



INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

in Contexts

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Judith N. Martin | Thomas K. Nakayama

**INTERCULTURAL
COMMUNICATION
IN CONTEXTS**

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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN CONTEXTS

EIGHTH EDITION

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Arizona State University

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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN CONTEXTS, EIGHTH EDITION

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 LCR 26 25 24 23 22 21

ISBN 978-1-260-83745-2 (bound edition)
MHID 1-260-83745-9 (bound edition)
ISBN 978-1-264-30254-3 (loose-leaf edition)
MHID 1-264-30254-1 (loose-leaf edition)

Portfolio Manager: *Sarah Remington*
Product Developers: *Alexander Preiss, Amy Oline*
Content Project Managers: *Lisa Bruflodt, George Theofanopoulos*
Buyer: *Sandy Ludovissy*
Designer: *Laurie Entringer*
Content Licensing Specialist: *Sarah Flynn*
Cover Image: ©*Shutterstock/metamorworks*
Compositor: *MPS Limited*

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Martin, Judith N., author. | Nakayama, Thomas K., author.
Intercultural communication in contexts / Judith N. Martin, Arizona State University ; Thomas K. Nakayama, Northeastern University.
Eighth edition. | New York, NY : McGraw Hill Education, [2022] | Includes bibliographical references and index.
LCCN 2020020603 | ISBN 9781260837452 (hardcover) | ISBN 9781264302543 (spiral bound)
LCSH: Intercultural communication. | Cultural awareness. | Multiculturalism.
LCC HM1211 .M373 2022 | DDC 303.48/2—dc23
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020020603>

The Internet addresses listed in the text were accurate at the time of publication. The inclusion of a website does not indicate an endorsement by the authors or McGraw Hill LLC, and McGraw Hill LLC does not guarantee the accuracy of the information presented at these sites.

About the Authors

The two authors of this book come to intercultural communication from very different backgrounds and very different research traditions. Yet we believe that these differences offer a unique approach to thinking about intercultural communication. We briefly introduce ourselves here, but we hope that by the end of the book you will have a much more complete understanding of who we are.

Judith Martin grew up in Mennonite communities, primarily in Delaware and Pennsylvania. She has studied at the Université de Grenoble in France and has taught in Algeria. She received her doctorate at the Pennsylvania State University. By background and training, she is a social scientist who has focused on intercultural communication on an interpersonal level and has studied how people's communication is affected as they move or sojourn between international locations. More recently, she has studied how people's cultural backgrounds influence their online communication. She has taught at the State University of New York at Oswego, the University of Minnesota, the University of New Mexico, and Arizona State University. She enjoys gardening, hiking in the Arizona desert, traveling, and Netflix.



Judith Martin

Tom Nakayama grew up mainly in Georgia, at a time when the Asian American presence was much less than it is now. He has studied at the Université de Paris and various universities in the United States. He received his doctorate from the University of Iowa. By background and training, he is a critical rhetorician who views intercultural communication in a social context. He has taught at the California State University at San Bernardino and Arizona State University. He has done a Fulbright at the Université de Mons in Belgium. He is now professor of communication studies at Northeastern University in Boston. He lives in Providence, Rhode Island and loves taking the train to campus. He loves the change of seasons in New England, especially autumn.



Courtesy of Glenn Turner

The authors' very different life stories and research programs came together at Arizona State University. We each have learned much about intercultural communication through our own experiences, as well as through our intellectual pursuits. Judith has a well-established record of social science approaches to intercultural communication.

Tom, in contrast, has taken a nontraditional approach to understanding intercultural communication by emphasizing critical perspectives. We believe that these differences in our lives and in our research offer complementary ways of understanding intercultural communication.

For more than 25 years, we have engaged in many different dialogues about intercultural communication—focusing on our experiences, thoughts, ideas, and analyses—which led us to think about writing this textbook. But our interest was not primarily sparked by these dialogues; rather, it was our overall interest in improving intercultural relations that motivated us. We believe that communication is an important arena for improving those relations. By helping people become more aware as intercultural communicators, we hope to make this a better world for all of us.

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Preface

THE INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

On December 31, 2019, a new strain of coronavirus was identified in Wuhan, China. This virus, commonly known as the Coronavirus or COVID-19, was initially contained in China, largely due to China's enormous quarantine of the Wuhan area. Quickly, however, the epidemic spread to other Asian countries, especially South Korea, and then to Europe and the rest of the world. It became a global pandemic.

On the one hand, the spread of the virus and its impact on the global economy underscored how interconnected the world has become. People and goods travel around the globe and the spread of the virus demonstrated how significant these global connections are. This movement of goods and people was quickly slowed down or shut down entirely. Many people scrambled to get home, and the flow of goods began to have a tremendous impact on China, the world's second largest economy and a major producer, as well as the United States, the world largest economy and a major consumer.

On the other hand, the response to the spreading epidemic has been to revert to older notions of borders, as many nations put restrictions on crossing their borders, some completely closing their borders, e.g., for Spain "only Spanish citizens, residents and special cases will be allowed in the country" (Coronavirus, 2020). On top of this kind of border control, the European Union "agreed to close off a region encompassing at least 26 countries and more than 400 million people" (Stevens-Gridneff, 2020). The United Kingdom, no longer part of the European Union, did not agree to participate.

