dorjee et al. (2011) discussed these challenges faced by Tibetans in diaspora India and found that young Tibetans who have received both traditional and modern education are usually proficient in multiple languages (i.e., Tibetan, English, and Hindi) and, thus, their intergroup contacts often are also more wide ranging and all-encompassing, including Tibetan and Indians friends. Therefore, for Tibetans who transplant their ethnic roots to the Indian context, thanks to India’s strong governmental and bicultural local community support, it is easier for them to retain their ethnic identity heritage and also move toward a bicultural identity option: to be both Tibetan and Indian simultaneously. Comparatively speaking, however, in Western countries such as in the United States, Tibetans often face incredible challenges to preserve their ethnic identity traditions and also move toward a bicultural identity option. The reasons lie partly in the distinctive host culture’s socially mobile membership groups (e.g., in

the United States) and its widespread geographical landscape. More importantly, the very low Tibetan population density and vitality in the United States, and the lack of institutional and educational support resources, hamper the active development of the Tibetan immigrants' bicultural or integrative identity option. For example, in the U.S. host environment, teaching all things Tibetan is left to the Tibetan families and the Sunday schools if available.

Relatedly, at the individual level, immigrants may differ in terms of their orientation toward issues of ethnic identity maintenance *and* larger cultural identity maintenance. In developing an alternative perspective to conceptualize Berry's (1987, 2004) typological model, Ward (2008) advocates paying closer attention to ethnocultural identity conflict and the motivation for ethnocultural continuity in future research into the intergenerational acculturation process. Ward (2008) argues that intergroup conflict factors such as "perceived discrimination, poor intergroup relations, infrequent contact with national peers, perceptions of impermeable ingroup boundaries, and threats to cultural continuity are significant predictors of cultural-ethnic identity conflict" (Ward, 2008, p. 108) and can impact on an individual's ethnic-cultural identity self-struggling issues. Perceived favorable or unfavorable intergroup contact factors and the actual intergroup contact opportunity itself contribute significantly to the interactional adaptation of immigrants in their new cultural abodes. In addition, parental and individual motivational factors to maintain (or dismiss) their ethnocultural traditions and celebrations, language maintenance, and ingroup membership continuity issues also play an integral role in immigrants' communicative adaptation to their new cultural habitat.

Thus, within multigenerational immigrant communities, for example, a second-generation Vietnamese American or a Colombian American can commit to one of the following four cultural-ethnic identity salience categories: Vietnamese or Colombian primarily, American primarily, both, or neither. However, rather than viewing Berry's (2004) four identity options as four static boxes that are equal in sizes, future acculturation researchers may want to parse out the perceived intergroup boundary factors and family/individual motivational factors in immigrants' cultural-ethnic identity conceptualization processes. Furthermore, an immigrant or a co-culture member can adapt strategically on the behavioral level and conduct a double-swing dance of different communication styles and appear to be biculturally oriented, but affectively and cognitively she or he can be ethnically or marginally affiliated with a particular membership group. Systems-level antecedent factors, individual and interpersonal factors, and identity-based process-related factors—all add together as a net influence on immigrants' adaptive experience and identity change process.

Alternatively, from the *racial-ethnic identity development perspective*, various models have been proposed to account for the racial or ethnic identity formation of African Americans (e.g., Cross, 1991, 1995; Helms, 1993; Parham, 1989), Asian Americans (Sodowsky, Kwan, & Pannu, 1995; Sue & Sue, 1990), Latino/a Americans (e.g., Ruiz, 1990), and European Americans (e.g., Helms & Carter, 1993; Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994). Racial-ethnic identity development models tend to emphasize the oppressive-adaptive nature of intergroup relations in a pluralistic society. From their

perspective, racial–ethnic identity salience concerns the development of racial or ethnic consciousness along a linear, progressive pathway of identity change. For example, Cross (1971, 1991) has developed a five-stage model of African American racial identity development that includes preencounter (stage 1), encounter (stage 2), immersion–emersion (stage 3), internalization (stage 4), and internalization–commitment (stage 5). Helms and her associates (e.g., Helms, 1986, 1993; Parham & Helms, 1985) have amended and refined this five-stage model (i.e., integrating the concept of “worldview” in each stage) into four stages: preencounter, encounter, immersion–emersion, and internalization–commitment (see Figure 4.3).

The *preencounter stage* (before any polarized intergroup encounter with dominant group members) is the high cultural identity salience phase wherein the self-concepts of ethnic minority group members are influenced by the values and norms of the larger culture and they believe they are also members of the larger mainstream national culture. The *encounter stage* is the marginal identity phase when new racial–ethnic realization is awakened in the individuals because of a “racial shattering” prejudiced event (e.g., encountering racial slurs and racism) and minority group members realize that they cannot be fully accepted as part of the “White world.” The *immersion–emersion stage* is the strong racial–ethnic identity salience phase when individuals withdraw to the safe confines of their own racial–ethnic groups and become ethnically conscious and want to search and reconnect with their ethnic heritage and similar peers. They also become active spokespersons for their own distinctive ethnic groups and racial–ethnic rights. Finally, the *internalization–commitment stage* is the phase during which individuals develop a secure racial–ethnic identity that is internally defined and, at the same time, are able to establish genuine intergroup contacts with members of the dominant group and other co-culture groups. They also now form productive alliances with members from other identity groups and commit to promoting social justice and equality

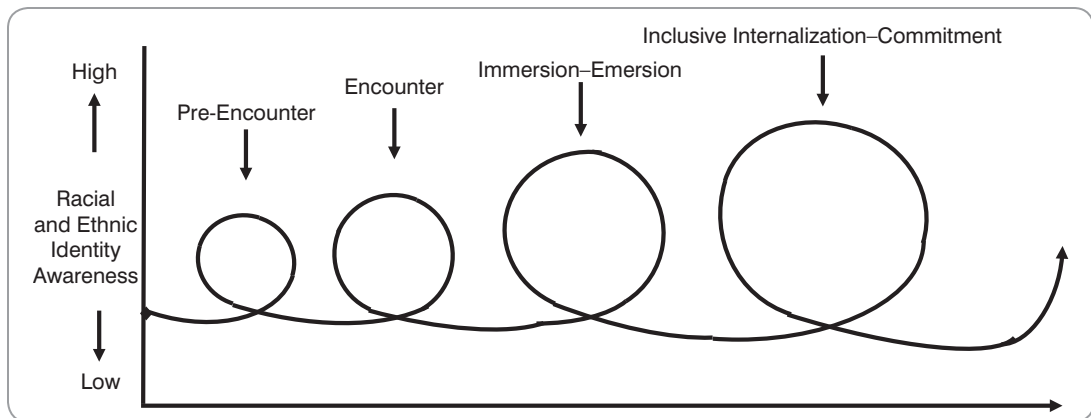


FIGURE 4.3. Racial–ethnic identity development model.

for diverse disenfranchised groups on either a domestic diversity or global level. At this stage, individuals' racial-ethnic identity awareness is inclusive of other co-culture members' struggles and challenges. In fact, in our visual model, we renamed this phase the "inclusive internalization-commitment stage" to reflect the all-encompassing inclusiveness of individuals (perhaps from a diverse co-culture group and also a dominant group) who identify with this particular stage and advocate for social justice for all. Racial-ethnic identity, mentioned above, refers to the quality or manner of identification with the respective racial or ethnic groups and also branches out to develop identity resonance for other marginalized identity groups (Cross, 1991; Helms, 1993).

In addition, Phinney (1992) has delineated four common themes of ethnic identity crystallization that are relevant to different group members at any stage of racial-ethnic identity development: ethnic belonging (i.e., positive affiliation with one's own ethnic group), ethnic identity achievement (i.e., active search for ethnic identity knowledge), ethnic practices (i.e., participation in ethnic traditions and activities), and other-group orientation (i.e., attitudes and feelings toward members of other ethnic groups) via positive or negative intergroup contacts. The different combined factors (i.e., a sense of ethnic belonging or larger cultural belonging or both, and the negative or positive attitudes between immigrant groups and host members) will shape the outlook of immigrant or minority members in experiencing a strong ethnic-oriented identity emphasis or an assimilated, bicultural, or marginal identity stance.

The foregoing typological and stage perspectives provide a good framework that will help us begin to understand the role of ethnic/cultural identity salience in a pluralistic society. Neither model, however, fully explains the ethnic/cultural identity salience issue or the ethnic/cultural identity content issue. To summarize, it appears that the study of ethnic identity salience has both ethnic-specific and ethnic-general elements (Phinney, 1990, 1991). As a specific phenomenon, ethnic identity encompasses the unique history, traditions, values, rituals, and symbols of a particular ethnic group. As a general phenomenon, ethnic identity in a pluralistic society is a composite construct that involves ethnic group belonging and the larger cultural identity intergroup contact issues. Thus, in order to understand the role of ethnic identity salience in a pluralistic society, both ethnic identity maintenance and the larger cultural identity maintenance should be taken into consideration.

To gain a more complete understanding of the influence of ethnic/cultural identity on behavior, the content (e.g., individualistic and collectivistic values, individual power ideology, intergroup expectations and perceived distance, and actual contact opportunity) and salience (e.g., degrees of importance and commitment) of both ethnic identity maintenance and larger culture contact experience should be integrated more closely into these models. Moreover, individual motivational and situational factors (i.e., on both immigrants' and host society members' levels) and the individual's operational skills in evoking strategic adaptation in different situations need to be incorporated in these intergroup identity formation and contact models.

Nevertheless, these models portray the broader trends of intergenerational and minority group members' experience in a multicultural environment and depict the

ebb and flow of their struggle for identity and sense of belonging. Some of the antecedent factors discussed earlier in this chapter can also account for the wavelike or oscillating movements between stages. From an intergroup perspective, adapting to a host environment involves communicating with individuals not only from different cultural and ethnic heritages, but also from diverse social identity groups.

Intergroup Social Identity Complexity

According to social identity complexity theory (SICT; Brewer, 2010), social identity formation can be complex with four patterns: dominance, intersection, compartmentalization, and merger. *Dominance* refers to individuals adopting one major social identity such as doctor, nurse, and professor from among many social identities and performing a particular identity in a consistent manner across contexts; other identities become secondary or subordinated to the main social identity. *Intersection* consists of two or more social memberships forming a singular, unique social identity such as a first-generation college student, first female firefighter in town, or first Latina CEO president and also performing this intersecting identity set in a regular manner across situations. However, others may decode or infer a different identity set when witnessing the intersecting identity performance. *Compartmentalization* refers to the enactment of various contextual social identities in different settings such as professor at a university, mother at home, chair at a committee meeting, and social activist at a rally, and concurrently performing in an optimally fluid and code-switching manner. Finally, *merger* refers to being keenly aware of and recognizing crosscutting multiple social identity memberships surrounding others and the individual is able to integrate these multiple identities into a holistic, genuine self. Other eyewitness individuals also discern these integrative multiple identity enactments as sincere, compelling, and authentically conveyed.

For example, Malala Yousafzi is a Pakistani Muslim and a social activist who fought for girls' education and became the youngest Nobel Peace Laureate. In this regard, Malala's merger pattern of highly complex social identity is constituted by six social identity memberships—Pakistani (nationality), Muslim (faith), girl (gender), education activist (social activism), youngest (age), and Nobel Laureate (exclusive social group). Her Indian counterpart, Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi, also has a highly complex merger pattern of social identity constituted by six social identity memberships—Indian (nationality), Hindu (faith), male (gender), children education activist (social activism), older (age), and Nobel Laureate (exclusive social group). Malala and Kailash at least shared two crosscutting social group memberships—children education activism and Nobel Peace Laureate.

Relatively speaking, SICT contends that dominance and intersection reflect low cognitive identity complexity and exterior role projection, whereas compartmentalization and merger reflect high cognitive identity complexity, with a stronger sense of intrinsically driven selves, and reflect adroit communicative accomplishment. Low social identity complexity individuals tend to carry their one dominant identity or two

(to three) intersecting identities as their projective personas across a variety of communicative situations and behave quite consistently. Comparatively, high social identity complexity individuals are keenly aware of their intrinsic multiple selves and also well aware of their attending audience. Thus, they choose to either adapt and address their audience responsively in different situations or execute an authentic multidimensional merger identity that appeals to manifold identity groups simultaneously.

Drawing from these socioemotional cognitive identity patterns, individuals may project consistent or different social identities in and across various situations and navigate them accordingly. Based on either or both self-avowed and other-ascribed social identity, immigrants may find it challenging to communicate between generations (e.g., based on age identity stereotypic perceptions) and individuals with stigmatized social identity (e.g., individuals with disability) with the normative group members. Reflecting more deeply about one's own social identity complexity and also according respect and understanding to a dissimilar other's social identity complexity may start the gateway to further intergroup membership dialogue and inclusive empathy.

Intergroup Communication Challenges and Adaptation

Immigrants encounter people from diverse social group memberships in the host cultural environment, especially from different generations and stigmatized groups. Concurrently, beyond the one-dimensional label of being "an immigrant" or "refugee," each home-seeker also possesses complex social identity facets and has distinctive stories to tell. For example, from an intergroup perspective, immigrants may experience communication predicaments in intergenerational and ability differential contexts. Intercultural acculturation scholars have not paid much attention to the communication challenges and elastic adaptation required in such situations. Informed by research studies in the intergroup communication arena, this section will discuss challenges related to intergenerational communication and stigmatized social identity in sequential order.

Intergenerational Communication Challenges and Models

Communicating with same-age peers is different from communicating with individuals from different age groups. Intergenerational communication can be defined in terms of generation-based age differences such as Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Generation Y or the Millennial Generation, and so on. Immigrants from these different generations may face intergenerational communication challenges in interpersonal interactions, workplaces (e.g., hospitals, and senior and assisted living apartments), and social gatherings. Identity and communication challenges among these generations are due to the fact that each generation's life experiences have primarily been informed or influenced by different sociohistorical-cultural trends, socioeconomic conditions, life span developmental perspectives, and many other factors experienced during their lifetimes (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010).

Intergenerational communication research (Giles & Gasiorek, 2011; Hummert, 2010) and the communication predicament of aging model (CPA) (Ryan, Giles, Bartolucci, & Henwood, 1986) indicate that younger generation immigrants are likely to communicate to elders mediated by stereotypical expectations, mostly negative. Elders also tend to stereotype the young as naïve, disrespectful, and less caring. Across intergenerational cultural contexts, both the young and elders reported much communication dissatisfaction in their acculturation process in their newly adopted homelands and emphasized a negative trajectory. The CPA model (Ryan et al. 1986) shows how this negative trend is perpetuated and how the communication dissatisfaction cycle often remains unbroken. Alternatively, age stereotypes in an interactional model show a positive outlook on intergenerational communication (Hummert, Garstka, Ryan, & Bonnesen, 2004). For example, elders can initiate positive changes in the verbal feedback cycle and, thus, intentionally switch the negative tonal quality of the verbal exchange process to the positive tonal quality mode. This action could ultimately result in a more coordinated intergenerational communication process and increase mutual communication satisfaction.

Interestingly, in intergenerational conflict situations, intercultural and intergroup communication scholars have identified the value gap as a common locus for conflict facework clashes among immigrants and their younger generation offspring (e.g., Gallois et al., 2005; Ting-Toomey, 2005b). Many immigrant parents seek to retain and transmit the traditions and values of their native homelands to their children through ethnic-specific parenting techniques (e.g., Pham, 2007), such as filial piety and *izzat* or face-honoring (Baig, Ting-Toomey, & Dorjee, 2014). Comparatively, members of the younger generation are often fully immersed in the host culture's and pop culture's social environment and have frequent interactions with their host social peers. For example, one research study indicated that older and younger Asian Indian American women differed in their narratives of bicultural experiences (Inman, 2006; Inman, Constantine, & Ladany, 1999). While the older ones reported "selective acculturation," choosing certain aspects of American culture (e.g., individual competitiveness and personal freedom) and Indian culture (e.g., food and religious activities) that appealed to them, the younger women reported struggling to maintain bicultural or integrative identity based on their combined American socialization and traditional Indian upbringing, and also striving hard to satisfy their Asian Indian ethnic community expectations. Notably, Baig et al. (2014) found, among other things about intergenerational *izzat* or face-honoring maintenance, *incremental identity shifting and value shifting* as the repeated stories of older South Asian Indian Americans (SAIAs). In their host environment, while the older SAIAs felt pressure to maintain *izzat* or face honor among the immediate family, they felt less so with the Indian casual friends' circle and community who are geographically dispersed. They also have more realistic cultural expectations of their offspring growing up in an individualistic cultural environment. Thus, both generational group members need to spend more time listening to each other's identity stories and struggles and also expressing their "common ground" understanding and empathy for each other's identity pain, change, and metamorphosis process.

Stigmatized Social Identity Challenges and Adaptation

In general, immigrants may face stigmatized identities, especially when host members are unwelcoming. For example, Mexican immigrants are often stigmatized as illegal immigrants, and the influx of Asian students into prestigious American universities may be labeled AIs (Asian Invaders) by some dominant White students. These perceptions and ascribed stigmas negatively affect communication interaction between individuals from these social groups and dominant members in the host society. Perhaps, the two more prominent stigmatized social identity challenges faced by immigrants that need more attention in acculturation research literature are related to sexual orientation and disability.

Recent studies on sexual orientation issues affecting immigrants indicate two trends in host environments: (1) discrimination and mistreatment and (2) recognition and protection. Gonzales et al. (2008) interviewed, in depth, 20 self-identified heterosexual Mexican immigrant men in Los Angeles and found that they had become victims of economic exploitation and potential sexual harassment by their employers (e.g., by White gay males). In contrast, Murray's (2014) interview study found that immigrant refugees to Canada are grateful that their gendered and sexual orientation is accepted and protected in the new homeland. Their feelings about the countries of origin are complex, however, as they continue communicating with families and friends living in their natal countries.

Many intergroup communication research studies focus on immigrants' sexual-orientation stigmatization and discrimination (Hajek, 2012; Hajek, Abrams, & Murachver, 2005) and can inform the intercultural acculturation literature. The umbrella term LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) includes sexual minorities; however, heterosexuals often use labels such as "gay" in a derogatory fashion (Thurlow, 2001). When heterosexuals communicate negative attitudes toward gays in social interactions, they threaten the gays' social identity and undercut their social self-esteem (Hajek et al., 2005). Heterosexuals' negative attitudes may be related to their own perceived identity threat to a strongly held traditional gendered belief system (Whitley & Egisdottir, 2000). Overall, research studies (e.g., Hajek & Giles, 2005; Kite & Whitley, 1996) indicate that gays are recipients of negative stereotypes, communicative divergence, and intergroup discrimination. More studies are needed to address these issues confronted by immigrants with complex social identity in the host societies. Beyond the stigmatized immigrant-outsider identity status, each individual with multiple stigmatized social identities carries additional emotional burdens and scars, identity vulnerable sore spots, and perpetual identity wariness and fatigue that cannot be shaken off easily.

To illustrate, in South Asia, specifically in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, transgender people called *Hijras* are stigmatized based on their gender. While they have officially received the recognition of Third Gender (individuals who are neither males nor females), *Hijras* on the one hand are ascribed to have spiritual power, but on the other hand, they are stigmatized and ostracized in social settings. Traditionally, many Indians believe *Hijras* have the power to bless desired couples with fertility or success

in business, or if they are displeased to curse them with infertility and failure in their business ventures. *Hijra* communities in South Asia are discriminated against, having scarce access to education, jobs, and good housing. Many of them are forced to earn their livelihoods through begging, prostitution, and extortion. In comparison, in most Western cultures, “sex” is defined in terms of distinctive “maleness” and “femaleness” binary categories, and transgender people have not yet received the unique third gender acknowledgment and inclusive recognition that has been given in some other cultural locales or sites.

Immigrants also face stigmatized social identity issues related to perceived ability-difference orientations that require dynamic adaptation and a fast learning curve. In the health context, for example, immigrants need to deal with complex disability interviews and disability written reports (Newbold & Simone, 2015), raising children with disability (Jennings, Khanlou, & Su, 2014), and children with learning disabilities (Barton & Wolery, 2010) among myriad other disability-related stressors. Not all forms of disability are the same, and therefore, different types of accommodation or adaptation are needed, such as physical adaptation (e.g., wheel chair and wheel chair access), cognitive adaptation (e.g., teaching and learning style adaptation), aging process adaptation (e.g., assisted living and care giving), sociocultural adaptation (e.g., learning English as a second language), and communication adaptation (e.g., adaptive verbal and nonverbal code switching between immigrants and host members), to name a few. Indeed, the term “disability” is problematic and value laden and is perceived as using the dominant cultural perspective to define what constitutes “disability” or even “deficiency.” This may be an area of research inquiry that critical, interpretive, and functional paradigm scholars can examine more deeply and broadly in interdependent collaboration.

To put the above idea succinctly, intergroup communication research indicates that able-bodied individuals often perceive disability as the central identity marker for individuals with disabilities and disregard their other unique personal traits (see Duggan, Robinson, & Thompson, 2012). They may view them as sick, incompetent, unproductive, overly dependent, and a family burden. These biased attributions often manifest themselves through unfavorable attitudes and dismissive communication in the intergroup contacts (Duggan et al., 2012; Fox & Giles, 1996). In many ways, able-bodied individuals do not know how to interact with individuals with disability. For example, even health care professionals lack knowledge and expertise to communicate with and treat patients with disabilities (e.g., with culturally sensitive assessment tools) responsively and empathetically. Patients with disabilities often have difficulty finding primary care physicians who can tend to their underlying adaptation problems holistically.

Furthermore, their negative intergroup attitudes about individuals with disability are positively related to patronizing communication (Harwood & Williams, 1998). Grounded in the communication accommodation theory (CAT; Ryan, Giles, Bartolucci, & Henwood, 1986), the communication predicament of disability model (CPDM; Ryan et al., 2005; Ryan, Bajorek, Beaman, & Anas, 2005) focused on explaining interactions between able-bodied individuals and individuals with disabilities. CPDM explicates the communication predicament with disability via four stages: stigmatization (of those

with disability); modified communication in both able-bodied individuals and individuals with disability; resistance or stereotypical reinforcement reaction by individuals with disability; and negative consequences of stigmatized social identity. The negative outcomes may include social isolation and loneliness, communication dissatisfaction, and health issues.

Encouragingly, intergroup communication scholars suggest that the negative feedback loop in CPD model can be actively modified through empowering communication strategies such as selective assertiveness, impression management strategies, self-disclosure regulation, social creativity, and competition strategies (see Duggan et al., 2012). Studies are needed to determine the efficacy of these intervention strategies and their outcomes. Of course, it is also vital that able-bodied individuals take a proactive learning stance to learn how to be culturally responsive and sensitive to individuals with disabilities on both verbal and nonverbal communication coordination levels. Based on CAT, it can also be suggested that changing intergroup orientation to interpersonal orientation in interactions (e.g., through personalized self-disclosure and sharing) can improve communication between able-bodied individuals and immigrants with disabilities and their adaptation to the host cultural environment. Although this is easier said than done, the able-bodied can try harder to increase their knowledge about stigmatized others; and stigmatized others need not give up too easily and should be tenacious in becoming strong advocates or educators for their own and other stigmatized identity groups.

Intergroup Interaction Strategies: Strategic Adaptation

The above sections clearly delineate the multitude of challenges that immigrants encounter in the host social environment. These challenges, related to identity and culture, exist at macro, individual, and interpersonal levels. Immigrants need to employ psychological, sociocultural, and communication strategies in adapting to their host setting. From an intergroup communication research and applied perspective, immigrants or co-culture members could use three intergroup strategies to improve their stigmatized situations in the dominant cultural milieu: social mobility, social creativity, and social competition (Harwood, Giles, & Palomares, 2005). These strategies are applicable to various intergroup contexts for identity and status improvement (e.g., Hajek et al., 2005). *Individual mobility strategy* is basically a strategic passing strategy that individuals can use to fit into the dominant group or host environment for identity and status upgrade, such as by working very hard and becoming successful professionals, having resources with which others would like to align. *Social creativity strategy* is a strategy that a group can use to improve their status by way of redefining a negative aspect of their social identity (e.g., being undocumented is not a crime) or changing intergroup comparison referents (e.g., there are other groups that are worse off), or strategically highlighting certain positive aspects of their identity (e.g., compassionate and nonviolent), or creating a new dimension of comparison altogether (e.g., one of a kind initiative or naming label such as the DREAMers). Finally, *social competition strategy*

is a group strategy that can be used to fight for a group's rights and identity recognition. For example, gays and lesbians use social competition strategy to gain legal recognition such as civil union and property rights in different state courts in the United States. They also organize and participate in Gay Pride parades as a social creative strategy for positive identity recognition. Some gays also conceal their gay identity as individual mobility strategy to prevent social ostracism and gain social approval and status recognition from the dominant heterosexuals.

Conceivably, immigrants can use these intergroup strategies to improve their status in host environments. Immigrants can use individual mobility strategy (e.g., higher education degree or excellent linguistic and communication skills) for adapting to and improving their status in host environments. Immigrants who have acculturated linguistically and culturally to the greatest extent possible have acquired an assimilated identity in their new homeland (Berry, 1994, 2004). Anecdotal evidence strongly indicates that these assimilated immigrants (or bicultural) who used social mobility strategies have gained access to higher socioeconomic status and power; many of them, facilitated by their demographic characteristics, have also passed as members of the dominant host culture and environment (i.e., if their physical features and skin color are similar to the dominant cultural group). From an intergroup analytical perspective, while these immigrants have successfully adapted to and improved their status and power on the individual level, their group membership status on the macro level may remain as it is. In comparison, social creativity and social competition strategies can be used to improve not just individuals but their group membership status as well.

Immigrant group members can use social creativity strategies to gain or improve their status recognition. For example, Tibetan immigrants are among the smallest groups of immigrants in North America and Europe based on their demography, status, and institutional support (Giles & Johnson, 1987). Using social creativity strategies, Tibetan immigrants around the world have promoted the stature of His Holiness the Dalai Lama as their undisputed leader as well as the culture of peace and nonviolence based on Buddhism. They also widely promoted the international recognition of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, including the Nobel Peace Prize (1989), Congressional Gold Medal (2007), and Templeton Prize (2012). These strategies contributed to the unique status recognition and adaptation of Tibetans to host environments. Adopting the nonviolence and middle-way approaches of Buddhism to resolve conflict issues, Tibetan Middle Way Policy has gained support from the leaderships of India, the United States, and the European Parliament (Dorjee, 2013). This policy espouses a win-win solution to Sino-Tibetan conflict issues.

Immigrants can also participate in multicultural pride parades to highlight the positive distinctiveness of their groups. To effect status recognition, immigrants can redefine the negative portrayal of their group memberships into positive images such as "Black Is Beautiful" and "Islam Is a Religion of Peace." Alternatively, they can also change social comparison groups to achieve favorable outcomes. For example, Nepalese and Bhutanese immigrants in the United States can compare themselves to Tibetan immigrants in terms of ethnolinguistic vitality for high status. Immigrants can also use

websites and social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and social networks as part of a creative strategy to improve their status recognition and solidarity empowerment.

Moreover, immigrant groups can use social competition strategies to achieve status improvement when they perceive the intergroup status quo as unstable and illegitimate (Harwood et al., 2005). Such strategies include political activism, marches, protests, vigils, lobbying, campaigns, and strikes to gain equal and equity rights and social justice. History abounds with examples of social competition strategies used by minority groups for social justice and equal rights—most notably, the civil rights movement and women's rights movement. In recent times, LGBT movements have fought for their civil union and property rights and have campaigned to stop discrimination based on sexual orientation. In general, immigrant groups struggle to preserve their cultural and ethnic heritage on the one hand and acculturate to host environment for intercultural adaptation on the other. Immigrants fear the loss of their cultural and ethnic heritage in host environments as attested to by the second generation of immigrants and more so by the third generation. In this regard, immigrant groups that are *ethnically oriented* (Berry et al., 1987) are likely to use social competition strategy to challenge the status quo of the dominant host group and fight for equality and equity. Metaphorically stated, they prefer the colorful salad bowl or quilt metaphor over the “one size blends all” melting pot identity metaphor. From an intercultural and intergroup perspective, their cultural identity distinctiveness (e.g., their ethnic values, religious traditions, languages, and nonverbal rituals) is rooted in preserving their ethnic heritage alongside intercultural acculturation to the host environment. In this regard, they are likely to use social competition strategies to fight for bilingual education, multicultural training, equal representation in power positions, and equal access to resources for their status recognition and improvement.

In short, the dynamic, adaptive strategies immigrants and immigrant groups are likely to use depend on their perceptions of intergroup boundary permeability and status quo legitimacy. If the intergroup boundary is perceived to be permeable, many immigrants may use social mobility strategies to upgrade their status and power. However, if the intergroup boundary is regarded as impermeable along with the illegitimacy of their status, then immigrant groups are likely to use social creative and social competition strategies for their status recognition and improvement (Harwood et al., 2005). Together with considering the antecedent factors in shaping immigrants' entry acculturation process and the perceived intergroup membership boundary and adaptive strategies that are being enacted, all these factors shape the immigrants' acculturation outcomes.

Immigrants' Acculturation Outcomes

Overall, systems-level and interpersonal-level antecedent factors, together with perceived and actual intergroup contact experiences, shape immigrants' acculturation outcomes. This section discusses unfavorable versus favorable systems-level conditions and

interpersonal support systems that prompt immigrants' identity vulnerability versus identity security states. We then discuss some evolving outcome strategies that both immigrants and host nationals can practice to move toward cooperative intergroup best practice and harmony.

Systems-Level and Interpersonal-Level Outcomes

As discussed in Chapter 1, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the United States is now a nation with increased multicultural complexities and nuances: of the nation's approximately 307 million people, 65% are Whites/non-Hispanics, 16% are Latinos/Hispanics, 13% are African Americans/Blacks, 4.5% are Asian Americans, and 1 percent Native Americans/Alaskan Natives/Pacific Islanders. According to these same census data, the number of foreign-born nationals is increasing at an accelerated pace: it is now 12% of the total U.S. population. Current and future generations in the United States include many individuals whose parents or grandparents were born in a Latin American or Asian region.

When systems-level and interpersonal-level factors are consistently hostile to newcomers, then newcomers lose their motivation to pursue their instrumental task or socioemotional goals. They also develop a high sense of acculturation vulnerability and ambivalence because of their outsider disorientation identity status. Simultaneously, their mental and physical health may be affected by these overloaded stressors. Identity confusion and identity dislocation across time can compound their emotionally fragile state. In such situations, friends and networks of the newcomers ought to provide them with timely identity support so that they do not feel alone. They can also balance the bleak identity outlook of these newly arrived immigrants with realistic positive images and constructive reminders. Institutions (e.g., school teachers and counselors) might well devote more attention and display empathy to the newcomers to buffer their psychological stressors. As for the new arrivals themselves, they should put themselves in situations in which they can achieve some degree of success and identity confidence and competence. They should learn to ask for help when things in the new culture become overwhelming and exhausting. They can also use different adaptive communication strategies to change their individual or group membership status if they so choose. Finally, they should mindfully learn to balance their negative intergroup contact experiences with the positive individuals and resources they encountered in their newly resided homelands.

When systems and interpersonal levels lend a helping hand and are responsive and welcoming, cultural strangers can start building their self-confidence and establish interpersonal trust with members of the host society. They can also gain a sense of increased acculturation security and confidence in their newly acquired home. In order to promote positive intergroup contacts and acculturation confidence, newcomers and host members need to heed these four positive intergroup membership contact conditions: strive hard to see each other on an equal-status inclusive level, engage with each other to develop a cooperative dialogue process, move forward affirmatively to achieve

mutually beneficial interdependent goals, and appeal for strong institutional support (Allport, 1954). In building on these four positive intergroup contact conditions, Kienzle and Soliz (2017) also recommend that cultural strangers tend to the following important features: the group salience outlook, friendship potential, the common ingroup identity model, intergroup contact via self-disclosure, and extended contact through mediated friendship. The first added intergroup contact feature, group salience, refers to the idea of using group membership features to add more depth of knowledge and complexity (versus shying away from self-group membership stereotypes) in the intergroup interaction process. The last four updated intergroup contact features focus more on developing personalized close friendships, cultivating common “third-culture” overlapped identity, engaging in quality group membership-based and interbeing-based sharing, and widening one’s network of friends to include diverse connective friendship experiences.

Personal Identity Change Outcomes

Immigrants’ acculturation outcome is an oscillating, dialectical process among antecedent, process, and outcome factors. The antecedent, process, and outcome acculturation factors are interdependent and are constantly co-evolving and involved bidirectional feedback loops. Newcomers at each acculturation stage have to learn to experiment and reinvent new ways of coping, thinking, feeling, and behaving on a daily basis. The costs of such internal and external struggles and constant reinvention can include everything from identity disorientation and exhilaration to identity malfunction and emotional shutdown.

Furthermore, immigrants have to realize that their sense of “identity in-betweenness” may stay with them for a long time and even through multiple generations (Yoshikawa, 1988). The affective struggle of identity rootlessness versus rootedness, especially in immigrants and subsequent generations, is part of the global history movement, with settlers moving from one spatial locale to another across the historical and generational time span. Although this chapter focuses primarily on immigrants’ acculturation issues in the United States, the accelerating global movements and influx of immigrants and refugees throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and the Middle East cannot be overlooked. Many of the immigrants’ sense of rootlessness and identity chaos may also help them see the ideas and practices of their adopted homeland with greater clarity. Their sense of developmental rootedness may propel many immigrants and their children to commit themselves more fully to social change and to correction of social injustice in both their adopted homeland and the wider global landscape.

Some immigrants may utilize a “third-culture perspective” (Casmir, 1997) when viewing the pros and cons of their culture of origin and the new culture. With deep intercultural understanding and empathy, both host members and immigrants can also co-create a unique “third-culture” outlook and put the best composite parts of each cultural system into cooperative best practice. Starosta and Olorunnisola (1998) also

propose that to develop a convergent third-culture approach to problem solving, cultural members need to be keenly aware of their distinctive cultural differences and the capacity to suspend ethnocentric judgments in order to work collaboratively. Alternatively, research on cultural frame switching provides insights that immigrants may use to adapt to the host environment.

Cultural frame switching (CFS) means using “two or more cultural interpretative frames or schemas. . . . These cultural schemas guide behaviors only when they come to the foreground in one’s mind and only when they are applicable to social events that need to be judged” (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000, p. 742). According to several research studies, immigrant groups or second-generation immigrant adolescents can use cultural frame switching elastically to negotiate bicultural and multicultural identity issues in their adopted homelands. Many of them also take culture-sensitive responsibilities for generating synergistic solutions to bridge intergenerational family conflicts or for helping the older generation to navigate their new cultural workplace setting (Benet-Martinez, Lee, & Leu, 2006; Benet-Martinez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002; Hong et al., 2003).

In sum, to be a resourceful communicator in a new culture, one has to walk judiciously on a warbling suspension bridge while balancing multiple identity acts in two hands. One has to forgo stability in order to regain stability. One has to experience differentiation in order to regain inclusion. One has to experience unpredictability in order to rebuild and regain predictability or trust. Finally, a newcomer has to be willing to “become” anonymous in the unknown territory in order to “be” a full-fledged, recognized member of the new culture. While some travelers view the journey as difficult and risky, others take advantage of traversing the hills and valleys along the way as part of a long-term acculturation and co-learning process on both intergroup and interindividual levels.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND MINDFUL GUIDELINES

The United States of America prides itself as the land of immigrants, yet immigrants encounter many challenges of acculturation and adaptation. In this chapter, we explored and discussed these challenges under three main points. First, we explained antecedent factors, from the systems level to the individual level to the interpersonal level, that influence immigrants’ entry acculturation process to the host cultural environment. Then we discussed intergroup contact encounters and social identity complexity issues and relatedly discussed intergroup interactional challenges such as intergenerational challenges and stigmatized social identity challenges. We also explored and discussed intergroup communication strategies of social mobility, social creativity, and social competition to adapt to the host environment. Finally, we discussed the unfavorable and favorable systems-level acculturation outcomes and individual-level acculturation outcomes such as developing a “third-culture” perspective and also engaging in “cultural frame switching.” Based on the research discussion in this chapter, here are

some recommendations for effectively managing identity transformation and acculturation in the host environment:

- 1** Immigrants should realize that culture shock is an inevitable experience that most people encounter when relocating from a familiar environment to an unfamiliar one. Culture shock is induced because of identity fear or threat in the unpredictable environment.
- 2** Acculturation is a process influenced by multiple factors from the systems level to the interpersonal level, and it involves incremental identity shift and changes for having to learn and adopt new roles and skills to adapt to the host culture. The host national attitudinal stance and local institutional support can facilitate immigrants' acculturation process.
- 3** The greater the cultural distance factor between immigrants' culture and the host culture, the greater the need for immigrants to be provided with optimal affective, cognitive, and behavioral resources to cope with such differences to feel at home in the new environment.
- 4** Establishing personal and social networks in the host environment can afford affective, instrumental, and informational resources for effective intercultural adaptation and making the host environment one's new home.
- 5** From an intergroup perspective, three strategies can be used for host environment adaptation based on immigrants' perceived permeability of the boundary crossing. These strategies are social mobility, social creativity, and social competition (Harwood et al., 2005).
- 6** From the identity negotiation theory lens, the immigrants' fundamental need in an unfamiliar culture is to address the sense of insecurity and vulnerability. The more competent immigrants are at managing their identity threat level, the more they are able to induce effective adaptation outcomes. New arrivals can defuse their identity threats by: (a) increasing their motivations to learn about the new culture; (b) keeping their expectations realistic and increasing their familiarity with the diverse facets of the new culture (e.g., conducting culture-specific research through readings and diverse accurate sources, including talking with people who have spent some time in that culture); (c) increasing their linguistic fluency and learning why, how, and under what situations certain phrases or gestures are appropriate, plus understanding the core cultural values linked to specific behaviors; (d) working on their tolerance for ambiguity and other flexible personal attributes; (e) developing strong ties (close friends) and weak ties (acquaintance-ships) to manage identity stress and loneliness; (f) using a wide range of mass media and social media to understand the symbolic complexity of the host culture; and (g) being mindful of their interpersonal behaviors and suspending snap evaluations of the host or newly adopted homeland culture.

CRITICAL THINKING AND CONNECTIVE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. In regard to the opening case story, what do you think of intercultural dating relationships? Can you think of persuasive ways to support and promote intimate–intercultural relationships? How can parents and cultural communities support intercultural relationships? What can parents do to raise their children bi- or multiculturally?
2. Among the three levels of antecedent factors that influence intercultural acculturation, which of them do you think impacts and creates the most stressors in immigrants' acculturation process? In what ways can host receptivity at the systems level (e.g., immigration policy), individual level (e.g., expectations), and interpersonal level (e.g., social network and support) positively impact immigrants' acculturation to the host environment?
3. Which of the identity change process models in your view help explain better immigrants' integration into the host environment? What can the host country members do to show respect and support to the social identity complexity of the immigrants?
4. To what extent do immigrants encounter intergenerational communication challenges and stigmatized social identity challenges in interpersonal and workplace situations? What strategies can enable us to face these challenges? What are the pros and cons of using social mobility, social creativity, and social competition strategies?
5. Based on research findings on effective outcomes, what future research directions would you suggest intercultural and intergroup scholars should focus on in promoting bicultural frame-switching and bicultural code-switching processes in both host and immigrant intergroup contact experiences?



PART II

Navigating Intercultural
and Intergroup
Communication
with Mindfulness

CHAPTER 5

Developing Intercultural and Intergroup Communication Competence

A Mindfulness Lens

- Introduction
- Integrative Identity Negotiation Competence: Criteria
 - *Intercultural Competence Criteria: Interaction Yardsticks*
 - *Intergroup Competence Criteria: Interaction Yardsticks*
- Culture-Sensitive Competence Components
 - *Acquiring Culture-Sensitive and Identity-Sensitive Knowledge Component*
 - *Developing the Flexible Mind-Set and Open-Hearted Attitudes Component*
 - *Sharpening Intercultural–Intergroup Communication Capacities and the Skillsets Component*
 - *Intercultural–Intergroup Desired Outcomes: Transformative Movements*
- Mindfulness: Linking Criteria, Components, and Outcomes
 - *The Connective Hook*
 - *The Threefold Facets*
- Chapter Summary and Mindful Guidelines
- Critical Thinking and Connective Application Questions

FRIENDLY TEASING OR VERBAL HARASSMENT?: A CASE STORY

A few months ago, Jessica Martinez had just graduated from a well-respected, local university with a degree in mass communications. She had several offers, but the most exciting and the one closest to home was with TechnoloComm. She was hired in the human resources office to work on internal newsletters and publicity.

Everything went well for the first week or two, and then something happened that made her question her job and the organization. It was last Monday morning, and she joined a conversation with her coworkers, Peter and Alex. They were working together on other projects. So, seeing them in the coffee room, she thought this was a great chance to get to know them.

First Episode: "Hi, Jessica," said Peter enthusiastically. "We were just talking about the big street party last weekend." "Yeah," chimed in Alex. "I was really frustrated because I couldn't get into my neighborhood. Did you experience the same problem?" After pausing, he added, "I guess not, since you probably don't live on the north side of town."

"Yeah, you must live in *el barrio*, right?" questioned Peter, making sure he had given a Latin twist to "*el barrio*." Jessica felt her face flush; she nodded slightly and faked a laugh. Jessica lived with her family in a traditionally Hispanic area of town and would never want to live anywhere else. Her neighborhood was *home*. It was where she had grown up and where she knew everyone.

Before she could think of a good response, the men headed back to their desks. Jessica's gut reaction was, "Why do they assume I live in the *barrio*? I *could* live anywhere; I just don't want to and my family doesn't want to either." After thinking about the conversation for a while, though, she decided to try to forget it, thinking, "It might be a verbal misunderstanding; I just need to focus on my own job."

Second Episode: A week later, the three of them bumped into each other again in the coffee room on a Monday morning. Peter asked, "Hey, guys, how was your weekend?" Alex replied, "Great! I got together with my family and had a surf and turf barbecue." Jessica responded, "Sounds yummy. I love barbecue!" Peter commented, "I'm surprised to hear that."

With a surprising and innocent tone, Jessica asked, "Why's that?" Peter replied, "Well, you know, I've always heard that Hispanics don't like to barbecue."

Jessica responded with an irritated voice, "And, pray tell, why not?" "Well," Peter said, "because the beans fall through the grill!" At this point, both Peter and Alex started laughing as Jessica responded with total disgust, "You guys are totally hopeless!" and she walked away with her heart pounding.

—Adapted from MEARES and OETZEL (2010, pp. 270–277)

Introduction

What do you think about the communication dynamics described in the story? To what extent can you relate to Jessica's experience? What communication concepts do you have in your toolkit to dissect Peter and Alex's verbal and nonverbal messages and Jessica's "heart-pounding" reaction and decoding interpretation? Do you read the story as a workplace friendly teasing episode or a workplace (or more specifically interethnic

and intergender) harassment episode? This opening story reflects the complex intersection of sociocultural membership and sociorelational professional role issues, perceived power and privilege dynamics, ingroup/outgroup boundary maintenance and separation, and biased intergroup communication filters. After reading this chapter, we hope you can apply some of the core competence components (such as knowledge, attitudes, and skillsets) and competence criteria (appropriateness, effectiveness, and adaptability), and we also hope that you will incorporate the essential role of mindfulness in analyzing this case story with enhanced intercultural and intergroup reflexivity.

Intercultural and intergroup communication competence is of vital importance to establish and maintain quality intercultural and intergroup relationships. Intercultural relationships are constituted through communication; incompetent communication usually derails or damages relationships, while competent communication usually nurtures relationships and enhances the richness of understanding on deep belief-value and identity levels. Mindful intercultural and intergroup communication can cue the use of an ethnorelative mind-set by linking the other person's cultural and personal value orientations and lived experiences to explain the problematic interaction. It also prompts timely use of a culturally adaptive verbal communication style, and the adoption of appropriate and effective nonverbal gestures in accordance with the intercultural or intergroup situation.

Several theoretical approaches to intercultural communication place a primary emphasis on competence, including anxiety/uncertainty management theory (Gudykunst, 2005a, 2005b), and INT (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). In Chapter 2, we extensively discussed IINT and the core composite identity domains, including culture, ethnicity, religion, gender, family/generation, intimate-professional role relationships, and individual personal attributes. In Chapters 3 and 4, we offered the contexts in which the identity negotiation processes of international sojourners and also immigrants and refugees can play out in mindful or mindless interactional manner. In this chapter, we contend that intercultural and intergroup communication competence is essential for fulfilling instrumental/task and relational goals for sociocultural membership identity interaction, sociocultural relational role interaction, and interpersonal-individualized interaction.

Traditionally, whereas the intercultural communication competence domain tends to draw from theories and research concepts from the international management, interpersonal communication, and intercultural competence fields, the intergroup communication domain tends to base its theorizing effort on social group processes, social psychology, and intergroup relations arenas. While there are some clear distinctive foci in each domain, some fascinating overlaps also exist in which these domains can mutually inform how to develop communication competence optimally. We explore some of these intersectionalities here.

Sociocultural group memberships and other identity diversity issues are central to understanding both intercultural and intergroup communication in our everyday workplace and relationship development (Giles, 2012; Ting-Toomey, 1999, 2005a). Under the current IINT version (see Chapter 2), competent communication is conceptualized as

integrating the necessary intercultural–intergroup knowledge, mindfulness, and interaction skills to manage identity-based and communication-based issues appropriately, effectively, and adaptively.

This chapter is organized in four sections. The first section probes the criteria of what constitutes a competent intercultural–intergroup communicator. In particular, the criteria of communication appropriateness, effectiveness, and adaptability are addressed. The second section offers a working model on intercultural–intergroup communication competence and covers the content components and desired outcomes of developing intercultural–intergroup competence capacities. The third section explores the role of mindfulness in connecting with competence criteria, content components, and desired outcomes. The fourth section offers a chapter summary and recommends some initial guidelines for developing a mindfulness state in becoming an astute intercultural and intergroup communicator in diverse interactional settings.

Integrative Identity Negotiation Competence: Criteria

The first part of this section emphasizes the implicit standards or yardsticks that assess intercultural communication competence; and the second part stresses the yardsticks that appraise intergroup communication competence. Here we also emphasize that both intercultural and intergroup communication competence are situational-based concepts and are intersubjectively derived based on the assessments of both insiders and outsiders' outlooks. While insiders or ingroup members would often compute the ingroup members' behaviors as manifesting appropriate and effective interaction, outsiders or outgroup members would just as often gauge the problematic behaviors as improper and ineffective.

Intercultural Competence Criteria: Interaction Yardsticks

According to Wiseman (2003), intercultural communication competence refers to the “the knowledge, motivation, and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures” (p. 192). When viewed from the INT lens (Ting-Toomey, 2005a), the criteria for evaluating intercultural communication competence have been borrowed from the field of interpersonal competence, especially concerning the criteria of appropriateness and effectiveness (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984, 1989, 2011). These two criteria, together with the added feature of adaptability (Ting-Toomey, 1999), can serve as evaluative yardsticks of whether or not an intercultural or intergroup communicator has been perceived as behaving competently in an interaction episode.

Communication appropriateness refers to the degree to which the exchanged behaviors are regarded as proper and match the expectations generated by the culture's insiders. To behave “properly” in any given cultural situation, competent negotiators need to have the relevant value knowledge schema of the larger situational norms that guide the interaction episode (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002). They also need to acquire

the specific knowledge schema of what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate language/verbal and nonverbal style patterns that can promote quality intercultural interaction and a synchronized relationship-building process. For example, knowing how to address senior persons (whether status-related or age-related seniors) by their proper titles and honorifics and with the proper nonverbal intonations and bowing postures is a sign of appropriate and respectful behavior in Japanese and Korean cultures.

Communication effectiveness refers to the degree to which communicators achieve mutually shared meaning and integrative goal-related outcomes in the interaction episode (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2011). To engage in effective communication strategies, intercultural negotiators need to have a wide range of verbal and nonverbal repertoires to make mindful choices and create the momentum needed to move their individual or interdependent goal outcomes forward. Communication effectiveness has been achieved when multiple meanings are attended to with accuracy and in a culturally sensitive manner, and when personal and mutually desired goals have been worked out strategically (Canary, Lakey, & Sillars, 2013; Hannawa, 2015). For example, in many Asian cultures such as the Thai and Vietnamese, individuals would not like to say a direct or blunt “no” to a friend’s request (e.g., for a ride to the airport at an early morning hour such as 5 A.M.), and the friend in turn would make the request in a very tactful way. They would meander around the issue, and the friend would already decode the “implicit rejection answer” and would retreat graciously from the request statement by engaging in some mutual face-saving response. Although the outcome of the airport ride request was not successful, on the meaning decoding level, both communicators discerned the content meaning level with accuracy and coordination. Thus, the outcome was partially effective and not awkward. More importantly, the twin criteria of communication appropriateness and communication effectiveness are positively interdependent. When both communicators display appropriate verbal and nonverbal behaviors in accordance with the culturally situated expectancies, the “good-faith” process behaviors can induce interaction and outcome effectiveness. When both intercultural members try hard to understand the multiple meanings in the communication transaction process, their attentive understanding posture can prompt collaborative intercultural movements and possibly lead to effective conjoint outcomes.

To behave both appropriately and effectively in managing a diverse range of intercultural situations, one needs to be mentally and behaviorally nimble and flexible. *Communication adaptability* refers to our ability to change our interaction behaviors and goals to meet the specific needs of the situation (Arasaratnam, 2007; Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005; Molinsky, 2007; Ting-Toomey, 2004). It implies mental, affective, and behavioral flexibility in dealing with the minute-to-minute unfolding intercultural scene with liveness and communication elasticity. To move toward behavioral adaptation, mindful communicators would need to integrate identity-sensitive knowledge concerning self and others and infuse their knowledge base with open-minded attitudes and open-hearted wonderment. For example, bicultural and bilingual individuals can often code-switch between languages seamlessly (e.g., between Spanish and English, or Tagalog and English when communicating with their grandparents versus with their

siblings in the U.S. family setting). The same applies to multicultural and multilingual individuals negotiating strategic communication convergence and divergence in different intergroup communicative situations.

Intergroup Competence Criteria: Interaction Yardsticks

From the lens of intergroup communication theorizing frameworks, intergroup communication is defined in terms of how social contexts and group memberships affect the ways in which individuals communicate with members of their own ingroups and perceived outgroups and how their sense of group membership solidarity or distance shape their communication patterns and meaning negotiation processes (Giles, 2012). In the opening case story, Jessica, Peter, and Alex's interactions exemplify intergroup communication clashes, especially Peter and Alex who behave in an unconscious incompetent manner while interacting with Jessica. Furthermore, Peter and Alex are presumptuous about where Jessica lives and about Hispanics' taste for barbecue. The intersectionality of power and privilege and sociocultural group memberships in the case story shapes Peter and Alex's jostling accommodative demeanor (acting as ingroup members) with each other, while they engage in an exclusionary nonaccommodative stance with Jessica (perceived as an outgroup member). However, from the perspective of a meaning-intention-decoding analysis process, both Peter and Alex may think they are being quite welcoming and accommodating to Jessica as the newcomer to the organization. In reality, they totally dismiss her interpretive lens and emotional reactions. They also use mindless and rigid stereotypes to typecast her ethnic background and also minimize her professional and personal identity attributes.

Whereas intergroup communication incompetence means communicating inappropriately, ineffectively, and unproductively, intergroup communication competence can be defined as individuals engaging in appropriate, effective, and adaptive interaction in a given social context and informed by knowledge, attitudes, and skills about diverse group membership and personal identity issues. Thus, this latter definition differs from the general conceptualization of interpersonal communication competence (Canary et al., 2013; Spitzberg, 2009, 2015; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2011), with a strong emphasis on promoting productive intergroup contact and interactional issues. Practically speaking, no interpersonal communication is totally devoid of sociocultural membership influence during the course of a relationship development trajectory.

Most importantly, from the intergroup communication framework, social contexts are very different from interpersonal contexts. For example, those with interpersonal (i.e., individuated-personalized) communication skills may competently relate to each other as individuals, but they may lack competent communication skills to relate to each other as members of different social groups such as elders and adolescents, or health care providers and patients (Hecht & Lu, 2015; Hummert, 2010; Villagran & Sparks, 2010). From a U.S.-centric research viewfinder, interpersonal communication (i.e., recognizing and valuing the unique, distinctive personal identity features of the individuals) often connotes "better quality" communication than intergroup communication.

However, the intergroup perspective recognizes the critical importance and the pervasive influence of social group membership contexts on the minute-to-minute dynamic shifting of the communication processes between the two or more individuals from diverse membership communities (see Giles, 2012; Giles et al., 2010; Harwood & Giles, 2005). Thus, to engage in competent intergroup communication, one needs to be responsive to sociocultural membership identity and dialogue issues and also develop an attuned ear to listen for important data sources that are being underscored in the intergroup interaction process. Intergroup communication is ubiquitous in everyday life. Group membership issues or topics should not be minimized in quality intergroup and interpersonal communication.

To accentuate our scholarly ideas in this book, we firmly believe that in the field of human communication studies, it is equally important to probe the conceptualization of “quality intergroup communication” on a par with the study of “quality interpersonal communication” in multiple interactional arenas. Intergenerational communication, for example, aptly illustrates the extent to which communication between elders and young adults has been mediated by stereotypical perceptions of each other’s social group memberships (Hummert, 2010; see later section of this chapter (under the heading “Sharpening Intercultural–Intergroup Communication Capacities and the Skillsets Component”). Mindful communicators will utilize knowledge-based identity information for productive dialogue or meaningful convergence but will not rigidly adhere to the preconceived “stereotyped” knowledge categories that mindless communicators would.

Intergroup communication competence involves mindfully communicating appropriately, effectively, and adaptively to each other in social contexts. *Intergroup appropriateness* refers to the extent to which the exchanged communicative behaviors accord with or match the social group expectations of the message’s recipients. For this purpose, intergroup interactants need to acquire the knowledge schema of what is regarded as proper or improper behavior according to the social expectations of the respective group membership. For example, in the social context of North American universities, students may call their professors by their first names, whereas in other social contexts such as in India and Tibet students address their professors by their respectful titles Sir, Madam, Professor Raman, or *Gen la* (Respected Teacher in Tibetan). Appropriate intergroup address is determined by the normative expectation standards of the respective social contexts. Students must learn about these appropriate behaviors and then mindfully practice them when relating to their professors in the particular social context.

Intergroup effectiveness refers to the extent to which communicators assign shared meaning to the exchanged communicative behaviors in social contexts and achieve interactional goals such as instrumental and relational goals. From an intergroup perspective, meanings are socially constructed and consensually agreed upon by members both within and between groups. For example, Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists regard the *swastika* (in its original form it was associated with the Indus Valley civilization) as a symbol with positive and sacred meanings, whereas European peoples in particular,

tormented by memories of Hitler and the atrocities of the Nazi regime, regard the same symbol (placed diagonally on the Nazi flag) with totally negative meaning. In 2010, in Pretend City—a Children’s museum—in Irvine, California, a Hindu *swastika* woven on a tapestry was displayed as part of the East Indian Heritage Exhibition and caused a great uproar among diverse group members. Some voiced negative criticism of the symbol on the ground of insensitivity and demanded that the symbol be removed from the exhibit. The museum did so, but others, opposed to the removal, emphasized that the swastika was a sacred symbol to the East Indians and so they demanded respect for it. This case vividly illustrates the need for effective intergroup communication and meaning coordination when addressing intergroup conflict issues.

This real-life scenario illustrates that intergroup communicators from both communities need to be sensitive to the situational context of proper and improper actions. They also need to learn to effectively negotiate the attributed meanings of verbal and nonverbal symbols and the associated sociohistorical contexts in order to understand each other’s group membership identity issues. Competent intergroup communication involves mindfully attuning to the situational dynamics and also negotiating the conflicting meanings of such symbols in a conjoint effective manner. Furthermore, intergroup communication competence also requires adaptability.

Adaptability refers to communicators’ abilities to be cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally agile in attuning to each other’s identity signals (and also instrumental or task goals) in particular contexts. Cognitively, intergroup communicators need to be constantly “minding their minds” in creating identity differentiations and identity complexities in observing and assessing the multifaceted identities of an unfamiliar other *in situ*. Affectively, they need to be empathetic to each other’s mind-sets, heart-sets, worldviews, and perspectives. Behaviorally, they need to change or adjust their actual behaviors in order to reach desired intergroup outcomes and situational needs. For example, in resolving the case about the swastika, members from both communities can mindfully attune to the contrasting meanings of the symbol in different sociocultural contexts and interpret its meaning accordingly. Adaptive intergroup communication involves being mindful of when to converge toward or diverge from the distinctive style of the other group member, or when to maintain one’s style in particular social contexts. Intentional code switching or dialect switching, or a caregiver converging toward an elderly family member with dementia (e.g., via the use of simple sentence structure or reassuring nonverbal convergent gestures), is an excellent example of mindful intergroup communication adaptability.

On a general level, intercultural–intergroup communication competence can be conceptualized along the following four stages of the staircase competence model (see Figure 5.1; Howell, 1982): (1) *unconscious incompetence*—the blissful ignorance stage in which an individual is unaware of the communication blunders he or she has committed in interacting with a cultural stranger in the intercultural or intergroup scene; (2) *conscious incompetence*—the stage in which an individual is aware of her or his incompetence in communicating with a cultural stranger but either lacks the necessary knowledge and skills to fix the problem or does not feel the necessity to change her

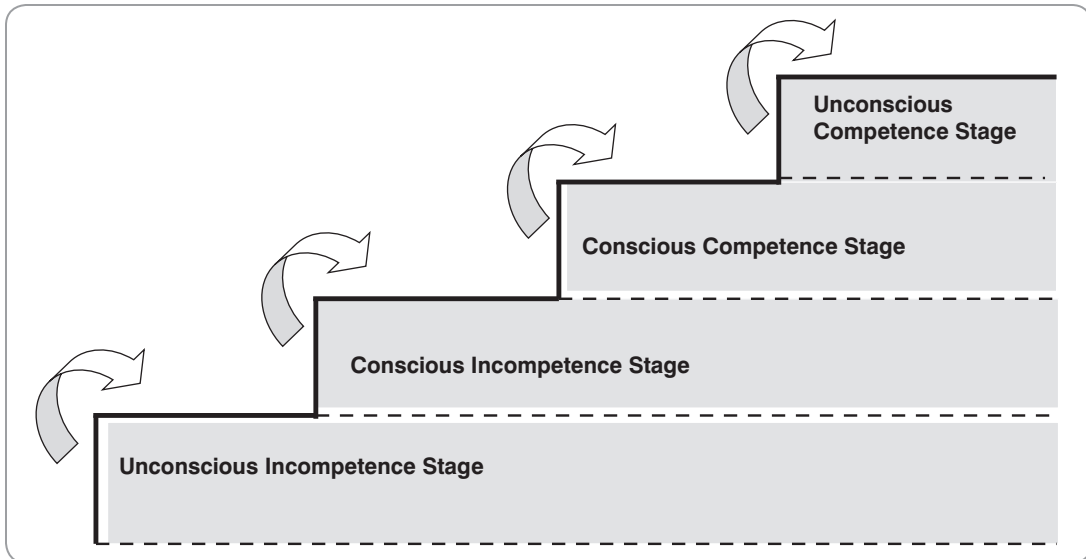


FIGURE 5.1. Four-stage intercultural communication competence: A staircase model.

or his habitual way of thinking and behaving in the encounter situation; (3) *conscious competence*—the stage when an individual is fully aware of his or her intercultural–intergroup communication “nonfluency” or awkwardness and is committed to integrate the new knowledge, ethnocultural attitudes, and skills into appropriate and effective practice; and (4) *unconscious competence*—the phase when an individual is naturally or spontaneously practicing her or his intercultural knowledge and skills to the extent that the intercultural–intergroup interaction process flows smoothly and “out-of-conscious awareness.”

While the first stage of “unconscious incompetence” can take place for many individuals because of cultural ignorance or interpersonal obliviousness, the second stage, “conscious incompetence,” is the most intriguing stage to contemplate in considering its communication implication. At this particular stage, some individuals can be cognitively aware of their cultural blunders but behaviorally still remain awkward due to the lack of cultural or identity-sensitive knowledge. However, in many cases too, some individuals can be “semiconscious” of their behavioral blunder or identity-insensitive remarks but remain steadfast in not wanting to change their behaviors due to a strong ethnocentric attitude or a prejudiced mind-set at work. The third stage, the “conscious competence” stage, refers to the “full mindfulness” phase in which communicators are fully aware of their own systems of thinking, reacting, and experiencing and, *simultaneously and intentionally*, attending to the systems of thinking, feelings, and behaviors of their interaction partners in the problematic intergroup situation. In other words, they try to “perspective-take” from the viewpoint of the other conversational partner’s frame

of reference. They mindfully or intentionally connect their newfound cultural or group membership knowledge sets and put them into appropriate, effective, and adaptive practice in accordance with the social contexts. The fourth stage, “unconscious competence,” is the “zen-like mindlessly mindful” phase in which communicators move in and out of “*spontaneous* mindfulness” and “*reflective* mindlessness” in communicating with dissimilar others. They practice a sense of intuitive “out-of-conscious awareness” interactional flow with seamless rhythms and movements. At this stage, intercultural or intergroup communication competence functions like second nature due to daily diligent practice and a fluent figure-eight double-swing mind-set and heart-set. It is likely that bicultural or third-culture kids and seasoned international sojourners (see Chapter 3), and co-culture members who have to deal with tremendous identity diversity in their family and workplace situations (see Chapter 4), are more attuned to navigating the multiple cultural worlds with conscious to unconscious competence than individuals who stay in their monocultural enclaves.

In one sense, competent intercultural and intergroup communicators often rotate between the conscious competence and the unconscious competence stage—for the purpose of refreshing and sharpening their knowledge and interactional skillsets in communicating appropriately, effectively, and elastically with cultural strangers (see also Spitzberg, 2015). The staircase model of developing communication competence is also a situational-based and culture-based model. Some intercultural–intergroup communicators can be very competent in dealing with certain particular cultural situations (e.g., negotiating formal business deals and contracts), yet behave totally awkwardly in other cultural scenes (e.g., in informal rapport-building social settings).

To accomplish both the internal and external desired outcomes of intercultural–intergroup competence development, communicators need to acquire the necessary culture-sensitive and identity-sensitive knowledge, cultivate their ethnorelative mind-set, and practice flexible operational skillsets relevant to the given context. We now turn to a discussion of these three key content components of intercultural–intergroup communication competence and the momentum needed to practice internal frame switching and external code switching as desired processes and outcomes.

Culture-Sensitive Competence Components

If individuals desire to operate competently in a new cultural setting, they should pay close attention to the three content components of culture-sensitive competence development: acquiring culture-sensitive and identity-sensitive knowledge; developing flexible mind-set and open-hearted attitudes; and sharpening their communication competence capacities and skillsets.

We start our discussion with the importance of acquiring culture-sensitive knowledge and the intentional acquisition of enhancing our awareness on how group membership identity and personal identity shape our communication contours with others (see Figure 5.2).

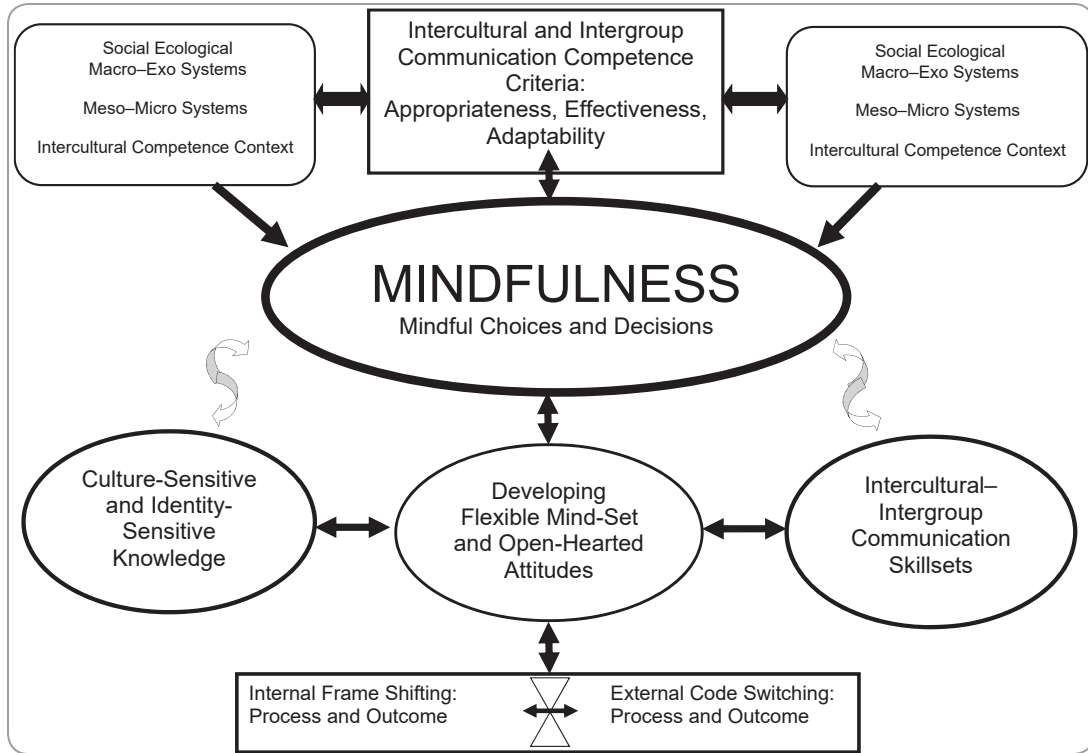


FIGURE 5.2. Intercultural and intergroup communication competence: A mindfulness model.

Acquiring the Culture-Sensitive and Identity-Sensitive Knowledge Component

In the context of developing intercultural communication knowledge content competence, Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2015, 2017) propose that the following knowledge elements should constitute the baseline cognitive knowledge structures of a competent intercultural communicator: understanding sociocultural membership, sociorelational role, and personal identity issues (see Chapter 2); developing deep knowledge contents of the cultural worldviews and value variation dimensions (see Chapter 6); mastering language proficiency and distinctive verbal interaction styles; and appreciating commonalities and differences of cross-cultural nonverbal codes (see Chapters 7 and 8). Additionally, the following intercultural knowledge structures are critical: comprehending culture shock and adjustment/reentry issues (see Chapter 3); recognizing immigrants’ and refugees’ complex acculturation processes in a diverse society (see Chapter 4); realizing the filters of ethnocentrism–stereotypes–prejudice–power dynamic issues between co-culture groups (see Chapter 9); practicing flexible intercultural conflict styles and collaborating on common-interest goals (see Chapter 10); grappling with

diverse forms of intercultural–intimate relationships (see Chapter 11); and developing a meta-ethics principled stance (see Chapter 12).

On the intergroup membership communication level, a plethora of meta-analytic studies investigated intergroup contact—real or imagined—to reduce intergroup prejudice and improve intergroup relations among other things (Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014; Miles & Crisp, 2014; Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011). Taken together, many of these studies indicate that intergroup contact involving positive attitudes and positive interaction (accommodative behaviors) and moderators (e.g., lowering anxiety about intergroup contact and enhancing empathy and perspective taking) reduce intergroup biases and further productive and trusting intergroup relations. For example, recently, thousands of Israeli and Palestinian women walked together for peace, sending a powerful positive message counteractive to the usual Middle East conflict messages. Intergroup researchers also pointed out that communicative factors such as self-disclosure and relational solidarity, among others, can enhance intergroup contact's effects (Harwood & Joyce, 2012).

Intergroup communication competence involves understanding and competently negotiating identity orientations, motivations, and communicative strategies between communicators in social contexts. While recognizing the significance of sociohistorical context, communication accommodation theory (CAT) maintains that effectively communicating with each other at interpersonal and intergroup levels requires accommodation (Gallois, Ogay, & Giles, 2005). For example, divergent or consensual interpretations of the history of race relations between African Americans and European Americans in the United States can change the dynamics of communication between two individuals from these ethnoracial backgrounds (Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau, 2003). In general, when people want to increase attraction and approval, they choose to converge or accommodate toward the other's interactional style in the interdependent social context (Dorjee et al., 2011). Competent intergroup communicators need to attend to these matters from a co-orientation standpoint and from both a situated social identity and personal identity lens. Furthermore, realizing one's own and others' motivations in an intergroup communicative situation can also shape and change the dynamics of the process and outcome of communication.

Developing the Flexible Mind-Set and Open-Hearted Attitudes Component

Dominant models of human competence since the 1950s assume that knowledge, motivation, and skills are the core components of competence (Hannawa & Spitzberg, 2015; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). We prefer to use the term “flexible mind-set”—a richer term to connote the need for a broader ethnorelative mind-set and the need for a deeper soulful heart-set—to discuss intercultural and intergroup communication competencies. Flexible mind-set includes motivational drives (both cognitive and affective predispositions) as well as a host of other concomitant attitudes (e.g., intergroup attitudes and mindful attunement) that could affect intercultural–intergroup communication competencies.

From a motivational point of view, willingness to interact and place oneself in culturally diverse situations is vital to competent interactions among individuals from different sociocultural backgrounds. Additionally, how individuals perceive each other can affect social interaction and communication outcomes. Arguably, willingness to interact and perceptions are filtered through intercultural–intergroup interpretations, ethnocentrism, and stereotypes (see Chapter 9). While the cultivation of an ethnorelative mind-set means seeing things from the other person’s holistic identity angle, an open-hearted attitude implies the combination of compassion for self and the development of affective empathy and resonance for others. In essence, an open-hearted attitude is to sit without judgment and to acknowledge things as they are, with equanimity and transparency. Concurrently, to engage in an open-hearted attitude, an individual needs to exercise due perceptual wisdom and balance between self and others. The Dalai Lama, for example, connects with people from all walks of life with an open-hearted attitude and emphasizes the deep commonality and interdependent fate of humanity on physical, mental, affective, ethical, and ecological levels. Often he said publicly, “We are same human beings who want happiness, but do not want suffering. We are physically, emotionally, and mentally same—no difference.” His Holiness the Dalai Lama treats all individuals equally without being judgmental, and he emphasizes being transparent in all interactions, with courage and without fear. In sum, competent intercultural and intergroup communicators need to be in touch with their cluttered hearts, opening their hearts to all forms of identity diversity, engage in active multiple-identity inclusion practices, and suspend snapshot reactive ethnocentrism.

The term “ethnocentrism” comes from two words originating from the Greek: *ethno*, which refers to “one’s own ethnic or cultural group,” and *centrism*, which means that “one’s own group should be looked upon as the center of the world.” Ethnocentrism, then, refers to considering the views and standards of our own ingroup as more important than those of any outgroup. Peripheral outgroups (especially if they are in a “powerless” position and without tons of assets or resources) are constantly at a disadvantage because we constantly judge them based on our own “mainstream” group’s standards and values. Examples of such standards include beliefs that one’s own group practices the correct religion, employs the best ways of educating their children, and votes for the most qualified political candidates. Ethnocentrism is a defense mechanism that elevates our own culture above other cultures. Ethnocentrism is reinforced and learned through a deep cultural conditioning and immersion process. It can be both a conscious and an unconscious social learning process. Ethnocentrism consists of both implicit and explicit attitudes toward outgroup members’ customs or behaviors.

We display ethnocentric tendencies for three reasons: (1) we tend to define what goes on in our own culture as *natural* and *correct* and what goes on in other cultures as *unnatural* and *incorrect*; (2) we tend to perceive ingroup values, customs, norms, and roles as universally applicable; and (3) we tend to experience psychological (to physical) distance from the outgroup, especially when our group identity is threatened or under attack (Stephan, Stephan, & Gudykunst 1999). Our ethnocentric tendencies may be blurred by our perception of privilege—an “invisible package of unearned assets” (McIntosh, 2002, p. 424)—that one is oblivious to, and it can be based on the group

membership's skin color, ethnicity, gender, social status, and geographical location. By assuming even on an unconscious level that we "deserve" certain rights or advantages over others, we develop a state of ethnocentric attitude toward outgroup members. For example, remember the opening case story's narrative? In the case story, Peter complained about the street party blocking his way to the neighborhood and said (sarcastically) to Jessica: "I was really frustrated because I couldn't get into my neighborhood. Did you experience the same problem?" After pausing, Peter added, "I guess not, since you probably don't live on the north side of town," a remark that reflected Peter's dominant white power, race privilege, and intergroup bias.

Intergroup attitudes based on group vitality can also affect perceptions of communication competence among members of different social groups. The vitality of a group can be measured on three levels: demography, status, and institutional support (Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977; Giles & Johnson, 1987). *Demography* includes population, immigration, emigration, birth, and mortality factors. *Status* includes social standing and economic status. *Institutional support* includes governmental, school, university, and organizational support to sustain and promote group vitality factors such as language, arts, cultures, and education. In social interactions, these group vitality factors influence intergroup relations and communication (Clement, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003). A society or nation consists of many groups referred to by terms such as *dominant* versus *subordinate* or *co-culture groups* (Orbe et al., 2013). For example, in the United States, European Americans constitute the *dominant group* while others (e.g., African Americans, Latino/Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans) are *subordinate* or *co-culture groups* (Orbe et al., 2013). These groups differ widely across the previously mentioned group vitality dimensions, shaping intergroup communication dynamics and competence perceptions. For example, subordinate or co-culture group members who perceive low ingroup vitality may defer to asymmetrical power distance interaction and accommodate to the interaction styles of dominant group members. Conversely, co-culture members who perceive high-status group vitality or pride and solidarity may enact, or even dramatize, ingroup interaction styles or speech dialects.

The default mind-set appears to be that individuals who experience high group vitality on a consistent daily basis would more likely expect individuals with low group vitality to accommodate to them in most social interactions. Anecdotal evidence indicates that in the U.S. multicultural society, which is considered the land and home of immigrants, many individuals from the dominant group do demand or expect recent immigrant group members to learn English fluently in a relatively short time and to speak it in any social setting. Theoretically, communication accommodation can come from either side in social interaction, but, in reality, dominant group members tend to expect minority or co-culture group members to accommodate to their communicative needs due to their sometimes unearned cultural/societal privilege of birth, inherited wealth, namesake, or the fact of their being white (McIntosh, 2002). Thus, the greater the perceived ingroup vitality and intergroup distance, the greater the group's status and power influence on intergroup interactions.

In particular, intergroup attitudes can hamper or facilitate intergroup communication competence (e.g., Giles & Rakic, 2014). CAT argues that social-historical contexts

and intergroup perceptions are critical to intergroup communication and accommodative practices (Gallois et al., 2005; Soliz & Giles, 2014). For example, during World War II, many mainstream U.S. Americans harshly stereotyped and engaged in direct prejudice and racism against Japanese Americans based on intergroup fear and anxiety. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 and thus officially uprooted and imprisoned more than 120,000 first-generation, second-generation, and third-generation Japanese Americans, sending them to internment camps in Arizona, Colorado, Utah, and remote parts of California and elsewhere. Many of these native-born Americans of Japanese descent experienced at firsthand direct institutional prejudice and discrimination from their mainstream American cohorts. Fast forward to a contemporary event, 9/11. Since then, many mainstream U.S. Americans have developed negative stereotypes of Muslims, including Muslim Americans. These stereotypes and intergroup hostility between many Muslim countries such as Iran and Iraq and the United States hinder intergroup communication competence among members of these groups.

Unfortunately, much of the communication among people from these groups is filtered through ethnocentrism and stereotypes. Members from these groups tend to perceive others' identity and existence as threats to their own identity (e.g., the Middle East conflict). Conversely, intergroup attraction and approval among friendly nations and groups such as the United States and the United Kingdom facilitate intergroup cooperation and, concurrently, more opportunities to practice competent communication processes and outcomes. Positive intergroup attitudes such as intergroup appreciation and win-win benefits and rewards help to enhance further intergroup dialogue and attunement, and promote inclusive communication practices. In fostering more intergroup cooperative opportunities, intergroup differences are attenuated, whereas intergroup commonalities are accentuated. As a result, ethnorelativism prevails in favorable intergroup settings. Thus, favorable intergroup attitudes promote intergroup relations and competent interactions (e.g., Bennett, 2004, 2013; Ellis & Moaz, 2012; Kim, 2013).

In sum, intergroup attitudes matter for intergroup communication competence. While negative or unfavorable intergroup attitudes such as intergroup hostility, ethnocentrism, and stereotypes hinder intergroup communication competence, positive or favorable intergroup attitudes such as ethnorelative mind-set, together with an open-hearted posture, promote intergroup communication competence. These attitudes are related to practicing competence communication skillsets.

Sharpening Intercultural–Intergroup Communication Capacities and the Skillsets Component

Dynamic and flexible intercultural and intergroup attitudes have to be translated and connected to concrete verbal and nonverbal behavioral practices. Intercultural–intergroup communication competence skillsets refer to the operational skills needed to negotiate appropriately, effectively, and adaptively on multiple levels of content, relationship, and identity issues coupled with accurate meaning encoding and decoding

processes (Affi & Coveleski, 2015; Cupach, 2015). While host nationals need to increase their knowledge, open-hearted attitudes, and culture-sensitive skills in dealing with the macro–micro interactional issues that impact incoming strangers, immigrants, refugees, and co-culture group members also need to learn to swing between the various identity dialectical poles creatively and elastically in crafting their strategic identity negotiation processes and desired outcomes.

According to Figure 5.2, the desired outcomes revolving around competent intercultural and intergroup communication include the capacity to frame-switch (an internal cognitive-affective transformation process moving from the ethnocentric to ethnorelative state) and code-switch (an external language/dialect convergence and divergence adaptive process in conjunction with verbal and nonverbal stylistic alteration process). Hopefully, through adaptive and dynamic frame-switching and code-switching processes, competent intercultural and intergroup negotiators can move forward productively to attain instrumental goals and also derive communication satisfaction on multiple intergroup contact levels. According to IINT, which was presented in Chapter 2, satisfactory identity negotiation outcomes on the broad level include the feeling of being understood, respected, and affirmatively valued between the local hosts and incoming guests, and among sojourners, transplanted immigrants, and minority identity or co-culture members (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). All these important external and internal factors affect the activation of general and particular intercultural and intergroup communication identity–supportive skillsets. Identity–support communicative strategies such as mindful listening and dialogue, shared empowerment and alliance formation strategies, identity confirmation and empathetic inclusion behaviors, and social justice advocacies are some productive identity interaction moves that can promote satisfactory intergroup and interpersonal relationships. In particular, in order to convey our understanding of another intercultural partner, we can do well to practice mindful listening skills such as the following: (1) Using an ethnorelative perspective to listen deeply to create more adaptive choices in our interaction; (2) display a respectful nonverbal posture; (3) aim to “struggle with” rather than “struggle against” our intercultural ally and cultivate common ground and common interest; (4) learn to reframe our understanding to interpret things from the other person’s viewpoint, and (5) share some of our emotional vulnerability and fear if appropriate (see Table 5.1).

Identity–rejection strategies such as mindless attendance or mindless listening, ego-focused monologue versus dialogue, power dominance or patronization, indifferent attitudes or identity-minimizing messages can maximize intergroup distancing (see Chapter 9). Unfortunately, in most emotionally aggravating situations between polarized identity groups, individuals’ sociocultural memberships or personal identities are often disrespected and actually bypassed or inadvertently stepped on, even without malicious intent. Our ethnocentric attitudes and biased stereotyped filters may direct us to see things from a narrow-tunneled angle for self-identity preservation and protection.

From an intergroup theorizing standpoint, as social beings, all individuals generally seek social approval from each other in interactions. CAT (Gallois et al., 2005)

TABLE 5.1. Mindless versus Mindful Listening Characteristics

Mindless listening	Mindful listening
Ethnocentric lens	Ethnorelative lens
Reactive approach	Proactive/choice approach
Selective hearing	Attentive listening
Defensive posture	Supportive posture
“Struggle against”	“Struggle with”
Judgmental attitude	Mindful reframing
Emotional outbursts	Vulnerability shared
Positional differences	Common interests
Fixed objectives	Creative options

contends that the extent to which social approval is sought can shape communicative accommodation in interactions. CAT provides three communicative strategies for effectively communicating in intergroup and interpersonal contexts: convergence or accommodative strategy, divergence or nonaccommodative strategy, and maintenance strategy (Gallois et al., 2005; Giles, Coupland, & Coupland, 1991). In general, these strategies are used in social interactions such as how elders and youngsters relate to each other. Group memberships influence their perceptions and situated communication strategies. In the following discussion, these ideas are defined and clarified through more specific CAT terms.

Convergence or accommodation is a communicative strategy through which interactants adjust or converge toward each other’s communicative behavior (e.g., matching the other’s accents, paralinguistic qualities, or use of phrases). Conversely, *divergence or nonaccommodation* is a communicative strategy through which interactants accentuate their differences in communicative behaviors (e.g., code-switching, speaking mixed languages or accents, and avoiding interaction). *Maintenance* is a communicative strategy through which interactions persist in their original communication style regardless of each other’s communicative behavior (e.g., speaking Indian English as usual, speaking American English as usual, or speaking the native language as usual).

