Introducing
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
Global Cultures and Contexts

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I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want all the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.

Mohandas K. Gandhi, political and spiritual leader of India, 1869–1948.
1

CHALLENGES OF LIVING IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Identify different contributors to cultural diversity in our society.
- Analyse the challenges we face living in a global village.
- Appreciate unity and harmony amid diversity.
- Recognize the importance of developing the solid knowledge and skills of intercultural communication.
INTRODUCTION

Our early ancestors lived in small villages; most of them rarely ventured far from their own communities. They lived and died close to where they were born, and much of their information sharing was done through face-to-face communication with people who were much like themselves. Over the years, advances in transportation, improvements in telecommunication technologies, increases in international business, and political exchanges have brought strangers from different parts of the world into face-to-face contact. In 1964, Canadian media culture analyst Marshall McLuhan coined the term ‘global village’ to describe a world in which communication technology, such as television, radio, and news services, brings news and information to the most remote parts of the world. Today, McLuhan’s vision of a global village is no longer considered an abstract idea, but a virtual certainty. We can exchange ideas as easily and quickly with people across the world as our ancestors did within the confines of their villages. We form communities and societies, and we encounter people from different cultures in business, at school, in public places, in our neighbourhood, and in cyberspace. We may wear clothes made in China, purchase seafood from Thailand, dine out with friends in an Italian restaurant, work at a computer made in the United States, drive a car manufactured in Japan – the list goes on. Each encounter with new food, clothing, lifestyle, art, language, or practice teaches us new things outside our ‘village’ culture.

‘Globalization lies at the heart of modern culture; cultural practices lie at the heart of globalization’ (Tomlinson, 1999: 1). This quote raises questions about the challenges that we face living in a global village. This chapter first identifies different contributors to cultural diversity in our society. Advances in technology, modern transport systems, global economy, international business transactions, and mass migration make our ‘village’ more culturally diverse. In this global village, people are constantly moving across borders and engaging in international exchange. This chapter explores theories of globalization and the context in which they are applied, describes various challenges we face living in such a global village, and explains the roles intercultural communication can play in meeting those challenges. By recognizing the importance of developing the sound knowledge and skills of intercultural communication, we can appreciate unity and harmony amid diversity in our global village.

CONTRIBUTORS TO CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Advanced technology and transport system

Globalization is the process of increasing interconnectedness between societies, so that events in one place of the world have more and deeper effects on people and societies far away (Baylis and Smith, 2001). Today, we can watch and read about the same events at the same time, regardless of time and space distance. With emails, social media, bulletin boards, satellites, fax and mobile phones, we can contact people anywhere and anytime. If we want a more personal exchange, Skype or video desktop technology can bring a person at the other end of the globe onto the computer screen right in front of us. Words like ‘blogs’ (an abridgment of the term ‘web log’) and ‘podcasting’ (an amalgam of ‘iPod’ and ‘broadcasting’) have appeared in our dictionaries since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Facebook is now a global phenomenon, allowing people from all walks of life to post their profiles online and communicate with other users across the world. Voice-over-Internet Protocol (VOIP), one of the fastest-growing internet technologies, allows people to talk online as if they were on a landline...
telephone. Instant messaging and texting messages and images by mobile phone can carry visual messages, if an audio channel is inconvenient. The choices of media to connect with other people anywhere and anytime are multiplying.

### Critical thinking...

Do we actually partake of a more unified or diversified world because communication technologies bring us closer? What are the biggest differences? What remains the same?

### Theory Corner

**GLOBAL VILLAGE**

The notion of global village and the process of globalization pose more questions than answers. Anura Goonasekera (2001) defines globalization as the widening, deepening, and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life. This interconnectivity breaks down the boundary between East and West. The metaphor of a global village has caught the imagination of many people, including political leaders and intellectuals. Goonasekera further argues that ‘paradoxically, we find that while technology has given the world the means of getting closer together into a global village, this very same technology has also given rise to unprecedented fears of domination by the technologically powerful nations’ (2001: 278). Some Asian leaders feel that globalization creates fears of cultural liquidation, particularly among smaller nations. Consequently, the global village is viewed more as a threat to cultural identities than as an opportunity to create a more consensual culture among people.

**Reference**


**Further reading on globalization and cultural hegemony**

INTRODUCING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Theory in Practice

LOCALIZED GLOBALISM AT TOURIST SITES IN CHINA

The increasing mobility of goods and people on a global scale has challenged the traditional, static, and universal definition of place. In tourist destinations, for example, the construction of places for tourists’ consumption involves the strategic mobilization of resources on a global–local continuum. Gao (2012) studied a tourist site, West Street, in Yangshuo County, China, to illustrate how a former residential neighbourhood was gradually transformed into a ‘global village’ for local tourists, in part through appropriating English as a semiotic resource. Situated in the picturesque Yangshuo County, West Street is full of craft shops, calligraphy and painting shops, cafés, bars, and Chinese Kung Fu houses. It is also the gathering place for the largest number of foreigners, with more than 20 businesses being owned by foreigners. The place is called the ‘global village’, since all the locals can speak foreign languages. Gao analysed County Chronicles, media reports, promotional materials on local government websites, and held interviews with foreign and local business owners in West Street to uncover how linguistic devices are used to localize globalism at tourism sites. Findings from this study show that the ‘global village’ in Yangshuo is not simply Westernization, but a social construct whose significance corresponds to ideologies of language and culture at societal level.