At the time of this writing, we do not know how this pandemic will play out. We do know that so far, millions have contracted the disease, hundreds of thousands have died, and many more are suffering economic devastation; life all over the globe has changed immeasurably.

People are asking how different cultural responses to the virus have different results. Government public health policies emerge within cultural and political frameworks. Can individualist cultures expect their citizens to follow rules that impact others? Are collectivist cultures better positioned to deal with these public health issues? After being asked to stay home and avoid contact with others, a Twitter user, Katie Williams, wrote: "I just went to a crowded Red Robin and I'm 30. It was delicious, and I took my sweet time eating my meal. Because this is America. And I'll do what I want" (quoted in Dillin, 2020). The infrastructure of different places have also influenced the response: "the vigilant monitoring systems in Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong were built over years, after their failures to stop another dangerous

outbreak—SARS—17 years ago. The United States disbanded its pandemic response unit in 2018” (Beech, 2020).

We start with this focus on the Coronavirus as you may have been impacted by it. Your university or college may have moved classes online and some people that you know might have contracted it. Our cultures shape how we respond to these crisis situations, as our cultural frameworks offer us a way to understand how to respond. Do we follow the directives of the government officials? Or do we do what we want? Do we think about others? Or is it everyone for him/herself? What will happen to globalization? Will we move more toward closing borders or will we reach out and be more engaged with the world?

Those who study, teach, and conduct research in intercultural communication face an increasing number of challenges and other difficult questions: Are we actually reinforcing stereotypes in discussing cultural differences? Is there a way to understand the dynamics of intercultural communication without resorting to lists of instructions? How do we understand the broader social, political, and historical contexts when we teach intercultural communication? How can we use our intercultural communication skills to help enrich our lives and the lives of those around us? Can intercultural communication scholars promote a better world for all?

Such questions are driven by rapidly changing cultural dynamics—both within the United States and abroad. On the one hand, natural disasters like wildfires in Australia and California, as well as migrants, driven from their home by climate change conditions or warfare have elicited a variety of positive responses, including tremendous caring and compassion across intercultural and international divides. On the other hand, the increasing number of terrorist attacks, many fueled by the increasing ideology of white supremacy world wide, the tightening of national borders in response to global migration, conflicts between police and communities of color in the United States, and the racist and hateful and sometimes false content posted on social media exemplify and sometimes exacerbate and lead to increased intergroup conflict (Hindu vs Muslim in India, violence against Rohingya in Myanmar, Uighurs in China forced into “reeducation camps”). These extremes demonstrate the dynamic nature of culture and communication.

We initially wrote this book in part to address questions and issues such as these. Although the foundation of intercultural communication theory and research has always been interdisciplinary, the field is now informed by three identifiable and competing *paradigms*, or “ways of thinking.” In this book, we attempt to integrate three different research approaches: (1) the traditional social-psychological approach that emphasizes cultural differences and how these differences influence communication, (2) the interpretive approach that emphasizes understanding communication in context, and (3) the critical approach that underscores the importance of power and historical context to understanding intercultural communication, including postcolonial approaches.

We believe that each of these approaches has important contributions to make to the understanding of intercultural communication and that they operate in interconnected and sometimes contradictory ways. In this eighth edition, we have further strengthened our *dialectical* approach, which encourages students to think critically about intercultural phenomena as seen from these various perspectives.

Throughout this book, we acknowledge that there are no easy solutions to the difficult challenges of intercultural communication. Sometimes our discussions raise

more questions than they answer. We believe that this is perfectly reasonable. The field of intercultural communication is changing, but the relationship between culture and communication is as well—because that relationship is, and probably always will be, complex and dynamic. We live in a rapidly changing world where intercultural contact will continue to increase, creating an increased potential for both conflict and cooperation. We hope that this book provides the tools needed to think about intercultural communication, as a way of understanding the challenges and recognizing the advantages of living in a multicultural world.

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SIGNATURE FEATURES OF THE BOOK

Students usually come to the field of intercultural communication with some knowledge about many different cultural groups, including their own. Their understanding often is based on observations drawn from the Internet, social media, television, movies, books, personal experiences, news media, and other sources. In this book, we hope to move students gradually to the notion of a *dialectical framework* for thinking about cultural issues. That is, we show that knowledge can be acquired in many different ways—through social scientific studies, experience, media reports, and so on—but these differing forms of knowledge need to be seen dynamically and in relation to each other. We offer students a number of ways to begin thinking critically about intercultural communication in a dialectical manner. These include:

- An explicit discussion of differing research approaches to intercultural communication, focusing on both the strengths and limitations of each

- Ongoing attention to history, popular culture, and identity as important factors in understanding intercultural communication
- Student Voices boxes in which students relate their own experiences and share their thoughts about various intercultural communication issues
- Point of View boxes in which diverse viewpoints from news media, research studies, and other public forums are presented
- Incorporation of the authors' own personal experiences to highlight particular aspects of intercultural communication

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- To reflect the increasing doubts about the benefits of an increasing rise of populism both in the U.S. and abroad, we continue to emphasize the importance of these issues to intercultural communication. For example, in Chapter 1, we discuss how globalization and related economic recessions influence intercultural communication. In Chapter 8, we provide new examples of the impact of war and terrorism on the continuing worldwide migration and the resulting intercultural encounters.
- The continuing and expanding influence of communication technology in our daily lives is addressed by new material in Chapter 1, acknowledging the increasing (and dialectic) role, negative and positive, of social media in intercultural encounters, and social media examples are interwoven throughout the book.
- Our expanded discussion of the implications of religious identity and belief systems in Chapters 1 and 11 is prompted by continued awareness of the important role religion plays in intercultural communication.
- We continue to emphasize the important roles that institutions play in intercultural contact. In Chapter 8, we address the role of institutions in supporting or discouraging refugees, as well as immigrants and other kinds of intercultural transitions.



