INTERCULTURAL
COMMUNICATION

Globalization and Social Justice

Kathryn Sorrells

Intercultural Communication

Third Edition

Intercultural Communication

Globalization and Social Justice

Third Edition

Kathryn Sorrells
California State University, Northridge

SAGE

Brief Contents

Detailed Contents

1 Opening the Conversation: Studying Intercultural Communication 1

2 Understanding the Context of Globalization 29

6 | Crossing Borders: Migration and Intercultural Adaptation   147

7 | Jamming Media and Popular Culture: Analyzing Messages About Diverse Cultures   179

8 | The Culture of Capitalism and the Business of Intercultural Communication 211

9 | Negotiating Intercultural Conflict and Social Justice: Strategies for Intercultural Relations 239

10 | Engaging Intercultural Communication for Social Justice: Challenges and Possibilities for Global Citizenship 273

Preface

Purpose of the Text

I wrote *Intercultural Communication: Globalization and Social Justice* with the goal of creating a new kind of introductory text for the undergraduate intercultural communication course that would provide students with critical and social justice perspectives on the dynamics of globalization that have brought so many people and cultures into contact and conversation. I want to help students understand and grapple with the interconnected and complex nature of intercultural communication in the world today. Students in my intercultural communication courses are clearly affected in direct and indirect ways on a daily basis by the forces of globalization. Their lives, livelihoods, and lifestyles are influenced in both challenging and beneficial ways by the forces of globalization—through rapid advances in communication and transportation technologies as well as changes in economic and political policies locally and globally. Globalization has catapulted people from different cultures into shared physical and virtual spaces in homes, in relationships, in schools, in neighborhoods, in the workplace, and in political alliances in unprecedented ways.

The coronavirus pandemic that gripped and transformed the world as I completed the third edition of the book illustrates all too well the inextricable interconnection and interdependence of the globe in the 21st century. The pandemic has further revealed and exacerbated systemic inequities within and across nations based on historically and socially constructed categories of difference such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and nationality. Preexisting health disparities, the disproportionate impact on communities of color, deeply rooted stereotypes and prejudices, and the disposability of so-called essential workers—most often working-class, migrant, and poor people—are only a few of the key intercultural communication challenges exposed by the pandemic. Opportunities to build and strengthen intercultural alliances, which offer new ways of thinking, supporting, and organizing for greater equity, access, and justice are also more visible and strengthened as we wrestle with the health, economics, and environmental impact of the pandemic.

CULTURE IS DYNAMIC AND MULTIFACETED

Central to this text is the idea that our understanding of culture must be dynamic and multifaceted to address the fast-paced, complex, and often contradictory influences that shape intercultural communication today. The advantage of this approach is that it reflects a world that students will recognize as their own—a world in which notions of culture are fluid, not static. Therefore, this text aims to move beyond the basic distinctions between international and domestic U.S. communication issues to also highlight the many connections between local and global issues. To help students better understand the challenges

and complexities of intercultural communication in the global context, I have also drawn attention to histories of intercultural conflict and the role power plays on macro- and micro-levels in intercultural relations. Thus, my aim in writing was to produce a text as vibrant, multifaceted, conflicting, and creative as intercultural communication itself!

Intercultural Communication: Globalization and Social Justice is built around these key concepts:

- A globalization framework

- A critical, social justice approach

- An emphasis on connections between the local/global and micro-, meso-, and macro-levels

- An emphasis on *intercultural praxis*

A Globalization Framework

Globalization provides a ubiquitous and complex context for studying intercultural communication. The context of globalization is characterized by an increasingly dynamic, mobile world and an intensification of interaction and exchange among people, cultures, and cultural forms; a rapidly growing global interdependence leading to shared interests and resources as well as greater intercultural tensions and conflicts; a magnification of inequities both within and across nations and cultural groups with significant impact on intercultural communication; and a historical legacy of colonization, Western domination, and U.S. hegemony that continues to shape intercultural relations today. Studying intercultural communication in the context of globalization allows us to highlight the following:

- Definitions of culture that address cultural continuity, contestation, and commodification

- Intercultural dimensions of economic, political, and cultural globalization

- Role of power and the impact of asymmetrical power relations on intercultural communication

- Rapid movement of people, cultures, verbal and nonverbal languages, and rhetoric through interpersonal and mediated communication

- Multifaceted, hybrid, and negotiated cultural identities

- Resignification of identity categories such as race, culture, gender, and sexuality today

- Changing nature of intercultural relationships and intercultural alliances

- Culture of capitalism and the commodification of culture

- Intercultural conflict through a multidimensional framework

- Dynamic intercultural alliances and movements for social justice

A Critical Social Justice Approach

This text takes a critical social justice approach that provides a framework to create a more equitable and socially just world through communication. In the context of globalization, finding solutions to local and global challenges inevitably requires intercultural communication. Today, some of the most innovative answers to difficult social, political, and economic problems develop through intercultural alliances. And regrettably, some of the most egregious injustices—exploitation of workers in homes, fields, and factories and violence perpetrated through racial profiling, ethnic cleansing, and religious fervor—are performed within intercultural contexts and are enabled by intercultural communication. Today, we face many intercultural challenges; for example, wealth disparity in the United States and globally and the percentage of people in the world living under the poverty line have become steadily worse in the new millennium. It is my hope that this text will not only help students develop a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges of intercultural communication today but also empower students to use their knowledge and skills to confront discrimination and challenge inequities.

Over the past 10 years, I have had the honor and privilege of working directly with Reverend James M. Lawson Jr., a close associate of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and leading architect of the civil rights movement, on the Civil Discourse & Social Change Initiative at California State University, Northridge (CSUN). Reverend Lawson's deep regard for all humanity, his appreciation of cultural differences, and his unwavering respect for the power of intercultural alliances stem from and are informed by his years of work in India in the 1950s, his leadership in the civil rights movement, his efforts to dismantle racism and sexism, and his efforts to gain living wages for workers and equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities. We all have the opportunity to use the knowledge, attitudes, and skills gained by studying and practicing intercultural communication to build relationships, imagine possibilities, and develop alliances to create a more equitable and socially just world.

Local/Global Connection and Multilevel Framework of Analysis

Life in the globalized 21st century is characterized by a complex web of linkages between the local and the global as well as the past and present. People—and their languages, identities, cultural practices, and ideas—are based in particular geographic locations, but they are also simultaneously connected—whether through communication technologies (e.g., phone, e-mail, social media), interpersonal networks (e.g., friends, family), or memories with different locations around the globe. Studying intercultural communication in the context of globalization requires us to pay attention to continuities and fragmentations of global communities over time and place.

For example, globalization links the distant towns of Villachuato, Mexico, and Marshalltown, Iowa, through global flows of capital, goods, and labor. A meatpacking plant in Marshalltown employs many Mexican workers, who return to Villachuato for annual religious events, weddings, and funerals. Like many towns across the United States and Mexico, the lives of people from Villachuato and Marshalltown are intertwined and interdependent in the global context. Intercultural connections do not necessarily require travel to forge links across the globe. For example, diasporic Indian communities in the United States and around the world enjoy watching Hindi films and keeping up on the latest popular culture from India. Much more than entertainment, these experiences of cultural consumption educate younger generations born outside of India about their culture, serve as cultural bridges across time and place, and play a role in developing their bicultural identities. Of course, global intercultural links are not solely positive. The roots of many intercultural conflicts happening today can be linked to historic transgressions and involve communities that are interconnected around the globe.

In this text, key concepts in intercultural communication—identity construction; the use of verbal and nonverbal communication; the creation and re-creation of cultural spaces; interpersonal relationships; as well as migration, adaptation, and intercultural conflict—are addressed in ways that underscore the connections and disjuncture between the local and the global and the relationships between the past and the present. A multilevel framework that focuses attention on three interrelated levels—(1) the micro (individual level), (2) the meso (intermediate, group-based level), and (3) the macro (broad economic–political level)—is introduced and applied to various case studies throughout the text to examine the complexities of intercultural communication in the context of globalization.

Intercultural Praxis

This text engages students in a process of critical, reflective thinking and acting—what I call intercultural praxis—that enables them to navigate the complex, contradictory, and challenging intercultural spaces they inhabit interpersonally, communally, and globally. At all moments in our day—when we interact with friends, coworkers, teachers, bosses, and strangers; when we consume pop culture and other entertainment; when we hear and read news and information from the media outlets; and in our daily routines and travel—we have the opportunity to engage in intercultural praxis. The purpose of engaging in intercultural praxis is to raise our awareness, increase our critical analysis, and develop our socially responsible action in regard to intercultural interactions in the context of globalization.

Through six interrelated points of entry—(1) inquiry, (2) framing, (3) positioning, (4) dialogue, (5) reflection, and (6) action—intercultural praxis uses our multifaceted identity positions and shifting access to privilege and power to develop our consciousness, imagine alternatives, and build alliances in our struggles for social responsibility and social justice. The focus on intercultural praxis is intertwined with the content of the text from initial discussions of culture in the global context to explorations of our identities and finally in our roles as global citizens.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TEXT

This book offers an innovative approach to address the rapid, complex, and often contradictory forces that propel and constrain intercultural communication in the context of globalization.

A fundamental goal of the book is to understand and analyze intercultural communication on three interlocking and interrelated levels: (1) the micro, individual level; (2) the meso, cultural group level; and (3) the macro, geopolitical level. I think of it as breathing in and breathing out. As we breathe in, we focus our attention on individual levels of communication, and then, breathing out, we expand to the broader levels of cultural group and macro-level intercultural communication issues. This metaphor helps my students understand the movement between levels from chapter to chapter as well as the connections that are made throughout the text between the past and the present. My goal is to encourage and support a way of thinking and being in the world that accounts for multiple frames of reference—like zooming in and zooming out on a Google map—across place and time.

Given that certain topics—language use, nonverbal communication, and cultural identity, for example—are so central to and interconnected with all facets of intercultural communication, these areas are addressed throughout the text in all chapters rather than isolated within stand-alone chapters. The organization of this text, therefore, highlights the many interconnections that define intercultural communication while also offering complete coverage of all topics commonly addressed in an introductory intercultural communication text.

NEW TO THE THIRD EDITION

The third edition augments and updates keys features and themes of the second edition. My goal then and now is to contextualize, historicize, and politicize our understanding and practice of intercultural communication. To accomplish this, the subject of each chapter is presented as a whole, highlighting broad systemic views of the content as well as in-depth treatment of interrelated concepts and issues. Case studies, new and expanded in the third edition, illuminate critical concepts, address current events, and illustrate how intercultural communication is a site of negotiation and contestation. Extended examples and case studies are also used to demonstrate methods of analysis central to intercultural praxis.