Questions to take you further
Tourist sites provide an opportunity for minority languages and cultures to enhance their value through the commodification of local languages and identities. Can you identify another arena for exploring the social construction of place?

Reference

Further reading on globalization

Advanced communication technologies also affect how we form relationships with others. In past centuries, social relationships typically were circumscribed by how far one could walk (Martin and Nakayama, 2001). With each technological advance – the train, motor vehicle, telephone, or the internet – social relationships have been transformed and expanded manifold. There are millions of global users of the internet every day. The average user spends over 70 per cent of his or her time online, building personal relationships, including online friendships, sexual partnerships, and romances (Nua Internet Survey, 2007). Evidence of the legitimacy and social acceptance of these types of relationship is found, for example, in Warner Brothers’ popular 1998 movie You’ve Got Mail, which played on the increasing mainstream acceptance of romantic relationships formed over the internet.
The internet has led to new ways of socializing that seem especially to attract young people. The research shows that, for example, in Western European countries most people know someone who has met a romantic partner on the internet. As Sveningsson (2007) writes, one of Sweden’s most popular online meeting places is a web community called Lunarstorm (www.lunarstorm.se), which is visited weekly by 85 per cent and daily by 29 per cent of all Swedes aged 15–20. Most young Swedes seem to have become members of Lunarstorm – the media have even called it ‘Sweden’s largest online youth recreation centre’. Whitty, Baker and Inman (2007) show that there are still the usual steps leading to the establishment and development of a love relationship, when initiated on the web: meeting in specific online places, communicating online, and meeting in real life are factors in successful and unsuccessful online-initiated relationships. They assess the role of Facebook in the escalation of romantic relationships and argue that new media technologies are supplementing or replacing face-to-face interaction in relationship development for a growing number of individuals.

The idea of internet-based romantic relationships is gaining popularity as the mobility of society increases. Unlike the telephone, postage, and physical travel, the cost of email, instant messaging and chat rooms does not depend on either message length or the distance the message travels. The internet, therefore, provides many opportunities to maintain and receive support from long-distance romantic partners, as it is inexpensive, convenient, quick, and similar to a conversation. The people we exchange emails with on the internet are now more than ever likely to come from different countries, be of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds, and have different life experiences. Advanced communication technologies make our community more culturally diverse than ever before.

Critical thinking...

In what ways can online communication shape the structure and development of interpersonal relationships, such as friendships? Do you think our continued reliance on technology-mediated communication will lead to a weakening of interpersonal communication skills?

Not only do we come in contact with more people in cyberspace, but modern transport systems also bring us into contact with more people physically. Our society is more mobile than in the past. For example, in the 1930s, travel from China to Singapore took several months; travellers started the journey in winter and arrived at their destination in summer. Nowadays, the same distance by airplane would take only a few hours! Such ease of mobility changes the nature of society. On the one hand, families and individuals easily and often move for economic, career or lifestyle opportunities. A New Zealander can work in Australia; an Australian can work in the USA; an American can work in England; a Briton can work in
France; a French person can work in Belgium – or in Tahiti. Increasing mobility and technology make our global village smaller but more diverse.

On the other hand, as Brown (2011) argues, ever since the fall of the Berlin Wall, there has been a strange increase in wall-building, in order to separate people. It is not simply that there is a resurgence in the construction of physical walls, such as the Israeli West Bank barrier, the US–Mexico border fence, or similar barriers on the edges of the European Union or the borders of India, Saudi Arabia, and a host of other countries (or the non-physical boundaries in maritime countries like Australia). There is also a rise of attempts at enclosure, as if nations could wrap themselves safely behind walls. Think of the town of Michalovce in Slovakia, where residents built a cement barrier to separate themselves from the town’s majority Roma population. This wall has nothing to do with sovereignty or security, but with aversion and xenophobia. Thus, while changes in technology have facilitated the exchange of ideas, they also have magnified the possibility for misunderstandings. If we consider that people with the same cultural background may experience problems communicating with each other, we can appreciate more fully the difficulties that people from different cultures may encounter when trying to communicate. Understanding other cultures is a challenge we face today, living in a global society.


THEORY CORNER

PERSPECTIVES ON GLOBALIZATION

In the academic literature (Held and McGrew, 2007), there are three different perspectives on globalization: a globalist perspective, a traditionalist perspective, and a transformationalist perspective.