The eighth edition of *Intercultural Communication in Contexts* is now available online with Connect, McGraw-Hill Education's integrated assignment and assessment platform. Connect also offers SmartBook for the new edition, which is the first adaptive reading experience proven to improve grades and help students study more effectively. All of the title's website and ancillary content is also available through Connect, including:

- A full Test Bank of multiple choice questions that test students on central concepts and ideas in each chapter
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CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Intercultural Communication in Contexts is organized into three parts: Part I, “Foundations of Intercultural Communication”; Part II, “Intercultural Communication Processes”; and Part III, “Intercultural Communication Applications.”

Part I, “Foundations of Intercultural Communication,” explores the history of the field and presents various approaches to this area of study, including our own.

We begin Chapter 1 with a focus on the dynamics of social life and global conditions as a rationale for the study of intercultural communication. We introduce ethics in this chapter to illustrate its centrality to any discussion of intercultural interaction. In this edition, we have introduced the “Environmental Imperative,” emphasizing the importance of increasing instances of wildfires, floods, droughts, and associated intercultural challenges (migration, conflict). We have also updated our discussion of the impact of rising populism and right-wing politics and immigration policies on intercultural encounters.

In Chapter 2, we introduce the history of intercultural communication as an area of study as well as the three paradigms that inform our knowledge about intercultural interactions. We establish the notion of a dialectical approach so that students can begin to make connections and form relationships among the paradigms. We describe and illustrate these approaches through the very relevant case study of the continuing global migration, including the impacts on the various cultural groups (racial, ethnic, LGBTQ) who have left their countries and also on host communities in the destination countries, including the related short- and long-term political implications.

In Chapter 3, we focus on four basic intercultural communication components—culture, communication, context, and power. In this edition, we’ve provided new examples of interpretive ethnographic research and extended our discussion of the critical impact of social media on cultural resistance (e.g., #metoo, the Time’s Up movement).

Chapter 4 focuses on the importance of historical forces in shaping contemporary intercultural interaction. We include additional focus on family history, as well as a discussion of how national histories are narrated (e.g., renovation of the Colonial museum in Belgium, Holocaust denial, the new U.S. lynching museum, and Ireland’s emigration museum). In addition, we have added discussions on India’s colonial history and the British imposition of anti-same sex laws, and analyze the intercultural challenges in the controversy surrounding “Silent Sam,” the Confederate statute on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus.

Part II, “Intercultural Communication Processes,” establishes the factors that contribute to the dynamics of intercultural communication: identity, language, and nonverbal codes.

Chapter 5, on identity, has extended coverage of religious identity, multicultural identity, and sexual identity (in addition to gender identity). This chapter includes an extended exploration of cisgender and transgender identity, and its current status in various cultures. We also include an updated discussion on generational differences, as well as the concept of “stateless person” as an identity, as well as nationality, and further discuss microaggression as a communication strategy used to demean another identity in subtle ways.



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Chapter 6 addresses language issues, with new examples of slang, and generational differences in communication style, as well as analysis of the communication style differences that influenced the challenging trade negotiations between the U.S. and China. We also introduce an extension of co-cultural theory—dominant group theory—that examines the strategies that dominant group members use in response to the concerns of co-cultural group members.

Chapter 7 focuses on nonverbal codes and cultural spaces and includes new examples of cultural variations in nonverbal behavior, including manspreading, deception, and emoji use. There is also a discussion of recent controversies over wearing of hijab, the intercultural implications of LGBTQ-free zones in Poland as well as the recent postmodern mobile massively multiplayer online *real-time strategy* (*MMORTS*) games.

Part III, “Intercultural Communication Applications,” helps students apply the knowledge of intercultural communication presented in the first two parts.

Chapter 8 addresses intercultural transitions. In this edition, we have added updated material on the worldwide refugee situation, including the influence of interethnic conflict and populist politics. We also further discuss the problems of integration and assimilation, as well as the issues of working overseas for global businesses.

In Chapter 9, we focus on popular and folk culture and their impact on intercultural communication. We have included new updated examples, including *Green Book*, as well as introduction of “yaoi” as an Asian popular culture example.

Chapter 10 explores intercultural relationships. In this edition, we update the discussion of sexuality and intimate relationships (both cisgender and LGBTQ) in multicultural environments. We also discuss the importance of contextual influences on these relationships, as well as the continuing societal tensions concerning these relationships, and the implications for intercultural communication.

Chapter 11 emphasizes an integrated approach to intercultural conflict in a many different ways, including conflict on social media, social change protests, as well as violence. We have refocused discussion on important strategies in peacebuilding, as well as the role of social movements (e.g., Black Lives Matter) and updated examples.