The third edition attends to the rise of ethnonationalism globally and of White nationalism, in particular, in the United States. Introduced in Chapter 2, the trends and implications of increased ethnonationalism are examined as a backlash to globalization underpinned by historical racism, ethnocentrism, and religious supremacy. Growing economic divides both within and across nations, the intersection of racial and economic inequities, and cycles of historic trauma experienced by people of color and the poor are also addressed. The rise of unfettered capitalism, the assault on freedom of the press and fact-based decisionmaking, as well as on norms of governance and institutions of

democracy constitute another theme threaded throughout the book. The new edition also attends in greater depth to the centrality of new media for intercultural communication in the global context as well as the increasing impact of religious fundamentalism throughout the world. The theme of social justice and our roles as students and practitioners of intercultural communication in imagining, creating, and enacting a more socially just world is introduced earlier in the text and threaded throughout.

New in the third edition:

- Backlash to globalization and implications for intercultural communication

- Additional case studies

- Updated statistics

- Extended examples addressing current events

- Expanded treatment of new media

CONTINUING PEDAGOGICAL FEATURES OF THE TEXT

A number of special features appear in each chapter of this text to encourage reflection and to move theory into practice for teachers and students of intercultural communication. Highly popular in the first and second editions, additional text boxes, both revised and new, appear in the third edition.

Engaging Textbox Features Highlight the Challenges and Rewards of Intercultural Communication

- **Communicative Dimensions Boxes** allow students to explore vivid examples of intercultural communication in action to see how different facets of communication—language use, nonverbal communication, rhetoric, and symbolic representation—play out in the global intercultural context.

- **Cultural Identity Boxes** help students understand how communication and culture shape and reflect identity and in turn how identity plays a role in communicating within and across cultures.

- **Intercultural Praxis Boxes** emphasize ways of developing our awareness and using our power and positionality to enable more equitable and socially just relationships across different cultures by engaging in dialogue, reflecting, and taking informed action.

ANCILLARY MATERIAL

This text includes an array of instructor teaching materials designed to save you time and to help you keep students engaged. To learn more, visit sagepub.com or contact your SAGE representative at sagepub.com/findmyrep. In addition to this material, resources addressing the intercultural communication dimensions of the coronavirus pandemic and global recovery are included. These ancillaries further support the goals of critical reflection, engaged learning, and informed action for social change presented in *Intercultural Communication: Globalization and Social Justice.*

Acknowledgments

Abook like this, while written by one person, could not have been imagined or completed without the critical and creative contributions of many. In writing the third edition, I have received invaluable feedback, suggestions, and insights from students and colleagues who I work with daily, from those who teach and engage in intercultural research across the United States as well as from those using the book in Japan, Mexico, China, India, and Europe. I am honored and grateful for these meaningful conversations, connections, and opportunities to engage with others in making a difference in the world. Sachi Sekimoto, my former undergraduate and graduate student and now Associate Professor, provided invaluable research and editorial assistance and developed the discussion questions and activities at the end of the chapters for both the first, second, and third editions. Our work together as co-editors of the book *Globalizing Intercultural Communication: A Reader* provided opportunities for lengthy and lively discussions as well as careful reading of compelling and innovative research in the field of intercultural communication, which enriched and strengthened the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the book. I want to thank Julie Chekroun and Hengameh Rabizadeh, also former graduate students, and Bridget Sampson for their meticulous edited and research assistance for the text. A third edition is inevitably an extension and elaboration of a vision and groundwork developed in earlier editions; thus, I continue to feel tremendous gratitude for my colleagues Sheena Malhotra and Bill Kelly for their careful reading and rereading of each chapter of the first edition. Sheena's insightful comments and encouragement, her examples that illustrate subtlety and ambiguity, and her feedback from using chapters in her classes all enhance the first, second, and third editions tremendously. Over the years, I have benefited greatly from hours of conversation with Gordon Nakagawa, Breny Mendoza, Lara Medina, Amer Ahmed, and Reverend James M. Lawson Jr., who, each in their own way, have had a hand in guiding the critical theoretical approach of the book. I also want to acknowledge both of my parents, Daniel Jackson Sorrells and Eleanor Kathryn Sorrells, whose love for learning and cultures continues to inspire me. Their memory is inextricably bound to this book as they both passed away during the research and writing of the first edition.

The team at SAGE deserves many thanks for all their support, patience, and sustained effort. Matthew Byrnie, believing in the importance of the project, brought the first edition to fruition and enthusiastically embraced the second edition. The expert and patient assistance of Lily Norton, acquisitions editor during the writing of the third edition, graciously moved this project forward. Megan O'Heffernan and Sam Diaz were very helpful and timely in their assistance in putting all the final pieces together to complete the project. I want to thank Linda Gray for her careful editing of the book. Finally, I am grateful to the production editor, Natasha Tiwari, and marketing manager, Staci Wittek, for bringing the third edition of the book into the world!

About the Author

Kathryn Sorrells is Professor of Communication Studies at California State University, Northridge (CSUN). She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in intercultural communication, critical pedagogy, performance, cultural studies, and feminist theory. She combines critical/cultural studies and postcolonial perspectives to explore issues of culture, race, gender, class, and sexuality. Kathryn grew up in Georgia; has lived in different regions of the United States; has studied and worked in Brazil, Japan, Turkey, and China; and has traveled extensively in Asia, Europe, and parts of Latin America and the Middle East. The critical, social justice approach she uses to study and practice intercultural communication is informed by her experiences growing up in the South during the tumultuous and transformative civil rights movement and her subsequent participation in the antiwar; women's; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT); and labor and immigrant rights movements. Kathryn has published a variety of articles related to intercultural communication, globalization, and social justice and is co-editor along with Sachi Sekimoto of *Globalizing Intercultural Communication*: A Reader (Sage, 2015). She has been instrumental in organizing a campus-wide initiative on Civil Discourse & Social Change at CSUN aimed at developing students' capacities for civic engagement and social justice. Kathryn is a recipient of numerous national, state, and local community service awards for founding and directing Communicating Common Ground, an innovative service learning project that provided students opportunities to develop creative alternatives to intercultural conflict. Kathryn also has experience as a consultant and trainer for nonprofit, for-profit, and educational organizations in the areas of intercultural communication and multicultural learning.

1

Opening the Conversation
STUDYING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

© iStockphoto.com/monkeybusinessimages

PHOTO 1.0
What creates positive intercultural interactions?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify the opportunities and challenges of intercultural communication in the context of globalization.

2. Describe three definitions of culture that influence intercultural communication in the global context.

3. Explain how our social location and standpoint shape how we see, experience, and understand the world differently.

4. Describe the goals and six points of entry into intercultural praxis.

We, the people of the world—over 7.5 billion of us from different cultures—find our lives, our livelihoods, and our lifestyles increasingly interconnected and interdependent due to the forces of globalization. Since the early 1990s, changes in economic and political policies, governance, and institutions have combined with advances in communication and transportation technology to dramatically accelerate interaction and interrelationship among people from different cultures around the globe. Deeply rooted in European colonization and Western imperialism, the forces of this current wave of globalization have catapulted people from different cultures into shared physical and virtual spaces in homes, in relationships, in schools, in neighborhoods, in the workplace, and in political alliance and activism in unprecedented ways. Yet our lives, livelihoods, and lifestyles are also increasingly polarized, fragmented, and vulnerable. Greater proximity, magnified economic inequity and insecurity, and real and perceived ethnic and racial tension have led to a backlash against globalization. Anti-immigrant, protectionist, and populist rhetoric and policies, fueled by xenophobia and racism, have given rise to new forms of ethnic nationalism, isolationism, and violence around the world.

Today, advances in communication technology allow some of us to connect with the world on wireless devices sitting in the backyard or in our favorite café. While just over half of the world's people wake up each morning assured of instant communication with others around the globe (Internet Telecommunication Union, 2019), nearly 50% of the world's population still start their day without the basic necessities of food, clean water, and shelter (World Bank Group, 2018). Through the Internet, satellite technology, and cell phones, many of the world's people have access to both mass media and personal accounts of events and experiences as they unfold around the globe. However, in this time of instant messages and global communication, about 750 million or about 15% of young people and adults worldwide, two thirds of whom are women, do not have the skills to read (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016). Today, advances in transportation technology bring families, friends, migrants, tourists, businesspeople, and strangers closer together more rapidly than ever before in the history of human interaction. Yet some have the privilege to enjoy intercultural experiences through leisure, recreation, and tourism, whereas other people travel far from home and engage with others who are different from themselves out of economic necessity and for basic survival.

People from different cultural backgrounds have been interacting with each other for many millennia. What makes intercultural communication in our current times different from other periods in history? The amount and intensity of intercultural interactions; the degree of intercultural interdependence; the patterns of movement of people, goods, and capital; and the conditions that shape and constrain our intercultural interactions distinguish our current context—the context of globalization—from other periods in history. Consider the following:

- About 258 million people live outside their country of origin. The number of international migrants under the age of 20 is at its highest in recorded history (UN Population Division, 2017).

- "Globalization is under attack. The electoral victory of Donald Trump, the Brexit vote and the rise of an aggressive nationalism in mainland Europe and around

the world are all part of a backlash to globalization. In each instance, citizens have upset the political order by voting to roll back economic, political and cultural globalization" (Short, 2016, para 1).

- In 2020, an estimated 3.96 billion people, more than half of the world's population, will use social media networks. WeChat or *Wēixìn* (微信), developed in China in 2011 by Tencent, is one of the largest messaging and payment apps in the world, connecting 1.2 billion users in China and around the world. But Facebook, with 2.6 million active users, remains the most popular social media network worldwide (Clement, 2020).

- Ethnic tension, conflicts, persecutions, violence, and natural disasters exacerbated by climate change have caused the worst worldwide refugee crisis since World War II. Eighty percent of all people displaced across borders come from 10 countries— Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Central African Republic, and Eritrea (UNHCR, 2019).

- The United States is projected to become a plurality nation for the first time in 2044. While the non-Hispanic White population will remain the largest single group, no group will make up a "majority." Racial and ethnic minorities, 40% of the U.S. population in 2019, are projected to comprise 63.5% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018).

- "Alongside soccer, basketball is one of the few truly global sports—and the NBA is the apex of the sport. From Beijing to Buenos Aires, Mexico City to Melbourne, hundreds of millions of fans are following" (Wolff, 2017, para. 2). The 2017 NBA Finals "are a distinctively global stage for athletes like Curry and LeBron, and a powerful shared cultural connection between fans all across the world" (Wolff, 2017, para. 10).