Globalists view globalization as an inevitable development which cannot be resisted or significantly influenced by human intervention, particularly through traditional political institutions, such as nation-states. Traditionalists argue that the significance of globalization as a new phase has been exaggerated. They believe that most economic and social activity is regional, rather than global, and they still see a significant role for nation-states. Transformationalists contend that globalization represents a significant shift, but they question the inevitability of its impacts. They argue that there is still significant scope for national, local, and other agencies.

Reference

Further reading on globalization
Theory in Practice

ONGOING CONFLICTS BETWEEN GLOBALISTS AND SCEPTICS

Research on media globalization has grown rapidly in recent years. Within the field of global media studies, there is an ongoing conflict between two basic positions: globalists and sceptics. Globalists emphasize the possibility of transnational media systems and communication technology to create a global public sphere, whereas sceptics stress the persistent national features of the news media, and the continuing stability of the nation-state paradigm. In her study on the emergence of a transnational (European) identity in national news reporting on global climate change, Olausson (2013) analysed climate reporting in Indian, Swedish, and US newspapers. Findings showed that some domestic discourses created explicit interconnections between the national or local and the global, for example, by situating Earth Hour in a small city in Sweden within the global framework of the event. Other discourses worked in a counter-domestic manner; that is, they lacked nationalizing elements around the issue of climate change. The author argues that the national and global are not mutually exclusive, but reinforce and reconstruct one another; they constitute two sides of the same coin.

Questions to take you further
Think about media audiences. Can you give examples to show what types of event covered in the media are more likely to activate our national identity positions? Under what circumstances do we accept global outlooks provided by the media?

Reference

Further reading on global media

Global economy and business transactions

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) transform the potential reach and influence of our economy and business transactions from a local to a global level. Global transformation refers to the worldwide economic and technological changes that influence how people relate to one another (Cooper, Calloway-Thomas and Simonds, 2007). For example, people in nearly every part of the world can buy Reebok shoes, Levi jeans or an iPhone! Cross-cultural business transactions today are as common as trade between two persons in the same village was centuries ago. The clothes we wear, the food we purchase from the local supermarket, the cars we drive, the electric appliances we use at home, the movies we watch may all be from different countries. Indeed, we are being multiculturalized every day. Our local market is as culturally diverse as the global market. Cultural diversity brings many opportunities, particularly in the economic realm, and helps to make our society the cosmopolitan, dynamic and exciting place it is today. However, one of the biggest economic and social challenges facing us today is to unlock the barriers to the
acceptance of cultural diversity in the economy and society as a whole (Beamer and Varner, 2008).

In response to the economic transformations, businesses are continually expanding into world markets as a part of the wider process of globalization. Cultural diversity shapes market demand and economic behaviours. For example, in 1991, India began to open its economy to wider trade, and the United States quickly became its primary trading and investment partner – investing some US$687 million in 1997, almost three times as much as in the previous year (Cooper et al., 2007). Billions of dollars in goods and services are exchanged each year in international businesses. Similarly, multinational corporations are increasingly moving their operations overseas to take advantage of lower labour costs, a trend that has far-reaching implications.

Ethnic diversity within workplaces is continually changing the organizational composition of most parts of the world. For example, the number of emigrants joining the European workforce from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East increases each year. In the United States, the proportion of non-white (Asian, black, and Hispanic American) men is growing, and this trend is expected to continue (Oetzel, 2002). In the Middle East, many workers come from India, the Philippines, and Southeast Asia. For example, Saudi Arabia’s population of foreign workers increased significantly over the last few decades, with a particularly significant increase of 38 per cent between 1975 and 2000. This population grew dramatically again in 2004, when there were approximately 12.5 million foreign workers in the country, making up 37 per cent of the overall population and 65 per cent of the entire labour force (Looney, 2004). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia emerged in 1932 upon the ascendance of King Abdulaziz to the throne. During the middle of the twentieth century, the discovery of oil reserves in the country led to rapid industrialization, and subsequent economic development. Early on, the oil wealth led to a great demand for skilled labour that was not present in Saudi Arabia.

Similarly, in Asian countries like Malaysia, the workforce is also becoming more diverse. Even though Malays make up a large proportion of the workforce (65 per cent), the term ‘Malaysian’, more often than not, is used to refer to the people of different ethnicities, including Indians and Chinese in Malaysia. Working in cross-cultural teams allows organizations to make use of scarce resources and thus increase their competitive advantage. As a result of such economic and cultural shifts, people with diverse cultural backgrounds are working side by side in many countries, creating a workplace that is intercultural (Beamer and Varner, 2008).