Chapter 12 includes updated examples of current intercultural challenges (e.g., recent religious and ethnic/racial conflict) in both domestic and international contexts, as well as suggestions for practical ways to strive for intercultural competence in everyday encounters.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The random convergence of the two authors in time and place led to the creation of this textbook. We both found ourselves at Arizona State University in the early 1990s. Over the course of several years, we discussed and analyzed the multiple approaches to intercultural communication. Much of this discussion was facilitated by the ASU Department of Communication’s “culture and communication” theme. Department

faculty met to discuss research and pedagogical issues relevant to the study of communication and culture; we also reflected on our own notions of what constituted intercultural communication. This often meant reliving many of our intercultural experiences and sharing them with our colleagues.

Above all, we must recognize the fine work of the staff at McGraw-Hill: Alex Preiss, Product Developer; Lisa Brufloft, Content Project Manager; and Sarah Flynn, Content Licensing Specialist.

In addition, we want to thank all the reviewers of this and previous editions of *Intercultural Communication in Contexts*, whose comments and careful readings were enormously helpful. They are:

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Our colleagues and students have provided invaluable assistance. Thanks to our colleagues for their ongoing moral support and intellectual challenges to our thinking. Thanks to Marilyn Brimo, San Diego Mesa College for her timely suggestion to add “The Environmental Imperative” in this edition. Thanks to our editorial assistants, Megan Stephenson at Arizona State University and Dr. Deya Roy at California State University San Marcos. They found relevant scholarship and interesting examples to support and liven up our writing. They were also always cooperative and responsive even when they had their own research projects to complete and academic deadlines to meet. And as always, we owe thanks to our undergraduate students, who continue to challenge us to think about intercultural communication in ways that make sense to their lives.

We thank our families and friends for once again allowing us absences and silences as we directed our energies toward the completion of this revision. We want to acknowledge both Ronald Chaldu and David L. Karbonski, who continue to be supportive of our academic writing projects.

Our international experiences have enriched our understanding of intercultural communication theories and concepts. We thank all of the following people for helping us with these experiences: Tommy and Kazuko Nakayama; Michel Dion and Eliana Sampaio of Strasbourg, France; Jean-Louis Sauvage and Pol Thiry of the Université de Mons-Hainaut, Belgium; Christina Kalinowska and the Café “Le Ropieur” in Mons, Belgium; Scott and the others at Le BXL in Brussels, Belgium; Emilio, Vince, Jimmy, Gene and the others at the Westbury Bar in Philadelphia; Jerzy, Alicja, Marek, and

Jolanta Drzewieccy of Bedzin, Poland; as well as Margaret Nicholson of the Commission for Educational Exchange between Belgium, Luxembourg, and the United States; and Liudmila Markina from Minsk, Belarus. Some research in this book was made possible by a scholarship from the Fulbright Commission and the Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique in Brussels. We also thank Dr. Melissa Steyn and her students at the Centre for Diversity Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa for their insightful discussions. In addition, we thank the countless others we have met in cafés, train stations, bars, and conferences, if only for a moment of international intercultural interaction.

Other people helped us understand intercultural communication closer to home, especially the staff and students at the Guadalupe Center at South Mountain Community College, and also Dr. Amalia Villegas, Cruzita Mori, and Lucia Madril and family.

In spirit and conceptualization, our book spans the centuries and crosses many continents. It has been shaped by the many people we have read about and encountered. It is to these guiding and inspiring individuals—some of whom we had the good fortune to meet and some of whom we will never encounter—that we dedicate this book. It is our hope that their spirit of curiosity, openness, and understanding will be reflected in the pages that follow.

To the Student

Many textbooks emphasize in their introductions how you should use the text. In contrast, we begin this book by introducing ourselves and our interests in intercultural communication. There are many ways to think about intercultural interactions. One way to learn more about intercultural experiences is to engage in dialogue with others on this topic. Ideally, we would like to begin a dialogue with you about some of the ways to think about intercultural communication. Learning about intercultural communication is not about learning a finite set of skills, terms, and theories. It is about learning to think about cultural realities in multiple ways. Unfortunately, it is not possible for us to engage in dialogues with our readers.

Instead, we strive to lay out a number of issues to think about regarding intercultural communication. In reflecting on these issues in your own interactions and talking about them with others, you will be well on your way to becoming both a better intercultural communicator and a better analyst of intercultural interactions. There is no endpoint from which we can say that we have learned all there is to know. Learning about communication is a lifelong process that involves experiences and analysis. We hope this book will generate many dialogues that will help you come to a greater understanding of different cultures and peoples and a greater appreciation for the complexity of intercultural communication.

COMMUNICATING IN A DYNAMIC, MULTICULTURAL WORLD

We live in rapidly changing times. Although no one can foresee the future, we believe that changes are increasing the imperative for intercultural learning. In Chapter 1, you will learn more about some of these changes and their influence on intercultural communication.

You stand at the beginning of a textbook journey into intercultural communication. At this point, you might take stock of who you are, what your intercultural communication experiences have been, both online and face-to-face, how you responded in those situations, and how you tend to think about those experiences. Some people respond to intercultural situations with amusement, curiosity, or interest; others may respond with hostility, anger, or fear. It is important to reflect on your experiences and to identify how you respond and what those reactions mean.