- The gap between the wealthy and the poor is increasing within countries and around the world; 153 billionaires have more wealth than 4.6 billion people, which is 60% of the world's population. "The gap between the rich and the poor can't be resolved without deliberate inequity-busting policies, and too few governments are committed to these" (Oxfam, 2020, para 2).

Clearly, cultural interaction is occurring, and intercultural communication matters. The goal of this book is to position the study and practice of intercultural communication within the context of globalization and the backlash to globalization, which then enables us to understand and grapple with the dynamic, creative, conflictive, and often inequitable nature of intercultural relations in the world. This book provides theories, conceptual maps, and practical tools to guide us in asking questions, making sense, and taking action in regard to the intercultural opportunities, misunderstandings, and conflicts that emerge today in the context of globalization. Throughout the book, intercultural communication is explored within this broader political, economic, and cultural context of globalization, which allows us to foreground the important roles that history, power, and global institutions—political, economic, and media institutions—currently play in intercultural communication.

This first chapter is called "Opening the Conversation" because the relationship between you, the readers, and me, the author, is a special kind of interaction. I start the conversation by introducing various definitions of culture that provide different ways to understand intercultural communication today. Then, some of the opportunities and challenges of studying intercultural communication are addressed by introducing positionality, standpoint theory, and ethnocentrism. This chapter ends with a discussion of intercultural praxis. As we "open the conversation," I invite you to engage with me in an ongoing process of learning, reflecting, and critiquing what I have to say about intercultural communication and how it applies to your everyday experiences.

DEFINITIONS OF CULTURE

Culture is a concept we use often but have a great deal of trouble defining. In the 1950s, anthropologists Clyde Kluckhohn and Arthur Kroeber (1952) identified over 150 definitions of culture. Culture is central to the way we view, experience, and engage with all aspects of our lives and the world around us. Thus, even our definitions of culture are shaped by the historical, political, social, and cultural contexts in which we live. Historically, the word *culture* was closely linked in its use and meaning to processes of colonization. In the 19th century, European anthropologists wrote detailed descriptions of the ways of life of "others," generally characterizing non-European societies as less civilized, barbaric, "primitive," and as lacking "culture." These colonial accounts treated European culture as the norm and constructed Europe as superior by using the alleged lack of "culture" of non-European societies as justification for colonization. By the beginning of World War I, nine-tenths of the world had been colonized by European powers—a history of imperialism that continues to structure and impact intercultural communication today (Young, 2001).

With this assumption of the superiority of European culture, the categorization system that stratified groups of people was based on having "culture" or not, which, in turn, translated within European societies as "high" culture and "low" culture. Those in the elite class, or ruling class, who had power, were educated at prestigious schools and were patrons of the arts, such as literature, opera, and ballet, embodied **high culture.** Those in the working class who enjoyed activities such as popular theater, folk art, and "street" activities—and later movies and television—embodied **low culture.** We see remnants of these definitions of culture operating today. The notion of culture continues to be used in some situations to stratify groups based on the kinds of activities people engage in, thereby reinforcing beliefs about superior and inferior cultures. Over the past 50 years, struggles within academia and society in general have legitimized the practices and activities of common everyday people, leading to the use of the term **popular culture** to reference much of what was previously considered low culture. However, in advertising, in media representations, and in everyday actions and speech, we still see the use of high and low cultural symbols not only to signify class differences but also to reinforce a cultural hierarchy. The appeal and consumption of U.S. culture around the world, which coincides with the superpower status of the United States, can be

understood, at least partially, as a desire to be in proximity as well as have contact with the United States and, therefore, to exhibit the signs of being "cultured."

Anthropologic Definition: Culture as a Site of Shared Meaning

The traditional academic field of intercultural communication has been deeply impacted by anthropology. In fact, many of the scholars like Edward T. Hall (1959), who is considered the originator of the field of intercultural communication, were trained as anthropologists. In the 1950s, Hall, along with others at the Foreign Service Institute, developed training programs on culture and communication for diplomats going abroad on assignment. Hall's applied approach, focusing on the micro-level of human interaction with particular attention to nonverbal communication and tacit or out-of-awareness levels of information exchange, established the foundation for the field of intercultural communication (Rogers, Hart, & Miike, 2002).

Clifford Geertz, another highly influential anthropologist, emphasized the pivotal role symbols play in understanding culture. According to Geertz, culture is a web of symbols that people use to create meaning and order in their lives. Concerned about the colonial and Western origins of anthropology, he highlighted the challenges of understanding and representing cultures accurately. Anthropologists engage in interpretive practices that, for Geertz, are best accomplished in conversation with people from within the culture. In his widely cited book, *Interpretation of Culture*, Geertz (1973) said culture "denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life" (p. 89).

Culture, then, from an anthropological perspective, is **a system of shared meanings** that are passed from generation to generation through symbols that allow human beings (not only men!) to communicate, maintain, and develop an approach and understanding of life. In other words, culture allows us to make sense of, express, and give meaning to our lives. Let's look more closely at the various elements of this definition.

At the core of this definition is the notion of symbols and symbol systems. **Symbols** stand for or represent other things. Words, images, people, ideas, and actions can all be symbols that represent other things. For example, the word *cat* is a set of symbols (the alphabet) that combine to represent both the idea of a cat and the actual cat. A handshake—whether firm or soft, simple or complex—a raised eyebrow, a hand gesturing "ok," a veil, a tie, or "bling" are all symbolic actions or things that carry meaning. An image or an object such as the U.S. flag, the twin towers, a cap that reads "Make America Great Again" or a T-shirt that says "NastyWoman," a cell phone, an emoji, or graffiti are also symbols that stand for ideas, beliefs, and actions. How do we know what these and other symbols represent or what they mean? Are the meanings of symbols somehow inherent in the things themselves, or are meanings assigned to symbols by the people who use them? While the meaning of symbols may seem natural or inherent for those who use them, the anthropological definition that was previously offered indicates that it is the act of

assigning similar meanings to symbols and the sharing of these assigned meanings that, at least partially, constitute culture.

The definition by Geertz (1973) also suggests that culture is a system. It is a system expressed through symbols that allow groups of people to communicate and to develop knowledge and understanding about life. When we say culture is a system, we mean that the elements of culture interrelate to form a whole. The shared symbols that convey or express meaning within a culture acquire meaning through their interrelation to each other and together create a system of meanings. Consider this example: As you read the brief scenario that follows, pay attention to what you are thinking and feeling.

Imagine a young man who is in his mid- to late 20s who works at a job making about $90,000 a year. OK, what do you think and how do you feel about this man? Now, you find out that he is single. Have your thoughts or feelings changed? For you, and for the majority of students like you in the United States, the picture of this man and his life is looking pretty good. Generally, both female and male students from various cultural backgrounds in the classroom think and feel positively about him. Now you find out that he lives at home with his parents and siblings. Have your thoughts or feelings about him changed? Without fail, when this scenario is used in the classroom, an audible sigh of disappointment comes from students when they learn that he lives with his parents. What's going on here? How does this information contradict or challenge the system of meaning in the dominant U.S. culture that was being created up to that point? The image of this young man, who was looking so good, suddenly plummets from desirable to highly suspect and, well, according to some students, "weird," "strange," and "not normal." The dominant U.S. culture is a system of shared meanings that places high value and regard on individualism, independence, consumerism, and capitalism, which are symbolically represented through the interrelated elements of income, age, sex/gender, and in this case, living arrangements. Students in the classroom who ascribe to the dominant cultural value system ask questions like the following: Why would he want to live at home if he has all that money? Is he a momma's boy? What's his problem? Does he have low self-esteem? Others, operating from similar assumptions suggest that he might be living at home to save money to buy a house of his own. In other words, he may be sacrificing his independence temporarily to achieve his ultimate (and, of course, preferable) goal of living independently.

After the disappointment, disbelief, and concern for this poor fellow has settled down, I often hear alternative interpretations from students who come from different cultural backgrounds or who straddle multiple cultural systems of meaning-making. The students suggest that "he lives at home to take care of his parents," or that "he likes living with his family," or "maybe that's just the way it's done in that culture." These students' interpretations represent a different system of meaning-making that values a more collectivistic than individualistic orientation and a more interdependent than independent approach to life. The students who do speak up with these alternative interpretations may feel a bit ambivalent about stating their interpretation because they realize they are in the racial or ethnic minority, yet they have no problem making sense of the scenario. In other words, the scenario is not viewed as contradictory or inconsistent; rather, it makes sense. My purpose in giving this example at this point is to demonstrate the ways in which culture operates as a system of shared meanings.

The example also illustrates how we—human beings—generally assume that the way we make sense of things and the way we give meaning to symbols is the "right," "correct," and often "superior" way. One of the goals in this book is to challenge these ethnocentric attitudes and to develop the ability to understand cultures from within their own frames of reference rather than interpreting and negatively evaluating other cultures from one's own cultural position.

In summary, a central aspect of the anthropological definition of culture is that the patterns of meaning embodied in symbols that are inherited and passed along through generations are assumed to be shared. In fact, it is shared meaning that constitutes culture as a unit of examination in this definition of culture. The cultural studies definition of culture from a critical perspective offers another way to understand the complex notion of culture (see Photo 1.1).

© iStockphoto.com/visual7

© iStockphoto.com/mseidelch
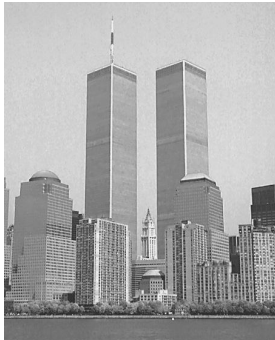
© iStockphoto.com/skynesher

iStockphoto.com/P_Wei

David Becker/Stringer/Getty Images

iStockphoto.com/yayayoyo

PHOTO 1.1
Are the meanings associated with these images shared or contested within cultures and across cultures?

Cultural Studies Definition: Culture as a Site of Contested Meaning

Whereas traditional anthropological definitions focus on culture as a system of shared meanings, cultural studies perspectives, informed by Marxist theories of class struggle and exploitation, view **culture as a site of contestation** where meanings are constantly negotiated (Grossberg, Nelson, & Treichler, 1992). Cultural studies is a transdisciplinary field of study that emerged in the post–World War II era in England as a challenge to the positivist approaches to the study of culture, which purported to approach culture "objectively." The goals of Richard Hoggart, who founded the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, and others who followed, such as Stuart Hall, are to develop subjective approaches to the study of culture in everyday life, to examine the broader historical and political context within which cultural practices are situated, and to attend to relations of power in understanding culture. Simon During (1999) suggested that as England's working class became more affluent and fragmented in the 1950s; as mass-mediated culture began to dominate over local, community cultures; and as the logic that separated culture from politics was challenged, the old notion of culture as a shared way of life was no longer descriptive or functional.