For example, according to Hummert (2010), individuals who belong to intergenerational groups perceive each other as members of different social groups while relating to each other. For competent communication to take place, both generational members need to be mindful of what is regarded as appropriate, effective, and adaptive communication from an ethnorelative point of view. For example, if elders have a hearing problem (which may happen due to aging), then young adults should speak louder to promote effective communication, but if they hear well, then speaking loudly would

be perceived as incompetent and patronizing communicative behavior. Elders appreciate neither overaccommodation nor underaccommodation by young interactants in particular situational scenes. Overaccommodation—such as verbal message oversimplifications, verbatim repetitions, and artificial nonverbal posturing—is a case of patronizing behavior that is perceived negatively. In contrast, underaccommodation is a failure to adapt to the communicative needs and styles of others and reflects communication insensitivity and incompetence (e.g., nonaccommodative to hard-of-hearing or impaired vision problem).

In other words, young adults' accommodative strategies for elders should be appropriate to the situation and, concurrently, should promote effective intergroup and interpersonal communication goals. Likewise, elders should adopt intergroup-sensitive convergence or sometimes even maintenance communicative strategies if they are appropriate to the particular elder–youngster social interactive situations. It is important to note here that *perceived* accommodation or nonaccommodation is often much more important than *actual* behavioral accommodation or divergence. Overall, competent intergroup communicators must attend to the influence of social-historical relationships, the actual ongoing interpersonal relationship formation, and intersubjective perceptions of communication, especially in problematic intergroup–interpersonal conflict situations.

For the last two and half decades, intercultural communication scholars have attached much research importance to the phenomenon of intercultural communication competence as supported by extant theorizing and substantive research work (see Deardorff, 2009; Wiseman & Koester, 1993). An added nuanced intergroup communication perspective with its emphasis on intergroup identity motivations, filtered perceptions, situations, and practice of strategic intergroup communicative strategies can greatly enhance our theorizing of intergroup–intercultural communication competencies.

Intercultural–Intergroup Desired Outcomes: Transformative Movements

According to Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) and Deardorff (2009), one of the future directions for theorizing about intercultural–intergroup communication competence is to include the component of desired outcomes in framing the various competence issues. We concur with their viewpoint and believe that mindfulness of both internal process outcomes such as cultural frame switching (Hong et al., 2000) and external process outcomes such as goal achievements and *face* identity support will propel individuals forward to complete the intercultural–intergroup communication competence cycle. We also emphasize here the tight interconnection between the terms “process” and “outcome” as dynamic processes of transformation—from appropriate and adaptive internal frame shifting to external code switching, in attunement with the multiple identities and needs of the communicators, the interactional process, and the situational goals. We view “competence outcomes” as the continuous development of internal mental agility, flexibility, and an open-hearted ethnorelative attitude, and the

“external outcomes” as identity, relational, and situational goal accomplishments, and a general sense of instrumental productivity and communicative satisfaction (Hecht et al., 2003; Hecht, Warren, Jung, & Krieger, 2005).

For example, Nguyen and Benet-Martinez (2010) showed that bicultural or multicultural immigrant individuals can utilize a *cultural frame-switching* strategy by switching between two or more cultural cognitive schemas or frames to guide the application of appropriate and effective behaviors in diverse cultural settings—depending on whom they are interacting with and the conversational goals and contexts. They often utilize their sensitivity to decode sociocultural membership cues and to “shift” between the two cultural interpretive schemas—for example, from small to large power distance respect–deference attitudinal dimensions. They can also cognitively “put forth” one cultural interpretive frame (e.g., utilizing a collectivistic reasoning frame versus an individualistic reasoning frame) in the foreground over another to negotiate their identity strategically in intercultural–intergroup interactions. They can also integrate both cultural cognitive frames in synchronicity (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Benet-Martinez, Lee, & Leu, 2006). In fact, Toomey et al.’s study (2013) provided additional evidence that competent bicultural individuals (i.e., Asian-Caucasian bicultural–biracial individuals) can swing adaptively in a fluid cultural code-shifting manner and do a behavioral double-swing dance in criss-crossing between the problematic collectivistic–individualistic communication divide.

For example, in the interpersonal–intercultural conflict competence research realm, desired external outcomes often emphasize the achievement of instrumental, relational, and/or self-presentation interactional goals (Canary & Lakey, 2013; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). Interculturally stated, the satisfaction and active negotiation of *face* identity issues constitute one of the premium interactional goals in managing intercultural–intergroup conflicts competently (see Chapter 10). While *face* is about a claimed sense of favorable interactional identity in a particular situation, *facework* is about verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors that protect/save self, other, or mutual face (Ting-Toomey, 1988; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). Thus, from the integrative framework of the intergroup–intercultural competence lens, the satisfaction of group membership interactional approval, inclusion, and acceptance, and the satisfaction of ingroup/outgroup membership identity respect or *face* validation issues may constitute some core desired external (and also internal) outcome scopes. The more mindful communicators can satisfy multiple face needs (e.g., autonomy face, inclusion face, status face, competence face, and moral face), the more they are likely to be perceived as competent and dynamic communicators within a given situational context. Finally, according to the IINT lens, all human beings crave the broader needs to be understood, respected, and affirmatively valued on the core humanistic level. Beyond tending to cultural and group membership identity differences, mindful communicators should work hard to internalize the universal human needs that exist on the supra-deep level of the cultural iceberg metaphor (see Chapter 1). In other words, they work hard at also connecting with culturally different others on the humanistic common goal level and in taking good care of themselves and families,

neighbors, and the larger community, and they take a nonviolent, harmonious approach in how they treat the ecological planet Earth.

Mindfulness: Linking Criteria, Components, and Outcomes

To promote competent intercultural and intergroup communication, an attuned communicator needs to develop a sense of mindful orientation to the complex and multilayered self-identity and other-identity issues in the intergroup contact process, pay astute attention to the emergent intercultural–intergroup communicative situation, and intentionally connect her or his identity-sensitive knowledge, elastic mind-set, and heart-set, and co-create supportive outcomes that satisfy the needs of both members from the different membership groups.

The Connective Hook

According to Figure 5.2, mindfulness is the critical link that promotes increased culture-sensitive and identity-sensitive knowledge, open-hearted attitudes, and communication skillsets, and vice versa. The general characteristics of mindfulness as derived from both the Eastern and Western notions of mindfulness have been discussed in Chapter 1. Briefly stated, *mindfulness practice* is rooted in the contemplative practices common to both Eastern and Western traditions. According to Eastern Buddhist practice, *mindfulness* means attending to one's own internal assumptions, arising emotions, intentions, cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Mindful reflexivity requires us to tune in to our own cultural, situational, and personal habitual premises in scanning a communication scene and decluttering the cultural noises or biases deep within ourselves (Nhat Hanh, 1991; Kabat-Zinn, 1994) without evaluative judgment. From a Western psychological lens, *mindfulness* means attuning to the other person's cultural and identity worldviews, assumptions, attitudes, emotions, and communication orientations. It also means the capacity to view the problematic interaction situation from multiple angles and learning to create new categories through which the unfamiliar behavior may be understood (Langer, 1989, 1997). While the Eastern orientation to mindfulness tends to focus on the development of a reflexive and fully awakening self and then extend an emotional resonance state to others, the Western orientation to mindfulness tends to emphasize interpersonal perspective-taking and a cognitive complexity viewpoint in seeing things from the other person's cognitive viewfinder and standpoint.

In a recent theorizing effort, a threefold-faceted prism of mindfulness was introduced (Ting-Toomey, 2014): the being in-the-moment present orientation; affective attunement orientation; and meta-cognition awareness orientation. Its core ideas have been derived from an integration of three strands of research studies: research on mindfulness (e.g., Baer, Smith, & Allen, 2004; Brown & Ryan, 2003; Hoskins, 1999; Siegel,

2007), research on cultural intelligence (e.g., Earley & Ang, 2003; Earley & Peterson, 2004; Thomas, 2006), and research on intercultural-interpersonal conflict competence (Canary et al., 2013; Ting-Toomey, 2009a, 2009b, 2011).

The Threefold Facets

The Being in-the-Moment Present Orientation Facet

The key to cultivating mindfulness is being fully present to attend to the self, others, and the communicative situation within multilayered socioecological contexts, including the sociocultural membership context. On the micro-level, there are two foci of practicing “being present”: *in-the-moment orientation to experience* and *in-the-moment self-regulated judgment* (Baer et al., 2004; Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006; Brown & Ryan, 2003).

The first idea, *in-the-moment orientation to experience*, refers to developing an acute sense of awareness of one’s bodily and emotional sensations, such as physical stress and anxiety, toward the problematic intercultural encounter situation. According to Nagata (2004), the term “body-mindfulness” refers to the ability to tune into one’s own state of being and to manage one’s own energy through conscious breathing. *In-the-moment orientation to experience* connotes sustained awareness and attention of one’s ebbs and flows of emotional states, bodily sensations, moods, and behavioral swings. It means not being swamped by our own physiological anxiety or stress or our urge to want to flee the interaction scene. Rather, it means mindfully managing one’s bodily and emotional sensations and getting our physical and emotional well-being ready for competent communication dialogue.

The second idea, *in-the-moment self-regulated judgment*, means being aware of our own ethnocentric judgments and intentionally suspending our reactive lens and shifting to an ethnorelative viewfinder. Countless intercultural studies have provided evidence that open-mindedness, cultural curiosity, and high tolerance for ambiguity are some of the key features of an ethnorelative mind-set. In fact, according to Baer et al. (2004), mindfulness has four factors: observing internal and external stimuli, describing and labeling phenomena nonjudgmentally, acting with awareness and undivided attention, and accepting event and experiences without judging them. Another study on mindfulness emphasizes the “sustained attention to the present moment” as a core component of mindfulness (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Thus, the radiant facet of “being fully present and observing without judgment” may undergird the other two mindfulness facets—for example, being nonjudgmentally proactive rather than reactive to an intercultural event.

The Affective Attunement Orientation Facet

Identity negotiation work in vulnerable intercultural–intergroup encounters is fundamentally an affective arousal experience (e.g., in perceived intergroup identity threat or

loss-of-face situations). Bolls (2010) states that emotion is the fuel that energizes human communication. More specifically, according to Nabi's (2010) research, human emotion is a psychological construct with five defining characteristics: (1) a subjective feeling state, (2) the physiological feature of arousal, (3) cognitive appraisal or assessment of a situation, (4) a motivational feature (including behavioral intentions or action readiness), and (5) motor actions. Two dimensions generally undergird the motivational base of human affective experience: an emotional arousal dimension (intensity: high/low activation) and a valence dimension (direction: pleasure/displeasure; approach/flee). Concurring with Nabi's work, Bolls (2010) also argues that our brains are equipped with an embodied affect system that codes the encounter episode as a high or low emotional arousal episode and a pleasant or unpleasant interpersonal experience.

When an emotional arousal episode is triggered (e.g., the swastika story identified earlier), emotions such as surprise, fear, anger, pain, or contempt may be experienced and aroused, and particular patterns of thoughts are instantaneously recalled or formed. Such patterns of thoughts and reactive emotions are usually subconsciously acquired from our sociohistorical contexts, past experiences, religious identity, everyday social surroundings, social media, peer group influence, and family socialization upbringing. In a typical intergroup stereotyped or prejudiced scenario, the short-cut social emotive and social cognitive appraisal process often primes our motivation to react in either a pouncing or a fleeing mode.

Alternatively, competent intergroup communicators can choose to mindfully attune to their own arising emotional states, practice some body-mindfulness, and develop affective empathy for the cultural stranger's plight by recalling similar emotional experiences, such as identity vulnerability, which they had experienced in a new cultural situation. They can also practice a "parallel thinking" projective process by substituting the plight of the cultural stranger with an "ingroup member" (such as a beloved sister or brother or romantic partner) and imagine how this ingroup member would react emotionally to the problematic words or nonverbal gestures directed to her or him in a similar intergroup biased situation.

The Metacognition Awareness Orientation Facet

Thomas (2006) uses the concept of mindfulness as the metacognitive strategy that links metathinking, knowledge, and behavioral flexibility. The "cultural intelligence" research team of Van Dyne et al. (2012) also emphasizes the concept of metacognition as a higher-order cognitive process of "thinking about thinking" (i.e., awareness, checking, and planning) and the importance of monitoring and modifying reactive cognitive schemas to understand the new cultural interactional environment. Thus, for host society members and sojourners and co-culture members coming together, they all need to cultivate metacognitive awareness facets in co-creating a common hybrid cultural space to relate, to communicate, and to make oneself vulnerable, and yet also to have the courage to realize when one makes a cultural mistake and to ask for forgiveness. To enhance metacognitive awareness practice, one needs to heighten one's awareness

of one's own encoding words and nonverbal postures and their implications for others. For example, co-cultural members should be metacognitively aware that they cannot use the "N" word as African Americans may do when they are with each other or the "F" word at a religious event.

Awareness in this context refers to the real-time consciousness in understanding how the role of cultural or identity membership community influences own and others' mental processes and verbal and nonverbal behaviors, in association with the actual cultural performance situation. *Checking* connotes the intentional review of preconceived mental maps and the adjustment of habituated mental patterns to acquire or substitute new mental maps to understand the unfamiliar others. For example, according to Devine's research (1989), both high-prejudiced and low-prejudiced individuals activated their emotionally reactive cultural stereotypes in the presence of the stereotyped group, but the low-prejudiced individuals were able to exercise intentional self-monitoring in replacing their stereotypes with alternative mental images more so than the high-prejudiced individuals. They substituted their preconceived stereotyped images with a more nuanced and differentiated outlook in understanding cultural strangers.

Lastly, *planning* refers to thinking "strategically" ahead and being aware of the short-term and long-term implications of any reactive behaviors or mindless outbursts. Mindful communicators use an intentional self-checking process and then engage in an intentional planning process to learn how to deliver certain news or messages in a culturally sensitive and culturally adaptive manner. They also develop imaginative multiple visions and use diverse creative strategies to handle the challenging intercultural or intergroup situation responsively, and they may even use a "middle-way" approach in coming up with a win-win hybrid solution (Dorjee, 2013, 2017). Out of respect and concern for each other's aspirations, they can divert their attention from extreme polarized positions to discovering a middle position that best serves both their needs and goals. Holding onto extreme polarized positions perpetuates the vicious cycle of intractable conflicts and destructive communication patterns that yield disastrous outcomes for both conflict parties.

Finally, drawing from the coordinated management of meaning (CMM) model (B. Pearce, 2005), K. Pearce (2012) outlines the following four paths to active social engagement: be mindful of yourself—what *you* say and do matters; be mindful of the "making/managing meanings" through the stories that we tell; be mindful of how we coordinate with others through the conversations we have with others across time; and be mindful and intentional in making better social worlds and practice mystery as a lens "for developing compassion, humility, and awe and wonder for the complexity of our social worlds" (Pearce, 2012, p. 4).

In sum, the cultivation of mindfulness is an art form involving the reconciliation of several communication paradoxes: being strategic versus being spontaneous; being focused versus being expanding; and digging in versus reaching out. Harnessing mindful communication practice relies heavily on intersubjective perceptions: from reflexive self-perception to introducing perception shifts about others to being aware of how one

is being perceived by others in a stigmatized or nonstigmatized manner. Intercultural–intergroup competence/incompetence perception is often formed based on the criteria of perceived communication appropriateness, effectiveness, and adaptability and is filtered through the threefold facets of mindfulness.

This threefold prism of mindfulness is also directly linked to the developmental acquisition of identity-sensitive knowledge, ethnorelative attitudes, and competent operational skillsets. Reciprocally, increased knowledge, open-hearted attitudes, and competent skills also concomitantly enhance the mindfulness quotient and “being-in-the-moment” situationally sensitive practice. We believe that the paths between mindfulness and the various competency components are bidirectional as opposed to a one-way linear trajectory.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND MINDFUL GUIDELINES

This chapter presented an extensive discussion of the complementary nature of intercultural and intergroup communication competence issues—from identifying particular criteria to evaluating intercultural and intergroup competence to the skillsets that are needed to become a competent intercultural–intergroup negotiator. We have also offered an integrative working model (see Figure 5.2) as a guiding framework to thread through the various criteria, components, mindfulness, and outcomes of intercultural–intergroup communication competence.

We have elaborated on the importance of understanding the three competence criteria of appropriateness, effectiveness, and adaptability, acquiring culture-sensitive knowledge, developing an ethnorelative mind-set and open-hearted attitudes, and activating competent intercultural–intergroup communication skillsets. We have also expanded on the particular threefold facets of mindfulness connecting the three competence components and final outcomes.

The forthcoming chapters will present specific mindful suggestions at the end of each chapter to help you to pay close attention to the particular topics of intercultural or intergroup communication competence. The following five general guidelines, drawn from this chapter, will facilitate your commitment to a mindful communication practice in your everyday workplace, family interaction, intimate relationship interaction, and classroom interaction:

- 1** Understand that each individual has a composite identity outlook—from sociocultural membership identity to personal identity. Practice some mindful attunement skills, such as identity respect and support, while paying close attention to the core composite and symbolic interaction identity features others deem important and sacred.
- 2** Make a conscious effort to cultivate mindfulness in playing the roles of both speaker and listener in interpersonal, intercultural, and intergroup interactions

while becoming attuned to the transactional process of communication for desired outcomes.

3 Express and share your own identity vulnerability spots with trusted others. Share your own authentic self with reliable others and also extend your active support, understanding, and respect to cultural strangers who often feel distinctly excluded or marginalized.

4 Remember that the practice of intercultural and intergroup communication competence is an intentional and situational-choice phenomenon. The four yardsticks of communicating appropriately, effectively, adaptively, and ethically (see Chapter 12) can help you to decide how to frame-switch or code-switch flexibly in different cultural situations.

5 Internalize the threefold facets of mindfulness: the being present orientation facet, the affective attunement facet, and the metacognitive awareness facet. By attuning to the present moment and by being fully present with the one with whom you are interacting, by developing affective empathy and perspective-taking with the culturally different other's plight, and by being able to mindfully select a constructive verbal and nonverbal script to communicate with the cultural stranger, you are making good progress on the path to becoming a conscious competent intercultural–intergroup communicator.

CRITICAL THINKING AND CONNECTIVE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Let's revisit the opening story for critical insights. In both conversations, were Peter and Alex merely engaging in friendly teasing or casual jokes? Were both episodes involving language misunderstandings? On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 = strongly disagree and 10 = strongly agree, how would you rate either or both episodes as verbal harassment? How so? Given what you know about the transactional model of human communication (see Chapter 1), what would you say to Peter, Alex, and Jessica? Having learned about the identity complexity and interplay of intercultural and intergroup communication (see Chapter 2), what would you say to Peter, Alex, and Jessica?
2. Now that in this chapter you have learned about the threefold prism of mindless versus mindful communication, how would you apply the prism to analyze this problematic case story from multiple angles? What mindful dialogue strategies can you recommend to help Jessica, Peter, and Alex promote deeper understanding of each person's communication lens?
3. Can you think of specific intercultural or intergroup interaction examples to illustrate the four stages of the staircase model: unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, and unconscious competence? Can you analyze and critique the pros and cons of the staircase competence model?

4. Which do you believe is the most important competence component: knowledge, attitudes, or skillsets? Which of the components is easier or toughest to apply and why?
5. Mindfully reflect on your own strength and weakness in regards to the three criteria of communication competence—appropriateness, effectiveness, and adaptability. Which criterion will you emphasize the most and why? Do you think there are cultural differences in emphasizing the priority of these three criteria?
6. How easy or difficult do you think it is to apply the threefold facets (i.e., the being present orientation facet, the affective attunement facet, and the metacognitive awareness facet) of mindfulness? Which one facet do you think you are good at, and which facet do you think you need to pay more attention to when communicating competently with intercultural or intergroup strangers?
7. If you are invited to design a “promoting quality intercultural–intergroup relationship” training workshop at your workplace, how would you sequence your training design? For example, would you use a knowledge–attitude–skillset design or a skillset–attitude–knowledge sequence? Justify your selection.

CHAPTER 6

Cultural Value Dimensions and Intercultural Encounters

- Introduction
- The Cultural Value Variability Framework: Culture-Level Systems Analysis
 - *Functions of Cultural and Personal Value Assumptions*
 - *Individualism–Collectivism Value Spectrum: The Core Value Dimension*
 - *The Power Distance Value Variability Dimension*
 - *The Uncertainty Avoidance Value Variability Dimension*
 - *The Masculinity–Femininity Value Variability Dimension*
 - *Additional Cultural Value Variability Dimensions*
- Self-Conceptions, Personal Dispositions, and Situational Considerations
 - *Independent Self-Construal versus Interdependent/Relational Self-Construal*
 - *Horizontal versus Vertical Personality Attributes*
 - *Uncertainty-Oriented versus Certainty-Oriented Personality Type*
 - *Androgynous Gender Identity versus Traditional Sex Role Identity*
 - *Culture × Personality × Situational Condition Considerations*
- Classical Value Orientations and Intercultural–Intergroup Encounters
 - *Classical Value Orientations and Basic Assumptions*
 - *People–Nature Value Orientation*
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 - *Activity Orientation*
 - *Relational Orientation*
- Chapter Summary and Mindful Guidelines
- Critical Thinking and Connective Application Questions

RESPECTFUL GESTURES AND VALUE PROBES: A CASE STORY

My first travel abroad was to Missoula, Montana. I was a visiting Tibetan Buddhist scholar at a small Tibetan Buddhist Center. During my visit, I had an opportunity to attend a Counseling Psychology Seminar at the University of Montana (UM). I saw a student leaning back in his chair and his stretched legs propped on another chair. He had the soles of his shoes pointed to his teacher (a professor) and talked while eating his food. All of his behaviors violated my cultural norms regarding teacher–student interaction.

Growing up in India, I observed that teachers were highly respected and obeyed. When my teachers in high school called my name to ask questions, I would stand up straight like a good soldier and answer their questions respectfully, addressing them as “Sir” or “Madame.” Never could we call them by their first names or even their names without titles such as Sir or Madame. And we would not dare to eat in class when class was in session. Given this socialization, I was shocked to witness the behavior of this American student in the seminar. I thought he was very disrespectful to his teacher; interestingly, she did not seem to mind it at all.

Now I realize that students in American schools respect their teachers in a different way. In actuality, I was shocked more by the student pointing his feet at the teacher than by his eating in the classroom. In many cultures, feet and shoes are considered dirty and, therefore, pointing the soles of your shoes directly to a person, especially your high-status teachers, is considered very disrespectful.

—TENZIN DORJEE, *college instructor*

Introduction

Cultural values are shared principles or ideas about what counts as important or unimportant, right or wrong, desirable or undesirable, and what counts as ethical or unethical conduct in a sociocultural community. Cultural values confer a sense of shared identity and community among groups of individuals. We live and breathe our own cultural values every day through the norms and rules we have consensually developed within our culture. In many cultures such as that of India, as the opening story illustrates, students stand up when teachers walk into their classrooms and greet them formally with Sir and Madam, and sit down after the teachers sit down or tell them to sit down. Teachers are highly respected, and the power distance between student and teacher is quite large. In India, students touch the feet of their teachers, and members of the younger generation touch the feet of older people to show respect and to receive their blessing. Therefore, showing feet or the soles of one’s shoes to teachers and parents and high-status individuals is regarded as very disrespectful. However, if we never

venture away from our milieu, we may not detect its importance to us until we, like fish in a pond, are removed from our familiar and comfortable surroundings. Being in a new sociocultural environment, Tenzin experienced intercultural challenges, including entry culture shock (see Chapter 3).

Although all of us develop our unique set of personal values based on our distinctive socialization and life experience, there are also larger values at work on a cultural system level. Cultural values are relatively stable and enduring and, concurrently, also evolve and change in adaptation to the fluctuation of time and societal innovations (e.g., iPad, iPhone, 3-D printers, android wears, robotic nurse assistant, self-drive hydrogen cars). Sociocultural group membership values guide and sustain a cultural community in times of crisis, changes, and stressful situations. Cultural traditions and values exist on the deeper level of the iceberg metaphor (see Chapter 1). It is important to dive deep and understand the operational structure of the intersecting and complex value dimensions of the iceberg because they provide the emotional fuel that drives affective reactions and judgments, sense-making processes, and verbal and nonverbal behavioral tendencies in a given situation.

Cultural value patterns form the basic criteria through which we evaluate our own behaviors and the behaviors of others. They cue our expectations of how we and others should behaviorally relate to each other during an interaction. They serve as implicit guidelines for our motivations and expectations, perceptions, and communicative actions. They also set the emotional tone for interpreting and evaluating the “bizarre or uncivilized” behaviors of cultural strangers. For example, child labor or animal cruelty is a controversial global topic, and what is appropriate in one country may be considered totally inappropriate or unacceptable in another. In Mexico, for instance, school-age child bullfighters receive top billing across the country; these mini-matadors are wildly popular across Mexico. While cultural outsiders may condemn this practice with strong outrage, cultural insiders may view this as distinctive part of their long-held cultural traditions and customs.

This chapter is organized in four sections. The first detailed section discusses the functions of values in guiding our everyday communicative lives. It then addresses the four value variability dimensions: individualism–collectivism, small/large power distance, weak/strong uncertainty avoidance, and feminine/masculine value. It ends with identifying two additional value dimensions: short-term versus long-term time value and indulgence–restraint value. The second section adds more complexity and depth to the understanding of various value dimensions attending to individual self-conceptions, personality attributes, and situational considerations that shape intercultural–intergroup communication. The third section explains the basic assumptions of the classical value orientations. It then highlights the classical value orientation framework of five value patterns. The final section summarizes the key ideas in the chapter and recommends some “doable” mindful guidelines and critical thinking questions concerning the clarification process of responsive value patterns, both introspectively and interpersonally.

The Cultural Value Variability Framework: Culture-Level Systems Analysis

Cultural values are frames of reference or patterned ideas we hold either subconsciously or consciously about what is important or unimportant, right or wrong, fair or unfair, and proper or improper behavioral conduct. We can think of values as existing on two levels: the cultural aggregate group membership level and the individualized personal level of analysis. While cultural value analysis exists on a group membership level, personal value analysis exists on a unique individual's value preference level. We can term the value patterns on the culture level as "normative cultural values," and the value patterns on the individual level as "subjective cultural values" (Triandis, 1972, 1994a). On the normative cultural level, cultures can clash over eating habits (e.g., eating whales in Japan vs. the Australian stance; or Hindu attitude toward beef vs. that of mainstream U.S. Americans) to ideological levels (e.g., the contention over human rights issues between the United States and China).

Variation exists within every culture. For example, based on empirical research data, the Korean or Mexican culture has strong group-oriented ideals and communal value focus. But readers should also recognize the outlier factor: some Koreans or some Mexicans can be very individualistic, whereas other Koreans or Mexicans can go into overdrive and be extremely communally focused in their value subscription (e.g., see Shim, Kim, & Martin, 2008). The same point can be made about the larger U.S. culture. While some researchers (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; Triandis, 1995) have identified the larger-mainstream U.S. culture as an individualistic-based culture, some U.S. Americans (e.g., from diverse ethnic heritage groups) exist on both ends of the prototypical central tendency curve (running from an extremely high to an extremely low individualistic tendency) (see Figure 6.1). The same principle applies to members of collectivist cultures. Sociologists and social psychologists may regard such group members as positive deviants and negative deviants within their society and group.

For example, some East Asian Indians also carry outlier values and can reflect the moderate to extreme spectrum of low to high collectivistic value tendency. The more heterogeneous the culture or society (e.g., multilingual and multicultural diversity as well as socioeconomic status differences), the more widespread the outliers at the polarized ends. These outliers may either accentuate or blur intergroup boundaries, depending on which end of the cultural spectrum they are located.

Despite the difficulties in generalizing about the diverse values in heterogeneous cultures such as India, China, and the United States, it is imperative to engage in such cultural value assessments *as a starting point*. Value assumptions are the driving force in forming emotional reactions/defenses and also reflect implicit intentions, motivations, reactive affective evaluations, and ritualistic behavioral tendencies. Cultural values on a systems level do change but at a slower rate than an individual's personal values change and evolve. Mindful value comparison on an aggregate group membership

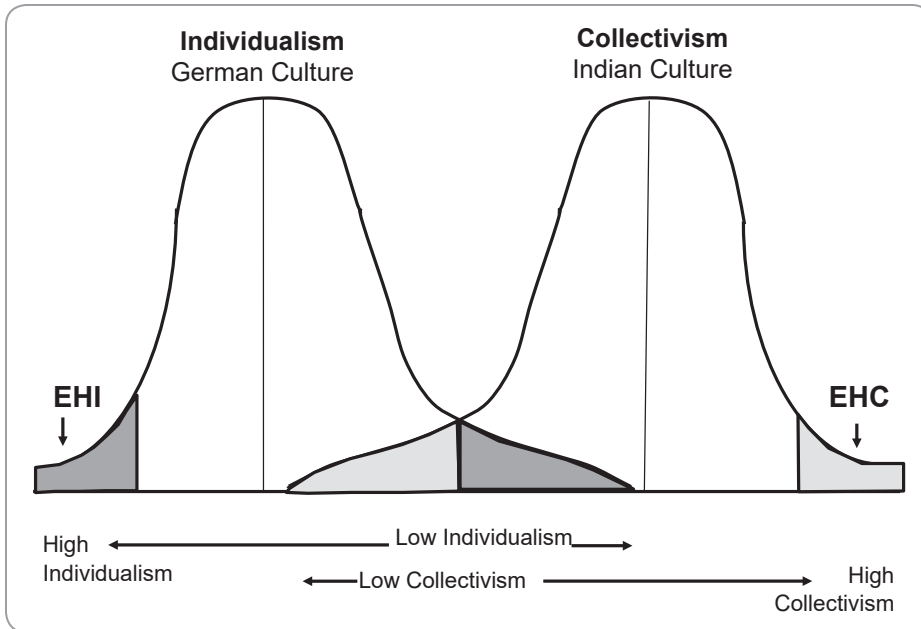


FIGURE 6.1. Central value tendencies of two comparative cultures. EHI, extreme high individualism; EHC, extreme high collectivism.

level acts as a critical first step in achieving better understanding of potential cultural differences and clashes at the deep submarine level of the iceberg.

Functions of Cultural and Personal Value Assumptions

Cultural and personal value patterns cue our expectations of how we and others should act during an interactional situation. They serve as implicit guidelines for our intentions, motivations, expectations, perceptions, and communicative actions. They set the emotional tone and cognitive appraisal process for interpreting and evaluating the behaviors of cultural strangers.

Cultural value patterns serve many functions, including the identity meaning, explanatory, expectancy, motivational, and ingroup–outgroup evaluative functions.

Identity Meaning Function

Cultural values provide the frame of reference for answering every human beings' most fundamental question: "Who am I?" Cultural beliefs and values provide the anchoring points to which we attach meanings and significance to our complex identities. For

example, in the U.S. middle class, “American” values often emphasize individual initiative and achievement. A person is considered “successful” or “self-actualizing” when he or she takes the personal initiative to realize his or her full potential. The result is recognition and rewards (e.g., a desirable career, six-digit income, a coveted car, or a dream house) that are tangible and acknowledged by others. Likewise, a person who can realize his or her dreams, after overcoming all odds and obstacles, is considered to be a “successful” individual in the context of middle-class U.S. society. For example, many U.S. and British celebrities are admired for their “rags-to-riches” stories: Tom Cruise is admired for overcoming dyslexia, Oprah Winfrey is accredited for overcoming poverty and sexual abuse, and J. K. Rowling is recognized for overcoming depression. Each celebrity such as these finally makes it through personal hard work, individual initiative, and determination to achieve success.

In contrast, in two-thirds of the world’s cultures, identity function is largely based on “we identity.” Successful individuals are those who put others before self and who try to utilize their full potential to do good for the common good of family, community, institution, country, and world. They become professionals and leaders (e.g., Liu Xiaobo, Malala Yousafzai, and Kailash Satyarthi) not so much for themselves, but for the greater good of others. Thus, the concept of being “successful” or an “irreplaceable” person, and the meanings attached to such words, stems from a cultural community’s premium values. The identity meanings or primary value configurations that we acquire within our cultural community are co-constructed and co-negotiated with other cultural members through everyday communication interactions.

Explanatory Function

Within our own group, we experience the familiarity of comfort and acceptance, and we do not have to constantly justify or explain our actions or values to our familiar others. Our commonly shared values are implicitly understood and celebrated via prominent or daily communication rituals. When we are interacting with people in unfamiliar groups, however, we have to be on constant alert and may also need to explain or even defend our culture-based interaction practices with more intentional effort. For example, if your family (coming from a traditional Mexican ethnic heritage background) is staging a *quinceañera* celebration for your little sister, you will readily understand the importance of this ceremonial event. However, if you bring your international friends along, you may have to explain each aspect of the celebration.

For example, you will have to explain to them that *quinceañera* is one of the most important celebrations in Mexican culture. This full-day event is held on a girl’s fifteenth birthday to mark her passage to womanhood, to give thanks to God for His blessings, and to present a young woman to the community. In Mexican communities, the *quinceañera* honors not only the young woman for reaching maturity, but also the girl’s parents and family, as well as her padrinos or godparents, all of whom play important roles throughout the ceremonies. Thus, cultural values of “collectivism” and “large power distance of respect and recognition” enter into the explanation of the communal

nature of the *quinceañera* celebration—especially the interdependent constructs of family, womanhood, and community.

When interacting with people from our own cultural group, we can mentally “fill in the blanks” and use a “short-cut path” to comprehend why people behave the way they do. However, when interacting with people from other cultural groups, we need to gather more mental energy and affective fuel to figure out their behavior and in such an unfamiliar manner. Intercultural misunderstandings may pile up if we are unable to explain fully the “why” and “how” of people’s words or nonverbal actions on culturally unfamiliar turf.

Expectancy Function

Cultural and personal values regulate our behaviors about gender-related communication issues such as haptics or touch. For example, same-sex touch and handholding in Malaysia, China, Sudan, Japan, India, Nepal, and Saudi Arabia are considered acceptable and part of daily life, whereas opposite-sex touch in a stranger relationship is considered inappropriate. This is better known as public display of affection (PDA). If you’re an American college student on a one-semester cultural exchange program in China and India, you may be very surprised by your same-sex friends wanting to link arms or hold hands with you.

In the United States, same-sex handholding is linked closely to the gay/lesbian/bisexual community, whereas opposite-sex handholding is considered normative PDA. People from Latin America also tend to engage in more frequent touch behaviors than do U.S. Americans and Canadians. However, it is important to remember that the touch behaviors in both Arab and Latin American cultural zones are usually confined to same-sex touching, not opposite-sex touch. Since touch is a powerful form of nonverbal communication, it can easily spark violations of intercultural nonverbal expectancy situations. Without an adequate value schema such as the “feminine/masculine value dimension” to set up some initial “best guess” anticipations, problematic gender-based encounters can fuel further misunderstanding and mistrust.

Motivational Function

Cultural values also serve as the internal drives for self and others in terms of what rewards are emphasized in the community and what punishments are awaiting you, individually or collectively. For example, for cultures that have everyday sayings such as “where there is a will, there’s a way,” “the person who stands alone excites our imagination,” and “the more chefs, the more spoiled the soup,” you will need to motivate members in those communities with incentive messages that appeal to their personal ambitions, drives, and needs for personal recognition. In the U.S. culture, for example, when top-ranked professional athletes are paid more than college professors or medical doctors, the value priorities of fierce competition, personal drive, and the importance of winning are in full display and are rewarded.

At the same time, other cultural communities may have everyday sayings or proverbs such as “it takes a village to raise a child,” “one chooses one’s friends, but family is from birth,” “when spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion,” and “one arrow can be easily broken, but three arrows—bundled together—cannot be broken lightly.” If you understand the primary group-orientation values of such cultural communities, you may want to connect with people in those communities by using team-based motivational appeals or pay closer attention to their family or extended family needs and interests.

Ingroup–Outgroup Evaluative Function

Culture and its accompanying shared values create a comforting buffer zone in which we experience ingroup inclusion and outgroup differentiation. A shared common fate or a sense of solidarity often exists among members of the same group. For example, within our own cultural group, we speak the same language or dialect, we share similar nonverbal rhythms, and we can decode each other’s mood without being overly verbose. However, with people from a dissimilar membership group, we may tend to “stand out,” and our symbolic identity such as language accents or culture-based nonverbal habits may further provoke interaction awkwardness and group membership identity distinctiveness (Brewer, 1991; Brewer & Miller, 1996).

Boundary arrangements (for example, language differences, national borders, and club memberships) shape our ingroup and outgroup evaluative attitudes when dealing with people who are culturally dissimilar. An *attitude* is a predisposed and learned tendency that influences our thinking pattern. A positive or negative attitude toward other groups is acquired through our cultural socialization, family socialization, school, workplace, peer social media, mass media, and personal life experiences. We often display more favorable attitudes toward perceived similar ingroup members and unfavorable outgroup attitude towards “stranger others” when they deviate behaviorally from our culture-based normative expectations. Perceived polarized value patterns reinforce our evaluative attitudes toward ingroup and outgroup membership interactions.

On one hand, *ingroups* are groups with whom we feel emotionally close and with whom we share interdependence, such as family or extended family, sorority or fraternity, or own cultural or ethnic group. *Outgroups*, on the other hand, are groups with whom we feel no emotional ties, and, at times, we may experience great psychological distance from them and even feel competitive against them. These can be our rival fraternity, our wartime enemy, or simply individuals who belong to another cultural identity or ethnic group.

Overall, we tend to hold favorable attitudes toward ingroup interactions because of our perceived shared values and behavioral comfort and similarities. Concurrently, we tend to hold unfavorable attitudes toward outgroup interactions largely because of our ignorance of their cultural values and norms, thus arousing communication fear. Value patterns regulate ingroup consensus and set evaluative standards concerning what is *valued* or *devalued* within a cultural community.

Values and Communication Implications: A Summary

Cultural values serve the identity meaning, explanatory, expectancy, motivational, and ingroup–outgroup evaluative functions. Communication, in essence, serves as the major hook that links the various channels (e.g., family socialization, educational institution, religious/spiritual institution) of value transmission systems in a coherent manner. Drawing from the various functions of cultural and personal values as discussed earlier, we can now explore some core value dimension patterns that shape the intercultural–intergroup communication process. By peering into the window of another culture, intercultural knowledge blocks can make individuals more reflective of their own ingrained cultural beliefs and values. By understanding where major cultural differences exist, learners can figure creative ways to connect the differences and find common ground to work with individuals from diverse cultural groups.

The following sections introduce and examine the cultural value variability framework of four value dimensions: the key value dimension of individualism–collectivism and the other three dimensions, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and femininity–masculinity. In addition, two other value patterns: short-term versus long-term orientation and indulgence versus restraint are highlighted (Hofstede, 1991; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). Based on comparative studies of wide-ranging cultures throughout the world, researchers have uncovered specific value patterns in different cultures in the areas of anthropology, cross-cultural psychology, sociology, international management, linguistics, and intercultural communication. Cultural values form the implicit standards by which we judge behaviors in a communication situation as appropriate and inappropriate. They constitute the larger content webs of a culture. They are also the distinctive contents of the self that drive our thoughts, embodied emotions, and everyday decision-making processes. Cultural and personal values, as the underlying parts of an iceberg, give rise to the meaning of “Who am I?” and “Who are you?”

Aggregate cultural membership value patterns are shaped by historical, socioeconomic (e.g., open market vs. closed market, abundant vs. scarce agricultural crops), political (e.g., people ownership vs. government controlled system), geographic–ecological location (e.g., weather patterns), and population density and mobility factors (Triandis, 1995). Cultural-level tendencies, however, do not explain the behaviors of all members in a single culture. Family socialization, individual life experience, popular culture, and immigration or intergroup contact experience will all have differential effects on the individual’s value formation process.

Geert Hofstede (1980, 1991; see also Hofstede et al., 2010) empirically derived four cultural variability dimensions in his initial large-scale study of a U.S. multinational business corporation. The corporation has subsidiaries in 50 countries and 3 regions (the Arabic-speaking countries, East Africa, and West Africa). Altogether, 116,000 managers and employees in this worldwide corporation were surveyed twice. Based on the results of this research, Hofstede (1980, 1991) delineated four organizational value patterns across a diverse range of cultures. Subsequently, Hofstede and Bond (1988) added a fifth workplace value dimension—short-term versus long-term orientation. More recently, Hofstede et al. (2010) added a sixth value dimension, indulgent–restrained.

As noted earlier, the first and most important dimension is individualism–collectivism, and the other three are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity–femininity. Indeed, an international research project, Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE), which included 200 co-researchers in 62 nations, has provided additional evidence that the foundational constructs of Hofstede’s core four value patterns are pervasive in 62 countries. This study’s sample size included 17,370 middle managers from three industries—telecommunications, financial services, and food supply—in each nation and at the societal, organizational, and individual levels of analysis (House et al., 2004; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012).

Hofstede’s core cultural variability dimensions are related to business organizational values in different cultures and do not capture variations within each specific country/culture. He also argues that ethnic and religious groups, gender, generation, social class, and social structure exert a strong influence on the value patterns of a particular culture. The four value dimensions should be viewed as a first systematic empirical attempt to compare cultures on an aggregate group membership level. Each culture also displays different value configurations along the four cultural variability dimensions.

Individualism–Collectivism Value Spectrum: The Core Value Dimension

While national cultures differ along many dimensions, one dimension that has received consistent attention from both intercultural researchers and cross-cultural psychologists is individualism–collectivism. Numerous cross-cultural studies (Fiske, 1991; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990; Triandis, 1994a, 1995) have provided theoretical and empirical evidence that the value orientations of individualism and collectivism are pervasive in a wide range of cultures. Individualism and collectivism can explain some of the basic differences and similarities concerning communication behavior between clusters of cultures.

Basically, *individualism* refers to the broad value tendencies of a culture in emphasizing the importance of individual identity over group identity, individual rights over group rights, and individual needs over group needs. Individualism promotes self-efficiency, individual responsibilities, and personal autonomy. In contrast, *collectivism* refers to the broad value tendencies of a culture in emphasizing the importance of the “we identity” over the “I identity,” group rights over individual rights, and ingroup-oriented needs over individual wants and desires. Collectivism promotes relational interdependence, ingroup harmony, and ingroup collaborative spirit (Ting-Toomey, 1988; Triandis, 1995) (see Table 6.1).

Individualistic and collectivistic value tendencies are manifested in everyday family, school, and workplace interaction. Hofstede (1991) explains that individualism pertains to “societies in which ties between individuals are loose; everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family” (p. 51). Comparatively, collectivism refers to “societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into

TABLE 6.1. Value Patterns in Individualistic and Collectivistic Cultures

Individualistic cultures	Collectivistic cultures
“I” identity	“We” identity
Individual goals	Group goals
Individual emphasis	Ingroup emphasis
Voluntary reciprocity	Obligatory reciprocity
Management of individuals	Management of groups
Independent self personality	Interdependent self personality
Examples	Examples
United States	Guatemala
Australia	Ecuador
Great Britain	Panama
Canada	Indonesia
The Netherlands	Pakistan
New Zealand	Taiwan/China
Sweden/France	Japan
Germany	West/East Africa

Note. Data from Hofstede (1991). The cultures listed are based on the *predominant* tendencies in the cultures.

strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetimes continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty” (Hofstede, 1991, p. 51).

Hofstede’s (1991) research in 50 countries and 3 regions reveals that factors such as national wealth, population growth, and historical roots affect the development of individualistic and collectivistic values. For example, the wealthy, urbanized, and industrialized societies are oriented toward individualism, whereas the poorer, rural, and traditional societies are more collectivistic. However, there are some exceptions, especially in East Asia: notably, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore appear to have retained collectivism in spite of industrialization.

Hofstede’s (1980, 1991) and Triandis’s (1988, 1989) research indicates that individualism is a cultural pattern that is found in most northern and western regions of Europe and in North America. Collectivism refers to a cultural pattern common in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Central and South America, and the Pacific islands. Less than one-third of the world population resides in highly individualistic cultures, and a little more than two-thirds in cultures that are highly collectivistic (Triandis, 1989).

More specifically, high individualistic index values have been found in the United States, Australia, Great Britain, Canada, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Italy, Belgium, Denmark, and Sweden. High collectivistic index values have been found in Guatemala, Ecuador, Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Costa Rica, and Peru (Hofstede, 1991, p. 53). Intercultural communication research (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; see also Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985) has consistently identified the United States as a culture high in individualistic value tendencies, and China, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan as high in collectivistic tendencies.

Triandis, Brislin, and Hui (1988) showed, for example, that when respondents were asked to give 20 descriptions of themselves by completing 20 sentences that start with “I am . . .” people from individualistic cultures used only 15% group-related attributes to define themselves, whereas people from collectivistic cultures used 35–45% group-related attributes (e.g., “I am the third daughter of my family”) to describe their sense of “selfhood.” In terms of specific value emphasis, the top individualist values are freedom, honesty, social recognition, comfort, hedonism, and personal equity. The top collectivist values are harmony, face-saving, filial piety (respect and conformity of parents’ wishes), equality in the distribution of rewards among peers (for the sake of group harmony), and fulfillment of others’ needs (Triandis et al., 1988). Overall, different kinds of individualism (e.g., emphasizing personal need in Australia or immediate family need in Sweden) and collectivism (e.g., emphasizing extended family need in Taiwan, work group need in Japan, or caste need in India) have been found to exist in different cultures. For each culture, it is important to determine “the group with which individuals have the closest identification. They could be keen to identify with their trade union, their family, their corporation, their religion, their profession, their nation. . . . The French tend to identify with *la France, la famille, le cadre*; the Japanese with the corporation; the former Eastern Bloc with the Communist Party; and Ireland with the Roman Catholic Church” (Trompenaars, 1994, p. 58).

Both Hofstede’s (2001) and House et al.’s (2004) international research studies have been criticized for using overgeneralized value dimensions that are superimposed on an entire national group and for treating national culture as a homogeneous entity (Thomas & Peterson, 2015; Ting-Toomey, 2010a). For example, cross-cultural family researchers Tamis-LeMonda et al. (2008) challenged the bifurcation of individualism and collectivism into two contrastive camps. They advanced the idea that individualism and collectivism coexist on both the cultural and individual levels of analysis.

Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, and Gelfand (1995) have sought to make the individualism–collectivism value dimension more complex by adding on the features of “horizontal” and “vertical” power distance orientations to the individualism–collectivism value spectrum. Thus, *horizontal individualism* means a cultural tendency that emphasizes the “I identity” outlook and that views each individual as equal in status or similar to each other. *Vertical individualism* stresses the “I autonomy” outlook and views each individual as unequal to each other due to status distinction or “sticking out” from each other. In comparison, *horizontal collectivism* refers to the “we identity” of ingroup values, and members perceive equality or similarity among group members.

Vertical collectivism, however, emphasizes a strong “communal value” orientation by members who perceive hierarchical status differences among different group types or by perceived rankings (see McCann, Honeycutt, & Keaton, 2010). These variations within a culture reflect intersections between individualism–collectivism and the small and large power distance factor.

In light of these variations within a culture (such as horizontal collectivism versus vertical collectivism), together with multiple social ecological layers, cultural and ethnic identity differentiations can be probed in a heterogeneous society along with other salient group membership identity facets in a more nuanced manner (Ting-Toomey, 2010a; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). Thus, within each culture, different ethnic communities can also display distinctive individualistic and collectivistic value patterns, along with horizontal and vertical power distance features. For example, first-generation Asian Americans and Latino/a Americans in the United States tend to retain more group-oriented values than individualistic values. Native Americans also tend to subscribe to group-oriented beliefs more than to individualistic beliefs. African Americans, Middle Eastern Americans, and certain Americans of southern European origin (e.g., Greek Americans) have been found to emphasize extended family solidarity above and beyond individualistic values.

Overall, the dimension of individualism–collectivism provides us with a conceptual grid in explaining why the meaning of self-conception varies across cultures. Additionally, it clarifies our understanding of how the various “I” identity or “we” identity orientations influence our everyday communication behaviors across cultures. Power distance is another important value dimension we should consider in intercultural and cross-cultural interactions.

The Power Distance Value Variability Dimension

Hofstede and Bond (1984) define power distance as the “extent to which the less powerful members of institutions . . . accept that power is distributed unequally” (p. 419). Small power index values are found, for example, in Austria, Israel, Denmark, New Zealand, Ireland, Sweden, and Norway. Large power index values are found in countries such as Malaysia, Guatemala, Panama, the Philippines, Mexico, Venezuela, and Arab nations (Hofstede, 1991). Hofstede (1991) explains that the country’s geographic latitude (higher latitudes being associated with a smaller power distance index), its population size (larger size being associated with a larger power distance index), and its wealth (richer countries being associated with a smaller power distance index) affect the power distance dimension. Specific factors that are associated with national wealth *and* with less dependence on others include less traditional culture, more modern technology, more urban living, more social mobility, a better educational system, and a larger middle class (Hofstede, 1991) (Table 6.2).

In small power distance cultural situations, children can contradict their parents and speak their own minds. They are expected to show self-initiative and to learn verbal articulation and persuasion. Parents and children work to achieve a democratic family

TABLE 6.2. Value Patterns in Small Power Distance and Large Power Distance Cultures

Small power distance cultures	Large power distance cultures
Emphasize equal distance	Emphasize power distance
Individual credibility	Seniority, age, rank, title
Symmetrical interaction	Asymmetrical interaction
Emphasize informality	Emphasize formality
Expect consultation	Expect directions
Horizontal self personality	Vertical self personality
Examples	Examples
Austria	Malaysia
Israel	Guatemala
Denmark	Panama
New Zealand	Philippines
Republic of Ireland	Arab Countries
Sweden/Norway	India
Germany	West Africa
Canada/United States	Singapore

Note. Data from Hofstede (1991). The cultures listed are based on the *predominant* tendencies in the cultures.

decision-making process. In contrast, in large power distance cultural situations, children are expected to obey their parents. The value of “respect” between unequal status members in the family is taught at a young age. Parents and grandparents assume the authority roles in the family decision-making process. Likewise, students are expected to obey and listen to their teachers in schools.

In small power distance work situations, power is evenly distributed. Students are expected to share their ideas with teachers, and in business, subordinates expect to be consulted, and the ideal boss is a resourceful, democratic leader. In large power work situations, the power of an organization is centralized at the upper management level. Subordinates expect to be told what to do, and the ideal boss plays the benevolent autocratic role. While the United States scores on the low side of power distance, it is not extremely low. Hofstede (1991) explains that “U.S. leadership theories tend to be based on subordinates with medium-level dependence needs: not too high, not too low” (p. 42).

People in small power distance cultures tend to value equal power distributions, equal rights and relations, and equitable rewards and punishments based on performance. People in large power distance cultures tend to accept unequal power distributions, hierarchical rights, asymmetrical role relations, and rewards and punishments based on age, rank, status, title, and seniority. For small power distance cultures, equality of personal rights represents an ideal to strive for in a system; for large power distance cultures, respect for power hierarchy in any system is a fundamental way of life.

The Uncertainty Avoidance Value Variability Dimension

Uncertainty avoidance refers to the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain and unknown situations and the extent to which they try to avoid these situations. The stronger the uncertainty avoidance, the greater the feeling of threat and the inclination toward avoidance in the face of uncertain, novel situations. Weak uncertainty avoidance cultures encourage risk taking, whereas strong uncertainty avoidance cultures prefer clear procedures and guidelines in directing members' behavior in an organization. Weak uncertainty avoidance index values, for example, are found in Singapore, Jamaica, Denmark, Sweden, Hong Kong, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Strong uncertainty avoidance index values are found, among other countries, in Greece, Portugal, Guatemala, Uruguay, Belgium, El Salvador, and Japan. Hofstede (1991) proposed historical/political change contexts and national wealth as two preliminary factors that affect the development of uncertainty avoidance work-related values (Table 6.3).

While members in weak uncertainty avoidance family situations prefer informal rules to guide their behavior, members in strong uncertainty avoidance family situations favor formal structure and rules. Rules and laws are established to counteract uncertainties in social interaction. In weak avoidance family situations, roles and behavioral expectations are actively negotiated. Children are given more latitude to explore their own values and morals. In strong uncertainty avoidance family situations, family roles are clearly established and family rules are expected to be followed closely.

In weak uncertainty work situations, there is a greater tolerance of innovative ideas and behavior. Conflict is also viewed as a natural part of organizational productivity. In strong uncertainty avoidance work situations, there is a greater resistance to deviant and innovative ideas. Career mobility is high in weak uncertainty avoidance cultures, whereas career stability is a desired end goal in strong uncertainty avoidance cultures. In strong uncertainty avoidance organizations, conflict is viewed as a threat to organizational effectiveness.

Hofstede (1980) uses the following statements to represent the basic characteristics of strong uncertainty avoidance organizations: (1) most organizations would be better off if conflict could be eliminated; (2) it is important for a manager to have at hand precise answers to most of the questions that his or her subordinates may raise about their work; and (3) when the respective roles of the members of a department become complex, detailed job descriptions are essential. Members of strong uncertainty avoidance

TABLE 6.3. Value Patterns in Weak–Strong Uncertainty Avoidance Cultures

Weak uncertainty avoidance cultures	Strong uncertainty avoidance cultures
Uncertainty is valued	Uncertainty is a threat
Career change	Career stability
Encourage risk taking	Expect clear procedures
Conflict can be positive	Conflict is negative
Expect innovations	Preserve status quo
Uncertainty-oriented personality	Certainty-oriented personality
Examples	Examples
Singapore	Greece
Jamaica	Portugal
Denmark	Guatemala
Sweden	Uruguay
Hong Kong	Japan
United States/Canada	France
Norway	Spain
Australia	South Korea/Japan

Note. Data from Hofstede (1991). The cultures listed are based on the *predominant* tendencies in the cultures.

organizations tend to score high on these statements; members of weak uncertainty avoidance organizations tend to score low on them.

The Masculinity–Femininity Value Variability Dimension

Distinctive male and female organizational behavior differences are found on the masculinity–femininity dimension (Hofstede, 1998). *Masculinity* pertains to “societies in which social gender roles are clearly distinct (namely, men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life)” (Hofstede, 1991, p. 82). *Femininity* pertains to “societies in which social gender roles overlap (i.e., both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life” (Hofstede, 1991, pp. 82–83). Japan, Austria, Venezuela, Italy, Switzerland, Mexico, and Ireland, for example, have high masculinity value indexes. The United States ranks

15th on the masculinity continuum out of the 50 countries and 3 regions studied. Sweden, Norway, The Netherlands, Denmark, Costa Rica, Yugoslavia, and Finland, for example, have low masculinity value indexes (implying a high femininity continuum). While “feminine” cultures emphasize flexible sex role behaviors, “masculine” cultures emphasize complementary sex role domains. Gender roles also differ by culture type across time and history. According to Triandis (1995), for example, in nomadic cultural communities where they have to move from place to place and hunt for their food, girls’ and boys’ upbringing are very similar, and they all have to forage for their next meals for survival and ecological adaptation purpose. However, in agricultural or herding communities, the socialization process for rearing boys and girls differs greatly: boys and men tend to crops or livestock, and girls and women stay home and raise children, take care of siblings, and cook (see Table 6.4).

Thus, historical roots and family socialization processes concerning gender roles shape the development of the masculine–feminine dimension. In “masculine” families, boys learn to be assertive, tough, and ambitious, and girls learn to be modest, nurturing, and relational oriented. In “feminine” families, both boys and girls learn to be caring and concerned with both facts and feelings. “Masculine” families are achievement

TABLE 6.4. Value Patterns in “Feminine” and “Masculine” Cultures

“Feminine” cultures	“Masculine” cultures
Flexible gender roles	Complementary gender roles
Emphasize nurturance	Emphasize achievements
Quality of work life	Economic growth
Work in order to live	Live in order to work
Environmental issues	Business performance
Androgynous-oriented personality	Traditional gender-role personality
Examples	Examples
Sweden	Japan
Norway	Austria
The Netherlands	Venezuela
Denmark	Italy
Costa Rica	Mexico
Finland	Philippines

Note. Data from Hofstede (1991). The cultures listed are based on the *predominant* tendencies in the cultures.

and success oriented. “Feminine” families are consensus oriented and stress the importance of quality-of-life issues. A “masculine” workplace differentiates male and female roles clearly. A “feminine” workplace merges male and female roles fluidly. A “masculine” organization also tends to emphasize business performance, whereas a “feminine” organization tends to emphasize environmental issues above and beyond business performance.

By implication, those who communicate in a “masculine” organizational culture should be mindful of the norms and rules of complementary sex role behaviors in the system. When one communicates in a “feminine” organizational culture, one should be sensitive to the flexible sex role norms and roles in that workplace. In working for a “masculine” culture, the focus should be more on business achievements and tangible result-based performance. In working for a “feminine” organization, one should be more mindful of the importance of quality of work/life balance issues and learn to be more concerned with community and environmental issues.

Moving beyond the four core value dimensions, Hofstede and his colleagues (see the Chinese Culture Connection, 1987) identified a fifth work-related value dimension, Confucian dynamism. More recently, Hofstede (2011) called out this dimension as a distinct dimension marked as “short-term orientation” versus “long-term orientation.” Furthermore, based on Michael Minkov’s (2009; Minkov & Hofstede, 2012) World Values Survey data, the Hofstede Dimensional Value Model includes a sixth value dimension: indulgence versus restraint value.

Additional Cultural Value Variability Dimensions

The Short-Term versus Long-Term Time Dimension

The fifth added value dimension has been previously identified as the Confucian Work Dynamism dimension, especially concerning the East Asian long-term orientation spectrum (Bond, 1991, 1996; the Chinese Culture Connection, 1987; Hofstede & Bond, 1988) in connection with their distinctive behavioral patterns. These East Asian cultures are China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. Their primary values include having a dynamic long-term orientation, showing perseverance, ordering relationships by status, being thrift centered, having a sense of shame, and emphasizing collective face-saving (Hofstede, 2001), thus, reflecting some of the traditional Confucian doctrines of 500 B.C.E.

The value of tenacity in pursuing one’s goals (i.e., the perseverance value), together with the availability of capital for investment (i.e., the thrift value), has helped shape the economic growth of the Five Dragons (Hong Kong/China, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan, and South Korea) in the Pacific Rim. In comparison, on this Confucian dynamism dimension, members from cultures such as Pakistan, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Canada score low. Some of the characteristics associated with the short-term orientation include conducting short- to medium-term planning, being spending centered, and emphasizing individual face-saving (see Table 6.5).

TABLE 6.5. Confucian Dynamism Dimension: Short-Term versus Long-Term Value Patterns

Short-term orientation characteristics	Long-term orientation characteristics
Personal survival/security	Social order
Personal respect/dignity	Hierarchical respect
Individual face-saving	Collective face-saving
Short- to medium-term planning	Long-term planning
Spending-centered	Thrift-centered
Short- to medium-term outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Examples	Examples
Pakistan	China
Nigeria	Hong Kong
Philippines	Taiwan
Canada	Japan
Zimbabwe	South Korea
Great Britain	Brazil
United States	Thailand
Germany	Singapore

Note. Data from Hofstede (1991). The cultures listed are based on the *predominant* tendencies in the cultures.

To better understand the Confucian dynamism dimension, a brief look at Confucian philosophy is helpful. Confucius was a Chinese philosopher of practical ethics who lived from 551 to 479 B.C.E. His practical code of conduct emphasizes hierarchical societal structure and appropriate family role performance (Bond, 1991, 1996). Confucianism remains the fundamental philosophy underlying Chinese values, attitudes, and behavior. The following two principles guide Confucian philosophy: (1) superiors in the workplace must act with virtue, and those in inferior positions must obey their superior; and (2) one should act dutifully toward one's parents and elders, reciprocally in one's obligations, and respectfully in role differentiation. Confucianism includes core values such as "servility, frugality, abstinence, diligence, hard work, patriarchal leadership, entrepreneurial spirit, and devotion to family" (Engholm, 1994, p. 30). This dimension reflects the collectivism and large power distance dimensions and also emphasizes both traditional values and adaptation to economic change in the environment.

Finally, the Chinese concept of “face” was based on Confucian philosophy. Face, in the Chinese context, means projected social image and social self-respect. Group harmony, and thus ingroup interdependence, is achieved by working to maintain everyone’s face in the society and trying hard not to cause any one to “lose face.” The “face-work” theme permeates many Asian cultures and profoundly influences how Asian cultures conduct business and their interpersonal interactions.

In recent years, Hofstede (2011) emphasized this distinctive value dimension as a fifth value, drawing especially from the data found in the World Values Survey (WVS: www.worldvaluessurvey.org) of 93 countries and regions. Under Ronald Inglehart’s (1997) guidance, the WVS collected worldwide data every 10 years and reported findings in the following areas: ecology, economics, education, emotions, family, gender and sexuality, government and politics, health, happiness, leisure and friends, morality, religion, society and nation, and work. Based on reanalysis of the WVS data, Hofstede (2011) identified long-term planning orientations as found in East Asian countries, followed by Eastern and Central Europe. A medium-term planning orientation is characteristic in south and north European, and South Asian countries. Short-term planning orientations are found in the United States, Australia, Latin American, African, and Middle Eastern cultural regions.

The Indulgence–Restraint Value Dimension

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010; see also Minkov, Blagoev, & Hofstede, 2013; Minkov & Hofstede, 2011, 2012a) added the sixth indulgence–restraint value dimension. Based on WVS data, the researchers defined the indulgence value pole as emphasizing the societal pursuit of prompt gratification of personal needs, desires, and individualized happiness, while the restraint value pole stresses the importance of individuals’ conformity to their societal environment, societal norms, and determinism. According to Hofstede (2011), the indulgence value spectrum prevails in North and South America, northern Europe, and parts of sub-Saharan Africa, whereas the restraint value spectrum prevails in western Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. According to Hofstede et al. (2010), Mediterranean Europe takes a middle position on this indulgence–restraint value dimension. Moving beyond a discussion of country-level value dimensions, we now address the relationship between individual dispositions, associated value patterns, and situational considerations.

Self-Conceptions, Personal Dispositions, and Situational Considerations

Self-conception is defined as apperception, or our views of ourselves derived from how we perceive ourselves in particular situations and from our views of ourselves as members of various groups (e.g., cultural, ethnic, and gender groups). Understanding the

fundamental premise of self in each culture and the core linguistic symbols associated with the conceptualization of “self” and “other” permits a clearer grasp of culture variations, personal identity, and communication issues in each distinctive group membership community.

Indeed, cross-cultural researchers around the world have accumulated a wealth of empirical data in the area of culture and self-conception. Miller (1991), for example, in researching interpersonal moral responsibility in India and the United States, observes that the Western cultural premise starts with the view of “persons as inherently autonomous. . . . the individual is regarded as primary, with the social order considered a derivative” (pp. 20–21). In the Hindu culture, however, the cultural premise reflects a more social and holistic view of the person. Persons are regarded as “inherently part of the social body, with relationships of hierarchical interdependence assumed to be both natural and normatively desirable. . . . the dyad rather than the autonomous individual is the most basic social unit” (Miller, 1991, pp. 21–22).

In commenting on the Chinese sense of “self,” Gao and Ting-Toomey (1998) observed: “Based on Confucianism, self is relational in Chinese culture. That is, the self is defined by the surrounding relations. Traditionally, the Chinese self involves multiple layers of relationships with others. A person in this relational network tends to be sensitive to his or her position as above, below, or equal to others” (p. 9). For the Chinese, the “self” is both a center of relationships and a dynamic process of development within a network of relationships. In Chinese culture, to be aware of one’s relations with others is an integral part of *zuo ren*, or “conducting oneself as a human properly” in getting along with others. In sum, the Chinese can never separate themselves from obligations to others and a Chinese sense of self-worth is closely tied with kinship and social networks.

In Colombia, the sense of self is also cast in terms of relational connectedness (Fitch, 1994, 1998). Terms such as *palanca* (literally, the word means a lever; symbolically, the word means a connection, a personal contact whose influence, or “pull,” enables someone to obtain a desired objective), *vinculos* (interpersonal bonds), and *confianza* (reliance, trust, confidence, camaraderie, and unconditional support) permeate the world of urban Colombian professionals. As Fitch (1998) notes: “The fundamental existence for Colombians is the *vinculo*: the bond between human pair-parts, between a family and its home (*la casa*), and between a human and his or her homeland (*tierra*). This premise cuts across a very wide range of Colombian interpersonal interpretations of action” (p. 147). In sum, a Colombian sense of self is tied closely to his or her tight-knit family bond and also extended kinship relationship between family relationship webs and the sentimental connective placement of space and home.

On a general theorizing level, self-conception is related to the core value dimension of individualism–collectivism in conjunction with power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and feminine–masculine features via the following characteristics: independent versus interdependent/relational self-construal, horizontal versus vertical self-construal, uncertainty-oriented versus certainty-oriented personality type, and gender-related personal identity/sexual identity issues.

Independent Self-Construal versus Interdependent/Relational Self-Construal

At the individual level of analysis, the term “self-construal” reflects how individuals view themselves in a given culture. Self-construal is linked to cultural values, norms, and communication. Recent research provides empirical evidence that two dimensions of self exist within each individual regardless of her or his cultural identity (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Singelis, 1994; Singelis & Brown, 1995). The terms “independent self-construal” and “interdependent self-construal” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 1994a, 1994b) refer to the degree to which people conceive of themselves as separate or connected to others, respectively (see Table 6.1).

On the one hand, the independent construal of self involves the view that an individual is a unique entity with an individuated repertoire of feelings, cognitions, and motivations (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Individuals with this self-construal value individualism, personal achievement, self-direction, and competition. Independents tend to be more self-face oriented than other-face oriented. Gudykunst et al. (1996) argue that independent self-construal predominates in individualistic cultures or ethnic groups. Independent self-construal has been linked to such behavior as outcome-oriented conversational constraints (Kim et al., 1996), task outcomes in groups (Oetzel & Bolton-Oetzel, 1997), and low-context communication style (i.e., upfront, direct communication; Gudykunst et al., 1996).

The interdependent construal of self, on the other hand, involves an emphasis on the importance of ingroup relational connectedness and reliance (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Markus and Kitayama (1991) note that “people are motivated to find a way to fit in with relevant others, to fulfill and create obligation, and in general to become part of various interpersonal relationships” (p. 227). Individuals with this self-construal want to fit in with others, act appropriately, promote others’ goals, and value conformity and cooperation. They are eager to appeal to other-face concerns in problematic situations in order to preserve relational harmony and to avoid public embarrassment. Gudykunst et al. (1996) argue that interdependent self-construal predominates in collectivistic cultures or ethnic groups. Interdependent self-construal has been linked to such behavior as other-oriented conversational constraints (Kim et al., 1996), relational outcomes in groups (Oetzel & Bolton-Oetzel, 1997), and high-context communication styles (i.e., subtle, indirect communication; Gudykunst et al., 1996).

More specifically, Markus and Kitayama (1991) argue that our self-construal influences our cognition, emotion, and motivation for actions. Independent construal of self includes a sense of “oneself as an agent, as a producer of one’s actions. One is conscious of being in control over the surrounding situation, and of the need to express one’s own thoughts, feelings, and actions to others” (p. 246). In contrast, an interdependent construal of self emphasizes “attentiveness and responsiveness to others that one either explicitly or implicitly assumes will be reciprocated by these others. . . . One is conscious of where one belongs with respect to others” (p. 246). Our sense of “self” serves

as an experiential point in terms of how we process self-views, how we relate to others, and by what criteria we evaluate others' behavior.

Importantly and more recently, a body of empirical evidence has revealed the utility of a tripartite model of self-construal in explaining people's behaviors in intimate relations (Kashima, Foddy, & Platow, 2002). For example, according to Bresnahan, Chui, and Levine (2004), while "collective interdependence focuses on the general connection that one has with one's group, entailing networks of obligation and face saving and maintenance" (p. 185), relational interdependence emphasizes a stronger "personal connection with significant others or romantic partners and the deeper involvement and commitment that such relationship entails" (p. 187). When dealing with intimate relationship problems, the relational-self individuals would be expected to be more committed and exclusively connected to the relationship than the general interdependent-self individuals.

Thus, cross-cultural researchers have made moderate progress in further differentiating general ingroup-reliance collectivism and particular relational dependence and connection. Hence, two types of "interdependent" personalities emerge in the study of individual dispositions or individual personality types: the ingroup-reliance personality type and the relational-dependence personality type. Cross, Bacon, and Morris (2000) found that people who scored high on relational-interdependent self-construal (hereafter labeled as "relational self-construal") tended to take into account the needs and wishes of intimate others when making decisions. Another study (Cousins, 1989) determined that Asians culturally define themselves in terms of close intimate relationships. All these studies also echo the call for attention concerning the importance of "relationalism" from the indigenous Chinese cultural perspective (Wang & Liu, 2010; Yeh, 2010).

In sum, people of independent self-construals value the ideals, goals, motivations, and identity negotiation process of an "unencumbered self." In comparison, people of interdependent self-construals value the ideals, goals, motivations, and emotions of a "connected self," which tie in closely with the extended family group, work group, neighborhood, village, or caste group. Furthermore, individuals with relational self-construals value the dyadic intimacy, emotional connection, and strong relational trust and reliance of a "relational bonded self."

Horizontal versus Vertical Personality Attributes

Parallel to the above self-construal idea, we can examine power distance from an individual level of analysis (see Table 6.2). Individuals and their behaviors can be conceptualized as moving toward either the "horizontal self" or the "vertical self" end of the spectrum. Individuals who endorse *horizontal self-construal* prefer informal symmetrical interactions (i.e., equal treatment) regardless of people's position, status, rank, or age. They prefer to approach an intercultural problem directly and to use impartial standards to resolve it. In contrast, individuals who emphasize *vertical self-construal*

prefer formal asymmetrical interactions (i.e., differential treatment) with due respect to people's position, titles, life experiences, and age (Triandis, 1995). They apply a "case-by-case" standard to assess right or wrong behaviors in accordance with the roles occupied in the hierarchical network.

These self-construals may influence relationship dynamics in interactions across cultural settings such as the workplace and learning environment. Thus, a professor with a horizontal-based self-construal may convert a professor–student relationship to a friend–friend relationship, which may well confuse a student with a vertical-based self-construal who expects a larger power distance in the professor–student interaction. Likewise, an American student who has a tendency toward a horizontal personality and is going overseas to China to study may attempt to establish an informal student–professor relationship with his or her teacher but may end up aggravating the professor's power distance expectancy of respect and deference from his or her student.

Uncertainty-Oriented versus Certainty-Oriented Personality Type

Analogous to the cultural level membership analysis of the weak versus strong uncertainty avoidance value spectrum, we can also examine the parallel style of uncertainty-oriented personality style versus the certainty-oriented personality style (see Table 6.3). According to Sorrentino (2012) and Sorrentino et al. (2008), uncertainty orientation refers to individual differences in how people handle uncertainty. These researchers found that individuals in Canada exhibited more uncertainty-oriented style traits, but individuals in Japan reflected more certainty-oriented style traits. Persons who are uncertainty oriented are characterized by direct responses to uncertainty, for example, actively seeking out information that reduces and resolves the uncertainty. In comparison, persons who are certainty oriented are characterized by indirect responses to uncertainty, for example, soaking up opinions of surrounding others to resolve uncertainty.

Sorrentino et al. (2008) and Shuper, Sorrentino, Otsubo, Hodson, and Walker (2004) found that a "goodness-of-match" hypothesis exists between the culture/country profile on uncertainty avoidance and the individual-based profile on uncertainty orientation. That is, individuals who match the predominant style of coping with uncertainty in their own society have a better sense of self, perceive less anxiety in work situations, experience more positive "flow" emotions, and are more realistic about what their future holds than those who do not match their own societal values (Sorrentino et al., 2008). Furthermore, uncertainty-oriented individuals are more likely to be actively engaged in a particular communicative activity where uncertainty is greater than the probability of certainty. In comparison, certainty-oriented individuals are more likely to be engaged in a particular interactional activity where estimated certainty is greater and the probability of uncertainty is lower. Interestingly, too, uncertainty-oriented persons also increased direct information processing when exposed to incongruent ingroup–outgroup messages, whereas certainty-oriented persons increased systematic

information exposure only in congruent ingroup–outgroup message conditions (Sorrentino & Short, 1986). The uncertainty orientation theory as developed by Richard Sorrentino (2012) in Canada and his international cohorts in Japan complements William Gudykunst’s (2005a, 2005b) anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) theory, as some of their research findings echo the AUM theory’s propositions. Sorrentino et al. (2008) also conclude that “[c]ontroversy currently rages with regards to whether individualism and collectivism truly distinguish Eastern and Western societies . . . ; a plausible alternative explanation is that East-West differences might be a function of how these societies cope with uncertainty” (p. 142).

Androgynous Gender Identity versus Traditional Sex Role Identity

The two terms “sex” and “gender” connote different phenomena in the research literature. The term “sex” refers to biological distinctions between women and men based on distinctive sex chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, internal reproduction structures, and external genitalia. As soon as a baby is born, she or he is marked down as a “girl” or “boy” under the “sex” check mark box based on biological distinctions. However, the term “gender” is fluid and dynamic and revolves around sociocultural construction issues such as wrapping a girl in a pink blanket and a boy in a blue one, reflecting the cultural construction of the “feminine” or “masculine” color association.

Bem (1974, 1993) coined the term *androgyny* to refer to the combination of both feminine and masculine qualities in an individual. The term “androgyny” also parallels the feminine value pole as discussed earlier, while traditional sex role identity parallels the masculine value pole spectrum (refer to Table 6.4). When an individual identifies with both gender roles, we say that she or he is psychologically androgynous. Thus, for example, a male nurse (note the gendered adjective added) treats his patients in an emotionally caring, compassionate, and empathetic way. However, in his leadership role in the homeowner association meeting, he can become assertive and competitive, and show a take-charge attitude. When an individual identifies himself or herself through the traditional gender role, that means he or she is following the traditional expectancies of how a man or woman should or ought to behave.

For example, U.S. females generally have been found to subscribe to interdependent and relational-oriented values. However, compared to females in collectivistic societies such as Japan and Thailand, U.S. females are still considered fairly independent-based. Comparatively, U.S. males have been found to adhere more to independent-self values and “I-focused” personal self-esteem and emotions (Bem, 1993; Tannen, 1990; Wood, 1997, 2013). Furthermore, according to Gilligan (1988), while U.S. males tend to subscribe to the ideal of the “morality of justice,” U.S. females tend to emphasize the ideal of the “morality of caring.” On the one hand, the “morality of justice” reflects independent–individualistic concerns of personal equity and self-deservingness. The “morality of caring,” on the other hand, reflects an interdependent–relational orientation of mutual caring, inclusivity, and connective empathy.

Culture × Personality × Situational Condition Considerations

Universal Societal Standards versus Particularistic Societal Standards

While independent-self people are influenced by “generalized others” in enacting their roles or parts, interdependent-self people are influenced by specific ingroup expectations and contexts in carrying out their communicative conduct. Independent-self individuals like to use a “universal” set or a “fair” set of standards to measure others’ performance. In comparison, interdependent-self individuals prefer to use a “particular” set of criteria or “situational rules” to evaluate others’ performance in different situations.

According to Parsons’s (1951) work, there are two kinds of societies: “universalistic” and “particularistic.” Independent-self individuals tend to be found in *universalistic societies*, whereas interdependent-self individuals tend to be located in *particularistic societies*. People in universalistic societies, such as Canada, the United States, Sweden, and Norway, believe that laws and regulations are written for everyone and must be upheld by everyone at all times. In contrast, for people in particularistic societies, such as China, South Korea, Venezuela, and Russia, the nature of the particular relationship in a given situation will determine how you will act in that situation (Trompenaars, 1994; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012).

On the one hand, for members of universalistic societies, the laws or regulations should treat everyone equally. On the other hand, for members of particularistic societies, the laws or regulations can be molded to fit the specific relationship or ingroup needs. Universalistic work practice emphasizes the importance of detailed contracts and penalty clauses in order to conduct business properly; particularistic work practice focuses on developing interpersonal trust and close social ties to maintain work commitments.

The ingroup asserts a profound impact, especially in particularistic societies. The concept of an “ingroup” can refer to both the actual kinship network to which you belong (e.g., your family group) and the reference group (e.g., work group or political group) with which you identify closely. On the cultural level of analysis, the definition of the ingroup can vary tremendously across cultures. For example, in the United States, the ingroup is typically defined as “people who are in agreement with me on important issues and values” (Triandis, 1989, p. 53). For traditional Greeks, the ingroup is defined as “family and friends and people who are concerned with my welfare” (Triandis, 1989, p. 53). For the Western Samoans, the ingroup consists of the extended family and the immediate village community (Ochs, 1988). For many Latin American groups, ingroup refers to the extended family and the immediate neighborhood. For Arab cultures, ingroup refers to immediate and extended family networks of parents, spouses, siblings, related cousins, and even nonfamily honored guests.

Situational Structure: Loose and Tight Social Structures

Cultures with loose social structures (Boldt, 1978), such as Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, generally give individuals more options for experimenting with their identity conceptions. In contrast, cultures with tight social structures such as Japan

and Korea tend to emphasize stringent cultural norms, rules, and interaction scripts. In loose social structures, people have a high degree of freedom to deviate from societal norms. In tight social structures, people are expected to conform to societal values, norms, and rules (Gelfand, 2012; Gelfand et al., 2011).

Triandis (1995) notes that a probable antecedent of social looseness is cultural heterogeneity (i.e., a mix of ethnocultures and diverse values). Cultures with loose social structures are more lenient in accepting a wide range of role-deviant behaviors. Loose cultures have multiple, sometimes conflicting, norms about what to do, and norm deviants in such cultures are not necessarily punished. There is also a high probability of looseness for cultures that are located at the intersections of other major cultures (e.g., Thailand at the intersection of India and China; Triandis, 1995). In societies with relatively loose structures, the United States, for example, the process of identity negotiation has a wide range of choices and options. In relatively tight structure societies like Japan, the process of identity negotiation has a narrow range of options.

In conclusion, individualistic value tendencies emphasize the importance of the independent self, personal self-esteem, and universalistic-based interaction. In comparison, collectivistic value tendencies emphasize the importance of the interdependent/relational self, collective self-esteem, and particularistic-based interaction. While both individualistic and collectivistic elements are present in all cultures, relatively clear patterns of individualistic value tendencies or collectivistic value tendencies do emerge to influence people's self-conception and behavior in particular situational scenes. We should also then consider whether you are situated in a "loose" social structure environment or a "tight" social structure environment. In a loose social system, violating some minor cultural rules or expectancies maybe glossed over by cultural insiders, but in a tight social system, you may have to do more communication repair work for such cultural expectancy violations.

In terms of which value set is better, individualism or collectivism, the answer is—it depends. Depending on the situation, the interaction goal, the people, the choices that are available, and the country you are in, it is sometimes wise to follow the collectivistic pathway, sometimes the individualistic pathway, sometimes both, and sometimes neither. Individualism and collectivism complement each other in an infinity-eight loop dance pattern. They represent a diverse range of cultural resources for creating more mindful choices for you and others, solving problems productively with culturally different others, and learning to join hands, heads, and hearts in making informed and meaningful choices and decisions.

Classical Value Orientations and Intercultural-Intergroup Encounters

F. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) conceptualize *cultural value orientations* as "complex but definitely patterned principles . . . which give order and direction to the ever-flowing stream of human acts and thoughts" (p. 4). Florence and Clyde Kluckhohn,

and their colleague Fred Strodtbeck, conducted this pioneering multiyear, multidisciplinary cross-cultural research project under the auspices of Harvard University in the late 1950s and 1960s. The five small but historically rich communities in which they lived and conducted their study were in northwestern New Mexico and included: the Pueblo of Zuni agricultural community, the Navaho/Dine nomadic sheepherding community, a “Spanish American” community whose residents had been part of the region since the sixteenth century, an “Anglo settlers” community whereby the individuals moved from the dustbowl region of Texas and Oklahoma during the Great Depression of the 1930s, and a Mormon/Latter Day Saints’ community that established the town of Ramah, New Mexico, in the late nineteenth century to convert the Native Americans to Christianity (Condon, 2015, p. 846).

The value orientation model emphasizes “[c]ultural values that included, and indeed welcomed, *variations*, as might be marked across historic changes, and that recognized variations in values within any community” (Condon, 2015, pp. 847–848). Cultural value orientations form the basic filtered lenses through which we view our own actions and those of others. The following subsections explain the core assumptions and the five value orientations developed by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961): people–nature, temporal, human nature, activity, and social relations orientations. Examples from both national cultures and ethnocultures are given. Ethnocultures are ethnic groups (e.g., African Americans, Irish Americans, Mexican Americans) within a national culture (e.g., the United States) whose members share similar sets of values based on their ancestral ties or common heritage. However, these groups also share some of the norms and rules of the larger culture for everyday effective coordination and functioning purposes.

Cultural value orientations regulate ingroup consensus and set evaluative standards concerning what is “valued” or “devalued” within a culture. They offer us a set of principles by which to function adaptively in a changing cultural milieu. They also help us to explain or “make sense” of events or people’s behaviors around us without too much information processing. We can “fill in the blank” of why people behave the way they do in our culture because we can draw from our implicit values and scripts in predicting ingroup members’ actions.