We also think it is helpful to recognize that in many instances people do not want to communicate interculturally. Sometimes people see those who are culturally

different as threatening, as forcing them to change. They may believe that such people require more assistance and patience, or they may simply think of them as “different.” People bring to intercultural interactions a variety of emotional states and attitudes; further, not everyone wants to communicate intercultural. Because of this dynamic, many people have had negative intercultural experiences that influence subsequent intercultural interactions. Negative experiences can range from simple misunderstandings to physical violence. Although it may be unpleasant to discuss such situations, we believe that it is necessary to do so if we are to understand and improve intercultural interaction.

Intercultural conflict can occur even when the participants do not intentionally provoke it. When we use our own cultural frames in intercultural settings, those hidden assumptions can cause trouble. For example, one of our students recounted an experience of conflict among members of an international soccer team based in Spain: “One player from the United States would have nervous breakdowns if practice started at 7:30 p.m., and players arrived late. This individual had been taught that ‘five minutes early was ten minutes late.’ The Spanish are not ones for arriving on time; to them you get there when you get there, no big deal. The players’ ‘hidden’ differing assumptions about appropriate behavior, time, and timing contributed to the conflict.” Intercultural experiences are not always fun. Sometimes they are frustrating, confusing, and distressing.

On a more serious level, we might look at the U.S. military’s continued engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan as yet another example of intercultural communication. The subsequent interpretations of and reactions to this presence by different communities of people reflect important differences in our society and in the world at large. Although some people in the United States and abroad see these efforts as attempts to liberate oppressed people and establish democratic governments, others view them as imperialist intervention on the part of the United States. These differing views highlight the complexity of intercultural communication. We do not come to intercultural interactions as blank slates; instead, we bring our identities and our cultures.

IMPROVING YOUR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Although the journey to developing awareness in intercultural communication is an individual one, it is important to recognize the connections we all have to many different aspects of social life. You are, of course, an individual. But you have been influenced by culture. The ways that others regard you and communicate with you are influenced largely by whom they perceive you to be. By enacting cultural characteristics of masculinity or femininity, for example, you may elicit particular reactions from others. Reflect on your social and individual characteristics; consider how these characteristics communicate something about you.

Finally, there is no list of things to do in an intercultural setting. Although prescribed reactions might help you avoid serious faux pas in one setting or culture, such lists are generally too simplistic to get you very far in any culture and may cause serious problems in other cultures. The study of communication is both a science

and an art. In this book, we attempt to pull the best of both kinds of knowledge together for you. Because communication does not happen in a vacuum but is integral to the many dynamics that make it possible—economics, politics, technology—the ever-changing character of our world means that it is essential to develop sensitivity and flexibility to change. It also means that you can never stop learning about intercultural communication.

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PART I

Foundations of Intercultural Communication

CHAPTER 1
Why Study Intercultural Communication?

CHAPTER 2
The Study of Intercultural Communication

CHAPTER 3
Culture, Communication, Context,
and Power

CHAPTER 4
History and Intercultural Communication

CHAPTER

I

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Identify seven imperatives for studying intercultural communication.
2. Describe how technology can impact intercultural interaction.
3. Describe how global and domestic economic and environmental conditions influence intercultural relations.
4. Explain how understanding intercultural communication can facilitate resolution of intercultural conflict.
5. Explain how studying intercultural communication can lead to increased self-understanding.
6. Understand the difference among a universalistic, a relativist, and a dialogic approach to the study of ethics and intercultural communication.
7. Identify and describe three characteristics of an ethical student of culture.

WHY STUDY INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION?

THE SELF-AWARENESS IMPERATIVE

THE DEMOGRAPHIC IMPERATIVE

Changing U.S. Demographics
Changing Immigration Patterns

THE ECONOMIC IMPERATIVE

THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPERATIVE

Floods and Droughts Lead to Migration
Wildfires
Water Rights

THE TECHNOLOGICAL IMPERATIVE

Technology and Human Communication
Access to Communication Technology

THE PEACE IMPERATIVE

THE ETHICAL IMPERATIVE

Relativity Versus Universality
Being Ethical Students of Culture

INTERNET RESOURCES

SUMMARY

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

ACTIVITIES

KEY WORDS

REFERENCES

When I was back home [Kuwait], before I came to the United States to go to college, I knew all about my culture and about my religion. However, I did not really know what other people from the other world [United States] think of Middle Eastern people or Muslims in general. So, what I have witnessed is a lot of discrimination in this country, not only against my race but against other groups. . . . Yet I understand that not all Americans hate us. I met a lot of Americans who are cooperative with me and show me love and are interested to know about my country and culture.

—Mohamad

My longest relationship was an intercultural relationship with a guy from Colombia. We didn't run into very many problems because we were both culturally open and enthusiastic to learn about each other's traditions and values. We talked a lot about our backgrounds and really learned to embrace our differences, as we grew close with each other's families. We both learned a lot about each other's culture and different philosophies on life. Overall, it was an extremely rewarding experience.

—Adrianna

Both Mohamad's and Adrianna's experiences point to the benefits and challenges of intercultural communication. Through intercultural relationships, we can learn a tremendous amount about other people and their cultures, and about ourselves and our own cultural background. At the same time, there are many challenges. Intercultural communication can also involve barriers like stereotyping and discrimination. And these relationships take place in complex historical and political contexts. Mohamad's experience in the United States is especially challenging today given the current political climate. An important goal in this book is how to increase your understanding of the dynamics at work in an intercultural interaction.