Through a cultural studies lens, then, the notion of culture shifts from an expression of local communal lives to a view of culture as an apparatus of power within a larger system of domination. A cultural studies perspective reveals how culture operates as a form of **hegemony,** or domination through consent, as defined by Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist theorist. Hegemony is dominance without the need for force or explicit forms of coercion. In other words, hegemony 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. Developments in cultural studies from the 1980s forward focus on the potential that individuals and groups have to challenge, resist, and transform meanings in their subjective, everyday lives. John Fiske (1992) stated, "The social order constrains and oppresses people, but at the same time offers them resources to fight against those constraints" (p. 157), suggesting that individuals and groups are both consumers and producers of cultural meanings and not passive recipients of meanings manufactured by cultural industries. From a cultural studies perspective, meanings are not necessarily shared, stable, or determined; rather, meanings are constantly produced, challenged, and negotiated.

Consider, for example, the images of nondominant groups in the United States, such as African American; Latinx; Asian American; American Indian; Arab American; or lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. Nondominant groups are often underrepresented and represented stereotypically in the mass media leading to struggles to affirm positive identities and efforts to claim and reclaim a position of respect in society. When any of us—from dominant or nondominant groups—speak

or act outside the "norm" established by society or what is seen as "normal" within our cultural group, we likely experience tension, admonition, or in more extreme cases, shunning and violence. As we engage with media representations and confront expected norms, we challenge and negotiate shared and accepted meanings within culture and society. Meanings associated with being an African American, a White man, or Latinx are not shared by all in the society; rather, these meanings are continuously asserted, challenged, negotiated, and rearticulated. From a cultural studies perspective, meanings are continually produced, hybridized, and reproduced in an ongoing struggle of power (Hall, 1997b). Culture, then, is the "actual, grounded terrain" of everyday practices—watching TV, consuming and wearing clothes, eating fast food or dining out, listening to music or radio talk shows—and representations—movies, songs, videos, advertisements, magazines, and "news"—where meanings are contested.

Older definitions of culture where a set of things or activities signify high or low culture still circulate, but the cultural studies notion of culture focuses on the struggles over meanings that are part of our everyday lives. Undoubtedly, the logic of understanding culture as a contested site or zone where meanings are negotiated appeals to and makes sense for people who experience themselves as marginalized from or marginalized within the centers of power, whether this is based on race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, or nationality. Similarly, the logic of understanding culture as a system of shared meanings appeals to and makes sense for people at the centers of power or in a dominant role, whether this position is based on race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, or nationality. This, itself, illustrates the struggle over the meaning of the notion of culture.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that we all participate in and are constrained by oppressive social forces. We all, at some points in our lives and to varying degrees, also challenge and struggle with dominant or preferred meanings. From a cultural studies perspective, culture is a site of analysis—in other words, something we need to attend to and critique. Culture is also a site of intervention, where we can work toward greater equity and justice in our lives and in the world in the ongoing struggle of domination and resistance.

The initial aim of the transdisciplinary field of cultural studies to critique social inequalities and work toward social change remains today; however, the academic field of cultural studies as it has traveled from England to Latin America, Australia, the United States, and other places has taken on different forms and emphases. In the mid-1980s, communication scholar Larry Grossberg (1986) identified the emerging and significant impact cultural studies began to have in the United States, particularly in the communication discipline. Today, as we explore intercultural communication within the context of and backlash to globalization, a cultural studies approach offers tools to analyze power relations, to understand the historical and political context of our intercultural relations, and to see how we can act or intervene critically and creatively in our everyday lives.

Globalization Definition: Culture as a Resource

Influenced by cultural studies, contemporary anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1996) suggested in his book *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* that we need to move away from thinking of culture as a thing, a substance, or an object that is shared. The concept of culture as a coherent, stable entity privileges certain forms of sharing and agreement and neglects the realities of inequality, difference, and those who are marginalized. He argued that the adjective *cultural* is more descriptive and useful than the noun *culture*. Consequently, focusing on the cultural dimensions of an object, issue, practice, or ideology is to recognize differences, contrasts, and comparisons. Culture, in the context of globalization, is not something that individuals or groups possess, but rather a way of referring to dimensions of situated and embodied difference that express and mobilize group identities (Appadurai, 1996).

George Yúdice (2003) suggested that culture in the age of globalization has come to be understood as a **resource.** Culture plays a greater role today than ever before because of the ways it is linked to community, national, international, and transnational economies and politics. In the first decades of the 21st century, culture is now seen as a resource for economic and political exploitation, agency, and power to be used or instrumentalized for a wide range of purposes and ends. For example, in the context of globalization, culture, in the form of symbolic goods, such as TV shows, movies, music, and tourism, is increasingly a resource for economic growth in global trade. Mass culture industries in the United States are a major contributor to the gross national product (GNP) and function globally as purveyors of U.S. cultural power (Crothers, 2018). Culture is also targeted for exploitation by capital in the media, consumerism, and tourism. Consider how products are modified and marketed to different cultural groups; how African American urban culture has been appropriated, exploited, commodified, and yet it operates as a potentially oppositional site; or how tourism in many parts of the world uses the resource of culture to attract foreign capital for development. Although the commodification of culture—the turning of culture, cultural practices, and cultural space into products for sale—is not new, the extent to which culture is "managed" as a resource for its capital-generating potential and as a "critical sphere for investment" by global institutions like the World Bank (WB) is new (Yúdice, 2003, p. 13).

Culture, in the context of globalization, is conceptualized, experienced, exploited, and mobilized as a resource. In addition to being invested in and distributed as a resource for economic development and capital accumulation, culture is used as a resource to address and solve social problems, such as illiteracy, addiction, crime, and conflict. Culture is also used today discursively, socially, and politically as a resource for collective and individual empowerment, agency, and resistance. Consider how a multiracial and multicultural coalition of women organized the Women's March on January 21, 2017, which became the largest single-day protest in U.S. history and spread worldwide "to harness the political power of diverse women and their communities to create transformative social change" (Women's March, 2020). Groups of people in proximity to each other or vastly distant

organize collective identities that serve as "homes" of familiarity; spaces of belonging; and as sites for the formation of resistance, agency, and political empowerment. Consider how over 20 years, the Indigenous Front of Binational Organizations (FIOB), an organization of indigenous Mixteco and Zapoteco immigrants from Oaxaca, Mexico, has become a transnational network where indigenous people reclaim indigenous forms of knowledge and cultural practices to resist discrimination, reframe colonization, and reinvent their cultural identities (Mercado, 2016). Or consider how hip-hop culture—transplanted and refashioned around the globe—uses music, dance, style, and knowledge to give voice to the silenced, challenge discrimination, and create platforms for activism that support cultural empowerment. Today, in the context of globalization "the understanding and practice of culture is quite complex, located at the intersection of economic and social justice agendas" (Yúdice, 2003, p. 17).

COMMUNICATIVE DIMENSIONS
COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

What is the relationship between communication and culture? The three different approaches to culture illustrate different assumptions about communication.

According to the *anthropological definition* of culture as a shared system of meaning, communication is a process of transmitting and sharing information among a group of people. In this case, communication enables culture to be co-constructed and mutually shared by members of a group.

In the *cultural studies definition,* culture is a contested site of meaning. According to this view, communication is a process through which individuals and groups negotiate and struggle over the "agreed on" and "appropriate" meanings assigned to reality. Through verbal and nonverbal communication as well as the use of rhetoric, some views are privileged and normalized while other perspectives are marginalized or silenced. Thus, communication is a process of negotiation, a struggle for power and visibility rather than a mutual construction and sharing of meaning.

Finally, in the *globalization definition,* culture is viewed as a resource. In this case, communication can be viewed as a productive process that enables change. We usually associate the word *productive* with positive qualities. However, "productive" here simply means that communication is a generative process. People leverage culture to build collective identities and exploit or mobilize for personal, economic, or political gain. Communication is a process of using cultural resources.

As you can see from our previous discussion, there are various and different definitions of culture. The concept of culture, itself, is *contested*. This means that there is no one agreed-on definition, that the different meanings of culture can be understood as being in competition with each other for usage, and that there are material and symbolic consequences or implications attached to the use of one or another of the definitions. The definitions presented here—(1) culture as shared meaning, (2) culture as contested meaning, and (3) culture as resource—all offer important and useful ways of understanding culture in the context of globalization. Throughout the book, all three definitions are used to help us make sense of the complex and contradictory intercultural communication issues and experiences we live and struggle with today.

STUDYING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

In recent years, when I ask students to speak about their culture, many find it a highly challenging exercise. For students who come from the dominant culture, the response is often "I don't really have a culture." For those students from nondominant groups, responses that point to their ethnic, racial, or religious group identification come more readily; however, their replies are often accompanied by some uneasiness. Typically, people whose culture differs from the dominant group have a stronger sense of their culture and develop a clearer awareness of their cultural identity earlier in life than those in the dominant group.

Cultural identity is defined as our situated sense of self that is shaped by our cultural experiences and social locations. Our identities develop through our relationships with others—our families, our friends, and those we see as outside our group. Our cultural identities are constructed from the languages we speak, the stories we tell, as well as the norms, behaviors, rituals, and nonverbal communication we enact. Histories passed along from within our cultural group in addition to representations of our group by others also shape our cultural identities. Our cultural identities serve to bond us with others, giving us a sense of belonging; cultural identities also provide a buffer protecting us from others we or our group see as different from ourselves; and cultural identities can also function as bridges connecting us to others who are viewed as different. Our cultural identities intersect with and are impacted by our other social identities, including our ethnic, racial, gender, class, age, religious, and national identities. In the context of globalization, our identities are not fixed; rather, our identities are complex, multifaceted, and fluid.

What definitions of culture do you think are operating in the minds of my students when asked to speak about their culture? How might their cultural identities—consciously or unconsciously—affect their understanding of culture? What accounts for the different responses among students from dominant and nondominant cultures? We can see how the anthropological definition of culture as shared meaning and culture as something that groups possess is presumed in the students' responses. Students who identify with U.S. dominant culture are encouraged to see themselves as "individuals," which often underlies their claim that they "have no culture." Since their culture is pervasive and "normal"

in the United States, European American or White students don't recognize the language, stories, values, norms, practices, and shared views on history as belonging to a culture. While students in nondominant groups see themselves as having culture or a cultural identity based on the ways in which they are different from the dominant group, dominant group members see the difference of nondominant groups and label it "culture," and their own seeming lack of "difference" as not having culture. Although the dominant culture is also infused with "difference," it is not as evident because the cultural patterns of the dominant group are the norm.