Classical Value Orientations and Basic Assumptions

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) observe that human beings in all cultures face a set of basic human problems or existential questions. Based on their research on Navajo Indians, Latino(a)s, and European Americans in the Southwest, they list the following five questions to which people in all cultures try to seek answers or solutions:

1. What is the relationship of people to nature (and supernatural beliefs)? (people and nature orientation)
2. What is the temporal focus of human life? (time sense orientation)

3. What is the character of innate human nature? (human nature orientation)
4. What is the modality of human activity? (activity orientation)
5. What is the modality of a human’s social relationship to other human beings? (social relations or relational orientation)

The value orientations’ approach assumes that these five questions are universal ones that human beings consciously or unconsciously seek to answer. While the answers to these questions are available in all cultures, some cultures have a stronger preference for one particular set of solutions than for others (Condon, 2015). The solutions represent the “deposits of wisdom” of a particular culture passed down from one generation to the next. The range of potential solutions to these five questions is shown and displayed horizontally after each key orientation in Figure 6.2.

People–Nature Value Orientation

The people–nature value orientation asks this question: “Is the relationship between people and the natural (or supernatural) environment one of control, harmony, or subordination and yielding?” While many middle-class European Americans believe in mastery and control over the natural environment, many ethnocultural groups (such as the African, Asian, Latino/a, and Native American) in the United States tend to believe in living harmoniously with nature.

Many Native American groups, for example, believe that what is human, what is nature, and what is spirit are all extensions of one another: we are all part of the universal

ORIENTATION	RANGE		
People and Nature	Subordination to Nature (Yielding)	Harmony with Nature (Flow)	Mastery over Nature (Control)
Time Sense	Past-Oriented (Tradition-Bound)	Present-Oriented (Situation-Bound)	Future-Oriented (Goal-Bound)
Human Nature	<u>Basically Evil</u> Mutable/Immutable	<u>Neutral</u> or <u>Good and Evil</u> Mutable/Immutable	<u>Basically Good</u> Mutable/Immutable
Activity	Being (Expressive/Emotional)	Being-in-Becoming (Inner Development)	Doing (Action-Oriented)
Social Relations	Lineality (Authoritarian Decisions)	Collaterality (Group Decisions)	Individualism (Autonomy)

FIGURE 6.2. The Kluckhohn model: Five value orientations and possible solutions. Adapted from Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) and Kohls (1996).

continuum, and hence we should learn to live harmoniously with one another. Buddhist cultures such as those of Bhutan, Laos, Thailand, and Tibet also tend to subscribe strongly to the harmony-with-nature belief. In comparison, many Polynesian cultures subscribe to the subjugation-to-nature value solution. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcano eruptions, and floods may have contributed to their belief that nature is a powerful force that is beyond the control of individuals. The best way to deal with nature is to pay respect to it and act humbly in the face of cataclysmic external forces.

The implication of this value orientation is that while some individuals believe in gaining control over their environment, others think it is more important to live harmoniously or submissively in relationship to their natural habitat. People who tend to believe in controlling nature have a stronger sense of the “self-over-nature” approach in dealing with their surroundings. People who tend to subscribe to the “self-with-nature” or “self-under-nature” viewpoint would have a more harmonious or submissive approach (respectively) in dealing with their environment.

For example, Trompenaars (1994, p. 138) asked managers in 38 different countries to choose between the following two statements: “(A) What happens to me is my own doing,” or “(B) Sometimes I feel that I do not have enough control over the directions my life is taking.” He found that 89% of U.S. managers and 82% of German managers selected option A, whereas only 56% of Japanese managers and 35% of Chinese managers selected that same option. Overall, most European countries scored high on option A, whereas most African, Middle Eastern, and Asian countries scored low on this option. People who believe that individuals should be controllers of nature are “inner directed” or internally driven; people who believe in nature as the controller of humans are “outer directed” or externally driven.

More specifically, the personality term “locus of control” reflects the destiny value orientation (control vs. yielding) on the cultural level. In terms of the locus of control personality dimension, there are two personality types: internal and external (Rotter, 1966). Internal locus of control individuals have a strong mastery-over-nature tendency, and external locus of control individuals have a strong yielding–fatalistic tendency. Individuals with an *internal locus of control* tend to emphasize free will, individual motivation, personal effort, and personal responsibility over the success or failure of an assignment. In comparison, individuals with an *external locus of control* emphasize external determinism, karma, fate, and external forces shaping a person’s life happenings and events. Internal locus of control is parallel to the notion of mastery over nature (i.e., controlling value), and external locus of control is parallel to the notion of subordination to nature (i.e., yielding value). Internal-locus individuals believe in the importance of free will and internal control of one’s fate. External-locus individuals believe in trying their best and then letting karmic fate take over.

Some individuals plan their actions in terms of the internal locus of control tendency, and others contemplate their life events along the external locus of control tendency. Perceived control of one’s destiny exists in varying degrees in an individual, across situations, and across cultures. In terms of gender socialization differences, for

example, males tend to endorse internal locus of control, and females tend to emphasize external locus of control in a wide variety of cultures (Smith, Bond, & Kagitcibasi, 2006). In other words, males in many cultures are more motivated by internal drives and a doing/fixing approach, and females tend to be more contextual and being-oriented in their attempt to flow with their external environment.

To engage in competent identity-support work, we have to increase our awareness and accuracy levels in assessing others' group membership identity and personal identity issues and the associated values that go with their group membership identity content or personal identity preference. When individuals from different "people–nature" solutions come together, intercultural problems may arise. While individuals from one cultural group are eager to "fix up" the environment with huge projects by building dams, levees, and reservoirs, another cultural group may be deeply offended because the action may provoke the anger of the spirits that inhabit the river being dammed or the terrain being inundated.

Temporal Orientation

The value orientation, the temporal value orientation, asks this question: "Is the temporal focus in the culture based on the past, present, or future?" The past-oriented time sense means honoring historic and ancestral ties; the present-oriented time sense means valuing the here and now, especially the interpersonal relationships and activities that are unfolding currently; and the future-oriented time sense means planning for desirable short- to medium-term developments and setting out clear objectives to realize them.

Asian immigrants (e.g., Chinese Americans and Vietnamese Americans) and Native Americans tend to revere the past; African Americans to have a strong sense of both past and present references; Latino/a Americans to respond strongly to the present experience; and European Americans to emphasize concern for the immediate future. More specifically, many Chinese Americans and Vietnamese Americans believe in the Buddhist concepts of karma and rebirth. They believe that "an individual life cycle is predetermined by good and bad deeds from a previous life. The goal is eventually to achieve spiritual liberation. . . . Ancestors are worshiped for four generations after death" (Locke, 1992, pp. 105–106). Thus, for many Chinese American and Vietnamese American immigrants, their ancestral past profoundly influences their present identities.

Many Mexican Americans, in contrast, prefer to experience life and people around them fully in the present. This outlook may come from their traditional cultural belief "in the concept of 'limited good.' In fact, this is the belief that there is only so much good in the world and, therefore, only so much good is possible in any one person's life" (Locke, 1992, p. 140). They prize experiencing life with the fullness of the five senses much more than "work for the sake of work" itself. For traditional-oriented Mexicans or Mexican Americans, work should never be an end in itself; living life fully

and helping families and friends through meaningful work make more sense to them (Hecht, Sedano, & Ribeau, 1993).

Many Africans and African Americans embrace a combination of past–present focus. For example, for many Africans and African Americans, people and activities in the present assume a higher priority than an external clock schedule (Asante & Asante, 1990). As Pennington (1990) observes, “Time for Africans does not exist in a vacuum as an entity which can be conceptually isolated. Time is conceived only as it is related to events, and it must be experienced in order to make sense or to become real. The mathematical division of time observed by Westerners has little relevance for Africans” (p. 131). Similarly, Locke (1992) notes that Africans’ concept of time differs from that found in Western cultures: “The difference is that in traditional African societies, people [tend to] emphasize something is done only at the present moment. . . . In becoming African Americans, the Africans had to develop a new framework capable of holding their beliefs, values, and behavior” (p. 26). For traditional Africans, the actual event that is happening forms the essence of temporal interaction. Furthermore, the past and ancestors “were indispensable in giving meaning to one’s present existence. In regard to the historical sense of time, events were filed as they happened. . . . There was always a conscious awareness and respect for the causal factors linking events among traditional Africans” (Pennington, 1990, p. 137).

On a broader level of interpretation, our sense of developmental identity is closely fused with the temporal value orientation. Those who subscribe to the past–present focus tend to believe in the importance of understanding historical factors and background contexts that frame the “self.” In order to understand the present self, it is important to understand the historical contexts that pave the way to it. Those who subscribe to the future focus (e.g., middle-class European Americans), however, tend to deemphasize the past, move forward boldly to the immediate future, and strongly emphasize the importance of “futurism” (e.g., the glorification of the “youth” culture and devaluation of “aging”). The larger French culture, for example, has been classified as “past–present oriented,” whereas the larger U.S. culture has been identified as “future oriented.” In French culture, “the past looms far larger and is used as a context in which to understand the present. Past, present, and future overlap synchronously so that the past informs the present, and both inform the future” (Trompenaars, 1994, p. 127). However, in the larger U.S. culture, its view of the future is that the individual can control it by personal achievement and inner-directed accountability (Kohls, 1996).

Potential clashes can exist between members of business groups with different time orientations: for example, between members who favor a “past–present” focus and members who favor a “future” focus. While business members from the first group want to view everything from the company’s “big picture developmental” history and traditions, members from the latter group prefer to bypass the past and plan ahead efficiently for an immediate future. Individuals with a “past–present” focus have a long-term view of holistic time, whereas individuals with a “future” focus have a short- to medium-term view of tangible-closure time.

Human Nature Orientation

The human nature orientation asks this question: “At birth, is human nature considered good, neutral, evil, or a mixture of good and evil, and is it changeable?” Individuals who believe in the basic goodness of human nature tend to be more trusting of others, whereas those who believe in humans’ inherent evil are generally more skeptical and suspicious when interacting with dissimilar others. Individuals who believe in the neutrality of human nature tend to believe in the role of the environment in shaping their intrinsic nature.

Although middle-class European Americans and African Americans tend to perceive human nature as neutral, many Native American groups emphasize the inherent goodness of human nature (Sue & Sue, 1990). Many European Americans believe in the individual’s personal willpower to shape the development of human nature, whereas many African Americans believe in the importance of the environment in shaping a person. For European Americans, human nature can be a mixture of good and evil, depending largely on the individual self-motivation effort. For African Americans, the environment (e.g., family or society) or a spiritual force (e.g., God) plays a critical role in cultivation of the goodness or evilness of human nature. For many traditional Africans and African Americans, “God is believed to be the creator, the sustainer, and the ultimate controller of life. . . . This belief in God’s intervention and ultimate control of the affairs of humans can account for an apparent resignation to fate or to higher forces observed on the part of traditional African peoples” (Pennington, 1990, pp. 127–128).

Many Native American groups believe in the innate goodness of human nature. Locke (1992) observes that “[Native Americans] act on this belief through their customs of welcoming strangers, sharing with each other, and helping others before self. People who do bad things are seen as inhabited by bad spirits, or perhaps as having spells put on them” (p. 57). While different Native American tribes engage in different communication modes in welcoming strangers (e.g., with initial silence and a period of observation), they ultimately believe in the goodness of people’s intentions. For many Native American groups, people are all part of the larger universe in which everyone is positively interconnected.

Individuals who believe in the essential goodness of human nature tend to be trusting: they leave their doors unlocked, and they do not usually fear strangers. Individuals who believe in the essential evilness of human nature tend to be less trusting; they tend to bolt their doors and eye strangers with suspicion. People in rural communities tend to be more trusting than people in urban communities.

Activity Orientation

The activity orientation asks this question: “Is the human activity in the culture focused on the doing, being, or being-in-becoming mode?” The “doing” solution means achievement-oriented activities; the “being” solution means living with emotional

vitality; and the “becoming” solution means living with an emphasis on spiritual renewal and connection.

While middle-class African Americans, Asian Americans, and European Americans focus on a “doing” or an achievement-oriented solution, Latino/a Americans and Native Americans focus on the “being-in-becoming” mode (Sue & Sue, 1990). However, the “doing” preference is manifested quite differently among the European American, African American, and Asian American groups.

For example, for the African American group, a “doing” mode means to fight against adversity and to combat racism through social achievements and activism for the good of the community. Furthermore, traditional Africans and African Americans also display a “being” mode for living. They value “having a sense of aliveness, emotional vitality, and openness of feelings. . . . African American culture is infused with a spirit (a knowledge that there is more to life than sorrow, which will pass) and a renewal in sensuousness, joy, and laughter. This symbol has its roots in African culture and expresses the soul and rhythm of that culture in America” (Hecht, Collier, & Ribeau, 1993, pp. 102–103). Likewise, Latino/a Americans also mix the “being” vitality solution with that of “being-in-becoming” spiritual beliefs.

For Asian immigrants in the United States, the “doing” mode is typically associated with working hard and making money in order to fulfill basic obligations to family and extended family networks. The great spiritual traditions of Asia (e.g., Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Taoism) also influence their “being-in-becoming” activity orientation. For European Americans, a “doing” mode means focusing on tangible accomplishments for personal gain, such as a coveted job promotion or a bigger salary to take care of self and immediate family (Locke & Bailey, 2014).

Both the Latino/a and Native American groups prefer the “being-in-becoming” mode and are oriented toward the religious and spiritual. Indeed, they are more concerned about their spiritual than their material well-being. Spiritual self-actualization is much more important to them than material rewards and gains. In addition, many traditional Latino(a)s also subscribe to the “being” mode of activity, which means enjoying the moment to the fullest. Shared recreations and celebrations with close friends and family members form a critical part of a Latino/a’s lifestyle.

Relational Orientation

The social relations or relational orientation asks this question: “Does the culture focus on individual, collateral, or lineal relationships?” Ho (1987) explains that while European Americans value individualistic relationships, many other ethnocultural groups (such as Asian, African, Latino/a, and Native Americans) enjoy collateral relationships. Individualistic-based relationships emphasize autonomy, differentiation, and the unique qualities of the people in the relationship. Collateral-based relationships emphasize role obligations and ingroup interdependence, kinship bonds, and extended family bonds. Lineal-based relationship emphasizes relationships that are passed from

one generation to the next along a historical trajectory such as social class, caste, or family background (e.g., the traditional caste system of India).

We can conclude that while middle-class European Americans tend to subscribe to the predominant individualistic relationship tendencies, African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Latino/a Americans tend to prefer the collateral relationship tendencies or a mixture of both value sets. Because of the proximity between these ethnic groups within the United States, their value tendencies often take on mixed adaptational functions. The theme of relational orientation is manifested through the individualism–collectivism dimension. The classical value orientation model, together with the value dimensions' schemas, are reflective of the deeper level of the iceberg metaphor presented in Chapter 1. Understanding some of the value dimension spectrum, such as small and large power distance value tendency, and mastery over nature versus subordination to nature value inclination, affords us more insights into why individuals think in certain value patterns and also how they construct social meanings based on their cultural socialization processes, personal lived experiences, and interactive situations. The more we understand where cultural strangers came from in terms of their thinking patterns, affective reactions, and behavioral predispositions, the more we can learn to acknowledge and even affirm their value orientation and communicative frames of operation and learn to work with them adaptively and collaboratively.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND MINDFUL GUIDELINES

Cultural values are deposits of wisdom that are passed from generation to generation. Simultaneously, they also can serve as cultural blinders to alternative ways of thinking, feeling, motivating, and behaving. While cultural values serve many useful functions such as identity maintenance and group solidarity, they can also reinforce various ethnocentric habitual practices and norms of communication and intercultural and intergroup relatedness.

In this chapter, we provided a systematic and comprehensive discussion of cultural values, their functions, and their values from a cultural general level to an individual and situational level to classical value orientations in intergroup encounters. While discussing the cultural variability framework, not only have we drawn attention to intracultural variations of vertical and horizontal dimensions of collectivism and individualism, but we have also dealt with additional dimensions such as short-term versus long-term time dimensions. While discussing self-construals, not only have we drawn attention to the tripartite of self-construals as well as vertical and horizontal self-construals, but also additional factors such as loose versus tight sociocultural structures. Last but not least, we discussed classical value orientations with insightful cross-cultural differences. We have also attempted to connect cultural dimensions, self-construals, and classical value orientations to each other for a system's perspective on understanding intercultural and cross-cultural communication behaviors.

To be a mindful intercultural communicator on the value clarification level, here are some recommendations to enhance your knowledge, motivation, and skills:

- 1 Understand that on the cultural group membership level, different value preferences exist for memberships in different cultures or co-cultures.
- 2 Different situations, contexts, and personality tendencies also affect the sampling of individualistic and collectivistic elements or small and large power distance elements in a given culture.
- 3 Develop a culture-relative approach in understanding different cultural values. Cultural relativism means understanding a particular set of cultural values from that cultural frame of reference rather than your own gut-level ethnocultural frame of reference.
- 4 When entering a new culture, learn to mentally *observe* (O), *describe* (D), and *interpret* (I) cultural differences, *suspending* (S) ethnocentrism, taking the other cultural values' perspective. In an unfamiliar culture, patient observation with our five senses can help us to shift value lenses and get ready, both emotionally and cognitively, to appreciate and understand the differences. Furthermore, with focused observation, we should work on generating multiple cultural interpretations in viewing a “seemingly deviant” behavior. We should make explicit our own unconscious cultural interpretations in comparison to the interpretations by cultural insiders. In this way, we hope, this O–D–I–S method application—observing, describing, interpreting, and suspending evaluations of the other's culture—will enable us to observe seemingly “uncivilized” behavior ethnorelatively.
- 5 Learn to observe a wide range of people in a wide range of situations in the new cultural setting before making any premature generalizations about the people's behavior in that culture.

CRITICAL THINKING AND CONNECTIVE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Of all the four value spectrums in Hofstede's framework of cultural variability dimensions, which one value dimension creates the most intercultural or intergroup misunderstandings in your family or intimate relationships? How about in your workplace?
2. Power distance and display of respect across cultures are part of everyday interactions. How do you negotiate power distance in interpersonal, intercultural, and workplace situations? Do you have an intercultural story similar to or different from that of Tenzin's story? How and why do individualists, collectivists, and bicultural individuals differ in their understanding and negotiation of power distance in various situations? How do people in different cultures display respect to each other, and

what misunderstandings happen from each other's cultural lens? Similar to showing feet or soles of shoes in Indian culture, what behaviors and use of nonverbal symbols are considered disrespectful in your cultures?

3. How are your family value patterns different from or consistent with those of the larger cultural and/or ethnic value system? How are your personal value patterns different from or consistent with these patterns?
4. Can you distinguish the individual-level personality factors (e.g., self-construals) from the culture-level general factors (e.g., individualism–collectivism and power distance) in your communication with cultural strangers? What are the pros and cons in differentiating the different levels of research analysis about cultural-level differences and personality differences?
5. Which of the classical value orientations do you attach the most importance to, and how do they shape your perceptions, lifestyle, and everyday decision-making process?
6. Think about a specific region of the world you might be visiting for an extended period of time or doing business with in the future. Identify the specific value dimension differences you might find between your cultural values and the regional cultural values.
7. If you have to work on a team project with other students who have diametrically opposite values from your own, how would you manage the differences in a competent manner? Recommend two ideas you can practice or apply to manage possible value clashes.

CHAPTER 7

Mindful Intercultural Verbal Communication

- Introduction
- Human Language: A Coherent System
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INTERCULTURAL VERBAL MISUNDERSTANDING OR CONFLICT CLASH?: A CASE STORY

Majid is an international student from Saudi Arabia who transferred to a 4-year university. He is a bright, serious, diligent student who has been granted a scholarship to obtain a degree from a U.S. university. He met with Professor Smith in the Business Department regarding a discrepancy with recorded absences and deducted attendance points for a class.

Overhearing their conversation, the Department Chair Dr. Jones passed by and said to Majid, "If you have anything that you want to discuss, come to my office." Majid interpreted this verbal message as an open-door invitation and followed Dr. Jones to his office. Dr. Jones was surprised that Majid came at that very moment.

Majid and Dr. Jones talked for a while, and Majid recounted the background context that led to his perceived grade discrepancy in Professor Smith's class and his dissatisfaction with what the professor told him. At some point, Dr. Jones asked Majid to leave. However, Majid wanted to continue their discussion because he felt like he barely filled in the key points of the story. Dr. Jones asked Majid again to leave or security would be called. Majid started to raise his voice.

Sally, the department secretary who sat outside of Dr. Jones's office was listening intently to this conversation. Hearing the student's voice escalate, the secretary quickly contacted campus security, fearing that the student might become hostile. When two security personnel arrived, they asked Majid to leave and escorted him out of the department office and the building. Some of Majid's friends happened to be around the building and saw him escorted out by security.

A few days later, a dejected Majid went to meet with the campus international student advisor about this incident. He was very upset, hurt, and fearful that he was treated like a terrorist. He expressed shame as many of his friends witnessed security escorting him out of the building like a criminal. At the same time, during the appointment, the Chair Dr. Jones also happened to call the advisor about his concern over Majid's emotional stability.

—JEAN, *international student advisor*

Introduction

Intercultural communication consists of the exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages through the use of a particular linguistic practice and its associated nonverbal intonations and varied gestures. Language in and of itself is not only a conduit for expressing content meaning or instrumental task request, but also a coherent system that reflects the lived experience of a cultural member and carries rich symbolic beliefs, values, norms, and attitudes concerning self, others, and the situation.

Indeed, language and culture are closely intertwined, and it is within a given cultural community that people learn about their language varieties, their situational use, and their symbolic meanings. The opening story reflects challenges that verbal communication styles present across cultures. Tens of thousands of international students study at universities in the United States, and they need the help of faculty, staff, and domestic students to meet their academic and other goals. If you were the international student advisor, how would you begin to unpack and analyze this case story? How would you evaluate the communication styles exhibited by Majid, Dr. Jones, and Sally? How would you respond to them? What can be done to diffuse anxiety and tension in the given situation? What suggestions would you proffer for better understanding and improved intergroup communication? Language frames our expectations and directs our perceptions and meaning interpretations. It is the key to unlocking the heart of a sociocultural community. Mindful language and verbal communicators are intentional in their choice of language and linguistic expressions and are also acutely aware of the accompanying nonverbal nuances and displays (see Chapter 8) for an analysis of both content and relational meanings in a particular cultural milieu.

In this and the following chapter, we will explore the relationship between underlying cultural values and verbal/nonverbal communication styles. As social beings, we are affiliated with different sociocultural groups, and our primary identities, most notably our cultural–ethnic identities, are often expressed through the symbols and styles we use in our interactions with others. Culture is a symbolically mediated meaning system, and language is a vital part of this symbolic system.

The chapter is divided into four main sections: the first presents the basic features of human language; the second explores the functions and patterns of languages across cultures; the third examines cross-cultural verbal styles; and the fourth presents the chapter summary, mindful guidelines, and critical thinking questions concerning competent intercultural verbal communication engagement. In order to understand culture, we have to understand the premium role of language and its verbal variations in connection with sociocultural norms, roles, relationships, and situations.

Human Language: A Coherent System

Every human language embodies a logical, coherent system for the insiders of a linguistic community. The term “system” implies patterns, rules, and structure. This section explores the structural features of human language for mindful intercultural verbal communication. While broad similarities exist among languages, tremendous variations remain in the sounds, written symbols, grammars, and nuances of the conveyed meanings of 7106 known living language varieties across cultures (*www.ethnologue.com*).

A *language* is a rule-based, arbitrary, symbolic system, developed by members of a particular speech community that names ideas, feelings, experiences, events, objects, spatial/temporal directions, colors, people, and other phenomena. Through

this arbitrary, symbolic system, humans imbue it with historical, philosophical, political, cultural, interpersonal, and personal experiential meanings. The three distinctive features of each human language are arbitrariness, multilayered rules, and speech community.

Arbitrariness

All human languages are arbitrary in their phonemic (i.e., sound unit) and graphic representations (i.e., alphabets or characters). As early as at 3 months of age, children have already acquired intonations or sounds similar to those changes in pitch heard in adult exclamations and questions in their culture. Through continuous reinforcement, children learn about the forms and sounds of words. In any culture, children acquire speaking and comprehension skills before reading and writing skills.

While almost all children have the capacity to utter all the sounds in all languages, this linguistic competence tapers off as they reach 6 to 7 years of age. This also explains why the speech of non-native speakers, even those fluent in English, has a non-native “accent.” Even within a shared linguistic community, people in different locales speak the same language with different accents and dialects. For example, Tibetans in the three provinces of Tibet (Amdo, Kham, and U-Tsang) speak Tibetan with different dialects and accents (Dorjee et al., 2011). In linguistic terms, an accent is a manner of pronunciation that contains no meaningful information (Dovidio & Gluszek, 2012). In terms of social identity, however, it conveys a considerable amount of social information affecting intergroup perceptions and communication (Cargile, Giles, Ryan, & Bradac, 1994; Lindemann, 2003; Rakic, Steffens, & Mummendey, 2011).

The arbitrary feature of language also extends to the written symbols or characters that cultural members use to express their ideas. Meanings are not inherently in words but in people. Written symbols such as *love* in English, *pyar* in Hindi, *ai* in Chinese, *amour* in French, and *tsewa* in Tibetan carry no intrinsic meanings that exactly match internal emotional states. These words are arbitrarily sounded out or written and have no meanings in and of themselves, but members of different speech communities give sociocultural meanings to these and other words based on their socialization processes. For example, in Tibetan culture, a monk teacher putting on a serious face to admonish a disciple and parents displaying a serious demeanor to discipline their children are regarded as caring and nurturing, not as necessitating a 911 call for abuse.

Multilayered Rules

To be a competent language user in a second or third foreign language, you need to have a good grasp of the “languaculture” that you will be encountering. The term “languaculture” emphasizes the *necessary* tie between language structure and culture (Agar, 1994). The features of a particular language, from syntactic rules to semantic rules, reflect a speaker’s worldviews, values, and premises concerning different functions and ways of speaking. Additionally, the more you understand how your own native

language system is put together, the more you can understand how your own thinking patterns and emotional reactive expressions are either liberated or constrained by the architectural framework of your own language system.

Human language appears to be the only communication system that combines meaningless elements into meaningful structures (Chaika, 1989). To non-native speakers, the rules of a “foreign language” appear random and nonsensical, but to native speakers, the rules of their language make perfect sense and are logical, even though most native speakers cannot clearly articulate the rules of their own language. All human languages are structured according to phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics (for pragmatics rule and speech community, see the next subsection) (see Figure 7.1).

The *phonological rules* (or phonology) of a language refer to the different accepted procedures for combining phonemes. Phonemes are the basic sound units of a word. For example, some of the phonemes in English are /k/, /sh/, and /t/. Native speakers of English, for example, may possess an intuitive sense of how to utter sounds such as “kiss,” “shy,” and “try”; however, they may not be able to articulate the how and why of the phonetic rules for producing these sounds. While the English language has 45 phonemes, other languages have a range of phonemes spanning anywhere between 15 and 85.

The accents of non-native language speakers are usually related to phonetic sound problems. Depending on the sounds of a given language, native speakers of that language are habituated to using their vocal instruments (e.g., mouth, tongue, palate, and vocal cords) in certain ways to produce certain sounds. Their ears are also trained to hear the native sounds of their own language. However, bilingual non-native speakers of the language may have difficulty hearing or articulating the sounds like natives do. This distinctively marks them as non-native speakers of the language.

Interestingly, members of subcultures who are native speakers of the same language

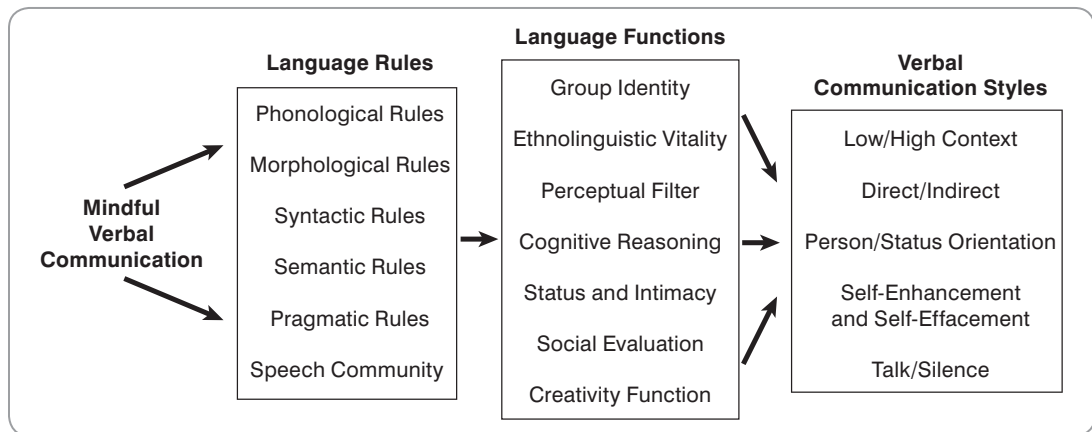


FIGURE 7.1. Mindful verbal communication: Rules, functions, and verbal styles.

can also be identified as having accents. In such cases, the distinctive accents can be attributed to shared group membership. Many Bostonians, for example, claim that they can differentiate the Italian, Irish, and Jewish groups in their city by the way they articulate their /o(r)/ vowel sound (in words like *short* and *corn*). Ethnically distinct speech often indicates group solidarity and bondedness. Thus, to a large degree, our accented speech pattern reflects our identity group membership. Whereas standard language and accents in a given linguistic community are positively evaluated, nonstandard language and accents are negatively evaluated in social interactions (Giles, & Rakić, 2014; Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010; Gluszek, Newheiser, & Dovidio, 2012; Tsurutani, 2012).

Linguistically speaking, however, everyone who communicates orally speaks with an accent because accent means the inflection or tone of voice that is taken to be the characteristic of an individual. For example, law enforcement agencies sometimes use electronic equipment to generate “voiceprints” made from recordings of suspects’ speech. These voiceprints can be used to help confirm the identities of the suspects because, like fingerprints, voiceprints are highly individualized. Based on decoding intergroup membership accents, group members often mark individuals as “ingroup” versus “outgroup” members via perceived tonal similarity or difference.

The *morphological rules* (or morphology) refer to how different sounds combine to make up a meaningful word or parts of a word (e.g., *new* and *com-er* form *new-com-er*). Phonemes combine to form morphemes, which are the smallest units of meaning in a language. In English and many other European languages, morphemes are syntactically often put at the end of words as *suffixes* (i.e., “is *going*” and “is *sleeping*” contain the morpheme *ing*, which indicates that an activity is currently in progress). In Swahili, however, the grammatical information indicating verb tense appears at the beginning as *prefixes* (law = “to go,” *nlaw* = “is going”; or “sun = to sleep,” *nsun* = “is sleeping”; Chaika, 1989, p. 5). Again, languages develop different rules based on cultural conventions that are passed down across generations.

The *syntactic rules* (or syntactics) of a language refer to how words are sequenced together in accordance with the grammatical practice of the linguistic community. The order of the words helps to establish the meaning of an utterance. It also reflects the cultural notions of causality and order. In English grammar, for example, explicit subject pronouns are used to distinguish self from other (e.g., “*I* cannot give *you* the report because it is not ready”). In Chinese grammar, however, explicit pronouns such as “I” and “you” are deemphasized. Instead, conjunctive words such as “because” (*yinwei*), “so” (*suoyi*), and “then” (*juo*) appear early in the discourse to pave the way for the rest of the story (e.g., “*Because* of so many projects all of a sudden piling up, *so* the report has *then* not been handled properly.” While Chinese syntax establishes a context and contingent conditions and then introduces the main point, English syntax establishes the key point and then lays out the reason (Scollon, Scollon, & Jones, 2012; Young, 1994). Unlike English language syntax, many languages have “Subject–Object–Verb” syntax. For example, ‘I love you’ in English is rendered in Hindi and Tibetan languages as ‘I you love’ syntax (Tibetan: *Nga* (I) *kyerang* (you) *la* (particle) *gagi dhug* (love)). Similarly, in English, adjectives generally come before nouns (e.g., asking for “Green tea”

at a restaurant), but in Tibetan adjectives generally follow nouns (e.g., “*Solja* (Tea) *Chig* (one)” (Tibetan)). The syntactic rules of a language impose tremendous power on one’s thinking, and hence on a culture’s reasoning patterns. Linear and relational worldviews are intimately related to the ethnolinguistic features and syntactic rules of a language (e.g., forms of address such as Sir, Madam, Your Highness, Your Eminence, and Your Holiness) and reflect relational status and power distance in interactions.

The *semantic rules* (semantics) of a language refer to the features of meaning we attach to words. Words themselves do not have holistic meanings. It is people within a cultural community who consensually establish shared meanings for specific words and phrases. For example, *pretty* has a feature of [+female], and *handsome* has a feature of [+male]. If we combine *pretty* with the [+male] feature such as “pretty boy” (or “handsome woman”), the concept takes on a whole range of different meanings (Chaika, 1989). Beyond mastering the vocabularies of a new language, language learners need to master the appropriate cultural meaning features that are indicated by different word pairings. Without such cultural knowledge, they may have the right vocabularies but an inappropriate meaning association system (e.g., “What a pretty boy!”).

Any language has two levels of meaning: denotative meaning and connotative meaning. A word’s *denotative meaning* is its dictionary definition from an objective, public stance. *Connotative meaning* is the informal affective grasp of particular words and phrases, and these meanings are relatively subjective and personal. Words such as “commitment,” “power,” “privilege,” “loyalty,” and “compromise” can hold both objective and subjective meanings. For instance, Jack and Jill may connotatively differ in the use of the word “commitment” in their relationship. While Jack’s use of commitment includes an exclusive dating relationship but not marriage, Jill’s use of commitment may include the presumption of marriage. Furthermore, according to Osgood, May, and Miron (1975), the following three dimensions comprise the *affective features* of connotative meaning: value (i.e., good–bad); potency (i.e., strong–weak); and activity (i.e., fast–slow).

For two international business parties (e.g., an American business partner negotiating a business contract with a Saudi business partner) working on a project may have similar reactions to the “good and strong” part of the concept concerning “commitment”; however, they differ as to the activity dimension of “fast versus slow.” While “fast” activity may reflect short-term future-oriented cultural values, “slow” activity reflects long-term past-oriented cultural values. The former party (e.g., American businessman) thinks that the business contract will be signed that afternoon and that he can fly back home by evening. However, the latter party (e.g., the Saudi Arabian businessman) thinks the business negotiation has just barely started—especially when relational trust in that culture takes a long time to develop. The three affective meaning features tap into the underlying cultural or personal attitudes we hold for a diverse range of concepts. The more abstract the concepts, the more chances that intended meanings can be lost in the translation process (Hannawa, 2017).

Furthermore, translation problems and jokes that involve different semantic understandings abound on the global level: The English phrase “The spirit is willing

but the flesh is weak” has been translated into Russian as “The vodka is good but the meat is rotten.” The translation for “Things come alive with Pepsi” has been translated into German as “Pepsi can pull you back from your grave!” General Motors’ “Chevy Nova” car has been translated into Spanish as “*No va*,” meaning “It doesn’t go.” Intercultural misunderstandings arise when we decode the literal meanings of the words but not the connotative meanings of the messages.

Lastly, we should also pay close attention to the two-leveled cultural meanings: etic meanings versus emic meanings. These two-leveled meanings can often complicate our understanding of semantics. On one hand, *etic meanings* can be defined as the dictionary meanings of words or phrases from a mainstream, standardized viewpoint or from an outsider’s culture-general understanding of the foreign language dictionary words or phrases. On the other hand, *emic meanings* refer to concepts, interpretations, and behaviors that are culture-specific, and insiders imbue the words with a strong cultural flavor. For example, indigenous Chinese term such as “filial piety” or *xiao* to connote the complex Confucius concept of “indebted devotion, sacrifices, and caring of one’s parents,” or use of the term *yuan fen* to reflect the richly textured Buddhist concept of “karmic relational destiny” (sometimes translated as “fateful coincidence” in English and “synchronicity” in French, and you can also have “*yuan* but no *fen*” in Chinese, meaning “have karmic relationship fate from previous incarnation but no human connective destiny in this lifetime”) are heavily emic-based terms and infused with insiders’ meanings. Take another term such as *personalismo* in Spanish, broadly denote “personalism” in English. From a cultural, emic interpretive standpoint, *personalismo*, in Mexican culture, refers to establishing a good rapport and personal connection, and being trustworthy (*confianza*) (Locke, 1992). It means the unconditional validation of the intrinsic value of the person with whom you are communicating, in consideration of her or his family membership background. Taking the time to know the individual and making an effort to display nonverbal warmth and genuine affection are part of the *personalismo* communicative value in the Mexican cultural community. While mindful understanding of etic meanings for essential words and phrases of a cultural community will open the door to developing a sound acquaintance relationship, the mindful grasping of the deep emic meanings of how insiders live their core cultural symbols of “verbs” and “nouns” and “adjectives” can promote deeper, quality friendships and partnerships. Understanding both etic and emic meanings in context, as well as their underlying cultural nuances, can help us become verbally sensitive and supportive intercultural communicators. Appropriate and effective language usage and verbal style engagement always take place within a situational speech community. The situational use of language is known as the pragmatic rule.

Pragmatic Rules and Speech Community

The *pragmatic rules* (pragmatics) of a language refer to the situational rules that govern language usage in a particular culture. Pragmatics concerns the rules of “how to say what to whom and under what situational conditions” in a particular situation within a

speech community. An individual can be fluent in a second or third language but still act like a linguistic fool if he or she violates the pragmatic rule of language usage in a particular sociocultural setting. For example, the Chinese elderly will sometimes comment on your appearance directly to your face as to whether you look too thin or too fat. When you hear, Oyo! Ni pang le! (“Wow, you’re fat!”), it is almost echoing the similar sentiment as “Oh look, now you have a beard!” In other words, it is not meant to hurt your feelings, but, rather, it is more of an observation and noticing. However, if you react negatively and say defensively: “I’ve been exercising everyday on the treadmill; what do you mean I’m fat?” you may have violated the Chinese pragmatic interactional rule—especially in your use of a blunt tone to an elderly uncle/auntie-type caring person. In many Asian cultures, the word *fat* (*Mota* in Hindi and *Gyagpa* or *Kusha Jorpo* in Tibetan) is associated with a wide range of meanings, including prosperity, moderate-to-high economic status, good health, charisma, and even pretty in the case of a girl. In this regard, the most proper response is to take it lightly, smile, and toss it off, or even say: “Yes—thanks to all the good blessings, and my parents fed me so very well everyday, and we are all so blessed.” But if the Chinese elderly person is within the German or U.S. sociocultural speech community, her or his comment can definitely be construed as rude and a violation of privacy and of the pragmatic rule of the individualistic, privacy-oriented society.

In short, pragmatics concerns the cultural expectations of how, when, where, with whom, and under what situational conditions certain verbal expressions are preferred, prohibited, or prescribed. Pragmatic rules also govern nonverbal communication in a given cultural context; for example, children are traditionally expected to be quiet in the presence of adults in Southeast Indian and Tibetan cultures. Children should politely respond to adults’ inquiry about them. Of course, language evolves and changes, and so do cultures (Lim, 2017). However, the deep underlying layer (e.g., cultural traditions, beliefs, values, and customs) of the iceberg is slower to change than the middle (e.g., language and nonverbal daily habits) or the surface level (e.g., the intersection of global pop cultures, artifacts, and icons).

A *speech community* is defined as a group of individuals who share a common set of norms and rules regarding proper communicative practices (Hymes, 1972; Labov, 1972). It is concerned with how individuals forge a shared group-based membership identity, define and interpret interaction goals, and evaluate the use of proper speech codes (Philipsen, 1992). *Speech codes* refer to the norms, rules, and premises of the cultural way of speaking. In order to understand a particular speech community (e.g., the gay community or the queer community or the senior retirement home community), we have to understand the distinctive speech codes, nonverbal expressions, meaning constructions, and coordinated verbal and nonverbal rules of that community (Carbaugh, 1990, 1996; Philipsen, 1987, 1992).

We have identified various features of human language and illustrated these features with some cultural examples. Linguistic features give rise to the diverse functions of languages across cultures and answer the question of why a language plays such a pivotal role within each culture. Language is a cultural heritage and legacy that

is passed down from one generation to the next. It is also a powerful adaptational tool for collaborating, competing, relating, and preserving identity on both individual and group membership levels.

Languages across Cultures: Diverse Functions

Cultural value orientations drive language usage in everyday lives. For example, if a culture has a high individualism value index (e.g., Germany and the United States), words and phrases such as “I,” “me,” “my goal,” “my opinion,” “self-help,” and “self-service” tend to appear as part of everyday parlance. If a culture has a high collectivism value index (e.g., Japan and Korea), phrases such as “our work team,” “our goal,” “our unit,” “our future together” and “we as a group” are part of the everyday lexicon. Individualistic cultures such as Canada and the United States have more competitive sports metaphors (e.g., “the *ball* is in your court,” “at this stage in the *game*,” or “I’m caught *blindsided* by his request”) or win–lose warlike metaphors (e.g., “it’s like a *war zone* in the main office,” “everyday is an *uphill struggle*,” or “I don’t want to be caught in the *crossfire* of office politics”). Collectivistic cultures such as the Thai and Japanese have more heart-based expressions (*jai/heart* in Thai; e.g., “the heart content is stable” or “one’s heart is frightened out of the body”) and belly-based to heart-based expressions (*hara/belly or stomach*; and *kororo/heart* in Japanese; e.g., “one’s stomach boils over,” “one heart’s rip,” or “one’s heart makes a lot of noise”), which signify the interwoven connection among the heart, body, and mind via the discourse process in everyday conversations (Berendt & Tanita, 2011).

Berendt and Tanita (2011) surmise that, while the English language maintains a sharp distinction between rationalities (head/mind) and emotions (heart), the Thai and Japanese language data reveal the fusion of the rational discourse mode with the embodied emotive mode of language usage as located in the heart or gut-belly level. Berendt and Tanita (2011) conclude: “The ‘dualistic’ dichotomy of the rational and emotive/attitudinal is evident in the Western tradition as in English ‘heart/mind’ expressions”; comparatively, “a ‘monistic’ view of communication, in which there is an integration of various modes of understanding . . . , can be seen from Thai in the *jai* (heart) expressions . . . [and] can also be seen in the Japanese *hara* (belly/abdomen) expressions” (2011, p. 75). Intercultural language misunderstanding can stem from the distinctive cultural perspective that each language community holds toward the spatial location of its root language expression: from the rational seat of the mind or the embodied location of the heart and belly.

In this section, we identify the diverse functions of languages across cultures as group identity, ethnolinguistic vitality, perceptual filtering, cognitive reasoning, status and intimacy, social evaluation, and creativity functions (Edwards, 1985, 1994; Farb, 1973; Giles et al., 1977; Ting-Toomey & Korzenny, 1989). The distinctive feature of a language (e.g., whether the language emphasizes the use of the formal “you” or intimate “you,” as in Colombia and Mexico) influences the specific function (e.g., the status and

intimacy function) of language usage in a particular situation and in a particular culture (see Figure 7.1).

The Group Identity Function

Language is the key to the heart of a culture. It is an identity marker. Language serves the larger cultural–ethnic identity function because language is an emblem of “groupness.” In speaking a common tongue, members signal group solidarity and connectedness. Language represents “a core symbol, a rallying point. Language is important in ethnic and nationalist sentiment because of its powerful and visible symbolism” (Edwards, 1985, p. 15). People deduce sociocultural information about each other, such as gender, ethnicity, and status, through languages and accents, and they also use the deduced information for social evaluation as indicated by studies on language attitudes and their social consequences (see Giles & Rasic, 2014). Intercultural frictions can easily occur because of the ways we socially categorize people into “ingroup” versus “outgroup” and linguistically label them as “us” versus “them” and relate to these marked terms favorably and unfavorably (Cargile et al., 1994; Dovidio & Gluszek, 2012).

Group memberships and linguistic mediums influence our perceptions, relationships, communication, and experiences. How we communicate linguistically and verbally with others is a rich site for both effective and ineffective communication. Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2014) theorized and argued that mindfully attending to the intersections of social-cultural identity and verbal/nonverbal style variations in particular situations and in a particular identity membership community is needed for effective intercultural/intergroup communication. Furthermore, the historical and symbolic associations of a language give rise to a shared sense of cultural identity or pride, and language status.

For example, the disputes between Anglophones and Francophones over use of English or French in Québec Province, the heated debates over whether Ebonics (i.e., Black English) is a language or a dialect in the United States, and the status associations attached to Hindi and English in India all reflect the significant role of the identity membership function of language. The struggle over using Spanish and/or English as a basic language in Puerto Rican schools is also a story of a group-based identity struggle. In the early 1900s, U.S. authorities insisted on the use of English in Puerto Rican schools for the purpose of assimilation. It was not until 1991 that the Puerto Rican legislature finally reversed the law and made Spanish the official language. In 1993, the pro-statehood governor signed legislation restoring equal status to Spanish and English. The struggle of language equity reflects the struggle or claiming of recognition of cultural-based identity.

Since language is learned so early in life and so effortlessly by all children, it permeates the core of our cultural and ethnic identities without our full awareness of its impact. Until we encounter linguistic differences, we may not develop an optimal mindfulness for our cultural-based “linguistic naming” process. How we construct our own identities and the identities of others is closely tied in with the naming or labeling process. More specifically, for example, in the group-oriented Indian culture, when one

asks for a Hindi's name, the person will first give you her or his caste identity, then her or his village name, and finally her or his own name (Bharati, 1985). In the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Tibetan, and Vietnamese cultures, the family name always precedes the personal name, which signals the importance of family identity over personal identity. Thus, a person named Mei-Ling *Wang* in the English form of address is referred to as *Wang* Mei-Ling in the Chinese form of address. Likewise, in the culture of Bali, a personal name is a nonsense syllable that is almost never used; instead, the name used is related to family role relations (e.g., the second born of family X; mother of Y; grandfather of Z). These examples demonstrate how the naming and labeling process shapes individuals' views of themselves and others.

Finally, while speaking their native tongue instills cultural membership pride in many people, many multilingual speakers also derive tremendous flexibility in their ability to code-switch. *Code switching* means switching to another language or dialect to increase or decrease intergroup distance. For example, many African Americans have developed different verbal strategies to deal with the stigma attached to Black English (or Ebonics) by the dominant group. Black English is "a distinctive language evolving from a largely West African pidgin form" and is "governed by rules with specific historical derivations" (Hecht et al., 1993, pp. 84–85). For instance, in Black English, subject nouns are followed by a repeated pronoun ("My sister, she . . ."); statements omit the verb form *to be* ("It dat way") to strategically imply a one-time occurrence, or use it ("It bees dat way") to imply multiple occurrences; questions omit the word *do* ("What it come to?"); and context clarifiers are used instead of a different verb tense ("I know it good when he ask me") (Hecht et al., 1993; Wyatt, 1995, 2015). Many multicultural Americans code-switch to mainstream American English in formal or work-related settings and then switch to their native/heritage languages such as Spanish, Ebonics, Chinese, and Vietnamese with familiar others in casual settings for forging group identity and connection.

The Ethnolinguistic Vitality Function

From applying the framework of sociocultural perspective, group vitality can affect intergroup and interpersonal perceptions and interactions among members of different sociocultural groups. Vitality refers to the strength of a group that could be measured at three levels: demography, status, and institutional support (Giles et al., 1977; Giles & Johnson, 1987). Ethnolinguistic vitality refers to "the strength of language communities within multilingual settings as determined by three broad dimensions of sociocultural variables: demography, institutional support, and status" (Bourhis, Sioufi, & Sachdev, 2012, p. 102). *Demography* includes population, immigration, emigration, and birth and mortality factors affecting the vitality of a language within and across national boundaries. *Institutional support* includes governmental, school, university, and organizational support to sustain and promote the linguistic vitality and culture of a particular language community. *Status* includes social standing and recognition of a given language. In social interactions, these ethnolinguistic vitality factors influence intergroup relations and communication (see Clement et al., 2003).

A society or nation consists of many groups referred to by terms such as *dominant* versus *subordinate* or *co-culture groups*. For example, in the United States, European Americans constitute the *dominant group*, while others (e.g., African Americans, Latino/Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans) constitute *subordinate groups* or *co-culture groups*. These groups differ widely across the above-mentioned group vitality dimensions, affecting intergroup relations and communication competence perceptions. On *purely* linguistic grounds, all languages are created equal. In reality, in a given society, the greater the ethnolinguistic vitality of a language, the greater its influence on the members of a lesser ethnolinguistic vitality community. For example, mainstream American English (AE) is preferred to Black English in work settings because AE is spoken by European Americans who are considered the dominant power-holders (i.e., individuals who control corporate or governmental resources) in the U.S. society. In sum, the language struggle is a sociopolitical power tussle.

Intergroup communication scholars argue that subjective ethnolinguistic vitality may be as important as objective ethnolinguistic vitality for language survival (Bourhis et al., 2012). Subjective vitality refers to the perceived ethnolinguistic vitality of a language by its community members. For example, while in India the objective ethnolinguistic vitality of the Tibetan language is low as compared to that of many Indian languages such as Hindi, Kanada, and Gujarati. The Tibetan language is thriving in India's Tibetan diaspora because of the high perceived vitality of the Tibetan language and culture. Tibetan schools, institutions, and communities in India have preserved and promoted their language and culture for over five decades (Dorjee et al., 2011).

Language infiltrates a culture's social experience so intensely that neither language nor culture can be understood without knowledge of both. To understand a culture deeply, we have to understand the culture's language, its emic meanings, its situational usage, and the language's philosophical-historical roots and development of its particular verbal motifs. To understand language in context, we have to understand the fundamental beliefs and value systems that drive particular language practice in particular circumstances.

The identity issue in language can be boiled down to an affective experience dimension. As Fisher (1998) notes,

Within the mother tongue, the comfort and confidence level is high, the anxiety level is low. In consequence, the *affective* worlds of two languages will not equate easily; poetry, for example, often does not translate well. Sentiments can be quite culture-specific; you cannot really separate the feelings that go with being *simpático* from the cultures that go with speaking Spanish. To add to it, there is the affective or emotional dimension of communication [which is culture] specific. How could one be Italian without using Italian gestures? (p. 42; emphasis in original)

The Perceptual Filtering Function

Language is more than a communication tool. It reflects the worldviews and beliefs of the people who speak it. It reflects the important modes of thinking and the salient

modes of being in living one's daily life in a culture. It acts as a gatekeeper in selecting and organizing what is considered "news" in our social environment, and it offers labels to bracket and capture these salient aspects of our perceptual reality.

An everyday language in a culture serves as a prism through which individuals interpret what they perceive to be "out there." For example, in the Mexican culture, Spanish words such as *machismo* (i.e., masculinity, physical strength, sexual attraction), *marianismo* (i.e., a woman's submissiveness, dependence, gentleness, and virginity until marriage), *respeto* (i.e., showing proper respect for authority such as parents and elders), and *familismo* (i.e., the importance of family and the extended family network) are part of everyday parlance (Paniagua, 1994). These terms infiltrate individuals' perceptions and are used as yardsticks to measure self and others' role performance.

Similarly, in the Chinese culture, words such as *xiao* (i.e., filial piety or the "proper" relationship between children and parents), *han xu* (i.e., implicit communication), *ting hua* (i.e., listening centered), *mian zi* (i.e., facework), *gan qing* (i.e., a multidimensional set of relational emotions), and *ren qing* (i.e., obligations and indebtedness) are used in the everyday language of interaction (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998). For the Chinese, individuals who are sensitive to their parents' needs, speak subtly or implicitly, act as good listeners, and are aware of facework and emotional work in developing interpersonal relationships are considered competent communicators. Conversely, individuals who violate these values and communication styles are considered incompetent communicators. Individuals perceive and simultaneously judge others' proper or improper behaviors through their use of habitual linguistic symbols.

Thus, language permeates our social experience and ultimately shapes our cultured and gendered expectations and perceptions. Individuals' perceptions are closely tied to their symbolically mediated, cognitive reasoning process.

The Cognitive Reasoning Function

Language categorizes the totality of our cultural experience and makes an infinite number of unrelated events appear coherent and understandable—especially in accordance with our cultural frame of reasoning. Benjamin Whorf (1952, 1956), drawing from the work of his mentor Edward Sapir (1921), has tested the "language is a guide to cultural reality" hypothesis.

Focusing on a comparative analysis between the Hopi Indian language and European languages, Whorf (1952) concludes that language is not merely a vehicle for voicing ideas but rather "is itself the shaper of ideas. . . . The world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds—and this means largely by the linguistic system in our minds" (p. 5). He emphasizes that it is the grammatical structure of a language that shapes and constitutes one's thought process. This grammatical structure is entirely culture based, and, as such, language, thinking, and culture are integral parts of the mind-set.

Whorf cites several examples from the Hopi language to support his point of view:

1. The Hopi language does not possess a discrete past–present–future grammatical system as do most European languages. Instead, it has a wide range of present tenses that concern the validity of the verbal statement the speaker is making such as “I know that she is running at this very moment” or “I am told that she is running.”
2. The Hopi language does not use a cyclic noun such as “days” or “years” in the same manner as countable quantities such as “five women” or “five men”; instead, it emphasizes the concept of “duration” when conceiving time. Thus, the Hopi equivalent for the English statement “They stayed 5 days” is “I know that they stay until the 6th day.”
3. While English speakers tend to use many spatial metaphors in their utterances (such as “Your time is *up*,” “I feel *elated*,” “I feel *depressed*,” or “I feel *low*”), the Hopi language tends to emphasize events that are happening in the here and now (Farb, 1973, pp. 207–208; Whorf, 1952).

In essence, Whorf believes that the grammars of different languages constitute separate conceptual realities for members of different cultures. We experience different cognitions and sensations through our linguistic systems. This idea is known as the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis, or the linguistic relativity hypothesis. For example, the structure of the future tense in the Spanish language tells us a great deal about the Mexican notion of the future. For example, a Spanish speaker will say, “I may go to the store” (*Ire al la tienda*) rather than “I will go to the store” to indicate the probability of an action in the future rather than the certainty of that action. The future, for many Spanish-speaking people, represents an unknown time and space: many things can happen later this afternoon or tomorrow; it is beyond the control of individuals (Recall the “present” and “being” value orientations discussed in Chapter 6.) Thus, use of a “probability” statement rather than certainty seems to fit logically with the Mexicans’ overall cultural reasoning schema.

Additionally, the vocabularies of different cultures (e.g., the numerous words for coconuts in the South Pacific islands; the many words for snow in the Eskimo culture; the variety of words for rice and tea in Chinese and Japanese cultures; the diversity of words for karma and reincarnation in the culture of India and for good and evil spirits in many Native American cultures; the many words for expressing gratitude in the Greek and Arab worlds) play a prominent role in people’s habitual way of thinking and hence their habitual way of communicating. The greater the variety of words members of a speech community use to categorize an observed phenomenon (or inner emotion), the more likely they are attuned to the subtle meaning shadings of the broad observed phenomenon or experienced emotion (e.g., the variety of Chinese words for rice, uncooked rice, cooked rice, left-over cold rice, burnt rice at the bottom of a pot).

After reviewing extensive studies on the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis, Steinfatt (1989) concludes that while the “weak” form (i.e., language *shapes* our thinking patterns) of the linguistic relativity hypothesis receives some support, no conclusive evidence can

be drawn to support the “strong” form (i.e., language *determines* our thinking patterns). The major premise of the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis, however, emphasizes the interpenetrating relationship among language, thoughts, and culture. Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf were the trailblazing pioneers in linking language with culture, and as such their work made a major contribution to the study of intercultural communication. Language serves as a mediating link between thoughts and our cultural reality.

The Relational Status and Intimacy Function

Language serves the status and intimacy function. For example, cultures (e.g., those of Denmark and Norway) that emphasize small power distance values tend to use language to promote informal, symmetrical interactions. Cultures (e.g., those of Colombia, Mexico, and the Philippines) that emphasize large power distance values tend to use language to accentuate asymmetrical role interactions, especially in formal situations.

We can use language to signify status differences such as the selective use of formal versus informal pronouns in different languages. We can also use language to regulate intimacy through verbal means to signal friendship and relational bonding (Brown & Gilman, 1960). For example, speakers of languages such as French, German, Spanish, and Tibetan have to constantly choose between a more formal or more intimate form of address. For instance, French has *vous* and *tu*, German has *sie* and *du*, Spanish has *usted* and *tu*, and Tibetan has *kunyyid* and *kyerang*.

Garcia (1996) explains that many Mexicans tend to use the Spanish pronoun *usted* in formal situations and *tu* in familiar, informal situations. Many Spanish speakers use *usted*, the formal pronoun, to address new acquaintances, older people, professional people, and people of authority. The use of *usted* forges a formal climate of *respeto*, or deference.

Respeto also means honor, respect, and “face,” which we accord to listeners in accordance with their roles and hierarchical statuses. The use of *tu*, on the other hand, fosters a climate of relational intimacy and informality. *Tu* is the informal application of the English pronoun *you*. Speakers of Spanish commonly use this informal pronoun to address their family members, close friends, or children. Addressing someone by the improper form of “you” can pose serious face-threat problems in Mexican interpersonal interactions. Individuals can also use *usted* and *tu* strategically to change the structure of the relationship, thereby altering the *respeto* climate of the relationship. Similarly, in Colombia, *respeto* is conferred via the following means: (1) by acknowledging hearer status (e.g., through the use of a title); (2) by maintaining interpersonal distance, showing that the speaker does not presume intimacy (e.g., through the use of the first name rather than a nickname); (3) by adhering to a code of conduct named *culto* (well-mannered behavior) and/or staying *formal* in address (e.g., through the use of a title plus the first name, say, Don Pedro, even though the first name alone might be an option); or (4) by recognizing an important connection such as a kinship or quasi-kinship tie (e.g., through the use of *madrina* or *comadre*— terms denoting a godparent relationship—when the first name alone might be an option (Fitch, 1998, p. 60). Thus,

well-mannered behavior in the Colombian culture involves both “knowledge of whom to respect and an expectation that important connections [are] signaled through use of address terms that [call] attention to the symbolic aspects of the relationship (such as the implicit contract involved in godparenting)” (Fitch, 1998, p. 60).

In the Asian cultural context, Lim and Choi (1996) use the concept of *che-myon* to explain how facework identity is employed as a means of social bonding in every aspect of Korean interaction. *Che-myon* refers to the image of “personal self that is claimed and negotiated through social interactions. . . . It is [also] the image of [the] sociological self that is defined by the society and must be protected by passing the normative standards . . . of relevant social values” (Lim & Choi, 1996, p. 124). Most Koreans value *che-myon* dearly. When they “hoist up” their *che-myon*, Koreans do not merely feel good but actually feel more socially desirable. To maintain the cultural construct of *che-myon*, Koreans need to be involved in the activities that include face-honoring behaviors such as showing indebtedness and deference verbally, and playing benevolent or complying social roles in particular situations. Overall, whether a particular linguistic code is selected or evoked in a given situation often depends on the topic, the interaction scene, the relative status of the speakers, and the relational intimacy level.

From intimacy to the relational connection function, another interesting trend on the international scene is the issue of language borrowing. Edwards (1994) points out that in Germany, for example, teenagers “wear *die Jeans*” and that “even the French grudgingly acknowledge the appeal of *le drugstore* and *le weekend* . . . [while] English words [are] integrated into Japanese [such as] *hamu tosuto* for a ‘toasted ham sandwich,’ [or] *apaato* for apartment” (p. 77). Language borrowing can indicate an added status, a necessary convenience, or a signal of ingroup intimacy or connection.

The attitudes toward language borrowing also polarize along the line of prestigious versus nonprestigious borrowing groups. Groups of perceived high social status can get away with using borrowed words and phrases, which are viewed as adding flair to their language style, whereas groups of perceived low social status who employ such borrowed terms are often viewed as engaging in “impure” language usage. Thus, the style-shifting ability of the speakers, when viewed through different social status lenses, may well have different evaluative outcomes.

The Social Evaluation Function

Language is not a neutral conduit for communication; it is socially loaded and evaluated in interactions. Giles and Rakic (2014) reviewed studies on language attitudes that provide ample evidence for the social consequences of languages and accents in communicative interactions. Through socialization processes, people have learned and internalized what languages and accents are regarded as standard or nonstandard in the social context and how they are judged positively or negatively. According to McGlone and Giles (2011), speakers’ identities are encoded in their voices, and listeners can decode their social identity information remarkably well without the need for decoding training. The literature on language attitudes has attended to the social evaluation functions of both standard language and accent and nonstandard language and accent.

In a given speech community and social context, people seem to have a natural sense of standard language and accent versus nonstandard language and accent, even though the standard set is an artificial construct (Lippi-Green, 1997). In a study on the Tibetan diaspora in India, Dorjee et al. (2011) found that Tibetan participants (mostly born and raised in India) evaluated messages presented in honorific U-Kad (the Central Tibetan Lhasa dialect) more positively than messages presented by the same speaker in the normative Tibetan dialect (the less honorific Central Tibetan dialect mixed with a few Hindi words) and in Hindi (the host Indian language mixed with some Tibetan words). As is the case in many other speech communities, Tibetans in diaspora India seem to have a clear notion of what is regarded as standard Tibetan language and accent that is “put on a societal pedestal” (Giles & Rakic, 2014). While standard language varieties are evaluated positively and are granted access to power and opportunities, nonstandard language varieties are evaluated negatively (e.g., stigmatized) (see Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010a, 2010b).

Interestingly, speakers of the same language may be evaluated differently based on their accents. For example, in the United States, speakers of American English with standard accents are evaluated positively and are granted more access to privileges, position, power, and opportunities than speakers of American English with nonstandard accents (e.g., Spanglish, Ebonics, and English with Asian accents). Anecdotal evidence indicates that although the news anchors on major U.S. news channels (e.g., ABC, NBC, and CBS) can belong to diverse social-cultural segments of society, they are almost all expected to speak and report news in standard American English. Linguistically, everyone speaks with an accent—which is just an intonation of their speech—but in everyday life and social interactions, only speakers with nonstandard accents are accused of having “an accent” and of being socially disadvantaged (see Giles & Rakic, 2014, p. 14).

Social evaluations are also based on accents, along with other social cues such as ethnic name. A study found that speakers with Hispanic names and accents were less favorably evaluated for their applicant characteristics (Purkiss, Perewe, Gillespie, Mayes, & Ferris, 2006). Asian Americans who speak standard American English are often asked where they are from because of the mismatch between their perceived minority-status demographic profile and the sense of otherness. From the social identity perspective, ingroup members are likely to evaluate ingroup language and accent positively (e.g., Spanglish, Ebonic English, Pidgin, and Indian English) for positive social identity distinctiveness—all of which suggests that language serves the powerful social evaluation function.

The Creativity Function

Although we human beings have created languages, we are also at times trapped by the habits of our own linguistic systems. While the language of a culture perpetuates that culture’s traditions, by changing our language habits we can incrementally transform long-standing cultural norms and attitudes. Thus, language also enables us to be creative and serves as an impactful communication change tool.

For example, the male generic language in English—terms such as *chairman*, *fireman*, *businessman*, or *mankind* used in Western society—tends to elevate men's experience as more valid and to make women's experience less prominent. Research has demonstrated “conclusively that masculine generics are perceived as referring predominantly or exclusively to men. When people hear them, they think of men, not women” (Wood, 1997, p. 152). Tellingly, in a study when the instructions referred to “the average student as *he*,” only 12% of students composed a story about a female. However, when the instructions defined “the average student as *he or she*,” 42% of the stories were about females” (Wood, 1997, p. 152).

To the extent that the language of a culture makes men appear more visible and women invisible, the perceptions generated from usage of such biased language create biased thinking. More importantly, language has a carryover effect on our expectations, and hence perceptions, of what constitute proper or improper gendered role behaviors. Research indicates, for example, that “women who use assertive speech associated with masculinity are judged as arrogant and uppity, while men who employ emotional language associated with femininity are often perceived as wimps or gay. . . . Polarized thinking about gender encouraged by our language restricts us from realizing the full range of human possibilities” (Wood, 1997, p. 160). U.S. presidential candidate Hillary Clinton was criticized as “bitchy” for her use of assertive language. Language can indeed imprison us because it influences our way of perceiving the world “out there.”

Fortunately, language can also set us free—that is, if we are willing to mindfully change our language habits and preconceived biased notions about different identity groups. Linguistic sexism occurs when women are devalued and made invisible through the constant use of masculine-based generic words to include both males and females (e.g., using *spokesman* rather than *spokesperson*, and using the generic *he* to imply both female and male). To combat linguistic sexism, here are some mindful suggestions:

1. Commit yourself to removing sexist language from all of your communications.
2. Practice and reinforce nonsexist language patterns until they become habitual.
3. Persuade others to use nonsexist language in their everyday lives.
4. Use reconstruction or substitution (e.g., change *founding fathers* to *founders*) to replace verbal sexism.
5. Use your creative capacity to reframe your verbal sexist habits with gender-neutral words in both public and private conversations. (Sorrels, 1983, p. 17)

Language creativity is a marvelous achievement of the human species. People in all cultures have the capacity to talk about things far away in time and space (i.e., the displacement feature), to say things they have never said before by a mere reconfiguration of words in their native tongues (i.e., the productivity feature), and to use language (e.g., via oral history, epic poems, parables, or stories) to pass on their heritage and wisdom from one generation to the next (i.e., the traditional transmission feature).

Fascinatingly, in this contemporary twenty-first century, new terms are coined at an accelerated rate because of the rapid innovation of diverse social media platforms and smart technologies. Social media terms such as “avatar,” “blogging,” “Facebook,” “hashtag,” “Instagram,” “Pinterest,” “podcast,” “retweet,” “Snapchat,” “trendjacking,” “trolling,” “Tumblr,” “Twitter,” “selfie,” “unfriend,” “Webinar,” and “going viral” did not exist in the 1990s but are now part of our everyday language. Globally, our on-screen language style usage has become more short-hand, informal, and personalized (yet still reaches a mass audience, for example, via the 140-character Twitter or Facebook) and also more is visually oriented with posted pictures and mini-videos. To be competent global communicators and to adapt to the rapidly changing e-language culture, individuals have to master a cornucopia of acronyms, abbreviations, emoticons, and neologisms.

However, humans are imaginative, adaptive, and inventive creatures. Remarkably, by the time children with normal language development patterns reach their fourth birthday, they have already internalized the exceedingly complex structures of their native tongues. In only a few more years, “children possess the entire linguistic system that allows them to utter and to understand sentences they have not previously heard” (Farb, 1973, p. 9). Individuals can garner their creative potential to use language mindfully for mutual gain and collaboration across gender and cultural groups. Alternatively, they can use language to disseminate hate-filled propaganda, engage in conflict, wage war, and engender destruction. Language can simultaneously be a hacking and a healing instrument: it can be used to “cut down” or degrade others’ primary identities; it can also be used mindfully to uplift and support their desired group-based or personal identities.

In this section, we have discussed the diverse functions of languages across cultures: the membership identity, ethnolinguistic vitality, perceptual filter, cognitive reasoning, status and intimacy, social evaluation, and creativity functions. We now turn to a discussion of how our cultural and ethnic identities influence our verbal communication styles. By understanding such differences, we can arrive at mutual clarity, appreciation, and respect.

Cross-Cultural Verbal Communication Styles

This section examines the low-context and high-context communication framework and its associated verbal interaction dimensions: direct and indirect verbal styles, person-oriented and status-oriented styles, self-enhancement and self-effacement verbal styles, and the importance of talk versus silence.

Low-Context and High-Context Communication

Hall (1976) claims that human interaction can broadly be divided into low-context and high-context communication systems. By *low-context communication*, we emphasize how intention or meaning is best expressed through explicit verbal messages. In

general, low-context communication refers to communication patterns of direct verbal mode—straight talk, nonverbal immediacy, and sender-oriented values (i.e., the sender assumes responsibility to communicate clearly). In low-context communication, the speaker is expected to be responsible for constructing a clear message that the listener can decode easily (see Table 7.1).

By *high-context communication*, we emphasize how intention or meaning can best be conveyed through the context (e.g., social roles or positions) and nonverbal channels (e.g., pauses, silence, tone of voice) of the verbal message. High-context communication refers to communication patterns of indirect verbal mode—self-effacing talk, nonverbal subtleties, and interpreter-sensitive values (i.e., the receiver or interpreter of the message assumes responsibility to infer the hidden or contextual meanings of the message) (Ting-Toomey, 1985). In high-context communication, the listener or interpreter of the message is expected to “read between the lines,” to accurately infer the implicit intent of the verbal message, and to observe the nonverbal nuances and subtleties that accompany and enhance the verbal message (see Table 7.1).

When we use low-context communication, we stress the importance of explicit verbal messages to convey personal thoughts, opinions, and feelings. When we use high-context communication, we stress the importance of multilayered contexts (e.g.,

TABLE 7.1. Low-Context and High-Context Communication Framework				
LCC characteristics		HCC characteristics		
Individualistic values		Group-oriented values		
Self-face assertive concern		Other-face and mutual-face concerns		
Linear logic		Spiral logic		
Direct style		Indirect style		
Person-oriented style		Status-oriented style		
Self-enhancement style		Self-effacement style		
Speaker-oriented style		Listener-oriented style		
Verbal-based understanding		Context-based understanding		
LCC examples		HCC examples		
←		→		
X				
Germany Switzerland Denmark Sweden ↑	United States Canada Australia Great Britain ↑	(France)	Saudi Arabia Kuwait Mexico Nigeria ↑	Japan China South Korea Vietnam ↑

historical context, social norms, roles, situational and relational contexts) that frame the interaction encounter. Low-context communication interaction is exemplified by the following dispute between two European American neighbors:

Scene 1

JANE: (*knocks on her neighbor's open window.*) Excuse me, it is 11 o'clock already, and your high-pitched opera singing is really disturbing my sleep. I have an important job interview tomorrow morning, and I want to get a good night's sleep. I really need this job to pay my rent!

DIANE: (*resentfully*) Well, this is the only time I can rehearse my opera! I've an important audition coming up tomorrow and I must succeed. I also need to pay my rent.

In contrast, the following dialogue involving two Japanese housewives illustrates their use of high-context communication style (Naotsuka et al., 1981, p. 70):

Scene 2

MRS. A: Your daughter has started taking piano lessons, hasn't she? I envy you, because you can be proud of her talent. I'm really impressed by her enthusiasm—every day, she practices so hard, for hours and hours, until late at night.

MRS. B: Oh, no, not at all. She is just a beginner. We hadn't realized that you could hear her playing. I'm so sorry you have been disturbed by her noise.

In Scene 1, Jane and Diane spell out everything that is on their minds with no restraints. Their interaction exchange is direct, to the point, bluntly contentious, and full of face-threat verbal messages. This scene represents one possible low-context way of approaching interpersonal conflict. Jane and Diane might actually turn their dialogue around and obtain a more productive outcome by identifying their common interests (such as urgency of the job search or rent payment due) and exploring other constructive options (such as closing the windows or practicing in another room). They can use the strengths of low-context, “explicit talk” in dealing with the conflict issue openly and nonjudgmentally.

In Scene 2, Mrs. A has not directly expressed her concern over the piano noise with Mrs. B because she wants to preserve face and her relationship with Mrs. B. Rather, Mrs. A only uses indirect hints and nonverbal signals to get her point across. However, Mrs. B. correctly “reads between the lines” of Mrs. A's verbal message and apologizes appropriately and effectively before any real conflict can bubble to the surface. Scene 2 represents one possible high-context way of approaching interpersonal conflict. From the high-context communication viewpoint, minor disagreement can easily turn into a major conflict if face-threatening and face-saving issues are not dealt with appropriately and effectively. However, if Mrs. A were the neighbor of Diane in Scene 1, Diane might not be able to “read between the lines” of Mrs. A's verbal and,

more importantly, nonverbal message. Diane might be clueless, and she might actually take Mrs. A's verbal message literally and infer her message as a compliment—and thus sing even louder!

Relating to Hall's (1976) low- and high-context communication, some recent studies have focused on culturally linked linguistic practices (Kashima, Kashima, & Kidd, 2014) and analytic and holistic cognitive processing styles (Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001). Linguistic practices, the ways in which people use their language, transmit people's cultural mind-set in two different ways: decontextualizing and contextualizing. In the decontextualizing mode, the listeners' attention is directed to "the focal object at the expense of the context in which it is embedded." In the contextualizing mode, the listeners' attention is directed to "the context in which the object is the figure against the contextual ground" (Kashima et al., 2014, p. 47) by certain linguistic practices. These practices are related to geographical locations and overlap with those of analytical and holistic cognitive processing styles (Nisbett, 2003; Nisbett et al., 2001). Analytical processing is a dissecting, decontextualizing, and field-independent style, whereas holistic processing is embedded in contextualism and a field-dependent style. Kashima et al. (2014) and Nisbett et al. (2001) showed that geographically decontextualizing linguistic practices and analytical cognitive processing style are often found in western European countries with low-context communication tendencies. Comparatively, contextualizing linguistic practices and holistic cognitive processing style are often found in East Asian cultural region with high-context communication tendencies.

More communication-centered studies are needed to investigate the relationships among contexts of communication, linguistic practices, verbal/nonverbal interaction styles, and cognitive processing patterns across countries, cultures, contexts, and multiple identity membership issues. Kashima et al. (2014) also commented that linguistic practices are related to, but different from, low- and high-context communication. More specifically, the surface form of linguistic practices may *emphasize* or *deemphasize* the subject (i.e., the speaker) in the utterances and/or the situational context of a focal object. For example, in languages such as English, German, and French, the subject or the speaker is often explicitly stated or emphasized, and the situational setting is deemphasized. In comparison, in many Asian languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Tibetan, while the subject as a speaker is often deemphasized, the situational context is explicitly contextualized in utterances such as "Staged a graceful performance in the job interview" and "Talked eloquently in the board meeting." In this case, the subject-pronoun "he" or "she" is decontextualized, but the situational context is emphasized via the two exemplar utterances. While the two utterances are considered grammatically correct from multiple Asian language standpoints, they may appear to lack a clear pronoun-subject indicator from English or German language practice. Related to different linguistic practices, interpreting whether an utterance reflects a low-context straight talk mode (i.e., "say what you mean, and mean what you say" and stop right there; also known as Grice's conversational clarity "maxim of manner: be clear, be brief, and avoid obscurity" 1975) or an understated, high-context verbal mode

will need deep-level intercultural value-based knowledge, situational-based pragmatic linguistic knowledge, and interpersonal-based competence knowledge.

More specifically, in the intercultural communication research field, research studies have revealed a positive relationship among culture, self-construals, and low- and high-context communication styles. Gudykunst et al. (1996) found that while independent self-construal positively mediated the relationship between individualism and low-context communication style, interdependent self-construal positively mediated the relationship between collectivism and high-context communication style. Other studies (Kittler, Rygl, & Mackinnon, 2011; Oetzel et al., 2001) have mostly compared communication differences between members of low and high contexts at the macro level of nations. Obviously, from a functional paradigm angle, the dichotomous idea of dividing clusters of cultures into low-context (e.g., the western European and Nordic countries) and high-context (e.g., East Asian countries) cultural systems can lead to broad categorization and research predictability (such as members of individualistic cultures tend to use low-context direct verbal mode, and members of collectivistic cultures tend to use high-context indirect verbal mode) on the relationship between the set of independent and dependent variables. However, theorizing and research need to go beyond these binary systems.

Overall, low-context interaction emphasizes direct talk, a person-oriented focus, a self-enhancement mode, and the importance of “talk.” High-context interaction, in comparison, stresses indirect talk, status-oriented focus, the self-effacement mode, and the importance of nonverbal signals and even silence.

Direct and Indirect Verbal Interaction Styles

The stylistic mode of verbal interaction, according to Katriel (1986), is the “tonal coloring given to spoken performance, [the] feeling tone” (p. 7; see also Katriel, 1991). The tone of voice, the speaker’s intention, and the verbal content reflect our way of speaking, our verbal style, which in turn reflects our cultural and personal values and sentiments.

Verbal style frames “how” a message should be interpreted. Of the four stylistic modes of verbal interaction (i.e., direct vs. indirect, person oriented vs. status oriented, self-enhancement vs. self-effacement, and talk vs. silence), the research evidence on the direct–indirect verbal interaction dimension is the most extensive and persuasive. This stylistic pair can be thought of as straddling a continuum. Individuals in all cultures use the gradations of all these verbal styles, depending on role identities, interaction goals, and situations. However, in individualistic cultures, people tend to encounter more situations that emphasize the preferential use of direct talk, person-oriented verbal interaction, verbal self-enhancement, and talkativeness. In contrast, in collectivistic cultures, people tend to encounter more situations that emphasize the preferential use of indirect talk, status-oriented verbal interaction, verbal self-effacement, and silence.

The direct and indirect styles differ in the extent to which communicators reveal their intentions through their tone of voice and the straightforwardness of their content

message. On the one hand, in the direct verbal style, statements clearly reveal the speaker's intentions and are enunciated in a forthright tone of voice. In the indirect verbal style, on the other hand, verbal statements tend to camouflage the speaker's actual intentions and are carried out with a more nuanced tone of voice. For example, the overall U.S. American verbal style often calls for clear and direct communication. Phrases such as "say what you mean," "don't beat around the bush," "I am not a mind reader," and "get to the point" are some examples. The direct verbal style of the larger U.S. culture is reflective of its low-context communication character.

By way of comparison, Graf (1994) observes that "Chinese tend to beat around the bush. They are not forthright enough, [so] that Westerners often perceive them as insincere and untrustworthy" (p. 232). For example, in a verbal request situation, U.S. Americans tend to use a straightforward form of request, whereas Chinese tend to ask for a favor in a more roundabout and implicit way. This difference can be demonstrated by the following pair of contrastive "airport ride request" scenes between two U.S. Americans and two Chinese (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998, p. 76):

Scene 1

AMERICAN 1: We're going to New Orleans this weekend.

AMERICAN 2: What fun! I wish we were going with you. How long are you going to be there? [If she wants a ride, she will ask.]

AMERICAN 1: Three days. By the way, we may need a ride to the airport. Do you think you can take us?

AMERICAN 2: Sure. What time?

AMERICAN 1: 10:30 P.M. this coming Saturday.

Scene 2

CHINESE 1: We're going to New Orleans this weekend.

CHINESE 2: What fun! I wish we were going with you. How long are you going to be there?

CHINESE 1: Three days. [I hope she'll offer me a ride to the airport.]

CHINESE 2: [She may want me to give her a ride.] Do you need a ride to the airport? I'll take you.

CHINESE 1: Are you sure it's not too much trouble?

CHINESE 2: It's no trouble at all.

Here we see that in the Chinese culture such requests for help are likely to be implied rather than stated explicitly and directly. Indirect requests can help both parties to save face and uphold a harmonious interaction. When the hearer detects a request during a conversation with the speaker, the hearer can choose to either grant

or deny the request. If the hearer decides to deny it, he or she usually does not respond to it or may subtly change the topic of conversation. Consequently, the speaker discerns the cues from the hearer and drops the request. An implicit understanding generally exists between a speaker and a hearer in Chinese culture that is essential to maintaining relational harmony at all costs in everyday social interaction.

Intercultural misunderstanding therefore becomes highly probable when Chinese and U.S. Americans communicate with each other. They each adhere to their habitual verbal styles and carry out their cultural scripts in a relatively mindless fashion. They also rely on their own cultural scripts to inform them of what to expect in the interaction. Let us look at Scene 3 of the “airport ride request” dialogue, this time between a Chinese speaker and a U.S. American hearer (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998, p. 77).

Scene 3

CHINESE: We’re going to New Orleans this weekend.

AMERICAN: What fun! I wish we were going with you. How long are you going to be there?

CHINESE: Three days. [I hope she’ll offer me a ride to the airport.]

AMERICAN: [If she wants a ride, she’ll ask me.] Have a great time.

CHINESE: [If she had wanted to give me a ride, she would have offered it. I’d better ask somebody else.] Thanks. I’ll see you when I get back.

Thus, we see that while the U.S. American verbal model rewards direct assertions and opinions, the Chinese model emphasizes indirect verbal style to cultivate relational harmony and implicit interpersonal understanding.

Similarly, in the context of the Korean culture, Koreans do not make negative responses like “No,” or “I disagree with you,” or “I cannot do it.” Rather, they like to use indirect expressions such as “[I] kind of agree with you in principle; however, please understand my difficulties . . .” or “[I] sympathize with your difficulties; unfortunately” (Park, 1979). The importance of preserving relational harmony with ingroup members and the importance of *nunchi* (an affective sense by which Koreans can detect whether others are pleased or satisfied) are the reasons why most Koreans opt for the indirect style of verbal communication. Additionally, *kibun* (respect for others’ sense of selfhood that includes their morale and facework support) is shown through indirect verbal behavior.