This book will expose you to the variety of approaches we use to study intercultural communication. We also weave into the text our personal stories to make theory come alive. By linking theory and practice, we hope to give a fuller picture of intercultural communication than either one alone could offer.

We bring many intercultural communication experiences to the text. As you read, you will learn not only about both of us as individuals but also about our views on intercultural communication. Don't be overwhelmed by the seeming complexity of intercultural communication. Not knowing everything that you would like to know is very much a part of this process.

Why is it important to focus on intercultural communication and to strive to become better at this complex pattern of interaction? We can think of at least seven reasons; perhaps you can add more.

THE SELF-AWARENESS IMPERATIVE

One of the most important reasons for studying intercultural communication is the awareness it raises of our own cultural identity and background. This is also one of the least obvious reasons. Peter Adler (1975), a noted social psychologist, observes

that the study of intercultural communication begins as a journey into another culture and reality and ends as a journey into one's own culture.

We gain insights into intercultural experiences overseas. When Judith was teaching high school in Algeria, a Muslim country in North Africa, she realized something about her religious identity as a Protestant. December 25 came and went, and she taught classes with no mention of Christmas. Judith had never thought about how special the celebration of Christmas was or how important the holiday was to her. She then recognized on a personal level the uniqueness of this particular cultural practice. Erla, a graduate student from Iceland, notes the increased knowledge and appreciation she's gained concerning her home country:

Living in another country widens your horizon. You look at your country from a different point of view. We have learned not to expect everything to be the same as "at home," but if we happen to find something that reminds us of home, we really appreciate it and it makes us very happy. Ultimately we are all very thankful that we had the opportunity to live in another country.

However, it is important to recognize that intercultural learning is not always easy or comfortable. Sometimes, intercultural encounters make us aware of our own **ethnocentrism**—a tendency to think that our own culture is superior to other cultures. This means that we assume, subconsciously, that the way we do things is the only way. For example, when Tom first visited France he was surprised to discover that shoppers are expected to greet shopkeepers when entering a small store. Or that French people sometimes ate horsemeat, snails, and very fragrant cheeses. Sometimes, Americans think that these foods shouldn't be eaten. This attitude that foods we eat are somehow normal and that people shouldn't eat these other foods is a kind of ethnocentrism. To be surprised or even taken aback by unfamiliar customs is not unexpected; however, a refusal to expand your cultural horizons or to acknowledge the legitimacy of cultural practices different from your own can lead to intergroup misunderstandings and conflicts.

ethnocentrism A tendency to think that our own culture is superior to other cultures.

What you learn depends on your social and economic position in society. Self-awareness through intercultural contact for someone from a racial or minority group may mean learning to be wary and not surprised at subtle slights by members of the dominant majority—and reminders of their place in society. For example, a Chinese American colleague is sometimes approached at professional meetings by white communication professors who ask her to take their drink order.

If you are white and middle class, intercultural learning may mean an enhanced awareness of your privilege. White friends tell us that they became more aware of their racial privilege after George Floyd was killed by a white police officer in Minneapolis. In the midst of the nationwide protests, the legal protections afforded the police came into view. They suddenly realized the myriad of ways that police (and other social institutions) are protected and empowered by laws, court cases, and more that create an unequal field that helps and hurts us in different ways.

Self-awareness, then, that comes through intercultural learning may involve an increased awareness of being caught up in political, economic, and historical systems—not of our own making.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC IMPERATIVE

You have probably observed that your world is increasingly diverse. You may have classes with students who differ from you in ethnicity, race, religion, and/or nationality. College and university student bodies in the United States are becoming increasingly diverse. Statistics show that college enrollment for all racial and ethnic minorities has grown in the past 20 years, especially for Latino students where college enrollment has more than doubled. In fact, currently, approximately 45% of undergraduate students belong to racial and ethnic minority groups (Davis & Fry, 2019).

Sports are also a very visible part of increasing diversity. Among the various U.S. American professional and college teams, the National Basketball Association and Women's National Basketball Association receive the highest grades for racial and gender hiring practices; and the NBA continues to have the most owners of color and the most female majority owners (Lapchick, 2019). The Major League Baseball organization also receives high marks for diversity in administration (office staff, managers, etc.) and now almost 80% of its players are ethnic/racial minorities. In contrast, in 2019, there were only three Black NFL head coaches and of the 30 new head coaches hired in January 2020, not one is Black (Belson, 2020). College sports are maintaining their diversity, and probably the greatest prospects for expanding opportunities exist in college sports rather than at the professional sports level because of the number of jobs available (Lapcheck, 2019). In addition, team diversity can apparently improve performance. One research study of European soccer teams (with players from almost 50 different nationalities) found that the most linguistically diverse teams had the best winning records (Malesky & Saiegh, 2014).

Changing U.S. Demographics

U.S. **demographics** are changing rapidly and provide another source of increased opportunity for intercultural contact. Racial and ethnic minorities are now growing more rapidly in numbers than whites. The fastest growth is among the multi-racial Americans, followed by Asians and Hispanics. Non-Hispanic whites make up 60% of the U.S. population; Hispanics make up 19%; Blacks, 13%; Asians, 6%; and multiracial Americans, 3% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). This trend is expected to continue as shown in Figure 1-2 (Passel & Cohn, 2008). In fact, there are now 109 counties that are “majority-minority”—where there is no one majority ethnic group, and minority groups account for more than 50% of the population (Schaeffer, 2019). This loss of a white majority seems to lead to some white anxiety and fear. In fact, one study found that the anticipation of this loss resulted in whites expressing more preference for socializing and interacting primarily with whites and increased negative evaluations of racial minority groups (Craig, Rucker, & Richeson, 2018). We address the issue of whites losing majority status in Chapter 5.