Additionally, we can see how those from the dominant culture often understand culture as a resource, which others have, but which they, rather nostalgically, are lacking. The historical and ongoing marking of nondominant groups as racially, ethnically, and culturally different by the dominant group has resulted in the mistaken belief and dangerous assumption that the dominant group has no culture. A dimension of the backlash to globalization has been the emergence or reassertion of White ethnic identity. Sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild (2016) describes an interesting phenomenon in her book, *Strangers in Their Own Land*. Based on research from 2011 to 2016, White working and middle-class people who form the core of the conservative right in Louisiana fear their culture, their claims as White Americans, and their economic viability are under attack and endangered. Their anger and experience of loss of culture, entitlement, and jobs echoed across the United States and were successfully mobilized as a political resource in the 2016 presidential election. Interestingly and importantly, the fact that people from the dominant group do not see their culture as a resource is highly problematic. When members of the dominant group do not recognize their culture as a resource, their knowledge and access to cultural privilege and White privilege are erased and made invisible by and for the dominant group (Frankenberg, 1993; Nakayama & Martin, 1999). We can also see the cultural studies definition of culture as contested meaning manifested in the differences between these students' responses.

To a great extent, culture or cultural dimensions of human interaction are unconsciously acquired and embodied through interaction and engagement with others from one's own culture. When one's culture differs from the dominant group (e.g., people who are Jewish, Muslim, or Buddhist in a predominantly Christian society, or people who identify as African American, Asian American, Latinx, Arab American, or Native American within the predominantly White or European American culture) then he or she is regularly, perhaps even on a daily basis, reminded of the differences between his or her own cultural values, norms, history, and possibly language and those of the dominant group. In effect, people from nondominant groups learn to "commute" between cultures, switching verbal and nonverbal cultural codes as well as values and ways of viewing the world as they move between two cultures. If you are from a nondominant group, the ways in which the dominant culture is different from your own are evident.

This phenomenon is certainly not unique to the United States. People of Algerian or Vietnamese background who are French, people who are Korean or Korean–Japanese in Japan, or people of Indian ancestry who have lived, perhaps for generations, in Africa, the

Caribbean, or South Pacific Islands are likely to experience a heightened sense of culture and cultural identification because their differences from the dominant group are seen as significant, are pointed out, and are part of their lived experience. Cultural identities serve as a place of belonging with others who are similar and a buffer from those who perceive you and are perceived as different.

On the other hand, people from the dominant cultural group in a society are often unaware that the norms, values, practices, and institutions of the society are, in fact, deeply shaped by and infused with a particular cultural orientation and that these patterns of shared meaning have been normalized as "just the way things are" or "the way things should be." So to return to our earlier question, what accounts for the differences in responses of my students when asked about their culture?

Positionality

The differences in responses can be understood to some extent based on differences in students' **positionality.** Positionality refers to one's social location or position within an intersecting web of socially constructed hierarchical categories, such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, and physical abilities, to name a few. Different experiences, understanding, and knowledge of oneself and the world are gained, accessed, and produced based on one's positionality. Positionality is a relational concept. In other words, when we consider positionality, we are thinking about how we are positioned in relation to others within these intersecting social categories and how we are positioned in terms of power. The socially constructed categories of race, gender, class, sexuality, nationality, religion, and ableness are hierarchical systems that often connote and confer material and symbolic power. At this point, consider how your positionality— your positions of power in relation to the categories of race, gender, class, nationality, and so on—impacts your experiences, understanding, and knowledge about yourself and the world around you. How does your positionality impact your intercultural communication interactions?

Standpoint Theory

The idea of positionality is closely related to **standpoint theory** (Collins, 1986; Harding, 1991; Hartsock, 1983) as proposed by feminist theorists. A standpoint is a place from which to view and make sense of the world around us. Our standpoint influences what we see and what we cannot, do not, or choose not to see. Feminist standpoint theory claims that the social groups to which we belong shape what we know and how we communicate (Wood, 2005). The theory is derived from the Marxist position that economically oppressed classes can access knowledge unavailable to the socially privileged and can generate distinctive accounts, particularly knowledge about social relations. For example, German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel, writing in the early 19th century, suggested that while society in general may acknowledge the existence of slavery, the perception,

experience, and knowledge of slavery is quite different for slaves than for masters. One's position within social relations of power produces different standpoints from which to view, experience, act, and construct knowledge about the world.

All standpoints are necessarily partial and limited, yet feminist theorists argue that people from oppressed or subordinated groups must understand both their own perspective and the perspective of those in power in order to survive. Therefore, the standpoint of marginalized people or groups, those with less power, is unique and should be privileged because it allows for a fuller and more comprehensive view. Patricia Hill Collins's (1986) notion of "outsiders within" points to the possibility of dual vision of marginalized people and groups, which in her case was that of a Black woman in predominantly White institutions. On the other hand, people in the dominant group—whether due to gender, class, race, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation—do not need to understand the viewpoint of subordinated groups and often have a vested interest in not understanding the positions of subordinated others in order to maintain their own dominance. As put forth by feminist theorists, standpoint theory is centrally concerned with the relationship between power and knowledge and sees the vantage point of those who are subordinated as a position of insight from which to challenge and oppose systems of oppression.

Standpoint theory offers a powerful lens through which to make sense of, address, and act on issues and challenges in intercultural communication. It enables us to understand the following:

- We may see, experience, and understand the world quite differently based on our different standpoints and positionalities.

- Knowledge about ourselves and others is situated and partial.

- Knowledge is always and inevitably connected to power.

- Oppositional standpoints can form, challenging and contesting the status quo.

Ethnocentrism

The application of standpoint theory and an understanding of the various positionalities we occupy may also assist us in avoiding the negative effects of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is derived from two Greek words: (1) *ethnos*, meaning group or nation, and (2) *kentron*, meaning center, referring to a view that places one's group at the center of the world. As first conceptualized by William Sumner (1906), **ethnocentrism** is the idea that one's own group's way of thinking, being, and acting in the world is superior to others. Some scholars argue that ethnocentrism has been a central feature in all cultures throughout history and has served as a mechanism of cultural cohesion and preservation (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997); yet the globalized context in which we live today makes ethnocentrism and ethnocentric approaches extremely problematic. The assumption that one's own group is superior to others leads to negative evaluations of others and can result in

dehumanization, legitimization of prejudices, discrimination, conflict, and violence. Both historically and today, ethnocentrism has combined with power—material, institutional, and symbolic—to justify colonization, imperialism, oppression, war, and ethnic cleansing.

One of the dangers of ethnocentrism is that it can blind individuals, groups, and even nations to the benefits of broader points of view and perceptions. Ethnocentrism is often marked by an intensely inward-looking and often nearsighted view of the world. On an interpersonal level, if you think your group's way of doing things, seeing things, and believing about things is the right way and the better way, you are likely to judge others negatively and respond arrogantly and dismissively to those who are different from you. These attitudes and actions will likely end any effective intercultural communication and deprive you of the benefits of other ways of seeing and acting in the world. If you are in a position of greater power in relation to the other person, you may feel as if it doesn't matter and you don't really need that person's perspective. From this, we can see how ethnocentrism combines with power to increase the likelihood of a more insular, myopic perspective. Interestingly, as our world becomes more interconnected in the digital age and we have increasing access to information and points of view different from our own, we also see how virtual spaces are monetized and how social media apps, personalized through Big Data, show users what they want to see, hear and consume. "What it does is limit people's exposure to anything they don't want to see. It creates silos and makes sure that these different worlds don't converge" (Kulkarni, 2017). Media silos validate and reinforce the point of view held by the user intensifying polarization, intolerance, and ethnocentrism.

On a global scale, ethnocentrism can affect perceptions of one's own group and can lead to ignorance, misunderstandings, resentment, and potentially, violence. In late December 2001, the *International Herald Tribune* reported the results of a poll of 275 global opinion leaders from 24 countries. "Asked if many or most people would consider US policies to be 'a major cause' of the September 11 attacks, 58 percent of the non-US respondents said they did, compared to just 18 percent of Americans" (Global Poll, 2001). According to the report, findings from the poll indicate "that much of the world views the attacks as a symptom of increasingly bitter polarization between haves and have-nots." In response to the question of how there can be such a difference in perception between what Americans think about themselves and what non-Americans think about Americans, authors Ziauddin Sardar and Meryl Wyn Davies (2002) suggested the following:

> Most Americans are simply not aware of the impact of their culture and their government's policies on the rest of the world. But more important, a vast majority simply do not believe that America has done, or can do, anything wrong. (p. 9)

Being a student of intercultural communication at this point in history presents unique opportunities and challenges. The increasing diversity of cultures in educational settings, workplaces, entertainment venues, and communities provides an impetus and resource for gaining knowledge and alternative perspectives about cultures that are different from one's own. The accelerated interconnectedness and interdependence of economics, politics,

media, and culture around the globe also can motivate people to learn from and about others. Yet for those positioned in the United States, rhetoric proclaiming the United States as the greatest and most powerful nation on Earth can combine with an unwillingness to critically examine the role of the United States in global economic and political instability and injustice. This can result in highly problematic, disturbing, and destructive forms of ethnocentrism that harm and inhibit intercultural communication and global intercultural relations. Ethnocentrism can lead to one-sided perceptions as well as extremely arrogant and misinformed views that are quite disparate from the perceptions of other cultural and national positions, and dangerously limit knowledge of the bigger global picture in which our intercultural communication and interactions take place. The denial of climate change by President Trump and shifts in direction on environmental policies in the U.S., includ-ing the withdrawal of the U.S. from the Paris Climate Accord, illustrate this well. At the G20 (Group of 20) summit in Hamburg, Germany in July 2017, 19 of 20 leaders from the world's largest economies moved forward collectively with a detailed blueprint to address climate change without the United States, noting Trump's decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris Accord (Erlanger, Smale, Friedman, & Davis, 2017).

Positionality, standpoint, and ethnocentric views are closely tied to our cultural identi-ties. Our identities, based on socially constructed categories of difference (i.e., middle-class, White male, American citizen), also position us in relation to others. Our positionality gives us a particular standpoint (i.e. "in American society, anyone can become successful if they work hard") and ethnocentric views may emerge (i.e., "American culture is more advanced and civilized than other cultures") if we have a limited understanding of others' positionalities and standpoints. When cultural identity is understood as a situated sense of self, we see how our positionality is not neutral, our standpoint is never universal, and our ethnocentric views are always problematic.