Cohen (1991), in analyzing diplomatic negotiation processes in China, Japan, Egypt, India, Mexico, and the United States, provides strong evidence that communication patterns differentiate China, Japan, Egypt, India, and Mexico (i.e., the indirect style), on the one hand, and the United States (i.e., the direct style), on the other. For example, Cohen documented that on the eve of the departure of Prime Minister Eisaku Sato of Japan for a crucial summit with President Richard M. Nixon in 1970, Sato released the following remarkable statement to the press: “Since Mr. Nixon and I

are old friends, the negotiations will be three parts talk and seven parts *haragei* [belly-to-belly talk, i.e., reading one another's mind]" (p. 117).

Unfortunately, for the bilateral relationship, this did not turn out to be true, and Prime Minister Sato's faith in a man he considered a close ally and personal friend was misplaced. Nixon declined to give any weight to Sato's domestic difficulties and "insisted [that he agree] to an explicit five-point proposal as the basis for a settlement" (Cohen, 1991, p. 117). The dimension of the direct versus the indirect communication style clearly posed a major barrier to effective diplomatic negotiations between Japan and the United States in that instance. Furthermore, the unwillingness to use "no" as a direct response in many of the collectivistic, high-context cultures often causes international conflicts. For high-context individuals, it is always easier to agree than to disagree. Confronted by a persistent and undesirable request, "they find the 'social affirmative' the best way out of an uncomfortable situation. The fault is not theirs but that of their obtuse interlocutor, who has failed to draw the correct conclusions from the hesitancy and unenthusiastic nature of the reply" (Cohen, 1991, p. 115).

Person-Oriented and Status-Oriented Verbal Styles

The person-oriented verbal style is an individual-centered verbal mode that emphasizes the importance of informality and role suspension. The status-oriented verbal style is a role-centered verbal mode that emphasizes formality and large power distance. The person-oriented style emphasizes symmetrical interaction, whereas the status-oriented style stresses asymmetrical interaction.

The person-oriented verbal style emphasizes the importance of respecting unique, personal identities in the interaction. The status-oriented verbal style emphasizes the importance of honoring prescribed power-based membership identities. Those who engage in status-oriented verbal interaction use specific vocabularies and paralinguistic features to accentuate the status distance of the role relationships (e.g., in parent-child interaction, superior-subordinate relations, and male-female interaction in many Latin American cultures). While low-context cultures tend to emphasize the use of the person-oriented verbal style, high-context cultures tend to value the status-oriented verbal mode.

For example, Okabe (1983), in commenting on the Japanese language, contends that English is a person-oriented language, whereas Japanese is a status-oriented language. Okabe (1983) observes that U.S. Americans tend to treat other people with informality and casualness. They tend to "shun the formal codes of conduct, titles, honorifics, and ritualistic manners in [their] interaction with others. They instead prefer a first-name basis and direct address. They also strive to equalize the language style between the sexes. In sharp contrast, the Japanese are likely to assume that formality is essential in their human relations. They are apt to feel uncomfortable in some informal situations" (p. 27). While Americans may find the status-oriented Japanese language to be less intimate and personalized, Japanese may find person-oriented American English to be too direct, too informal, as well as less respectful and appropriate. Being mindful of these

different speaking modes is essential for competent communication between people from different cultural communities such as Japanese and Americans.

Similarly, Yum (1988a) notes that the Korean language accommodates the Confucian ethics of hierarchical human relationships. It has special vocabularies for each sex, for different degrees of social status and intimacy, and for different levels of formality depending on the occasion. Using proper verbal styles for the proper types of relationships and in the proper contexts is a sure sign that one is an “educated” person in the Korean culture. Yum (1988b) argues that the Korean language is a status-based language because the cultural ethos of the Korean interaction style is based on the primary value of *uye-ri* (i.e., righteousness, duty, obligation, a debt of gratitude, and loyalty in accordance with proper relationships between people). Deferential language is used when a Korean communicates with a higher-status person or with a person to whom he or she is indebted.

In short, the style of speaking reflects the overall values and norms of a culture. The cultural styles of speaking in many speech communities reflect the hierarchical social order, asymmetrical role positions, and power distance values of the different cultures.

Self-Enhancement and Self-Effacement Verbal Styles

The self-enhancement verbal style emphasizes the importance of boasting about one’s accomplishments and abilities. The self-effacement verbal style, in contrast, emphasizes the importance of humbling oneself through verbal restraints, hesitation, modest talk, and self-deprecation concerning one’s effort or performance. Some studies have investigated self-enhancement and self-effacement verbal styles related to individualism/independent self-construal and collectivism/interdependent self-construal (Heine, 2003; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997; Suzuki, Davis, & Greenfield, 2008). The self-enhancement verbal style is preferred and prevalent in individualistic cultures and by individuals with independent self-construal. Comparatively, the self-effacement verbal style is preferred and prevalent in collectivistic cultures and by individuals with interdependent self-construal (Naotsuka et al., 1981, p. 40).

In the U.S. culture, individuals are encouraged to “sell and boast about themselves,” for example, in performance review or in job interview sessions; otherwise, no one would notice their accomplishments. In many Asian cultures, individuals believe that if their performance is good, their behavior will be noticed, for example, by their supervisors during promotion review situations. However, from the Western cultural standpoint, if my performance is good, I should document or boast about it so that my supervisor will be sure to take notice. In the East Asian cultural context, the verbal self-effacement pattern is also related to forms of address and pronouns used for self and others in social interactions. Unlike English, multiple pronoun forms are used to refer to “I,” “you,” and “he/she/they.” Honorific pronouns are used for others but not for self. Facework-sensitivity guides what pronoun forms are used and how they are expressed in relational communication to convey respect and deference. For example, in English a

translator can say, “He said . . .,” referring to His Holiness the Dalai Lama; one cannot say the same thing in Tibetan, for it would be highly disrespectful. Therefore, a face-sensitive Tibetan English translator may use forms of address such as *Gong Sa Chog* (His Holiness) and *Kundun* (His Presence) referring to His Holiness in the Tibetan language. In this situation, a Tibetan translator will use a self-effacement pronoun for himself or herself but other-enhancement pronouns to address His Holiness.

The pattern of verbal self-effacement cannot be generalized to all high-context communication cultures (e.g., Arab or African cultures). In Egypt, for example, a popular saying is, “Make your harvest look big, lest your enemies rejoice” (Cohen, 1991, p. 132). Effusive verbal self-enhancement is critical to the enhancement of one’s face or honor in some large power distance Arab cultures (Almaney & Alwan, 1982, p. 84). Many Arab hosts feel obligated to engage in effusive other-enhancement talk in communicating with honored guests. The tendency in Arabic to use somewhat charged or even hyperbolic expressions during diplomatic confrontations may have caused more misunderstandings between the United States and some Arab countries than any other single factor (Cohen, 1987). According to Sedikides, Gaertner, and Vevea (2005), self-enhancement motivation is universal, but its communication manifestation differs among cultures. Westerners use self-enhancement that is strategically based on individualistic cultural attributes and situational demands, whereas Asian Easterners do the same based on collectivistic cultural attributes and situational normative tightness or looseness.

While these findings are informative, a more multilayered systems study design (e.g., integrating both dispositional and situational-induced approaches) may capture an in-depth understanding of how these styles are used in Western/U.S. and Eastern/Asian contexts (e.g., Kim, 2011; Uskul, Oyserman, & Schwarz, 2010). For example, some studies (e.g., Cai et al., 2010) have examined the relationship between modesty interaction and self-enhancement in the U.S. and Chinese cultures. The researchers found no relationship between the modesty interaction norm and self-esteem enhancement in the U.S. sample. However, in the Chinese sample, while a negative relationship was reported between modesty interaction preference and explicit self-esteem enhancement, a positive relationship was found between modesty norm adherence and implicit self-esteem enhancement. Thus, the paradoxical nature of adhering to a cultural norm induces a positivity sense of self-esteem in the intrinsic self-assessment process in the Chinese group. Overall, verbal modesty or the self-effacement style involves downplay of one’s qualities, modest talk, restraint, verbal hesitation, and the giving of face to others (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012).

There are also ethnic verbal style differences in terms of expressive or animated verbal styles. There are, for example, distinctive differences in the verbal interaction styles of African Americans and European Americans. As Kochman (1990) notes, “Black presentations are emotionally intense, dynamic, and demonstrative; White presentations are more modest and emotionally restrained. Where Whites use the relatively detached and unemotional *discussion* mode to engage an issue, Blacks use the more emotionally intense and involving mode of *argument*” (p. 193; emphasis in original).

The verbal styles of African Americans have been identified as emotionally expressive, assertive, boastful, vigorous, rhythmic, and synchronized (Kochman, 1990). As Kochman concludes: “The animation and vitality of Black expressive behavior is in part owing to the emotional force or spiritual energy that Blacks habitually invest in their public presentations and the functional role that emotions play in realizing the goals of Black interactions, activities, and events” (p. 195).

Verbal styles revolving around “expressive or enhancement style” and “understated or effacement style” are *relative comparison* issues. For example, in comparison to many traditional Asian American groups, the European American verbal style might well be deemed “boastful.” However, in comparison to the African American verbal style, the European American verbal pattern might seem “understated.” From the standpoint of the African American group, many Asian immigrant groups sound “extremely understated, distant, or evasive.”

Interethnic frictions arise when a group uses its own verbal style yardstick to evaluate another group’s verbal output. Even routine conversations can escalate into major conflicts because of our ignorance of each other’s preferred verbal styles. More importantly, our ethnocentric evaluations can clutter our ability to listen clearly to ongoing communication from others. Recognizing and respecting verbal style differences requires mindfulness.

Beliefs Expressed in Talk and Silence

Silence is communicative, and it can often say as much as words or even more. Consider the silent treatment two people give to each other in interpersonal interaction. While silence occurs in interaction contexts in cultures around the world, how the silence is interpreted and evaluated differs across cultures and between persons. Hall (1983) claims that silence, or *ma*, serves as a critical communication device in the Japanese communication pattern. *Ma* is much more than pausing between words; rather, it is like a semicolon that reflects the inner pausing of the speaker’s thoughts. Through *ma*, interpersonal synchrony is made possible in many high-context cultures.

While silence may hold strong, contextual meanings in high-context cultures, prolonged silence is often viewed as “empty pauses” or “ignorant lapses” in the Western rhetorical model. From the high-context perspective, silence can be the essence of the language of superiority and inferiority, affecting such relationships as teacher–student, male–female, and expert–client. The process of silencing or refraining from speaking can have both positive and negative effects. In some situations, notably, in many Asian collectivistic cultures, “quiet is demanded by others and by those who must themselves be quiet. Being quiet—effecting a self-imposed silence—is often valued in some social environments. Being quiet is often a sign of respect for the wisdom and expertise of others” (Ishii & Bruneau, 1991, p. 315).

Research studies by Barnlund (1989) and Wiemann, Chen, and Giles (1986) provide strong empirical evidence on the important role of silence in high-context cultures such as those of China, Japan, Korea, and many Southeastern Asian countries. More

specifically, Wiemann et al. (1986) found that European Americans perceive talk as more important and enjoyable than Chinese Americans and native-born Chinese. In addition, European Americans perceive the use of *talk* to be a means of social control, whereas native-born Chinese consider the use of *silence* a conversational control strategy. Finally, native-born Chinese have been found to be more tolerant of silence in conversations than European Americans or Chinese Americans. Ting-Toomey's (1980, 1981) ethnographic studies of Chinese immigrant families in the United States indicates that traditional Chinese parents tend to use talk to elicit obedience and conformity from their children and silence to indicate displeasure and disapproval. Modern Chinese parents, however, use talk to create closeness and intimacy and silence to signal attentive listening and understanding. In India's and Tibet's cultures, children are socialized to be quiet or silent in the presence of adults; attentive listening and respect of silence are emphasized.

The concept of silence also occupies a central role in the Apache culture in the United States (Basso, 1970). Silence is deemed appropriate in contexts where social relations between individuals are unpredictable and highly ambiguous. The Apache also prefer silence in situations in which role expectations are unclear. Members of the Navajo and Papago Indian tribes exhibit similar silent behavior under the same conditions (Basso, 1970). In France, people tend to engage in animated conversations to affirm the nature of their established relationships; in the absence of any such relationship, silence serves as a neutral communication process. This is why "in the elevator, in the street, on the bus . . . people don't talk to each other readily in France. . . . This is a seemingly inexhaustible source of misunderstanding between the French and the [European] Americans, especially since these rules are suspended under exceptional circumstances and on vacation (and therefore on the train, on the plane). . . . [European] Americans often feel rejected, disapproved of, criticized, or scorned without understanding the reason for this hostility" (Carroll, 1987, p. 30). When in the company of strangers, the French and many Native American groups generally preserve a proper distance by means of silence. In contrast, European Americans tend to use talk to "break the ice," and they reserve silence for their most intimate relationship.

Intercultural miscommunication can therefore often occur because of the different priorities different groups place on talk and silence. Silence can serve various functions, depending on the type of relationship, interactive situation, and particular cultural beliefs held. Intercultural clashes arise when we unintentionally use our own culture-bound evaluations in judging the talk and silence of dissimilar others. Interestingly, silence seems to play a significant role across cultures while communicating with God, nature, or transcendental beings. Across belief systems, individuals personally or collectively find inner peace, life-affirming appreciation, and deeper insights while silently communicating with God, nature, or transcendental beings. Silence is understood as the most effective nonverbal communication code in different contexts, especially the spiritual context. In a nutshell, our mindless versus mindful orientations in interpreting these different verbal communication styles can ultimately influence the quality of our intergroup relationship with dissimilar others.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND MINDFUL GUIDELINES

This chapter has covered the following major areas: the features of human language, the functions of languages across diverse cultures, the low-context and high-context communication framework, and the dimensions of the low-context and high-context verbal style. Intercultural miscommunications often occur because individuals use cultural-laden habits and assumptions to interpret each other's verbal messages and verbal styles. Unfortunately, individuals are frequently unaware of their ethnocentric-based verbal interpretations and evaluations.

In order to be mindful verbal communicators, we should do the following:

- 1 Understand the functions and interpretations that are attached to different modes of talk—from the group identity function to the status function of language usage in a particular culture. We should be sensitive to the cultural beliefs and values that underlie the different modes of verbal expressions.
- 2 Develop verbal empathy and patience for non-native speakers in our culture. We can, for example, (a) speak slowly, in simple sentences, and allow for comprehension pauses; (b) restate what we say in different words; (c) use probing questions to check whether the message is received accurately; (d) paraphrase and perception check (see Mindful Guideline 4), and use Powerpoint visual aids, gestures, or written summaries to reinforce our points. Make sure to accommodate appropriately and respectfully and not engage in patronizing talk. Likewise, if we travel to another country where we use a second language, we should use similar strategies to cross-check for understanding of the *meaning* of the message.
- 3 Practice mindful listening skills when communicating with non-native speakers. Mindful listening demands that we pay thoughtful attention to both the speaker's verbal and nonverbal messages before responding or evaluating. It means listening attentively with all our senses and checking responsively for the accuracy of our meaning decoding process on multiple levels (i.e., on content, identity, and relational meaning). Mindful listening is an important intercultural communication skill for a variety of reasons. First, mindful listening helps us to manage emotional vulnerability between ourselves and dissimilar others. Second, it helps us to minimize misunderstanding and maximize the mutual understanding of co-created meanings. Third, mindful listening helps us to discover our own perceptual biases in the listening process. By listening mindfully, we are sending the following identity-support message to the other person: "I am committed to understanding your verbal message and the person behind the message." Mindful listening consists of culture-sensitive paraphrasing skills and perception checking for the accuracy of understanding on content, relational, and identity meaning levels.
- 4 Practice culture-sensitive paraphrasing skills. Paraphrasing skill refers to two major characteristics: (a) verbally restating the content meaning of the

speaker's message in our own words, and (b) nonverbally echoing back our interpretation of the emotional meaning of the speaker's message. The verbal restatement should reflect our tentative understanding of the speaker's meaning behind the content message, using phrases such as "It sounds to me that . . ." and "In other words, you're saying that. . . ." Nonverbally, you should pay attention to the attitudinal tone that underlies your verbal restatement (i.e., it is critical to display a genuine tone when you express the desire to understand). In dealing with high-context members, your paraphrasing statements should consist of deferential, qualifying phrases such as "I may be wrong, but what I'm hearing is that . . ." or "Please forgive me ahead of time if I didn't hear clearly what you've just mentioned. . . ." In communicating with low-context members, our paraphrasing statements can be more direct and to the point than when communicating with high-context members. In addition, practice culture-sensitive perception-checking skills to solicit verification for whether your paraphrasing message is accurate or inaccurate. For example, use phrases such as: "Let me know if my interpretation is on the wrong track. . . ." or "Please help me out and correct me if I misinterpret your words. . . ."

5 Be mindful of the fundamental differences between low-context and high-context communication patterns and the ethnocentric tendencies that we assign to evaluate the opposing characteristics. Low-context communicators prefer a direct verbal style, person-oriented language usage, self-enhancement, and talkativeness in order to "get acquainted." In contrast, high-context communicators prefer an indirect verbal style, status-oriented language usage, self-effacement, and silence in order to gauge the situation and the stranger. To be flexible intercultural communicators, we need both knowledge and skills in verbal and nonverbal communication styles so that we can communicate sensitively across cultural and ethnic boundaries.

6 The *O.P.E.N. Guide* is a useful tool for analyzing intercultural case stories such as the opening case story: **O** = Opening: Creating an OPENING, a safe space, and engaging in invitational inquiries through identity affirmative messages, content-probing messages, and displaying cultural sensitivity and identity acknowledgement work; **P** = Perspectivizing: Generating multiple PERSPECTIVES, fact-checking, and meaning clarification from multiple sources, embarking on the multiple-story discovery process, and displaying identity respectful posture; **E** = Explaining : Providing EXPLANATIONS to various stakeholders; active cultural contexting of different explanations, bridging diverse cultural and personal viewpoints from an ethnorelative angle, and using identity meaning-centered and context-centered language; and **N** = Negotiating: NEGOTIATING options, soliciting desirable processes, generating mutual-interest solutions, articulating criteria (e.g., a timeline and action plan), and engaging in inclusive identity validation work to build security, trust, and inclusion.

Based on the IINT framework (see Chapter 2) and a mindfulness lens (see Chapter 5) and the easy-to-use *O.P.E.N. Guide*, international student advisors or staff can formulate identity-based empathetic advising techniques, including respect, with international students for their success. Similarly, counselors or social service workers can use various mindful guideline tools to work more competently with immigrants and refugees in different community service organizations.

CRITICAL THINKING AND CONNECTIVE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Jot down your gut-level meanings for the two terms “power” and “privilege.” Compare your meanings with those of another classmate. Do you hold similar meanings or different meanings for those two terms? How did you acquire such meanings? Do you think individualists and collectivists would have different meanings for those two terms? Explain briefly.
2. Think of the common vocabulary, metaphors, or idioms you use in the larger U.S. culture or in your own ethnic community or with your own close-knit identity group. Can you make a case for how language, thoughts, emotions, and culture are interdependent? Use as many language examples as you can to support your persuasive arguments.
3. Have you ever been stereotyped because of your accent? When you heard someone speaking English with an accent in your first team meeting project—one with a British accent and one with a Vietnamese accent, how did you form your first impression? What images came to your mind? Have an honest dialogue with another classmate.
4. Have you ever encountered high-context/low-context communication clashes in your own culture or with people from another culture? Can you share a concrete example? Did you repair the communication damage afterwards, and how? What advice would you give to low-context folks to communicate mindfully with high-context folks? What advice would you give to high-context folks to communicate mindfully with low-context folks?
5. If you were the team leader of a multinational group project, how would you use the knowledge blocks from the cross-cultural verbal communication styles’ section to create a verbally sensitive and supportive interaction climate to include all team members in a productive group discussion? What particular verbal strategies would you use to facilitate a supportive group interaction climate?
6. Having read the chapter and as you revisit the opening story, can you think of some concrete constructive verbal communication steps Majid and Dr. Jones could have taken to avoid such an extreme incident? Consider how faculty, staff, and international student advisors could use the OPEN guide to improve communication with international students on U.S. campuses?

CHAPTER 8

Mindful Intercultural Nonverbal Communication

- Introduction
- Multiple Perspectives on Nonverbal Communication
 - ▣ *The Bioevolutionary Perspective*
 - ▣ *The Sociocultural Perspective*
 - ▣ *The Neuroculture Theory Perspective*
- Nonverbal Communication: Specific Functions and Patterns
 - ▣ *Reflection and Management of Identities*
 - ▣ *Expression of Emotions and Attitudes*
 - ▣ *Conversational Management*
 - ▣ *Impression Formation and Attraction*
- Space and Time Across Cultures
 - ▣ *Interpersonal Spatial Boundary Regulation*
 - ▣ *Environmental Boundary Regulation*
 - ▣ *Temporal Regulation*
- Interpersonal Synchrony, Deception and Deviance, and Nonverbal Cautions
 - ▣ *Interpersonal Interactive Synchrony*
 - ▣ *Deception and Deviance*
 - ▣ *Nonverbal Cautions*
- Chapter Summary and Mindful Guidelines
- Critical Thinking and Connective Application Questions

CULTURAL PRIDE OR CULTURAL EMBARRASSMENT?: A CASE STORY

We moved to California in the early 1990s when I was ten years old. It was a tough transition, and my parents really missed India. I liked it here, but the school system was very different. I will never forget about the day I was sent home early from school. It was *Raksha Bandan*, an Indian festival that celebrates the relational-security bond between sisters and brothers. My sister tied a colorful *raakhi* (a sacred thread) on my wrist that symbolized her love for me. My sister also put a *tikka* (red mark on the forehead) on me as she prayed for me.

When I got to school, my classmates started making fun of my traditional clothes and of the *tikka* on my forehead. Unlike the other kids, I was used to wearing traditional clothes to school. One boy told me, "You look weird with your third eye." The taunting did not stop, and I was getting really frustrated. The same boy tried to wipe off my *tikka* and break off the *raakhi* my sister gave me. I punched him in retaliation. My teacher caught me punching my classmate, but she did not wait to hear my side of the story. She sent me to the school counselor who talked to me and then took me home.

My parents were angry that I had misbehaved and beat up another kid. I tried explaining to them that I was made fun of for my clothes and *tikka*. Then the counselor suggested to my parents that they should "dress me in more Western clothes, so that I don't stand out." She also suggested that I try to fit in more, and not display the "red dot" in school, so that my adjustment could go easier.

Within a year, we moved back to India. My parents found it too hard to adjust to the United States and did not want us to forget our cultural traditions. Thirteen years later, my sister and I migrated back to California. She continues to tie me a *raakhi* every year, but she makes sure that it does not have fancy decorations and that it is less colourful. And I continue to wash off my *tikka* before I go to work.

—ASHISH, senior project manager

Introduction

Communication is not only about report, but also about rapport. It involves both instrumental and relational communication. Nonverbal communication is primarily concerned with rapport and the relational aspect of communication, and it serves multiple functions in intercultural interaction. While verbal messages convey content meaning, nonverbal messages carry strong identity and relational meaning. Nonverbal messages signify who we are via our artifacts (e.g., the clothes we wear), our vocal cues, our nonverbal self-presentation modes, and the interpersonal spaces we claim for ourselves (e.g., members of southern European cultures prefer closer distances than do northern Europeans). Ashish's story illustrates the communicative significance of the display of nonverbal symbols and messages. According to the Hindu belief system, *Raksha Bandan*,

Raakhi, and *tikka* are powerful nonverbal symbols that reflect and communicate belief system, religious identity, relational identity, and security bond. Sisters on that special occasion put *Raakhi* thread around their brothers' wrists and mark their foreheads with red *tikka* to affirm their relational-security bond. In return, brothers promise them *Raksha* or protection as long as they live. In the Hindu tradition, if a female establishes *Raksha Bandan* with a male, the male must respect, love, and treat her as if she were his real sister regardless of blood relation and protect her from fear and danger.

Nonverbal messages can help to complement, emphasize, substitute, and even contradict the meaning of verbal messages. Nonverbal messages are the nonlinguistic aspects of the communication that carry powerful emotional meaning. They provide the context for how the accompanying verbal message should be interpreted and understood. They can create miscommunication or clarify communication (e.g., through the use of facial expressions). But more often than not, nonverbal messages can create intercultural friction and confusion because: (1) the same nonverbal signal can mean different things to different people in different cultures (e.g., the nonverbal okay sign means "approval," "insult," and "money" in the United States, Brazil, and Japan, respectively); (2) multiple nonverbal cues are sent in each interaction, thereby creating interpretive ambiguities; and (3) factors of personality, gender, relational distance, situation, and socioeconomic status create tremendous variations of nonverbal display patterns in different cultures.

Nonverbal communication is, overall, a powerful form of human expression (Keating, 2006; Manusov, 2017). It is everywhere. It has interaction primacy; that is, nonverbal messages are often the primary means of signaling our emotions, attitudes, and the nature of our relationships with others. Nonverbal messages can often express what verbal messages cannot convey and are assumed to be more truthful than verbal messages. In the development of the human species, nonverbal actions predated language. Infants learn to communicate first through nonverbal movements before they master linguistic codes. Many nonverbal experts (e.g., Birdwhistell, 1955; Mehrabian, 1981) estimated that in every social encounter, nearly two-thirds of the interaction meaning is derived through nonverbal messages.

This chapter is organized in five main sections. First, multiple perspectives on nonverbal communication are presented. Second, we describe the specific functions, patterns, and examples of nonverbal interaction across a wide range of cultures. Third, the boundary regulation processes of space and time across cultures are discussed. Fourth, the concepts of interpersonal nonverbal synchrony, deception and deviance, and cautions are reviewed. Lastly, we provide mindful guidelines on nonverbal communication across cultures.

Multiple Perspectives on Nonverbal Communication

Emotions are the stuff of interpersonal relationships, and human emotional expressions are encoded and decoded primarily through nonverbal cues and channels. Different research approaches have investigated how emotions are intrapersonally experienced

and interculturally expressed across cultures. We believe nonverbal communication can be studied from different perspectives; two well-known ways to study emotional facial expressions are the cultural universal approach and the cultural relative approach (Burgoon, Guerrero, & Floyd, 2010; Ekman & Friesen, 1975). Cultural universalists contend that facial expressions are innate and emotional expressions are universal across cultures. In comparison, cultural relativists argue that cultures differ in terms of display rules with regard to facial and emotional expressions. Cultural display rules emphasize the use of culture-based situational norms in guiding when we should display or even dramatize certain facial emotions and when we should downplay or even mask certain facial emotions. Among multiple explanatory perspectives in explaining nonverbal codes, the *bioevolutionary perspective* and the *sociocultural perspective* support each of these contentions well (Burgoon et al., 2010). While the bioevolutionary perspective resorts to biological factors and evolutionary processes to explain nonverbal expressions across societies and cultures, the sociocultural perspective resorts to socialization and cultural influences to explain nonverbal expressions primarily within specific cultures.

The Bioevolutionary Perspective

The bioevolutionary perspective is grounded in theories of evolution and biology (see Burgoon et al., 2010; Frank & Shaw, 2016). Darwin's (1859) theory of natural selection explains how certain members of a species have favorable traits for survival and reproduction due to the natural selection process and reveals how the evolutionary process contributes to changing the characteristics of various species. His theory has been applied to explain human emotions, cognitions, and behavior (e.g., see Floyd & Haynes, 2005). For example, humans who have inherited traits of attractiveness, intelligence, and emotional attachment are likely to survive and produce offspring with similar genes. According to the field of psychophysiology, these traits and events are reflected in psychosomatic processes (Floyd, 2004; Floyd & Riforgiate, 2008).

Emotions such as fear and love are associated with hormonal and neural activities, and these are enacted in facial expressions, fight or flight, and haptic behaviors. For example, fear activates pupil dilation, which increases the visual acuity needed to assess threat in dangerous situations, and increased heartbeat and respiration activate muscles to fight or flee. In the case of love, oxytocin is activated, which induces pleasure and happiness and may lead to kissing and hugging and procreation. It is also analogous to individuals who have inherited traits of attractiveness and intelligence and are likely to survive and produce offspring with similar genes.

The bioevolutionary perspective provides strong evidence for the facial expressions of basic emotions, namely, sadness, anger, disgust, fear, interest, surprise, and happiness (SADFISH) consistently found across sociocultural contexts. Some early studies (e.g., Galati, Scherer, & Ricci-Bitti, 1997) found that adults who have been blind from birth were able to express the same facial expressions for basic emotions as sighted adults. These studies show that these facial expressions are not necessarily the products of

socialization and cultural practices. Many researchers also found health benefits from supportive haptic behaviors. For example, affectionate interaction decreased *cortisol*—the stress hormone—but increased *oxytocin*—the pleasure/love hormone (Grewen, Girdler, Amico, & Light, 2005). It was also found that kissing a spouse or partner for 30 minutes reduced the production of allergens in the immune system (Kimata, 2006) and that kissing also strengthened the immune system (Davis, 2007). We also observe that nonverbal behaviors are different in both form and substance within and across cultures.

The Sociocultural Perspective

The sociocultural perspective on nonverbal communication asserts that different socialization patterns and cultural practices can explain why people enact similar or different nonverbal behaviors. Individuals who have been socialized in larger cultures such as individualism and collectivism are likely to differ in their display of nonverbal behaviors such as respect and love (Hwang & Matsumoto, 2017; Matsumoto & Hwang, 2016). *Cultural display rules* shape when, how, what, and with whom certain nonverbal expressions should be shown or suppressed within a specific cultural context. Cultural values influence the latitude of emotional expressions under particular situational conditions in different cultures. For example, in larger cultures of the United States and the United Kingdom (individualistic cultures), people show respect by standing upright and/or giving a firm handshake. However, in the larger cultures of Japan and Korea (collectivistic cultures), people show respect by bowing to each other. Within individualism and collectivism, we find variations based on power distance such as vertical and horizontal individualism and vertical and horizontal collectivism (Triandis, 1995). In light of these findings, display of respect may manifest differently. For example, in vertical individualism, persons with less power will remain standing until the high-status power individuals take their seats first, whereas in vertical collectivism, individuals with less power will bow down more than usual while greeting individuals with more power. These nonverbal behaviors are not necessarily displayed in horizontal individualism and collectivism. Thus, various displays of respect can be best explained by the sociocultural perspective (see Chapter 4 for a discussion of cultural dimensions and value orientations). For example, young South Asian Indian Americans touch the feet of elders to show respect; Vietnamese Americans walk kneeling in the presence of senior monks in temple to show respect; and Tibetan Americans prostrate themselves before monk teachers to show deep respect and gratitude.

The Neuroculture Theory Perspective

Perhaps nonverbal human emotional expressions can best be understood from the *neuroculture theory perspective*, which integrates theoretical assumptions of both bio-evolutionary and sociocultural perspectives (Ekman & Friesen, 1975; Kupperbusch, Matsumoto, Kookan, Lowenger, Uchida, Wilson-Cohn, & Yrizarry, 1999). According

to this theory, while human beings are predisposed to make the connection between certain emotional states and facial muscles, it is through the continuous socialization, reward–sanction process within their culture that human beings acquire nonverbal display rules. For example, intercultural/intergroup nonverbal power display (e.g., on the emotions of anger and fear or affection) can be explained based on bioevolutionary processes and sociocultural factors such as vertical individualism and vertical collectivism norms (Triandis, 1995). Reasonable evidence exists that there is a relationship between emotion and facial expression but perhaps not as tight an association as the neurocultural theory suggested (Baumeister & Finkel, 2010). From a methodological standpoint, this may be because it is difficult to tease out the bioevolutionary and cultural components of emotional expressions.

The *sociocultural perspective* may provide a better explanatory calculus (in comparison to the *bioevolutionary perspective*) for understanding facial emotional expressions both within and across cultures. Arguably, almost all humans are bioevolutionarily wired more or less the same with regard to various general emotional experience states or events (with the exception of certain disabilities). However, from early on, humans in different sociocultural settings have been socialized to sociocultural display rules of emotional expressions. From an intercultural–intergroup communication perspective, intercultural strangers must attend to the core components of communication competence in different cultures. For example, in the U.S. mainstream culture, a birthday boy or girl should explicitly display his or her happiness and excitement along with appropriate facial expressions and paralinguistic cues when presented with greeting cards and gifts. In contrast, in Japanese and similar other cultures, a birthday boy or girl is expected to display modesty and restrain emotional expression while presented with greeting cards and gifts. Additionally, an integrative framework of a *situational-based neuroculture lens* may also help to advance the theorizing and research work in the area of cross-cultural nonverbal emotional expression and decoding styles. Cross-cultural nonverbal researchers will do well to map out the situational dynamics that trigger different emotional expression, masking, dramatizing, or suppression across a wide range of situations. On the macro level, knowing whether an individual is entering a “tight” (e.g., South Korea) or a “loose social structure” culture (e.g., Thailand) (see Chapter 4) can shed some light on the latitude of emotional expression variations allowed in a cultural situation. In a culture with a tight social structure, insiders may frown on nonverbal violations more stringently. In a culture with a loose social structure, however, insiders may laugh at the cultural nonverbal violations or faux pas with moderate amusement. Other microsituational factors that may have a critical impact on the expression of particular nonverbal facial expressions can include perceived ingroup–outgroup parameters, cooperative–competitive task situations, power distance status patterns, degree of interpersonal intimacy and attraction, and public versus private interactional setting. In this chapter, we use primarily the sociocultural perspective to discuss mindful nonverbal communication, for it offers a richer lens to explain comparative cross-cultural nonverbal functions and patterns. We now turn to a systematic discussion of these specific functions and patterns of nonverbal communication across cultures.

Nonverbal Communication: Specific Functions and Patterns

Nonverbal communication is a rich, complex field of study and is closely tied to the embedded situations and larger contexts in which they are being encoded and decoded. Nonverbal display rules are learned within a culture. Cultural value tendencies (e.g., small/large power distance value dimension), in conjunction with many relational and situational factors, shape cross-cultural nonverbal behaviors. *Nonverbal communication* is defined as the nonlinguistic behaviors (or attributes) that are consciously or unconsciously encoded and decoded via multiple communication channels. Multiple channels refer to how the meaning of nonverbal messages can be simultaneously signaled and interpreted through various nonverbal mediums such as facial expressions, bodily gestures, spatial relationships, and the environment (physical and psychological) in which people are communicating.

Nonverbal communication shares many features with verbal communication; nevertheless, nonverbal messages have the following distinctive characteristics: (1) they are analogic messages that carry continuous meanings (e.g., via various ranges of tone of voice); (2) they are sent via multiple interaction channels; (3) they have sensory immediacy, appealing to our senses of sight, smell, taste, hearing, and touch; (4) they can be simultaneously decoded (e.g., decoding facial expressions and the tone of voice together); and (5) from a perceiver-centered perspective, nonverbal communication takes place both intentionally and unintentionally.

This section examines the basic functions of cross-cultural nonverbal communication and uses examples from the study of kinesics (facial and bodily movements), oculosics (eye contact), vocalics (e.g., tone of voice, volume), proxemics (spatial distance), haptics (touch), environment (e.g., decor, architecture), and chronemics (time) to illustrate the diverse nonverbal functions (see Figure 8.1).

Based on previous nonverbal research (e.g., Altman & Gauvain, 1981; Hall, 1976, 1983; Matsumoto, 1992; Matsumoto & Hwang, 2016; Matsumoto & Kudoh, 1993), the following nonverbal functions are discussed: (1) reflection and management of identities; (2) expression of emotions and attitudes; (3) conversational management; and (4) impression formation and attraction.

Reflection and Management of Identities

Nonverbal cues serve as the markers of our identities. The way we dress, our accent pattern, our nonverbal way of gesturing—all tell others something about ourselves and how we want to be perceived. In terms of cultural variability and self-construal, many of us nonverbally signify individual or personal identity in public (e.g., Lady Gaga, Beyonce, and Jay Z), others of us do the same with our sociocultural identity (e.g., U.S. Americans and Bolivians), and still others of us do the same with our intersecting social identity complexity (e.g., Hispanic American lesbian parents). Likewise, we rely on nonverbal cues as “name badges—to discern what groups they [or others] belong to

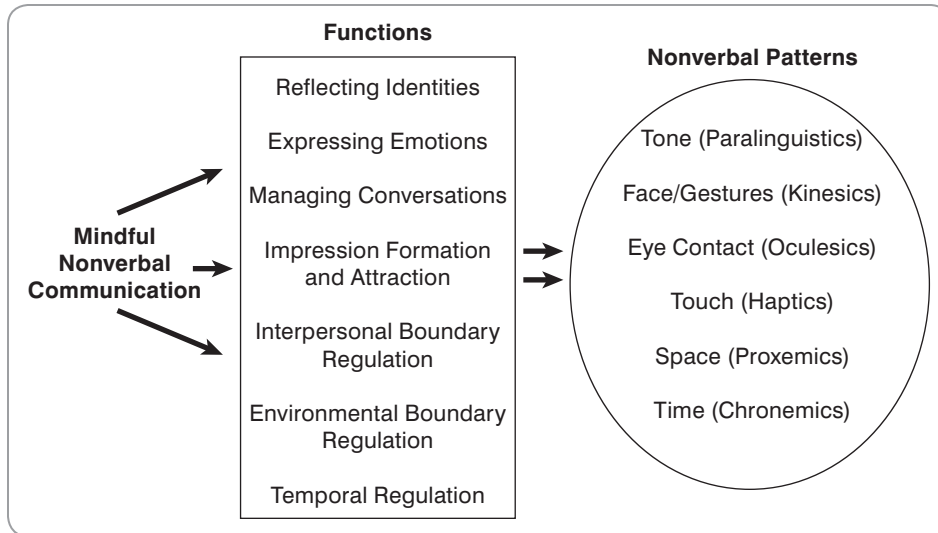


FIGURE 8.1. Mindful nonverbal communication: Functions and patterns.

and whether they appear similar or dissimilar to us. This process of identification is at the heart of our self-concept and is a driving force behind our feelings of belonging to valued or stigmatized groups” (Burgoon et al., 1996, p. 215).

Thus, nonverbal cues serve as our identity badges, such as *Raakhi* and *tikka* in the opening story, and the identity badges through which we place others into categories (e.g., ingroup and outgroup). According to social perception research, sex and race are the two primary or “primitive” categories that are immediately processed in the first few minutes of an intergroup encounter (Brewer, 1988). Intergroup communication research indicates that social perceptions and interactions are filtered through stereotypes based on visible group memberships and speech features such as dialects and accents (Giles et al., 2010).

Factors that affect such categorical slotting include the following: (1) contrastive physical cues (such as skin color and facial features); (2) a person’s “typicality” as mediated through our stereotypic lenses that she or he “looks like someone from that group”; and (3) nonverbal speech patterns such as contrastive accents, grammar, and manner of speaking. In initial intergroup encounters, the communicators typically perform their nonverbal identity habits (e.g., the use of a habitual tone of voice) without conscious processing (Lavan, Scott, & McGettigan, 2016; Smith & Bond, 1993). Similarly, we tend to respond to others through our stereotypic group images and expectations rather than responding to personal contact characteristics. For example, since 9/11, Muslims in the United States have been stereotyped as terrorists; Hispanics are stereotyped as illegal immigrants, often based on their physical appearance or identity category.

Adornment features such as clothing, jewelry, cosmetics, and accessories in different cultures also reflect a complex reality—with respect to enhancing, asserting, or reflecting identities. Based on our stereotypic knowledge of a particular group, we look for validation of our expectations using nonverbal cues and surface adornment features. In today's society, the cosmetics industry is a multibillion-dollar business engaged in enhancing or “making over” our faces, and thus our symbolic identities, in public. Body tattoos and flesh piercing (e.g., of the ears or nose), which are again in vogue, have occurred at various times in history and serve as identity markers of the individuals and/or the normative practices of the larger culture.

Furthermore, the uniforms that people such as doctors, nurses, and police officers wear also connote different identity markers. For example, uniforms in Japan worn by students, businesspeople, entertainers, and even vacationers, among others, reflect the individual's special relationship to a specific identity group. Japanese tourists typically wear the resort hotel's *yukata* (a lightweight kimono) and stroll around town wearing these “identity badges” signifying that they are guests of that particular hot springs resort. Muslim women are easily marked as “foreign others” if they wear the *hijab* (a scarf traditionally worn by Muslim women to cover the head and neck, leaving the face clear), *niqab* (a veil for the face that leaves the areas around the eyes clear), *chador* (a full-body cloak worn when outside the house), or *burqa* (the most concealing of all veils, covering the entire face and body and leaving just a mesh screen to see through) in the U.S. or UK mainstream cultural zones.

Beyond adornment features, another area that gives our cultural, ethnic, or gender identity away is vocalics—our use of voice qualifiers and vocalizations (Lavan et al., 2016). *Voice qualifiers* include vocalic behavior related to speech, such as accent, pitch range (high to low, wide to narrow inflection), pitch intensity (emotional involvement–uninvolvement), volume (loud to soft), articulation (precise to slurred), resonance (rich to thin), and tempo (fast to slow). Each of these characteristics represents a vocalic continuum. For example, mainstream Americans often perceive newly arrived immigrant Korean Americans or Puerto Ricans as sounding “foreign” and “less educated.” Cultural group members often tend to use their own vocal qualifiers and rules to evaluate others' vocalic signals harshly and critically.

Vocalizations refer to specific vocal sounds or noises that are independent of speech, such as the use of vocal characterizers (e.g., the sounds of laughing, crying, moaning, groaning, yawning, or belching; belching in public, for instance, is considered acceptable in some Asian cultures but is deemed rude in many northern European cultures) and vocal segregates (e.g., pauses, “uh-huh” for yes, “um, uh” for hesitation, and “sh” for silence) (Burgoon et al., 1996). From cultural and regional to social class identities, perceivers form attitudes and impressions based on their ethnocentric evaluations of different vocalic markers.

As the communication accommodation theory (Gallois, Giles, Jones, Cargile, & Ota, 1995) explains, we tend to view people who sound like us as friendlier and more attractive and people who sound different from us as strange and distant. Many intergroup relation factors promote the maintenance of diverse vocalic or dialect varieties

within a culture. Based on the members' preferred identity orientations, some individuals (with multiple vocalics competencies) can code-switch their speech patterns toward the partner's pattern, maintain their own distinctive speech patterns, or shift to some other speech patterns. For example, they may speak standard American English for social acceptance and mobility, they may maintain ethnic speech patterns (e.g., Spanglish and Ebonic English) for divergence and identity pride, or they may switch to speaking their heritage language (e.g., Spanish or Vietnamese) for purposes of identity solidarity and distinctiveness.

In sum, from adornments to the use of vocalics, we encode our sense of self by means of different nonverbal features and behaviors. Perceivers also tend to use ethnocentric evaluations to construct and decode others' identities through their use of different nonverbal signals. While some of these identity markers can be intentionally sent (e.g., wearing ethnic clothes), others can be unintentional identity cues (e.g., use of personal space). The following subsections expand this identity theme further by examining how nonverbal behaviors serve multiple nonverbal functions across cultures.

Expression of Emotions and Attitudes

By using nonverbal messages, we infer the feelings and attitudes of the stranger in the interaction. Feelings and attitudes are typically inferred through the nonverbal systems of kinesics and vocalics. The word *kinesics*, derived from the Greek word *kinesis* ("movement"), encompasses all forms of facial, bodily, and gestural movement. According to Birdwhistell (1970), the face is capable of producing some 250,000 expressions. Cultural universalists and cultural relativists differ in explaining emotional facial expressions (Ekman & Friesen, 1975; Hwang & Matsumoto, 2017; Kupperbusch et al., 1999).

Cultural universalists (closely aligned with the bioevolutionary view) believe that emotional facial expressions are innate and serve basic human adaptation functions regardless of cultural differences. They argue that infants who are born blind know how to use facial expressions instinctively to get what they want, such as expressions of pleasant sweet smiles or resentment (Darwin, 1872; Izard, 1980). In contrast, *cultural relativists* (closely aligned with the sociocultural view) believe that culture shapes emotional facial expressions as observed across cultures. They hold that culture provides the basic rules that govern the when and how of what emotions should be expressed or concealed (Birdwhistell, 1970; Matsumoto, Hwang, & Frank, 2016). Infants and children learn the social roles, rules, and proper nonverbal emotional displays on an unconscious level through a continuous cultural reinforcement process, and they can perform "spontaneously" and properly in accordance with particular situational requirements. Ekman and Friesen (1975) seek to integrate these two positions and argue for the *neuroculture theory* of emotional facial expression. According to this theory, while human beings are predisposed to make the connection between certain emotional states and facial muscles, it is through the continuous reward–sanction developmental immersion process within a sociocultural community that babies and young children acquire

nonverbal display rules. While language can be intentionally taught and learned, the acquisition of nonverbal communication is an experiential-immersive process of soaking up the ongoing millions of nonverbal cues and gestures on an unconscious to semiconscious level in a particular membership identity community and within a larger socio-cultural system. Nonverbal communication is omnipresent throughout a culture—it is everywhere.

Drawing from the explanatory frames of individualism–collectivism and power distance (Hofstede, 1991), for example, we can reasonably propose that individualists will tend to value spontaneous emotional expressions with less censorship and collectivists will tend to monitor their nonverbal emotional expressions more carefully because of their concern for relational harmony and ingroup reactions. Furthermore, when perceiving threats in the interaction, individualists tend to be more concerned with expressing and repairing self-focused emotions (e.g., personal anger, frustration, or resentment), whereas collectivists generally are more concerned with other-focused emotions (e.g., relational shame, hurt, or embarrassment).

People from small power distance cultures (e.g., in Australia and Canada) tend to use nonverbal emotional cues to establish equal-status relationships. People from large power distance cultures (e.g., in many Latin and Middle Eastern cultures) mostly use nonverbal emotional cues (e.g., the proper tone of voice) to signify asymmetrical-status relationships. However, misunderstandings or frustrations often occur when cultural members fail to observe and decode the subtle (or not so subtle) nonverbal cues in intercultural episodes. Cultural members tend to use their nonverbal cultural frame of reference to judge the other's "miscued" performance.

While both individualists and collectivists may experience a wide spectrum of emotions, they may internalize certain types of emotions with varying intensity in response to different situational conditions (e.g., a collectivist might experience more intense shame for the wrongdoings of a close relative than an individualist would). They may also choose to disintensify, neutralize, or dramatize different types of facial expressions to achieve specific interaction outcomes or goals in their particular culture.

Nonverbal researchers have generally agreed that there is relative universality in decoding basic facial emotions—anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise (Ekman et al., 1987; Izard, 1980). These facial emotional expressions (e.g., facial photographs as portrayed by U.S. Americans and Papua New Guineans) have been consistently recognized or similarly decoded by members of different cultures (e.g., from Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Scotland, the Indonesian island of Sumatra, Turkey, and the United States).

The more similar the cultures (i.e., from the same geographic region), the more accurate is the nonverbal decoding process. Further studies (with pictures of both Japanese and U.S. American male and female faces) indicate that U.S. students are better able to identify anger, disgust, fear, and sadness than are Japanese students. A possible explanation might be that Japanese students have been socialized to suppress the overt expression of such emotions because such expression could be face threatening to others. Therefore, they would have less practice in identifying these "negative" emotions.

Both groups, however, are equally adept at recognizing happiness and surprise (Hwang & Matsumoto, 2017; Matsumoto, 1989, 1992).

In a study probing the emotional experience of generic “feel good” emotions (such as feeling relaxed, elated, and calm), some interesting cross-cultural differences emerged (Kitayama & Markus, 1994). While U.S. college students perceive the generic “feel good” emotions as associated with socially disengaged emotions (such as feelings of pride and superiority), Japanese college students equate the “feel good” emotions with socially engaged emotions (such as friendly feelings and feelings of respect). Although decoding the core facial emotions can be pancultural, the meaning, circumstances, and associated tasks related to generating such emotions are culture specific. Individualists generally feel good focusing on personal achievement and recognition; in contrast, collectivists generally feel good focusing on collective achievement and ingroup recognition.

In addition, the meaning of smiles can carry different connotations in different cultures. Within the U.S. culture, a smile can mean joy or happiness. In the Japanese culture, in addition to signaling joy, a smile can also be used to mask embarrassment, hide displeasure, or suppress anger. In Russia, facial expressions serve as important negotiation cues. U.S. Americans are taught to “open conversations with a smile and to keep smiling. Russians tend to start out with grim faces, but when they do smile, it reflects relaxation and progress in developing a good relationship. Winks and nods are also good signs” (Richmond, 1996, p. 136).

With the worldwide rise of text-based message exchanges, use of emoticons and emoji has risen to convey appropriate emotions. With advances in technology and the Internet, cultural display rules have changed. Sending messages via Twitter, text, and Facebook has resulted in a more efficient way to communicate, affecting how we express our emotions. The use of icons in text messages has become popular because of the great need to replace long sentences, words, and expressions of our feelings with quick keyboard symbols. Universal icon expressions have become a significant way to converse without face-to-face interaction. These give senders everywhere the ability to talk with others without having to explain in detail the weight of their feelings. How about cultural differences in the use of emoticons? South Koreans and Japanese tend to use emoticons with expressive eyes and a neutral mouth (^_^), while U.S. Americans vary the direction of the mouth, :) and :(. One study (Yuki, Maddux, & Masuda, 2007) showed that students in the United States are not as sensitive to cues in the eyes and mouth because they poorly misinterpret the meaning assigned to popular emoticons from Japanese culture.

Research regarding the use of cross-cultural emoticons is varied. It appears that Asians tend to use more emoticons than U.S. Americans (Kayan, Fussell, & Setlock, 2006). Elderly Japanese men regard emoticons as a means to overcome the restrictions that computer-mediated communication places on interpersonal communication (Kanayama, 2003). It has also been reported that Indian web forums use more emoticons than their German counterparts (Pflug, 2011). Recall that in Chapter 7 we discussed the differences between low-context and high-context communication patterns.

Both Korean and Indian cultures are considered high-context communication cultures, while the U.S. culture is considered a low-context interaction culture. It seems logical to infer that high-context people have a stronger urge to fill in the nonverbal contextual gaps than their Western U.S. counterparts.

Despite the popularity, frequency, and successful use of emoticons, text messaging and icons, in general, have some clear disadvantages. First, many people who use them on a daily basis can cite an exact time and place in which they were misunderstood or their words were taken the wrong way after sending out a message. Reading emoticons in a message does not replace the depth of feelings a person has tried hard to convey. Second, jokes and sarcasm are difficult to interpret. Many people complain that they spend much time putting out the flame of a potential conflict because of wrong punctuation or a misinterpreted abbreviated term. For example, stating: "I'm okay." versus "I'm okay . . ." with the added ellipses in an e-text may drastically change the interpretive context of the e-message. Or for another example, by writing FTW without contextual cues, a smile, or an exclamation point, your friend may read the abbreviated term as an insulting WTF backward abbreviation, when you actually meant "For the Win!" You may also have used the abbreviated "JK" and baffled your intimate partner as to whether you meant a "Joke" or "Just Kidding!" Finally, when you text an abbreviated term in your chat message: "Tl; dr," your coworker may think that you are feeling sick and are asking for emergency help to get a doctor quick; instead, you actually meant: "Too long; didn't read." The crossover effect between reading an abbreviated term with or without emoticon versus decoding a real-life facial expression can cause further intercultural or interpersonal friction.

Overall, culture appears to play a powerful role in determining the types of emotions that should be displayed or suppressed in different interactive situations (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988). Individualistic cultures tend to encourage the display of a wide range of positive and negative emotions; accordingly, members are also able to accurately decode a wide range of emotions. In contrast, collectivistic cultures tend to encourage the display of modest "positive" emotions (e.g., friendly and agreeable emotions) while suppressing the display of extreme "negative" emotions (e.g., anger and disgust) in everyday lives. Accordingly, collectivists also tend to have a harder time reading negative facial expressions. Furthermore, they are mindful of what facial emotions should be displayed or suppressed in their interactions with ingroup and outgroup members.

Along with facial expressions of emotions, the human voice carries powerful emotional meaning. In the U.S. culture, soft emotions such as grief and love are expressed through variations in pitch. Harsh emotions such as anger and contempt are expressed by changes in volume (i.e., loudness vs. softness), and neutral emotions such as indifference are expressed through tempo changes (Costanzo, Markel, & Costanzo, 1969). Overall, while anger has been found to be an easy vocalic emotion to decode (Davitz & Davitz, 1959), fear and love are the most difficult vocalic emotions to recognize (Zuckerman, Lipets, Koivumaki, & Rosenthal, 1975).

Cultural norms also greatly influence our conversational volume and intensity. While many southern European cultures (e.g., Greece and Italy) and Arab cultures (e.g., Saudi Arabia and Yemen) tend to value an emotionally engaged, expressive tone of voice when important issues are discussed, many East and Southeast Asian cultures (e.g., Malaysia and Thailand) value a moderating, soft tone of voice for both females and males. According to Nydell (1996), one of the most commonly misunderstood aspects of Arab communication involves the display of anger. Arabs are not usually as angry as they appear to be. To indicate sincerity, they raise their voices, repeat points, and even pound the table for emphasis; a Western observer may therefore misconstrue them to be angry and argumentative. While members of German and U.S. cultures, for example, often interpret the Arab tone of voice as aggressive and pushy, Arabs just as frequently evaluate the nonexpressive German and U.S. American style as “cold,” “distant,” and “harsh.”

Thus, nonverbal cultural differences exist on a scale of relative differences: from the Arab point of view, the U.S. American tone of voice sounds “cold” and “emotionally disengaging”; from the East Asian point of view, the same voice tone can sound “too heated” and “harsh.” Members of different cultures use their own nonverbal cultural standards as guidelines for proper or improper ways of “sounding” and evaluating others. It is also important to realize that, within the broader labels of what constitute “individualistic” and “collectivistic” nonverbal patterns, diverse nonverbal rules (with subtle variations) exist in different regions of individualistic and collectivistic cultures.

In sum, different cultural socialization processes contribute to the display of various facial and vocalic emotional expressions. The consensual meanings of such nonverbal behaviors are perpetuated and reinforced through ongoing cultural activities and interactions. Intercultural nonverbal strains may occur when individualists and collectivists cannot accurately decode or interpret their respective nonverbal expression or suppression governed by different cultural norms and rules.

Conversational Management

People generally use kinesics (e.g., hand gestures and body posture) and oculosics (i.e., eye and face gaze) to manage their conversation with others. Hand gestures and body postures have been categorized as emblems, illustrators, regulators, and adaptors (Ekman & Friesen, 1969; Knapp & Hall, 2001). Each of these categories emphasizes some specific communication functions. The categories, however, are not mutually exclusive—a single hand gesture can be classified as serving both illustrative and regulative functions and so on.

Emblems are hand gestures that hold specific meanings for members within a culture. They have a direct verbal referent and can substitute for the words they represent (e.g., the nonverbal peace sign, the hitchhike sign). They are most often gestures or movements with intentional meanings (e.g., thumbs up and down for “good and bad rating,” respectively, is a common U.S. emblem). They can be recognized by ingroup

members even when they are displayed out of context. Greeting rituals, beckoning gestures, peace or insult gestures, gang signs, and head movements to indicate “yes” or “no” are all examples of emblems. Every culture has a rich variety of emblems with specific meanings and rules of display (Gochenour, 1990).

Many emblems across cultures also hold contradictory meanings in different cultures. For example, a single hand gesture signifying okay to U.S. Americans in which one raises one’s hand and makes a circle between the thumb and forefinger can mean “money” to the Japanese, a sexual insult in Brazil and Greece, a vulgar gesture in Russia, or “zero” in French. The Bulgarian turn of the head sideways from left to right, which indicates “yes,” means “no” for many other cultures. The “V-for-victory” sign is shown by extending the forefinger and index finger upward and apart—the palm may face in or out in the United States; however, in Britain the “V” sign with the palm turned inward (but not outward) connotes an insult. The “thumbs-up” gesture used in Canada and the United States to signify approval or encouragement is offensive throughout the Arab world (e.g., in Egypt and Kuwait; Morrison, Conaway, & Borden, 1994). Thus, inaccurate and insensitive encoding and decoding of emblematic nonverbal gestures can create intercultural misunderstanding or strife.

Illustrators are nonverbal hand gestures that are used to complement or illustrate spoken words. They are less arbitrary than emblems. They are the most “pictorial” of all kinesic behaviors, being hand gestures that accentuate a word or phrase. They can also be used to illustrate directions or “draw” a picture of the intended verbal meaning.

Italians famously make more use of broad, full-arm gestures to illustrate their conversations than do U.S. Americans. They also like to “talk with their hands,” and most of their hand gestures are expressive and innocuous. Many Spaniards also use a variety of hand illustrators, many of which are region specific (Morrison et al., 1994). Generally, southern Europeans tend to employ more animated hand gestures than do northern Europeans.

While southern Europeans (e.g., Italians and Greeks), Arabs (e.g., Egyptians and Saudis), and Latin Americans (e.g., Chileans and Venezuelans) tend to use animated hand illustrators, many Asians and northern Europeans (e.g., Belgians, Finns, and Swedes) prefer “quiet gestures” when speaking. Furthermore, the left hand is considered unclean in India and the Arab world, and it is strictly taboo to eat with it. U.S. Americans occupy the middle position in their use of nonverbal illustrators—somewhere between the southern Europeans and the northern Europeans.

Regulators include the use of vocalics, kinesics (especially nonverbal gestures and head movements), and oculusics to regulate the pacing and flow of the conversation. Next to emblems, regulators are considered culture-specific nonverbal behaviors. They are also the most rule-governed kinesic behaviors. They act as nonverbal traffic signs that control the flow and pauses of conversations.

For example, in international business negotiations, Brazilians have been found to interrupt conversations twice as much as either Japanese or U.S. Americans. Japanese negotiators tend to use silence most, U.S. Americans a moderate amount, and Brazilian negotiators almost none at all (Graham, 1985). Like the Brazilians, the French

are inclined to use interruptions to create “fireworks” in their “serious” conversations, especially in established relationships. The French interruption–punctuation pattern signals “interest in the other’s remark, which merits a commentary, a word of appreciation, denial, protest, or laughter—in short, a reaction without which the remark would ‘fall flat.’ The ball is tossed to be caught and tossed back. Where there is no ‘interruption,’ when each person speaks sedately in turn (as in American conversation, according to the French), the conversation never ‘takes off’; it remains polite, formal, cold” (Carroll, 1987, p. 37). The interruption pattern reflects interaction spontaneity and enthusiasm and is a source of stimulation. However, the continuous interruption pattern in French conversations often baffles U.S. Americans.

Regulators are vocalic and kinesic behaviors that we learn at a very young age and govern the pacing of our conversation. We use them at a very low level of awareness. The use of regulators with different rhythms and punctuations often causes intercultural distress and misunderstandings. However, while individuals from contrastive cultures may experience such interaction frustrations, they may not be able to articulate the reasons for them. Regulators are the most rule-governed nonverbal interaction category, unconsciously reflecting the norms of the larger culture.

Additionally, vocal segregates such as *hai*, *hai* in Japanese and *uhhuh* in English can be classified as nonverbal regulatory devices. For the Japanese, vocal pause-filler cues such as *hai*, *hai* mean “I’m hearing you”; however, for Westerners, the literal translation of *hai* is “yes.” Intercultural misunderstanding can easily occur when, for instance, Westerners think the Japanese have actually signaled “yes” to a contract agreement by saying *hai*, *hai*, while the Japanese think they have merely acknowledged hearing the speaker’s statement.

Moreover, changing body posture, using terminating gestures, and breaking off eye contact are some examples of turn-yielding cues in typical U.S. conversations. Within the U.S. culture, however, ethnic groups such as African American, European American, Latino/a American, and Asian immigrant groups have been found to follow different eye contact norms in regulating conversations. For example, African Americans often maintain eye contact when speaking but break it off when listening; European Americans do the opposite: they tend to break off eye contact when speaking and maintain it when listening (Adams & Nelson, 2016; LaFrance & Mayo, 1978). Interethnic expectancy violations occur when African Americans expect European Americans to look them in the eyes when speaking but instead receive “nonresponsiveness” or “indifference” cues. European Americans may view the direct eye gaze during speaking as “confrontational” or “aggressive.” Of the four groups, Latino/a Americans appear to engage in more intense and prolonged eye contact during conversations than do European American, African American, and Asian immigrant groups, in that order. Furthermore, Asian immigrants and Native Americans have been taught to show respect, especially when conversing with elderly or high-status persons, by averting eye contact (i.e., in order to signal self-effacing status). Status position, gender role, and situational norms strongly influence the various uses of nonverbal cues. In addition, factors such as perceived ingroup versus outgroup interaction, as well as conversational topics and

goals, may greatly influence what kind of eye contact is appropriate in a particular sociocultural scene. Within a pluralistic society, we should pay mindful attention to the ethnic diversity of nonverbal communication styles in conjunction with the verbal speech acts that are being conveyed and decoded.

Finally, *adaptors*—nonverbal habits or gestures that are reactions to internal or external stimuli—are used to satisfy psychological or physical needs. Some are learned within a culture (such as covering the mouth when we cough or blowing the nose using a handkerchief), and others are more automatic (such as scratching an itch). Most are not intended to communicate a message. However, some of these habits can be considered rude in the context of another culture (e.g., chewing gum in public in France; pointing a finger in the Arab world, which is considered a rude gesture; and winking, which may be considered an insult or a sexual proposition in India and Pakistan). Using adaptors in the wrong context or at the wrong time can create great distress and confusion in cultural strangers who are unaccustomed to them.

Impression Formation and Attraction

When we manage our impressions on the nonverbal level, we are concerned with creating a favorable impression in the presence of others so that they can either be attracted to us or at least find us credible. Impression formation and interpersonal attraction are closely intertwined. Perceived physical attractiveness has been consistently associated with positive impression formation. Cultural values and norms, however, influence the implicit criteria we hold for what constitutes perceived attractiveness or unattractiveness.

Research in the United States, for example, indicates that physical appearance is closely associated with perceived attractiveness. Perceived attractiveness, in turn, is closely related to perceived desirable personality characteristics such as appearing more sensitive, kind, sociable, pleasant, likable, and interesting than those who are perceived as unattractive (Dion, 1986; Patzer, 1985). Attractive people are also evaluated as more competent and intelligent in the United States (Ross & Ferris, 1981).

In comparing U.S. and Japanese perceptions of attractiveness, U.S. college students consistently rate smiling faces (both American and Japanese faces) as more attractive, intelligent, and sociable than neutral faces. Although Japanese students rate smiling faces as more sociable than neutral faces, they evaluate neutral faces as more intelligent. Additionally, Japanese students do not perceive smiling faces as being more attractive than neutral faces (Matsumoto & Kudoh, 1993).

In terms of the perceived credibility aspect, facial composure and body posture appear to influence our judgments of whether individuals appear to be credible (i.e., have high social influence power) or not credible (i.e., have low social influence power). In some Asian cultures (e.g., South Korea and Japan), influential people tend to maintain restrained facial expressions and postural rigidity. In the U.S. culture, however, relaxed facial expressions and posture are associated with credibility and giving positive impressions (Burgoon et al., 1996).

Overall, we can conclude that perceived attractiveness and credibility are two culturally laden phenomena whose meaning reflects social agreements that are created and sustained through cultural nonverbal practices.

Space and Time Across Cultures

Space and time are boundary-regulation and identity-protection issues because we, as humans, are territorial animals. Our primary identities are tied closely to our claimed territories. When our territories (e.g., extending from our home down to our personal space) are “invaded,” our identities perceive threats and experience emotional vulnerability. Protective territory or sacred space satisfies our needs for security, trust, inclusion, connection, and stability. In this section, we consider the following three themes: interpersonal spatial boundary regulation, environmental boundary regulation, and temporal regulation.

Interpersonal Spatial Boundary Regulation

Interpersonal spatial boundary regulation can be discussed in relation to two nonverbal classification systems: proxemics and haptics.

Proxemics

Proxemic studies examine the functions and regulation of interpersonal space in different cultures. Claiming a space for oneself means injecting one’s sense of identity or selfhood into a place. For instance, we often use object markers such as books, coats, and umbrellas to “mark” or “claim” our favorite chair or table in a classroom or library.

According to Hall’s (1966) proxemic theory, the use of interpersonal space or distance helps individuals regulate intimacy by controlling sensory exposure. Hall observes that middle-class European Americans typically use four spatial distances: (1) *intimate distance*—from body contact to 18 inches, a distance for lovemaking, comforting, whispering secrets, and the like; (2) *personal distance*—from 18 inches to 4 feet, a distance that enables personal to casual conversations while people carry an invisible “space bubble” surrounding them; (3) *social distance*—from 4 to 12 feet, a distance reserved for formal business transactions or formal social interaction; and (4) *public distance*—from 12 to 25 feet, a suitable distance for public lectures or performances. Intercultural irritations most often occur in defining what constitutes intimate space as opposed to personal space.

From an intergroup perspective, what constitutes appropriate personal distance for one cultural group can be perceived as crowding by another group. The average conversational distance or personal space for European Americans is approximately 20 inches. For some Latin American and Caribbean cultural groups (e.g., Costa Ricans, Puerto Ricans, Bahamians, and Jamaicans), however, the average personal space is

approximately 14–15 inches. For the Saudi, the ideal conversational distance is approximately 9–10 inches (Ferraro, 1990). On the one hand, when Arabs overstep the personal space boundary of European Americans, they are often considered “rude” and “intrusive.” On the other hand, Arab negotiators frequently find European Americans to be “aloof,” “cold,” and “standoffish.” Personal space often serves as a “hidden dimension” of intercultural misunderstanding and discomfort (Hall, 1966). Personal space is our unconscious protective territory that we carry around with us and deem sacred, non-violable, and non-negotiable. The experience of spaciousness and crowdedness and the perception of space violation and space respect vary from culture to culture.

The key mediating variable appears to be associated with the need for sensory exposure and contact in different cultures. Sensory exposure means the need for tactile (touch) and olfactory (smell) modes of communication. People in *high-contact cultures* appear to have high tactile and olfactory needs in their communication process with others; those in *low-contact cultures* appear to have more visual needs than the other two needs (Hall, 1966).

People in cultures favoring high sensory exposure require much personal contact. The French, Italians, Latin Americans, Russians, Arabs, and Africans are members of high-contact cultures. U.S. Americans, Canadians, northern Europeans, New Zealanders, and Australians are members of moderate-contact cultures, as are, to a lesser degree, Germans and Danes. In contrast, people in cultures favoring low sensory exposure require little personal contact. East Asians such as Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans are members of low-contact cultures (Barnlund, 1975; Hall, 1976; Matsumoto et al., 2016).

In a high-contact culture, communicators face one another directly, often look one another in the eye, interact closely with one another, often touch one another, and speak in a rather loud voice. In contrast, in a low-contact culture, interactants face one another more indirectly, interact with a wider space between them, engage in little or no touching, prefer indirect eye glances, and speak in a soft-to-moderate tone of voice (Watson, 1970). People in *moderate-contact cultures* have a mixture of both high-contact and low-contact nonverbal interaction characteristics. Anderson (1997) argues that high-contact cultures tend to be located in warmer climates or regions, whereas low-contact cultures tend to be located in cooler areas. He concludes that cultures in warmer climates tend to be more socioemotionally oriented than task oriented, and cultures in cooler climates tend to be more task oriented than socioemotional oriented. A possible explanation is that survival in warmer climates is far less dependent on task collaboration: people can focus more on sensual pleasures and touch, and enjoy one another more on the socioemotional level. In extremely cold climates, however, human survival depends on the development of task solutions to solve climatic problems.

Beyond climate, many factors, of course, influence the use of interaction space and touch behaviors. For example, in testing the proxemic theory of sensory exposure, researchers examined the use of personal distance in Japanese, Venezuelan, and U.S. American students. Results indicate that (1) when speaking their native languages, Japanese students sit further apart than do Venezuelan students, with U.S. American

students sitting at an intermediate distance; (2) females tend to sit closer together than males do in all three groups; and (3) when speaking English, students from Japan and Venezuela use personal distances that more closely approximate U.S. American spatial distance norms (Sussman & Rosenfeld, 1982). While Venezuela has been identified as a high-contact culture, the United States has been deemed a moderate-contact culture, and Japan a low-contact culture. Apparently, individuals conversing in their native language trigger a broader package of culturally appropriate behaviors.

Other research indicates that the Japanese prefer greater interaction distances with their professors, friends, and fathers than do Japanese Americans in Hawaii and European Americans on the U.S. mainland (Engebretson & Fullman, 1972). Nonverbal studies also reveal that while African American children exhibit closer interaction distances than do European American children, by the fifth grade these differences are minimized (e.g., Halberstadt, 1991; Scherer, 1994). By age 16, however, African Americans tend to maintain greater conversational distances with adolescent European Americans than with adolescents of their own race. Latino(a) Americans tend to interact at closer distances than do European Americans or African Americans.

In terms of spatial violation behavior, several studies suggest that members of individualistic cultures generally take an active, aggressive stance when their space is violated, whereas members of collectivistic cultures assume a passive, withdrawal stance when their personal space is invaded (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988). Cultural values, language usage, gender difference, age, and context are all key factors to watch for in attempting to understand the complex proxemic behaviors in different cultures.

Haptics

Haptic studies investigate the perceptions, functions, and meanings of touch behavior as communication in different cultures. Different cultures encode and interpret touch behavior in different ways. Touch is used to fulfill five communicative functions: (1) ritualistic interaction such as shaking hands or bowing; (2) expression of affect such as kissing and kicking; (3) playfulness such as flirtatious stroking and poking; (4) a control function such as grabbing someone's arm; and (5) a task-related function such as a nurse taking a patient's pulse at the wrist (Jones & Yarborough, 1985).

Different cultures have different expectations as to who can touch whom in different interaction scenes (Andersen, Hecht, Hoobler, & Smallwood, 2002). For example, while Chinese view opposite-sex handshakes as acceptable, for Malays and Arabs they are taboo. Furthermore, different cultures uphold different gender norms for embracing and handholding. The friendly full embrace between males or friendly arm link pattern between them is much more acceptable in many Latin American cultures than in Britain or the United States. The friendly handholding pattern between two females in many Asian cultures is also common nonverbal practice (Barnlund, 1975). As Nydell (1987) observes, "In general, Arabs tend to stand and sit closer and to touch other people (of the same sex) more than Westerners do. It is common to see two men or two women holding hands as they walk down a street, which is simply a sign of friendship" (p. 44).

Arab and Western cultures differ considerably with regard to the nonverbal norms of haptics. These norms, however, are often out of their conscious awareness. The tendency for North Americans to remain outside the appropriate haptic zone of Arabs often leads the Arabs to suspect the speakers' intentions. Arabs tend to see such distancing nonverbal acts as "insincere" and "cold." Conversely, the Arab need for close contact often constitutes a violation of the personal space and privacy of most North Americans, who tend to consider such nonverbal intrusive acts as "aggressive" and "belligerent."

Comparative haptic studies on touch behaviors in Latin American cultures and U.S. and Canadian cultures also indicate that Latino(a)s tend to engage in more frequent touch behaviors than do U.S. Americans and Canadians (Engebretson & Fullman, 1972; Mayo & LaFrance, 1977; Shuter, 1976). It is important to remember, however, that touch behaviors in both Arab and Latin American cultures are usually confined to same-sex rather than opposite-sex touching. Furthermore, while Latin Americans and southern Europeans view kissing and hugging as spontaneous expressions of their positive feelings, many Asian cultures do not subscribe to such overt display of affection. The French, for example, like to kiss acquaintances on both cheeks. In comparison, Britons practice "vacuum kisses," not actual kisses.

Different cultures uphold different standards and expectations concerning the amount of touching permitted, the areas of the body that can properly be touched, and whom one should or should not touch. Finally, the rules of appropriate and inappropriate touch behaviors are much more stringent in collectivistic cultures than in individualistic cultures for reasons such as power distance and gender factor.

Environmental Boundary Regulation

Environmental boundary regulation is discussed here in two parts: physical boundary regulation and psychological boundary regulation.

Physical Boundary Regulation

Our claimed primary territories (e.g., homes, farms, and community properties) offer us a sense of security, interaction trust or predictability, and inclusion. Primary territories are places that are central to our lives and that elicit a strong emotional attachment for us; secondary territories are places such as neighborhood markets or bars to which we feel less connected (Altman & Chemers, 1980).

How people define primary and secondary territories can be culturally and subjectively based. For some people, a neighborhood bar may be their second home or "turf," and hence would be the primary territory they would defend from outsiders. Concepts of territory and identity are intertwined because we usually invest lots of time, effort, emotion, and self-worth in places that we claim as our primary territories. Our home territory or immediate environment exerts a strong influence on our everyday lives.

Lewin (1936), for example, focuses on the importance of environment in influencing human behavior. He introduces the following formula for human behavior:

$B = f(P, E)$, where B is behavior, P is person, and E is environment. Simply put, Lewin believes that human behavior is defined by the persons interacting as well as the environment in which the communication takes place. For example, the middle-class home environment in Canada and the United States is very different from that in many Latin American and Asian countries.

In the United States, for example, the middle-class home environment typically is separated from the community at large by fences with gates and by yards with lawns in the front and back. In essence, it reflects individualistic values such as privacy. In contrast, in Mexico, the middle-class home environment is developed in such a way that the architectural design of the house is integrated with that of a central plaza, which may contain a community center and a church. It appears to reflect collectivistic values such as group-based interaction.

Overall, North American homes often symbolize the desire of the owners to assert their individual identities and separate themselves from one another. They create boundaries through the use of gates, lawns, living rooms, separate bedrooms, private bathrooms, and many locks. Similarly, Hall (1983) observes that in Germany homes, like offices, have heavy soundproof doors and double locks. In Germany, it is considered rude to enter someone's room without knocking. Elaborate laws also govern German gardens such that trees must be planted at a prescribed distance without shading the neighbor's property (i.e., not even a shadow may intrude on the other's garden). In Norwegian homes, in comparison, the use of high shrubbery, trees, fences, and large carved doors shield the homes from public sight. While both Germans and Norwegians cherish privacy, it is protected and expressed differently in the two cultures.

Furthermore, different cultural assumptions are attached to the diverse ways guests or outsiders should be entertained: at home versus in public places. For example, in some Asian cultures such as China, Korea, and Japan, the proper way to entertain guests is in a formal restaurant, because of self-effacement cultural values (i.e., home is a humble habitat for the family). In contrast, many Arabs, like U.S. Americans and Canadians, do not mind entertaining guests in their homes. The difference is that while many Arab homes reserve a specific formal room (with exquisite heirlooms and furnishings) to entertain guests and the guests may not see any other part of the house (until the relationship is trusted), many American hosts may take their guests on a tour around the entire house before settling in. In many Arab homes, separate quarters are reserved for male and female activities.

Interestingly, in many traditional Japanese homes, families and close friends usually sit in a multipurpose room to chat, eat, and drink. Traditional Japanese homes do not make clear distinctions between the living room, dining room, and bedroom. Thus, it is critical for friends to remove their shoes before entering the multipurpose space, the floor of which is covered with straw mats, or *tatami*. Unlike their living and dining rooms, Japanese make a strong distinction between the bathroom (*ofuro*), used solely for bathing, and the toilet room (*otearai*). From their cultural perspective, to mix up bathing (a cleaning function) and toileting (a dirtying function) is against their code of civility and personal hygiene.

To put it simply, many individualistic cultures foster personal identity-type home environments, whereas many collectivistic cultures encourage communal-type home settings. In our early childhood homes, we all unconsciously acquire our cultural norms teaching us how to deal with space and boundary issues through social roles, furniture arrangements, and the proper interaction etiquettes to be performed in each room.

Psychological Boundary Regulation

On the psychological level, privacy regulation refers to the selective monitoring of closeness and openness or access to the self or to one's group (Altman, 1975; Petronio, 2002, 2010). Intrapersonal space refers to the need for information privacy or psychological quietness between the self and others. While privacy regulation is a major concern in many Western social environments, the issue may not be seen as very critical in many collectivistic cultures. In fact, the concept of privacy carries heavily negative connotations in many collectivistic cultures. For example, the Chinese words that closely correspond to the concept "privacy" are "secretive" and "selfishness," both of which have heavy pejorative meanings. This is not to say that Chinese do not need personal privacy or space. It just implies that many Chinese believe that relational interconnection should override the importance of personal privacy in everyday interactions. Moreover, population density and crowded environmental conditions make it virtually impossible for people in many Asian countries (e.g., China, India, Indonesia, and Japan) to maintain personal privacy or interpersonal space.

Similarly, for many Arab cultures, the concept of privacy is baffling at best because in translation the Arabic word that comes closest to the concept of "privacy" means "loneliness" (Nydell, 1996, p. 29). The following example illustrates the Arab construction of the meaning of "privacy": When an exhausted American guest, after 3 hours of partying and loud music, decided to step onto the balcony for some fresh air, her worried Cairo host immediately followed after her and asked, "Is anything wrong? Are you angry at someone?" (Nydell, 1996, p. 30).

Drawing from the integrated identity negotiation theory presented in Chapter 2, to the extent that we perceive territorial safety, we feel comfortable in our interaction with others. To the extent that we perceive identity threat, we build up defenses through physical or symbolic means. Spatial regulation is indeed a powerful means of marking ingroup and outgroup boundaries, and of differentiating "self" from "others" in diverse intergroup contact settings.

Temporal Regulation

Temporal regulation is reflective of our spiritual, relational, and task-oriented attitudes toward the time frame in which communication is taking place. In many cultures, people use traditional calendars called almanacs. For example, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Tibetans use lunar calendars to celebrate New Year. Lunar calendars are also used for scheduling many important events in life such as child's hair-cutting ceremony, enthronement of leaders, engagements and weddings, and funeral rites. All of these

events are spiritually significant times in peoples' lives and are regulated according to the lunar calendar. Time is not necessarily linear in these cultures.

The study of time is referred to as the study of chronemics. *Chronemics* concerns how people in different cultures structure, interpret, and understand the time dimension. Our developmental identities (i.e., at different age-linked stages) are closely tied in with the sense of time. Our conceptions of birth, development, aging, and death are related to consciousness of the time dimension. Our religious or spiritual beliefs, in terms of where the universe begins and ends and where life begins and ends, are also two temporal-related worldview questions.

On the cultural-specific level, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) value orientation of time indicates that some cultures (e.g., many African cultures) emphasize the past-present time continuum, whereas other cultures emphasize the future time continuum (e.g., Australia, Canada, and the United States). Cultural temporal patterns designate when and how we should start the day and when we should eat, work, play, sleep, even die, and reincarnate.

Hall (1983) distinguishes two patterns of time that govern different cultures: the *monochronic time schedule* (M-time) and the *polychronic time schedule* (P-time). According to Hall and Hall (1987), the M-time and P-time are empirically quite distinct: people in M-time cultures pay attention to clock time and do one thing at a time; people in P-time adhere to relational time and may be involved in many simultaneous activities (see Table 8.1).

For Hall and Hall (1987), the United States, Germany, and Switzerland represent classic examples of M-time cultures. Time is linearly segmented into hours, minutes, and seconds, and people in these cultures attach importance to scheduling almost everything following the monochronic time concept. If workers, students, patients, and meeting participants do not follow their scheduled times, they are marked down for being disrespectful, rude, and tardy.

TABLE 8.1. Characteristics of Monochronic and Polychronic Time

Monochronic time	Polychronic Time
Clock time	Situational time
Appointment time	Flextime
Segmented activities	Simultaneous activities
Task-oriented	Relationship-oriented
Achievement tempos	Experiential tempos
Future-focused	Past/Present-focused
Tangible outcome perspective	Historical perspective

For Hall and Hall (1987), Arab, African, Latin American, Asian, and Mediterranean cultures are representatives of P-time patterns. Time is relational and not necessarily dictated by the moving hands of a clock or a watch. People in these cultures attach importance to relationship and context following the polychronic time concept. For example, according to Pennington (1990), for many Africans, time is viewed in the context of establishing a complexity of balanced relationships. Time is used to establish a relationship with the Supreme Being, a relationship of continuity between the present and past generations, a relationship with nature and the forces of one's environment (nature), and to create group harmony and participation among the living. This sense of temporal synchronization and group connectedness can be seen in the performing arts of Africans, such as dance and drumming. Time for traditional Africans is an emergent experiential process and cannot be marked or separated as discrete, mechanical, and segmentational elements.

People who follow M-time patterns usually engage in one activity at a time. They compartmentalize time schedules to serve personal identity needs, and they separate task-oriented time from socioemotional time. For M-time people, time is a tangible commodity. People who follow P-time, however, tend to engage in multiple activities at the same time (e.g., in China, doctors may simultaneously treat their patients while talking with visiting relatives about unrelated medical topics). P-time people hold more fluid attitudes toward time schedules and appointments, and they blend socioemotional need with task accomplishment. For P-time individuals, time is a relational rather than a clock time issue (Ting-Toomey, 1994a, 1994b; Tung, 1994).

Members of individualistic cultures generally follow the M-time pattern, whereas members of collectivistic cultures follow the P-time pattern. Members of individualistic cultures view time as something that can be controlled and arranged, whereas members of collectivistic cultures view time as experientially based (i.e., living and experiencing time fully rather than monitoring clock time mechanically). Individualistic M-time members emphasize the value of time as an outcome accomplishment concept, while collectivistic P-time members stress the value of time as a rapport-building and trust-building process concept.