There is increasing diversity in the U.S. workforce as well—representing the diversity in the general population, in race and ethnicity, people with disabilities, and straight, gay, and transgendered individuals (see Figure 1-1).

demographics The characteristics of a population, especially as classified by race, ethnicity, age, sex, and income.



FIGURE 1-1 Rapid changes in technology, demographics, and economic forces mean that you are likely to come into contact with many people with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Although many of these communication experiences will be in professional and work situations, many other interactions will be in public and social settings. (izusek/E+/Getty Images)

Changing Immigration Patterns

The second source of demographic change is different immigration patterns. Although the United States has often been thought of as a nation of immigrants, it is also a nation that established itself by subjugating the original inhabitants and that prospered to some extent as a result of slave labor. These aspects of national identity are important in understanding contemporary society. Today, immigration has changed the social landscape significantly. First, the foreign-born population continues to rise as a percentage of the total population, up from almost 5% in 1970 to more than 14% in 2020, but lower than 25 other countries and territories (Immigrant share. . . . 2019), and also lower than it was during the great migrations in the 1800s and 1900s when most Europeans came to the United States (Radford, 2019).

A second change concerns the origin of the immigrants. Prior to the 1970s, most of the immigrants to the United States came from Europe; now the large majority of immigrants are from Latin America (Radford, 2019). These shifts in patterns of immigration have resulted in a much more racially and ethnically diverse population and include 1 million lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, or LGBT, adult immigrants. It's not hard to see that the United States is becoming more heterogeneous.

Sometimes more **heterogeneous** cultures are contrasted to more **homogeneous** cultures. Instead of thinking of cultures as either heterogeneous or homogeneous, it is more useful to think about cultures as more or less heterogeneous (or more or less homogeneous). Cultures can change over time and become more or less homogeneous. They can also be more heterogeneous than another culture.

heterogeneous
Difference(s) in a group, culture, or population.

homogeneous
Similarity in a group, culture, or population.

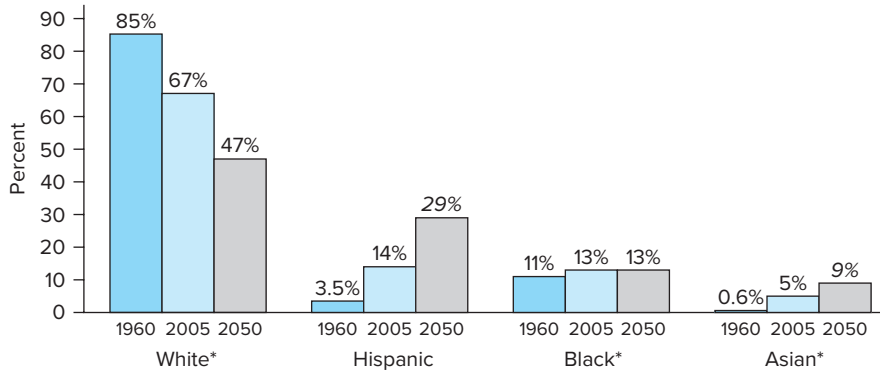


FIGURE I-2 Population by race and ethnicity, actual and projected: 1960, 2005, and 2050 (% of total).

Source: From J. S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, *U.S. Population Projections: 2005–2050*, Pew Research Center, 2008, p. 9.

Note: All races modified and not Hispanic (*); American Indian/Alaska Native not shown. See “Methodology.” Projections for 2050 indicated by light gray bars.

This heterogeneity presents many opportunities and challenges for students of intercultural communication. Sometimes tensions can be created by (and be the result of) world events and proposed legislation. After the devastating terror attacks in Paris in November 2015, people and governments had heightened concerns about the security threat posed by Middle Eastern refugees moving into Europe. For some, this concern translated to anti-immigrant/refugee attitudes and legislation. For example, in 2017, President Trump signed executive orders suspending the entry of immigrants from six Muslim countries and then initiated measures that would restrict immigration, including: building more barriers on the U.S.-Mexico border, allowing asylum seekers to cross at only certain border points, suspending the DACA program (Zoppo et al., 2017), and most recently, drastically cutting the number of refugees accepted into the United States (Shear & Kanno-Youngs, 2019). While some feel that these are reasonable measures, others feel that they pave the way for increased prejudice and discrimination against foreigners, particularly those from the Middle East and Latin America, especially given the fact that terrorist attacks by Islamist groups have decreased, comprising only 7% of attacks in the West, while twice as many (18%) were committed by far right groups (including white nationalists) (Brzozowski, 2019).