The study and practice of intercultural communication inevitably challenge our assumptions and views of the world. In fact, one of the main benefits of intercultural communication is the way in which it broadens and deepens our understanding of the world we live in by challenging our taken-for-granted beliefs and views and by providing alternative ways to live fully and respectfully as human beings. Ethnocentrism may pro-vide temporary protection from views, experiences, and realities that threaten one's own, but it has no long-term benefits for effective or successful intercultural communication in the context of globalization.

INTERCULTURAL PRAXIS IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

One of my goals in this book is to introduce and develop a process of critical reflective thinking and acting—what I call **intercultural praxis**—that enables us to navigate the complex and challenging intercultural spaces we inhabit interpersonally, communally, and globally. I hope that by reading this book you not only learn "about" intercultural communication but also practice a way of being, thinking, analyzing, reflecting, and act-ing in the world in regard to cultural differences. Differences based on race, ethnicity,

gender, class, religion, and nationality are real. Differences manifest in language, dress, behaviors, attitudes, values, histories, and worldviews. When people from diverse backgrounds come together, differences exist. Yet the challenge in intercultural communication is not only about cultural differences; differences are always and inevitably situated within relations of power. Thus, a central intention of the intercultural praxis model is to understand and address the intersection of cultural differences and hierarchies of power in intercultural interactions.

All moments in your day—when you are interacting with friends, coworkers, teachers, bosses, and strangers; when you are consuming pop culture in the form of music, clothes, your favorite streaming shows, movies, and other entertainment; when you hear and read news and information from the media and other outlets; and in your routines of what and where you eat, where you live, how and where you travel—are all opportunities to engage in intercultural praxis. To begin to understand intercultural praxis, I offer six interrelated points of entry into the process: (1) inquiry, (2) framing, (3) positioning, (4) dialogue, (5) reflection, and (6) action.

The purpose of engaging in intercultural praxis is to raise our awareness, increase our critical analysis, and develop our socially responsible action in regard to our intercultural interactions in the context of globalization. The intercultural praxis model provides a blueprint for joining our knowledge and skills as intercultural communicators with our ability to act in the world to create greater equity and social justice. Education scholars Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin (2016) defined **social justice** as both a goal and process in their book *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*: "The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs" (p. 3). Social justice includes a vision of the equitable distribution of resources where social actors experience agency with and responsibility for others. The process of reaching the goal of social justice should be "democratic and participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency and human capacities for working collaboratively to create change" (Adams et al., p. 3).

The six points or ports of entry in the intercultural praxis model direct us toward ways of thinking, reflecting, and acting in relation to our intercultural experiences, allowing us to attend to the complex, relational, interconnected, and often ambiguous nature of our experiences. All six ports of entry into intercultural praxis are interconnected and interrelated. As we foreground each one individually, keep the others in your mind and consider how they inform the foregrounded port of entry. The six points of entry into intercultural praxis are introduced here and developed in greater depth through subsequent chapters (see Figure 1.1).

Inquiry

Inquiry, as a port of entry for intercultural praxis, refers to a desire and willingness to know, to ask, to find out, and to learn. Curious inquiry about those who are different from ourselves leads us to engagement with others. Although it may sound simple, inquiry also requires that we are willing to take risks, willing to allow our own way of viewing

FIGURE 1.1 Intercultural Praxis Model
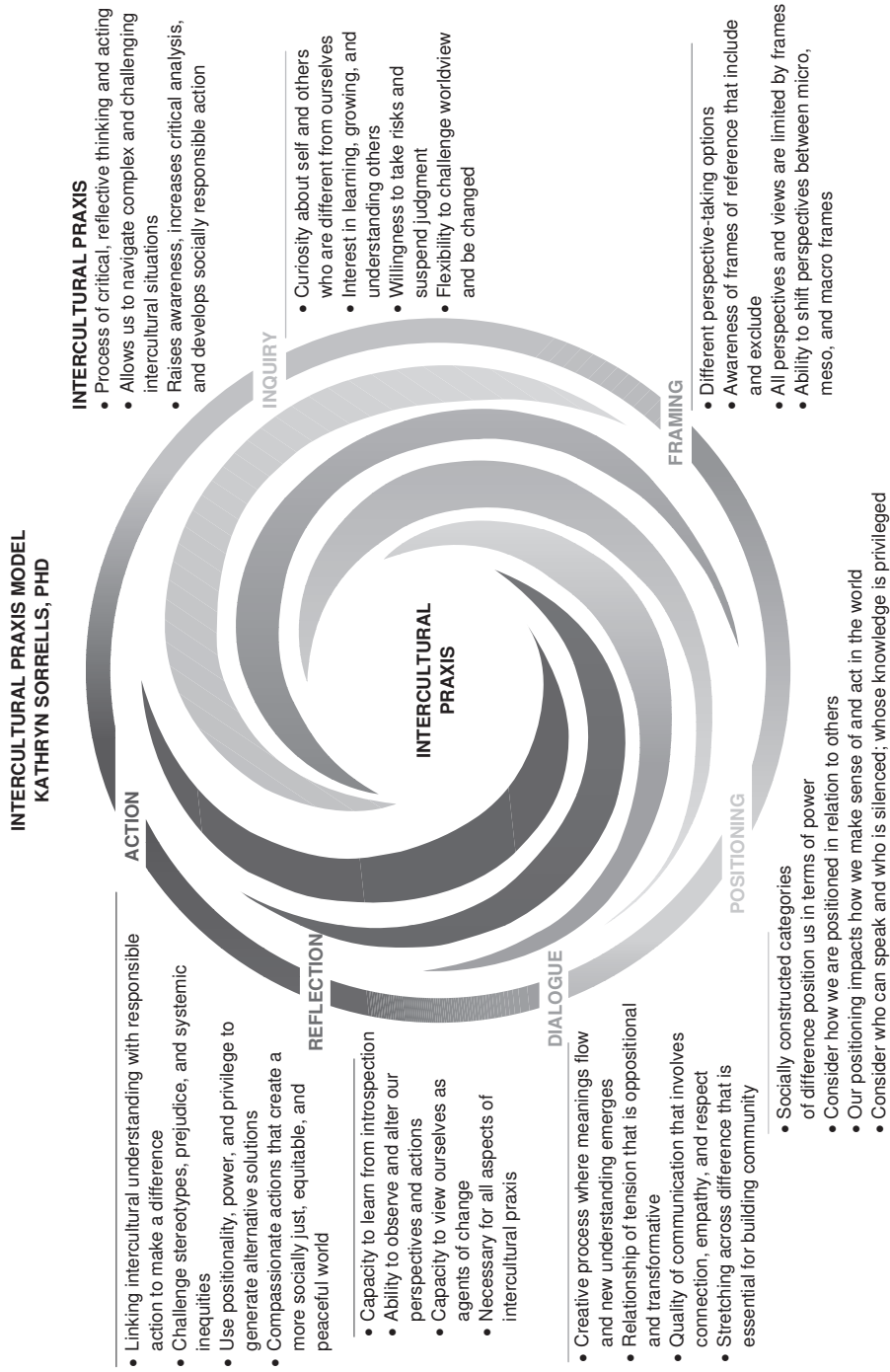
and being in the world to be challenged and perhaps changed, and willing to suspend judgments about others in order to see and interpret others and the world from different points of view. A Vietnamese American student, Quynyh Tran, recounted an intercultural experience she had before enrolling in one of my intercultural classes. When being introduced in a business setting to a man she did not know, she extended her hand to shake his. He responded that it was against his culture and religion to shake hands. She remembers feeling rather put off and offended by his response, deciding without saying anything that she was not interested in talking or working with him!

Reflecting on this incident in class, she realized that she missed an incredible opportunity to learn more about someone who was different from herself. She realized that if she could have let go of her judgments about those who were different and had not reacted to the man's statement as "weird, strange, or unfriendly," she may have been able to learn something and expand her knowledge of the world. She regretted not stepping through one of the doors of entry into intercultural praxis. Yet by entering into reflection, she learned from this experience that inquiry, curiosity, a willingness to suspend judgment, and a desire to learn from others can be tremendously rewarding and informing. She could also see that what she reacted to as "weird" and "strange" was framed by her culture and positionality.

Framing

I propose **framing** to suggest a range of different perspective-taking options that we can learn to make available to ourselves and need to be aware of in intercultural praxis. First, the concept and action of "framing" connotes that frames always and inevitably limit our perspectives and our views on ourselves, others, and the world around us. Frames focus our attention highlighting certain perspectives and interpretations while also minimizing or dismissing others. We see and make sense of things through individual, cultural, national, and regional frames or lenses that predispose us to perceive and interpret people, things, and events in particular ways. As we engage in intercultural praxis, it is critical that we become aware of the frames of reference from which we view and experience the world. It is also critical to learn how to shift our perspective; to have the flexibility and capacity to see how and why others make sense of the world the way they do. In our current polarized political climate, it's often easier to simply dismiss and denigrate others who see, experience, and frame the world differently and at the same time insulate ourselves from perspectives that challenge our own. Is it possible to work toward understanding the perspectives and experiences of others even if or perhaps most particularly when the perspectives and experiences are different from our own? Understanding doesn't require that we agree or support the other perspective. It means we are trying to imagine our way into the world of the other person to understand where the person is coming from. We need to exercise our perspective-taking options to recognize the limitations of a single perspective and the benefits of multiple points of view.

Second, "framing" means that we are aware of both the local and global contexts that shape intercultural interactions. Sometimes it is very important to narrow the frame, to

zoom in, and focus on the particular and very situated aspects of an interaction, event, or exchange. Take, for example, a conflict between two people, two groups, or two nations from different cultures, such as a conflict between neighbors, between a person of color and the police, or between the U.S. and North Korea. It's important to look at the micro-level differences in communication styles, how verbal and nonverbal communication may be used differently, how the two people may perceive their identities differently based on cultural belonging, and how the two may have learned to enact conflict differently based on their enculturation. However, to fully understand the particular intercultural interaction or misunderstanding, it is also necessary to back up to view the incident, event, or interaction from a broader frame. As we zoom out, we may see a history of conflict and misunderstanding between the two groups that the individuals represent; we may observe historical and/or current patterns of inequities between the two groups that position them differently; and we may also be able to map out broader geopolitical, global relations of power that can shed light on the particular and situated intercultural interaction, misunderstanding, or conflict. As we zoom in and foreground the micro-level of intercultural communication, we need to keep the wider background frame in mind; it provides the context in which meaning about the particular is made. Similarly, as we zoom out and look at larger macro-level dimensions, we need to keep in mind the particular local and situated lived experience of people in their everyday lives. "Framing" as a port of entry into intercultural praxis means we are aware of our frames of reference. It also means we develop our capacity to flexibly and consciously shift our perspective from the particular, situated dimensions of intercultural communication to the broader global dimensions, and from the global dimensions to the particular while maintaining our awareness of both.