The flow of migrant workers as a result of economic transformation also leads to an increase in ethnic competition. Migrant workers tend to flow from regions with lower economic opportunities towards those with greater opportunities. In Western European countries, for example, with the opening up of national borders within the European Union, European nation-states have been granting social rights, although no real political rights, to migrants (Soysal, 1994). This change has increased the perception of competition on the part of the native population. For example, there is a large North African presence in Europe. Reaching 3.5 million today, North Africans began arriving in Europe as early as the 1940s to help rebuild fledgling European economies severely weakened by the war. This migration accelerated in the 1950s and 1960s to meet the high demand for low-skilled workers in factories and mines and to compensate for
slow demographic growth in Western Europe. For many years, North African immigrants were considered temporary residents (guest workers) and had no share in the social, political, and cultural life of the host societies. Now, these groups form communities with a generation born in the new country.


It was only after the 1974 policies of family reunion that immigrants, their families, traditions, and religions became visible in everyday life. France, for example, is home to the largest number of North African immigrants, due to its long colonial involvement in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, followed by Holland, Belgium, Spain, Italy, and Germany. Different citizenship and immigration laws, as well as the socio-political climate of each host country, determine to a large extent how North Africans have engaged with the host culture. While acknowledging the benefits that can be obtained from an ethnically and culturally diverse workforce, studies consistently indicate problems often experienced by multi-ethnic workers, such as conflicts in expectations, lack of communication competence, and attitude problems such as mistrust. Thus, understanding the cultural tensions created by economic transformations is a challenge we face in the business context of intercultural communication.

THEORY CORNER

CONCEPTUALIZING ETHNICITY

As is widely known, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘ethnic’ are derived from the Greek. At the time of Homer (between 750 and 650 BC) the term ethnos was applied to various large, undifferentiated groups (warriors as well as bees and birds) and meant something like ‘throng’ or ‘swarm’. According to Hutchinson and Smith (1996: 6), ethnicity is named after a ‘human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of a common culture, a link with a homeland and a sense of solidarity among at least some of its members’. Special attention is paid to the extremes of human experience, which are always a fertile ground for cultural myths and memories that sustain a large group culture. Similarly, Anthony D. Smith (2007) views myths and memories as part of a culture, remembered as a part of a golden past and the commemoration and celebration of heroic events. Every ethnic group, according to Smith, has a mythologized version of its past, in which heroic events (victories/glories and sacrifices/traumas) and heroes (actual historical figures and/or mythologized characters) occupy a prominent position. These events and characters are often evoked during different occasions and ceremonies to inspire the members of the group, to build social cohesion among them, and to particularize their common identity. For example, the French celebrate their Independence Day to honour the storming of the Bastille, the beginning of the revolution, and the birth of the modern French nation. These celebratory activities have the purpose of enhancing the cultural group’s sense of belonging and togetherness.
References

Further reading on ethnicity

Theory in Practice

**ETHNICITY AS A MANAGEMENT ISSUE AND RESOURCE**

There has been recognition for some time that the management policies in international operations of multinational companies are complex and complicated. This is not only due to diverse business or product market strategies, but also because the political, economic, social, legislative, and cultural environment varies between locations. In particular, a neglected aspect of the context is ethnicity, especially in multi-ethnic locations. Such environments provide not only ‘constraints’, but also ‘opportunities’ in terms of management, write Bhopal and Rowley (2005). Ethnicity is not only an issue which calls for ‘management’, but is itself a potential managerial resource. Ethnicity is important for organizations at both external (contextual) and internal (operational) levels.

Bhopal and Rowley specifically write about the Malaysian context. They argue that for political management, the creation of ethnic boundaries assists in creating ethnic bonds. In this sense, ethnicity is a resource in the developmental process, because it undermines the potential of employer–employee conflicts of interest, and can act as a solvent for the basis of political organization and support. In this study, the idea of ethnic identification – either with the values of rural Malays or with Chinese-educated Chinese – acts to ensure that there is a desire to reduce cultural distance and seek commonalities rather than highlight differences.

Questions to take you further
To what extent are issues of ethnicity functional and dysfunctional for organizational management? What are the key factors that improve the situation? What aspects of ethnicity make things worse?

Reference

Further reading on global business citizenship
Critical thinking...

Skilled migrants form an important migration element; they are accepted into the receiving country to fill in skill shortages. However, international research has found that many of them are under-employed or unemployed in the country of settlement. Why do you think this is so? What training programmes could we offer to enhance their employability in the job market? What does this have to do with intercultural communication?