We should also note the potential opportunities in a culturally diverse society. **Diversity** can expand our conceptions of what is possible—linguistically, politically, socially—as various lifestyles and ways of thinking converge. In fact, a growing number of research studies show that being around people who are different can make us more creative, more diligent, and make us work harder, especially for groups that value innovation and new ideas. Specifically, innovative groups and organizations who have gender and racial diversity produce more creative ideas and outperform less diverse groups (Phillips, 2014). However, increased

diversity The quality of being different.

opportunity does not always lead to increased interaction or positive attitudes. While a recent survey found that incoming college students say they want to promote racial understanding (Eagan et al., 2016), this doesn't happen automatically. For example, if they've had a previous negative intercultural interaction, they may avoid such future contact. For majority students (straight, white, Christian), this means missing out on intercultural learning and prejudice reduction. For minority students (e.g., students of color, LGBTQ, first-generation, poor, international students), the results are much greater—affecting their sense of belonging, well-being, and overall educational experience (Hudson, 2018). In addition, there have been numerous reports of racist incidents on college and high school campuses across the country in recent years (Griffith, 2019). This may be because these students are graduating from high schools that are becoming increasingly more segregated (Orfield & Frankenberg, 2014).

To get a better sense of the situation in the United States today, let's take a look at our history. As mentioned previously, the United States has often been referred to as a nation of **immigrants**, but this is only partly true. When Europeans began arriving on the shores of the New World, an estimated 8 to 10 million Native Americans were already living here. Their ancestors probably began to arrive via the Bering Strait at least 40,000 years earlier. The outcome of the encounters between these groups—the colonizing Europeans and the native peoples—is well known. By 1940, the Native American population of the United States had been reduced to an estimated 250,000. Today, about 6.6 million Native Americans and Alaska Natives (from 567 recognized tribes) live in the United States (Native Americans by the Numbers, 2017).

immigrants People who come to a new country, region, or environment to settle more or less permanently. (Compare with **sojourners**, see Chapter 8)

African American Immigrants African Americans represent a special case in the history of U.S. immigration. African Americans did not choose to emigrate but were brought here involuntarily, mainly as slave labor. Many Europeans also emigrated as indentured servants. However, the system of contract servitude was gradually replaced by perpetual servitude, or slavery, almost wholly of Africans. Many landowners wanted captive workers who could not escape and who could not become competitors. They turned to slave labor.

The slave trade, developed by European and African merchants, lasted about 350 years, although slavery was outlawed in Europe long before it was outlawed in the United States. Roughly 10 million Africans reached the Americas, although many died in the brutal overseas passage (Curtin, 1969). Slavery is an important aspect of U.S. immigration history. As James Baldwin (1955) suggested, the legacy of slavery makes contemporary interracial relations in the United States very different from interracial relations in Europe and other regions of the world.

Slavery presents a moral dilemma for many whites even today. A common response is simply to ignore history. Many people assert that because not all whites owned slaves, we should forget the past and move on. For others, forgetting the past is not acceptable. In fact, some historians, like James Loewen, maintain that acknowledging and understanding the past is the only viable alternative in moving forward and making the connection of slavery to the current racial tensions in the United States:

Slavery's twin legacies to the present are the social and economic inferiority it conferred upon blacks and the cultural racism it spread throughout our culture. Slavery ended in 1863–65, depending upon where one lived. Unfortunately, racism, slavery's handmaiden, did not. It lives on afflicting all of us today. (Loewen, 2010, p. 159)

Influential author/journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates (2017) agrees that we should begin by acknowledging the historical flaws of U.S. society and recognizing the historical consequences of slavery. However, the United States has several Holocaust museums but no organized, official recognition of the horrors of slavery. Perhaps it is easier for us to focus on the negative events of another nation's history than on those of our own. In their travels, Judith and Tom have been struck by other countries' efforts to come to terms with a shameful history. South Africa has an impressive Apartheid Museum (and a memorial commemorating the Truth and Reconciliation movement); Berlin, Germany has numerous plaques that denote locations where Jews were torn from their homes and sent to their deaths; Rwanda has several genocide memorials for the murders of 800,000 mostly minority Tutsi citizens in 1994. In each country, the effort is to not eliminate the very painful past, but to communicate to all that they recognize the shame and the country has moved forward. While many U.S. Americans feel that the election of Barack Obama, the first African American president, shows some progress in U.S. race relations, others like author Coates see a current backlash against Obama's presidency and a need for a continuing national conversation about race. In Chapter 4, we explore the importance of history in understanding the dynamics of intercultural communication.

Relationships with New Immigrants Relationships between residents and immigrants—between oldtimers and newcomers—have often been filled with tension and conflict. In the 19th century, Native Americans sometimes were caught in the middle of European rivalries. During the War of 1812, for example, Indian allies of the British were severely punished by the United States when the war ended. In 1832, the U.S. Congress recognized the Indian nations' right to self-government, but in 1871, a congressional act prohibited treaties between the U.S. government and Indian tribes. In 1887, Congress passed the Dawes Severalty Act, terminating Native Americans' special relationship with the U.S. government and paving the way for their removal from their homelands.

As waves of immigrants continued to roll in from Europe, the more firmly established European—mainly British—immigrants tried to protect their way of life, language, and culture. As one citizen lamented in 1856,

Four-fifths of the beggary and three-fifths of the crime spring from our foreign population; more than half the public charities, more than half the prisons and almshouses, more than half the police and the cost of administering criminal justice are for foreigners. (quoted in Cole, 1998, p. 126)

The foreigners to which this citizen was referring were mostly from Ireland, devastated by the potato famines, and from Germany, which had fallen on hard economic and political times. Historian James Banks (1991) identifies other anti-immigrant events throughout the nation's history. As early as 1729, an English mob