Positioning

Where are you positioned as you read this sentence? Your first response may be to say you are lounging in a chair at home, in a café, in the break room at work, or in the library. If you "zoomed out" utilizing the framing strategy in the previous discussion, you may also respond by stating your location in a part of a neighborhood, city, state, nation, or region of the world. **Positioning** as a point of entry into intercultural praxis invites us to consider how our geographic positioning is related to social and political positions. As you read these sentences, where are you positioned socioculturally? The globe we inhabit is stratified by socially constructed hierarchical categories based on culture, race, class, gender, nationality, religion, age, and physical abilities, among others. Like the lines of longitude and latitude that divide, map, and position us geographically on the earth, these hierarchical categories position us socially, politically, and materially in relation to each other and in relation to power.

Understanding how and where we are positioned in the world—the locations from which we speak, listen, act, think, and make sense of the world—allows us to acknowledge that we, as human beings, are positioned differently with both material and symbolic consequences. It is also important to note that your positionality may shift and change based on where you are and with whom you are communicating. For example, it could vary over

the course of a day, from occupying a relatively powerful position at home as the oldest son in a family to having to occupy a less powerful positionality in your part-time job as a personal assistant. Sometimes the shift may be even more drastic, as in the case of someone who is a doctor and part of a dominant group in her home culture and then shifts class and power positions when she is forced to migrate to the United States for political reasons. She finds herself not only part of a racial or ethnic minority group but also positioned very differently when her medical degree is not recognized, forcing her into more manual work and part-time student positionalities.

Positioning, as a way to enter into intercultural praxis, also directs us to interrogate who can speak and who is silenced; whose language is spoken and whose language is trivialized or denied; whose actions have the power to shape and impact others; and whose actions are dismissed, unreported, and marginalized. Positioning combines with other ports of entry, such as inquiry and framing, encouraging us to question whose knowledge is privileged, authorized, and agreed on as true and whose knowledge is deemed unworthy, "primitive," or unnecessary. Positioning ourselves, others, and our knowledge of both self and others allow us to see the relationship between power and what we think of as "knowledge." Our knowledge of the world—whether knowledge of meridians of longitude and latitude or hierarchical categories of race, class, and gender—is socially and historically constructed and produced in relation to power.

INTERCULTURAL PRAXIS
NEGOTIATING DIFFERENCES

To begin using the intercultural praxis model as a tool for navigating the complexities of cultural differences and power differences in intercultural situations, read the following statements and consider your response to each. On a continuum, do you strongly agree with the statement, disagree, or is your response somewhere in between?

1. Hard work is all it takes for me to succeed in school, work, and life.

2. Big cities are generally not safe, and people are not as friendly there.

3. In the United States, women are treated fairly and as equals to men.

4. The police are viewed with suspicion in my neighborhood.

5. Going to college/university is my primary responsibility.

6. Same-sex marriage is now legal in the United States, so homophobia is increasingly a problem of the past.

7. Religious freedom is what makes the United States a great country.

8. I have to work twice as hard to prove I am as capable and competent as others.

9. For the most part, I can go pretty much anywhere in my city, town, or region without feeling afraid for my safety.

10. The U.S. is a country of immigrants. Politicians should stop criminalizing migrants and figure out legal and humane ways to meet labor needs and paths to citizenship.

11. Interracial and intercultural relationships cause problems. People should stay with their own kind.

12. I am one of the only ones in my family who has the opportunity to go to college/university.

13. Since the United States has had a Black president, the country has basically moved beyond racism.

14. I can get financial support from my family to pay for college/university, if necessary.

Now that you have read the statements, consider the following:

• How do your cultural frames inform your responses?

• How are your responses related to your positionality?

• How do cultural frames and positionality intersect to shape your responses?

• Share these statements with a friend, partner, or coworker and then dialogue about how your responses may be similar or different.

• Reflect and dialogue with the other person about how our differences in terms of power and positionality impact our standpoints.

• Reflect on the assumptions and judgments you may have about people who would make each of these statements.

• How is dialogue with people who are different in terms of culture and positionality a step toward creating a more equitable and just world?

Dialogue

While we have all heard of **dialogue** and likely assume that we engage in it regularly, it's useful to consider the derivation of the word to deepen our understanding of dialogue as an entry port into intercultural praxis. A common mistake is to think "dia" means two and dialogue, then, is conversation between two people. However, the word *dialogue* is derived from the Greek word *dialogos*. *Dia* means "through," "between," or "across," and *logos* refers to "word" or "the meaning of the word" as well as "speech" or "thought." Physicist and philosopher David Bohm (1996) wrote the following:

The picture or the image that this derivation suggests is of a *stream of meaning* among and through us and between us. This will make possible a flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which may emerge a new understanding. It's something new, which may not have been in the starting point at all. It's something creative. (p. 6)

Anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano (1990) suggested that "dialogue" necessarily entails both an oppositional as well as a transformative dimension. Given the differences in power and positionality in intercultural interactions, engagement in dialogue is necessarily a relationship of tension that "is conceived as a crossing, a reaching across, a sharing if not a common ground of understanding" (p. 277).

According to philosopher Martin Buber, dialogue is essential for building community and goes far beyond an exchange of messages. For Buber, dialogue requires a particular quality of communication that involves a connection among participants who are potentially changed by each other. Buber refers to such relationships as I–Thou, where one relates and experiences another as a person. This relationship is quite different from an I–It relationship where people are regarded as objects and experienced as a means to a goal. Dialogue occurs only when there is regard for both self and other and where either/or thinking is challenged, allowing for the possibility of shared ground, new meaning, and mutual understanding.

Dialogue offers a critical point of entry into intercultural praxis. Cognizant of differences in cultural frames and positionalities as well as the tensions that emerge from these differences, the process of dialogue invites us to stretch ourselves—to reach across—to imagine, experience, and creatively engage with points of view, ways of thinking and being, and beliefs different from our own while accepting that we may not fully understand or come to a common agreement or position.

Reflection

While cultures around the world differ in the degree to which they value reflection and the ways in which they practice **reflection**, the capacity to learn from introspection, to observe oneself in relation to others, and to alter one's perspectives and actions based on reflection is a capacity shared by all humans. Many cultures, including the dominant culture of the United States, place a high value on doing activities and accomplishing tasks, which often leaves little space and time for reflection. However, reflection is a key feature of intercultural praxis. Consider how reflection is central to the other points of entry into intercultural praxis already addressed. To engage in curious inquiry, one must be able to reflect on oneself as a subject—a thinking, learning, creative, and capable subject. The practices of framing and positioning require that one consciously observe oneself and critically analyze one's relationships and interrelationships with others. Similarly, reflection is necessary to initiate, maintain, and sustain dialogue across the new and often difficult terrain of intercultural praxis.

Brazilian educator and activist Paulo Freire (1998) noted in his book *Pedagogy of Freedom* that critical praxis "involves a dynamic and dialectic movement between 'doing' and 'reflecting on doing'" (p. 43). Reflection is what informs our actions. Reflection that incorporates critical analyses of micro- and macro-levels of intercultural issues, which considers multiple cultural frames of reference, and that recognizes our own and others' positioning enables us to act in the world in meaningful, effective, and responsible ways.

Action

Influenced by the work of Freire (1973/2000), the concept of intercultural praxis refers to an ongoing process of thinking, reflecting, and acting. Intercultural praxis is not only about deepening our understanding of ourselves, others, and the world in which we live. Rather, intercultural praxis means we join our increased understanding with responsible **action** to make a difference in the world—to create a more socially just, equitable, and peaceful world.

Each one of us takes multiple and varied actions individually and collectively that have intercultural communication dimensions and implications every single day of our lives. We take action when we decide to get an education, decide to go to class or not, and select classes or a field of study. Our actions in an educational context are influenced by cultural, gendered, national, and class-based assumptions, biases, or constraints. We take action when we go to work and when we speak out or don't about inequity, discrimination, and misuses of power. Watching, reading, or listening to the news is an action that affords opportunities to understand how cultural and national interests shape, limit, and bias the news we receive. A choice to seek out independent or alternative media sources, which are typically funded by community members versus corporations, is an action that can facilitate inquiry, expand our frames of interpretation, and bring awareness to how we and others are positioned. Our consumption of products, food, and entertainment are all actions. When we know who has labored to make the goods we consume and under what conditions, we confront ourselves and others with the choices we make through our actions. We take action when we make decisions about whom we develop friendships and long-term relationships with and when we choose not to be involved. When we feel strongly enough about an issue, we are moved to organize and take action.

What informs our choices and actions? What are the implications of our actions? In the context of globalization, our choices and actions are always enabled, shaped, and 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 that enables us to navigate the complex and challenging intercultural spaces we inhabit interpersonally, communally, and globally. Intercultural praxis can manifest in a range of forms, such as simple or complex communication competency skills, complicit actions, and oppositional tactics, as well as through creative, improvisational, and transformational interventions.

SUMMARY

As we "open the conversation," it is evident that there is a critical need for skillful and informed intercultural communicators in the current context of globalization and backlash to globalization. To assist us in making sense of intercultural communication in the rapidly changing, increasingly interdependent, and inequitable world we inhabit, I introduced various definitions of culture: (1) culture as shared meaning, (2) culture as contested meaning, and (3) culture as resource. Each definition provides different and necessary ways of understanding culture in our complex age. Studying intercultural communication in the context of globalization offers opportunities and challenges. To guide our approach and to increase our awareness, the basic concepts of positionality, standpoint theory, and ethnocentrism were introduced. Because we want to become more effective as intercultural communicators, thinkers, and actors in the global context, intercultural praxis—a set of skills, processes, and practices for critical, reflective thinking and acting—was outlined to navigate the complex, contradictory, and challenging intercultural spaces we inhabit. In the next chapter, we explore the historical, political, and economic factors and forces that have contributed to globalization and discuss various dimensions of intercultural communication in the context of globalization.

KEY TERMS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Discussion Questions

1. In the anthropologic definition, culture is defined as a site of shared meaning. How is this definition useful in understanding culture? In what ways does globalization complicate our understanding of culture as a site of shared meaning?

2. What is your positionality and how does it shape your standpoint? Why are these concepts important in studying intercultural communication?

3. How does hegemony—defined as domination through consent—function to produce and maintain relations of power in society? What are the examples of hegemonic forces that influence your life? Where do those hegemonic forces come from?