Mass migration and international exchange

One of the most significant contributors to our multicultural environment is the ever-increasing flow of people through migration and international exchange (see Chapter 9). According to the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations (DESA, 2013), 232 million people, or 3.2 per cent of the world’s population, were international migrants in 2012, compared with 175 million in 2000 and 154 million in 1990. In 2013 a growing concentration of international migrants was found in ten countries, with the USA hosting the largest number (45.8 million). The Russian Federation hosted 11 million, followed by Germany (9.8 million), Saudi Arabia (9.1 million), the United Arab Emirates (7.8 million), the United Kingdom (7.8 million), France (7.4 million), Canada (7.3 million), Australia (6.5 million), and Spain (6.5 million). Asians and Latin Americans living outside their home regions form the largest global diaspora group. Statistics from the Population Division of the United Nations reveals that in 2013 Asians accounted for 19 million migrants living in Europe, some 16 million in Northern America, and about 3 million in Oceania. International migrants originating from Central America, including Mexico, represented another large group of migrants living outside their home region. The majority of Central American migrants (about 16.3 million out of 17.4 million) live in the USA. Migration increases cultural diversity in the composition of populations for receiving countries, and contributes to social and economic development both in the countries of origin and in the countries of destination. Therefore, it is crucial to enhance the benefits of international migration, while reducing its negative implications.

A steadily increasing proportion of migrant populations are made up of international students, particularly in developed English-speaking countries such as the USA, Australia, and the UK. To date, the United States has been the world’s largest receiving country for international students. In 2005–06, the number of international students enrolled in higher education institutions remained steady at 567,766, according to the Annual Report on International Academic Mobility published by the Institute of International Education (IIE, 2006). This marks the seventh year in a row that the USA has hosted more than half a million foreign students. Asia remains the largest region of origin, accounting for 58 per cent of the total of US international enrolments. India is the leading country of origin for international students, followed by China, Korea, Japan, Canada, Taiwan, Mexico, Turkey, Germany, and Thailand. International students contribute approximately US$13.5 billion to the US economy through their expenditure on tuition and living expenses. The Department of Commerce describes US higher education as the country’s fifth largest service sector export.

A similar trend was found in Oceanic countries such as Australia, where education has recently replaced tourism as the country’s largest service export, according to IDP Education, a global company that informs and advises international students on Australian education and assists in enrolment in Australian institutions across all sectors (IDP Education, 2008). Higher education is the largest sector for international students, with an average annual growth rate of 7.7 per cent since 2002. Students from China accounted for 40.2 per cent of all international student higher education enrolments in 2011 (International Education Advisory Council [IEAC], 2012). Australia’s top five source countries for international students are China, India,
INTRODUCING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

South Korea, Vietnam, and Malaysia (Australian Education International, 2013). Figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) show that international education contributed A$16 billion (approximately US$15 billion) to the Australian economy in the 2010–11 financial year, and created over 100,000 jobs. According to commentators, education is now a bigger drawcard for visitors to Australia than the Great Barrier Reef and all other tourist attractions combined.

The flow of international students, particularly those from non-English-to-English-speaking countries, inevitably creates both opportunities and challenges for intercultural communication.

Of more permanent residential status than international students are those people who migrate to the host country to make a living. They are a significant contributor to the multicultural environment of society today. In Australia, for example, immigration has always been a central part of nation building. Since the end of the Second World War, around over 7 million migrants have moved to Australia. In the immediate post-war period, only 10 per cent of Australia’s population was born overseas (Marden and Mercer, 1998). Today, nearly 25 per cent of the Australian population was born overseas (including all three authors of this book), and approximately 200 languages are spoken in the country. The proportion of people from Asian countries is on the increase. Between 2000 and 2005, the number of East Asians in Australia rose by 17 per cent (from approximately 850,000 to 1 million). In comparison, the total Australian population grew only by approximately 5 per cent (from 19.4 million to 20.3 million) during the same period (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2005).

Migrants move to their host countries for a variety of reasons, including access to a better living environment or to give their children a good education in an English-speaking country. Other people intend to explore business opportunities unavailable in their home country, while some migrate to seek refuge or political protection. Regardless of the reasons for migration, migrants worldwide dream of the freedom to be their own boss, to have autonomy in their choice of work, and to achieve prosperity in the host country. Small businesses, such as take-away shops, convenience stores, trading companies or video shops, are considered by many migrants as ways to realize their dreams of freedom and financial security. As a result, walking along a street in Sydney, Auckland, San Francisco or London, one would not have difficulty finding an Indian restaurant, a Chinese take-away shop, a Vietnamese greengrocery store, an Italian deli, a Japanese sushi bar – the list goes on. For example, in Brisbane market squares, signs are in different languages to cater to the linguistic diversity of customers.

NECESSITY AND BENEFITS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Multiculturalism

All over the world, nations are trying to come to terms with the growing diversity of their populations (Beamer and Varner, 2008). Behind the overt, visible symbols of cultural diversity is a complex and often
implicit concept of *multiculturalism*. At a descriptive level, multiculturalism can be used to characterize a society with diverse cultures. As an attitude, it can refer to a society’s tolerance towards diversity and acceptance of equal societal participation. In attempting to maximize the benefits of cultural diversity, there has been an accompanying awareness of some potential threats to our cultural uniqueness. Globally, host nationals have expressed concerns over the threat that new ethnic cultures may pose to mainstream cultural values, the political and economic power structure, and the distribution of employment opportunities. Some countries are addressing these concerns by trying to control diversity through tighter entry requirements. Other countries are developing governmental policies concerning the rights of immigrants to preserve their home culture within the host country.