Beyond M-time and P-time, Hall (1959) also differentiates five time zones for arriving late for appointments in accordance with European American reflections: (1) mumble something time (5–10 minutes late, approximately); (2) slight apology time (10–15 minutes late); (3) mildly insulting or serious apology time (15–30 minutes late); (4) rude time (30–45 minutes late); and (5) downright insulting time (45–60 minutes late). For people who follow M-time schedules stringently (e.g., many northern Europeans and European Americans), their working unit of time is the 5-minute block. If they are 5-minutes late for an appointment, they mumble something. If they are 15 minutes late—a block of time representing three significant units—they are expected to make a slight apology. If they are 30 minutes late, they are expected to offer a serious apology with a persuasive reason for their lateness.

For other cultures, such as some Arab and Latin American cultures, a historical time perspective is important. Arab culture, for example, has a 6,000-year history, and

many Arabs will “address the historical aspects of a situation before addressing the current issue. The working unit of time for many Arabs is also a much larger block of time than that of European Americans—about 15 minutes” (Cushner & Brislin, 1996, p. 285). Thus, if Arab visitors are 30 minutes late, their mind-set may indicate “2 units” of delay time. They may not even “mumble something” to express an apology, especially when the reason concerns taking care of family or kinship affairs. They will expect understanding from those who are waiting for them. The Arabic word *maʿalish* means “never mind, or it doesn’t matter . . . it’s not that serious. You will hear this said frequently when someone has had a delay, a disappointment, or an unfortunate experience. . . . Arabs often react to adversity with resignation and, to some extent, an acceptance of their fate” (Nydell, 1996, p. 71).

In sum, individualistic cultures are clock time oriented and short-term goal oriented. Collectivistic cultures are relationally oriented in their time attitude and historically oriented in terms of long-term goal planning. Individualists tend to protect their individual identity via exacting use of clock time, and collectivists mark their communal identities by treating time from a relational standpoint. Intercultural frictions occur frequently because people in different cultures have different time orientations.

A synergistic, common ground can be developed by individuals following contrastive M-time and P-time schedules for appointments. On the one hand, M-time people can learn to establish a wider window of appointment time (e.g., “I’ll wait for you from 11:00 to 11:30”) or deadline schedule (e.g., “The delivery date is between Wednesday and Friday”). On the other hand, P-time people learn to honor deadlines because of such flextime orientation from the other parties. Thinking outside of our culturally (or personally) ingrained chronemic habit boxes can facilitate flexible and attuning management of time, identity, relationship, and communication.

Interpersonal Synchrony, Deception and Deviance, and Nonverbal Cautions

Three areas that give us additional insights into the nonverbal dynamics between people from the same or different cultures are: interpersonal interactive synchrony, deception and deviance, and nonverbal cautions.

Interpersonal Interactive Synchrony

Interpersonal synchronization is needed to function appropriately and effectively within and between cultures. Interpersonal synchronization creates conjoint relational satisfaction and supportive rapport. According to Hall (1983), interpersonal synchrony refers to convergent rhythmic movements between two people on both verbal and nonverbal levels. Every facet of human behavior is involved in the rhythmic process. As Hall asserts, “It can now be said with assurance that individuals are dominated in their behavior by complex hierarchies of interlocking rhythms” (p. 153). Based on kinesic and

proxemic film research, results indicate that interpersonal synchronization between individuals within the same culture displays an incredible mirroring effect. The process appears rhythmic, and the individuals are locked together in a “dance” that functions almost totally out of awareness.

Hall (1983) observes that people in African and Latin American cultures seem to be more conscious of these rhythmic movements than are people in northern European, U.S., and Canadian cultures. African Americans’ habitual use of the call and response pattern on both verbal and nonverbal levels has often led to miscommunication with European Americans, who do not use the pattern. African Americans infer from the absence of a response that “the Whites to whom they are speaking are not listening. White speakers tend to infer from the various responses like ‘Dig it!’ or ‘I hear you!’ which Blacks consider necessary and appropriate interpolations . . . as that Blacks are constantly *interrupting* them” (Kochman, 1990, p. 199; emphasis in original).

Furthermore, collectivists appear to have a higher need to fully complete the rhythmic pattern of a conversational episode (i.e., beginning, middle, and ending action chains) than do individualists. An action chain is defined as a rhythmic sequence of events in which people alternately “release appropriate responses in each other in order to achieve an agreed-upon or predictable goal. The steps or links in the chain . . . vary from culture to culture” (Hall & Hall, 1987, p. 183). For example, it often takes Arabs a longer time to complete a nonverbal greeting ritual, to display hospitality, to introduce a topic, to maintain a topic, and to end a conversation. All these greeting activities must be accomplished before the host and the visiting guest can be fully satisfied with the entire initial interaction.

In contrast, individualists (e.g., from Australia and Canada) have a relatively low need to complete an action chain on the nonverbal level. Whatever members of individualistic cultures do not accomplish on the nonverbal level, they can rely on words to complete the interaction ritual. However, for collectivists, nonverbal rhythm is an intangible but important aspect of interaction. This is because “nature’s cycles are rhythmic, and it is understandable that rhythm and tempo are distinguishing features of any culture. Rhythm ties the people of a culture together and can also alienate them from members of other cultures” (Hall & Hall, 1987, p. 18).

Interpersonal synchrony or convergence is achieved when the nonverbal behavior between two individuals moves toward smoothness, responsiveness, and spontaneity. Interpersonal divergence occurs when the nonverbal behavior between two individuals moves toward difficulty, rigidity, and awkwardness. Interpersonal synchrony signifies increased rapport and trust, whereas interpersonal divergence signifies increased distance and mistrust. Deception and deviance often cause interpersonal divergence and identity challenges.

Deception and Deviance

Deception and deviance are pervasive in human interactions because they are related to self-presentation and impression formation. Importantly, deception and deviance are

both enacted and detected through communicative symbols, especially nonverbal cues. Most scholars (e.g., Buller & Burgoon, 1994; Ekman, 1985; Zuckerman, De Paul, & Rosenthal, 1981) agree that deception is intentionally concealing the truth and misleading others by projecting false impressions and beliefs. Imposters pose identity challenges in interactions. For example, con artists project the false impression that they are rich and famous by dressing up the part and faking high-status identities. Demeanor bias (Frank & Ekman, 2004a, 2004b) enables frauds to give the appearance of sincerity, trustworthiness, and honesty. While there are relatively few con artists and imposters in the general human population, there are many more deviants.

Deviance is not synonymous with deception. It can be defined in various ways. Sociologists have mostly defined deviating from or violating a basic norm in a negative fashion (Goode, 2001), and many of them regard deviance and stigma as conceptual twins. However, some social psychologists have defined deviance positively in terms of behaviors, attitudes, and attributes that exceed normative expectations and lead to favorable evaluations (Heckert & Heckert, 2002). Positive deviants include overachievers, innovators, and super athletes. From the sociocultural perspective, deception and deviance may be perceived differently depending on normative expectations.

For example, with regard to the dress code and acceptable behavior for attending funerals as family members, Cambodian and mainstream Americans differ in terms of normative expectations. While Cambodians traditionally dress all in white to mourn death and honor the deceased with beautiful flower wreaths and prayers, mainstream Americans usually dress in black clothes to respect those who have passed away. Violating these funeral norms in each culture may be regarded as deviant, and others may react to them negatively. Overall, we know little about the influence of culture on deception and deviance. That said, people look for ways to detect deception.

Research shows that people attend to nonverbal cues to detect deception (Henningesen, Valde, & Davies, 2005; Lock, 2004). When a mismatch occurs between verbal and nonverbal messages, people tend to place greater trust in nonverbal messages. Ekman (2003) proposed that within the kinesic channel, facial cues are least likely to leak truthful information because deceivers will attempt to mindfully control macro- and micro-facial expressions. Yet, people pay closer attention to face than to body and voice, which are two nonverbal channels that are most likely to leak information about deception (Burgoon, Guerrero, & Floyd, 2010). Some past studies indicate that the facial expression of contempt (i.e., the use of a tightening and slight raising of the corner of one's lips as often expressed by former vice president, Dick Cheney) can reflect a universal encoded and decoded facial emotion (Ekman & Heider, 1988).

Intelligence gatherers use polygraphs and body scanners among other tools to detect deception. Even nonverbal experts find it difficult to detect deception (Vrij, 2004, 2006). Overall, successfully detecting deception depends on multiple factors, including attending to reliable cues rather than stereotypical ones (Mann, Vrij, & Bull, 2004). More importantly, to be an astute nonverbal deception decoder, an individual needs to know his or her partner's baseline nonverbal styles confidently and then become a mindful "noticer or detective" to catch any micro-fleeting deviant expressions leaking

from the body or voice tone or micro-facial level. In the intercultural interaction realm, it is also vital to have deep knowledge about the cultural baseline norms of nonverbal expressiveness versus nonverbal suppressions in order to be considered a savvy nonverbal cultural detective. Intercultural and intergroup stereotyping has a homogenizing effect on understanding the complexity of the relationship among nonverbal gestures, situational enactments, and larger cultural norms—as this view minimizes or even ignores within-culture variations on multiple levels. Thus, a few words of caution are in order.

Nonverbal Cautions

We need to be mindful of exploring intercultural nonverbal differences. Intercultural scholars often focus more on “differences” than on “similarities,” and in the process we exaggerate differences among cultures and downplay their similarities. However, we caution here that while cultural differences exert a strong influence on nonverbal patterns across cultures, tremendous within-culture variations also exist in any given system. Unfortunately, within-culture variants are often glossed over in favor of between-culture interactional differences. Thus, the following three factors should be given serious consideration when interpreting any nonverbal behaviors across cultures (Burgoon et al., 1996, pp. 216–217):

1. *Overgeneralization.* Variations within entire cultures, subcultures, age groups, genders, regions, or personality types are enormous. Within-culture differences are often glossed over, thereby creating a cultural homogeneity effect.
2. *Mythical “average person.”* The “average person” of a culture is a hypothetical construct. It must be remembered that group norms represent an amalgamation of characteristics possessed by a majority of individuals. The phrase “a majority of individuals” is a projective statistic or a generalized image of what is going on in a culture based on selective empirical data.
3. *Viewing cultural norms as static.* Just as people constantly change over a lifetime, norms associated with various classes of people in different cultures also change. Thus, nonverbal identity markers and nonverbal behaviors are subject to change based on a variety of group membership and personal identity factors.

In attempting to understand within-culture and across-culture nonverbal variations, interpersonal sensitivity, respect, and patience in dealing with such differences serve as a good first step in gaining nonverbal entrance to a culture.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND MINDFUL GUIDELINES

Communication is not only about what we actually say (content meaning or report talk) to each other in various contexts, but also about *how* we say (relational meaning or rapport, paralinguistic to nonlinguistic expressions) something when we utter the message and with what hand gestures, body postures, shoulder shrug orientations, and proxemic distance, and how it is actually being interpreted. In fact, research on nonverbal communication indicates that the larger part of everyday communication is nonverbal or nonlinguistic. In this chapter, we started with a discussion of three perspectives on nonverbal communication—the bioevolutionary, sociocultural, and neurocultural—to understand both the universality and specificity of the nonverbal communication system. Then, we further discussed various nonverbal functions such as reflecting and managing identities, expressing emotions and attitudes, managing everyday conversations, and forming initial impression and attraction. Informed primarily by the sociocultural perspective, we extensively discussed nonverbal cues and display rules across cultures. We also discussed the spatial regulation of physical and psychological boundaries and the temporal regulation of monochronic and polychronic time rhythms across cultures. Finally, we discussed interpersonal verbal and nonverbal synchronization as well as deception and deviance. Importantly, we noted that when a discrepancy exists between words and nonverbal expressions, we largely decode the message based primarily on nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, paralinguistic tone of voice, and bodily postures and gestures because nonverbal cues tend to leak perceived credible message. We also cautioned that intercultural scholars often overemphasize cultural differences between and across cultures while minimizing within-culture variations for both verbal and nonverbal messages. In this regard, to communicate mindfully on the intercultural nonverbal message exchange level, individuals should learn to do the following:

- 1** Identify the appropriate nonverbal display rules in different cultures. They have to use a situational analysis approach in patiently observing the matching of social role identities, the status of performers, intimacy distance, social expectations, norms, scripts, topical exchange emphasis, conversational goals, props, proper language “tonal” usage, and appropriate nonverbal behaviors—all in particular situations.
- 2** Understand the cultural values and attributions that are attached to different nonverbal norms and rules. Surface understanding of nonverbal differences does not offer the depth of explanation for day-to-day nonverbal operation in a given culture.

- 3** Realize that the fundamental functions and interpretations of any nonverbal cues are tied closely to identity, emotional expression, conversational management, impression formation, and boundary/temporal regulation functions. Understanding what nonverbal behavior and cues serve primarily what functions in what situations will facilitate nonverbal interaction effectiveness.
- 4** Convey acknowledgment and culture-sensitive respect in regard to different nonverbal norms and behaviors in different ethnic and cultural communities. If individuals do not feel comfortable in nonverbally adapting, at a minimum they should mindfully monitor their ethnocentric interpretations and evaluations of “alien” nonverbal patterns (e.g., as arrogant or rude).
- 5** Deepen the complexities of their understanding of nonverbal behaviors within each culture along multiple dimensions, such as ethnicity, gender, age, region, social class, relational variations, language usage, and situations. Different configurations of different dimensions impact the functions and interpretations of nonverbal cues in different cultural contexts.
- 6** Use culture-sensitive perception checking statements. Perception checking skill, especially when they are unsure about the meaning of a nonverbal behavior, helps individuals make sure they are interpreting the speaker’s nonverbal behavior accurately. Perception checking involves the use of clear, perceptual eyewitness statements and perceptual verification questions. For example, statements such as “From your tired facial expression, I can see that you need a break right now. Do you?” and “You have a confused look and seems like you want me to slow down. Should I?” are clear perception checking statements. Perception checking is part of mindful observation and mindful listening skills.
- 7** Decoding nonverbal message requires attending to coordinated management of multiple nonverbal cues in a given context and also in conjunction with verbal expression. Even nonverbal experts find it challenging to decode deception cues due to looking at them stereotypically or in isolation from one another and social context. Allowing for multiple interpretations of nonverbal behavior and cues is a wise approach for proper decoding of intercultural messages.

Mindful verbal and nonverbal communication requires the application of flexible, adaptive interaction skills. Appropriate verbal and nonverbal adaptation creates positive interaction synchrony. Positive interaction synchrony, in the long-run, facilitates quality intercultural and intergroup relationship development.

CRITICAL THINKING AND CONNECTIVE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Can you analyze the pros and cons of the *bioevolutionary perspective* versus the *sociocultural perspective*? Can you provide some evidence from your everyday observations to support or refute each perspective?
2. Now that you have read the chapter, as you revisit the opening story, what do you think about the distinctive nonverbal symbols such as *Raakhi* and *tikka*? Have your reactions to the symbols remained the same, or have they changed. Why? Does understanding the meanings of such symbols facilitate your evaluation and reactions to them? In general, cultural and religious symbols tend to be unique and distinctive such as the Jewish faith's Menorah image, the Islamic faith's Star and Crescent image, the Buddhist Dharma Wheel symbol, and many others. How can we accept and accord due respect to all of these distinctive nonverbal symbols regardless of being a believer or a nonbeliever?
3. In your daily life, what kind of nonverbal gestures, facial expressions, and paralinguistic cues do you think create the most intercultural or intergroup (e.g., intergender or intergeneration) misunderstandings? How so? Can you think of some concrete ways to prevent and repair nonverbal misunderstandings? If asked, how would you design an effective intercultural–nonverbal training workshop to improve nonverbal communication competence?
4. What artifacts or nonverbal channels do you tend to emphasize in creating an important sociocultural membership identity or personal identity of your choice? Can you share some specific examples? Do others see you differently when you dramatize this particular identity through this specific nonverbal channel?
5. Are you a *monochronic time schedule (MTS)* person or a *polychronic time schedule (PTS)* person? Can you argue for both the pluses and minuses of being a *MTS* or a *PTS* person? Can you suggest any creative strategies to reconcile the different interpersonal time rhythms between you and another family member or a coworker?
6. Can you suggest any fresh directions for future research in the domain of nonverbal communication across cultures?



PART III

Boundary Regulation
and Intercultural–Intergroup
Relationship Development
Processes

CHAPTER 9

Understanding Intergroup Perceptual Filters, Biases, and Communicative Distance

- Introduction
- Social Identity Theory and Its Associated Constructs: A Boundary-Regulation Approach
 - *Intergroup Perception*
 - *Social Identity Theory*
 - *Social Categorization*
 - *Social Comparison*
 - *Ethnocentrism and Communication*
 - *Stereotypes and Communication*
- Intergroup Attribution: A Sense-Making Process
 - *Attribution Theory*
 - *Intergroup Attribution Theory*
- Mind-Sets and Communication: Affective and Cognitive Filters
 - *Perceived Intergroup Threat and Intergroup Biases*
 - *Prejudice and Communication*
 - *Power and Privilege: Discriminatory Practices and Microaggressions*
 - *Reduction of Prejudice and Discrimination*
- Chapter Summary and Mindful Guidelines
- Critical Thinking and Connective Application Questions

A SIMPLE MISUNDERSTANDING OR RACISM?: A CASE STORY

I had just finished lunch at the university restaurant with my work colleagues when I glanced over at the other table. The table was beautifully decorated with rose petals and fancy packages. The women who were going to be seated were immaculately dressed.

I could see the couture, Chanel and Gucci. I was curious and walked over to their table. "Excuse me, your table is so beautiful. I was wondering what the special occasion was?" One woman, Ms. W. smiled and replied, "We are celebrating friendship day. We do this every year. By the way, may I have a glass of ice tea, no cubes please?" I was totally stunned but told her "I am so sorry, I did not introduce myself. I am an Assistant Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences." The White woman apologized and ended with, "I thought you were the Maître D—I mean, the Head Maître D."

As an African American woman who has worked on this campus for over a decade, I am still disappointed and somewhat dismayed, that after all of these years, color matters. It is a daily reminder that I am different. For those who are ignorant (and/or racist), this is a teaching moment, and for me, these moments keep me grounded and motivate me to keep being a change agent—with my students and others whom I may encounter daily.

—PAULINE, *Assistant Dean*

(in Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2013, p. 158)

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Introduction

The scenario described in the opening case story is the classic recipe for perceived intergroup misunderstanding or intergroup bias. What is your opinion about this story? On a scale ranging from 1 (misunderstanding) to 10 (racial prejudice), rate the story and explain why. Can you relate to Ms. W's communication misstep or blooper? Can you resonate with Dean Pauline's disheartening encounter or disappointment? Communicating with strangers from other cultural and racial groups involves the interplay between ingroup and outgroup membership boundaries. It also involves attitudinal mind-set and heart-set inclusion/rejection issues. We hope that after you have mastered Chapter 9's key concepts, you can revisit the opening story with newly found intercultural and intergroup insights—interpreting the story from multiple identity and group membership boundary angles. Thus, do pay close attention to concepts such as ethnocentrism, mindless stereotypes, and power and privilege issues.

As social beings, we all yearn to belong to some groups and to be included and embraced. From an intergroup perspective, individuals are more likely to experience anxiety and uncertainty in their interactions with outgroup members (such as different cultures, generations, and sexual orientations) than with their ingroup members (Gudykunst, 2005a, 2005b). This is because when we are dealing with ingroup members we can use comfortable habitual scripts and predictable interaction styles to communicate. However, with outgroup members, these same scripts and styles may not operate appropriately and effectively. While experiencing intergroup contact anxiety, we also need to utilize more cognitive and emotional attentional resources to make interactions

work. According to anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) theory (Gudykunst, 2005a, 2005b), to manage anxiety (affective emotional-mood state) and uncertainty (cognitive state of mind) effectively in intergroup encounters, mindfulness can serve as a critical vantage point to guide our intercultural and intergroup communication outlook (see Chapter 5). Sociocultural group memberships influence our intergroup perceptions, attributions, intergroup distance and closeness, and interpersonal relationship developments.

Intergroup interaction is defined by the perceived group membership features outweighing the unique personalized features in an initial sociocultural encounter (Giles et al., 2010). Often, visible sociocultural group membership demographic cues (e.g., skin color, distinctive physical ethnic markers, age, sex, accents) are perceived more clearly than any individualized characteristics, thus putting in focus many initial encounters as intergroup versus interpersonal. Recently, for example, the United States and Cuba established political and economic bilateral relations (intergroup relations), and President Obama made a historic visit to Cuba. This new relationship is expected to lead to unprecedented commerce and interactions between these two countries. Interactions between Cubans and Americans may be intergroup in nature if they are influenced by their intersecting sociocultural group memberships (e.g., nationality, culture, and ethnicity); however, their interactions can be interpersonal if they are influenced by their personal identities. The dynamics of communication can shift drastically when communicators intentionally shift their evaluations of their intergroup encounter to an interpersonal one (e.g., through more in-depth personalized sharing), or vice versa (Giles et al., 2010). Intergroup communication scholars contend that even in interpersonal interactions at least 70% of these interactions are highly intergroup in nature (Giles, 2012). In the absence of expected knowledge and skills, intergroup strangers have limited norms and rules to guide their initial contact process. They often fall back to using stereotypes about each other to bolster their behavioral expectancy and their need for interaction predictability.

Although some of the stereotypes have kernels of truth, many of the group-based stereotypes are inaccurate and perpetuate further intergroup misunderstandings and prejudice. An intergroup encounter can be an exhilarating co-culture learning journey—if both cultural members are willing to open their eyes, ears, mind-sets, and hearts. It can also be an identity-threatening experience on both group-based and interpersonal-based contact levels. Intercultural and intergroup encounter is a testing ground for both communicators' needs for certainty or mystery, predictability or risk-taking, and being mindless or mindful about the perceptual filters they use in gauging each other as cultural stranger (B. Pearce, 2005; Pearce, 2012). This chapter explores the various reasons individuals form stereotypes about each other, make biased attributions, and engage in intergroup distance discriminatory behaviors.

More specifically, this chapter examines some of the factors that contribute to ingroup/outgroup mind-sets and shows how these mind-sets affect the perceptual lenses we use to evaluate an intergroup encounter. In particular, the IINT in conjunction with social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and intergroup attribution

theory are the guiding themes of this chapter. Integrated threat theory (ITT; Stephan & Stephan, 2001; Stephan, Ybarra, & Bachman, 1999) is also invoked to explicate how real or symbolic threat can influence intergroup biases and discrimination.

The chapter is organized in four main sections. First, the core ideas of intergroup perception and social identity theory, social categorization, and social comparison perspectives are presented. Related social identity constructs such as ethnocentrism and stereotypes are further explored. Second, drawing from social identity theory and the identity negotiation perspective, intergroup attribution theory is presented. Third, using critical theory concepts such as power and privilege (see Chapter 2) together with intergroup-integrated threat theory, concepts such as prejudice and discrimination, microaggressions, and productive/unproductive contact conditions are probed. Fourth, chapter summary highlights are presented, and doable mindful guidelines in breaking mindless stereotypes and reducing biased mindsets are offered.

Social Identity Theory and Its Associated Constructs: A Boundary-Regulation Approach

Initial intergroup encounters are typically fraught with anxiety, emotional insecurity, and awkwardness. Even if strangers are interacting using a common language, many complex perceptual factors are at work that influence the intergroup impression formation process. This section discusses social identity theory and its associated constructs, social categorization, and social comparison. Before we examine this theory, let us review IINT briefly. (IINT is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.)

According to the IINT perspective, our sociocultural identity (e.g., cultural or ethnic identity) *consciousness* becomes more salient under the following conditions: (1) when we encounter a perceived interaction threat (e.g., due to unfamiliarity or preconceived bias) and experience emotional vulnerability on the group membership level (e.g., hearing an out-of-the blue prejudiced remark); (2) when we encounter an identity valuation that leads to group membership pride (e.g., “Your country must be very proud of you for winning this Olympic gold medal!”); (3) when our membership identity is negatively stigmatized (e.g., “The X people are all so tardy and irresponsible!”); or (4) when our membership identity is stigmatized on a positive stereotypical level (e.g., “The Y people have such great musical rhythm!”).

When one of these conditions is heightened, we often experience sociocultural membership identity distinctiveness (e.g., race in the opening story, age, sexual orientation, and disability). This is also related to the concept of how other people “marked or stereotyped” one particular salient aspect of an individual’s compound identities (e.g., The White woman said to the Assistant Dean, “I thought you were the Maître D—I mean, the Head Maître D.”).

The paradox of social identity affirmation rests on multiple levels: self-perception of one’s own sociocultural identity, sociorelational role identity, and personal identity; and others’ perceptions of our social and personal identity. Sometimes there is mutual perceptual coordination, but usually, mismatched perceptions and inaccuracy exist

in intergroup encounters owing to unfamiliarity, ignorance, or fear. Thus, communicating with strangers from another identity group involves the interplay processes of perceived group-based differentiation and inclusion. Group-based differentiation and inclusion serve as the two “powerful social motives” for understanding the intergroup boundary-regulation function (Billig, 1987).

More specifically, perceived outgroup-based differentiation or contrast can be achieved by separating the self and the dissimilar other on salient group-membership dimensions (e.g., skin color, language, religion, disability). Ingroup-based loyalty and inclusion can be attained by identifying the self with salient ingroup membership characteristics (e.g., by race or ethnicity, by sex or age, or by sexual identity). Through intergroup comparative processes, individuals draw ingroup/outgroup membership boundary distinctions and acquire ingroup affiliation badges for a sense of group solidarity and ingroup pride. Thus, social identity theory provides insights into these ingroup/outgroup membership boundary regulation issues. Social identity and its boundary regulation function fulfill the basic human needs for group-based security, inclusion, connection, and distinctiveness (Becker et al., 2012; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2015). The concept of intergroup perception undergirds the various social identity theorizing variations and intergroup communication. Intergroup perception marks ingroup and outgroup boundary regulation issues, and evokes intergroup social comparisons and assessments.

Intergroup Perception

Human perception is the process of selecting cues from the social environment, organizing them into a coherent pattern, and interpreting that pattern. This process is profoundly influenced by our cultural socialization and group membership (Dovidio, Hewstone, Glick, & Esses, 2010; Smith et al., 2006). Our sense of group membership offers us a sense of group security, inclusion, and interactional predictability and continuity.

Intergroup perception functions in accordance with the following principles:

1. Perception is a largely subjective phenomenon: we generally construct the reality of what we want to perceive, and this is basically a biased process.
2. Perception is categorical: we use social or linguistic categories to guide our expectations in actual intergroup interactions.
3. Perception is selective: we select information that fits our expectancy categories and ignore other incoming stimuli in our information-loaded environment.
4. Perceptual patterns tend to be consistent: once we see something a certain way, we tend to continue to see the same pattern despite contradictory evidence.
5. Perception is largely a learned process: to a great extent, it is learned through our cultural socialization.
6. Intergroup perception accentuates differences between identity groups especially making the boundary distinction: one of “us” versus one of “them.”

Indeed, everyday intergroup and interpersonal communication is filtered through intergroup perception, and of particular interest is the relationship between ingroup and outgroup categorization process. This ingroup–outgroup boundary maintenance process then triggers the host of other boundary regulation issues such as the formation of social comparative categories to the formation of ethnocentric attitudes and we–they intergroup stereotypes. Ingroup favoritism and outgroup bias make up the cornerstone construct in social identity theory.

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory posits that the social world can be categorized as an “us” versus “them” mode. People who belong to “us” are perceived as “ingroup” members, and others who belong to “them” are seen as “outgroup” members. Based on these intergroup categories, people treat ingroup and outgroup members differently, as evidenced by *ingroup favoritism* and *outgroup discrimination* (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Brown & Zagefka, 2011). In dire, intractable, intergroup conflict situations, these phenomena are manifested in extreme forms of ingroup favoritism and outgroup discrimination. For example, as witnessed in Nazi Germany, the Hitler regime exalted “Aryan” Germans (i.e., the so-called master race: ingroup members characterized by their blond, blue-eyed, and tall characteristics), considering them the superior human race. At the other extreme, based on a highly rigid intergroup categorization fueled by power superiority, Hitler ordered atrocities and annihilation for the outgroup members of society: Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, and handicapped individuals. Approximately 6 million European Jews out of the 9 million living in Europe were systematically murdered during the Holocaust, during the period 1933–1945. However, not all intergroup categories lead to such extreme forms of ingroup favoritism and outgroup discrimination.

In our everyday social lives, we often observe mild and subtle forms of ingroup favoritism and outgroup discrimination in many intergroup situations for the purpose of enhancing the social and personal self-image and self-esteem of ingroup members. For example, in the U.S. academic setting, professors may favor students who actively participate in class discussion and activities over those who remain silent, whereas in the academic settings of Vietnam and China, professors may favor students who silently listen to them over those who ask questions and share comments. According to social identity theory, people can improve their self-image in two ways: by enhancing their ingroup identity or by bolstering their personal identity (Sani, 2008; Tajfel, 1981; Vignoles, 2011). These identity types are interdependent: enhancing one identity type can increase the attraction of the other (such as social self-esteem and personal self-esteem, and vice versa). Ingroup identity refers to the emotional attachments and shared fate (i.e., perceived common treatment as a function of category membership) that we attach to our selective cultural, ethnic, or social group categories. Outgroups are groups from which we remain emotionally detached and that we distrust both emotionally and cognitively. However, outgroups serve as the basis for social comparison in terms of solidifying our own “civilized” ingroup values, norms, behaviors, and achievements (Brewer & Miller, 1996; Brewer & Yuki, 2007).

From the standpoint of social identity negotiation, it can be argued that members of particular social groups often prefer to regard their ingroup attributes in a positive rather than negative light, especially in comparison to other groups (e.g., Israelis vs. Palestinians; or Catholics vs. Protestants in Ireland). The more they view their salient ingroup values and norms as desirable and rewarding, the more they tend to see their own membership identity as desirable and rewarding. Moreover, individuals often tend to assume that fellow ingroup members are more similar to them than outgroup members. Ingroups can be of many different types, however, ranging from small, face-to-face groupings of family and friends to large social categories such as gender, religion, language, race, and nationality. According to Brewer and Miller (1996), “attachment to ingroups and preference of ingroups over outgroups may be a universal characteristic of human life” (Brewer & Miller, 1996, p. 23).

The *ingroup favoritism principle* states that there is positive attachment to and predisposition for norms and behaviors that are related to ingroup categories more than to outgroup categories. Ingroup favoritism ultimately enhances our desired ingroup valued status and identity distinctiveness. Concurrently, it also enriches our sense of personal self-esteem with pride. Personal identity refers to the individual attributes by which we conceptualize our sense of “unique self” (e.g., individual motivation, intelligence, attractiveness, credibility, competence) in comparison to other individuals. Overall, the experiments conducted in connection with the Minimal Group Paradigm project (in which subjects are arbitrarily divided into two groups in a research methodological tool to investigate minimal conditions needed for ingroup favoritism and outgroup discrimination to occur) and other related studies show that participants consistently favor ingroup members in rewarding points (or money) and attempt to maximize ingroup–outgroup contrast (Hogg, 2013; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Hogg & Vaughan, 2005).

Ingroup favoritism and outgroup discrimination are also expressed when a threat to intergroup distinctiveness is perceived. According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), group members seek social identity distinctiveness for purposes of intergroup differentiation and positive outcome. In a meta-analysis study, group members were reported to favor ingroups and to discriminate against outgroups under the condition of perceived high threat to perceived intergroup distinctiveness (Jetten, Spears, & Postmes, 2004). Another study (Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 2001) found that individuals with high-ingroup identifier orientations demonstrated more ingroup favoritism and outgroup discrimination than individuals with low-ingroup identifier orientations—especially under the perceived low-intergroup distinctiveness condition. Basically, research findings such as these reveal that individuals seek to reinforce ingroup boundaries by tightening their positive approval of their own ingroup norms and practices. Concurrently, they also create protective mental fortresses and reinforce their attitudinal biases in viewing outgroup presence as a nuisance, encroaching on their ingroup’s secure boundaries.

The ingroup favoritism principle can also enhance our understanding of why people behave ethnocentrically in different cultures (see the “Ethnocentrism and Communication” section later in this chapter). When we behave ethnocentrically, we are

basically protecting our group membership boundaries and, more fundamentally, our habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and responding. Countless research studies across cultures (see, e.g., Devine, Hamilton, & Ostrom, 1994; Leyens, Yzerbyt, & Schadron, 1994) indicate that people in all cultures tend to exhibit ingroup favoritism and outgroup prejudice. The core construct, intergroup boundary regulation, together with two other constructs, social categorization and social comparison, is the basic foundation for social identity theory.

Social Categorization

We are social beings, and social categorization is a fundamental quality of our cognition and need for boundary predictability. It offers us a way to manage our chaotic environment in a predictable and efficient fashion. It is also a function of human language—as a categorical organizing system reflecting our highly abstract thoughts. Human perception involves attention, organization, and interpretation, a three-step process that is affected by sociocultural socialization that may yield biased intergroup communication. The consequences of this process involving social categorization lead to certain expectations as to how others should behave. These expectancy states are closely related to our stereotypes of dissimilar others. We stereotype people based on their broad social group membership categories without regard to innumerable within-group variations.

Stereotypes are the exaggerated pictures we create about a group of people on the basis of our inflexible beliefs and expectations about what characteristics or behaviors the group should embody (Lippmann, 1936; Stephan & Stephan, 1996). Simply put, a stereotype is an overgeneralization of a group of people without any attempt to perceive individual variations. Another term that encapsulates the concept of stereotype is “essentialism” (Prentice & Miller, 2007). *Essentialism* refers to the belief that all members of a sociocultural membership group share the same psychological characteristics. It can refer to a subconsciously held belief about an entire membership group. Stereotypes can be formed through direct means (e.g., one or two negative, rude incidents with outgroup members) or hearsay (e.g., friends’ horrible travel experiences or comments on social media). Stereotypes can be positive or negative and sometimes even neutral. For example, elders are stereotyped as wise, grumpy, or stubborn; or Germans are stereotyped as disciplined, detached, and cold. Such stereotypes may derive from isolated incidents of interaction with a handful of individuals from certain sociocultural identity groups; from selective media exposure or indirect sources such as hearsay; and from family and community socialization and system biases. Overall, research shows that stereotypes about other group members are often filled with negative images and that these negative images and attitudes often influence problematic intergroup communication in contexts such as intergenerational and ability differential.

Our social categorization process also frames the expectations and meanings we attach to people’s behaviors and actions. For example, when we learn that someone is a lesbian, guided by this linguistic category of “lesbian,” we begin viewing this individual’s every word and action as stemming from her sexual orientation. The single story

of being a “lesbian” soon overshadows all her other multifaceted identities and stories. Basically, her unique personal identity (e.g., fun-loving, curious, compassionate) and social identity complexity (e.g., ethnicity, age, family role, professional role) are often now disregarded or minimized in interpersonal and social interactions (Nadal, 2013; Roccas & Brewer, 2002).

Such linguistic categories also start to create polarized boundaries between me and you, us and them, females and males, Blacks and Whites, God and Devil, and so on. Engaging in polarized thinking of good or bad, beautiful or ugly, and right or wrong can reduce any anxiety we feel when we find ourselves in the gray areas between two polarities. To borrow Burke’s (1969) terms, we use God terms (positive terms) to describe “us” and Devil terms (negative terms) to describe “them.” Functionally, polarized thinking reduces interpretive and interaction complexities. It also bolsters stability and predictability, especially if we are functioning in an unfamiliar environment. Unfortunately, this kind of thinking leads to a unidirectional view of the “correct” or “incorrect” way of behaving. In the U.S. mainstream culture, men are expected to be assertive and women are expected to be nurturing, and violations of these gendered norms lead to negative social evaluations. For example, in the 2016 presidential election, Hillary Clinton was described as “bitchy” or a “nasty woman” for being assertive in election speeches.

Social categorization influences our tendency to accentuate the differences between membership categories and minimize variations within each category. Generally, preconceived social categories help to frame our expectations and make our social world more predictable and meaningful in accordance with our own cultural and personal frames of reference. They also simultaneously delimit our thinking and perceptual capabilities. By being mindful of our own categorical and hence expectancy formation system, we can start debunking some of the myths or discarding the negative images we form about outgroup members. Based on social categorization, we also find ourselves engaged in intergroup comparison for social identity reasons.

Social Comparison

In addition to the social categorization process, social identity theory posits that individuals strive to achieve a positive social identity in social comparison to other groups (Turner, 1987). In general, we feel emotionally close to our ingroup and attach importance to group membership because it provides identity security and trust and socio-emotional support. However, we do not feel the same way about outgroups wherein we may experience identity vulnerability, anxiety, uncertainty, and distrust (e.g., Brewer & Miller, 1996; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Phoenix, 2010). In many social interactions, we often compare the standing of our ingroup with that of other groups in order to bolster our positive social identities. Social comparison is functional to a certain degree (e.g., to motivate our ingroup to move ahead or to engage in social activism to bolster our own ingroup standing), and the criteria for social comparison are situational specific—that is, dependent on the interaction task, topic of conversation, and context that triggers

the identity consciousness level. Interestingly, Wills (1991) proposes that three types of social group membership comparison are possible: lateral comparison, downward comparison, and upward comparison.

Lateral comparison refers to comparing one's identity group with other social or cultural groups that "should be" at essentially the same level. *Downward comparison* refers to comparing one's identity group with groups perceived as less powerful. *Upward comparison* refers to comparing one's identity group with groups perceived as more powerful than one's own. Research indicates that individuals most often engage in either lateral or downward comparison rather than upward comparison because it bolsters individuals' membership and personal self-esteem level (Wills, 1991). The more one feels good about one's identity group, the more one experiences positive sentiments concerning one's social and personal selves. However, group members can also experience negative social identities.

What happens if group members experience negative social or cultural identities because of negative comparisons? Several options exist. Individuals can, for example, maintain a distancing posture from their ingroup and not mingle with its members. They can deemphasize the importance of their social identities and maximize the importance of their personal identities (e.g., "The important thing about me is not that I'm a member of group X but that I'm an honest and hardworking person"). Individuals can also enhance their personal identities by allying themselves with members of high-status groups (e.g., "Although I wasn't chosen for membership in any of the country clubs, I now have several close friends who are members of the most prestigious country clubs—so I guess I have a likeable personality after all"). Conversely, they can downgrade the comparative group through biased intergroup attributions (e.g., "Who would ever want to join these substandard country clubs—with all these boring people talking about useless topics"). They can also engage in an active social change process (e.g., push for new laws) to change the criteria for membership admission, or, alternatively, they can create innovative options (e.g., start their own ethnic country clubs) (van Knippenberg, 1989; see also Orbe, 1998).

According to intergroup communication scholars (Giles, 2012; Giles et al., 2010), individuals can bolster their social identity through social mobility, which is contingent on the perceived permeability of intergroup boundaries. For example, when perceived group boundaries are permeable, immigrants or stigmatized identity individuals with negative social identities can switch group memberships (e.g., a Dutch-Indonesian adolescent can pass as a White Dutch if his or her skin color is light enough). This *social mobility* strategy only upgrades the social status of individual immigrants or particular individuals, and not their group system status. In contrast, based on the perceived impermeability of intergroup boundaries, immigrant group members can employ other forms of social comparison, namely, *social creativity* and *social competition*. For example, immigrants can compare themselves to relevant other immigrant group(s) for favorable comparison, or they can creatively redefine certain negative aspects of their social identity positively (e.g., redefining illegal immigrants as hardworking group) or focus on positive aspect of their social identity (e.g., peaceful and nonviolent faith).

Alternatively, immigrant groups can socially compete with dominant group for social justice and equity by means of rally, mass movement, protest, revolution, and lobbying. One's social identity and personal identity are positively correlated, and they influence each other in positive to negative valence directions.

Thus, social identity theory emphasizes the importance of the reciprocal reinforcement of social identity and personal identity. A positive membership self-worth evokes a desirable personal identity and, in turn, induces positive membership self-worth. According to the IINT's dialectical notion (see Chapter 2), while an optimal level of ingroup identification satisfies individuals' security, inclusion, and predictability needs, an extreme level of ingroup membership identification and ingroup favoritism evokes rigid ethnocentrism, mindless reactive stereotypes, and intergroup prejudice and polarized interactional distance.

Ethnocentrism and Communication

Ethnocentrism, as suggested earlier, means that we hold views and standards that are "own group/centric" and that we make judgments about other groups based on our own group's values and beliefs. In the context of Greek culture in the Golden Age, for example, those who spoke the Greek language were viewed as "cultured" and "eloquent" people, and those who did not were labeled *barbarikos*, or "barbarians" (i.e., those "aliens" whose language was incomprehensible and sounded like a repeated babbling "barbar" noise). When rigidly held views assume ingroup favoritism, the sentiments of ingroup superiority and outgroup inferiority are reinforced.

Another example of this ethnocentric tendency can be found in the Chinese characters for "China" (or "Middle Kingdom"). The characters or pictographs for "China," first written more than 4,000 years ago during the Hsia dynasty, meant "the center of the universe." This example is also reminiscent of Manifest Destiny, the nineteenth-century concept that the United States was justified in expanding throughout the continent.

Ethnocentrism is our defensive attitudinal tendency to view the values and norms of our culture as superior to those of other cultures, and we perceive our cultural ways of living as the most reasonable and proper ways to conduct our lives. Consequently, there is the expectation that all other groups should follow our civilized ways of thinking and behaving. Ethnocentrism is bolstered through our own cultural socialization process. It can consist of both implicit and explicit attitudes toward outgroup members' customs or behavior (Kessler et al., 2010; Stephan & Stephan, 2001). Sumner (1940) summarizes ethnocentrism as the "view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are rated and scaled with reference to it" (pp. 27–28). Triandis (1990) explains that all human beings display the ethnocentric tendencies to (1) define what occurs in their cultures as "natural" and "correct" and what occurs in other cultures as "unnatural" and "incorrect"; (2) perceive ingroup values, customs, norms, and roles as universally valid—that is, what is good for us is good for everybody; (3) act in ways that favor the ingroup and exalt it; and (4) experience relational distance

from the outgroup, especially when one's membership identity is threatened or under attack.

While all human beings are ethnocentric to a certain degree, because of their needs for identity security, ingroup inclusion, and predictability, a rigidly held ethnocentric mind-set creates a superior–inferior gap in intergroup relations. An individual can possess ethnocentrism ranging all the way from the basic need for valued social identity to an identity-defensive need for power or dominance. People can also be ethnocentric about different aspects of their group membership (e.g., language, food, location, architecture). Under conditions of a perceived outgroup threat of competition for scarce resources, members of various identity groups can oscillate between high ethnocentrism and low ethnocentrism, depending on changing circumstances.

Lukens (1978) uses the communicative distances of indifference, avoidance, and disparagement to discuss the differential degree of ethnocentrism. The *distance of indifference* (i.e., low ethnocentrism) reflects the lack of sensitivity in our verbal and nonverbal interactions in dealing with dissimilar others. From the use of insensitive questioning approaches to the use of “foreigner talk” (i.e., exaggeratedly slow speech or a dramatically loud tone of voice, as if all foreigners are deaf), the speech pattern serves as a reminder that these strangers are somehow “exotic” and “quaintly different.” The *distance of avoidance* (i.e., moderate ethnocentrism) reflects attempted linguistic or dialect switching in the presence of outgroup members, and with displayed nonverbal inattention (e.g., members of the dominant group maintain eye contact only with members of their group) to accentuate ingroup connection and avoid outgroup members. Finally, the *distance of disparagement* (i.e., high ethnocentrism) refers to the use of verbal sarcasm, racist jokes, hate-filled speech, and physical violence to marginalize or obliterate the existence of outgroup members (Zanna & Olson, 1994).

In counterbalancing the concept of ethnocentrism, we can also review the concept of *ethnorelativism* (Bennett, 1993; Bennett, 2014). Ethnorelativism emphasizes the use of outgroup members' cultural frame of reference in interpreting their behaviors. Like ethnocentrism, ethnorelativism has various gradations. Bennett and Bennett (2004) offered the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS), highlighting three states of ethnocentrism and three states of ethnorelativism (see Figure 9.1).

The three states of ethnocentrism are denial, defense, and minimization of cultural difference, which cognitively represent cultural difference as problematic. *Denial* is an ethnocentric state of mind that recognizes one's own cultural distinctiveness and superiority while intentionally or semi-intentionally denying even the existence of the others' cultural beliefs, values, and assumptions and their existence on an equal level. *Defense* is an ethnocentric state of mind that sees one's own culture as superior over that of others and feels defensive and protective about the beliefs, values, and norms of one's own culture. Interestingly, defense ethnocentrism can manifest in reverse form—that is, seeing one's adopted culture as superior to one's native culture. And *minimization* is an ethnocentric state of mind that undermines cultural differences while seeing one's cultural standards as “universals.” In light of these ethnocentric mental states and worldviews, for example, with regard to high- and low-context communication style

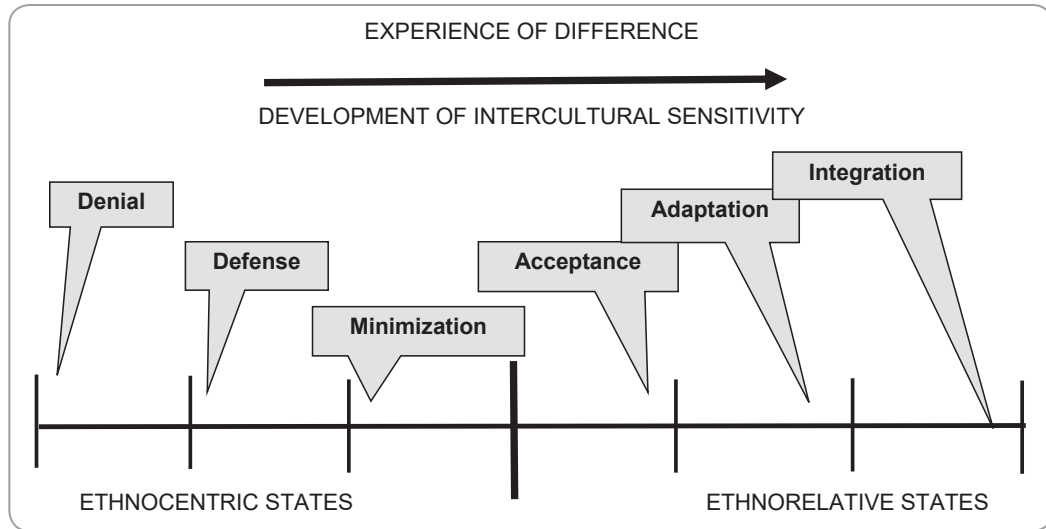


FIGURE 9.1. A developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. Data from Bennett and Bennett (2004).

differences, individuals may deny that these differences exist or defend their communication style as superior to that of others or minimize the differences by requiring others to follow their style as a universal standard. We can counteract these ethnocentric minds by cultivating three ethnorelative states of mind: acceptance, adaptation, and integration (Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Paige, 2015).

Acceptance is an ethnorelative mind-set that acknowledges and respects cultural diversity in a society. It sees one's own cultural community as part of a larger cultural diversity landscape that encompasses people from all cultural backgrounds, and individuals remain cognitively curious and open to learn about cultural differences. With regard to developing further cultural sensitivity to cultural strangers, *adaptation* is an ethnorelative mind-set that adopts the other's perspective in interpreting a problematic cultural event or behavior. Cultural frame-shifting or cultural perspective-taking characterizes adaptive mental agility and mind-set suppleness; while behavioral code switching in accordance with the person, relationship, goals, and context reflects astute verbal and nonverbal adaptation. *Integration* is an ethnorelative mind-set that embraces diverse cultural worldviews in approaching identity membership differences. Individuals in an integrative state of consciousness employ a synergistic perspective in viewing cultural differences, and they are able to integrate wise cultural practices from different identity membership groups and display their cultural sensitivity and resonance.

Integrators often can put together a "third-culture" perspective (i.e., a hybrid cultural outlook) in analyzing and reconciling diverse viewpoints in solving a problematic intercultural encounter. Individuals with an ethnorelative acceptance mind-set,

for example, can understand the logic and appreciate distinctive high-context and low-context communication styles. Individuals with an ethnorelative adaptive mind-set can code-switch mentally and behaviorally between high- and low-communication systems. Individuals with an ethnorelative integrative worldview can have an inclusive worldview of both high-context and low-context, or collectivistic–individualistic value orientations; they can create a hybrid outlook and serve as dynamic cultural bridge spanners, cultural mediators, and global leaders (Bennett, 2009; Paige & Bennett, 2015; Pusch, 2009).

Ethnorelative individuals can effectively negotiate intercultural and intergroup interactions, demonstrating understanding, respect, empathy, support, and synergistic perspective. Through their newly acquired knowledge and skillsets, they also practice *isomorphic attribution*, which means trying to cognitively interpret the behaviors of members of the other group from that group's cultural frame of reference (Triandis, 1994a, 1994b). They refrain from rushing into negative evaluative judgments based on their own ethnocentric frames of reference. Beyond respecting others, they empathize with the cultural experiences of culturally different others. While *understanding* means accurate cognitive comprehension, *empathy* is a state of affective transformation in which we transpose ourselves to the other's cultural context. In other words, through empathy we are willing to spend the time, emotions, and commitment to imaginatively place ourselves in the dissimilar other's cultural world and to strive to experience what she or he is experiencing (see Bennett, 1993; Stewart & Bennett, 1991). When we engage in tight ethnocentric states, our ethnocentric tendencies reinforce our inflexible or mindless stereotypes of unfamiliar strangers or outgroup members. We are not willing to spend the time or energy to truly understand cultural strangers as individuals and people or to empathize with their plight, but instead relate to them through stereotyped perceptions.

Stereotypes and Communication

The origin of the word “stereotype” is derived from a French adjective, *stéréotype*, which draws its root source from the combined Greek word, *stereo* (meaning “solid”) and French word, *type* (meaning “type”). Taken together, the concept refers to “a solid plate of type” for repeated stenciling or printing usage or as an “image without change.” Thus, stereotypes are oversimplified and exaggerated “pictures in our head” (Lippmann, 1936; Stephan & Stephan, 1992, 1996) about a class or group of individuals based on the principle of group homogeneity. A stereotype is an *overgeneralization* about a group of people without any attempt to perceive individual variations within the broad social category (Fiske & Russell, 2010). Stereotyping can refer to subconsciously held beliefs about a membership group. The content of stereotypes can convey both positive and negative information (e.g., “Filipinos are respectful and hardworking” or “Filipinos are illegal and uneducated”).

There are different kinds of stereotype. *Autostereotype* refers to what insiders think of themselves as a group (e.g., what Californians think of Californians); *heterostereotype* refers to what one group thinks of another group (e.g., what Californians think

of New Yorkers and vice versa). When stereotypes have a high degree of external validity (e.g., 90% agreement with empirical evidence from research), they become known as *sociotypes* (Triandis, 1994a).

The process of heterostereotyping occurs as follows: (1) individuals are categorized, usually on the basis of easily identifiable characteristics such as age, gender, or ethnicity; (2) features or attributes are ascribed to all or most members of that category—that is, individuals belonging to the stereotyped group are assumed to be similar to each other; and (3) preconceived attributes are applied to individual members belonging to that category (Cox, 1994; Hewstone & Brown, 1986). From the social categorization principle to the illusory correlation principle, members of outgroups are often “stigmatized” as behaving and thinking in the same undesirable way. Heterostereotyping may include normative and personal stereotypes.

Normative stereotypes result when we make guesses based on the generalized knowledge we have acquired about another group from mass media or books. Normative stereotypes can have accurate or inaccurate aspects. If social science research has established that “90% of some group have a trait, if we think that a member of that group has that trait . . . we would do better using the sociotype than saying—I know nothing about this person” (Triandis, 1994a, p. 138). For example, Asian Americans are stereotypically perceived as “foreigners” in the United States based on demographic characteristics such as race, ethnicity, or accent. In interpersonal interactions, Asian Americans are regularly asked, “Where are you from?” or they are incorrectly complimented as “You speak excellent English” or “You speak English better than I do.” *Personal stereotypes* are formed as the result of our personal experiences and limited contacts with the other group. However, personal stereotypes can also be faulty because our contact experiences might well be based on a skewed sample such as one or two bad Asian drivers or math wizards.

Furthermore, group members can engage in an autostereotyping process by taking on others’ stereotyped images that are imposed on them or stereotyped images in the media. This is also reflective of the *principle of self-fulfilling prophecy*. For example, media images stereotypically depict African American males as Buck (athletic and sexually powerful) (Orbe & Harris, 2008), and Latinas/os as sensual and “fiery” (Barnes, 2012; Merskin, 2007) or criminals (Pieraccini & Alligood, 2005). These images can feed back into the self-perception schemas of these group members. Such negative self-stereotyping can create a negative self-image, which in turn can induce negative self-expectations in the individual. Self-fulfilling prophecies occur when we think something is true about ourselves and then we behave accordingly. Self-fulfilling prophecy can go in a positive or negative direction in its outcomes.

In fact, a classic study by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) illustrates the powerful effect of other-perception on self-perception. Students were randomly assigned to either the intellectual “bloomer” group or the regular student group. The teachers were told that the test scores of one group were significantly higher than those of the other group. After a year, the experimenters found that the “bloomer” group showed more dramatic gains in IQ than did the “regular” group.

The teacher's preconception of this "bloomer" group and the students' positive self-perception were explained as the key factors that led to the dramatic increase in IQ gains. Thus, the power of positive versus negative stereotypes holds tremendous promise in influencing group and individuals' desired identities. To the extent that we use rigidly held negative stereotypes in interacting with outgroup members, our relationships can only end up in unproductive interaction spirals. To the extent that we use neutral-to-positive stereotypes in interacting with outgroup members, intergroup relationships can be improved substantially.

Inevitably, people indulge in autostereotyping, heterostereotyping, and sociotyping. The key to dealing with the issue is to learn to distinguish between inflexible or mindless stereotyping and flexible or mindful stereotyping (see Table 9.1).

The characteristics of *inflexible or mindless stereotyping* are as follows:

1. Holding our preconceived, negative stereotypes rigidly and operating on automatic pilot in exercising such negative stereotypes.
2. Presuming that the outgroup stereotypes are valid and ignoring all new incoming information and evidence.
3. Using emotionally laden evaluative categories to guide our "typecasting" process.
4. Employing a polarized, cognitive mode to engage in ingroup favoritism and outgroup bias.
5. Engaging in mental distortions to "force" members' behaviors into preconceived categories.
6. Presuming that one member's behavior is reflective of all members' behaviors and norms.
7. Maximizing intergroup distance with exaggerated, contrastive categories with no productive outcome.

TABLE 9.1. Inflexible/Mindless versus Flexible/Mindful Stereotyping

Inflexible/mindless stereotyping	Flexible/mindful stereotyping
Automatic-pilot reaction	Mindful of categorization
Rigid categories	Open-ended categories
Premature closure	First best-guesses
Polarized evaluations	Alternative interpretations
Information distortion	Information openness
Unwillingness to change categories	Willingness to change categories

In comparison, the characteristics of *flexible or mindful stereotyping* are as follows:

1. Holding the stereotypes consciously or mindfully—that is, being metacognitively aware that we are stereotyping members of an entire group.
2. Assuming that the stereotypes we use are merely first-best guesses rather than definitive answers (Adler, 1997).
3. Using loose, interpretive categories rather than preconceived negative evaluative categories.
4. Employing qualifying, contextual statements to frame our perceptions and interpretations.
5. Being open to new information and evidence and redefining the preconceived social categories accordingly.
6. Getting to know, in depth, the group membership and personal identities of the individuals within the group and sampling a variety of sources within the group.
7. Recognizing valid and meaningful differences and similarities between the self and others and between one's own group and the other group.

While flexible or mindful stereotyping evokes an open-minded attitude in dealing with others, inflexible or mindless stereotyping reflects a closed-ended mind-set holding tightly onto beliefs concerning a group of individuals. Mindful stereotyping, in contrast, refers to our consciously held beliefs about a group of individuals, with a willingness to change our loosely held images based on diversified, firsthand contact experiences. It relies heavily on a receptive communication process in observing, listening, and attending to the new cues and signals sent by strangers from other groups. The need to sustain a valued social or personal identity, to ward off identity threat, and to protect our ingroup boundaries from perceived intergroup threats, as well as the subjective nature of human perception, lead to the development of biased intergroup attribution process (see also Zhang, 2017).

Intergroup Attribution: A Sense-Making Process

From the social categorization process to social comparison differentiations, intergroup attribution is a natural by-product of these interactive processes. The intergroup attribution process helps us to make sense of our intergroup encounters. It also helps us to interpret and evaluate our ingroup membership status and outgroup membership role in social interactions. Together with the social identity theorizing process, the attribution process shapes the formation of our intergroup stereotypes and our prejudiced attitudes.

Attribution Theory

Attribution theory has been around ever since publication of Fritz Heider's seminal work in the mid-1940s (Heider, 1944, 1958). We shall first discuss the basic ideas of attribution theory and then examine the specifics of attribution errors and intergroup attribution biases.

The fundamental premise of attribution theory is that every human being is a naive psychologist with implicit assumptions, beliefs, and social categorizations of what human nature or human behavior is all about. Thus, we often use our implicit assumptions and built-in social categories to predict and explain behaviors or events occurring around us. Generally, we interpret and explain human behavior by attributing causation either to the perceived disposition of the person under scrutiny (i.e., personality traits) or to environmental influences (i.e., situational factors) (Heider, 1958).

Attribution Biases

Kelley (1967) identified three inherent biases in the human attribution process. First, perceivers have a tendency to overestimate the influence of negative dispositional factors in explaining a stranger's negative performance and to underestimate situational factors. This is known as the *fundamental attribution error*. For example, if a stranger walks into a class late, we (as perceivers) might well attribute his or her behavior to "laziness and tardiness." However, if we walk into a class late, we readily explain our negative behavior by citing situational factors such as car trouble, no parking space, or a sick friend needing our help at the last minute. Then, when we engage in negative behavior, we protect our own social or personal identities by invoking justifiable situational causes, but we tend to explain a stranger's undesirable behavior by negative dispositional judgments. Furthermore, it is cognitively more efficient to engage in snapshot dispositional judgments rather than time-consuming, situational reasoning.

The Principle of Negativity

The second attribution bias stems from the fact that perceivers typically use the principle of negativity to explain a stranger's negative action. The *principle of negativity* refers to the tendency of individuals to consider negative information to be more salient than positive information (Kanouse & Hanson, 1972). Given the heightened anxiety and uncertainty toward outgroup-based interactions (Gudykunst, 1998, 2005b), we often fall back on negative stereotypes when interacting with outgroup members. Negative stereotypes are those that most likely justify our perception of an identity threat in interacting with dissimilar strangers. Our perceived identity threat or fear also causes us to experience vulnerable defensive emotions (Pettigrew, 1979). With preconceived negative stereotypes, we also look for negative outgroup behaviors to confirm our negative expectations. Because of our ignorance or overgeneralization, we also tend to typecast the entire outgroup as behaving in a similar negative manner.

Attributions about Positive or Negative Events

The third attribution bias arises from the use of different types of attribution in *accounting for positive or negative events*. This concerns attributions for our own behavior versus a stranger's behavior. For example, if we get a promotion (a positive event) in our organization, we usually attribute it to our positive dispositional traits such as intelligence and hard work. However, if a stranger gets a promotion, we more likely attribute it to luck or some situational factor. Similarly, if we get fired from our job (a negative event), we might well attribute our misfortune to the bad economy or a budget cut in the organization. However, if a stranger gets fired, we tend to use negative dispositional attributions such as "inertia and incompetence" as the reason for the firing. All of these attributions reflect self-serving biases.

Interestingly, these self-serving biases are generally more applicable in individualistic than collectivistic cultures. For example, in comparing how U.S. and Japanese students attribute success in recalling details of slides of scenes in unfamiliar countries, researchers uncovered some interesting differences. The U.S. students tended to explain their successes more (i.e., remembering accurate details) in terms of their ability than they did their failures. Japanese students, in contrast, tended to attribute their failures to lack of competence, which reflects a "self-effacement bias" (Kashima & Triandis, 1986; Smith & Bond, 1998; Smith et al., 2006).

Intergroup Attribution Theory

In extending attribution theory to the intergroup attribution process, Hewstone and Jaspars (1984; see also Hewstone & Swart, 2011) explain that this process is essentially social in nature. This is because (1) the process is largely filtered through social interaction and is influenced by social information; (2) most attributions are social categorical rather than interindividually based; (3) we typically share similar attributions with ingroup members about outgroups' attributes; and (4) shared social attributions with ingroups enhance our positive social identities, and hence reinforce our social solidarity and identity inclusion with ingroup members.

Hewstone (1989) refers to intergroup attribution in discussing how members of different social groups "explain the behavior, outcomes of behavior, and the social conditions that characterize members of their own [ingroup] and other [outgroup] social groups" (p. 25). For example, if an ingroup member were to get a promotion, we would likely attribute it to positive dispositional traits such as "hard work and strong will power to succeed." However, we may attribute an outgroup member's promotion to any of the following possibilities: (1) external luck or a special quota advantage; (2) his or her manipulation of the system by networking with the right people; or (c) his or her being an exception to the group (a token phenomenon) rather than reflective of the larger outgroup norm (Pettigrew, 1978) (see Figure 9.2).

Conversely, if an ingroup member received a demotion, we might criticize it as an instance of unfair treatment or attribute it to an economic downsizing problem.

		Positive Event	Negative Event
		Positive Dispositional Attributions	Situational Attributions
Attribution Process	Ingroup		
	Outgroup	Situational Attributions	Negative Dispositional Attributions

FIGURE 9.2. Ingroup and outgroup attribution differences.

However, for an outgroup member's demotion, we would likely use negative dispositional attributions to explain it (e.g., tardiness and irresponsibility).

The values of individualism and collectivism reinforce the notion that, overall, individualists tend to use dispositional attributions to explain the social world around them and collectivists tend to be more sensitive to situational features that frame behavior (Brewer & Chen 2007; Kashima & Triandis, 1986; Smith et al., 2006). Furthermore, the content of dispositional attributions (positive or negative) reflects the underlying values and norms of the cross-cultural perceivers. The nature of intergroup attributions directly affects the intergroup relationship formation process.

Mind-Sets and Communication: Affective and Cognitive Filters

While the ingroup favoritism principle of social identity theory has helped to explain biased ingroup–outgroup mental attitudes, the assumptions of intergroup attribution theory have served as the explanatory calculus shaping our prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory practices. Affective and cognitive filters refer to our reactive emotions and thinking patterns that we use in interpreting and evaluating the performance of ingroup–outgroup members. They form part of our predisposed mind-sets in communicating with ingroup and outgroup members inclusively or apathetically. Intergroup attitudes and affective predispositions are learned through education, experience, social media, and cultural programming, and reflect our response toward individuals or groups of individuals. However, since prejudiced attitude is a learned social phenomenon, it can also be mindfully and intentionally unlearned.

Perceived Intergroup Threat and Intergroup Biases

A plethora of studies have investigated the relationships between perceived intergroup threat and intergroup biases (Sears & Henry, 2003). Riek, Mania, and Gaertner (2006)

did an important meta-analytic review ($N = 95$ samples) of intergroup threat and outgroup attitudes and, overall, found a positive relationship between many types of perceived intergroup threat and negative outgroup attitudes including prejudice. Based on this meta-analytic review, intergroup threat occurs not only when (1) perceived competition over scarce resources from other social group members occurs, but also when (2) it is perceived that the other social group member's values undermine ingroup values. A realistic conflict theory (Sheriff, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sheriff, 1988) predicted the following: perceived intergroup threat can be inferred from realistic competition over scarce resources leading to outgroup hostility. For example, the perception of immigrant gains in the United States was negatively correlated with residents' attitudes toward immigration and immigrants (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001). A threat does not need to be real; it can be an imagined one because the emphasis is on threat perception in intergroup encounters. Alternatively, based on symbolic racism theory, symbolic threat can be perceived from the perspective of conflicting values and beliefs rather than realistic conflict goals (Kinder & Sears, 1981). For example, it has been found that perceived symbolic threat undermining American values was a better predictor of participants' negative attitudes toward immigrants than perceived realistic threat (McLaren, 2003).

Integrated threat theory (ITT; Stephan & Stephan, 1996, 2000) proposes that both realistic threat and symbolic threat can simultaneously influence outgroup attitudes. This predictive theory integrates four types of intergroup threat: realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, and negative stereotypes. Intergroup anxiety reflects affective uneasiness about interacting with outgroup members, and studies have indicated a negative relationship between intergroup anxiety and outgroup attitudes (e.g., Ho & Jackson, 2001; Voci & Hewstone, 2003). Negative stereotypes reflect threats due to negative expectancies about outgroup members' behaviors (Riek et al., 2006; Stephan & Stephan, 1996). ITT has gained robust support for its integrated threat prediction across different intergroup settings (see reviews in Riek et al., 2006). Perceived threat to ingroup identity can lead to communicative predicament owing to intergroup biases such as ethnocentrism and prejudice.

The perceptual filters of tight ethnocentrism, rigid or mindless stereotypes, and perceived intergroup threats to one's group membership or personal identity act as major barriers to effective intercultural or intergroup communication. Ineffective communication between cultural or racial group members often occurs because we assume that we perceive and interpret other people's behavior in an unbiased way. The reality, however, is that our perceptions of others are highly biased and selective. By understanding the forms and processes of how ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and prejudice operate, we can tune in to our biased preconceptions with a mindful analysis.

Prejudice and Communication

An individual learns prejudice against outgroup members mainly through the family socialization process, education, peer groups, and the mass media. The word *prejudice*

means “prejudging” something or someone based on biased cognitive and affective preconceptions. In the literature of intergroup relations, *prejudice* is a mind-set of hostile feelings and negative predispositions directed toward outgroup members. It is intimately related to *discrimination*, which refers to antagonistic, degrading treatment and behavior aimed at members of an outgroup. When prejudice is translated into action, it becomes discrimination.

More precisely, Allport (1954) defines prejudice as “an antipathy based on faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he [or she] is a member of that group” (p. 7). Prejudice is based on hasty and inflexible overgeneralizations above and beyond existing evidence. Individuals can hold prejudices against others based on their skin color, foreign accent or local dialect, cultural or religious practices, and the like. Four theories have been posited to account for the development and persistence of prejudice: exploitation theory, scapegoating theory, the authoritarian personality approach, and the structural approach (Schaefer, 2009).

Exploitation theory views power as a scarce resource and explains that in order to keep one’s valued status and power, one has to suppress the social mobility of the underclass to bolster one’s own group position and security. To maintain the status quo, for example, women and minorities, hampered by a “glass ceiling,” are denied equal access and opportunity to achieve higher status and positions.

Scapegoating theory suggests that prejudiced individuals believe themselves to be the victims of society. This theory holds that often the scapegoaters first perceive themselves as victims; then, rather than accepting the basic responsibility for some failure (e.g., defeat in a war), they typically shift the locus of responsibility for it to some vulnerable group. For example, domestic economic and social crises in California are scapegoated onto so-called illegal and undocumented immigrants, who are held responsible for the bad economy and social problems.

The *authoritarian personality approach* emphasizes the personality features of rigid adherence to conventional norms, uncritical acceptance of authority, and concern for power as the composites of a personality type that inclines toward prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behavior (Schaefer, 2009). For example, the Nazis strictly enforced authoritarian laws and policies against Jews and demanded absolute acceptance of Nazi authority. To this day, the communist leaders of North Korea and China oppress everyone under their authoritative regimes. Authoritarian personalities are likely to discriminate against the powerless and the vulnerable. Of course, other mediating variables such as an individual’s motivational level, educational environment, peer group networks, and his or her role models can enhance or dilute the authoritarian personality profile.

Finally, the *structural approach* to prejudice emphasizes institutionally promoting the social climate of discriminatory laws and policies or the “pecking order” favoring certain sections of the society. For example, according to Japanese law, those who are born abroad or whose parents and grandparents were born abroad are considered

foreigners and so have no voting rights, and in India some Hindu Temples post signboards at their entrance that read “Foreigners are not allowed.”

Beyond these four broad approaches to prejudice, prejudice serves some micro-level specific functions: ego-defensive, value-expressive, knowledge, and utilitarian functions (Brislin, 1993).

The *ego-defensive function* of prejudice preserves people’s view of themselves on both personal and social identity levels. If some individuals are not good businesspeople, they can put down others to protect their egos rather than spend time analyzing their own business incompetence. They can also hold their own cultural values, norms, and practices as the proper and civilized ways of thinking and behaving, which serves as a *value-expressive function* for their need for value and behavioral consistencies.

The *knowledge function* refers to defending one’s knowledge base and viewing others who lack such knowledge as ignorant or deficient. For example, if one’s ingroup has attained proficiency in use of computer technology, then one may see outgroup members who have not learned to master this new technology as backward and unintelligent. In contrast, the *utilitarian function* of prejudice refers to how people impose preexisting categories or biased expectations on others to simplify their information-overload environment. They can also collect rewards from their own group by sharing in the consensual prejudiced beliefs of their ingroup. For example, some middle managers may casually overlook and drop some minority job applications in order to appease top management expectations (e.g., that certain minority groups cannot “rise to the top” because of their “laid-back” or loafing lifestyle). Power and privilege are related to these intergroup biases and discrimination.

Power and Privilege: Discriminatory Practices and Microaggressions

Power and Privilege

Power and privilege exist across social groups. Ethnocentrism, stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination in intergroup relations are often examples of power imbalance and privilege. According to the critical paradigm perspective, oppression, injustice, and muted voices must be acknowledged and addressed in society, the media, relationships, and communication. Critical scholars aim to unearth power differentials, oppression, injustice, and muted voices among social groups, and through their research studies they articulate power equality, social justice, and power for all voices (e.g., Hall, 1986, 1997). For example, critical multicultural educators can lead their students to “understanding, engaging, and transforming the diverse histories, cultural narratives, representations, and institutions that produce racism and other forms of discrimination” (Giroux, 2001, p. 328; see also Fassett & Warren, 2007).

From the authors’ perspective, power can be defined by the macro level and from a critical lens. Because of their dominant group or positional status on the race-based hierarchical social ladder, Whites in U.S. society have more power, accessibility to opportunities, and privileges than all marginalized minority groups. These dominant

agents possess the ability or perceived ability to influence or control other co-culture group members' advancement pathways and needed resources. On an interindividual level, however, the concept of power can be defined in terms of interpersonal "negotiated power": power over or power against (i.e., distributive power), or in terms of collaborative/synergistic power with someone (i.e., integrative power to foster collaborative social activism) (Hocker & Wilmot, 2018). The less group members or individuals rely on the approval or needed resources of dominant groups or partners and the more they cultivate creative alternatives through collaborative means with other group allies, the more power currencies, such as interpersonal linkage and communication expertise, can be enhanced and shared on interindividual and social identity levels, and vice versa.

Similarly, privilege may be defined as an "invisible package of unearned assets" (McIntosh, 2002, p. 424). On the macro level, owing to dominant or normative group membership identity status, individuals can have unearned or earned advantages and resources on account of their race, skin color, social class background, young or old age (depending on what culture type), or heterosexual identity. On the micro level, however, many individuals (whether from the dominant group or the minority/nondominant group) from different social classes work hard to make a living and to help their own families achieve equal opportunity. In essence, on the micro level, power and privilege are malleable and negotiable concepts, whereas based on macro-critical theory level, power and privilege are fixed, static entities. We are all privileged through different forms of earned (e.g., our earned college degree) or unearned badges (e.g., by good fortune coming from a middle-class family) in different social settings, and the concept of privilege is also highly dependent on the social groups with which we are associated or compared. Even within our ingroup (e.g., in the Hispanic/Latino/a American group), we can be more privileged if we know the ingroup language, however we can be viewed as an outsider if we cannot code-switch fluently between English and Spanish. Thus, it is vital for intercultural scholars and research activists to use a more dynamic perspective to conceptualize power and privilege issues within and between social groups, in order to move toward a truly domestic inclusive or global social justice stance. A genuine global position on social justice emphasizes the importance of achieving an equitable distribution of resources and of gaining the full participation for members of diverse identity groups both in a particular society and on a worldwide level.

To understand the relationships among macro-level ethnocentrism, power, and privilege, we need only to consult any world atlas; every nation shows itself in a central position on the map, with neighboring states depicted as peripheral. Historically speaking, genocide is an extreme example of ethnocentric power and privilege. In the context of linguistic skills, attributing intelligence to individuals who speak and write fluently in the English language as compared to speaking and writing well in other languages, including native heritage languages, is an ethnocentric example of power and privilege. Ethnocentric power also exists in other contexts (e.g., sports). For example, the winner of the U.S. football competition is named the Superbowl "World" Champion, although no one else in the world plays U.S. football.

Stereotypes and prejudice also involve power and privilege. In any society, there are dominant and minority groups based on ethnolinguistic vitality dimensions (Giles & Johnson, 1987). In general, power and privilege are associated with the dominant group and its members (e.g., the Euro-American group and its members in the United States and the Han Chinese in China). Minority group members struggle to adapt to all things dominant (e.g., in its culture, language, education system, communication norms and style, and work environment) on the one hand, and maintain and transmit their own ethnic heritage, language, and communication style to the younger generation on the other hand. For example, the media's depiction of "character types" and their fitting members of specific ethnic groups into these stereotypical typecasting characters and roles speak volumes about the relationships among stereotypes, power, and privilege (Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, & Kopacz, 2008). Usually, in Bollywood movies, the dominant group members are cast as "the good guys" (e.g., heroes and saviors), and the minority members are cast as "the bad guys" (e.g., gangsters and victims). Rarely are good role models found for minority members in these movies. It seems that the media stereotypes are deeply ingrained in people's minds—so much so that if the "character types" are switched in the shows (i.e., minority members are cast as the good guys and dominant members as the bad guys), audiences tend to disbelieve the storyline and typecast (usually meaning the movie becomes a flop).

Moreover, power and privilege are inextricably linked to discrimination and racism. Following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, Jane Elliott created a powerful experiment called "Blue Eyes and Brown Eyes" to demonstrate to her third graders that prejudice and discrimination are related to power, privilege, and racism (Peters, 1987). She has modeled similar experiments to train correctional facility staff to understand and prevent prejudice and discrimination. While prejudice refers to antagonistic feelings and biased attitudes toward outgroup members, discrimination refers to both verbal and nonverbal actions that carry out such prejudiced attitudes.

Discriminatory Practices and Racism

According to Feagin and Feagin (2011), four basic types of discriminatory practices exist in a society: (1) isolated discrimination; (2) small-group discrimination; (3) direct institutional discrimination; and (4) indirect institutional discrimination. Each type involves power and privilege.

Isolated discrimination refers to harmful verbal and nonverbal action taken intentionally by a member of a group toward an outgroup member without the outright support of the larger organizational or community network. It refers to discriminatory activity on an individual basis, ranging from racist slurs to violent physical actions. For example, in their interactions, privileged dominant members allege that individual Mexican Americans are illegal immigrants and they threaten to report them to the authority, or they may tell individual Asian Americans with accents to "go home."

Small-group discrimination refers to action taken by individuals belonging to an identifiable group who engage in hostile and abusive actions against members of an out-group. However, these actions do not have the normative support of the larger organizational or community network. Activities of groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and the detention of Muslim Americans, or persons looking like Muslims, since 9/11 at airports for security reasons are examples of this type of discrimination.

Direct institutional discrimination refers to institutionally prescribed endorsements of discriminatory practices. These practices are not isolated incidents but are carried out routinely by a large number of individuals protected by laws and policies. For example, as noted earlier, a blatant institutional discriminatory action against Japanese Americans was carried out during World War II when 110,000 Japanese Americans were incarcerated in internment camps. Other historical examples include the segregation of African Americans in schools, on public buses, and in the use of drinking fountains and public restrooms until the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Indirect institutional discrimination consists of practices that have a negative impact on group members, even though the original intent of the institution's established guidelines was not malicious. Examples of indirect institutional discrimination are educational IQ tests such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test, Graduate Record Examination, Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children—Revised, Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised, and Stanford IQ tests, the verbal dysfluency diagnostic test, and the like, together with the use of a “homogenized” standard (with a strong White middle-class orientation) to test the intelligence or verbal fluency level of all children in a pluralistic immigrant culture. Even without hostile intent, the improper use of such “standardized” instruments in diverse ethnic and immigrant populations in the United States can lead to an exclusion of group members seeking better educational opportunities and job promotions.

Moving beyond the kinds of discrimination that exist in a society, Merton (1957) presents a model that links the relationship between prejudice and discrimination and develops a typology of prejudice–discrimination types based on low- and high-prejudiced attitudes and low or high discriminatory practices (see Figure 9.3).

		DISCRIMINATION	
		Yes	No
PREJUDICE	Yes	Active Bigot	Timid Bigot
	No	Fair-Weather Liberal	Proactive Change Agent

FIGURE 9.3. A prejudice–discrimination typology. Data from Merton (1957).

Under certain conditions, individual members can be identified as (1) prejudiced discriminators or “active bigots”; (2) prejudiced nondiscriminators or “timid bigots”; (3) nonprejudiced discriminators or “fair weather liberals”; and (4) nonprejudiced nondiscriminators or, as we term this category, “proactive change agents.”

Individuals of the first type, *active bigots*, possess prejudiced attitudes and actively discriminate against outgroup members. Groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazis serve as prime exemplars of this type. Individuals of the second type, *timid bigots*, hold prejudiced attitudes toward outgroup members but learn to sublimate their hostility or resentment because of social pressures or norms. However, they do engage in covert discriminatory practices. For example, a timid bigot acting in a hiring capacity might pay lip service to the fairness of nondiscriminatory hiring practices but might turn down perfectly suitable outgroup candidates owing to covert discrimination. The third type, *fair-weather liberals*, do not harbor strong hostilities toward outgroup members. However, because surrounding peer group members talk in a prejudiced manner or engage in racist jokes, they feel compelled to either join in or maintain silence for purposes of social expediency. The fourth type, *proactive change agents*, take an activist stance in promoting true equality between all cultural, ethnic, and gender groups with commitment to eliminate unfair racial, gender, and social practices. They are likely to speak up against perceived discriminatory practices in their surrounding environment, but they adopt a nonviolent approach to achieve peace-building goals. Mohandas K. Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson R. Mandela, the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, Malala Yousafzai, and Kailash Satyarthi are some prime examples. They can also be “ordinary people” who intervene directly or indirectly (and appropriately to the situation) when they witness a discriminatory case.

While some individuals can be identified as belonging to one of these four categories, most individuals typically oscillate in their dealing with such ingroup and outgroup feelings. Prejudice can also manifest in various forms such as “arm’s-length prejudice” or “symbolic racism” (Brislin, 1993).

On the one hand, *arm’s-length prejudice* refers to actions by individuals who engage in cordial, positive behaviors toward outgroup members in semiformal social situations (e.g., the work or business party setting), while treating the same outgroup members at arm’s-length when the contacts involve intimate situations (e.g., at-home dinner invitations, dating, or more intimate friendship developments). These individuals are uncomfortable sharing personal thoughts or feelings and treating outgroup members as true equals. *Symbolic racism*, on the other hand, refers to the perceived threat viewed by a group of individuals who believe that outgroup members are interfering with the *symbols* of their culture. These symbols can be abstract or concrete, and they include: “(a) the belief [in hard work] as the backbone of society, and (b) the importance of standing on one’s own two feet and solving one’s own problem. Concrete symbols include (c) the classroom as a place for learning the basics, not a place to deal with everyone’s social problems, and (d) the job interview as a ‘level playing field’ where some people should not have an advantage because they are from a minority group” (Brislin, 1993, pp. 186–187).

According to Auletta and Jones (1994), racism occurs in various contexts and on multiple levels—personal, institutional, and cultural. *Personal racism* involves the belief that certain physical traits determine social, moral, and intellectual character, so that skin color, for example, would signal inferior moral character. *Institutional racism* is an extension of personal racism and includes those institutional practices that operate to restrict groups of individuals on a low power status level. *Cultural racism* combines elements of personal and institutional racism to perpetuate the belief in the cultural superiority of one race and the cultural inferiority of all others. Auletta and Jones (1994) observe that “[r]acism can be reduced, but it cannot be eliminated in our lifetime. Racism is so intricately woven into our personal and collective unconscious that only constant vigilance will reduce it in our lifetime” (p. 170).

Microaggressions

Sue (2010a) and his colleagues (Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2007; Sue, Capodilupo, & Torino, 2008) examined microaggressions directed toward groups stigmatized for racial, gender, and sexual orientation reasons. Sue (2010a) defines racial microaggressions as: “commonplace verbal, behavioral or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostility, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to people of color” (p. 29). To put it simply, microaggressions are brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to marginalized groups. For example, a teacher may say to a Native American college student (in a patronizing tone), “You’re such a credit to your race, you’re so articulate and smart!” (Thus, we have a micro-insult message with the metacommunicative meaning level that the Native American group is not viewed as smart.) Or as another example, a third-generation Japanese American is being complimented by a White classmate for speaking such “good English.” (Here we have a micro-invalidation message that the Japanese American is the foreign other; Sue et al., 2007).