4. Do you think there are universal human values? If so, what are they? Is the belief in universal human values inherently ethnocentric?

5. The chapter defines intercultural praxis as a process of critical, reflective thinking and acting shaped by six ports of entry. In what ways is this approach different from learning a predetermined set of rules and norms for intercultural communication? Why does intercultural praxis emphasize the self-reflexive process of thinking and acting rather than following established rules of communication?

Activities

1. Exploring the Cultural Dimensions That Shape You

   a. Using the definitions of culture discussed in this chapter, write a brief paragraph exploring the cultural dimensions that shape you. How do you understand your culture as a system of shared meanings? As a site of contestation? As a resource?

      (For example, as an American, I value independence and individualism, which are cultural values that I share with many others from the United States. As a woman, I feel like I am constantly negotiating representations of what it means to be a woman. My gender culture is a site of contestation. Women, in this society, are often turned into objects like resources that can be exploited, packaged, and sold. Yet I am proud to be a woman and experience this cultural dimension of myself as an empowering resource. As a White American, I know my experiences are different from other racial groups. I am learning how I am different from others and not just how they are different from me as a member of the dominant group. The privileges I have from being White are resources, even, or especially, when I can't see these invisible advantages.)

   b. Share your paragraph responses with your classmates and discuss the similarities and differences between your cultural dimensions.

   c. Discuss the usefulness and limitations of each definition of culture.

2. Positioning Yourself and Your Cultural Dimensions

   a. Using your responses to the first activity, develop your ideas on how you are positioned in relation to others in terms of race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, religion, and ableness.

   b. Discuss how your positionality influences your standpoint on the world around you and how you engage in intercultural communication.

3. Intercultural Praxis—Group Activity

   In a group of four to five students, consider and discuss the following:

   a. Inquiry: What do you already know about each other? What stereotypes, preconceptions, and assumptions might you have about students in your class or those in your group? What would you like to know about the cultural background of those in your group? What skills and experience do you bring to the process of inquiry?

b. Framing: In what ways does your cultural background frame the way you see and experience others in your group? What frames of reference are useful in understanding the members of your group? What can you see if you "zoom in" and look at the micro-level in terms of the cultural dimensions of your group? What can you see if you "zoom out" and look at the macro-level in terms of the cultural dimensions of your group?

c. Positioning: How are you positioned sociohistorically in relation to others in your group? How does your positionality change in different contexts and frames of reference?

d. Dialogue: With whom do you frequently engage in dialogue? How can you expand the circle of people with whom you engage in dialogue? What qualities are required to engage effectively in dialogue? How do relationships of power shape the process of dialogue?

e. Reflection: As you reflect on your inquiry, framing, positioning, and dialogue, what have you learned about yourself, your group, and intercultural praxis?

f. Action: How and when can you engage in intercultural praxis? How can you use what you have learned in this chapter to effect change for a more equitable and just world? What are the consequences and implications of lack of action?

g. Finally, discuss the challenges of engaging in intercultural praxis. Keep your dialogue and reflections from this group activity in mind as you read the following chapters.

2

Understanding the Context of Globalization

© iStockphoto.com/lSnap

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the complex and contradictory influences of globalization on intercultural communication.

2. Explain the important role history plays in shaping intercultural communication today.

3. Explain how relationships of power impact intercultural communication in our everyday lives.

4. Identify the intercultural dimensions of economic, political, and cultural globalization.

Scenario One: In the hallway of a university in Southern California, three students—Hamza, an international student from Morocco; Cathy, who came to the United States four years ago from France; and Immaculee from Rwanda, who immigrated 17 years ago—spend the 15-minute break during their intercultural

communication class speaking with each other in French, relishing in the comfort that speaking a language of "home" offers and forming an intercultural relationship, however temporary and transitory. Why would they all speak French?

Scenario Two: In the fall of 2018, the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA) was signed by all three countries. USMCA, promoted by President Trump, is a revised and *rebranded* version of the 25-year-old **North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)**. In the 2019 State of the Union address, President Trump urged Congress to approve the USMCA, which he argued must replace "the catastrophe known as NAFTA" and "deliver for American workers like they have not had delivered to for a long time" (Kirby, 2019). Yet an independent government report issued by the International Trade Commission challenged the president's claims, concluding that USMCA, the revised agreement "will offer modest benefits to the economy" (Swanson, 2019). What impact do trade agreements like USMCA have on you as a consumer? Who benefits?

Scenario Three: Which movie star is wealthier than Tom Cruise, George Clooney, or Johnny Depp? Many automatically think of a U.S. star, but the answer is Shah Rukh Khan, India's most successful actor also known as "King Khan" and the "King of Bollywood." Indian cinema is the largest film industry in the world with an annual production of nearly 2,000 films. Mumbai's (Bombay) Hindi language film industry, Bollywood, is now a global phenomenon, where Shah Rukh Khan holds center stage. "He has a total of 279 awards in his lifetime career, including national and international awards. The French government has awarded him with three honours. His fans on social media are aplenty. The entire Bollywood salutes him" (Ashraf, 2019). Outside of Indian American communities, why are so few in the United States aware of this superstar?

Scenario Four: On March 19, 2019, over a million students from countries around the world—Europe, Africa, Asia, New Zealand, Australia, and South and North America—marched to protest government inaction on climate change. In over 2,000 protests in 125 countries, students expressed frustration and anger that adults have not acted to address the impending climate change disaster. A manifesto from the United Kingdom Climate Change Network states,

> We're young, we're students, and we're calling for change. Our movement started in February [2019], when tens of thousands of young people took to the streets in towns and cities around Britain, in an unprecedented emergence of a youth climate justice movement. We've joined a movement that is spreading rapidly around the world. (Glenza, Evans, & Zhou, 2019)

Scenario Five: Filipina American Grace Ebron recalls,

> "I arrive at the Rome Airport, thrilled at the notion of living in Italy. As I step out of the customs hall, I immediately see my boyfriend, waiting to meet me. His parents, whom I've never met, are with him and as I turn to them with

my perfectly rehearsed Italian greeting, they appear very confused. 'No- no'
they stammer, a perplexed expression on their faces. They turn to Massimo:
'But where is your girlfriend—the American? Why did she send the maid?'"
(Ebron, 2002).

W hat themes are interwoven through the fabric of all of these scenarios? Without
erasing the obvious and more subtle differences between the situations, what
common factors and forces shape the world that these scenarios describe? Hamza,
Cathy, and Immaculee made personal journeys from different parts of the globe to the
United States and found themselves relating to each other through a common language
and connected to each other through a history of colonization. Through worldwide
distribution of Hindi films, numerous websites, and social media, fans from around
the world can stay up to date on Shah Rukh Khan's latest public appearances and
movies. Supported by rapid communication and transportation technologies, free-trade
agreements like USMCA, the revised and rebranded NAFTA, create favorable conditions
for corporations to trade goods, exchange intellectual property, and make profits. The
youth climate justice movement was catalyzed by Greta Thunberg, a 16-year-old Swedish
high school student who protested outside the Swedish Parliament demanding that the
Swedish government reduce carbon emissions in accordance with the Paris Agreement.
Her lone, persistent message—"school strike for climate"—attracted media attention and
galvanized youth around the world. Forming intercultural alliances in unprecedented
ways, youth activists are coordinating actions within and across nations, demanding
that governments take steps on the global climate catastrophe and impending ecological
collapse (Taylor, 2019). Grace Ebron, excited to reconnect with her Italian boyfriend,
benefits from her global mobility and but is confronted with stereotypes and racialized
assumptions due to colonial histories and the migration of Filipina laborers to Italy as
part of a development policy based on the export of labor.

All the scenarios illustrate the dynamic movement, confluence, and interconnec-
tion of peoples, cultures, markets, and relationships of power that are rooted in history
and yet are redefined and rearticulated in our current global age. Through advances
in technology—both communication technology and transportation technology—and
open markets, people from around the globe with different cultural, racial, national,
economic, and linguistic backgrounds are coming into contact with each other; con-
suming each other's cultural foods, products, and identities; developing relationships
and struggling through conflicts; building alliances and activist networks; and labor-
ing with and for each other more frequently, more intensely, and with greater impact
today than ever before. In the workplace and the home, through entertainment and
the Internet, in politics and the military, and through travel for leisure, work, pleasure,
and survival, intercultural communication and interactions have become common,
everyday experiences.

This chapter begins with an introduction of the central roles that history and power play in intercultural communication and explores the broader context of globalization within which intercultural communication occurs today. To grasp the complexity of globalization and the backlash to globalization, we examine facets of economic globalization, political globalization, and cultural globalization. Each facet is treated separately here to highlight the ways intercultural communication is integral to globalization. Yet these three facets of globalization are inextricably intertwined; thus, the interrelationship between economic, political, and cultural issues is also addressed.

THE ROLE OF HISTORY IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Certainly, as we know from a study of history, for several millennia people have traveled and moved great distances exchanging cultural goods, ideas, and practices and experiencing significant intercultural contact. While both the Islamic and Mongol empires had broad reaches, Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton (1999) noted in their book *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture* that the European conquest starting in the 16th century transformed global migration patterns in ways that continue to impact us today. During the European colonial era, people moved primarily from Europe, Spain, Portugal, and England but also from France, Holland, Belgium, and Germany to the Americas, Oceania, Africa, and Asia for the purpose of conquest, economic expansion, and religious conversion. Settlers from these countries then followed, reinforcing the flow from Europe to the outlying colonies. Between the 1600s and the 1850s, 9 to 12 million people were forcibly removed from Africa and transported to the colonies—primarily in the Americas—to serve as enslaved laborers during the transatlantic slave trade. In the 19th century, Indians (from the subcontinent of India) subjected to colonial British rule were relocated as laborers—often as indentured servants—to British colonies in Africa and Oceania. The process of colonization, which was based on the extraction of wealth through the exploitation of natural and human resources, established Europe as the economic and political center of the world and the colonies as the periphery (Young, 2001).

Later in the 19th century, after the British and Spanish colonies in the Americas had gained independence from colonial rule, a mass migration occurred with the expulsion of working-class and poor people from the economically stretched and famine-torn centers of Europe to the United States, Canada, and the Southern Cone, including Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, and others. Movements of indentured laborers from Asia—primarily China, Japan, and the Philippines—to European colonies and former colonies—mainly the United States and Canada—swelled the number of migrants to over 40 million during the 25 years before World War I (WWI).

WWI brought the unprecedented closure of national borders and the implementation of the first systematic immigration legislation and border controls in modern times. The ethnically motivated violence of World War II (WWII) led to