Australia, during the nineteenth century, had no restrictions on anyone entering what was then a set of colonies, provided that they were not convicts serving out their time. Consequently, free settlers moved in from Great Britain, Germany, America, Scandinavia, and Asia. Similarly, the slogan of the post-Second World War immigration programme was ‘Populate or Perish!’ However, since 2007, a citizenship test has been in place to check migrants’ knowledge of the English language and comprehension of Australian moral principles and history, as well as national and Aboriginal symbols. The test is available in English only, and a migrant applicant for citizenship must pass the test before an application for citizenship can be lodged. This restriction of citizenship opportunities is also evident elsewhere. In some countries, such as the People’s Republic of China and the USA, dual citizenship is not recognized. In Germany, immigrants are considered ‘Ausländer’ (foreigners) and their naturalization is only possible if they agree to renounce their original citizenship and demonstrate loyalty to their ‘adoptive’ country (these laws were slightly relaxed when the Social Democrats gained power in the 1990s). Even so, there is a raging controversy regarding the amendment of the citizenship laws and the implications for German national identity (Blank, Schmidt and Westle, 2001). France has built its nation-state, since the nineteenth century, on the premise that all regional and cultural differences should be eliminated. French citizens have to show loyalty to a powerful, centralized, secular nation-state, and to adhere to universal political values. Linguistic as well as cultural diversity within France has always been seen as a sign of regression and a hindrance to achieving national unity. Even in the United States, a country that historically afforded a home to people of diverse cultures, the advantages and disadvantages of acknowledging diversity are hotly debated (Cooper et al., 2007). Maintenance of nationalism and continuity of the mainstream culture have been key issues of concern in all countries that receive migrants.

Migrants, on the other hand, have long been forming associations to maintain their ethnic and cultural heritage and promote the survival of their languages within a host country’s mainstream institutions. In Australia, for example, the Asian-values debate has attracted considerable media attention, particularly in response to increased Asian immigration and the continuing emphasis placed on Australia’s role in the Asian region as being closely tied to the policy of multiculturalism (Marden and Mercer, 1998).

Central to this debate is the question of whether the preservation of ethnic cultures creates a threat to mainstream society. An interesting example, from Australia, involves the game of football (soccer), the ‘world game’ (or the ‘beautiful game’). This code of football had not been popular in Australia, but began to gain followers with the European migrations in the 1950s and 1960s (see the Case Study). These people formed teams with names similar to those in their countries of origin (‘Juventus’, ‘Olympic’). During the 1990s, the national football association pushed for a change to these names and the composition of the teams, so that the game would be seen as ‘less ethnic’. Clubs like the Sydney Football Club and the Brisbane Roar gained followers from their home cities (a long Australian tradition in many football codes). Today, with Australia’s improved performance in world football, the clubs feel sufficiently integrated into mainstream society to celebrate their multi-ethnic and multicultural character; they advertise that they reflect the ‘real’, multicultural Australia. Even so, multiculturalism is on fragile ground. The challenge we face is how to promote intercultural understanding so as to reap the benefits of cultural diversity and reduce intercultural tensions. The key to building the necessary understanding between cultural groups is effective intercultural communication.
Critical thinking...

To what extent should migrants maintain their ethnic cultural traditions and practices without posing a threat to the unity of the mainstream host culture? To what extent should they adapt to their new society? Do you agree with the admonition ‘Leave your old conflicts at home – there is no place for them here’? Why or why not?


Building intercultural understanding

Understanding is the first step towards acceptance. The biggest benefit of accepting cultural differences is that cultural diversity enriches each of us. Throughout history, people around the world have accumulated a rich stock of cultural traditions and customs, but we are often not aware of the cultural rules governing our own behaviour until we encounter behaviours different from our own. Local laws and customs vary from country to country; if you are unaware of them and act according to your own learned customs when in the new country, you may very well end up in prison! For example, it is illegal in Egypt to take photographs of bridges and canals (including the Suez Canal), as well as military personnel, buildings and equipment. In India, trespassing on and photography of airports, military establishments and dams is illegal, with penalties ranging from 3 to 14 years’ imprisonment. Similarly, maiming or killing a cow in India is an offence which can result in a punishment of up to five years’ imprisonment. In Thailand, lengthy prison terms of up to 15 years can be imposed for insulting the monarchy; this includes destroying bank notes bearing the king’s image.