The researchers also reasoned that microaggressions often stemmed from dominant groups with no intentions of offending, but nevertheless marginalized groups perceived the slights, the implicit patronizing attitude, or the nuanced insults embedded in and informed by the fact that they were frequent recipients of these indignities. Microaggressions have been considered the “new face of racism” on the more subtle, daily interaction level. Microaggressions in the daily lives of racial minorities, women, and gays have also been correlated to detrimental biological health effects, depression and negative subjective well-being, and cognitive disruptions (Feagin, 2006; Hwang & Goto, 2008; Steele, 2003).

Microaggressions appear in three forms: (1) Microinsult (often unconscious): communicative messages that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage (e.g., ascription of intelligence, second-class citizenship, ascription of criminal status, and pathologizing cultural values/communication styles as in “why do you always have to speak so loudly and emotionally!” to an African American coworker); (2) micro

invalidation (often unconscious): communicative messages that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, and experiential reality of a person of color (e.g., making the target feel as an alien in his/her own land, colorblindness talk, myth of meritocracy trumps all racial barriers, and denial of individual racism as in “I’m not a racist, I’ve friends from all rainbow colors!”); and (3) microassault (often conscious and reflecting classic racism messages): explicit racial derogations characterized by violent verbal and nonverbal attacks, or hostile environmental (i.e., perceived demeaning political, economic, social, educational, and religious cues such as working in an “alienating or hostile work climate”) atmosphere meant to derail or hurt the intended targets through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory practices (Sue, 2010a, p. 29). Microaggressions often reinforce the implicit biased stereotypes of the beholders by making their targets feel demeaned, soiled, smaller, invalidated, and with an emotional double-take response turn. Through subtle implications, the perpetrator continues to hold onto the mainstream dominant culture outlook in reaffirming the “power” and “privilege” that she or he occupies and that the minority group member is an anomaly or an outcast member. It is also indeed (see Chapter 8) not the content of the message being conveyed (i.e., the use of microinsults and microinvalidations) but the paralinguistic aspect of the message that betrays the biased one up–one down attitudes behind the brief “innocuous” verbal phrases in a particular interactional context.

Sue (2010a, 2010b) and Sue and Constantine (2008) advocated that by having the specific terms to talk about microaggression interactions, by making the invisible visible, by deconstructing the hidden messages, and by engaging in difficult but essential dialogues among members of all multiple identity groups, we can come to better intergroup understanding and deepen each other’s interpretive sensibilities. Sue concludes (2010a) with the following constructive dialogue principles:

1. Learn about the people of color, women, and LGBTs within the group via a variety of sources: minority-run businesses, ethnic TV stations, ethnic poetry and writing, and so on.
2. However, do move beyond surface mass media and social media knowledge, and learn from diverse individuals through face-to-face channels and from diverse strata of the group as well as through strong ethnic role models, leaders, and social activists.
3. Learn from experiential reality through actual deep immersion in that group community and also be willing to be guided and coached by a wise cultural-bridge person in order to attain better intergroup understanding.
4. Learn from constant vigilance of your own biases and fears due to intergroup anxiety, guilt, and defensiveness.
5. Learn by being committed to personal action against racism, sexism, and heterosexism (Sue, 2010a, pp. 279–280; Sue, Lin, Torino, Copodilupo, & Rivera, 2009).

Reduction of Prejudice and Discrimination

People have prejudiced attitudes and engage in discriminatory practices because of many factors. One such factor is the fundamental emotion of insecurity or fear. According to the IINT (see Chapter 2), fear gives rise to emotional vulnerability and identity insecurity and exclusion. Individuals are worried that their cultural or social habits, and hence their identities, are being attacked because of the influx of outsiders or immigrants or cultural strangers whom they perceive to be fragmenting a nation or a community.

Individuals are apprehensive of losing power or domination because all these newcomers compete for scarce resources in an institutionalized setting. They are scared because outgroup members bring in with them alternative values, norms, and lifestyles, thereby directly challenging their fundamental way of existence. This fundamental fear or perceived threat triggers a package of other feelings such as resentment, frustration, anger, and anxiety. While some of these feelings may be legitimate, others are probably completely groundless.

The seminal ideas on intergroup–intercultural communication competence focus on the reduction of emotional or identity threat and promotion of accurate knowledge between the two polarized identity groups. Stephan and Stephan (2003) recommended some possible productive intergroup contact remedies to lighten the perceived emotional anxiety and intergroup threat loads:

1. Gaining accurate knowledge of major cultural value difference dimensions to enhance mutual understanding and decrease ignorance.
2. Promoting information about overriding human values (such as family security, respect, and compassion) common to all cultures in order to decrease prejudice about outgroup members.
3. Pursuing accurate data concerning the exaggerated nature of people's beliefs concerning the scarcity of resources in a conflict situation.
4. Creating or developing superordinate identities so that both cultural groups can realize the connected humanistic souls that exist between them.
5. Reminding people of the multiple social categories or overlapping circles to which they belong.

Setting up opportunities for two or more identity groups to engage in cooperative learning techniques (e.g., team-building activities and working on positive interdependent tasks) would help both groups to see the “human face” beyond the broad-based stereotypical group membership labels. Cooperative learning techniques include face-to-face active communication engagements between dominant group and co-culture or minority groups. In solving an interdependent community problem together, for example, and with enough institutional resource support and incentive (e.g., a community

initiative grant to develop a neighborhood health care center), polarized group members can get acquainted and cooperate more productively.

More importantly, both groups should be able to make some concrete interdependent contributions to the problem-solving task. Cooperative learning techniques also have built-in semistructured time to promote the formation of deeper friendships and a mutual personalized, self-disclosure process. Thus, the contact condition should allow individuals to get to know each other on a personalized, culture-sensitive sharing level versus the superficial, stereotypical level. Finally, the intergroup contact process should be strongly supported by key authority figures or change agents in the organization or the community and, hopefully, with adequate resource support, space, and funding allocations. In these cooperative settings, the *positive goal interdependence* between cultural and ethnic groups has been identified as the key causal factor in accomplishing a positive interpersonal relationship and achievement outcome (Hewstone & Swart, 2011; Stephan & Stephan, 2001).

On a micro level of prejudice reduction, to reduce prejudice and discriminatory practices effectively, we should conduct a mind-set analysis along the following lines:

First, we must be honest with ourselves—we need to confront our own biases and ethnocentric attitudes. We should question where we have learned our biases about outgroup members. We should also figure out how strongly or rigidly we buy into this set of preconceived stereotypes about others.

Second, we should critically assess the contents of our stereotypes and check against our actual interactions with outgroup members. In sum, we should be mindful of stereotyping both self-identity and other-identity based on social group memberships.

Third, we should work on deepening the complexity of our intergroup perceptions, that is, use the principle of heterogeneity to counteract the principle of homogeneity and break down the broad social categories (e.g., Asian Americans) into subunits (e.g., recent Asian immigrants vs. native-born Asian Americans), and with finer distinctions (e.g., Korean Americans, Vietnamese Americans, Japanese Americans) and intersecting with multifaceted identity variations (e.g., generation, age, social class, LGBTQ identity, relational role, professional role, hobbies, unique personality traits, and personal desires). We should be willing to spend time to get to know members of an outgroup as individuals and as distinctive members of salient social identity groups and also their real likes and dislikes, their fears, and their dreams for their individual and communal future.

Fourth, we should use mindful, qualifying language (e.g., “From my contacts with several Vietnamese American students, they appear to be on the quiet side”) in describing the behaviors of dissimilar others. We should use “neutral” language in our descriptions or analysis and adopt “situated language” in qualifying or “contexting” our understanding.

Fifth, we should be able to recognize that others may have experiences that we may not be able to grasp fully. With our passion, we need humility. We should learn to say: “It must be very stressful for you. Help me to understand some more . . .” or “I’m here for you. I’m ready to listen and learn.”

Sixth, we should be empathetic, able to reach deep down and feel the experiences and traumas of others; but we should be sensitive without being excessively so (thus, being overwhelmed by our emotions to the point of inaction).

Seventh, we should put ourselves in frequent intergroup contact situations so that we will be comfortable with group-based differences. We can gain more realistic and accurate information based on increased positive contacts with a variety of individuals from a wide spectrum of the identity group. At the same time, we should learn to honor group-based differences; we should not totalize the differences and forget about genuine human commonalities.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND MINDFUL GUIDELINES

Intergroup communication is ubiquitous. When intergroup strangers meet, as a result of anxiety and uncertainty about each other, they are more likely to use their own sociocultural ingroup scripts as standard to interact with each other. Communication is largely filtered through intergroup perceptual biases, such as ethnocentrism and stereotypes, and, oftentimes, we do not heed the personal attributes of the unique individual interacting with us. In other words, in intergroup interactions, a cultural stranger's holistic and unique personal self is often deemphasized or dismissed, while the "essentialized stereotypic image" of a cultural stranger of an identity membership group is enlarged or overemphasized. We also often lack the dialogue skills and sacred space to discuss group membership identity issues in a meaningful and authentic manner without provoking further intergroup threats or negative stereotypes.

In this chapter, we expounded core concepts of social identity theory such as social categorization, social comparison, and boundary regulation based on intergroup perceptions, ingroup versus outgroup distinctions, and rigidified ethnocentrism and stereotypes. We furthered the discussion of the intergroup sense-making process through attribution theory and intergroup attribution theory. We illustrated how biased attributions—dispositional or internal attribution versus situational or external attribution—are employed based on social group memberships as an explanatory calculus for understanding intergroup successes and failures. Finally, we presented perceived intergroup threat leading to extensive discussion of the relationships among communication and some of the major intergroup perceptual filters, namely, prejudice and discrimination, as well as power and privilege and microaggressions.

As intergroup communicators, we have to understand the basic assumptions that undergird the formation of our cultural or social identities, and we have to recognize how these identities, in turn, impact our desired personal identities. According to the IINT, the need for identity emotional security, inclusion, and interactive trust leads us to engage in ingroup favoritism and outgroup exclusion. When we perceive identity threats from outgroup members, we often tighten our ingroup boundaries and reinforce our ingroup solidarity and loyalty. Additionally, mind-set filters such as ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and prejudice create cognitive and affective distortions.

To become mindful intergroup communicators, we need to do the following:

- 1** Recognize the fact that all human beings are ethnocentric to a certain degree and at different levels. We should be aware of our ethnocentric tendencies and their sources, including cultural upbringing, religious practices, educational system, mass media, government, digital media, and peer influences.
- 2** Acknowledge that the concept of “power” underscores many of the interplays between “dominant” and “nondominant” group relations within the larger society. Typically, members of a dominant group hold more power and status control than members of a less privileged group in any system. To promote quality intergroup relations, both groups need to learn to share power and assert power productively, responsively, and responsibly. Sharing power can be manifested through willingness to listen and readiness to incorporate the other group member’s point of view; willingness to delegate and let others take on more task-oriented responsibilities; the honesty to give useful, critical feedback when necessary for improving task-oriented and relationship-oriented issues; and willingness to mentor, motivate, and act as role models of members of diverse groups.
- 3** Express responsible power by learning to act affirmatively through asserting one’s viewpoint responsibly *and* at the same time respecting the different voices of members of diverse groups; learning to separate constructive feedback from group membership identity issues (i.e., not every comment is intended to be a “racist” or “antiracist” comment); learning to develop identity security in the self and others within and across diverse groups through supportive identity work; and willingness to assume leadership roles and take chances in improving oneself.
- 4** Monitor our inflexible or mindless stereotyping of outgroup members. We should realize that in stereotyping outgroup members in social interactions, we are categorizing the behavior of a large group of individuals under generalized labels or categories. Since stereotyping is an inevitable process, we have to monitor our typecasting process of outgroup members (and that of our own groups). We have to mindfully “mind” our own social categorization process.
- 5** Understand the basic functions of prejudice and discrimination. Often these are developed through ignorance and identity-defensiveness functions. We need to increase our cultural and ethnic literacy regarding different ethnic groups within different cultures. While members of an identity group share many similar values, norms, and characteristics, no two individuals are ever alike in all attributes, likes, and dislikes. We should learn to honor and affirm both the group membership and personal identities of individuals with unique experiences, attributes, and competencies in the communication process. We should learn to understand the historical conditions that frame the marginalization experiences of “minority” group members. Only by assuming an inclusive stance and an equality mind-set can intergroup racism be reduced.

6 Practice ethnic-sensitive identity confirmation skills. We should address members of different cultural and ethnic groups by their preferred titles and names. For example, individuals sometimes may identify strongly with their ethnic-based membership or religious denomination (e.g., as African Americans, Cuban Americans, or Italian Americans, or as Jews, Lutherans, Buddhists, Amish, or Quakers) and sometimes with their person-based identities. By being sensitive to people's self-images in particular situations and by according due respect to their desired identities, we confirm and support their self-worth.

7 Practice using inclusive language rather than exclusive language (e.g., “you gay people”) and using situational language rather than polarized language as part of identity support skills. Inclusive language means that we are mindful at all times of our use of verbal messages when we converse with both ingroup and outgroup members in a small group setting. We should cross-check our own verbal habits and direct our comments to both ingroup and outgroup members on an equitable basis. Inclusive language usage also includes the use of inclusive nonverbal behavior (e.g., give eye contact evenly to both ingroup and outgroup members). Situational language use means willing to take situational contingencies into account in understanding the behavior of outgroup members with the same courtesy as we accord ingroup members. In sum, we honor the identities of outgroup members as if they were members of a superordinate group to which we all belong rather than overemphasize ingroup/outgroup circles.

8 On a macro level of social justice, social justice is about listening to all group identity voices and stories and creating inclusive equitable participation opportunity for all identity group members so that they can excel and fulfill their respective interests, needs, dreams, and hopes.

Thus, we confirm and disconfirm dissimilar others by the words we choose to address them and by the attitude behind the words with which we “name” them. Sometimes we may want to downplay group-based identities because members who belong to dissimilar groups do not necessarily identify strongly with their groups. However, we may also be interacting with dissimilar individuals who value their group memberships enormously. To communicate mindfully on an intergroup level, we must pay close attention to people's identity affiliation process in particular relationships and situations. Mindful intercultural–intergroup communicators are willing to experiment with new paradigms of experiencing, communicating, adapting, and confirming. They are willing to admit their ethnocentrism and reframe their mind-sets through ethnorelative thinking. They are willing to “struggle *with*” rather than “struggle *against*” dissimilar others.

CRITICAL THINKING AND CONNECTIVE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. How would you differentiate between intergroup communication and interpersonal communication from an identity perspective? Explore how and why social group memberships or social identities take over personal identities in intergroup interactions.
2. Informed by intergroup attribution theory, explore how and why we engage in biased intergroup attributions to explain the ingroup's success and failure versus the outgroup's success and failure in three different contexts, such as academic, workplace, and relational setting.
3. In what ways do you see that everyday communication is filtered through intergroup perceptual biases? Revisiting the opening story between Ms. W and Dean Pauline, what can we do to prevent, reduce, and counteract intergroup biases, such as race and education or housing issues, for effective intergroup communication?
4. What is your understanding of power and privilege? What power and privilege are associated with self and other's group membership/s? How do you feel about the lack of power in certain communicative situations? How do you feel about the perceived abundance of power and privilege accorded to your own group? What are the pros and cons of being perceived as having high power versus having low power, especially in intergroup social contact situations? How would you connect these questions to the opening story that reflects racism, power, and privilege?
5. How do you understand the role of microaggressions from both a dominant group membership perspective and a stigmatized identity perspective? What are your observations of microaggressions in your everyday life? What are the most effective verbal and nonverbal strategies you can use as an intercultural bystander when others use microaggressive messages to a minority target? Will you stand up and be counted?

CHAPTER 10

Attending to Intercultural and Intergroup Conflict Issues

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A MOTIVATIONAL OR DEMOTIVATIONAL SPEECH?: A CASE STORY

A Japanese multimedia subsidiary in the United States had just completed a very successful year, surpassing its stated goals. As a result, the annual sales conference was held in Disneyland Resort Hotel in California for celebration and a well-earned vacation for the employees and their families. The audience at the dinner celebration consisted of mostly American salespeople and their spouses, as well as some Japanese technical support personnel. The Japanese president gave a brief welcome in halted English, but the audience appreciated his remarks.

Next, the American director of sales, William Wilde, introduced the Japanese vice president, Satoshi Watanabe-san. They had planned to give two short motivational speeches to kick off the conference. Watanabe-san was about 50 years old, and he had used the last 2 weeks to memorize his carefully prepared speech in English. When Watanabe-san stood up, his posture was rigid, his face was serious, and his tone sounded harsh. Here is what he said:

Thank you for your hard work this fiscal year. We have broken many records, but . . . we need to be careful and not to appear too proud. We need to keep up our fighting spirit! Our competition is working to defeat us this very minute while we are celebrating. You have done a good job . . . but you must do more. There's no time for frivolous activities. You must prepare yourselves to work twice as hard this coming year. The company has invested a lot of money in new manufacturing facilities. These facilities are producing our new product lines. It is your duty to this company to sell these products as efficiently as possible. You must not fail! You must not be content! I hope you do a better job in the new fiscal year. Thank you.

The American audience sat in stunned silence during most of Watanabe-san's speech. William Wilde, stood up quickly, physically backed away from the Japanese vice president of sales, and with an awkward smile said:

Disregard everything he just said. We are here to celebrate your fantastic achievements this year! We've outperformed all our competitors this past year and your success is far beyond expectations. So give yourselves a big round of applause, and, let the festivities begin!

The audience applauded. William gave the signal to the hotel staff to serve the dinner. For the rest of the conference, the tension between Watanabe-san and William Wilde was obvious, and most of the other Americans looked irritated.

—Adapted from Clarke and Lipp (1998, pp. 232–235)

Introduction

The opening story presents an intercultural conflict situation and an intercultural rhetorical situation. After reading it, how would you evaluate Mr. Watanabe-san's speech and Mr. Wilde's reaction to it? What do you think of Mr. Watanabe-san's speech—was it a motivational speech or a demotivational speech? What about his speech delivery—was it an appropriate and effective speech or an inappropriate and ineffective speech? By what cultural standards are you evaluating his speech? Who do you think is the audience in Mr. Watanabe's mind-set? What identity do you think he projected to his audience? What do you think of Mr. Wilde's reaction? Was it appropriate or inappropriate? We hope the various intercultural conflict concepts and facework lens discussed in this chapter will enable you to reread the opening story with fresh multiple cultural perspectives. By understanding cross-cultural perspectives on conflict face-saving and face-giving, and the diverse conflict styles, this chapter should enhance your intercultural and intergroup conflict knowledge currencies in managing different conflict situations with astute value dimension analysis and identity attunement sensitivity.

Developing intercultural conflict competence within the larger intercultural competence setting is critical because conflict creates perceptual distortions and emotional flooding in the cultural encountering process. Sharpening the knowledge, mindfulness, and skills of intercultural conflict competence can simultaneously enhance general intercultural competence tendencies and vice versa. Under emotional anxiety and stress, even if an individual is well honed in general intercultural competence, she or he might still be overwhelmed by her or his verbal and nonverbal ineptness and awkwardness in a stressful conflict situation.

Thus, it is important to pay close attention to the topic of intercultural conflict competence within the broad umbrella of intercultural competence. Learning to manage antagonistic intercultural conflicts competently involves applying multiple perspectives and differentiated viewpoints in a conflictual relationship. *Intercultural conflict* is defined in this chapter as the *perceived or actual incompatibility of cultural values, norms, face orientations, goals, emotions, scarce resources, styles/processes, and/or outcomes in a face-to-face (or mediated) context within a sociohistorical embedded system*. Intercultural conflict negotiation can be about substantive, relational, and/or identity conflict goal issues.

Within intercultural competence development, it is also important to consider cultural distance, which is a key contributor to intercultural conflict. The greater the cultural distance between the two conflict parties, the more likely the assessment of the conflict negotiation process will be misconstrued (see also Cai & Fink, 2017). The cultural membership distances can include deep-level differences such as historical grievances, cultural worldviews, and beliefs. Concurrently, they can also include the mismatch of applying different expectations in a particular conflict episode. Individuals from contrasting cultural communities often bring with them different value patterns, verbal and nonverbal habits, and interaction scripts that influence the actual conflict interaction process. Intercultural conflict often starts with diverse expectations

concerning what constitute appropriate or inappropriate verbal and nonverbal behaviors in a conflict encounter scene. Violations of expectation, in turn, often influence the attributional patterns and the communication strategies that individuals use in their conflict interaction process (Canary & Lakey, 2006; Canary et al., 2013; Hinner, 2017).

Intercultural conflict competence criteria include appropriateness, effectiveness, and interaction adaptability features. If inappropriate or ineffective conflict behaviors continue, the miscommunication can easily spiral into a complex, polarized intercultural conflict situation. More specifically, *intercultural conflict competence* refers to the *mindful management of emotional frustrations and conflict interaction struggles due primarily to cultural or ethnic group membership differences*.

This chapter is organized in six sections: First, the criteria and the components of intercultural conflict competence are discussed. Second, a culture-based situational conflict model is introduced to provide a “big-picture” outlook in explaining the antecedent and moderating factors of intercultural and intergroup conflict. Third, two identity-based theories, the integrated threat theory and the conflict face negotiation theory (CFNT), are reviewed as two plausible theories that can explain more fully the intercultural conflict management process. Fourth, a detailed presentation of the CFNT’s core assumptions, conditions, and essential constructs are covered. Fifth, recent research trends and directions for future research revolving around the use of CFNT are offered. Finally, the chapter summary and mindful guidelines are presented with an emphasis on becoming a competent intercultural and intergroup conflict negotiator.

Intercultural Conflict Competence: Criteria and Components

According to a core assumption of the INT, intercultural identity-based competence refers to the optimal integration of knowledge, mindfulness, and communication skills in managing problematic interaction scenes appropriately, effectively, and adaptively (Ting-Toomey, 2005a; see also Chapters 2 and 5). An identity-based conflict competence perspective is emphasized in this chapter because knotty identity issues often spark affective-based interactional support or rejection. In any intercultural or intergroup encounter process, if repeated problematic issues arise in the same parties, it is often not the substantive or content issue that is at stake so much as the identity or relational issue is in jeopardy (Imahori & Cupach, 2005; Rothman, 1997). For example, in the opening case story, beyond a content expectancy clash of what constitutes an appropriate and effective “motivational” versus a “demotivational” speech in the Japanese versus the U.S. cultural setting, both Mr. Watanabe-san and Mr. Wilde’s professional and personal identities are in high-wired tension. Both conflict parties probably feel embarrassed in the public celebratory annual sale conference.

Identity is viewed as an anchoring point at which sojourners, immigrants, international businesspersons, and local hosts have to deal with on an everyday interaction

basis (Kim, 2001, 2004, 2013). Furthermore, when it involves intercultural conflict negotiation process work, most entangled conflict situations between polarized groups or individuals have a strong identity locus. Identity is conceptualized in this chapter as reflective sociocultural group membership, sociorelational role identities, and individualized self-images that are constructed, experienced, and communicated by the individuals within a culture and in a particular interaction scene. This section addresses the criteria and components associated with becoming a competent intercultural conflict negotiator from the identity negotiation framework.

Intercultural Conflict Competence: Criteria

The criteria of communication appropriateness, effectiveness, and adaptability can serve as evaluative yardsticks of whether an intercultural conflict communicator has been perceived as behaving competently or incompetently in a conflict interaction episode (Spitzberg, Canary, & Cupach, 1994; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). *Appropriateness* refers to the degree to which the exchanged behaviors are regarded as proper and match the expectations generated by the insiders of the culture or social ingroup members in an intergroup context. To behave “properly” in any given cultural situation, competent conflict negotiators need to have the relevant value knowledge schema of the larger situational norms that guide the interaction episode. They also need to acquire the specific conflict knowledge schema of what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate conflict style patterns that can promote constructive versus destructive conflict outcomes. Thus, the criterion of “appropriateness” is theorized as a socioculture-sensitive attunement process in which individuals have mastered the deep knowledge structures of the values and norms of the conflict situation and are able to connect such knowledge structures with skillful conflict practice. It also means the ability to implement and perform situationally relevant, constructive conflict behaviors.

The criterion of “effectiveness” refers to the degree to which communicators achieve mutually shared meaning and integrative goal-related outcomes in the conflict episode. To engage in effective conflict communication strategies, intercultural conflict negotiators need to have a wide range of verbal and nonverbal conflict repertoires to make mindful choices and options. They need to engage in more neutrally toned attributions such as viewing the conflict trigger as unintentional or situationally induced, unstable, and particularized. In polarized blameworthy attributions, conflict parties often tend to make internally driven negative attributions and stable negative trait assumptions, and they perceive the conflict as a generalized-chronic problem (Canary & Lakey, 2006).

On the intergroup conflict interpretation level, competent conflict negotiators need to mind their ESP factors (e.g., ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and prejudice identity threat factors), namely, their own ethnocentric mind-set, their rigid stereotypes of outgroup members, and their prejudiced tendencies (Neuliep & Speten-Hansen, 2013). Along with an ethnorelative mind-set (Bennett & Bennett, 2004), individuals also need to master strategic conflict negotiation skills to integrate divergent conflict goals constructively. Conflict interaction effectiveness has been achieved when multiple

meanings are attended to with accuracy and in an unbiased manner, and mutually desired interaction goals have been conjointly worked out in a strategic and creative manner (see Putnam, 2013; Putnam & Powers, 2015). Elsewhere, Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2015) argued that “an integrative theorizing effort on intercultural–intergroup communication competence will enhance our identity-sensitive awareness, knowledge, open-hearted attitudes, and skillsets in communicating with diverse sociocultural membership groups responsively” (p. 503). They also proposed a new model, namely, the Intercultural and Intergroup Communication Competence: A Working Model (for details, see Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2015).

Appropriateness and effectiveness criteria are positively interdependent. When one manages a conflict appropriately, the “good-faith” behaviors can induce reciprocal interaction effectiveness. Likewise, when one promotes effective conflict and mutual goal-directed interaction paths, the effectiveness posture can induce appropriate interaction behaviors from the other conflict party. More specifically, the appropriateness criterion emphasizes the importance of tending to socioemotional or relational conflict goals in the conflict negotiation situation, while the effectiveness criterion stresses the importance of tending to instrumental or task-oriented conflict goals in the conflict management process and moving the polarized positions incrementally to win–win productive outcomes.

To behave both appropriately and effectively in managing a diverse range of intercultural conflict situations, one needs to be cognitively and behaviorally flexible and adaptive. *Communication adaptability* refers to our ability to change our interaction behaviors and goals to meet the specific needs of the situation. It implies cognitive, affective, and behavioral agility in dealing with the intercultural conflict situation. It signals attuning to the other conflict party’s perspectives, interests, goals, and conflict communication approach, plus willingness to modify our own behaviors and goals to adapt to the emergent conflict situation. Communication adaptability connotes dynamic code-switching ability in an intercultural conflict interaction scene (Molinsky, 2007). To behave appropriately, effectively, and adaptively, an interculturally astute conflict negotiator needs to attend to and learn about the specific components of intercultural conflict competence.

Intercultural Conflict Competence: Components

According to the face negotiation theory (FNT; Ting-Toomey, 2005b), knowledge is the most important component that underscores the other components of competence. Without *culture-sensitive knowledge*, conflict communicators would continue to use their implicit “ethnocentric lenses” to assess cultural stranger’s dissonance behaviors in an intercultural conflict interaction scene. Without knowledge, people can neither have an accurate perspective nor reframe their interpretation of a problematic communication situation from the other’s cultural frame of reference. Knowledge enhances cultural self-awareness and other-awareness. Knowledge here refers to developing an in-depth understanding of relevant intercultural concepts (e.g., cultural value patterns,

preferred conflict mediation styles) that can help to manage culture-based conflict issues competently. To be an astute decoder of a complex intercultural conflict situation, one must develop a mindful, layered systems outlook in assessing the macro- and micro-level features of an intercultural conflict problem (Oetzel, Ting-Toomey, & Willow, 2013). Knowledge and an open-minded attitude are closely intertwined and reciprocally influence one another. Alternatively, according to Deardorff (2004), attitudes of respect, openness, and curiosity can lead to acquiring more culture-sensitive knowledge. Knowledge and a discovery attitude can facilitate a mindful consciousness.

Mindfulness, in the intercultural communication competence context, means attending to one's internal communication assumptions, cognitions, and emotions and, at the same time, becoming exquisitely attuned to the other's communication assumptions, cognitions, and emotions (LeBaron, 2003; Ting-Toomey, 1999, 2010a, 2010b, 2015a; see Chapter 5). Mindful reflexivity requires us to tune into our own cultural and personal habitual assumptions in scanning a problematic interaction scene. To be mindful of intercultural conflict differences, we have to learn to see the unfamiliar behavior from multiple cultural angles (Langer, 1989, 1997). In the context of the intercultural conflict negotiation process, for example, we have to deal with our own vulnerable emotions regarding identity and face-threatening behaviors. At the same time, we have to be responsive to the new interaction scripts awaiting us. We also need to develop multiple lenses in understanding the culture-level and situational-level factors that shape the problematic conflict episode (recall your analysis of the opening story). Mindfulness is part of the metacognition process that is a key feature in the cultural intelligence research literature (Earley & Ang, 2003; Earley & Peterson, 2004). According to Ang et al. (2007), metacognition refers to the "higher-order mental capability to think about personal thought processes, anticipate cultural preferences of others and adjust mental models during and after intercultural experiences" (p. 341). *Mindfulness of the mind* is the mediating step in linking knowledge with the intentional application of constructive conflict skill practice.

We can also use some critical reflective questions to guide our mindful conflict transformative "U" learning process (Fisher-Yoshida, 2005; Mezirow, 2000). For example, if a disputant in an intercultural mediation session is constantly using "silence" or indirect response to every question a mediator asks during the conflict storytelling phase, the mindful transformative questions that the mediator can process within herself or himself are:

First (a content reflection question), what are my cultural and personal assessments about the use of "silence" in this particular mediation scene?

Second (a process critical reflection question), why do I form such assessments, and what are the sources of my assessments?

Third (a premise-value question), what are the underlying assumptions or values that drive my evaluative assessments?

Fourth (a premise-self-challenge question), how do I know that they are relevant or valid in this conflict context?

Fifth (an identity transformation question), what reasons might I have for maintaining or changing my underlying conflict premises?

Sixth (a mind-set transformation question), how should I shift my cultural or personal premises into the direction that promotes deeper intercultural understanding?

Seventh (a behavioral transformation question), how should I flex adaptively on both verbal and nonverbal conflict-style levels in order to display facework-sensitive behaviors and to facilitate a productive common-interest outcome?

The first three questions are based on Fisher–Yoshida’s work (2005, 2013) concerning the importance of engaging in deeper double-loop thinking in analyzing the role of the self-in-conflict context. The last four questions are an extension of Ting-Toomey’s (2005a) mindful identity transformation work.

Constructive conflict communication skills refer to our operational abilities to manage a problematic interaction situation appropriately, effectively, and adaptively through skillful verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors. Of the many possible conflict management skills (see, e.g., Ting-Toomey, 2004; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012), skills such as deep listening, mindful reframing, decentering, face-sensitive respectful dialogue skills, and collaborative conflict negotiation skills (e.g., the skillset of the “AEIOU” negotiation, which stands for “Attack, Evade, Inform, Open, Unite,” developed by Coleman & Raider, 2006) across cultural and ethnic–racial lines are essential practices. Intercultural sensitivity training strategies such as dynamic behavioral code-switching skills (Molinsky, 2007) and relativism commitment strategies can also move the conflict communicators from an ethnocentric stage to an ethnorelative stage (Bennett, 2003; Pedersen, Crethar, & Carlson, 2008; see Chapter 9). Having discussed the criteria and components of intercultural conflict competence as the backdrop, the following section will fill in the knowledge gap that is essential to becoming a competent intercultural–intergroup conflict communicator.

A Culture-Based Situational Conflict Model

As cultural beings, we are socialized or “programmed” by the values and norms of our culture to think and behave in certain ways. Our family, peer groups, educational institutions, mass media system, social media platform, political system, and religious institutions are some of the forces that shape and mold our cultural and personal values. Our learned values and expectancy norms are, in turn, expressed through the way we communicate. To deeply understand the value assumptions, filters, and behaviors in conflict across cultures, we need a conceptual map or framework to explain in depth

why and how cultural value dimensions and value orientations are different or similar to those presented in Chapter 6. Understanding the deep level of a cultural community and its associated traditions and beliefs, values and norms, and conflict tendencies and styles can help us to decode the others' conflict styles with cultural sensitivity and interpersonal responsiveness.

Conflict styles can be understood through three conflict approaches: the dispositional, the situational, and the systems. The dispositional approach emphasizes both cultural-level dispositional tendencies (e.g., individualists versus collectivists' conflict interaction patterns) and individuals' personality trait tendencies, such as introversion or extroversion, in dealing with conflict situations in various situations and across cultures. This approach emphasizes the relative consistency or stability of using a prototypical conflict style in a wide variety of conflict situations.

The situational approach emphasizes the importance of asking contextual questions concerning the when, where, what, and with whom the intercultural conflict clash happened. Situational features such as the proper/improper timing, the situational locale and context and occasion, the expected process and goal, and the relationship between the conflict communicators would affect the adoption of different conflict styles in the conflict episode. Cultural conflict negotiators would tailor their conflict styles and strategies to handle the particular conflict scene. The situational approach emphasizes the importance of situational context in shaping our outlook, attitudes, and behavioral styles in approaching the conflict scenario.

The systems approach emphasizes both the dispositional and situational factors needed to deal with conflict. It takes into account macro level intergroup contact conditions, intergroup conflict histories and hostilities, cultural and individual socialization patterns, membership-level and interindividual-level ethnocentrism–stereotypes–prejudice-plus 3 (prejudice, power, and privilege) mind-sets, and perceived identity and face threats, conflict facework styles, and conflict competence knowledge and skills. From a broad vision of the systems approach, the culture-based situational conflict model (with a combined emphasis on the situational and dispositional views) is developed. This section reviews the culture-based situational conflict model (Ting-Toomey, 2009b; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001, 2013; see Figure 10.1).

Cultural and Individual Socialization Value Patterns

Cultural Socialization Patterns

The cultural socialization patterns that profoundly influence conflict behaviors can include the study of the value patterns of individualism–collectivism and small-large power distance (Hofstede, 2001). Indeed, the most recent GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness—A Research Program Study of 62 societies) research project (House et al., 2004) provided additional evidence that the foundational constructs of individualism–collectivism and small-large power distance permeate 62 countries (with a sample size of 17,370 middle managers from three industries) at

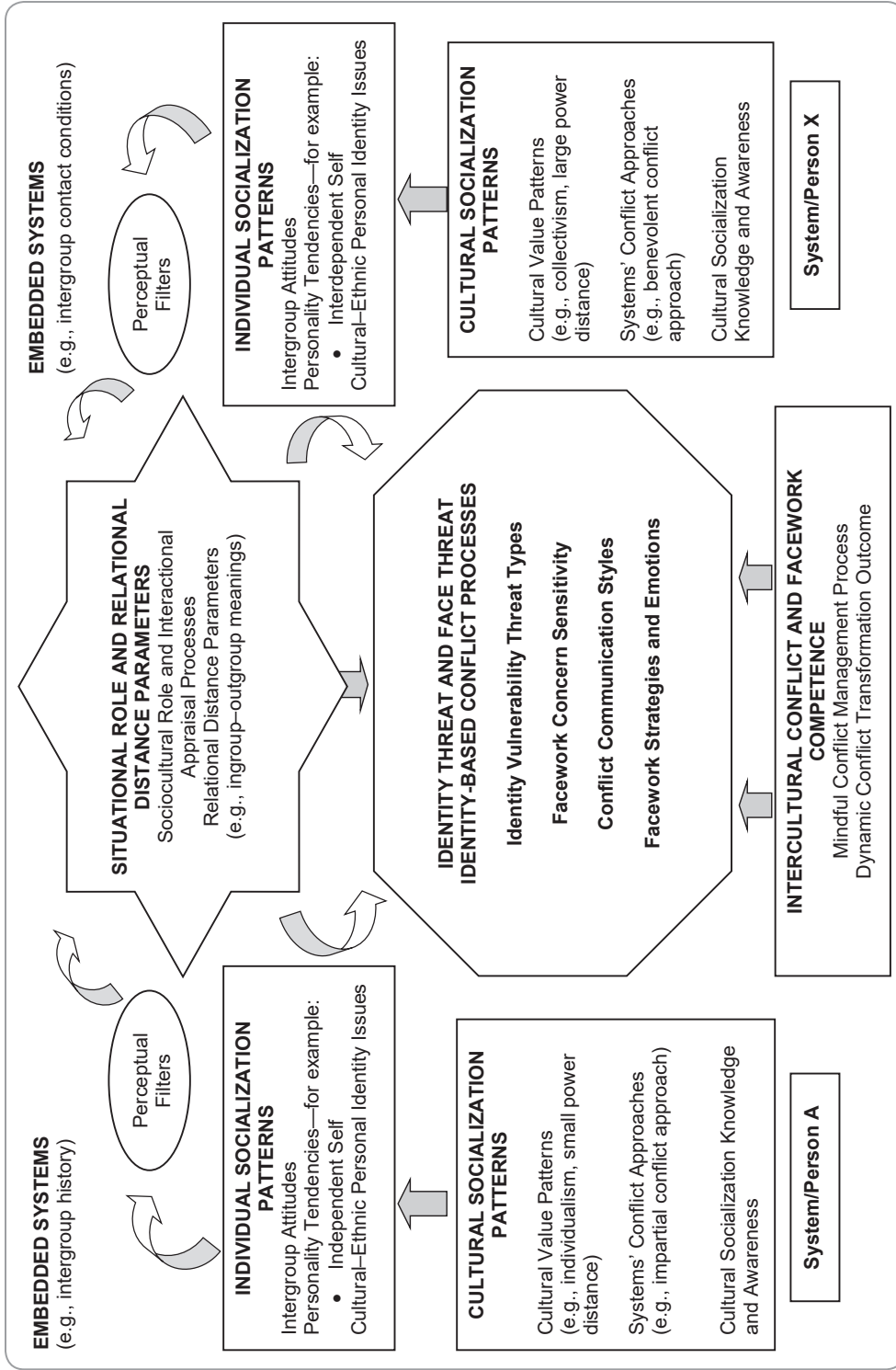


FIGURE 10.1. A culture-based situational conflict model. Data from Ting-Toomey (2009b).

the societal, organizational, and individual levels of analysis. Basically, *individualism* refers to the broad value tendencies of a culture in emphasizing the importance of the I identity over the we identity, individual rights over group interests, and individuated-focused emotions over social-focused emotions. In comparison, *collectivism* refers to the broad value tendencies of a culture in emphasizing the importance of the we identity over the I identity, ingroup interests over individual desires, and other-face concerns over self-face concerns. These contrasting value tendencies are manifested in everyday interpersonal, family, school, and workplace social interactions.

Beyond individualism–collectivism, power distance is another important value dimension that is critical to understanding workplace conflict interaction competence (Carl, Gupta, & Javidan, 2004). *Power distance*, from the workplace values' analysis standpoint, refers to the way in which a corporate culture approaches and deals with status differences and social hierarchies. Individuals in *small power distance* corporate cultures tend to value equal power distributions, symmetrical relations, a mixture of positive and negative messages in feedback sessions, and equitable reward and cost distributions based on individual merits. However, individuals in *large power distance* corporate cultures tend to accept unequal power distributions, asymmetrical relations, authoritative feedback from the experts or high-status individuals, and rewards and sanctions based on rank, role, status, age, and perhaps even gender identity.

In combining both individualism–collectivism and small-large power distance value patterns, we can discuss four predominant corporate value dimension approaches along the two grids of the individualism–collectivism continuum and the small-large power distance continuum: impartial, status achievement, benevolent, and communal (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001; see Figure 10.2).

The *impartial approach* reflects a combination of an individualistic and small power distance value orientation; the *status-achievement approach* consists of a combination of an individualistic and large power distance value orientation; the *benevolent approach* reflects a combination of a collectivistic and large power distance value orientation; and the *communal approach* consists of a combination of collectivistic and small power distance value orientation.

Thus, managers and employees around the world have different expectations of how a workplace conflict episode should be interpreted and resolved—depending on whether the workplace culture emphasizes impartial, status achievement, benevolent, or communal interaction rituals. More specifically, for example, in the *impartial approach* to workplace conflict, the predominant values of this approach are personal freedom and equality (Smith, Dugan, Peterson, & Leung, 1998). From this conflict approach lens, if an interpersonal conflict arises between a manager and an employee, the manager has a tendency to deal with the conflict in an upfront and direct manner. Specific feedback and concrete justifications are expected from the manager. Concurrently, an employee is also expected to articulate clearly his or her conflict viewpoints and justify his or her conflict concerns. In an equal-rank employee–employee conflict, the manager would generally play the “impartial” third-party role and would encourage the two employees to talk things over and find their own workable solution. Both the

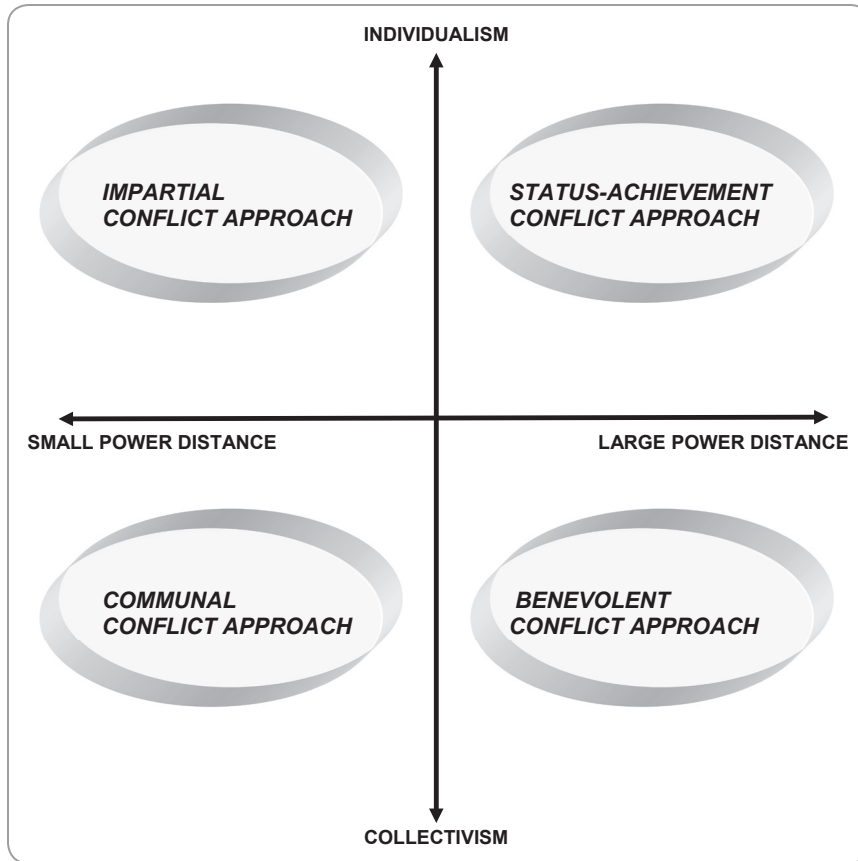


FIGURE 10.2. Corporate values' cultural grid: Four conflict approaches.

manager and the employees would rely on the principle of objectivity or a fact-finding approach to resolve a conflict situation. Managers in large corporations in Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Norway appear to practice the impartial communication approach (Hofstede, 2001).

Alternatively, from a *status-achievement approach* to conflict, the predominant values of this approach are personal freedom and earned inequality. For example, in France, employees often feel they have the freedom to voice their grievances directly and to complain about their managers in the workplace (Storti, 2001), but they do not expect their managers to change much because of status difference. The managers also expect conflict accommodations from their subordinates. When the conflict involves two same-rank coworkers, the use of upfront conflict tactics to aggression tactics is a hallmark of the status-achievement approach. Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) observed that the U.S. management style often follows a conjoint impartial approach and a status

achievement approach because the larger U.S. culture emphasizes that through individual hard work, personal ambition, and fierce competitiveness, status and rank can be earned and status cues can be displayed with pride and credibility. Unfortunately, while much research work has been conducted in the United States, little research studies exist concerning eastern European, African, and Asian or Latin American conflict management styles.

In comparison, many managers in other parts of the globe tend to see themselves as interdependent and at a different status level than others. These managers think of themselves as individuals with interlocking connections with others and as members of a hierarchical network. They practice the *benevolent approach* of management style (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). The term “benevolent” implies that many managers play the authoritative parental role in approaching or motivating their employees. Two values that pervade this approach are obligation to others and asymmetrical interaction treatment. Countries that predominantly reflect the benevolent approach include most Latin and South American nations (e.g., Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, Chile), most Asian nations (e.g., India, Japan, China, South Korea), most Arab nations (e.g., Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan), and most African nations (e.g., Nigeria, Uganda; Hofstede, 2001). For many of the large East Asian corporations, Confucian-driven hierarchical principles promote a parent–child relationship between manager and subordinate. However, more cross-cultural studies on international management and intercultural communication are needed to understand how the concept of “benevolence” plays out differently in collectivistic cultural communities, as many of these communities are in flux thanks to accelerated globalization and technological influence.

Under the benevolent conflict approach, while a manager can confront his or her employees to motivate them to work harder, only rarely will subordinates directly challenge the manager’s authority or face during a conflict interaction process. However, subordinates might resort to passive–aggressive or sabotage conflict strategies to deal with the workplace conflicts. In dealing with low-premium conflicts, managers would consider “smooth-over” relational tactics or subtle face-pressuring tactics to gain employees’ compliance or cooperation. However, in dealing with high-premium conflicts, benevolent managers may act in a directive or autocratic and controlling manner. They might also practice preferential treatment or particularistic value by treating senior employees more favorably than junior employees.

The *communal approach* is the least common of the four conflict approaches (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). The values that encompass this approach are the recognition of authentic interdependent connection to others and genuine interpersonal equality. Costa Rica is the only country in the world that fits this approach (Hofstede, 2001). Nonprofit mediation centers or successful start-up small businesses also appear to practice some communal decision-making behaviors and participatory democracy, so that everyone has a say and also takes turns to rotate leadership. Similarly, feminist principles include holistic and integrative problem solving and the importance of engaging in mutual face-sensitive, collaborative dialogue (Barge, 2006; Barge & Andreas, 2013).

Individual Socialization Patterns

Individual socialization patterns can include the study of the personality tendencies of independent self and interdependent self. Self-construal is a major individual factor that focuses on individual variation within and between cultures. *Self-construal* is one's self-image and consists of an independent and interdependent self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 1998).

The independent construal of self involves the view that an individual is a unique entity with an individuated repertoire of feelings, cognitions, and motivations. In contrast, the interdependent construal of self involves an emphasis on the importance of relational or ingroup connectedness. Self-construal is the individual-level equivalent of the cultural variability dimension of individualism–collectivism. For example, Gudykunst et al. (1996) argued that independent self-construal is predominantly associated with people in individualistic cultures, while interdependent self-construal is predominantly associated with people of collectivistic cultures. However, both dimensions of self exist within each individual, regardless of cultural identity. In individualistic cultural communities, there may be more communication situations that evoke the need for independent-based decisions and behaviors. In collectivistic communities, there may be more situations that demand the sensitivity for interdependent-based decisions and actions. These self-construals should have a profound influence on the expectancies of what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate communication responses in a wide variety of conflict interactional situations across a diverse range of cultures.

For example, in a cross-national conflict study in four nations, Oetzel and Ting-Toomey (2003) found that, on the one hand, independent self-construal is associated positively with self-face concern and the use of dominating/competing conflict strategies. Interdependent self-construal, on the other hand, is associated positively with other-face concern and the use of avoiding and integrating conflict tactics. It would appear that independent self-construal fosters the use of direct, upfront, and low-context assertive to aggressive communication responses, while interdependent self-construal emphasizes indirect, circumspective, high-context, and accommodating and nonconfrontational communication interaction patterns.

Situational Role and Relational Distance Parameters

Situational Role Parameters

The culture-based situational conflict model also emphasizes the importance of understanding the expectancy features of each communication domain such as workplace/organizational, classroom/school, community or neighborhood, and family or intimate relationship domain. For example, three of the possible factors that moderate the activation of an independent versus an interdependent self in a conflict communication episode can include a general situational appraisal process, a sociocultural role appraisal process, and an interactional appraisal process analysis (Ting-Toomey & Takai, 2006).

A *general situational appraisal process* can include an assessment of the degree of formality of the setting, the mood/climate of the situation, artifact displays, the arrangement of seating, and the room design where the conflict negotiation will take place. A *sociocultural role appraisal process* can include an assessment of the role expectancies between the conflict parties such as professional role identities, cultural–ethnic identity issues, and other salient sociocultural membership identity concerns. The appropriate role displays and enactments would greatly influence the effective development of trust, conflict goal movements, and collaborative versus competitive conflict outlook. An *interactional appraisal process* includes an analysis of anticipated rewards/costs/alternative calculations, appropriate language usage, culture-sensitive interaction channels, relevant conflict openings, convergent relational rhythms, and the conflict competence skillsets needed to manage the conflict flexibly and adaptively.

Relational Distance Parameters

Many relational distance factors are important in competent intercultural conflict negotiation, such as how a particular cultural community defines *ingroup* and *outgroup* and what constitutes appropriate ingroup versus outgroup conflict symbolic exchange processes. Take, for example, from the Japanese communication lens, Midooka (1990), who categorized four groups of relationships: the ingroup consisting of *kino-okenai-kankei* and *nakama* and the outgroup consisting of *najimi-no-tanin* and *muen-no-kankei*.

Kino-okenai-kankei (“intimate ingroups”) consists of intimate or equal-status relationships in which communication is causal, open, and direct. Examples of such relationships are best friends, family/siblings, close relatives, childhood buddies, and dating relationships. In these relationships, differences in age or seniority are superseded by intimacy, and no hierarchical rituals, especially in the “best friends” category, are heeded. Thus, in Japanese “best friends” conflict situations, the process can involve more heart-to-heart talks to direct conflict self-disclosure. *Nakama* (“familiar interactive ingroups”), in contrast, are close-contact ingroup relations, especially in terms of everyday familiarity, yet not so much as to override status differences. These typically include everyday colleagues in the same workplace, and here maximum care must be taken to observe interpersonal rituals and preserve relational harmony even under stressful conflict conditions. A certain level of decorum or formality is expected to be maintained in this particular relationship category.

Najimi-no-tanin (“acquaintance interactive outgroups”) refers to a less intimate, acquaintance relationship, characterized more as an outgroup rather than as an ingroup relationship—for example, acquaintance colleagues in other universities or a friend of a close friend who needs a favor. While interacting in a *tannin* (a familiar yet distant person) relationship, communication behaviors toward this “familiar” outgroup member would differ greatly depending on the perceived value or reward/cost appraisal process of the relationship. However, since Japan is an overall group-oriented society, social ties have interlocking importance and wider interdependent implications from one spectrum of the society to the next (Ting-Toomey & Takai, 2006). If the relationship

poses a threat to one's public face, one is still careful to observe appropriate interaction formality and diplomatic conflict rituals. Cautious formality is exercised more so in the *tanin* situation than in the *nakama*, as one misstep can be costly and can ruin one's reputation or face beyond just the outgroup circle. Finally, *muen-no-kankei* ("stranger outgroups") indicates a purely outgroup, stranger relationship, also referred to as *aka-no-tanin*. Since strangers are way beyond the bounds of accepted social or personalized ties, often no form of considerate behavior needs to be extended between the stranger-pair lacking an emotional tie. Indifference can be part of the conflict ritual in this peripheral outgroup category.

In sum, the factors in the situational role and relational distance parameters have a strong impact on what appropriate and effective conflict styles and facework behaviors should be used in conflict situations in different cultural communities. An interculturally competent conflict communicator would need to increase his or her awareness concerning self and others' cultural and individual socialization process and mindfully connect the value pattern orientations with situational and relational expectancy issues in the adaptive intercultural conflict exchange process.

Identity-Based Threats and Face-Threatening Process

Intercultural conflict interaction processes can include study of conflict communication styles and patterns that are used in a conflict episode. Competent conflict negotiators also need to have a firm grasp of ESP factors that create additional anxiety and uncertainty in the conflict situation. Owing to space limitations, the discussion will focus on some of the conditions that induce identity threats in intergroup conflict situations and also outline a brief background to the development of FNT, all of which are important in developing intercultural conflict competence.

Integrated Threat Theory

Stephan, Stephan, and Gudykunst (1999) have collaborated for many years and mutually influenced development of ITT and AUM (Gudykunst, 2005a, 2005b). ITT (Stephan, 1999; Stephan & Stephan, 2000, 2001) fuses various affective theories in the social identity and intergroup prejudice literature and emphasizes one key causal factor in prejudice: feelings of fear or threat. Feelings of fear or identity threat prompt intergroup animosities and conflicts and are closely aligned with Gudykunst's (2005a) position on anxiety management issues and ineffective communication concepts.

ITT is a macro-level conflict theory that explains intergroup or intercultural antagonism. Macro-level theory refers to the "big-picture" socioeconomic, institutional, and/or historical factors that frame a society's intergroup relations. According to ITT, the four antecedent conditions of perceived threat types are prior conflict history, ignorance or knowledge gap, contact, and status. First, according to Stephan (1999), *intergroup conflict history* is "the single most important seedbed of prejudice" (p. 32). More

importantly, past intergroup conflict history serves as a backdrop to current intergroup contact relations. The more damaging and protracted the past conflict, the more perceived threats and prejudiced attitudes arise in intergroup relations.

Second, *intergroup knowledge gap or ignorance* of the outgroup refers to the fact that when intergroup members know little of each other or think they know too much (i.e., based on their overgeneralized, negative stereotypical lens), then they are likely to perceive each other as threatening in the context of the intergroup hostility situation. Here, the one group is likely to perceive the other group as threatening in the context of the intergroup hostility situation.

Third, the *type* (positive vs. negative) *and frequency of intergroup contact* also affect feelings of security or insecurity, familiarity or unfamiliarity, and trust or mistrust between members of different identity groups (Ting-Toomey, 1993, 2005a). The more positive and personalized the contact, the more likely members of both groups can see the “human face” beyond the broad-based identity group categories. The more negative and surface level the contact, the greater the perceived negative stereotypes and prejudice justifications.

Fourth, *societal/group membership power status* refers to both institutional power dominance/resistance issues and individual power perception issues. On the institutional power level, dominant group members in a society can be perceived as controlling the key political, economic, and media functioning of a society. On the individual power level, it can refer to high- or low-status perceptions based on group memberships in a society or institutional setting. Often, “high-status” or dominant group members may want to reinforce their own power positions to maintain the status quo. They might also worry about hostility or competition from “low-status” members. Because of their long history of inequality, injustice, prejudice, and unfair treatment, minority group members might indeed resent the power institutions and challenge the dominant group members. The wider the cultural relation and perceived power schisms, the more anxiety or fear is generated in escalatory conflict cycles.

The four basic identity threat types that lead to escalatory prejudice and conflict cycles are intergroup anxiety, rigid or negative stereotypes, tangible/realistic threats, and perceived value/symbolic threats. ITT also emphasizes *subjectively* perceived threats posed by the other “enemy” group (Stephan, 1999). The first type of threat, *intergroup anxiety/anticipated consequences*, often arises in unfamiliar intergroup encounters (Gudykunst, 1995, 2005b). In intergroup encounters, people can be especially anxious about anticipated negative consequences such as negative psychological consequences (e.g., confusion, frustration, feeling incompetent), negative behavioral consequences (e.g., being exploited, harmed), and negative evaluations by outgroup members (e.g., rejection or being identified with marginalized outgroup members). Individuals anticipate intergroup anxiety because they are concerned about potential face threats or about the possibility that their identities will be stigmatized, embarrassed, rejected, or even excluded in intergroup contact situations (Jackson, 1999, 2002).

The second type of threat, *rigid or negative stereotypes*, poses a threat to the ingroup (especially the dominant ingroup) because ingroup members typically learn

the negative images and traits of outgroups through the mass media and secondhand sources. These negative images can generate negative self-fulfilling prophecies and expectations and thus create negative intergroup encountering processes and outcomes. Rigid positive stereotypes (e.g., the minority model) can also be considered a potential intergroup threat because of the fear that this particular group is taking over education, technology, and health care. Overly positive and negative stereotypes can activate both dominant–minority and minority–minority intergroup conflicts in a multicultural society.

The third type of threat, *tangible/realistic threats*, refers to perceived content threats from outgroups such as the battle for territory, wealth, scarce resources, and natural resources, as well as perceived threats and competitions involving economics, housing, education, and politics.

The fourth type, *perceived values/symbolic threats*, is founded in cultural–ethnic membership differences in morals, beliefs, values, norms, standards, and attitudes. These are threats to the dominant ingroup’s “standard way of living” and “standard way of behaving.” Outgroups who hold worldviews and values that are different from those of ingroups threaten the ingroup’s core value system, which may then lead to fossilized ingroup ethnocentrism and outgroup avoidance or rejection.

Research studies testing the four threat types demonstrate that three of the four threat types (intergroup anxiety, tangible threats, and values/symbolic threats) consistently predicted prejudice and attitudinal animosity from mainstream dominant groups (e.g., European Americans) toward minority groups (e.g., African Americans, Asian Americans, and Mexican Americans; Hecht et al., 2003; Orbe et al., 2013; Plant & Devine, 2003; Stephan, Diaz-Loving, & Duran, 2000) and also immigrant groups (e.g., Cuban American immigrants; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Stephan et al., 1999) in a multicultural society.

In sum, intergroup anxiety and fear can color our expectations and intensify our perceived identity threat levels when we are dealing with culturally dissimilar strangers or what we consider our “enemies.” Using historically tainted glasses and competing for scarce resources, members from dominant and minority groups might view each other with mistrust, suspicion, and disrespect, and thereby adopt an annihilation outlook (e.g., vicious verbal attacks and name-calling cycles). Intercultural or intergroup conflict often entails the back-and-forth threatening messages, face-defensive moves, and face-recuperating strategies.

Conflict Face Negotiation Theory: A Brief History

Intercultural conflict often involves face-losing and face-saving behaviors. *Face* refers to a claimed sense of desired social self-image in a relational or international setting (Ting-Toomey, 2004, 2005b). Loss of face occurs when we are being treated in such a way that our identity claims are being directly or indirectly challenged or ignored. It can occur on an individual or identity group level, or both. Repeated loss and threat of face often lead to escalating conflict spirals or an impasse in the conflict negotiation process.

In response to the heavy reliance on the individualistic Western perspective in framing various conflict approaches, Ting-Toomey (1985, 1988; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998) advanced a cross-cultural conflict FNT to provide a collectivistic Asian perspective designed to broaden various conflict orientations. FNT (Ting-Toomey, 1985, 1988, 2005b, 2015c) explains the culture-based, individual-based, and situational factors that shape communicators' management of conflicts in diverse situations. The outcome components of FNT also address the competence components and criteria needed to arrive at an intercultural harmonizing state.

"*Face*" is generally conceptualized as how we want others to see us and treat us and how we actually treat others in association with their social self-conception expectations. In everyday interactions, individuals constantly make conscious or semiconscious choices concerning face-saving, face maintenance, and face-honoring issues across interpersonal, workplace, and international contexts. While *face* is about a claimed sense of social interactional identity *in situ*, *facework* is about verbal and non-verbal behaviors that protect/save self-face, other-face, mutual-face, or communal face.

Research on facework can be found in a wide range of disciplines, including anthropology, psychology, sociology, linguistics/English as a Second Language, management, international diplomacy, and human communication studies. The concept of face has been used to explain linguistic politeness rituals, apology acts, embarrassment situations, requesting behaviors, and conflict interactions, among others. The formation of FNT was influenced by Hsien Chin Hu's (1944) anthropological essay, "The Chinese Concept of *Face*," Erving Goffman's (1955) sociological article on "On *Face-Work*," and Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's (1987) linguistics monograph, *Politeness*.

The study of intercultural conflict communication involves, at least in part, cultural group membership differences and identity/face dissonance. Intercultural harmony can be experienced by increasing our awareness and knowledge of how different cultural perspectives enact various face concerns and engage in different conflict styles. Intercultural harmony can be attained by integrating culture-sensitive knowledge, mindfulness, and adaptive facework practice in managing the problematic conflict situation skillfully and arriving at a peace-building state.

Conflict Face Negotiation Theory: Core Assumptions, Key Conditions, and Research Findings

Core Assumptions

In 1985, the introductory conflict face negotiation theoretic framework emphasized the functional connection between Edward T. Hall's (1976, 1983) low-context and high-context cultural schema with different conflict styles (Ting-Toomey, 1985). Altogether, eight theoretical propositions were introduced. Among these propositions, Proposition 5 stated that individuals from low-context cultures tend to have a direct, confrontational conflict attitude and style, and Proposition 6 stated that individuals from high-context

cultures tend to be characterized by indirect/tactful, nonconfrontational attitude and style.

In 1988, the formal seed version of FNT became available—with 5 core assumptions and 12 theoretical propositions—stating the relationship between individualism and collectivism (Hofstede, 1991, 2001; Triandis, 1995, 2002) and self-face concern and other-face concern issues. Four particular facework types were also identified: self-concern and other-concern autonomy face (“negative face”), and self-concern and other-concern approval face (“positive face”) maintenance strategies. Furthermore, specific conflict communication styles were delineated: dominating versus smoothing/obliging, and direct closure–orientation versus indirect avoidance style (Ting-Toomey, 1988). A cultural variability framework of “I identity” and “we identity” cultures was used to connect culture-level analysis with face concerns and conflict styles. For example, Proposition 9 stated that members of individualistic, low-context cultures tend to use more dominating or controlling strategies to manage conflict than do members of collectivistic, high-context cultures; and Proposition 10 stated that members of collectivistic, high-context cultures tend to use more obliging or smoothing strategies to manage conflict than do members of individualistic, low-context cultures;

In 1998, a second formal version of the conflict FNT with 7 assumptions and 32 propositions was issued (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998), accentuating the importance of investigating individual-level factors with face concern issues and conflict styles. In addition, three key conflict content competence dimensions (culture-sensitive knowledge, mindfulness, and conflict interaction skills), together with four facework competence criteria (perceived appropriateness, effectiveness, mutual adaptability, and satisfaction), were incorporated. In 2005, based on the results of several large cross-cultural conflict data sets, a third formal version of the FNT was presented. This version maintained the 7 core assumptions and updated 24 theoretical propositions (scaled back from Version 2’s 32 propositions; Ting-Toomey, 2005a).

The seven core FNT assumptions (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998; Ting-Toomey, 2005b) are as follows:

1. People in all cultures try to maintain and negotiate face in all communication situations.
2. The concept of face is especially problematic in emotionally threatening or identity-vulnerable situations when the situated identities of the communicators are called into question.
3. The cultural value spectrums of individualism–collectivism and small/large power distance shape facework concerns and styles.
4. Individualism and collectivism value patterns shape members’ preferences for self-oriented face concern versus other-oriented or mutual-oriented concern.
5. Small and large power distance value patterns shape members’ preferences for horizontal-based facework versus vertical-based facework.

6. The value dimensions, in conjunction with individual, relational, and situational factors, influence the use of particular facework behaviors in particular cultural scenes.
7. Intercultural facework competence refers to the optimal integration of knowledge, mindfulness, and communication skills in managing vulnerable identity-based conflict situations appropriately, effectively, and adaptively.

Key Conditions

When an individual's face image is being threatened in a conflict situation, she or he likely experiences identity-based frustration, emotional vulnerability, anger, defensiveness, hurt—and even a thirst for vengeance. The threats to face can be on a group membership or individual level. In 2005, in a third formal version of the FNT (“The Matrix of Updated Face Negotiation Theory”; Ting-Toomey, 2005b), five triggering conditions are added to predict the activation and the valence direction of an intercultural *face-threatening process (FTP)*: First, the more the culturally appropriate facework rule is violated, the more severe the perceived FTP. Second, the larger the cultural distance between the conflict parties, the more mistrust or misunderstanding cumulate in the FTP. Third, the more important the perceived conflict topic or imposition of the conflict demand, as interpreted from distinctive cultural angles, the more severe the perceived FTP. Fourth, the more power the conflict initiator has over the conflict recipient, the more severe the perceived FTP by the recipient. Fifth, the more harm the FTP produces, the more time and effort needed to repair the FTP—self-face protective or defensive concern becomes incrementally more salient.

For example, individuals are likely to move toward self-face-saving and ingroup communal face-saving as they perceive escalating face-threatening conditions directed at them or their salient ingroups. Cultural worldview perspectives, individual personality tendencies, relational parameters, and situational pressures frame the underlying interpretations of a severe intercultural “face-threatening” interaction episode.

Essential Constructs and Related Research Findings

Because of space limitations, this section reports only those research findings related to FNT from 2000 to 2015; for earlier FNT-related conflict research results, consult the overview articles in the FNT versions (Ting-Toomey, 2005b; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998) and theoretical variations and research articles in Ting-Toomey and Cole (1990: intergroup facework diplomatic communication—Cuban Missile Crisis case study); Ting-Toomey et al. (1991: a five-culture study—China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and the United States); Trubisky, Ting-Toomey, and Lin (1991: a two-culture study—Taiwan and the United States); Cocroft and Ting-Toomey (1994: Japan and the United States); Ting-Toomey (1994: an edited book on cross-cultural facework); and Gao (1998) and Gao and Ting-Toomey (1998: a coauthored book on Chinese communication patterns).

Multiple Facets of Face Concerns

The struggle for face respect or face deference in a conflict episode consists of three facets: (1) locus of face—concern for self, other, or both, plus communal face; (2) face valence—whether face is being defended, maintained, or honored, and (3) temporality—whether face is being restored or proactively protected. Locus of face is the primary dimension of face that has been tested extensively; this face facet shapes the direction of the subsequent conflict messages (Ting-Toomey, 2005b; Ting-Toomey & Takai, 2006).

On one hand, *self-face* is the protective concern for one's image when one's own face is threatened in the conflict situation. *Other-face*, on the other hand, is the concern for accommodating the other conflict party's image in the conflict crisis situation. *Mutual-face* is the concern for both parties' images and/or the "identity expectancy image" of the relationship (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). *Communal face* is the concern to uphold ingroup membership face in assessing ingroup/outgroup face expectancies and reactions (see, for example, Ting-Toomey & Cole, 1990, on intergroup diplomatic communication; and Dorjee, Baig, & Ting-Toomey, 2013, on honor killing; see also other scholarly conceptualizations of face concern and facework, including Bond, 1992; Chen, 2014; Cupach & Metts, 1994). From an intergroup perspective, four face concerns can be imagined: ingroup membership, outgroup membership, intergroup membership, and community membership (for details, see Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2014). These face concerns can explain why group members use different communicative strategies in intergroup facework negotiation setting.

More specifically, in a direct empirical test of the theory (Oetzel, Garcia, & Ting-Toomey, 2008; Oetzel, Myers, Meares, & Lara, 2003; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003; Oetzel et al., 2001; Ting-Toomey et al., 1991), the research program with multiple empirical studies tested the underlying assumption of the face negotiation theory that face is an explanatory mechanism for cultural membership's influence on conflict behavior. For example, in Oetzel et al.'s (2001) international study, a questionnaire was administered to 768 participants in four national cultures (China, Germany, Japan, and the United States) in their respective languages asking them to recall and describe a recent interpersonal conflict with someone of "equal status or higher status," or with someone "very close or not very close." However, since the situational characteristics did not have a strong effect on conflict behaviors in the college student respondents, results were reported as overall findings of the FNT.

The major findings of the studies are as follows: First, cultural individualism–collectivism had direct effects on conflict styles, as well as mediated effects through self-construal and face concerns. Second, *self-face concern* was associated positively with dominating style, and *other-face concern* was associated positively with avoiding and integrating styles. Third, German respondents reported the frequent use of direct-confrontational facework strategies and did not care much for avoidance facework tactics; Japanese reported the use of different pretending strategies to act as if the conflict situation did not exist; Chinese engaged in a variety of avoiding, obliging, and passive–aggressive facework tactics; and U.S. Americans reported the use of upfront

expressions of feelings and remaining calm as facework strategies to handle problematic conflict situations. In a recent study, Zhang, Ting-Toomey, Dorjee, and Lee (2012) tested FNT in an intimate relationship setting. In their investigation of conflict styles in China and the United States, they found that Chinese individuals preferred a loyalty conflict response in intimate relationships, whereas U.S. individuals favored an action-orientation exit strategy or overt anger expression strategy in dealing with emotional transgression issues.

Facework Strategies and Conflict Styles

Facework is the communication strategy used to uphold, support, and challenge self-face and other-face identity issues in a conflict situation. Facework is linked closely with identity and relationship conflict goals. Facework can refer to identity-sensitive verbal and nonverbal messages of a broad conflict style. It can also stand alone or apart from an interactive conflict negotiation process, as facework behaviors can be enacted before, during, or after a conflict confrontation process.

Three broad types of facework have been identified: dominating, integrating, and avoiding (Oetzel, Ting-Toomey, Yokochi, Masumoto, & Takai, 2000). *Dominating facework* includes being aggressive, defending a position, and expressing an opinion. *Integrating facework* includes problem-solving, displaying identity respect, private discussion of the conflict, apologizing, and remaining calm using self-discipline during the conflict. *Avoiding facework* includes pretending that the conflict does not exist, passive-aggressive sabotaging tactics, giving in to the other's position, and utilizing a third party to help manage the conflict situation (Oetzel et al., 2000; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001).

While facework strategies can be used as preemptive, ongoing, or retrospective maneuvers to explain away a conflict situation, conflict styles refer to patterned conflict communication responses used during a conflict episode. The five-style conflict model represents one way of conceptualizing these different conflict style tendencies (Rahim, 1983, 1992) (see Figure 10.3).

The *dominating style* (or *competitive/controlling*) emphasizes conflict tactics that push for one's own position above and beyond the other person's interest. It includes aggressive, defensive, controlling, and intimidating tactics. The *avoiding style* involves dodging the topic, the other party, or the situation altogether. This style includes behavior ranging from glossing over the topic and denying that conflict exists to leaving the conflict scene. The *obliging* (or *accommodating*) style is characterized by a high concern for the other person's conflict interest above and beyond one's own conflict interest. Individuals tend to use the obliging style when they value their relationship more than their personal conflict goal. They tend to either smooth over the conflict or give in to the wishes of their conflict partners. The *compromising style*, however, involves a give-and-take concession approach to reach a midpoint agreement concerning the conflict issue. In using the compromising style, individuals use fairness appeals, trade-off suggestions, or reach other quick, short-term solutions. It is an intermediate style

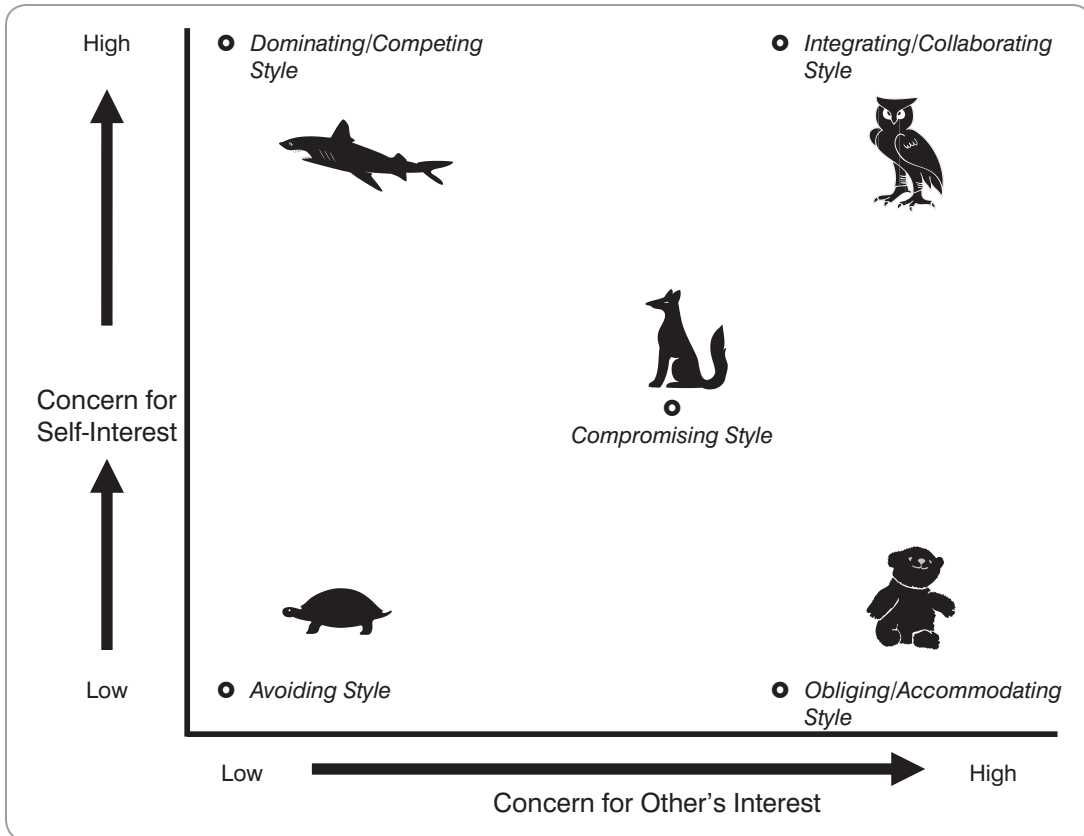


FIGURE 10.3. A five-style conflict model: A Western approach.

resulting in some gains and some losses for each party (Rahim, 1983, 1992). Finally, the *integrating (or collaborative style)* reflects a willingness and commitment to find a mutual-interest solution and involves a high concern for both self-interest and the other person's interest in the conflict situation. In adopting an integrative style, individuals tend to use nonevaluative descriptive messages, qualifying statements, and mutual-interest clarifying questions to seek common-ground solutions.

The multiple versions of FNT development presented in 1988–2005 research studies repeatedly noted that in the U.S.-centric conflict style research literature, obliging and avoiding conflict styles are often interpreted as negatively disengaged styles (i.e., acting either too passively or indifferently or fleeing the conflict scene altogether, with no active resolution). However, according to multiple cross-cultural research data sets, many Asian and Latin collectivists (e.g., see Ting-Toomey & Cole, 1990; Oetzel et al., 2001, 2003) do not necessarily perceive these conflict styles as negative. For example, collectivists often use these two conflict communication styles to maintain other-face

interests and ingroup harmony. As seen through the collectivistic cultural lens, obliging and avoiding conflict styles can be viewed as two constructive, face-sensitive conflict styles for building relationship rapport or buying time to handle conflict competently.

In addition, from the U.S.-centric individualistic conflict-style lens, use of the compromising conflict style is an expedient way of giving up something to achieve a 50–50, middle-of-the-road split solution (“win some, lose some”) and leaving both conflict parties potentially frustrated. However, for collectivists, the “compromising style” is often viewed as a long-term conflict relational commitment strategy to gain trust and build further relationship favors (see the discussion of the conflict style in Ting-Toomey, 1988, 2005b; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2002; see also Kim & Leung, 2000).

In expanding the five-conflict style model to be inclusive of ethnic pluralism issues in a heterogeneous society, three tested cross-cultural conflict styles were added to the classic five styles: emotional expression, third-party help, and passive–aggressive neglect style (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000) (see Figure 10.4).

Emotional expression refers to relying on emotions and gut-level responses to guide the self-assertive conflict expression approach and style. *Third-party help* involves seeking help from someone who is not a conflict partner for advice and for mediation of the escalating conflict episode and reflects a moderate concern for self-face and moderate concern for the other-face stylistic lens. *Neglect* refers to use of passive–aggressive conflict tactics to sidestep the conflict but at the same time getting

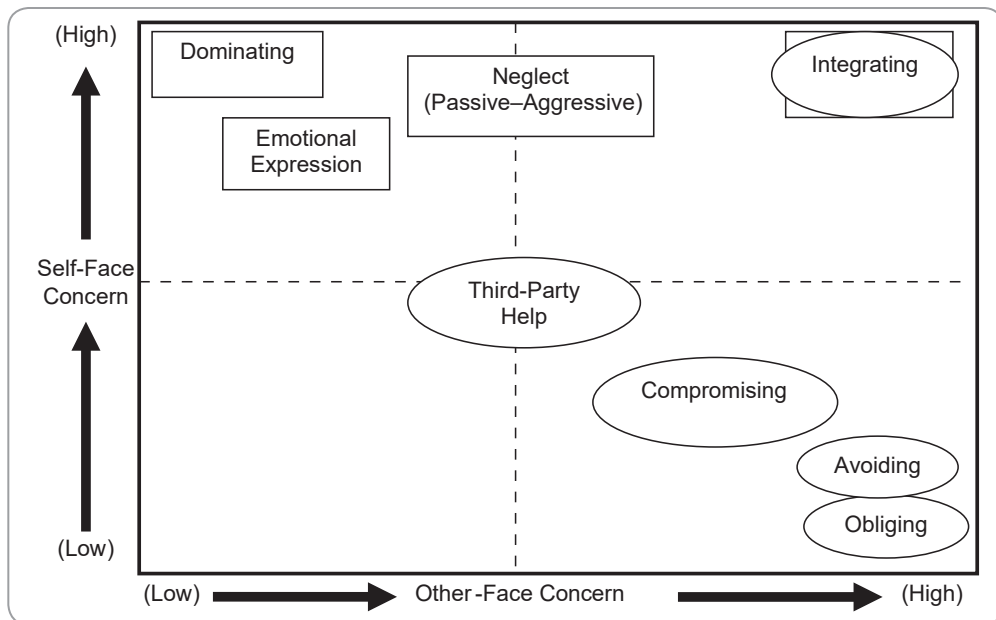


FIGURE 10.4. An eight-style conflict grid: An intercultural approach. Data from Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001).

an individual's emotion arousal reaction from the other conflict party. It also reflects a high concern for own aggrieved self-face and moderate concern for other-face reaction. More notably, according to the intercultural conflict style approach, the avoidance conflict style moves from "low concern for self- and other-face" to "low concern for self-face but high concern for other-face." Moreover, the compromising conflict style also dips toward "high concern for other-face sensitivity."

In testing FNT within the pluralistic U.S. culture, multiethnic conflict research has uncovered distinctive conflict interaction styles in relationship to particular cultural–ethnic identity salience issues (Ting-Toomey, 1986, 2005b; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). To illustrate, in the U.S. cultural context, it was found that Latino/a American and Asian American respondents tended to use more avoidance and sought third-party help conflict strategies more so than did African Americans; Asian Americans also used more avoidance tactics than European Americans. African American females tended to confront intimate relationship conflicts more readily than European American females. More interestingly, individuals who identified strongly with mainstream U.S. culture used more integrating, compromising, and emotionally expressive conflict strategies than individuals who identified weakly with the larger U.S. culture. Concurrently, individual respondents who indicated strong ethnic identity affiliation also expressed higher use of integrative conflict style than respondents with weak ethnic identity affiliations.

Bicultural individuals (i.e., those individuals who identified strongly with both the larger mainstream U.S. culture and their ethnic group membership) also tended to use more integrating and compromising conflict strategies than marginal identity individuals. Beyond testing cultural and ethnic identity distinctiveness issues, in the early and mid-2000s, the FNT research program also focused on testing the individual-level prediction of face concerns and conflict styles in diverse relationship types (e.g., interpersonal, family, and workplace) and negotiated situations (e.g., ingroup versus outgroup situations; role status difference and power imbalance situations).

Cultural and Individual Variability and Facework Strategies

While research studies in the 1990s and early 2000s focused on the relationship between the value dimensions of culture-based individualism–collectivism and face concern strategies and conflict styles, the mid-2000 to present conflict studies have rediscovered the small and large power distance values and related these value dimensions to facework expectancies and practices. For example, Merkin (2006) integrated small/large power distance value dimensions with individualism–collectivism value dimensions in explaining face-threatening response messages and conflict styles in multiple cultures. She found that high-status individuals from large power distance cultures used both direct and indirect facework strategies to deal with face-threatening situations—depending on whether they were delivering positive or negative messages. Furthermore, Kaushal and Kwantes (2006) found that the dominant conflict style of "high concern for self/low concern for others" was positively associated with both

vertical individualism and vertical collectivism. The notion of “face” or “claimed social interactive identity” is considered one key domain in the larger competent power distance facework negotiation process.

Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2013; see also Smith et al., 1998; Triandis, 1995), in combining both individualism–collectivism and small/large power distance value patterns, identified four predominant international workplace conflict approaches: impartial, status-achievement, benevolent, and communal (see earlier discussion in this chapter). Depending on whether international employees are encountering equal or unequal status conflicts, different face concerns and conflict styles are predicted. Leung and Cohen (2011) proposed using the CuPS approach (culture \times person \times situation) in which within-culture and between-culture variations on cultural and individual differences concerning the concepts of dignity, honor, and face can be explained in combination with various situational priming experiments.