If some of these local laws do not make much sense to you, you may find some local customs even stranger. Behaviours which are considered perfectly appropriate and acceptable in one culture may appear harsh or offensive in another. For example, in Saudi Arabia, women are legally required to wear the abaya, a long black coat that conceals their body shape, in all public places, while men are to avoid wearing shorts, short-sleeved or unbuttoned shirts. Public displays of affection, including kissing and holding hands, are considered offensive. Hotels may refuse accommodation to couples unable to provide proof of marriage, because it is illegal for unmarried couples to live together. In Thailand, simple actions such as showing the soles of your feet or touching the top of a person’s head are likely to cause grave offence. Even unknowingly breaching local customs may either get you into trouble or make you unwelcome!

We acquire many of our cultural beliefs, values, and communication norms at an unconscious level. Cultural socialization, in addition, can encourage the development of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism means seeing our own culture as the central and best one, and seeing other cultures as insignificant or even inferior. Ethnocentrism may lead to prejudice, stereotypes, or discrimination (see Chapter 4). It is a barrier to effective intercultural communication because it prevents us from understanding those who are culturally different from ourselves. In contrast to ethnocentrism is cultural relativism, which is the degree to which an individual judges another culture by its context (Rogers and Steinfatt, 1999). Cultural relativists try to evaluate the behaviours of a culture using that culture’s assumptions about reality. Although one element of a culture, by itself, may seem strange to a non-member, it generally
makes sense when being considered in light of other elements of that culture (see Chapter 3). To understand another culture, therefore, we need to communicate with its people and broaden our understanding of its practices and beliefs, thus enhancing our sense of cultural relativism – hence the need and benefit of intercultural communication.

As members of the global village, we can celebrate the richness of the human imagination along with its diverse products. The key to appreciating cultural differences is to acquire intercultural knowledge and develop intercultural skills. Intercultural knowledge opens doors to the treasure house of human experience. It reveals to us myriad ways of experiencing, sensing, feeling, and knowing. It helps us to start questioning our own stance on issues that we may have once taken for granted. It widens our vision to include an alternative perspective of valuing and relating. By understanding the beliefs, values, and worldviews that influence alternative communication approaches, we can understand the logic that motivates the actions or behaviours of others who are culturally different from ourselves. Cultural differences do not prevent us from communicating with each other; rather, they enrich us through communication. Culturally sensitive communication can increase relational closeness and deepen cultural self-awareness (Ting-Toomey and Chung, 2005). The more that culturally diverse people get to know each other, the more they can appreciate the differences and perceive the deep commonalities among them. The key to building a stock of intercultural knowledge, therefore, is to engage in intercultural communication. Intercultural communication can help us to build our knowledge of other peoples and their cultures, as well as enhancing and consolidating our knowledge about our own culture. The result is invariably greater intercultural understanding.


Promoting international business exchange

The ‘International Business Trend Report’ produced in 1999 (Training and Development, 1999) identified three competencies that are essential in the global workplace of the twenty-first century: intercultural communication skills, problem-solving ability, and global leadership. When money and jobs cross borders, there are challenges and opportunities facing individuals of different backgrounds who live and work together. People of different ethnic backgrounds bring their cultural baggage to the workplace. In a multinational organization, for instance, Malay employees may heavily emphasize the values of family togetherness, harmony in relationships, and respect for seniority, whereas North American employees may value individuality and personal achievement more highly. A workgroup consisting of members from different cultural backgrounds is more likely to experience difficulty in communication or to experience miscommunication, dysfunctional conflict, and turnover if group members are not interculturally competent. This is clearly reflected in research conducted by Cox, Lobel and McLeod (1991), who studied the effects of ethnic differences in groups, and the cooperative and competitive behaviours of group members. Their findings indicate that Asian, black and Hispanic employees have a more cooperative task orientation than Anglos. Ethnic diversity in the workplace creates challenges for management in today’s businesses, but attention to diversity issues has the potential to bolster employee morale, create an inclusive climate in organizations, and spark creative innovation.

Communicating in unfamiliar cultures does not simply mean finding a translator to facilitate discussions in a foreign language (Beamer and Varner, 2008). Communication is about unarticulated meanings and the thinking behind the words, not just the words per se (see Chapter 2). To understand
the significance of a message from someone, you need to understand that person’s perception and the most important values in that person’s view of the world. You need to know what to expect when someone engages in a particular behaviour. *Guanxi*, for example, is a special type of Chinese relationship which contains trust, favour, dependence, and adaptation. It constitutes a highly differentiated and intricate system of formal and informal social subsets, which are governed by the unwritten law of reciprocity (Zhou and Hui, 2003). The Chinese people view human relationships as long-term, and consequently place great emphasis on cultivating a good relationship with their business partners prior to any business transaction. While economic factors are important to the Chinese, those factors alone cannot sustain the motivation to maintain long-term business relations. In fact, non-economic factors such as acceptance, face-giving, complementary social reciprocity, and trust may play a bigger role in influencing decision making. The emphasis on developing *guanxi* is reflected in business negotiations with Chinese partners, which tend to be much lengthier than those with a Westerner. As culture profoundly influences how people think, communicate, and behave, it also affects the kinds of deals they make and the way they make them. A good understanding of cultural differences is a key factor in promoting mutually productive and successful international business exchanges.