Independent versus Interdependent Self-Construal

Self-construal is one’s overall self-image consisting of an independent and an interdependent self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 1998). Both dimensions of self exist within each individual and co-vary with particular facework situations, regardless of cultural identity. The way individuals conceive of their overall self-images—-independent versus interdependent selves, or both—should have a profound influence on what constitute appropriate or inappropriate conflict communication responses in widely varying conflict situations. In a more recent study, the role of relational self-construal was also added to test face concern issues in emotional infidelity conflict situations in China and the United States (Zhang et al., 2012).

In a cross-national conflict study conducted in four nations, Oetzel and Ting-Toomey (2003) found that independent self-construal is associated positively with self-face concern and use of dominating/competing conflict strategies. Interdependent self-construal, in contrast, is associated positively with other-face concern and use of avoiding and integrating conflict tactics. Bicultural construal individuals also manifested a wider range of conflict-style tactics than the other three construal types (high independent self, high interdependent self, and ambivalent self; Ting-Toomey, Oetzel, & Yee-Jung, 2001). In addition, Zhang et al. (2012) found that respondents in China and the United States with high independent self-construals preferred exit and anger voice responses, and respondents with high relational self-construals preferred the integrative conflict style and third-party help-seeking conflict style in dealing with intimate relationship conflicts.

The overall findings in testing FNT revealed that individualistic cultural members and independent self-construal types have more self-face concerns and less other-face and mutual-face concerns than collectivists and interdependent types. In comparison, collectivistic cultural members and interdependent types have more other-face emphasis in managing conflicts with others than individualists and independent self-construal types (Oetzel et al., 2001, 2008).

Conflict Face Negotiation Theory: Recent Research Trends

Recent research testing (2010–2015a) on conflict FNT include the following themes: face-sensitive conflict emotions, interpersonal transgressions and forgiveness, intergenerational face and the dark side of face, and measurement methodological issues of various face concern constructs.

Cross-Cultural Face-Sensitive Emotions

Zhang et al. (2014) linked emotion to FNT's assumptions and probed the critical role of anger, compassion, and guilt in understanding the complex pathways of their relationships with self-construal, face concerns, and conflict styles in U.S. and Chinese cultures.

Results revealed that in both U.S. and Chinese cultures anger was associated positively with independent self-construal, self-face concern, and competing style, and compassion was associated positively with interdependent self-construal, other-face concern, and integrating, compromising, and obliging styles. Guilt was related positively to interdependent self-construal and the obliging style in the United States, and to interdependent self-construal and the avoiding style in China.

Overall, emotion mediated the effects of self-construal and face concerns on conflict styles in both cultures, though cultural differences did emerge. The effects of self-construal were mediated more through face concerns than emotions in the United States. However, the effects of self-construal were mediated through both face concerns and conflict emotions in China (Zhang et al., 2014). The researchers explained this interesting research finding by employing the individualized lens of the independent self-construal personality as a strong stand-alone trait in shaping self-face concern in dealing with conflict issues in the United States. However, for independent-self cultural members in China, the emotion of anger (i.e., feeling *irritated*, *angry*, *annoyed*, and *aggravated*) fully mediated self-face concern and competitive conflict style. When aggravated anger was finally experienced and triggered in a conflict cycle, Chinese respondents displayed a strong tendency to protect self-face from hurt or embarrassment; this emotion of anger also primed the use of a dominant competitive outlook in the conflict face negotiation situation (Zhang et al., 2014).

Cross-Cultural Conflict Forgiveness

This particular cross-cultural forgiveness study probed the dynamic nature of emotions and the perceived face threat in forgiveness and reconciliation processes in China and the United States (Zhang, Oetzel, & Ting-Toomey 2015). The findings revealed both interesting differences and similarities on cross-cultural forgiveness and the emotion of anger in conflict management.

The major findings of the research were as follows:

1. Chinese participants reported more relationship-oriented forgiveness than U.S. participants.
2. Relative to pre-forgiveness, results indicated less post-forgiveness anger and more compassion in both the U.S. and Chinese samples—thus, some cross-cultural commonalities.
3. Initial anger had a negative association with forgiveness, but initial compassion had a positive association with forgiveness in both cultures.
4. Perceived face threat had a positive relationship with initial anger and a negative relationship with initial compassion in both cultures.
5. Anger was negatively correlated, but compassion was positively correlated, with reconciliation in both cultures.
6. The hypothesized structural equation model (SEM) had a good fit to the data in both cultures.

Thus, perceived face threat evokes initial emotions (i.e., anger and compassion), which influence forgiveness, and in turn counterinfluence emotions (i.e., anger and compassion), which then affect reconciliation. Drawing from the functional paradigm methodology, the study's findings contributed to an understanding of the reactive emotions of anger and compassion in shaping interpersonal amends and reconciliation. The goodness of fit of the SEM model in both China and the United States paints a more complete picture of the direct path between forgiveness and reconciliation as well as the mediated paths among perceived face threats, emotions, and reconciliation (Zhang et al., 2015).

In sum, forgiveness is an essential step in effecting reconciliation in both individualistic and group-based cultures. Alternatively, softening or reframing the perceived face threat event in the relationship and developing empathy and compassion for the transgressor may also activate forgiveness and reconciliation processes. The results of the study offered some evidence for the fifth condition proposed in the FNT's face-threatening process (FTP): "Fifth, the more harm or hurtful the FTP produces, the more time and effort is needed to repair the FTP. . . . Self-face concern becomes incrementally more salient if several of these conditions are present in a face-threatening communication process" (Ting-Toomey, 2005b, p. 77). The findings of this cross-cultural China-U.S. forgiveness study paved the way for testing FTP conditions.

Drawing from another functional paradigm research lens, a recent methodological study ($N = 1,003$ research participants) testing FNT in five nations (China, Taiwan, Uganda, Ethiopia, and the United States) emphasized the importance of establishing cross-cultural measurement equivalence issues regarding facework behaviors (Fletcher et al., 2014; see also Oetzel et al., 2000). Interested readers can also track the various measurement scales for operationalizing self-construals, face concerns, and conflict styles in Ting-Toomey et al. (1991), Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001), and Oetzel and Ting-Toomey (2003).

Intergenerational Face and the Dark Side of Face

In a recent study, using an interpretive paradigm lens, Baig et al. (2014) used FNT as a guiding framework in exploring how the South Asian Indian term *izzat* relates to the meaning construction of *face* in intergenerational contexts in the United States. Based on a qualitative design approach, the twin objectives of the research were to explore the meanings of *izzat* among Asian Indian Americans and to understand how the motif of *izzat* serves as a potential source for intergenerational conflict. Interview data and thematic analysis results revealed six interpretive themes: showing respect as a performance ritual; staging family face; reacting to complex *izzat* emotions; managing face boundaries in embarrassing situations; dispelling grounds for gossip; and identifying the acculturation change process and *izzat* socialization.

Participants viewed *izzat* primarily as relating to family respect and embarrassing situations. They also used active concealment and diversion facework strategies to ward off potential *izzat* face-threatening encounters. Overall, differences in *izzat* were contextualized in terms of ethnic family socialization processes and the identity change process between the older generation and the younger Asian Indian American generation in the United States' multiethnic society.

In flipping face on its head, Dorjee et al. (2013) explored the dark side of face in their analysis of an "honor killing" case study with a conjoint social ecological perspective (SEP) and FNT (see Oetzel, Ting-Toomey, & Rinderle, 2006; Oetzel et al., 2013; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2013). Informed by this integrative perspective, a true-life horrific case story of honor killing—"Miss Banaz Mahmud's Honor Killing Story in the U.K."—was systematically analyzed. Briefly, Ms. Banaz Mahmud was a 20-year-old, Iraqi-Kurdish female immigrant, living in Surrey, United Kingdom. Following cultural tradition, Banaz Mahmud had been forced to marry an older man at the age of 17. She returned to her parent's home abruptly due to an abusive and violent relationship. Later, she met Mr. Rahmat Sulemani, a young Iranian Kurd, and fell in love with him. Her family members were furious when they found out about the behind-the-scenes dating relationship because Mr. Sulemani was not "immediate family" or a "strict Muslim." Ms. Mahmud tried to seek police protection help but her voice was ignored and actually perpetuated more family conflict. In January, 2006, Ms. Banaz Mahmud was strangled and murdered at her home and her body was stuffed into a suitcase. Several months later the suitcase was found buried more than 100 miles away, under a house in a Birmingham suburb. Banaz's father and uncle along with three other accomplices were eventually arrested for her brutal murder that involved "honor" killing (Dorjee et al., 2013). Miss Banaz Mahmud's story illustrates intercultural issues such as entrenched ethnocentric lens and insensitivity, and taboo intercultural relationship development. It also reveals intergroup membership issues such as traditional family role expectations, gender role inequality, ingroup community reactions, social justice and injustice issues, and historical intergroup hostility factors.

FNT worked well with SEP in understanding the honor killing story given its theoretical focus on the dark side of face concerns, facework strategies, and group

membership identity honor and vulnerability issues. *Honor* is a face concern issue that involves the emotions of pride and shame, and honor killing is a drastic and desperate face restoration strategy. Thus, to restore family pride and communal honor, the father Mr. Mahmod felt he had no choice but to order paid assassins to murder his own daughter in a brutal and violent manner. He hoped to restore some semblance of family face reputation and ingroup communal honor. In essence, the misnomer “honor killing” constitutes a heinous narrow-range cultural struggle and moral struggle that challenges universal human conscience, social justice, and human rights.

Thus, it is imperative that intercultural and intergroup researchers be responsive and show responsible attention in the theorizing and researching process involved in integrating the study of *moral face* or ethics with the development of FNT (Ting-Toomey, 2011; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2013). In short, honor killing represents the abyss of the cultural dark side of facework (Dorjee et al., 2013; see also Zhang & Ting-Toomey, 2014, for an integrative SEP and FNT case study analysis of “Anna Mae He’s Chinese Adoption Story, 1999–2009”).

Multiple theoretical variation and methodological approaches have been used to test and extend FNT. Researchers are fully welcomed and embraced to test, extend, modify, and stretch the FNT propositions through the tripartite research paradigms of functional–interpretive–critical approaches. Depending on the research questions asked, testing the theory itself can draw from any of the paradigms and a mixed-method framework—as long as the rationale and logical reasoning process of using a particular method are in alignment with the spirit of FNT core assumptions, propositions, and conditions.

Researching Conflict Face Negotiation Theory: Future Directions

The study of *face* is an exhilarating metaphor that spans many academic disciplinary boundaries and covers a wide range of communication phenomena of interest. The advancement of FNT can only be made by instilling a strong sense of situational complexity and identity complexity in its further evolutionary phases. The progress of FNT is highly dependent on rigorous and creative cross-cultural comparative testing, testing of intercultural and intergroup facework encounters, and developmental-longitudinal testing methodologies.

FNT is considered to be a theory–research–practice conceptual framework that can be used in multiple applied settings such as intercultural communication training, conflict training, mediation training, to name a few examples (e.g., see Ting-Toomey, 2004, 2007a, 2007b, 2009a, 2009b), and more research studies need to be designed to probe the pretraining, process-training, and posttraining effects of increased face knowledge, enhanced ethnorelative view, and improved facework skills’ practice. Finally, the themes of identity negotiation, facework emotions, revisiting of conflict styles, intergroup convergence/divergence facework issues, and the role of mindfulness in cultivating intercultural harmony may help to present a fuller picture of FNT as we move closer to the mid-twenty-first century (see, e.g., Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2014).

Identity Negotiation and Facework

Given the within-identity diversity found in contemporary societies, more attention can also be paid to sociocultural identity membership issues in the conflict negotiation process. For example, Kim-Jo, Benet-Martinez, and Ozer (2010) found that Korean and European American monocultural respondents used a more obliging conflict style and a competitive conflict style, respectively. However, the most intriguing finding regarding conflict style was associated with the Korean American bicultural group. The Korean American respondents, like European Americans, used a significantly more competitive conflict style than Korean nationals and simultaneously used more avoidance conflict style than Korean nationals in conflict resolution.

The researchers theorized that some cultural individuals (in this case, the Korean American respondents) may actually adhere more strongly to their ethnic cultural values than to their heritage home country (Kim-Jo et al., 2010). This explanation alone does not, however, account for the competitive style of the Korean American participants. Instead, Briley, Morris, and Simonson's (2005) research findings on bicultural individuals in Hong Kong and the chameleon nature of biculturalists and their adaptive impression management skills may help explain bicultural code-switching conflict strategies—extending from use of avoidance style to use of competitive communication style and their flexible facework strategies (see also Toomey, Dorjee, & Ting-Toomey, 2013). Thus, more FNT-related conflict research on the competent facework strategies biculturalists use in a multiethnic society may also yield a more complex picture of how strategic and creative facework strategies are being deployed in diverse communication competence arenas (see also Ting-Toomey, 2005b and the recent works on intercultural communication competence and communication competence by Dai & Chen, 2014, and Hannawa & Spitzberg, 2015).

Facework Emotions

Recent research studies have focused on investigating the relationship between face concerns and the emotions of anger, compassion, and guilt. In an actual conflict negotiation situation, however, mixed and blended emotions of anger, sadness, guilt, shame, contempt, fear, and hope may underlie different self-face and other-face concern conflict moves. Theoretically, careful attention can be paid to the expanded role of emotion in unpacking the relationship between the self-construal and emotional appraisal process in a conflict situation. Research-wise, the mediating links of primary (e.g., perceived conflict goal salience/relevance) and secondary (e.g., future expectancy for things to get better or worse) emotional appraisal processes between face concerns and conflict styles can be further tested across a wide range of cultures.

The recently identified conflict emotional sets (i.e., vulnerable, fearful, hostile, flat, self-conscious, and positive emotional sets; Guerrero, 2013) can also add in-depth complexity to the study of conflict emotions and facework strategies in different individuals, situations, and cultures. Clearer conceptual and operational definitions on

“conflict emotions experienced” versus “conflict emotions expressed” in an intercultural or intergroup face-vulnerable conflict situation need to be further analyzed.

Revisiting and Unpacking Conflict Styles

Research results have consistently revealed that individualists and independent self-construals are related to dominating/competing conflict style and that collectivists and interdependent self-construals are related to avoidance and obliging, to integrative and compromising conflict styles. More cultural indigenous perspectives on the meaning of “competition,” “integrating,” “compromising,” and “harmonizing” will likely yield a fuller picture of each distinctive conflict style.

Findings on passive–aggressive conflict style and third-party help (i.e., the results were inconsistent in terms of their relationship to self-face concern or other-face concern) yielded inconsistent results and thus required more well-designed cross-cultural or intercultural/intergroup research studies especially using a multimethod lens. Understudied concepts that are closely related to conflict styles, for example, “eating bitter” or “enduring” conflict style, “knowing thy enemy” conflict style, and “harmony repair” style (to name a few of the Chinese conflict-related concepts) can help to expand the existing conflict-style vocabulary in the mainstream literature. An integrative emic plus etic perspective can offer a fuller picture of the derived stories, meanings, vulnerable emotions, situations, face-saving/face-recuperating conflict styles and strategies related to the conflict FNT. More collaborative research studies, both domestic and global, can also help to expand the repertoires of conflict styles from different cultural zones, ethnic–racial membership groups, and gender identity perspectives.

Intergroup Convergence/Divergence Issues

While 30 years of FNT testing have focused primarily on *cross-cultural comparative* facework style analysis, more research studies are needed to look at face convergence and divergence processes in *intercultural* or *intergroup-level* conflict negotiation processes (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2014). Social construction of ingroup versus outgroup seems complex in different cultures (e.g., the two ingroup conceptions and the two outgroup conceptions in Japanese relational culture; see Midooka, 1990) and requires identity and face negotiation competence. Videotaped interaction analysis methods, experimental studies, intergroup discourse analysis studies, and real-life macro–micro intergroup conflict case studies may prove more fruitful in advancing conflict FNT in the next decade.

In addition, the role of language usage in code switching between “saving face” and “giving face” in front of perceived ingroup or outgroup situations may yield some interesting insights in terms of the role of language enactment, impression formation, and face concern decoding and encoding facets. The subtle facework code switching and the nuanced shifting of nonverbal signals also call for more collaborative intercultural and nonverbal research studies. Indeed, the perceptions and meaning constructions of

face, as well as the use of diverse verbal and nonverbal facework masking and recovery strategies, may also provide more illuminating insights into intergroup facework convergence versus divergence dynamics.

Mindfulness and Intercultural Harmony

Intercultural facework competence is really about the mindful management of emotional frustrations and conflict interaction struggles owing primarily to cultural or ethnic group membership differences. It means having the necessary culture-based knowledge, open-minded attitude, and operational skills mindfully attuned to the internal thinking patterns and habits of one's own mind, and making the commitment to see things from a different lens. It means paying exquisite attention to identity-based communication issues and conjointly creating a harmonizing path and outcome that can be sustained on the macro and micro levels of conflict resolution practice.

In a recent theorizing effort, a threefold-faceted prism of mindfulness was introduced (Ting-Toomey, 2015a, 2017b, 2017c; see also Chapter 5). The threefold mindfulness prism comprises being present in the immediate time and space orientation; affective attunement orientation; and metacognition awareness. Intercultural conflict competence/incompetence perception is often formed, based on the criteria of perceived communication appropriateness, effectiveness, and adaptability and is filtered through the threefold facets of mindfulness. Mindful transformation is the incremental awakening process in understanding how our own cultural worldviews and value system shape our conflict responses and gut-level reactions, simultaneously realizing that alternative worldviews and value systems frame our cultural partners' conflict lens and meanings. Dynamic conflict communication skills such as cultural decentering, mindful listening, reframing, adaptive verbal and nonverbal code switching, and mutual-face respect dialogue skills are some of the face-sensitive skills (see Ting-Toomey, 2004, 2007b, 2015c) that have been used in multiple theory-practice, face competence training workshops.

Future research needs to pay more attention to how mindful transformation can be fostered and induced from an ethnocentric state to an ethnorelative state, or from a mindless–incompetent orientation stage to a mindful–competent attuning stage (Ting-Toomey, 2014; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2015). We need more research studies to capture the subtle mind-shift process, emotional arousal process, body-mindfulness awakening process, and behavioral adaptation process in moving individuals from a dysfunctional state to a synchronized, peace-building interdependent system.

While a systematic accumulation of cross-cultural conflict style studies exists, researchers need to address more fully the criteria dimensions of competent conflict management: appropriateness, effectiveness, and adaptation. For example, to understand whether appropriate conflict behaviors have been perceived, one must obtain competence evaluations from the standpoint of both conflict negotiators and interested observers. It is also critical to obtain both self-perception and other-perception data because we may think that we are acting appropriately in a conflict situation, but others may not concur with our self-assessment.

Finally, postconflict interviews or journal tracking can elicit the logic or narrative accounts that individuals use to justify their facework behaviors during and after an intercultural conflict episode. Although the knowledge component has been emphasized as the most important area for intercultural conflict competence training, we need more empirical research to test this assertion. We also need to know how we can optimally sequence the knowledge, mindfulness, and conflict skills components to train effectively and dynamically. We also need more well-designed pretest and posttest research studies to understand the rate and quality of change in the knowledge, mindfulness, and skills domains as a direct result of the intercultural conflict training program.

The “culture-based situational conflict model” presented in this chapter is a tentative compass or map to guide and encourage international collaborative research in the conjoint areas of intercultural and intergroup conflict communication. The intricate relationship among these various communication competence processes and criteria—appropriateness, effectiveness, and adaptability—especially in connection with understanding problematic intercultural interaction situations, awaits further exploration and testing from both an insider “emic” lens (see, e.g., Oetzel, Arcos, Mabizela, Weinman, & Zhang, 2006) and an outsider “etic” lens.

It is hoped that by collecting meaningful data in a wide range of situational domains and in a diverse range of cultural communities, more research knowledge can transform the flat, two-dimensional plane conflict model to a multidimensional, culture-sensitive conflict framework. Both international insider and outsider research collaborative efforts are urgently needed to understand the rich fabric of the different designs, patterns, and colorful threads that constitute the complex and adaptive intercultural conflict competence system. Both indigenous narrative perspective and cross-cultural comparative perspectives are needed to truly understand the multiple voices, stories, and dynamics of what constitutes a competent versus incompetent conflict negotiation practice (Cai & Fink, 2017; Chen, 2017).

To conclude, the multiple pathways of testing conflict FNT have led us in an emotionally exhilarating and intellectually rewarding journey. While I (STT) cannot mention all the specific names here, I want to thank many of my former and present students, colleagues, and international scholars and friends for collaborating with me and also inviting me to collaborate with them on many of the FNT-related research projects. In my FNT work, I am blessed with their support, and I count myself most lucky to have been inspired by their collective wisdom, dedicated professionalism, and grace.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND MINDFUL GUIDELINES

Creative conflict communicators use culture-sensitive, adaptive communication skills to manage the process appropriately, integrate divergent interaction goals effectively, and promote constructive team productivity and satisfaction within the system. In sum, this chapter has covered five key topics: a discussion of the criteria and

components of intercultural conflict competence; a review of the culture-based situational conflict model; and a synoptic probe of the integrated threat theory and conflict FNT. Furthermore, the chapter also covers key assumptions, conditions, and core constructs of FNT. In addition, it discusses past and current research findings related to conflict FNT, and ends with specific suggestions. The chapter ends with specific suggestions for research directions in utilizing conflict FNT as an explanatory conflict framework.

Considering the individualism–collectivism conflict boundary-crossing as a starting point, we can make some specific recommendations based on differences in individualistic and collectivistic styles of conflict management. These suggestions are not listed in any order of importance. To deal with conflict constructively in a collectivistic culture, individualists need to do the following:

- 1 Be mindful of the mutual face-saving premises in a collectivistic culture, especially the use of specific facework skills in managing the delicate balance of humiliation and pride, respect and disrespect, and shame and honor issues.
- 2 Practice patience and mindful observation: Take five mindful seconds before verbally articulating your feelings. Be mindful of past events that bear relevance to the present conflict situation, and also limit the number of verbal *why* questions—because collectivists typically focus on the nonverbal *how* process.
- 3 Practice mindful listening skills: Attend to the sound, movement, and emotional experience of the other person. This indicates that one person is attending to the other person’s identity and relational expectation issues; remember that the word *listen* can become *silent* by rearranging the letters.

Some specific recommendations also can be made for collectivists in handling conflict with individualists. When encountering a conflict situation in an individualistic culture, collectivists need to do the following:

- 1 Engage in an assertive style of conflict behavior that emphasizes the right of both parties to speak up in the conflict situation and respects the right to defend one’s position; learn to open a conflict dialogue with a clear thesis statement and then systematically advance key points.
- 2 Assume individual accountability for the conflict decision-making process: use “I” statements when expressing opinions, sharing feelings, and voicing thought processes; assume a sender-responsible approach to constructively manage the conflict; learn to ask more *why* questions and probe for clear explanations and details.
- 3 Engage in active listening skills: engage in active verbal paraphrasing and perception-checking skills to ensure that the other person thoroughly

understands each point; learn to occasionally disclose emotions, attitudes, and experiences within the conflict process itself; do not rely solely on nonverbal signals or count on other people to *gauge* personal reactions.

To manage intercultural/intergroup conflict flexibly, we must be prepared to consider alternative cultural perspectives. If another party is an interdependent-self collectivist, we may want to attend to his or her “process-oriented” assumptions during our conflict negotiation. If others are independent-self individualists, we may want to be sensitive to their “outcome-oriented” assumptions during the conflict negotiation. Flexible intercultural conflict management means using culture-sensitive communication skills to manage the process and outcome of conflict adaptively and productively (see also Broome, 2017; Haslett, 2017).

Intercultural conflict competence takes into account the keys of perceived emotional and identity threats that affect the well-being of the two intercultural conflict parties or systems. Through intentional mindfulness, conflict parties can practice both general intercultural competence and specific intercultural conflict competence skills. Intercultural parties can learn to depolarize their emotional tensions and conflict positions, as well as learn to reframe the intercultural conflict from a monocultural conflict perspective assessing it from multiple discovery perspectives. Finally, intercultural conflict intelligence demands that conflict parties use a transformational outlook in balancing focused attention with flexible behavioral repertoires in communicating appropriately, effectively, and adaptively in managing sudden conflict crises and moment-to-moment changes. In short, intercultural conflict competence is about the activation of a focused attunement process, behavioral flexibility, and the skillful application of the untapped human imagination between diverse identity groups, communities, and cultures.

CRITICAL THINKING AND CONNECTIVE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. In rereading the opening story, did you perceive any face-threatening interactional episode(s) and face-threatening verbal and nonverbal messages in the case story? What underlying intercultural value and expectancy clashes drive the face-threatening encounter? Can you recommend two constructive other-face, mutual-face, and/or communal face-saving strategies to “save face” or “repair face” for both Mr. Watanabe-san and Mr. Wilde in the case story either during the unfolding conflict-escalating process or in a follow-up meeting session?
2. Recall a past conflict face-threatening situation with your coworker or intimate partner. How can understanding self-face, other-face, mutual-face, community face, and ingroup/outgroup face help you to understand this particular conflict more deeply?
3. Think about the seven conflict management styles: dominating, avoidance, compromising, obliging/accommodating, integrative/collaborative style, emotional

expression, and third-party styles across different conflict situations (such as supervisor–subordinate conflict, intimate relationship conflict, and family conflict). Under what conditions should you consider using which particular style and why?

4. Based on the culture-based situational conflict model discussed in this chapter, how would you design an intercultural training workshop session on the topic of intercultural conflict management transformation for positive change?
5. You are deputed as a United Nations negotiator to try to solve intractable conflicts such as the Middle Eastern, the China–Tibet, and religious conflicts. In what ways can ITT and FNT help you better understand such conflicts and help the conflicting parties to find some constructive solutions?
6. Drawing from the knowledge blocks of Chapters 9 and 10, what do you view as the similarities and differences between intercultural conflict versus intergroup conflict? What are the key takeaway practical lessons for you from both chapters in becoming a competent intercultural and intergroup conflict negotiator in your everyday life?

CHAPTER 11

Attuning to Intercultural–Intimate Relationship Development Processes

- Introduction
- Developing Intercultural–Intimate Relationships: Sociocultural Membership Identity Factors
 - *Cultural–Ethnic Membership Values*
 - *Anxiety/Uncertainty Interaction Management*
 - *Love Attitudes and Expectations*
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 - *Perceived Physical Attractiveness*
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 - *The Encounter: Prejudice and Racism*
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- Chapter Summary and Mindful Guidelines
- Critical Thinking and Connective Application Questions

KEN AND KIM'S MARITAL CRISIS: ARRIVAL OF THE IN-LAWS CASE STORY

Ken and Kim have been married for 6 years. For most of those 6 years, they have been a happily married couple. Ken is a 33-year-old German American and works at a high-tech firm in Silicon Valley. Kim is a 30-year-old Chinese immigrant who is a pharmacist

and works in a nearby hospital. The couple has a 3-year-old son, Kevin. For the past three years, Kim, with Ken's support, worked hard and succeeded in bringing her parents from China to the United States. While Ken and Kim are at work, the grandparents happily babysit their grandson Kevin as they live across the street. Not knowing English, they only speak Chinese to Kevin. To their delight, Kevin has been picking up Chinese quickly.

Recently, Ken and Kim have had many tense moments and communication difficulties relating to the in-law issue. To begin with, Ken feels he is never alone with Kim in the house anymore because his in-laws are always there. Kim and her parents chatter constantly in Chinese and also laugh in that strange Chinese tone. Ken feels very left out and an outsider in his own house. He loves his family and wants things to get back to normal—the way it was. He feels excluded from everyday conversation at home and decides to have an upfront, honest talk with Kim about his frustrations.

He asks Kim to please tell her parents to reduce their visits from every day to only on the weekends and also call them ahead of time rather than just popping in to visit. He asks Kim to register Kevin in a nearby English-speaking preschool so that he can play with other English-speaking kids. While Kim nods "Uh-huh" to all his comments, nothing seems to change. Moreover, her parents often cook up strange-smelling Chinese food in the kitchen, and Ken's frustration has been on the rise.

From Kim's viewpoint, she cannot understand how Ken can be so selfish. Her parents are new immigrants with no friends and they do not drive. She is glad that Kevin has a chance to learn Chinese from her parents and also feels that her Chinese roots are taking hold again. She hopes that by ignoring Ken's "ridiculous" requests, he will eventually forget about them and come to his senses. Although at one point she yells back at Ken for raising his voice and making another of his "off-the-wall" comments, often she ends up only staring at Ken in silence. She does not want to upset her parents, who are playing with Kevin in the next room. Inwardly, Kim grows increasingly resentful and stressed. Likewise, Kevin feels progressively misunderstood and frustrated. Both love each other deeply, but they feel their marriage is spiraling out of control. Kim and Ken desperately need some concrete help and advice to handle their marital crisis.

—STELLA, college instructor

Introduction

How would you explain Ken's frustration and Kim's stress? To what extent can you relate to Ken? How so? To what extent can you relate to Kim? How so? Can you draw upon any real-life intimate relationship examples (involving yourself or your family members) that have had caused you tremendous relationship frustrations and stress? Are any of them related to cultural, ethnic, gender, religious, age, or sexual-orientation issues? Hopefully, by mastering the concepts in this chapter, you can diagnose both

Ken and Kim's marital crisis with a culture-sensitive lens and also offer them some concrete solutions to resolve their marital problem. Intercultural-intimate relationships have been on the rise in the United States.

According to Pew Institute Center's (2010) American Community Survey Report on interracial marriage in the United States, the findings indicated that a record of 15.1% of all new marriages in the United States were between spouses of difference races (including marriages between a non-Hispanic with a Hispanic) and that the rates of interracial marriages nearly tripled between 1980 and 2010. Among all newlyweds, intermarried pairings were predominantly between White-Hispanic (43.3%), White-Asian (14.4%), White-Black (11.9%), and other combinations (i.e., between different ethnic groups, multiracial individuals, and Native Americans). Regional pairings indicated that most interracial marriages took place in the West (22%), followed by the South (14%), the Northeast (13%), and the Midwest (11%).

In another interesting news report, on June 26, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court delivered a landmark ruling; a 5-4 decision granting same-sex couples the constitutional right to marry. The decision rests in part on the Court's interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment stating that limiting marriage to heterosexual couples violates the amendment's guarantee of equal protection under the law. Justice Anthony Kennedy, writing for the majority, stated cogently that "no union is more profound than marriage, for it embodies the highest ideals of love, fidelity, devotion, sacrifice, and family," and concluded that "gay and lesbian couples ask for equal dignity in the eyes of the law. The constitution grants them that right" (Pew Research Center, June 26, 2015, p. 1). Concurrently, there has been a dramatic shift of support for same-sex marriage in the broader U.S. national landscape—from 37% in 2009 to 57% in 2015. However, more than half of the LGBT members surveyed (58%: about six in ten) continue to struggle with their stigmatized identity and reported that they have been the target of slurs and jokes in different social settings. The first nation to legalize gay marriage was The Netherlands, and the recent U.S. Supreme Court's legal ruling placed the United States as the 21st country to support and protect same-sex marriage.

According to an additional news report, between 2010 and 2015, 39% of new marriages in the United States reported having a spouse from an unaffiliated "none" group or different religious traditions. Most of these interfaith marriages are between Christians and the religiously unaffiliated, and then Christians from different denominations. Interfaith intimate relationships are even more common today among cohabitating couples. Nearly half (49%) of unmarried couples reported living with someone of a different faith or nonaffiliated religious category (Pew Institute Center, June 12, 2015).

Despite the accelerating trends toward the formation of intercultural friendships, dating relationships, and interracial/interethnic marriages, the development of intercultural-intimate relationships continues to face daunting challenges owing to intercultural value and communication dissonances between intimate partners and external reactions from family and friends. The challenges or stumbling blocks in developing intercultural close relationships are often due to negative expectancy violations, identity rejections and disapprovals, and individuals' lack of skillful means to manage

their intimate relationships and deal with sociocultural membership and relational culture issues capably.

Throughout this chapter, we consider the development of intercultural–intimate relationships between individuals who differ on one or more sociocultural membership identities. As we will show, most formation and maintenance issues surrounding intercultural–intimate relationships involve negotiating multiple-group membership identity differences (e.g., different ethnicity, religion, age, language, cultural rituals, traditions, parental-gendered expectancy roles). Simultaneously, we also pay close attention to research studies that focus on the cultivation of different levels of cross-cultural intimacy, commitment, and love expression at different stages of the relationship development process (Sternberg, 1987).

The chapter examines the cultural factors, interpersonal facilitating factors, and stumbling block factors associated with entering into and maintaining voluntary intercultural–intimate relationships, especially in the context of intercultural friendships and romantic relationships. The discussion first addresses the cross-cultural identity membership challenges that intimate partners often face when they come from diverse cultural value systems. Next, it delineates the facilitating factors that prompt relational partners to be attracted to each other. Third, the chapter addresses particular obstacles some couples face when they want the relationship to move to a deeper commitment stage. Also explored are issues of raising securely bicultural children. Finally, the chapter ends with an overall summary and mindful guidelines for developing a healthy and functional intercultural–intimate relationship.

Understanding the cultural challenges, interpersonal facilitating factors, obstacles, and rewards of an intercultural–intimate relationship can make us all more astute in dealing with our own diverse intimate relationship networks. Additionally, the knowledge blocks in the chapter should also help us to be more supportive of our families' and friends' relational needs and goals and improve the quality of our interpersonal relationships.

Developing Intercultural–Intimate Relationships: Sociocultural Membership Identity Factors

Before we discuss why individuals are attracted to one another across cultural or ethnic lines, we need to look deeper into the cultural “iceberg” and explore the semihidden values that come into play in any relationship. Let's first revisit some familiar terms, such as individualism and collectivism, and draw out their implications for culture-based intimate relationship expectations.

Cultural–Ethnic Membership Values

The role of the individualism–collectivism value dimension, and its impact on intercultural relationship expectations and interaction decoding processes, are often like a

hidden tsunami that stirs up tremendous intercultural–intimate conflict problems. Cultural value patterns form the basic criteria through which we evaluate our own behaviors and those of others. They cue our expectations of how people should act during the development process of an intimate relationship. Cultural value orientations serve as implicit guidelines for our motivations, expectations, perceptions, interpretations, meaning formations, and interpersonal communicative actions.

By being mindful of how different value patterns can create unintentional clashes in our relationship lives, we may be able to deal with these undercurrent dimensions proactively rather than reactively. If one partner in an intimate relationship comes from an individualistic cultural system and another partner comes from a group-orientation cultural system, this cultural gap may be a major factor underlying an existing relationship conflict.

The individualist society is one in which ties between individuals are loosely linked and everyone is expected to look after themselves and their immediate family (Triandis, 1995). For individualists, unique personal qualities, individual initiative, and an active “doing” and “fixing” orientation are important assets in the ups and downs of an interpersonal relationship development process. In comparison, collectivism refers to societies in which ties between individuals in the community are closely intertwined (Triandis, 1995). Group members see their fates as interdependent. While they will look after the welfare of ingroup or extended family members, they also expect their ingroup members to look after their interests through long-term reciprocal obligations. For collectivists, demonstrated loyalty, long-term trust, and prescribed role responsibilities and obligations are the keys to developing quality ingroup–interpersonal relationships (Table 11.1).

According to an intercultural research study (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994), individualists tend to have more generalized trust of strangers than collectivists, while collectivists display their faith in particularized trust on ingroup members and display more of a lifetime commitment to them than individualists. For example, according to the European Values Survey, western European nations appeared to practice more generalized trust toward strangers than some eastern European collectivistic nations (Gheorghiu, Vignoles, & Smith, 2009).

TABLE 11.1. Individualistic and Collectivistic Relationship Orientations

Individualistic orientation	Collectivistic orientation
I-Identity relationship expectations	Ingroup relationship expectations
Couple's privacy and autonomy needs	Ingroup's connection and concerns
Voluntary personal commitments	Family and social commitments
Low-context emotional expressions	High-context emotional expressions
Unique relational culture	Conventional relational culture

Gender role expectations and relational role obligations (i.e., the meaning of being a “good” husband or a “good” wife or partner, or the meaning of being an “ideal” father or an “ideal” mother) are also tied closely to the fundamental beliefs and worldviews of a culture. For example, Schwartz and Boehnke (2004) found the father role tends to be perceived as controlling and instrumental, and the mother role as nurturing and expressive across multiple cultures. In addition, in the U.S. cultural setting, particular *gender differences* exist in adherence to individualistic or communal-oriented values. On one hand, U.S. males generally have been found to adhere more to individualistic values than to communal or relational-oriented values. U.S. females, on the other hand, generally have been found to subscribe to relational-oriented values more than U.S. males do (Tannen, 1990, 1994; Wood, 1997). However, compared to females in collectivistic societies such as Greece, Italy, Japan, and Mexico, U.S. females still hold reasonably high levels of individualistic-oriented values. Thus, value pattern analysis between countries or cultural communities is reflective of the “relative and comparative to whom and what” point of view and the “during what period” as versus an “absolute” stand-alone cultural pattern concept.

It has also been found that different layers of individualism (e.g., emphasizing personal need in the United Kingdom or immediate family need in Sweden) and collectivism (e.g., emphasizing work group need in Singapore or caste need in India) exist in different cultures. For example, for the Vietnamese, it is the extended family; for the Irish, it is the Roman Catholic Church. Cultural membership values such as individualism and collectivism shape our interpretations of concepts such as “autonomy” and “connection” in an intimate relationship. In developing a relationship between individuals from two contrastive cultures, friends or romantic partners often face the challenge of how to handle autonomy and connection issues without going crazy (see Jian & Ray, 2016).

Autonomy is the need for personal privacy and regulated space in a relationship. *Connection* is the need to merge personal and psychological space. On an individual trait-based level, independent-minded partners often view autonomy–connection struggles as a delicate highwire act, constantly balancing the “me–we” dialectical forces (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). In contrast, interdependent-minded partners often see autonomy and connection as a quadrangular juggling act, a “me–we–they–they” dance performance in the intimate relationship and among their respective family/friendship connective networks. As a result, intimate partners who subscribe to a strong collectivistic-communal value orientation believe the romantic relationship will never be truly free from family obligations, duties, and extended family reactions.

Tremendous individual, gender, ethnic, social class, and regional variations exist within the broad label of a national culture. Thus, on the personality trait level, terms such as “independent self-construal” and “interdependent self-construal” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) are equivalent to cultural group membership systems terms such as “individualists” and “collectivists.” Being mindful about both cultural membership differences and unique personality distinctions within and between cultures is critical in any intercultural–intimate relationship bonding process (see Figure 11.1).

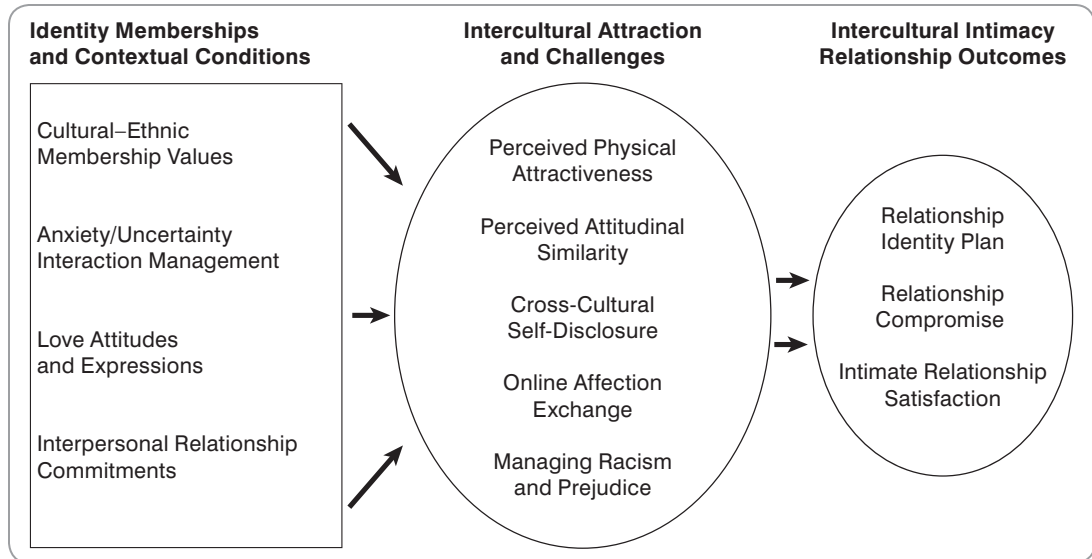


FIGURE 11.1. Sociocultural membership factors and intercultural relationship attraction and challenges.

Anxiety/Uncertainty Interaction Management

Many interesting things can happen in an intercultural relationship development journey. AUM theory, developed by Dr. William Gudykunst, explains how strangers from diverse cultures or group memberships can practice communication effectiveness through the mindful management of anxiety and uncertainty levels of interaction (Gudykunst, 1988, 1993, 2005b). The root of AUM theory is the integration of uncertainty reduction theory by Charles Berger (1975) and social identity theory by Henri Tajfel (1981). AUM theory is one of the major intercultural communication theories explaining the antecedent, process, and outcome dimensions of intergroup and interpersonal communication effectiveness. The building-block concepts of the theory include strangers, anxiety, uncertainty, thresholds, mindfulness, cross-cultural variability, effective communication, and intercultural adjustment.

According to the basic premise of AUM theory, when individuals encounter strangers or culturally dissimilar others, they often experience both anxiety and uncertainty. The concept of “stranger” is drawn from the sociological work of Georg Simmel whereby a stranger can reflect both “near and far” qualities—nearness connotes physical closeness, and remoteness refers to dissimilar values, outlooks, or behaviors. From this stranger–ingroup figure–ground context, AUM theory emphasizes the notion that almost all initial interactions are both intergroup and interpersonal in nature. Furthermore, strangers’ interaction is fraught with anxiety and uncertainty.

On the one hand, anxiety refers to affective feelings such as experiencing uneasiness, awkwardness, confusion, stress, or apprehension about what might occur in the encounter. Uncertainty, on the other hand, is a cognitive phenomenon and involves both predictive uncertainty and explanatory uncertainty. In an initial intercultural encounter process, Gudykunst (2005b) proposes that individualistic members tend to use their default low-context approach to reduce their anxiety and uncertainty by asking direct questions of strangers, probing for more personalized interests and opinions, and expecting a direct answer from strangers. In comparison, collectivistic members tend to use either an observational approach in sizing up a stranger or a “round-about indirect way” to reduce their own anxiety and uncertainty. For example, collectivists or interdependent-self individuals may resort to “a third-party information-seeking” approach and ask an intermediary member about the relational status, family, or social background status concerning the stranger’s myriad identities. Berger’s (1975; Berger & Calabrese, 1975) three uncertainty reduction strategy types can be connected to the intercultural uncertainty reduction arena as follows: Individualists would tend to use more direct “interactive” uncertainty reduction strategies, and in comparison, collectivists would use more “passive” or observational uncertainty reduction strategies or “active/third-party information seeking” uncertainty reduction strategies.

Often when we encounter intercultural strangers, we experience predictive uncertainty and explanatory uncertainty. While predictive uncertainty refers to our inability to predict strangers’ attitudes or behaviors, explanatory uncertainty refers to our inability to come up with a coherent explanation for strangers’ unfamiliar or “bizarre” behaviors. According to Gudykunst (2005b), as individuals navigate across cultural boundaries, they develop minimum and maximum thresholds for tolerating anxiety and uncertainty. Too much or too little anxiety and uncertainty hampers intercultural communication effectiveness. For example, when emotional anxiety is too high, cultural strangers tend to communicate on automatic pilot and interpret dissimilar others’ behaviors using their own cultural-ethnocentric frame of reference. However, when emotional anxiety is too low, they might act in a very indifferent or continuous ethnocentric manner. Similarly, when cognitive uncertainty is too high, cultural strangers cannot accurately interpret each other’s incoming verbal and nonverbal messages. When cognitive uncertainty is too low, cultural strangers might over-rely on stereotypes to decode the intercultural–intergroup interaction episode and make exaggerated and overgeneralized attributions concerning strangers’ unfamiliar behaviors.

According to the core thrust of AUM theory, intercultural or intergroup communication is effective when individuals can maximize understandings and minimize misunderstandings. To achieve this meaning coordination process, individuals have to learn to be mindful. To be mindful, as suggested earlier, means being open to new information and multiple cultural perspectives, creating more differentiated categories to understand cultural strangers’ viewpoints, and being sensitive to the complex meaning negotiation process between different identity groups (Langer, 1989). Mindfulness serves as the key moderating process between the two underlying causes (i.e.,

anxiety management and uncertainty management) and communication effectiveness (Gudykunst, 2005b).

Extending Gudykunst's AUM theory, Neuliep (2012) and Neuliep and Ryan (1998) found that individuals with low communication apprehension in initial interaction with strangers practice both verbal assertiveness and verbal responsiveness. On the one hand, verbal assertiveness is defined as an individual's ability to make requests, actively disagree, express personal feelings, and initiate, maintain, and terminate conversations. On the other hand, verbal responsiveness is conceptualized as the ability of a person to be a good listener, to engage in comforting communication, and to recognize the needs and wants of relevant others. Overall, studies under this research program revealed that U.S. respondents scored higher on the assertiveness dimension than Finnish and Japanese respondents. The results also indicated that within a diverse set of cultures (China, Japan, South Korea, Finland, and the United States), males tend to score higher on the assertiveness scale dimension, and females to score higher on the responsiveness scale dimension. In this set of comparative research studies, as verbal assertiveness and responsiveness increase, initial interaction uncertainty decreases, and interpersonal communication satisfaction increases. Thus, the more we strive to manage our anxiety and uncertainty in a culturally appropriate and gender-sensitive adaptive manner, the more we bolster our affective security and cognitive confidence in meeting cultural strangers eye to eye and face to face, and now on social media.

Love Attitudes and Expectations

How do we define love? The word *love* can have so many different connotations and, at times, can be very confusing. It can be used seriously or casually, depending on what culture you're from. Researchers simply cannot offer a clear definition of love. However, perspectives on love have been developed to distinguish it from "liking." Sternberg (1988a), for example, compared different types of love and liking as a triangle consisting of three key components reflecting the Western perspective on love: intimacy, passion, and commitment.

To Sternberg (1988a, 1988b), liking someone reflects a high level of intimacy but relatively low levels of passion and commitment. Loving someone, from the concept of "romantic/passionate love," connotes high levels of intimacy and passion especially reflecting the initial dating stages as well as sexual attraction and desire. In the sphere of "consummate love," high levels of the tripartite concepts of intimacy, passion, and commitment are vested. When intimacy is combined with commitment, deep "friendship love" or "family/sibling love" also exists (Fehr & Russell, 1991).

Just as researchers and ordinary folks vary as to how they conceptualize love, expectations concerning love across cultures also vary. In individualistic cultures, people typically want to "fall in love" (which sometimes involves intense dating procedures) and then either get married or move on to another dating partner. Romantic love, however, often poses major relational paradoxes. Although intimate partners desire to

“lose” themselves in a romantic love-fused relationship, many of them also struggle with their desires for independence and personal freedom. Intercultural love experts Dr. Karen Dion and Dr. Kenneth Dion (1996) concluded that the high divorce rate that characterizes “U.S. society is due in good part to the culture’s exaggerated sense of individualism” (p. 286). They observe that in the United States, subscribers to “expressive individualism” face the following dilemmas in romantic relationships:

First, one can “lose” one’s self and the feeling of personal autonomy in a love relationship, feeling used and exploited as a result. Second, satisfying the autonomous needs of two “separate” individuals in a love relationship obviously becomes a difficult balancing act. Third, the spirit of American individualism makes it difficult for either partner in a relationship to justify sacrificing or giving to the other more than one is receiving. Finally, and inevitably, Americans confront a fundamental conflict trying to reconcile personal freedom and individuality, on the one hand, with obligations and role requirements of marital partner and parent, on the other (Dion & Dion, 1996, p. 286).

In addition, passionate love (high levels of intimacy and sexual attraction) is valued most when family ties are weak (e.g., as in the larger U.S. culture, Australia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom); passionate love is diluted where family ties are strong (e.g., in Greece, Singapore, Spain, and Italy). Romantic passionate love is a critical component in the “falling in love” stage of many individualists due to emphasis placed on the voluntary passionate love stage regardless of the partners’ cultural and family backgrounds or social standings (Gao, 1991; Kline, Horton, & Zhang, 2008). This is also one reason why individualists believe that getting married without love is a disastrous decision.

Research indicates, however, that many collectivists value companionate love (strong friendship intimacy and commitment) more than passionate love in romantic relationships (Gao, 1991). For example, some traditional collectivists (e.g., in India, Iran, and northern Nigeria, in which arranged marriages are still the norm) prefer to get married and then take their time to “fall in love.” Essentially, love and intimacy are incrementally cultivated, with a long-term commitment emphasis. In collectivistic cultures, ingroup harmony and cohesiveness take precedence over individual needs and desires. From this particular communal-relational value system, the value of intimacy or incremental love is expressed through dedicated/patient caregiving, doing things for one another, reciprocal loyalty and trust, forbearance and forgiveness, and holding a long-term view of the relationship over romantic ideals (Kline et al., 2008). For some collectivistic relational partners, being *in love* takes long-term commitment and relational patience. Love follows after marriage. Alternatively, as they learn to “grin and bear” it, they learn to love each other, and accepting the flaws and virtues of their lifetime partners.

Expert researchers on love also examined cultural differences in communicating love by comparing young adults from the United States and the East Asian countries of China, Japan, and South Korea (Kline et al., 2008). U.S. American and East Asian international students answered questions about their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors related to love and friendship, and also expectations concerning marriage. The results

showed that while East Asian respondents were more likely to believe that marriage is about *trust*, *caring*, and *respect* and that it takes *hard work*, U.S. American respondents were more likely to believe that love in marriage is *essential* and *unconditional*.

East Asian students also expressed love and affection in close friendships predominantly through “social gathering and informal chatting” activities such as having dinner together and drinking together, whereas U.S. American students tended to express love and affection in close friendships during activities (e.g., sports and exercise, going to movies or concerts, and shopping), along with dining and drinking together. In expressing love and affection in marriage, both groups had the same notions about the most important vehicles for expressing love: talking, having dinner together, doing things together, and physical intimacy. Both groups also subscribed to the importance of having similar beliefs, fidelity, and commitment in marital bonding relationships, more so than in close friendship relationships (Bresnahan & Zhu, 2017; Gareis, 2017; Kline et al., 2008).

Despite some individualistic and collectivistic cultural differences concerning intimacy attraction ideology, it is also important to note that in nearly all 37 cultural samples studied (Buss et al., 1990), both females and males endorsed *mutual attraction–love*, *dependability*, *emotional stability*, *kindness–understanding*, and *intelligence* as the top-ranked mate-selection criteria. The greatest cultural variation was found in the attitude toward *premarital chastity*. Respondents in China, India, Nigeria, Iran, and Zambia (i.e., reflective of collectivistic values) differed from respondents in the continental United States and western Europe (i.e., reflective of individualistic values) in placing a premium value on premarital chastity.

Personal Commitment and Structural Commitment

In terms of relational commitment issues, individualists tend to expect voluntary personal commitment from their partners in approaching their intimate relationships. However, for collectivists, structural commitment in an intimate relationship may be more important than (or at least on an equal footing with) personal commitment in a long-term romantic relationship. Here *personal commitment*, on the one hand, means an individual’s desire or intent to continue the relationship based on his or her subjective emotional feelings and experiences; *structural commitment*, on the other hand, means the individual takes into consideration various external social and family reactions in deciding either to continue or to terminate a relationship (Johnson, 1991).

As a result of the struggle with autonomy and connection pulls, as well as personal–structural commitment issues, one other outcome among the individualistic cultural mind-set is the phenomenon known as the “hook-up” culture. Hooking up carries a wide range of meanings but is mostly linked to consensual sexual activities that make no pretense of starting a committed relationship, between young, mostly college-age students (Bogle, 2008). While many U.S. college students recognize hooking up as the pathway to a potential romantic relationship, a hook-up encounter does not guarantee

any deep commitment beyond the in-the-moment interpersonal encounter. Traditional collectivistic romantic partners may be quite shocked to learn about the “hook-up” culture when they go abroad as international students or as they work overseas in an individualistic cultural environment. An intimate relationship is already a complicated affair between two attracted partners within the same culture or religion; imagine the complexity of intercultural or intergroup (e.g., interfaith) romantic attraction, especially in conjunction with diverse attitudes toward deep-level beliefs and values, everyday ritual practices, love expression or subtleties, the rearing of bicultural children issues, and dealings with family and peer pressures.

Attuning to Intercultural–Intimate Relationship Attraction: Interpersonal Facilitating Factors

Attraction is an unspoken energy that magnetizes or draws people together. The force of attraction may be sudden, or it may develop slowly across time. Clear cultural-based influences affect the initial attraction between two individuals: perceived physical attractiveness, perceived similarity, self-disclosure, and intercultural–interracial intimate relationship development.

Perceived Physical Attractiveness

Physical attraction develops when one is attracted to a person’s appearance, such as the body, eyes, hair, or clothes. Ryan (2004) found that the force of attraction in Western cultures has to do with our facial features: men should have prominent cheek bones, a big smile, and strong jaw line, and women need a small nose and chin, high eyebrows, and narrow cheeks. In addition, from the Western cultural perspective, extroverts are more likely to be perceived as attractive and are more likely to develop multiple romantic relationships.

Research evidence (Swami, Frederick, & 59 co-authors, 2010) in 26 nations also indicates that while physical attractiveness is critical to initial attraction, so are cultural differences and rural/urban differences regarding those perceived as physically attractive or regarding what are attractive character traits. For example, larger bodies and shapes are preferred in rural samples than in urban samples across multiple nations. The researchers, using the evolutionary theory, explained that where food is scarce, as in rural areas, a plump woman/individual is seen as a high-status, affluent symbol. However, where food is in full supply, a plump mate is no longer desirable. It is interesting, too, that in all cultural samples, women scored higher on preferred female body shape as more slender and leaner than men. In another cross-cultural attraction study (Wheeler & Kim, 1997), in the United States persons with high energy and enthusiasm were considered attractive; for Koreans, however, attractive persons were those high in integrity and in concern for others (Wheeler & Kim, 1997). In the initial stage of

a relationship, individuals often want to create a favorable impression so that others can either be attracted to them or at least find them likable. Thus, an individual may interact in a way that seems to exude attractive qualities (from his or her own perspective) so as to create a favorable impression. Unfortunately, this person may still not be perceived as very attractive by an individual from another culture.

Impression formation and *interpersonal attraction* are two intertwined concepts. Physical attraction is closely associated with overall perceived attractiveness. Overall perceived attractiveness, in turn, is related to desirable personality attributes, such as appearing sensitive, kind, sociable, pleasant, likable, and interesting. Attractive people are also evaluated as more competent and intelligent (Ross & Ferris, 1981). In comparing U.S. and Japanese perceptions of facial attractiveness and the impression formation process, U.S. college students consistently rate smiling faces (both American and Japanese faces) as more attractive, intelligent, and sociable than neutral faces, whereas Japanese students rate smiling faces as more sociable but not necessarily more attractive or intelligent (Matsumoto & Kudoh, 1993).

In terms of perceived credibility, facial composure and body posture apparently influence our judgments of whether individuals appear to be credible (i.e., high social influence power) or not credible (i.e., low social influence power). In some Asian cultures (e.g., South Korea and Japan), for example, influential people tend to use restrained facial expressions and practice postural rigidity. In U.S. culture, however, animated facial expressions and postural relaxation are associated with credibility and positive impression formation (Burgoon et al., 2010). Overall, it can be concluded that perceived attractiveness or credibility is in the eye of the beholder. Furthermore, the meaning of such concepts reflects social agreements that are created and sustained through cultural nonverbal practices.

Perceived Attitudinal Similarity

Perceived similarity refers to how much people think others are similar or dissimilar to themselves. It implies the perception of shared views in beliefs, values, attitudes, communication, interests, and/or hobbies. For example, Morry (2005) found that same-sex friends perceived themselves to be happier individuals the more they reported being similar to their friends. The similarity–attraction perspective (Byrne, 1971) has received intense attention in intergroup–interpersonal attraction research for the last six decades. The argument behind this perspective (with a distinct individualistic-based focus) is that individuals are motivated to maintain or increase their positive self-evaluation by choosing to associate with others who reinforce dimensions relevant to the self (i.e., birds of a feather flock together).

The similarity–attraction hypothesis supports this assumption: a positive relationship exists between perceived similarity and interpersonal attraction (Berscheid & Reis, 1998). Three possible explanations may account for this hypothesis: (1) we experience cognitive consistency if we hold the same attitude and outlook in our relationship; (2) cognitive consistency reinforces our ego and provides identity rewards and

affirmation; and (3) with similar others, we tend to invest less time and energy in managing relational vulnerable feelings, which gives a boost to interpersonal attraction.

In the context of intergroup–interpersonal attraction, perceived similarity takes on a variety of aspects, such as perceived cultural-racial similarity. For low-prejudiced individuals, race is a nonissue, but perceived physical attractiveness is the decisive factor in intergroup attraction (Byrne, 1971). In contrast, for high-prejudiced individuals, racial dissimilarity is viewed as creating insurmountable barriers to intergroup attraction. Additionally, the more the relational partners in initial interethnic encounters hold similar viewpoints concerning communication orientations (e.g., ways to support each other’s self-concepts, ways to comfort each other), the more they are attracted to each other (Lee & Gudykunst, 2001).

In addition, people may be attracted to dissimilar strangers through repeated interactions with them under favorable contact conditions and with a positive mind-set. Proximity, together with perceived similarity, definitely influences initial intercultural attraction. Proximity creates more interaction opportunities. With repeated interaction opportunities, individuals may uncover important attitudinal and communication similarities (e.g., relationship philosophy, family outlook, similar communication styles, and common interests) and thus increase their confidence in relating to each other.

Overall, research findings appear to indicate that the more perceived attitudinal similarity in core relational ideology issues (e.g., relationship future planning, dreams, and relational goals) and communication orientation issues (e.g., the trading of reciprocal supportive messages), the more likely intimate partners experience the gravitational pull toward each other in their attraction chemistry. Concurrently, the more we are attracted to an intercultural partner, the more we are biased toward perceiving attitudinal similarity between self and the partner because she or he now reinforces our long-held relational or communication beliefs.

Perceived similarity provides the additional impetus for individuals to increase their relational commitment and bonding levels. While perceived attitudinal similarity enhances attraction, complementary attraction (especially on the resource and behavioral exchange levels within reasonable range) operates in intercultural–intimate relationship to provide novelty, freshness, enjoyment, and excitement. It appears that both “similarity attracts” and “opposite attracts” coexist in the ever-evolving intercultural–intergroup relationship development process. While “opposite attracts” appears to be an important factor in the development of the initial attraction, perceived “attitudinal similarities” may move the relationship to deeper commitment, trust, and mutual self-disclosure in the relational system.

Cross-Cultural Self-Disclosure Comparisons

Self-disclosure involves the intentional process of revealing exclusive information about ourselves to others that other individuals do not know. The study of self-disclosure is related to social penetration theory (Altman & Taylor, 1973). This theory states that interpersonal information progresses from superficial, nonintimate self-disclosure to

more deep-layered, intimate self-disclosure. This developmental process also involves the *breadth* (i.e., the number of topics we are comfortable with and are willing to disclose to reveal our dynamic self) and *depth* (i.e., intimate layers that reveal our emotionally vulnerable self) of self-disclosure. Deep-layered self-disclosure, as the pinnacle of intimacy, is defined as an individual's willingness to reveal exclusive private information, especially vulnerable identity information to a significant other.

Verbal self-disclosure often follows a *trust-risk dilemma*. To trust someone, you have to be willing to take some risks when sharing unique information about yourself. Through risk taking, you may also establish an initial trusting cycle in interpersonal relationships. However, you may also have to worry about your friend betraying the exclusive information you have just shared. In any relationship, verbal revelation and concealment act as critical gatekeepers in moving a relationship toward greater or lesser intimacy. Both being willing to reveal something about yourself and taking the risk to be transparent and being willing to pay attention to the other person's self-disclosure process are necessary to build a trusting intercultural friendship or romantic relationship. Self-disclosure is related to both public and private selves.

The term "public self," in the self-disclosure arena, refers to those facets of the person that are readily available and are easily shared with others; the term "private self" refers to those facets that are potentially communicable but are not usually shared with generalized others. We can disclose information concerning the different parts of the public self (e.g., tastes and interests, work and studies, attitudes and opinions) and the private self (e.g., family secret issues, personality traits, body image, or self-image issues). Barnlund (1989) found that the Japanese tend to have a relatively small layer of public self and a relatively large layer of private self in their self-disclosure tendency. In comparison, his research revealed that U.S. Americans have a larger layer of public self and a smaller layer of private self in the self-disclosure arena. The Japanese have been found to be more guarded as to disclosing their inner attitudes and private feelings in initial relationship development stages, and they self-disclose with a slower, polychronic time rhythm. In contrast, U.S. Americans are more responsive in disclosing and reciprocating information of a personal, private nature and tend to move faster from the acquaintance relationship to the intimate friendship level, and with monochronic time rhythms.

In examining the self-disclosure patterns of East Asian international students from four different countries (China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan), Chen (2006) found that East Asian students self-disclosed slightly more in intracultural friendships than intercultural friendships. In addition, they perceived the disclosure of attitudes and opinions, tastes and interests, studies or work, and personality as "superficial topics," while they considered the sharing of information on money and financial matters, and body and appearance as "intimate topics." In a follow-up study, Chen and Nakazawa (2010) investigated the self-disclosure patterns of U.S. American students in intercultural and interracial friendship types. In the study, students reported on either their intercultural friendships (between a U.S. citizen and a non-U.S. citizen) or on their interracial friendships. The research findings indicate that the level

of relational intimacy plays a strong role in self-disclosure patterns: as relational intimacy level increases, friends have greater intent to disclose, they disclose in greater amount and depth, and they also engage in more honest/accurate self-disclosure. These findings were the same for both intercultural and interracial friendship situations; respondents reported similar levels of reciprocal self-disclosure (see also Bresnahan & Zhu, 2017).

In comparing self-disclosure patterns in Japanese and U.S. American students, Kito (2005) showed that both groups were drawn to their newfound friends because of perceived similarity. Japanese respondents cited togetherness, trust, and warmth as their top friendship priorities, linking to the self-disclosure process, while U.S. Americans cited understanding, respect, and sincerity as top friendship indicators and an increased self-disclosure rate. Although Asian collectivists emphasized an interpersonal “relationship atmosphere” of harmony and warmth in friendship development, U.S. American individualists emphasized the intrinsic friendship qualities of “being oneself” and “self-transparency” or honesty.

Overall, individualists have been found to engage in more active self-disclosure than collectivists across topics and different “targets,” or receivers (e.g., parents vs. friends). Japanese and U.S. groups agreed on their disclosure *target* preferences in the following order: same-sex friend, opposite-sex friend, mother, father, stranger (Barnlund, 1989). U.S. college students consistently scored higher in their overall amount of self-disclosure than Japanese and Chinese college students. Female college students also reported a significantly higher amount of self-disclosure than male college students, regardless of culture (Ting-Toomey, 1991).

Self-disclosure and intimacy are interdependent: Appropriate self-disclosure can increase intimacy, and increased intimacy prompts more self-disclosure. Self-disclosure develops interpersonal trust, emotional support, and mutual identity validation. However, self-disclosure can also open up the vulnerable self to hurt, disappointment, and information betrayal.

Online Disclosure of Affection

Social network sites are providing an alternative way to disclose feelings or attraction to another. The most popular social networking site, Facebook, has 500 million active users worldwide. According to a recent social media trend report (Statistica—The Statistics Portal, 2018), as of the fourth quarter of 2017, the most popular social networking site, Facebook, had 2.2 billion worldwide monthly active users. On any given day, 1.40 billion individuals log onto Facebook daily and are considered daily active users. In the United States, an average “Facebooker” had 338 friends (with the median at 200 friends). With so much time spent on Facebook, the way people develop and maintain friendships, and the manner in which they communicate with each other, have changed the typical rules of interpersonal relationship engagement. According to Choi, Kim, Sung, and Sohn (2011), while U.S. college students held larger but looser online social networks, Korean college students maintained denser but smaller online social

networks. Whereas U.S. students tend to emphasize “bridging” interaction strategies to accumulate large and more extended social networks, Korean students stress “bonding” interaction strategies to solidify deeper social connections on Facebook.

Furthermore, online dating has become a widespread, explosive global phenomenon. Mobile dating or “mobile romance” appears to be equally popular. Using the same online dating services, subscribers can register, text their location, and find profiles of people in the same zip code range. The cell phone/text culture appeals mainly to younger users (Coleman & Bahnan, 2009). More than half a billion users around the world subscribe to online services (Kale & Spence, 2009). Aside from the traditional dating sites, there are also specialized dating and social sites for like-minded people, whether the shared interest be religion (Christian and Jewish), vegan diets, “Goths,” or spiritual quests.

Some researchers have contrasted online and offline courtship development. How does online dating work? According to Whitty (2009), there are five phases of courtship. In phase one, the *attention phase*, an individual selects an attractive photograph to post, chooses a screen name to represent himself or herself, and crafts a skillful profile. If these three methods connect with another individual and attract attention, phase two occurs. In this *recognition phase*, virtual flirting occurs, which is sending a wink, a kiss, or some icon to represent an interest to the other party. Phase three, the *interaction phase*, is the shortest phase and may take place via email, instant messaging, or texting. In the absence of traditional cues of flirting, emoticons are used to express interest. These first three phases reflect the strategic self-presentation individuals use to communicate who they are in cyberspace. In the virtual world, individuals can be ambiguous, creative, and playful without the fear of face-to-face outright rejection. Interestingly, through the Internet’s global reach and the safety it provides, online dating has moved to countries that historically have sanctioned only arranged dating. The fourth phase, the *face-to-face meeting phase*, refers to the “screening out process” in which partners check each other out for physical chemistry or sexual attraction. Potential partners also want to verify whether the actual person matches the online profile. The meeting is usually scheduled in a safe public space and within a limited time. The fifth and final phase, the *resolution phase*, is the decision-making phase when potential partners decide whether to see each other offline again and/or to continue using the online dating site to check out other potential dating partners.

This lucrative business of searching for love online is booming in China. In a country with relationship worries and pressure to be married by the age of 30, millions of Chinese are using online dating services as the answer. Jiang (2011) reports that online dating sites in China attracted approximately three million subscribers in 2010, a number that is predicted to increase even more in the next five years for busy Chinese professionals. Indeed, online dating and matchmaking have evolved, now transformed into a multibillion dollar concept and practice. Once marked with negative connotations, online dating services provide the easiest way to meet others without obligation to form serious ties or commitment.

Intercultural–Intimate Conflict: Stumbling Blocks

Intercultural and interracial dating or marriage provides fertile ground for culture clashes and obstacles. (Note: The word *intercultural* is used in conjunction with *interracial* for ease.) There are many sources of intercultural–intimate conflict. *Intercultural–intimate conflict* is defined as any antagonistic friction or disagreement between two romantic partners due, in part, to cultural or ethnic or racial group membership differences. Some of the prominent conflict sources are cultural–ethnic value clashes (see the first section of this chapter), prejudice and racism issues, and the rearing of bicultural and biracial children. This section examines intercultural–interracial intimate relationship stages, prejudice, and racism reactions in the everyday environment of the romantic couple. It also covers the different coping strategies couples use to counter racist attitudes and ends with a discussion of identity issues in raising a bicultural child.

Intercultural–Interracial Romantic Relationship Development Stages

With the increase in cultural and ethnic diversification in the United States, the likelihood of being attracted to members of other cultures and races has also increased. Age, generation, ethnic identity, and racial–intergroup attitude appear to be four important predictors of interethnic dating and marriage. For example, Firmin and Firebaugh (2008) found that one’s age and generation are two key predictors for intimate relationship formation: younger people and succeeding generations are more open to interracial dating than older and preceding generations. The later the generation in the United States, the more likely its members are to date outgroup members. Additionally, the less prejudice they perceive in intergroup relations, the more likely they are to be open to dating outgroup members. For example, third-generation Asian Americans are five times more likely to marry outside their ethnic group than first-generation Asian Americans (Kitano, Fujino, & Sato, 1998).

Intercultural romantic relationships have both challenges and benefits. In discussing interracial intimate relationship development, Foeman and Nance (1999) concluded that interracial couples move through the following stages of “racial” awareness and awakening as they enter intimate relationships: racial awareness, coping orientation, relational identity emergence, and relationship maintenance and renegotiation. The first stage, *racial awareness*, refers to the gradual awakening stage when the partners in the interracial relationship become conscious of each other’s opinions and views on intimate racial relationship matters. The second stage, *coping orientation*, refers to the negotiated struggles and conflicts the couple faces in gaining approval from their families and friends and also often in defining a “racist or nonracist encounter episode” from their different interpretive lenses. During this challenging stage, they need to cultivate adaptive and resilient communication strategies in dealing with these different external and internal relationship stressors. In the third stage, *relational identity emergence*, both partners gain a new sense of relational identity, intimacy, and security, and boldly

announce their committed intimate relationship to their families and ingroups. At this stage, the couple attempts to solidify their sense of “relational culture” and “relational commitment” to the outside world. The fourth stage, *relationship maintenance and renegotiation* (see also Imahori & Cupach, 2005) refers to the continuous hard work the couple has to face in dealing with new challenges such as moving to new neighborhoods, meeting and merging new social circles, and raising securely biracial children. These stages are also cyclical, and couples zig-zag between stages. The movement from one stage to the next also depends on the mindful relationship competence skills that the couple utilizes in navigating intergroup–interracial membership issues and the interpersonal empathy and sensitivity they convey to each other.

Despite the many hurdles that arise in an intimate intercultural or interracial relationship, many romantic couples often mention the following relationship rewards in their intercultural–interracial relationships (Karis & Killian, 2009; Romano, 2003; Ting-Toomey, 2009a):

1. Experiencing personal enrichment and growth due to the day-to-day opportunity to continuously clarify their own beliefs, values, and prejudices.
2. Developing multiple cultural frames of reference owing to the opportunity for “doing” and “being,” “controlling” and “yielding.”
3. Experiencing greater diversity and emotional vitality in their lifestyles by participating in different customs, ceremonies, languages, celebrations, foods, and cultural network circles.
4. Developing a stronger and deeper relationship with their partner because they have weathered intercultural prejudice and racist opposition and have arrived at a forgiving, healing place.
5. Raising open-minded, resourceful children who see the world through a multicultural lens and have the ability to be “at home” wherever they find themselves.

These stages of challenges and benefits provide an overall picture of the ebb and flow of intercultural–interracial romantic relationship development. Interestingly, for example, while examining interethnic dating attraction among Asian Americans, Chung and Ting-Toomey (1999) found that the strength of individuals’ ethnic identities was related closely to intergroup attraction and dating. Individuals with assimilated, bicultural, or marginal identities have a greater tendency to date outside of their own groups than those who view their ethnic identities and traditions as important aspects of their self-concept. There were also times during which individuals were attracted to culturally similar (and also culturally dissimilar) others because they perceived their partners to be atypical and distinctive, rather than typical, of their constructed stereotypic cultural images. This means that people do activate

their stereotyping process in initial intercultural attraction stages—be they positive or negative stereotypes. In addition, there may also be a “Romeo and Juliet” effect at work in an intercultural–intimate relationship: the more the respective families oppose this intimate relationship, the more the couple wants to rebel against their parents and “do their own thing”; therefore, they find each other even more attractive. In a rare longitudinal study examining interracial dating patterns from over 2000 college students (from diverse racial–ethnic backgrounds), Levin, Taylor, and Caudle (2007) found that students who exhibited lower levels of ingroup favoritism bias and intergroup anxiety were more likely to date members of other racial and ethnic groups during college. In addition, students who more frequently dated outside their group during college showed less ingroup favoritism bias and intergroup anxiety at the end of their college experience.

In another informative research study, Martin, Bradford, Drzewiecka, and Chitgopekar (2003) surveyed European American young adults regarding their openness to, and experience with, interracial dating. The results indicated that respondents who were raised in more diverse neighborhoods and who had diverse acquaintances were significantly more likely to date outside their race. Among the reasons offered for encouraging interracial dating were perceived compatibility, physical and sexual attraction, and cultural/racial curiosity. And the reasons offered for discouraging interracial dating included lack of desire, lack of proximity, and personal, familial, or societal pressure.

To counteract familial or societal biases and pressures, relational partners need to make a strong commitment to communicate in a culture-sensitive manner and to be responsive and empathetic to their racial minority partner’s lived experience and viewpoint. Thus, both partners need to attune to their internal dynamics that solidify their intimate relationship and build a safety net for each other in encountering prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory practices directed at them from the outside world. The intimate couple needs to convey their deep identity understanding, support, and empathy for each other on both the sociocultural membership and relational cultural level (see also Afifi & Coveleski, 2015).

The Encounter: Prejudice and Racism

With regard to encountering prejudice and racism, the experiences of interracial or intercultural couples may be different. Some of these couples may appear to outsiders to be an ingroup or intracultural relationship due to their physical similarities (e.g., a Mexican-Guatemalan intimate couple may have similar physical features, yet they represent different cultures). These couples can choose either to reveal or to conceal their differences to outsiders. But for interracial and some other intercultural couples, the visible differences are inescapable to all (e.g., an African American married to a Korean American, or a Mexican American dating an Asian Indian American). These couples must find different ways to cope with family and social group reactions as well

as with each other's reactions toward the role their ethnic group plays in their relationship. Although the emotional reactions of outgroup members range from complete acceptance to utter ostracism, the couple's reactions in considering ethnicity as a factor in their relationship can also range from deep understanding to total dismissal. Conflict often arises when intercultural couples have to deal with the dilemma of whether or not to talk about matters of race or racism in their surrounding environment and within their own relationship context.

Prejudice is about a biased mind-set, inflexible prejudgments, and antagonistic feelings about outgroup members. However, racism is about a personal/institutional belief in the cultural superiority of one race and the perceived inferiority of other races (Jones, 1997). Racism also refers to the practice of power dominance of a "superior" racial group over other "inferior" races. Couples often encounter initial conflict when marriage plans are discussed with their respective parents. Reactions can range from responses of support, acceptance, rejection, or fear to outright hostility. For example, let's look at the response of Gina's family in the following interview excerpt (Gina is a European American woman planning to marry an African American man):

"Well, when I told my parents, they both looked kind of shocked, and then my father sort of blew up. He was yelling and screaming and told me that I had just thrown my life away and was I happy about that. But the whole time, I didn't hear my mother say anything against us. Later, after my father went to bed, she came up to me and told me that while she couldn't go against my father's wishes, she just wanted to make sure that I was happy." (in McNamara, Tempenis, & Walton, 1999, p. 76)

Or consider the family response to James, an African American, when he announced his plans to marry a European American woman:

"My father was absolutely against my marrying a White woman. He said I was a traitor to my race and that I was not giving Black women a chance at a wonderful life. He would not talk to Donna, would not see her under any circumstances, and we did not talk to each other for over five years." (in McNamara et al., 1999, p. 84)

For many ethnically homogeneous families, fear is the basic reason behind opposition to an intercultural marriage. Their reasons can include societal or community disapproval, fear for the general physical and emotional well-being of the couple, fear of ostracism, and self-esteem issues concerning their biracial grandchildren (Frankenberg, 1993). As one European American woman commented:

"I am sitting in a small restaurant with my daughter, my husband, my grandson, and my son-in-law. I look at my two-year-old grandson. I have a warm feeling and think to myself, 'This is my first grandchild.' Then my pleasure dissolves into anxiety as I realize that everyone in the restaurant is looking at us. My grandson is brown. My son-in-law is black. And my daughter is no longer mine." (in Crohn, 1995, p. 90)

In terms of societal reactions, one of the most common problems experienced by intercultural couples is the blatant, open stares from strangers. In addition to the stares, prejudiced treatment by some restaurant servers and real estate agents, as well as racism within their own workplace, may deeply disturb the couple's relationship. For example, read Russell's (an African American husband) comments:

"We go into a restaurant, together, with our children. We will order the meal and when we are done, the waitress hands us separate checks. Like she is saying 'here is no way you two could be together.' And here we are sitting with our children, who are obviously fair-skinned: whom does she think they belong to?" (in McNamara et al., 1999, p. 96)

Finally, simply because the partners are in an intimate relationship, there is no guarantee that they themselves are free of racism or matters of race in their own evolving relationship. In times of anger and conflict, couples may use racial epithets or show racial attitudes to vent their frustrations, and these expressions can seriously hurt each other. Although some of the words may have been exchanged in a joking/teasing or sarcastic way during an intimate conflict, those words or phrases can be taken as hurtful, racist comments.

Sometimes a nonminority partner's indifference to or ignorance of a racial issue may actually perpetuate a racist worldview. Gloria (an African American woman married to a European American man) said in an interview:

"I told him someone yelled, 'nigger.' I was on the corner down there; I was with the baby, just driving by. And his first reaction is, 'Well, what did you do to provoke that?' . . . And I thought, 'That's the difference between being Black and White. Why would I have to do anything to provoke it?'" (in Rosenblatt, Karis, & Powell, 1995, p. 240)

This nonminority partner's insulated stance toward issues of racism reflects his lifelong privilege of being a White male in a predominantly White society (see McIntosh, 2002). The concept of White privilege refers to the invisible entitlement that confers dominance or power resources on Whites. Thus, White males can walk down the street at night without the need to be aware of potential racist remarks directed at them without cause, or they can drive their cars routinely without being particularly concerned about racial profiling by the police on the highways.

Fortunately, not all European Americans have such a chilling, indifferent reaction to the issues of racism faced by their intimate partners. As Adam (a European American male married to an African American female) commented:

"It takes being open to your own racism. It's all well and good to be sensitive to others in how they react to you, but you ought to be a little bit sensitive when you can and recognize your own mistakes, try to learn why what you've just said or done offended your partner . . . for example, there's an experience where Wanda would say, 'Yeah, I understand that,' and I say, 'I don't understand it. What was happening? Help me out here.'" (in Rosenblatt et al., 1995, p. 243)

When two intimate partners bring to their relationship strong identities as members of two different minority groups, they may be hypersensitive to identity conflict issues. The following heated debate (Crohn, 1995, p. 171) between Alan (with a strong African American identity) and Sara (with a strong Jewish identity) illustrates this point:

ALAN: How can you know what it means to be discriminated against? You grew up in a comfortable, safe neighborhood. You got to choose whether or not you revealed to others that you were Jewish. My ancestors were brought here as slaves.

SARA: I can't believe you're saying this stuff. You know that I lost great-aunts and great-uncles in the Holocaust. You don't have any monopoly on suffering. What right does the past give you to say how we lead our lives?

Alan and Sara's conflict over their cultural, racial, and religious identities obviously tapped into intense, core emotions in their own identity construction. They will need time to get to know each other's identity and to find meaningful ways to connect to each other's cultures as well as their own.

Countering Racism and Prejudice: Coping Strategies

In dealing with prejudice and racism outside their relationship, some couples may talk about racism issues as a lifetime project, whereas others dismiss them as inconsequential. Some reinforce the idea that to deal with prejudice issues, they have to learn to be honest about prejudices that they carry within themselves. Other couples try to make matters of race only a small part of their relationship and focus their attention more on the love they have for each other and on handling all the mundane details of a shared life: grocery shopping, raising children, doing the laundry, washing the dishes, planning vacations (Rosenblatt et al., 1995). In addition to race issues, emotional issues (e.g., work stress, money, sex, housework, and a new baby) are the most common sources of marital squabbles (Gottman & Silver, 1999). These are the frequent "emotional tasks" that couples have to deal with in their everyday lives and that often reveal their clashing cultural and personal perspectives on how to approach such issues. Gottman and Silver also advise the use of the "5-to-1 ratio" intimacy expression formula—that is, you need to invest five emotionally supportive positive messages in your intimate relationship to counteract one negative message you uttered during the intense relational conflict frustration stage. Furthermore, research indicates that the more you engage in positive relationship memory reflections, the more you will think positively about the current state of your intimate relationship.

More specifically, most interracial couples have developed specific coping strategies to deal with recurring prejudice and racial conflict situations. These coping strategies include *ignoring/dismissing* (especially for minor offenses, such as staring or nasty comments) and *normalizing* (thinking of themselves and appealing to others to treat them as "normal" couples with marital ups and downs). They also use either

withdrawing strategy (avoiding places and groups of people who are hostile to interracial couples) or direct *confrontation strategy* (forthright and outspoken approach to the people who insult or embarrass them) to ward off the verbal or nonverbal insults. They may also employ *educational strategy*, for example, quoting the latest statistics on multiracial dating or marriage and also engaging in outreach efforts to help others to accept interracial couples. Lastly, they also use either *prayer* (relying on their religious faith to solve the prejudice/racism problems) or *humor* (injecting levity into distressing situations and balancing out their own positive mood) to ease or ward off the pains of racism (McNamara et al., 1999). Partners usually use ignoring/dismissal coping strategies to deal with minor threats but use more direct strategies—such as confronting and educating—when countering major racist comments or slurs.

More interestingly, because the discussion of any racial or religious identity issue is so complex and emotionally charged, most couples avoid the topic altogether in their own relating process. However, refraining from dealing with identity issues (especially from the beholder’s viewpoint) is like “buying peace for your relationship on a credit card. You may enjoy the temporary freedom from anxiety you ‘purchased’ by avoiding the difficult topics, but when the bill finally comes due, the ‘interest’ that’s accumulated in the form of resentment and regret may be devastating” (Crohn, 1995, pp. 183–184). Partners in an intercultural–intimate relationship often wonder whether their conflicts are a result of genuine differences of opinion, personality clashes, cultural value differences, or the prejudiced attitude of one of the partners. To achieve a genuine understanding of these intertwined issues, couples have to learn to listen, to probe for message accuracy, and to listen some more. As a final example, let’s listen to the following comments by an African American male who is married to a White female:

“If I had to pick the perfect wife that I could have, she is very close to it. . . . She knows me better than anyone else . . . [and] she helps me a lot too. I like to talk to her and trust her and the fact that we both trust each other was there from the start. I know that she is really sensitive to issues of race and that is because we have experienced so much together. But I also know how difficult that has been for her. So I always try to keep her feelings in the front of my mind. I can’t do anything about my race, but I can do something about how it affects her, at least sometimes I can. She does the same for me, which means that we are always thinking of each other. That’s one of the reasons why I think we have lasted for so long—we are a lot stronger because we are really sensitive to the problem.” (in McNamara et al., 1999, p. 150)

A fundamental acceptance of the cultural-racial and religious aspects of a partner’s identity and a mutual willingness to explore cultural codes, as well as a mutual openness in discussing racism issues, can facilitate greater relational satisfaction. Whether we are in an intimate intracultural or intercultural relationship, we will do well to regard each interpersonal relationship as if it is an intercultural one, for each of us has a subjective cultural iceberg within us due to a distinctive family socialization process, peer group influence, social media engagement, complex identity layers, and unique intimate relationship development lived experiences.

Relational Transgressions and Cross-Cultural Responses

Individuals involved in intimate romantic relationships of any kind may experience unfortunate relational transgressions (e.g., affairs, flirting with others). Zhang et al. (2012) explored how U.S. American college students and Chinese college students might differ when they respond to their dating partners' Internet relational transgressions. Overall, they found that U.S. respondents tend to prefer leaving the relationship ("exit" response) and/or to communicate anger ("anger voice response") more so than Chinese respondents in reacting to an episode of online emotional infidelity. Comparatively, Chinese respondents tend to prefer loyalty, passive neglect, and third-party help responses. It seems that for the Chinese respondents, loyalty is a passive-active strategy: a patient, self-disciplined reaction helps to tone down upfront confrontation, and it would not aggravate the conflict situation further. Furthermore, while seeking help from family and close friends might seem to be a passive approach in the U.S. American mind-set, it is actually an active strategy for Chinese participants because it shows that the individual is caring and committed in salvaging the intimate relationship. Both culture group members, however, also preferred the use of a high degree of integrative, "win-win" problem solving as a response to their partner's online infidelity.

Furthermore, the researchers (Zhang et al., 2012) also found that participants with different levels of self-construal differed when they responded to their dating partners' relational transgressions. High independent self-construal participants tend to prefer exit and angry vocal responses, whereas high interdependent self-construal participants prefer the use of integrative voice and third-party help-seeking responses. Ting-Toomey, Oetzel, and Yee-Jung (2001) also found that biconstrual individuals (those who are high on both independent and interdependent traits) tend to have the most diverse conflict repertoires to deal with a conflict situation in comparison to independent, interdependent, and ambivalent (low on both independent and interdependent traits) personality types. However, the degree of intimacy between the conflict partners, the nature of the conflict, and the conflict context greatly influence individuals' expectancies concerning appropriate and effective conflict behaviors and outcomes in different intercultural/interracial conflict situations.

Moving beyond interracial-interethnic communication styles and response to transgressions, Bratter and King (2008) used data from the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth to examine divorce rates for interracial couples in comparison to same-racial couples. The study revealed that, overall, interracial couples have higher rates of divorce, particularly for those marrying during the late 1980s. Compared to same-race White-White couples, they found that Black male-White female marriages and Asian male-White female marriages were more prone to divorce. Interestingly, those involving White male-non-White female marriages and Hispanic-non-Hispanic marriages tended toward lower risks of divorce.

Researchers continue to focus on understanding these more fragile interracial marriages. While they cannot conclude that race is the cause per se of divorce, it does seem to be associated with higher risk of divorce or separation (Zhang & Van Hook,

2009). One notable finding is that there is a consistent elevated divorce rate for White females in interracial marriages. This distinctive couple type may experience added stress owing to negative reactions from strangers and diminished support from family and friends. In addition, White mothers may be perceived as “unqualified to raise and nurture non-White offspring because of their lack of experience in navigating American culture as a minority” (Bratter & King, 2008, p. 170). Yancey (2007) notes that White females reported encountering more racial incidents with their Black husbands (e.g., inferior restaurant service, racial profiling, and racism against their children) and greater hostility from families and friends as compared to other interracial pairings. Such unwelcoming reactions and the distancing environment from both racial ingroups may add strain and social isolation to this type of interracial marriage.

Raising Secure Bicultural Children

The common refrain from many intercultural marital couples is, “We were doing fine until the kids came along. . . .” Most intercultural parents easily slip back into their own childhood memories and use their own family models to discipline, guide, and raise their children. In the context of bicultural family socialization, some of these parents may hold conflicting values and attitudes in teaching their children “good” from “bad” behaviors, or “proper” from “improper” ways of communicating with their grandparents, parents, siblings, or extended family members. The two themes in this section are raising bicultural–biracial children and helping children to develop a secure identity.

In any intimate relationship, the topic of raising children is a major stressor. Adding intercultural and religious factors to this mix, both parents and children have multiple issues to deal with and to pre-plan. In contemplating an intercultural or interfaith union, the following reflective questions may help to guide you: Does one parent identify with her or his cultural or ethnic group (or religious faith) with a greater intensity than the other? What degree of involvement do members of the immediate and extended families play in the child’s life? What is the cultural and religious composition of the environment, neighborhoods, and schools? Do parents reach a mutually satisfactory outcome regarding an identity path for the family and in raising the child?

Guided by identity management theory (Imahori & Cupach, 2005), Martinez, Ting-Toomey, and Dorjee (2016) interviewed 16 married individuals concerning their interfaith marital highs and lows. The thematic analysis findings included the identification of key milestone decisions (i.e., wedding plans and children socialization coordination) interfaith partners face in their intimate relationships. Although interfaith partners did not perceive their religious differences to pose a significant threat to their marriage, they indicated two fundamental stages of life when they needed to sort out their religious differences head on: getting married and planning the wedding, and raising children.

According to the interview data, almost all couples have to face the challenging issue of the religious upbringing of their children. Reaching a consensus on what sort of religious education their children would receive proved to be a very daunting

communication task. Without a doubt, relational partners identified raising children as the stage in their marriage in which their religious differences most factored in. In some cases, the couples experienced added pressure from their family and social networks as to how to raise their children properly.

In spite of family and social pressures, once participants discussed how they would raise their children, they came to one of two conclusions. They would either raise the children in one faith, or they would expose them to both faiths without necessarily having them practice either. For most of the interviewees with children, the discussion on how to raise them religiously contained a more significant amount of deliberation and intentional communication effort. Couples mulled over their differences and revisited their options until they ultimately decided to expose children to one of the two religious or to both religions and when the children were older, allow them to choose their own religious way (Martinez et al., 2016).

Developing an Identity Plan and Relationship Satisfaction

Bicultural and interfaith children and trans-adopted children often face more identity issues and complexity during various stages of their life cycle development. Decisions about which group to identify with, which label they prefer, and the context that triggers an identity are part of the bicultural identity struggles among children and adolescents. In addition, many bicultural children may claim four identify forms for themselves: (1) *majority-group identifiers*—these children identify with the parent from the dominant culture or religion, while they may or may not publicly acknowledge the identity of their other parent (in this case, from a minority-group background); (2) *minority-group identifiers*—these children identify with the parent who is a minority, while they may either acknowledge that their other parent is from a different background or deny (or minimize) their dual heritage background; (3) *synthesizers*—children who acknowledge the influence of both aspects of their parents' cultural backgrounds and synchronize and synthesize the diverse aspects of their parents' values into a coherent identity; and (4) *disaffiliates* (i.e., “none of the above” identifiers)—children who distance themselves or claim not to be influenced by their parents' cultural backgrounds; they often create their own identity labels and rebel against any existing label that is imposed on them as part of a particular racial or cultural group (Crohn, 1995).

Children or teenagers at different developmental stages may experience the emotional highs and lows related to their sense of self. They may opt for different identity forms—depending on their peer group's attitudes, their parents' socialization efforts, their own self-identity explorations, and the larger society's support or rejection of such an identity search process. Developing a secure identity is a lifelong commitment that requires resilience and skill development. In essence, it means maintaining flexibility. This is not an easy task. Some practical guidelines are provided next to facilitate a stronger dialogue between parents and children regarding cultural and religious identity issues.

First, take time and make a commitment to work out a family identity process as early in your relationship as possible; understand the important aspects of your own and your partner's cultural–ethnic and religious identity. Second, make time to listen to your children's identity stories and experiences; their ambivalence is often part of a normal, developmental process. Learn not to judge or be hurt by their truthful revelations. Third, try to provide your children with plenty of cultural enrichment opportunities that celebrate the diversity of both of your cultures; offer them positive experiences to appreciate and synthesize the differences (Crohn, 1995; Ting-Toomey, 2009c).

Fourth, be truthful in dealing with prejudice and racism issues; nurture a secure sense of personal self-esteem and self-worth in your children regardless of how they wish to identify themselves. Parents should model constructive, assertive behaviors in confronting prejudice and racism issues. Finally, recognize that your children will grow up and choose their own path; keep the dialogue open and let your young children or teenagers know that you will always be there for them. A secure home environment, listening to their stories with patience and interest, giving them room or space to grow, and finding meaningful ways to relate to who they are, and are becoming, are some very basic means that parents can use to signal their heartfelt caring and mindful presence in their children's lives.

We should recognize that in any intercultural–intimate conflict, it is difficult to pursue all “my needs” or all “your needs” and come up with a neat conflict resolution package. In most intimate conflicts, couples who engage in constructive conflict tend to cultivate multiple paths in arriving at a mutually satisfying communication process and destination. They also need to learn the art of compromising and letting go and to think of their rich relationship blessings in lives more so than the pitfalls. Satisfied intercultural couples learn to listen to their partners' viewpoint with patience, and they are open to reconsidering their own position. They are committed to understanding their partners' cultural beliefs, values, intimacy lenses, racism stories, and relational expectations. They are also willing to actively share and self-disclose their vulnerabilities, dreams, and hopes. Concurrently, they are able to inject humor and to laugh with each other in times of stress. Finally, they are also able to be mindfully there for their small children and adolescents—in their quest for cultural and personal identity meanings.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND MINDFUL GUIDELINES

This chapter focused on both the facilitating factors and the challenges in developing intercultural–intimate relationships. We first explored culture-based individualism–collectivism value issues and their influence on general intercultural–intimate relationship development. We discussed anxiety/uncertainty management theory in depth and its implications for initial strangers' uncertainty reduction interaction. We also explored love attitudes and expressions and relationship commitment issues across cultures. We then moved on to review the facilitating factors in prompting intercultural–intimate

attraction: perceived physical attractiveness, perceived attitudinal similarity, cross-cultural self-disclosure comparisons, and online disclosure of affection. In the third section, we probed the stumbling blocks faced by intercultural–interracial couples. We discussed the different developmental stages of the intercultural–intimate relationship development process. We then explored the stressors that an intercultural–interracial couple faces in dealing with racism issues and relational transgression issues as well as the accompanying communication strategies to deal with these stumbling blocks. We rounded off the section by focusing on some practical strategies and tips on how to raise healthy and vibrant bicultural–biracial children in the family system. These and other stumbling blocks are best handled by culture-sensitive dialogue, genuine relational commitment, and extra attention to cultural, ethnic, and relational culture identity development issues.

The following mindful guidelines are drawn from the preceding discussion of various roadblocks that an intercultural–intimate couple faces:

- 1** Be mindful that individualists and collectivists hold different expectations concerning love attitudes and expressions, and relationship commitment issues.
- 2** Learn to deal with the individualistic and collectivistic value gaps adaptively and be sensitive to cross-cultural personal commitment versus structural/family network commitment issues.
- 3** Be committed to developing a deep friendship with your intimate partner as a cushion to deal with both internal and external stressors down the road.
- 4** Be unconditionally accepting of your partner's core personality. You must make your partner feel that you try hard to understand the cultural and religious (or nonreligious) identities and sociocultural membership contexts that she or he is coming from.
- 5** Be flexible in learning the communication preferences of your intimate partner and learn to code-switch from direct- to indirect-nuanced styles or from verbal to nonverbal emotionally responsive behaviors. Learn to listen deeply and attend to your partner's yearning needs with your caring-compassionate heart.

CRITICAL THINKING AND CONNECTIVE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. In this chapter, we discussed the value of individualism–collectivism and how it can shape your outlook on love expressions and relationship commitment. The opening story reflects several key values and communication challenges of intercultural–intimate relationships. Drawing from the “sociocultural membership identity factors” section, can you apply the knowledge insights and offer some concrete intercultural advice to both Ken and Kim? Can you also offer them some insights into how to raise their son Kevin to be a happy and secure bicultural kid?
2. Think about the last time you experienced high levels of anxiety/uncertainty in approaching an attractive intercultural stranger. Why did you experience such anxiety and uncertainty? What strategies did you use to manage your anxiety/uncertainty? Did your strategies produce a favorable or unfavorable outcome?
3. In this chapter, we cited abundant studies on “similarity attracts” and less on “opposite attracts.” Can you think of examples in your own life or in your social network that the norm of “opposite attracts” worked out much more beautifully than “similarity attracts”? What are the couple’s secrets in making the relationship work out so nicely?
4. We discussed the breadth and depth of self-disclosure in this chapter. Do you feel your family background and upbringing shape your self-disclosure tendency—high or low—in your own intimate relationship? How so? How does self-disclosure and its trust–risk dilemma play out in your cultural community? Does your cultural community endorse more self-disclosure or other-disclosure process (i.e., sharing information about close-knit others in the network)? How so?
5. Based on the ideas in this chapter, which three pieces of advice would you share with a close friend concerning how to deal with the challenges or conflicts in his or her intercultural–intimate relationship development process? Why these three?

CHAPTER 12

Becoming Ethical Intercultural Practitioners and Improving Communication Practices

- Introduction
- Contemporary Issues Revolving Around Ethical Choice Making
 - *Global Standard Procedures and Local Justice Issues*
 - *Corporate Responsibility and Local Customary Practice*
 - *Cultural Value Clash and Communication Emphasis*
- Understanding Existing Intercultural Ethical Positions
 - *The Ethical Absolutism Position versus the Ethical Relativism Position*
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 - *The Meta-Ethics Contextualism Direction: Procedures and Reflexive Questions*
- Cultivating Ethical Intercultural Research and Training Practices
 - *Intercultural Communication Research: Specific Ethical Issues*
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- Promoting Global Social Justice and Peace-Building Processes: A Lifelong Journey
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 - *Improving Ethical Transcultural Communication Practices*
- Chapter Summary and Mindful Guidelines
- Critical Thinking and Connective Application Questions

MICHIGAN DOCTORS CHARGED: RELIGIOUS PRACTICE OR CHILD ABUSE? A CASE STORY

(CNN) In the first federal case involving female genital mutilation filed in the United States, two Michigan doctors and the wife of one of the doctors have been charged with performing the banned procedure on two 7-year-old girls. Dr. Fakhruddin Attar, 53, and

his wife, Farida Attar, 50, were arrested Friday at their medical office in Livonia, Michigan, west of Detroit. They were charged with three federal criminal counts, including conspiracy, female genital mutilation, and aiding and abetting. Detroit emergency room physician Jumana Nagarwala, 44, was arrested on April 12 and is currently in jail awaiting trial after a federal judge deemed her a flight risk and a threat to the community.

The three defendants belong to a “religious and cultural community” that investigators allege practice female genital mutilation on young girls—a painful surgical procedure to remove part of the clitoris or clitoral hood to suppress female sexuality. During a court hearing on April 17, 2017, Nagarwala’s defense attorney, Shannon Smith, told a judge that the procedure did not involve cutting and was religious in nature. . . . Smith argued that the procedure is practiced by the Dawoodi Bohra, an Islamic sect based in India, and that the clinic was used to keep procedures sterile. . . .

The Detroit Free Press reported from the hearing that Smith said her client removed membrane from the girls’ genital area using a “scraper” as part of a religious practice. The girls’ parents would then bury the membrane in the ground in accordance with their religious custom. . . . Both girls said their parents told them not to talk about the procedure. When investigators questioned the parents, one couple described the procedure as a “cleansing” of extra skin.

—From CUEVAS (2017).

Introduction

We open this chapter with a case story of female genital mutilation in the United States reported by CNN in April 2017. What are your reactions to this real-life case story? Are you horrified, and did you wince as you read it? Have you already decided that the procedure is unethical? Or do you want to learn more about the factual details and the comparative cultural backdrops of this case? Importantly, how best can we understand and address issues such as this in intercultural and cross-cultural contexts? It is contended that multilayered cultural and social contexts often frame an ethical dilemma. In order to understand a problematic cultural practice and before we render a sound judgment, multiple historical and macro–micro perspectives must be taken into serious consideration.

In any intercultural ethical decision-making situation such as the one presented here, we often have to make difficult choices between upholding our own cultural beliefs and values and considering the values of the other culture. We also have to think about intention, behavior/process, outcome, and larger individual, community, global, and humanistic consequences.

Ethics has to do with what is good and bad in human conduct, and it embodies a perspective that leads to prescriptive norms that guide a system’s behaviors or actions. In short, ethics comprises a set of standards that uphold the community’s expectations

concerning “right” and “wrong” conduct. To be an ethical intercultural practitioner, mastering the standards of “right” and “wrong” conduct is an essential feature that undergirds cognitive, affective, and behavioral competence.

The concept of ethics becomes more problematic and complex when a particular issue involves a struggle between global (or predominantly Western) standards and local justice, corporate responsibility and local practice, as well as clashes of values and communication preference issues. Making wise and compassionate ethical choices *in situ* is a multilayered, developmental, and complex process.

This chapter is organized via five sections: (1) general contemporary ethical issues confronting intercultural communication practitioners; (2) multiple intercultural ethical positions such as ethical absolutism, ethical relativism, and the meta-ethics contextualism framework; (3) particular ethical issues pertaining to intercultural communication research and training; (4) the stepping stones to promoting global justice, peace, and harmony and further ideas on improving ethical transcultural communication practices; and (5) summary highlights and final guidelines for becoming ethical intercultural communicators, together with critical thinking and connective application questions.

Contemporary Issues Revolving Around Ethical Choice Making

Intercultural communication ethics can include topics such as global operational standards and local justice issues, multinational corporate power and responsibility in local cultures, and cultural values and communication clashes. Ethics regulates what ought to be and helps set standards for everyday human conduct (Paige & Martin, 1996).

Global Standard Procedures and Local Justice Issues

First, let us check out a summary story excerpted from Oetzel’s (2009) intercultural text concerning a real-life case that took place in Sudan in November 2007:

THE TEDDY BEAR STORY

Gillian Gibbons is a British woman who was working in a Sudanese school as a teacher of young children. As part of the mandated government curriculum to learn about animals, Gibbons asked one of her students to bring a teddy bear to class. She asked the predominantly Muslim students to identify some names for the bear and then to vote on their favorite names. The voting was a way to introduce the students to democracy. The students, all around 7 years old, identified Abdullah, Hassan, and Muhammad as possible names. Ultimately, the vast majority chose Muhammad. The students took turns taking the teddy bear home and writing a diary, which was labeled “My name is Muhammad.”

Gibbons was arrested in November 2007 and charged with inciting religious hatred—a crime that is punishable by 40 lashes and 6 month imprisonment. The Prophet

of Muhammad is the most sacred symbol in Islam and to name an animal Muhammad is insulting to many Muslims. (p. 2)

Ultimately, Ms. Gibbons was sentenced to 15 days in prison and then deported back to Britain. The case provoked outcries from both the British and the Sudanese Muslim perspective. From the British viewpoint, the incident was an innocent intercultural misunderstanding and not a major criminal offense. For their part, the Sudanese Muslims saw Ms. Gibbons's action as a grave insult directed at their faith and their sacred spiritual leader, Muhammad. On the day after sentencing, many thousand protestors marched to the streets and demanded Ms. Gibbons be executed or be given "death by firing squad."

As this news story demonstrates, for every ethical case study one can find multiple perspectives and layered contexts framing an ethical dilemma case. Let's look at another example: Adler and Gundersen (2008) offered another tragic critical incident to illustrate the clash of global standard procedures and local justice:

THE PETTY THEFT STORY

A major North American company operating in Asia discovered one of the local employees stealing company property of minimal value. . . . Following the company's standard worldwide procedure, the North American managing director reported the case to the local police. Similar to many other North American companies, this company believed that it was best to let officials from the local culture deal with the theft and similar violations in whatever way they found most appropriate, rather than imposing the system of justice from their home culture. The local police arrived at the company, arrested the employee, took him to the police station, and interrogated him according to local procedures.

The employee confessed. The police then took the employee outside and shot him dead. (p. 215)

Needless to say, the North American managing director was totally devastated and, for the rest of his life, felt remorse and guilt for reporting the theft case to the local police and causing the end of a precious life.

As students of intercultural communication ethics, how can we make wise choices that reconcile differences between global standard procedures and local justice issues? How can we leverage the laws, rules, and norms of the home-based environment with that of the local cultural setting? According to Adler and Gundersen (2008), in approaching the "theft" case just described, we can start thinking of a cultural variability framework and apply it systematically as depicted in the following five-phase ethical decision-making model: problem recognition, information search, construction of alternatives, choice, and implementation.

In the *problem recognition phase*, we should learn to frame the "petty theft" case from both the North American and the local cultural/legal (e.g., "serious crime") viewpoint. Different values need to be systematically explored and compared and contrasted for one to recognize the cultural convergent and divergent points of mutual

meaning coordination and clash. In the *information search phase*, the emphasis is on gathering multiple facts from different sectors of Western and local cultures concerning diverse ideas, possibilities, and potential consequences. If the North American managing director in the preceding case study had searched more closely for additional data, he might have learned that death was the punishment for anyone who violated local laws—whether the crime was petty or serious. In the *construction of alternatives phase*, the emphasis is on how the North American company could craft culturally inclusive creative alternatives that would reconcile its corporate values (e.g., “individuals can learn and change for the better”) and integrity policy with those of the local culture (e.g., the “once a thief always a thief” notion).

In the *choice phase*, who assumes primary responsibility for making the process and final outcome decision? An individual or a team? Should the approach used be top-down or bottom-up? Are diverse voices from different sectors of the workplace being heard and answered as an outcome decision is being made? In applying the cultural variability framework, perhaps a tripartite intercultural decision-making committee (made up of representatives from the North American, Asian, and other cultural regions) to review the “petty theft” case might have learned that a “death” consequence awaited the local employee if he was reported to the local police. Thus, the committee members may want to return to the construction of alternatives phase to consider more creative solutions (e.g., devise a first-time warning system, fire the employee but not report the theft, demand personal accountability through full self-disclosure, and/or deduct money from the employee’s paycheck as a first-time offense). They might also want to delay making a final decision to report the theft case in order to obtain a more thorough understanding of local legal and cultural ramifications. In the last phase, *implementation*, the emphasis is on whether the new global corporate policy (e.g., implementing a first-time warning system for “petty theft”) should come down from the top-down global headquarters or involve the full participation of subsidiaries from different cultural regions. Depending on the circumstances of each ethical dilemma case, a layered understanding of macro and micro factors is needed to fine-tune our thinking and interpretation of intercultural ethics.

Corporate Responsibility and Local Customary Practice

Another set of contemporary ethical issues concerns the economically privileged position of a corporate culture for operating in developing countries. Issues such as child labor, women’s rights, human rights violations, working conditions, and corporate responsibility versus local discriminatory policies are other urgent ethical issues waiting to be addressed. For example, during the apartheid period in South Africa, many political groups claimed that international businesses had a “moral duty to boycott the apartheid regime—that is, either not to enter or pull out—while others, and in particular, the staying companies claimed that they were obligated to use their influence to better the life situation for the country’s discriminated-against majority” (Brinkmann, 2006, p. 432). Perhaps global corporate pressure and positive influence through

constructive educational programs can help raise social justice and other-awareness issues. More importantly, it is through the dedicated commitment and collective action of members within the local culture scene, fervently advocating breakthrough change, that discriminatory practice in a national culture can be confronted directly.

More specifically—for example, with regard to issues of local hiring practices—Donaldson (1989) developed an ethical algorithm formula whereby he identified two conflict types: (1) conflict due to moral reasoning related to the country's economic development, and (2) conflict not due to moral reasoning related to the country's economic development. In the first case, for example, a Latin American country has lower minimum wages than the United States because of its lower level of economic development. Donaldson (1989) believes that the “low wage” practice is permissible *if and only if* the members of the home country would, under similar economic development conditions, regard the practice as permissible and consistent treatment across the board. In a separate, second “hiring” case in a Latin country, hiring is done on the basis of clan or family network loyalty rather than individual merit. Donaldson (1989) proposed the deliberation on the “hiring family member” case via the following two questions: (1) Is the practice a clear violation of a fundamental international human right? (2) Is it possible to conduct businesses successfully in the local culture without undertaking this practice? The practice is permissible, *if and only if* the answer to both questions is “no.”

Let us assume that a global company wants to open a manufacturing plant in Country X. In Country X, it is strict government policy that women be paid 50% of a man's salary for the same job. Now, applying Donaldson's (1989) situational ethics formula, we find that the answer to the first question is “yes.” However, the answer to the second question is “no.” Thus, the practice fails the overall situational ethics formula test (Brake, Walker, & Walker, 1995). In addition, Brake et al. (1995) recommend that in making a sound ethical intercultural decision, the following questions be considered:

1. Are you ethically confident and comfortable in defending your action in both the private and public sectors? Would you want your significant others, spouse, children, and parents to know about your problematic behavior? Would you want your colleagues and bosses to know about your shaky practice? Would you be comfortable if your questionable action were reported on the front page of a major newspaper or became CNN's headline news?
2. Would you want the same action to be happening to you or directed at a close member of your family?
3. What if everyone acted that way? What will be some of the cumulative harms? What will be some of the cumulative benefits? Would the resulting consequences be beneficial to the larger community or society on both tangible and principled ethics levels? Would the benefits sustain themselves without your corporate presence? Would you be comfortable teaching your children to act the same way? If you were designing a socially just and inclusive global

organization, would you want your employees to act that way? Are there better creative alternatives that rest on firmer ethical principles?

Cultural Value Clash and Communication Emphasis

The third contemporary issue concerns the cultural value clash of universalism and particularism (Parsons, 1951; Triandis, 1995). For example, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) asked 30,000 managers in 30 nations to respond to the following dilemma: You're riding in a car driven by a close friend, and your friend hits a pedestrian. The maximum allowed speed was 20 mph, and your friend was driving at 35 mph. Other than you, there are no witnesses. Your friend's lawyer says that if you testify under oath that your friend was driving at 20 mph, your friend may avoid serious consequences. On one hand, more than 90% of the managers in Switzerland, United States, Canada, Ireland, Sweden, Australia, the UK, and The Netherlands claimed that society's rules were designed for everyone and that their friend therefore had no right to expect them to testify falsely. On the other hand, only under 55% of the managers from Venezuela, Nepal, South Korea, Russia, China, and India made the same claim; the rest of the 35% managers needed to ponder the case further. While the answers of the Swiss and U.S. managers reflected an "impartial/objective" or "universalistic" value standpoint, the answers of the Venezuelan and Nepalese managers showed a "particularistic/relational" value pattern.

Overall, the North American and northern European respondents in this study tended to be more impartial and individualistic in their decision making. In comparison, the Latin American and Asian managers tended toward particularistic and collectivistic value orientations. The moral reasoning for the individualistic universalists was as follows: "as the seriousness of the accident increases, the obligation of helping their friend decreases . . . the law was broken and the serious condition of the pedestrian underlines the importance of upholding the law" (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 34). In contrast, the collectivistic particularists reasoned that "my friend needs my help more than ever now that he is in serious trouble with the law." As you can see, a rather straightforward critical incident such as this can generate multiple interpretations, dilemmas, and choices. Thus, a dilemma implies two equally compelling and competing premises that, at any given moment in time, an intercultural communicator has to select one of two equally appealing or unappealing choices (Gannon, 2008; Williams, 2002). In reality, most intercultural ethical dilemmas have many layers of complexity, gradations, and nuances and are subject to different cultural interpretations from multiple spectrum dimensions.

Understanding Existing Intercultural Ethical Positions

The two most commonly held and discussed ethical positions in the intercultural arena are *ethical absolutism* and *ethical relativism* (Pedersen, 1997; Ting-Toomey, 1999, 2011). An alternative to both positions is *ethical universalism*, which is derived from

commonalities across cultures. However, the *meta-ethics contextualism framework* transcends all of these ethical positions. Which of these ethical positions and meta-ethics position would you apply to the opening story about female genital mutilation, and why? The next two subsections define the various ethical positions and consider the merits and limitations of each position.

The Ethical Absolutism Position versus the Ethical Relativism Position

The Ethical Absolutism Position

Ethical absolutism emphasizes the principles of right and wrong in accordance with a set of fixed standards regardless of cultural differences. According to the ethical absolutism position, the importance of cultural context is minimized. Ethical absolutists believe that in evaluating *good* and *bad* behavior, the same fixed standards should be applied to all cultures. Unfortunately, the dominant or mainstream culture typically defines and dominates the criteria by which ethical behavior is evaluated. Cultural or ethnic distinctive differences between membership groups are often minimized.

For example, a dominant culture may view Western medical practice as the most “civilized” way of treating a patient and thus impose this view on all groups. If a Hmong woman, for example, gives birth to a new baby and asks the nurse or doctor to give her the placenta, a Western doctor may find the request bizarre and may well refuse such an “uncivilized” request. However, within the Hmong culture, the act of burying the placenta has extremely important cultural significance and is related directly to their belief in the migration of souls and matters of life after death.

The positive aspect of ethical absolutism is that one set of fixed standards is applied to evaluate a range of practices, thus preserving cross-situational consistency. The negative aspect is that ethical absolutism is a “culturally imposed” perspective that often reflects the criteria set forth by members in the dominant cultures or groups (e.g., First World nations vs. Third World nations). The ethical absolutism approach often results in marginalizing or muting the voices of nondominant groups in both domestic and international arenas. It imposes and accentuates a colonial ethnocentric worldview. According to Munshi, Broadfoot, and Smith (2011), it is critical to create an “in-between space” for the authentic dialogue of all indigenous groups to take place so that the space can facilitate and give voice to the values and practices of all peoples and so that multivocal standpoints are included, respected, and legitimized. Thus, if you operate from the ethical absolutism approach, what would be your reaction and decision in regard to the opening story? Does religious faith matter or does it not?

The Ethical Relativism Position

In contrast, *ethical relativism* emphasizes the importance of understanding the cultural context in which the problematic conduct is being judged. According to the ethical relativism position, the critical role of cultural context is maximized. It is important to

elicit the interpretations and to understand problematic cases from the cultural insiders' viewpoint.

Ethical relativists try to understand each cultural group on its own terms. They advocate the importance of respecting the values of another culture and using those value systems as standards for ethical judgments. They emphasize that *ethical* and *unethical* practices should be understood from a cultural insider's lens. This approach takes the role of culture seriously in its ethical decision-making process and takes into account the importance of ethno relativism rather than ethnocentrism. Evaluative standards of ethical behavior are related closely to the conventional customs in each cultural context. Thus, if you operated using the ethical relativism approach, what would be your reaction and decision in regards to the opening story? Can you disregard universal standards and laws?

When taken to its extreme, however, this view encourages too much cultural flexibility and leniency and ignores ethical principles that are developed beyond each cultural context and on a global humanistic-interpretive level. Furthermore, ignorant laypersons (or cultural resource powerholders) often use the "excuse or guise" of ethical relativism and continue to tolerate or perpetuate intolerable cultural practices (e.g., female genital mutilation in Somalia and Sudan; honor killing in Turkey, Pakistan, and India; see also Dorjee et al., 2013). Dominant groups in a society are often those that preserve cruel or intolerable cultural practices for their own gratification. They also perpetuate those practices that reinforce the status quo, which maintains its onepmanship and keeps nondominant groups in subservient, powerless roles (see Figure 12.1).

Three Ethical Positions			
	Ethical Absolutism	Ethical Relativism	Ethical Universalism
Pros	Enforces consistent and fixed standards for all practices for all cultural groups.	Takes the role of cultural context and local norms seriously and applies culturally responsive standards.	Takes global humanistic standards or worldwide standards seriously.
Cons	Reflects culturally imposed standard often by the dominant cultural group, and nondominant cultural groups are marginalized. One-sized ethnocentric ethical position.	In some cases, encourages too much cultural leniency and flexibility and may perpetuate intolerable cultural practices by being too culturally accepting and overly tolerant.	Most advocating this position rely heavily on Eurocentric moral philosophies or reflect a "First World" countries' lens. Still need to incorporate inclusive voices from <i>all</i> diverse identity groups. However, while striving toward the global yardstick, we are not quite there yet.

FIGURE 12.1. Three ethical positions: Pros and cons.

The Derived Ethical Universalism Position

A third approach, *derived ethical universalism*, emphasizes the importance of deriving universal ethical guidelines by placing ethical judgments within the proper cross-cultural context. Evaluations about “good” or “bad” behaviors require knowledge about the underlying similarities across cultures and about the unique features of a culture. A derived ethical universalism approach highlights an integrative culture-universal and culture-specific interpretive framework. Unfortunately, this is easier said than done. Thus, if you use the derived ethical universalism approach, what would be your reaction and decision stand relative to the opening story?⁹ How would you integrate a universal standard and a culture-specific lens in this case?

Although it is ideal to strive for a derived universalistic stance, it demands collaborative dialogue, attitudinal openness, and hard work from members of all social class, gender, ethnic, and cultural groups. It demands that all voices be heard and affirmed. It also calls for equal power distributions among all groups representing a diverse range of cultures. Unfortunately, most of the current “ethical universalism” approaches are “pseudo-ethical universalism” or can be viewed as an “imposed ethics” lens that relies heavily on Eurocentric moral philosophies to the exclusion of many co-culture or minority group ethical philosophies or voices. Beyond the Western codes of ethics such as virtue, natural law, and utilitarian ethics, and the occasional inclusion of feminist ethics, ethical codes from other cultural regions such as Confucian, Taoist, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Islamic, Hispanic/Latino/a, and pan-African ethics are seldom seen in mainstream ethics readings. An inclusive and all-encompassing ethical universalism is a goal that is ideal goal to strive for—especially when efforts have been made to include representative members from all disenfranchised groups in order to share their visions, dreams, and hopes. A more reasonable, analytical perspective guiding our ethical struggles in contemporary society may be that of the meta-ethics contextualism framework.

The Meta-Ethics Contextualism Framework: Macro- and Micro-Level Analysis

The *meta-ethics contextualism* framework (Ting-Toomey, 1999, 2011) emphasizes the importance of understanding problematic practices from a 360 degree, multilayered, multi-auditory, multi-visionary, multivocal, and multicontextual angle. It is socioecologically informed sense-making ethics. A *meta-ethical contextual decision* is a case-by-case discovery process, delving deeper into our own value system to find inconsistencies, resonating points, and creative problem-solving commitments. It also prompts us to gather multiple-level information to understand the complex, multilayered reasons that give rise to problematic practices from diverse lenses and voices.

The term “meta-ethics” refers to thinking about our own thought process concerning the knotty, struggling questions surrounding an ethical dilemma case and being transparent with ourselves. Emphasizing a meta-ethics contextualism decision-making

approach means the methodical application of ethics from multiple kaleidoscopic viewpoints and with grounded data and culture-sensitive understanding. It also takes into account differentiated person-by-person considerations, situation-by-situation probes, intention-and-consequence comparative foci, and inclusion of macro (e.g., cultural worldviews and intergroup histories), exo (e.g., formal institutions such as the existing policies, climates, court rulings), meso (e.g., media, community, or workplace standpoints), micro (e.g., intercultural–interpersonal message exchanges), chrono-, and spatial standpoint interpretive lenses.

On the positive side, this approach emphasizes in-depth fact-finding and layer-by-layer interpretations. It also seriously considers the importance of culture, context, persons, intentions, means, consequences, and global humanism (see also Jia & Jia, 2017). The problem it presents is that it is a time-consuming approach that involves immense human power, hard work, fact-finding, and collaborative back-and-forth negotiation from diverse cultural groups. Yet, in the long run, the time invested in understanding a problematic practice from multiple contextual angles may ultimately help to save time and prevent further human suffering, pain, and agony. Thus, if you attempt to understand the opening story from the meta-ethics contextualism framework, what will be your reaction and decision in regard to the story? How would you apply a multilayered, multiperspective, and contextual lens to this case story?

With a clear understanding of the embedded contexts (on multiple sociohistorical, sociocultural, sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and situational levels) that frame the problematic cultural situation in question, intercultural learners can make mindful choices concerning their own degree of commitment and action plan in approaching ethical situations with follow-up procedures and a set of transformative, reflexive inquiry questions.

The Meta-Ethics Contextualism Direction: Procedures and Reflexive Questions

The meta-ethics contextualism framework is actually a broader philosophical outlook on how an ethical dilemma should be conceptualized and approached. To prepare ourselves to develop an everyday meta-ethics mind-set, we may use the procedural recommendations made by ethical experts (e.g., Moorthy et al., 1998) in analyzing problematic international business cases.

Initially, we should properly collect data and fact-check the details about the case from multiple interpretive angles. We also need to look at the case considering the totality of the situation as well as the cultural context, an effort that requires suspending our ethnocentric judgment and looking at the case from the other cultural frame of reference. To understand the intentions and motives of those involved in the case, we should consider their intentions independent of their actions; their actions independent of their intentions; and a combination of their intentions and actions as a whole. Following this step, we should analyze the weighted positive and negative consequences of their actions and then make our final decision and recommendations.

Good action requires good intentions; however, you usually do not know the true intentions of others. You can only observe their actions and make inferences. However, you should systematically train yourself to be transparent with regard to your own intentions or motives showing why you behave the way you behave in a particular situation. Thus, you can assume full responsibility for your own decision-making choices and meta-analytical mind-set. You can also train yourself to try to act ethically in both intentions and actions, and enhance and magnify your self-reflexivity critical inquiry process.

In everyday life and on a personal level, we often make choices that have multiple consequences for our own lives and those of others. In the intercultural meta-ethics decision-making arena, we need to mindfully ask ourselves the following 10 questions when we encounter culture-based tug-and-pull ethical dilemma situations:

1. Who or which group perpetuates this practice within this culture and for what reasons?
2. Who or which group resists this practice and for what reasons? Who is benefiting? Who is suffering—either voluntarily or involuntarily?
3. Does the practice cause unjustifiable suffering to an individual or a selected group of individuals at the pleasure of another group?
4. What is my role, and what is my “voice” in this ethical dilemma?
5. Should I condemn/reject this practice publicly and withdraw from the cultural scene?
6. Should I go along and find a solution that reconciles cultural differences?
7. Can I visualize alternative solutions or creative outcomes that can serve to honor cultural traditions and at the same time get rid of the intolerable cultural practice?
8. At what level can I implement this particular creative solution? Who are my allies? Who are my adversaries?
9. Should I act as a change agent in the local cultural scene through grassroots movement efforts?
10. What systematic changes in the culture are needed for the creative solution to sustain itself and filter through the system?

Many problematic cultural practices perpetuate themselves because of long-standing cultural habits or ignorance of alternative ways of doing things. Education and a desire for change from the people within a local culture are usually how a questionable practice is ended. Viewed from a meta-ethics contextualism framework, it is clear that making a sound ethical judgment demands both breadth and depth of culture-sensitive knowledge, context-specific knowledge, a person-specific experiential schema, and genuine humanistic concern. A meta-ethics contextualism philosophy can

lead us to develop an inclusive mind-set and pave the way to a genuine, universal ethics. Struggling with ambiguous feelings, dissonance, decision processes, and outcomes while searching for the kernel of truth in an ethically foggy case is part of a maturing discovery stance.

Cultivating Ethical Intercultural Research and Training Practices

The theorizing behind intercultural ethics in the last 20 years or so can be clustered into two themes: the representative voice of the intercultural communication research field and the ethics of intercultural communication training. While some theorizing efforts have been made about ethical issues in the intercultural communication field, there is, unfortunately, a paucity of actual research on intercultural communication ethics.

Intercultural Communication Research: Specific Ethical Issues

Martin and Butler (2001) theorize about diverse intercultural ethical issues from the perspective of three research camps: functionalist, interpretive, and critical views (see also Chapter 2). While the functionalist camp emphasizes the role of the researcher as an objective empiricist (the etic perspective), researching culture and communication via “quantifiable” dimensions and categories, the interpretive camp emphasizes the role of the researcher as an intersubjective participant (the emic perspective), researching the lived cultural experiences of the observed participants in context. While the functionalists mostly emphasize the strict guidelines of “human subject protection,” interpretive ethnographers highlight the importance of practicing “cultural respect” and “cultural humility” in learning from the insiders’ views of their stories and metaphors, and their personal experiences of their own cultural worlds and communication codes (Gonzalez, 2000). The functionalists must be mindful of the influence of ethical absolutism in constructing and applying the strict guidelines to their research subject and investigation, and by the same token, the interpretivists must be mindful of the influence of the extremity of ethical relativism in practicing cultural respect and dealing with social injustice issues across cultures.

From the critical research standpoint, which underscores the importance of the power struggle involved in the study of culture, Orbe and Spellers (2005) and Alcoff (1991) ask the following question: Who can speak for whom in intercultural or inter-ethnic communication research? The question has important implications for the following questions: Can a researcher really understand the lived experience of a dissimilar, unfamiliar cultural group without prolonged immersion in that group? Can a researcher conduct intercultural communication research or fieldwork without first mastering the language or dialect codes of a particular cultural community? Can a

researcher legitimately write about another cultural group's lived experience without a deep internalization of that cultural group's histories, traditions, beliefs, and values?

Furthermore, can a researcher write with intercultural empathy and sensitivity when the mere fact of academic writing is a privileged act? Can a researcher truly understand a dissimilar cultural community and its deep-rooted communication patterns when the power differential (or social class issue) between the academic researcher and the disenfranchised groups is vast and deep? These are only some of the ethical questions that an intercultural researcher might initially want to ponder—whether he or she is interested in conducting quantitative, qualitative, or critical cultural studies.

Martin and Butler (2001) end their analysis of ethical issues in intercultural communication research by presenting the following guidelines: ethical intercultural researchers are self-reflexive about their deeply held underlying beliefs, values, and motivations; they are self-reflective about their positionality; and they attempt to generate valid participatory interpretations from diverse members of the cultural community. Indeed, ethical intercultural researchers, teachers, and trainers are “work-in-progress” individuals guided by their deeply held values. Yet, they are humble enough to know that they can continue to learn, to improve, and to falter and try again with a principled stance. For what we (S. T. T. and T. D.) consider core value priorities in our own lives, see Appendices B and C at the end of the book.

Intercultural Communication Training: Specific Ethical Issues

Intercultural communication training is generally defined as an interactive facilitation process in which learners are given the opportunity to acquire culturally relevant knowledge, increase self-awareness and other-awareness, manage emotional challenges, and practice competent intercultural communication skillsets (Ting-Toomey, 2004, 2007b). Through effective intercultural training, trainers can transform mindsets, affective habits, and behaviors of the trainees in order for them to communicate competently and adaptively across cultures. For a thorough overview of the history of the intercultural communication training (ICT) field, readers can consult Pusch's (2004) and also Baldwin's (2017) chapters on the historical trends of the ICT field.

The ethical issues involved in intercultural communication training are: (1) the competencies of the intercultural trainer, (2) culture contact and training goals, (3) the transformative change process, and (4) intercultural training content and pedagogy issues (Hafen, 2005; Paige & Martin, 1996; Ting-Toomey, 2004, 2007b). Paige and Martin (1996), for example, offer three concrete guidelines in becoming an ethical intercultural trainer: acquisition of culturally sensitive knowledge, development of relevant and adaptive pedagogical skills, and active commitment to professional development.

The ethical issues involving culture contact can include issues such as globalization, technological infiltration, English language dominance, and religious proselytizing. Thus, ethical intercultural trainers need to understand clearly the ultimate goals of their culture contact or culture adjustment training sessions. They need to develop a set

of professional codes to guide their decision to accept the training contract at the first hand or to reject the contract outright. They also should heed the fact that experienced intercultural or diversity trainers “do not promote training as the ready solution when the organizational diversity problem or need appears to be institutional, rather than individual. . . . Institutional cultural changes emerge from changes in organizational policies and practices—the everyday assumptions and interactions that seem ‘natural’ but that can create a climate of exclusion and/or pressured assimilation” (Hafen, 2005, p. 13). Thus, Hafen (2005) makes a strong case for understanding the macro factors that undergird the immediate context of diversity or intercultural communication training.

On the immediate context level, ethical intercultural trainers also need to develop an acute sense of the potential transformational power of an intercultural training workshop (Bennett, 2009). They need to have a clear vision of what changes they want to instill or facilitate in an intercultural training program. They need to learn to facilitate “envisioning skills” in the participants in such a way that they empower organizational members by “involving them in the envisioning process, encourage them to be transcenders, and fostering their capacity for visionist multicultural leadership” (Cortes & Wilkinson, 2009, p. 29). Whether intercultural trainers are designing an intercultural workshop to change behaviors, cognitive frames, or affective habits, they are also “critically challenging” the mind-sets or creating “disjunctions” in the trainees’ intrapersonal cognitive and affective system.

Ethical intercultural trainers need to balance safety and risk factors in the learning process, be mindful of the particular sequencing of the cultural learning modules (e.g., from low risk to high risk learning challenges), and be aware of the relevance of the content–activity combination in the context of a culturally diverse audience. They also need to prepare for follow-up support sessions or provide other professional support networks if requested. Ethical intercultural trainers need to know how to sequence the theory–content–activity session in a culturally and professionally intelligent manner so that enough trust and security are in place to counterbalance emotionally charged topics such as stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, power, privilege, and inclusion–exclusion.

Promoting Global Social Justice and Peace-Building Processes: A Lifelong Journey

Promoting intergroup social justice and peace-building efforts on a global level requires tenacious and “big-picture” leadership visions, intergroup inclusion dispositions, and culture-sensitive and astute communication skills. It is a lifelong journey of both individual and collaborative hard work, involving shoulder-to-shoulder work with those who hold both similar and dissimilar beliefs and values. In strong alliance with culturally dissimilar others, global social justice visions need to be constantly revisited, shared, transformed, and supported, and pragmatic action plans need to be systematically carried out, modified, and adapted.

This section emphasizes the importance of developing a morally inclusive introspective position and holding faith and hope firm in moving toward a socially just and participatory, harmonizing world. The cultivation of a moral inclusion compass, intergroup social justice stance, and global peace-building effort are three intertwined ethical concepts.

Secular Ethics: Intergroup Social Justice and Global Peace Building

Morality involves the cognitive and emotional conditioning of individuals or groups within a particular identity community or cultural system. It refers to a conception of “an inner sense of principled fairness or justice” (i.e., through character, comportment, honor, dignity, decency, civility, or principled integrity) concerning ethical dilemmas and personal choices in a variety of sociocultural settings. Morality forms the deep-seated values and attitudes that drive ethical choices. While *moral inclusion* represents a universal moral stance, *moral exclusion* represents a selective, limited moral stance.

By *moral inclusion*, we mean an inclusive moral stance that promotes social justice and well-being on the basis of humanity, disregarding sociocultural differences. The *secular ethics* promoted worldwide by His Holiness the Dalai Lama is a prime example of moral inclusion. While secular ethics seems to be negatively understood in the West (i.e., disrespecting religion), the Dalai Lama defines secular ethics as a meta-ethical concept that transcends mundane and supramundane (religions) boundaries. According to the Dalai Lama, to promote well-being and social justice in the world, we need to think about all the 7 billion people (including 1 billion who are nonbelievers or do not subscribe to any formal religion). An ethics that is tied to any religion or religions cannot be morally inclusive because not everyone believes in such an ethics. Therefore, he proposes secular ethics that transcends religious boundaries, for it is based on three rationales: (1) common sense—everybody wants happiness, and no one wants suffering; (2) biological factor; that is, from our very birth a mother’s compassionate caring has nurtured our lives; this biologically supported compassion is not tied to any one religion, but without it we would not have survived; and (3) scientific evidence supporting compassion and promoting sociopsychological health and well-being. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has authored books on secular ethics such as *Ethics for the New Millennium* (2001) and *Beyond Religions* (2011).

The Dalai Lama has actively promoted secular ethics across the globe through his speaking engagements and meetings (Dorjee, 2013). For over 30 years, he has met with prominent scientists from different fields, including neuroscientists at major Mind and Life conferences in India, the United States, and Europe discussing how to make the world better for all peoples. His secular ethics perspective contains three commitments: (1) promotion of human values such as compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, contentment, and self-discipline; (2) interreligious harmony and understanding among all religious traditions in the world; and (3) preservation of the Tibetan Buddhist culture of peace and nonviolence (see www.dalailama.com). Of these commitments, the first two have been his lifelong objectives and the last one will continue until the Tibet issue

is finally resolved peacefully. His Holiness the Dalai Lama's understanding of secular ethics is based on how it is defined in the Indian Constitution and India's centuries-old mutual respect for all religions. India constitutionally claims itself to be a secular nation that respects and treats all its citizens as equal regardless of any sociocultural differences, including believers and nonbelievers. The Dalai Lama often refers to India's centuries-old tradition of religious harmony and respect for all religious philosophies, including *Charvakas* (Nihilists who deny life in the hereafter). For example, while most Indian philosophers heavily critique Charvakas's nihilism, they respect the Charvaka philosophers as *Rishis* (Nobles).

His Holiness the Dalai Lama also strongly believes that secular ethics education can make our world better, but it is missing in the modern educational curriculum. He feels that much of our world problems are of our own creation and that they may be related to modern education, which is more or less focused on materialism. He wants the younger generation to be educated in developing both caring hearts and bright minds, to better our world, and to address social problems from a system's perspective and an inclusive approach. Around the world, he has tirelessly spoken about the need for secular ethics in education, and now the Emory–Tibet Partnership, Emory University, has drafted a proposed curriculum for K–12 and college education called *Secular Ethics in Education: Educating the Heart and Mind* (October 21, 2015). This proposed curriculum has drawn much from His Holiness's *Ethics of New Millennium* and *Beyond Religions* as well as his talks on secular ethics across the globe. *Beyond Religions* has eight chapters that include a framework of 10 competencies: (1) appreciating kindness, (2) ethical mindfulness, (3) emotional awareness, (4) self-acceptance/courage, (5) forgiveness of others, (6) contentment and other inner values, (7) impartiality, (8) gratitude and endearment, (9) empathic concern, and (10) discernment. It also provides pedagogical guides and applications to teach secular ethics from one's early years through college.

The Dalai Lama envisions bettering the world through secular ethics education. Secular ethics is rooted in biological compassion, common sense, and emerging scientific empirical evidence, and it is morally inclusive regarding all of humanity as the same physically, emotionally, and mentally. (His Holiness often emphasizes these primary common characteristics of humanity over secondary ones such as race, culture, and religion.) Antithetical to secular ethics is moral exclusion.

Moral exclusion occurs when individuals or groups are perceived as “outside the boundary in which moral values, rules, and considerations of fairness apply. Those who are excluded are perceived as nonentities, expendable, or undeserving; consequently, harming them appears acceptable, appropriate, or just” (Opatow, 1990a, p. 1). Moral exclusion can be severe or mild. Severe instances include violations of human rights, children and women's rights, education, political repression, religious persecution, slavery, genocide, and brutality of all kinds. Milder instances of moral exclusion occur when we either intentionally or unintentionally create psychological or tangible interaction barriers that cause harm, shame, embarrassment, and perceived unequal treatment due to someone's sociocultural membership markers or personal identity facets.

While moral exclusion applies the scope of justice to a handful of concerned, self-interested communities (e.g., our own gender or racial communities), moral inclusion expands the scope of justice (or fairness) to include all individuals across diverse communities. The underlying characteristics that constitute moral inclusion (Opatow, 1990b) include: (1) the belief that considerations of fairness apply to all identity groups; (2) willingness to redistribute economic and social resources to underprivileged identity groups; (3) willingness to make sacrifices to foster another's well-being; (4) the view that conflicts are opportunities for learning and that individuals are willing to integrate diverse perspectives—so that solutions will include mutually agreed-upon procedures to divide resources fairly; and (5) the genuine belief of the “we” group in incorporating individuals from all walks of life—on a truly global level.

Moral inclusion–exclusion is tied directly to our approach to intergroup social justice issues. The phenomenon of social justice exists on cultural, political, economic, institutional, media, social-interpersonal, and social-intrapersonal levels. On the cultural to the media level, who sets the standards and who controls the resources serve as the beginning point to understand the phenomenon of social justice or injustice issues. From the social-interpersonal to social-intrapersonal level, how we treat one another in our everyday lives—with respect versus indifference or with an ethnorelative versus ethnocentric mind-set—also reflects our intrapersonal social justice viewpoint. As Sorrells (2016) aptly summarizes: “Social justice is . . . both a goal and process. The overarching goal of social justice . . . is equal access to, participation in, and distribution of opportunities and resources among all members and groups to meet their needs” (p. 230). Social justice as a process is “as important as the goal. Processes where social actors engage with democratic, participatory, and inclusive practices and values that uphold our individual and collective capacities and agency to create change” (Sorrells, 2016, p. 231). Change usually comes about when people are informed and educated with multiple viewpoints in analyzing a problematic or socially unjust situation.

As Malala Yousafzai (Yousafzai with Lamb, 2013), who at 17 years of age was the youngest ever Nobel Peace Prize laureate, states in her earlier book: “One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world” and “[w]hen the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful.” His Holiness the Dalai Lama also concludes discerningly: “If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito.”

According to Broome (2013, 2017), in building a “culture of peace via dialogue,” we need to pay mindful attention to the following: (1) Promoting constructive and sustained intergroup contact, (2) reducing deep-seated intergroup hostility via emotional resonance and forgiveness, (3) nurturing respect for the *Other* via deep listening, (4) developing a narrative of hope and peace through an acute awareness of our humanistic interconnectedness, and (5) establishing a basis for intergroup cooperation through incremental time, patience, good-faith, hard work, respect, and trust. Human respect is a prerequisite for any form of competent intercultural–interethnic or intergroup communication. Without basic human respect, a community can easily fall apart. As Kale (1991) aptly observes, “The concept of peace applies not only to relations between

cultures and countries but also to the right of all people to live at peace with themselves and their surroundings. As such, it is unethical to communicate with people in a way that does violence to their concept of themselves or to the dignity and worth of their human spirit” (p. 424). The underlying philosophy behind this book echoes the moral inclusive and peace-building spirit: global harmony starts with the self. The more we are in alignment with our deepest moral values and with our positive humanistic self, the more we can connect with the intrinsic “worthiness qualities” in other cultural and ethnic tribes. The more we are connected in our compassion with and for dissimilar others, the more compassionate and peaceful we can become in our own cultural niche.

Improving Ethical Transcultural Communication Practices

Our operational abilities to manage a problematic intercultural or intergroup communication situation effectively rely on use of astute nonverbal and verbal communication practices and principled and ethical application. Many communication practices such as mindful observation, mindful listening and reframing, cultural empathy, and culturally sensitive dialogue skills across cultural–ethnic and other salient group membership lines (see the “Mindful Guidelines” in previous chapters) can enhance intercultural and intergroup interaction competencies. Following is a brief summary of various competent communication skillsets (gleaned from the 11 preceding chapters’ “Mindful Guidelines”).

When we enter a new culture, we should learn to practice the mindful observation method. The *mindful O-D-I-S method* refers to mindful observation, *description*, *interpretations*, and *suspending* ethnocentric evaluations. Applying O-D-I-S analysis involves learning to *observe* attentively—the verbal *and* nonverbal signals that are being exchanged in the communication process (see also Nam & Condon, 2010). We should then try to *describe* mentally and in behaviorally specific terms (e.g., “He is using many pauses in his request statement” or “She is greeting me without a smile on her face”) what is going on in the intercultural interaction. *Description* involves a clear report of actual observation and the effort to refrain from adding any evaluative meaning to the observed behavior.

Next, we should generate *multiple interpretations* to make sense of the behavior we are observing and describing. Interpretation is what we think about what we see and hear. Importantly, multiple interpretations (e.g., “From my cultural view, greeting someone with a pleasant smile seems natural and proper,” or “Walking around with a smile is not part of her cultural routine”) are possible interpretations of an observed and described behavior. While respecting the differences, we can *suspend* our ethnocentric evaluation. Evaluations are positive or negative judgments (e.g., “I like the fact that she is keeping part of her cultural norms,” or “I don’t like it because I’ve been raised in a culture that values a pleasant smile in greeting someone.”) concerning the interpretation(s) we attribute to the behavior. We should also learn to observe a wide swath of people in widely varying situations in the new cultural setting to prevent premature overgeneralizations about others’ cultural behavior.

We also need to practice some genuine mindful listening skills. *Mindful listening* is a face-validation and power-sharing skill. For example, in an intercultural or intergroup conflict interaction episode, the disputants have to try hard to listen with focused attentiveness to the cultural and personal assumptions that are being expressed in the conflict interaction. They have to learn to listen responsively or *ting* (the Chinese word for listening means “attending mindfully with our ears, eyes, and a focused heart”) to the sounds, tone, gestures, movements, nonverbal nuances, pauses, and silence in a given conflict situation. By listening mindfully, intercultural disputants can learn to create new categories—that is, apply culture-sensitive concepts to make sense of conflict variation behaviors. Mindful listening involves paraphrasing and using perception-checking skills. Paraphrasing skills involve summarizing the content meaning of the other’s message in your own words and nonverbally echoing your interpretation of the emotional meaning of the other’s message. In dealing with high-context members, your paraphrasing statements should consist of deferential, qualifying phrases, such as “I may be wrong, but what I’m hearing is that . . .” or “Please correct me if I misinterpret what you’ve said. It sounded to me that. . . .” In interacting with low-context members, your paraphrasing statements can be more direct and to the point than when interacting with high-context members.

Additionally, perception-checking is designed to help ensure that we are interpreting the speaker’s nonverbal and verbal behaviors accurately during a heated or stressful communication episode. Culturally sensitive perception-checking statements involve both direct and indirect perceptual observation statements and perceptual verification questions. For example, a perceptual-checking statement can be “You look really confused. I mentioned the report should be on my desk on Friday morning. It is now 11 am and the report is still not on my desk. Is my timeline not clear enough? Maybe I should clarify my expectation and say Friday morning at 9 am? Or is there something else that may not be clear? [pause].” Perception checking is part of mindful observation and mindful listening skills and should be used cautiously in accordance with the particular topic, relationship, timing, and situational context. Mindful listening involves taking into account how things look not only from your own communication perspective but also from the other partner’s communication lens. Mindful listening can lead to some important reframing skills.

Mindful reframing is a highly creative, mutual-face-honoring skill. It means creating alternative contexts to frame your understanding of the problematic communication behavior. Just as in changing a frame to appreciate an old painting, creating a new context to understand the conflict behavior may redefine your interpretation of the behavior or conflict event. Reframing is the mindful process of using language to change the way each person defines or thinks about experiences and views the conflict situation.

The reframing skill uses neutrally toned (to positively toned) language; it can help to soften defensiveness, reduce tension, and increase understanding. Some specific suggestions for mindful reframing are to (1) restate conflict positions into common-interest terms, (2) change complaint statements into requests, (3) move from blaming statements to mutual-focused, problem-solving statements, (4) help those in conflict

communication to recognize the benefits of a win–win synergistic approach, and (5) help conflict parties see the “big picture.” In practicing these mindful reframing skills, competent communicators can develop the capacity for cultural empathy practice.

Cultural empathy has two layers: cultural empathetic understanding and cultural empathetic responsiveness (Broome & Jakobsson Hatay, 2006; Ridley & Udipi, 2002). Cultural empathy is participants’ learned ability to understand accurately the self-experiences of others from diverse cultures and, concurrently, the ability to convey their understanding responsively and effectively to reach the “cultural ears” of the culturally different others in the problematic communication situation. Its techniques include the following: (1) check yourself for possible cultural biases and hidden prejudices in the conflict episode, (2) suspend your rigidly held intergroup stereotypes, (3) do not pretend to understand—ask for clarification, (4) use reflective time and appropriate silence to gauge your own understanding of the other’s communication perspective, and (5) capture the core communicative emotion, metaphor, meaning, and identity theme of the intercultural sender, and echo the theme back to the sender in your own interpretive words—with carefully phrased responsive words, nonverbal gestures, and appropriate pauses (Ridley & Udipi, 2002; Ting-Toomey, 2010c).

Identity-sensitive dialogue means displaying the commitment to truly want to understand the complex identities of your intercultural partner and also your willingness to share or self-disclose some of your own vulnerable identity issues and stories. Bohm (1990; see also Bohm, 1985) reports that dialogue is a term deriving from the Greek word “*Dialogos*. *Logos* means ‘the word’ or in our case the meaning of the word. And *dia* means ‘through.’ . . . The picture or image that this derivation suggests is of a ‘stream of meaning’ flowing among and through us and between us. This will make possible a flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which will emerge some new understanding. . . . It’s something creative. And this shared meaning is the ‘glue’ and ‘cement’ that holds people and societies together” (p. 1).

According to Huang-Nissen’s (1999) applied dialogue perspective, the conditions that facilitate an inclusive dialogue interaction among diverse group members include treating culturally different others as colleagues and peers despite role or status differences, creating an uncluttered empty space in our mind to learn and listen, listening without ethnocentric judgment, setting aside our own assumptions and allowing diverse meanings to emerge, postponing a preplanned agenda and predetermined goals, focusing on learning with a sense of curiosity, inquiring with open-ended questions and learning some more, becoming an observer to our own intrapersonal reactions and feelings, and respecting and valuing identity differences and voices.

Thus, mindful listening and culture-sensitive dialogue go hand in hand. Additionally, in order to develop quality intercultural–interpersonal relationships, the art of self-disclosure or intentional sharing of something deeper about ourselves on both breadth (i.e., a variety of topics) and depth (i.e., the degree of intimacy and vulnerability you’re willing to share on each topic) levels can also promote more trusting relationships (Altman & Taylor, 1973; see Chapter 11). One other way to understand self-disclosure in more depth is to check out the Johari Window (Luft, 1969; see Figure 12.2).

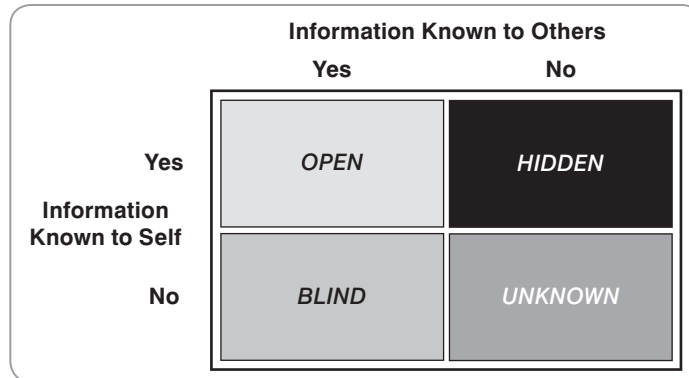


FIGURE 12.2. The Johari Window: Self-disclosure and sharing. Data from Luft (1969).

The label “Johari” takes its name from **J**oseph Luft and **H**arry Ingham—the first names of the window’s creators. The window can be conceived as having four panels: *open*, *hidden*, *blind*, and *unknown*. On a broad level, the *open panel* is defined as information known to self as well as information known to generalized others or a specific person. The *hidden panel* is defined as information known to self but unknown to others. The *blind panel* is information not known to self but information that is known to others. Last, the *unknown panel* is information not known to self or to others.

Individuals who have big open panels and small hidden panels are more willing to disclose and share information about themselves, compared with individuals with small open panels and big hidden panels. As discussed in Chapter 11, the ideology of self-disclosure is also a culture-dependent and a situational-dependent phenomenon. However, as learners of intercultural communication knowledge and skillsets, we can prompt ourselves to stretch and experiment with different and novel communication scripts even if initially we may feel uneasy. Listening with attunement and closely attending to others’ verbal/nonverbal feedback and comments can reduce the size of the blind panel as described in the Johari Window. The blind area means we are unaware (or in denial) that we harbor such biased attitudes (e.g., sexist, racist, and homophobic attitudes) or behaviors (e.g., gay slighting), but our truthful friends actually observe those in us and prompt us to pay close attention to our implicit biases. Through obtaining feedback from others, information that we were previously unaware of now becomes known to us. Lastly, the mysterious panel, the unknown area, at first glance seems strange. However, we can deduce that the unknown panel exists in all of us because there is always something surprising or new to discover about ourselves and others—through new learning, traveling, life experiences, activating imagination, putting ourselves in contact with diverse cultural strangers, and/or engaging in meditations about the unconscious self.

Self-disclosure and trust are interdependent: Appropriate self-disclosure can increase trust, and increased trust prompts more self-disclosure. Appropriate and relevant self-disclosure and sharing help develop emotional rapport and support and promote a mutual identity discovery process. However, self-disclosure can of course also open up the vulnerable self to risks, hurts, and even information betrayal. Moreover, in the intercultural and intergroup identity-sharing process, we would do well to remember how to dialogue sensitively about complex group membership issues in conjunction with personal identity sharing issues. We also need to have the courage to ask for forgiveness if we overstep the boundary of too much disclosure probing or seem too forward with our ignorant questions. Authentic self-disclosure (i.e., with appropriate timing and context relevant to the relationship, and in a culture-sensitive tone of voice and proper nonverbal gestures) and the genuine intention to want to understand will help us to promote quality and meaningful intercultural and intergroup dialogue.

Through intentional mindfulness of observing, listening, reframing, empathizing, and culture-sensitive dialogue, members from diverse identity groups can develop deeper understanding and accurate perspective taking, and also discover common ground and common dreams and life goals (see Haslett, 2017). In short, intercultural and intergroup communication competence is about the activation of a focused attunement process, behavioral flexibility, and skillful application of the untapped human imagination between diverse identity groups, communities, and cultures. An ethical transcultural communicator in this context will engage in a lifelong learning process of culture-universal and culture-specific communication knowledge and willingly uphold the human dignity of others through a respectful mind-set, an open heart, a principled moral stance, and an inclusive humanistic vision developed by applying mindful communication skills dynamically and elastically.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND MINDFUL GUIDELINES

We started the discussion of intercultural ethical issues along three primary topical clusters: global standard procedure and local justice issues; corporate responsibility and local customary practice; and cultural values clash and communication preference. We then explained and probed the pros and cons of the three ethical positions: ethical absolutism, ethical relativism, and derived ethical universalism. We also outlined a set of procedures and reflexive questions in implementing a meta-ethics contextualism framework in analyzing arduous ethical dilemma cases. This framework emphasizes the importance of systematic data collection from a wide range of sources, plus the important consideration of taking the total person, situation, and total cultural system into serious account. The schema also emphasizes the importance of seeking creative options and implementing globally inclusive solutions to address those ethically wrangling situations. We then moved on to address the ethical turning points confronting intercultural researchers and practitioners. We also addressed the five skills needed to improve transcultural communication competencies: mindful observation,

mindful listening, mindful reframing, cultural empathy, and identity-sensitive dialogue. We concluded with specific suggestions on how to promote global social justice and peace-building efforts in this contemporary, interdependent social world.

We end here by offering you a set of final mindful guidelines for becoming ethical intercultural communicators:

- 1 Be principled, yet flexible.
- 2 Be morally inclusive, with a vision for a better social world.
- 3 Be dedicated, tenacious, and courageous.
- 4 Walk the talk.
- 5 Accept ambiguity and flow with its rhythms.
- 6 Hold a long-term developmental view of change.
- 7 Face fear and resistance, yet stand up and be counted.
- 8 Be able to balance compassion, mindfulness, and wisdom.
- 9 Cultivate a lifetime of learning and use your immense curiosity, voracious imagination, and creative activism to develop a morally inclusive global platform and humanistic connectivity.

CRITICAL THINKING AND CONNECTIVE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. This chapter has discussed some major ethical positions. Thinking of various intercultural ethical dilemma situations in today's world, similar to the female genital mutilation case story, the Teddy Bear Story, or the Petty Theft Story, pick a current controversial news case and analyze it from multiple ethical position standpoints.
2. Meta-ethics contextualism has been upheld as the process of investigating case by case from multilevel perspectives. While it takes a long time, it usually leads to a satisfactory and lasting outcome. Would it be possible to develop a universal standard based on meta-ethics contextualism; if so, how?

3. This chapter raises some questions regarding intercultural communication research and training issues. Can you brainstorm some concrete solutions to circumvent some of these thorny, ethical problems in conducting intercultural research or training?
4. Secular ethics emphasizes a morally inclusive approach, for it transcends intercultural and intergroup boundaries. If you have to develop a class in teaching “secular ethics” to a group of third-grade students (who are generally around 8–9 years old) to promote intergroup social justice and global harmony, what topics and instructional strategies/activities would you emphasize?
5. What intercultural insights can be drawn from applying the discovery process of meta-ethics contextualism to the opening case story of female genital mutilation and similar ethical dilemma situations?

APPENDIX A

Researching Intercultural and Intergroup Communication

Three Paradigms and Conflict Studies Examples

	Functional/social scientific (e.g., CAT)	Interpretive/narrative (e.g., CMM)	Critical (e.g., standpoint)
Culture and group membership	Shared socialization system of value patterns; a priori group membership; ingroup/outgroup emphasis	Shared system of constructed identity meanings and boundaries; distinctive speech community	Site of historical struggle; site of hierarchical power struggle; site of contested meaning and inequality
Identity	Discrete choice; categorical and negotiated; strategic identity presentation; avowed; ascribed	Distinct system of communal practices; insider/ingroup narratives	Social location and standpoint via the subordinate–dominant group membership lens; group rights
Conflict communication	Study of perceptions, expectancies, attributions, and verbal and nonverbal conflict-related messages, styles, strategies	Study of dialectical speech codes; interpretive and coordinated meanings; communal function	Study of muted and dominant voices; discourse, texts, and images in mass media and pop culture
Conflict competence	Culture-sensitive awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and skills to interact appropriately, effectively, adaptively; mindfulness	Situated appropriate and effective communication; coordinated meanings at multiple levels	Recognition of privilege issues; power balancing; equality of resource distributions; power of “naming”

	Functional/social scientific (e.g., CAT)	Interpretive/narrative (e.g., CMM)	Critical (e.g., standpoint)
Intercultural and intergroup relationship	Intercultural and intergroup contact conditions; develop through systematic stages	Develop through interpretive stages constructed by speech codes of community members	Recognition of power imbalance issues and the importance of advocacy and forming alliances
Research goals	Identify patterns of sociocultural influences on communication; comparison of multiple cultures and social identities; etc	Deep description of individual/specific cultural community; focus on insiders' voice and meaning construction and interpretation; emic	Unmask power, domination, and injustice in the system to achieve social justice
Research methods	Quantitative: survey and experimental design, identity mapping and alternative methods, triangulation, multiple methods	Qualitative: ethnography, interviews, case studies; interpretive analysis: ethnography of speaking, grounded theory	Qualitative: interviews, case study, postcolonial ethnography; cultural/rhetorical analysis: critical discourse analysis and textual critique analysis
<i>Note.</i> Adapted from Oetzel and Ting-Toomey (2011).			

APPENDIX B

“Be Surprised and Also Holding On!”

Honors Convocation Keynote Speech, May 22, 2009

STELLA TING-TOOMEY
2008 CSUF Outstanding Professor
Department of Human Communication Studies
California State University, Fullerton

It is my honor today to be standing here to celebrate with you this very joyous occasion and mark your stellar accomplishments and magical journey of arrival in this beautiful concert hall.

I have no doubt that many of you have overcome many obstacles, challenges, and hurdles, to get to where you are today with joy and excitement. I salute *you*—all summa cum laude graduates, University Honors Program graduates, and all special award recipients.

I also want to cheer on *all* your special family members, parents, intimate partners, and reliable friends—for I'm sure during your days of uncertainty, their encouraging words and soothing tones uplifted your spirit and motivated you to move forward.

There are three reflections I would like to share with you today. The first thing is: Be ready to plunge into unfamiliar territory. Be prepared for surprises, unpredictability, and the thrill of discovery as you hike up the unfamiliar mountain in the next stage of your life. When I came to America as an international Chinese student more than 30 years ago, I landed in the middle of Iowa cornfields. I was totally lost, disoriented, and confused. However, I did persevere. To make a long story short, the constant culture shocks did test my own strengths and limits. However, you do learn more about yourself and your own priorities as you encounter the unknown and the unfamiliar. Take some risks and experiment with the unfamiliar. Learn to be playful, and, balance your sense of self-discipline with imagination.

The second thing is: Be ready to take detours and enjoy the detoured scenery along the way. Your detoured trip may turn into a full-scale second-stage journey. Honestly, I did not intentionally pursue the goal of being an intercultural communication professor. I had always thought I would become a television-film director when I was younger. My

bachelor's and master's degrees were in the mass media area. However, my application to a PhD media degree program was rejected. I took a detour and ended up finding my true passion in the teaching of and research in intercultural communication. Thus, a crossroads could be something stressful initially; however, the crossroads may lead you to a more vibrant landscape and terrain. Embrace your detours and challenges—everything will turn out OK.

Finally, the third thing is: Hold on to the precious people who help you to get to that amazing summit. As you trek to the top of Japan's Mount Fuji, or China's Great Wall, or the Grand Canyon and take in the magnificent panoramic view, I hope you have someone special to share the breathtaking vista. At the end of the day, it's down to your beloved family members, your significant others, and your very loyal friends who are sitting here with you today who matter the most—they have gone through the bumpy and bouncy ride with you all the way. They have carried your backpacks and water for you. Create meaningful memories with them and honor yourself and your loved ones with dignity, joy, and appreciation.

Congratulations and three cheers to all your hard work, tenacious spirit, and distinguished academic achievements!

APPENDIX C

“Never Give Up!”

Commencement Speech, May 21, 2017

TENZIN DORJEE, Associate Professor
Distinguished Faculty Marshal
Department of Human Communication Studies
California State University, Fullerton

President Garcia, Acting Dean Fink, chairs, faculty colleagues, staff, class of 2017, families, and friends:

It is my honor and privilege to be a Faculty Marshal speaker at today’s happy commencement of the College of Communications. I have always enjoyed participating in commencements to celebrate our students’ achievements, congratulate them, and share their happiness.

I know I am expected to share some parting wisdom which I personally don’t have. But I have decided to share with you some wisdom of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. I have had the great honor and privilege to serve as His Holiness’s English translator both in India and the United States. He will be visiting SoCal next month as the Commencement Speaker for the University of California, San Diego. The wisdom I have learned from His Holiness is: “Never give up!”

“Never give up” no matter what the circumstances are. Fulfilling dreams requires lots of tenacious hard work. The fact that you are proudly here with your families and friends is largely because you never gave up on your degree dream. Despite all the odds, your family did not give up on your dream; CSUF did not give up on your dream, and most importantly, you yourself did not give up on your dream. As you gaze at President Garcia and everyone on the platform and under the canopy, it took a lot of ups and downs for them to be successful in fulfilling their dreams, but they never gave up pursuing them. Sometimes fulfilling dreams can be solitary journeys where others may not understand you, but you need to understand yourself and never give up!

Allow me to indulge and share a bit of my own story to advance my theme—Never Give Up! I mostly grew up in India as a Tibetan refugee before coming to the United States. As a child and young adult, I walked several miles 6 days a week, often

barefooted, to my high school in rain or shine. In spite of all the odds, I received a good Tibetan and modern education. I never gave up on my dream! To cut short my story, I came to this country on a translation tour and found an opportunity to pursue higher education. Although I have an undergraduate degree from the Panjab University, Chandigarh, India, I started it all over again, starting with Santa Monica Community College and then to CSU Long Beach and UC Santa Barbara where I earned my PhD in Communication. When I began my education here, I was a middle-aged person and you may call it midlife crisis; but I never gave up on my dream. It took me over 10 years to fulfill my dream to be a professor. What I learned on the way is that even if others give up on you, you should never give up on fulfilling your dream. I am grateful to some friends who stood thick and thin with me in the pursuit of my dream.

As you fulfill one dream, new dreams will emerge. One of my new dreams is to promote religious freedom around the globe. I am one of the nine congressionally appointed commissioners on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF; www.uscirf.gov), and we volunteer our service to promote global religious freedom. USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan commission entrusted with the mandate to monitor and promote religious freedom across the world. Having worked very hard collegially and collaboratively with my USCIRF colleagues and staff for several months, we just published our 243-page Annual Report of 2017. I will never give up on my new dream and committed responsibility as a public servant commissioner.

Now that you have fulfilled one big dream with your bachelor or master's degree, you will have new dreams. Choose them wisely and pursue them to the best of your ability and never give up. I believe we as faculty have done our best to offer you an excellent education that has prepared you well for the job market and other aspirations. However, I am not sure whether we have done enough to prepare you to be altruistic, kind, and compassionate to others. Our U.S. education system is geared largely toward tangible, degree goals. However, I believe that to make a real difference in the world, it is not enough to have excellent knowledge and sound education, but you also need a caring heart—kindness and compassion. I have been working on cultivating a compassionate heart everyday, drawing from the firm grounding in traditional Tibetan education that emphasizes mindful training, other-caring motivation, and dedicated service to others.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has pioneered what he calls secular ethics in modern education, that is, integrating kindness and compassion as nonreligious, secular qualities, to prevent and resolve conflicts in the world in a nonviolent and peaceful manner. The Emory–Tibet Partnership of Emory University has designed a curriculum for K–12 and College Education based on his vision of secular ethics in modern education supplemented by the work and research of scientists, educators, and researchers. It is called *Secular Ethics in Education: Educating the Heart and Mind*. Several schools in India and the United States and elsewhere have started to implement the curriculum for experiment. His Holiness wishes formal education to include education of the heart—love, compassion, kindness, forgiveness, and respect. I strongly support this

initiative because educating both the heart and mind is a holistic and inclusive educational vision and mission to raise future generations to come.

Dear graduates, as you venture into your new jobs, careers, and dreams, I would like to implore you to seriously consider kindness as a part of your life's goals and dreams. "Never give up" on being kind to yourself and to others. As you extend kindness and caring to others, I truly believe you will beget kindness in return and its abundant blessings. Kindness is cool and infectious; it warms our hearts and ignites passion and action for positive change in self, others, and the larger community. Thank you for your attentive listening. A Big Warm Congratulation to all of you graduates—class of 2017, and to your family and loved ones. Be kind. And *never give up! Go Titans!!!*

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About the Authors

Stella Ting-Toomey, PhD, is Professor of Human Communication Studies at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF). Her teaching passions include intercultural communication theory and training and interpersonal conflict management. She is the author or editor of 17 scholarly books, two instructional manuals, two interactive student resource guides, and more than 120 articles and chapters in prestigious communication journals and handbooks. Dr. Ting-Toomey has delivered major keynote speeches on mindful intercultural communication in the United States and internationally. She has also conducted a variety of intercultural conflict competence training workshops for corporations and nonprofit institutes. She is a recipient of the CSU Wang Family Excellence Award and the CSUF Outstanding Professor Award for superlative teaching, research, and service. Dr. Ting-Toomey's sojourning and immigrant experiences—as an international student departing from Hong Kong and arriving at Iowa City, and from Iowa City to Seattle, and then from Seattle onward to New Brunswick, Tempe, and Fullerton—together with her daily contact with culturally diverse students at CSUF, enriched her theorizing and researching journey, as reflected in this book.

Tenzin Dorjee, PhD, is Associate Professor at CSUF. His primary teaching and research interests are in intergroup–intercultural identity issues, social justice, and conflict resolution. He is a recipient of faculty recognition awards for outstanding achievements in teaching, research, and community service and was recognized as Distinguished Faculty Marshal of the College of Communications and as Distinguished Faculty Member of the Department of Human Communication Studies. In December 2016, the U.S. House of Representatives appointed Dr. Dorjee to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). He has traveled to Burma and Iraq to monitor religious freedom conditions and testified before the U.S. Congress on religious freedom conditions in Tibet and China. In May of 2018, he was reappointed to the USCIRF and in June, he was unanimously elected chair of the bipartisan commission. He has authored or coauthored articles and book chapters on Tibetan culture, identity, and conflict resolution, among others. He has also translated for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and many preeminent Tibetan Buddhist professors in India and North America. Dr. Dorjee has distilled his rich intercultural lived experiences—from growing up and working as a Tibetan refugee in India for more than 30 years to becoming a professor and the first Tibetan American commissioner on the USCIRF—as well as his theoretical and research insights in this book.