**Facilitating cross-cultural adaptation**

Cross-cultural adaptation has to be understood as a manifestation of broader social trends that are not confined to the experience of immigrants, but rather as extending to many other kinds of associations and networks as well as into cultural life at large.

Globalization is a process by which geographic borders as boundaries between nations and states are eroding. There are new contours of transnational spaces and societies, and new systems of identity. Advances in technology and transport systems now provide people with greater freedom to travel beyond national borders as well as more choices for belonging. Ultimately, interconnectedness between people and the erosion of geographic borders make our ‘village’ more global, but our world smaller. The arrival of immigrants brings various changes to the host cultural environment. Intercultural encounters provide opportunities for understanding between people as well as the potential for misunderstanding.

Cross-cultural adaptation is not a process that is unique to immigrants; host nationals also have to experience cultural adjustments when their society is joined by culturally different others (see Chapter 9). The tension between immigrants and host nationals often centres on the extent to which immigrants can maintain their heritage culture in the host country. Research conducted on immigrants’ cultural adaptation strategies indicates that they identify integrating into the host culture and, at the same time, maintaining their ethnic cultural heritage as their preferred acculturation strategy (Liu, 2007). A key question is whether or not the host society provides immigrants with an environment in which they feel welcome to integrate. In countries receiving many immigrants, ethnically different populations can become perceived threats to collective identity and to the standard of living of the natives. For host nationals, multiculturalism can be interpreted as a threat to their cultural dominance. For migrant groups, however, multiculturalism offers the possibility of maintaining their own culture and still integrating into the host society. Thus, policies of multiculturalism that highlight the importance of recognizing cultural diversity within a common framework, as well as equal opportunities, can lead to inter-ethnic distinctions and threaten social cohesion.

The extent to which host nationals allow members of immigrant groups to maintain their own culture and partake in relationships with the dominant cultural group plays an important role in the construction of a truly multicultural society. Promoting inter-ethnic understanding facilitates cultural adaptation by both migrants and host nationals; the key to inter-ethnic understanding is intercultural communication.
Interacting with immigrants is often difficult for host nationals because of differences in language and cultural values, and this adds anxiety to intercultural interactions. To reduce anxiety of this nature, we must equip ourselves with knowledge about other cultures. Intercultural knowledge reduces anxiety and uncertainty, making the communication process smoother and more successful. Intercultural knowledge and intercultural communication skills, however, do not come naturally; they have to be acquired through conscious learning.

**SUMMARY**

- Advancement in communication technologies, modern transport systems, global economy, international business, mass migration, and international exchange are major contributors to cultural diversity in our society.
- While geographic borders that used to separate people from people and country from country are receding, there are various issues associated with globalization and challenges we face by living in a global village, which highlight the necessity of acquiring skills in intercultural communication.
- Our culture governs our behaviour; however, our way of doing may be neither the only nor the only right way. Different cultural customs and practices need to be interpreted in their own contexts.
- In order to harness the benefits of cultural diversity in our society, we need to develop sound knowledge and skills in communicating with people from different cultures.
- The study of intercultural communication equips us with the necessary knowledge and dynamic skills to manage differences efficiently and effectively.

**JOIN THE DEBATE**

Will globalization result in the disappearance of local cultures?

There have been ongoing debates about the interaction of global trends and influences with local cultures and realities. Pervasive rhetoric on globalization within and outside academia has revealed a tendency to provide a polarized vision of the world in which we live: it is either celebrated for its global unity and interconnectivity which communication technologies facilitate, or it is deplored for the erosion of differences. While the interconnectivity can hardly be contested, it has not erased the differences. The reconfiguration of the sociocultural, political, and economic landscape of the world keeps reminding us that while the ‘global village’ continues to draw more tightly together into a single system of consumption, it increasingly multiples its circulation of differences. Local cultures and traditions as a site of resistance or liberation are finding ways of asserting themselves or reclaiming spaces in the global society. The global and the local are becoming increasingly interlocked and interdependent, albeit in an asymmetrical way. What are the multiple ways in which local cultures and practices interact with, respond to, adjust, or reject global cultures?
Migration and diversity in Australia

Australia has become one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world. One can hardly walk along a major city street without passing a Chinese restaurant, a Vietnamese grocery store, an Italian deli or a Japanese sushi bar. The most significant contributor to this multicultural environment is the ever-increasing levels of immigration. As Castles (1992: 549) pointed out, nowhere is this more apparent than in a country like Australia, where ‘immigration has always been a central part of nation building’. Since 1945, over 7 million people have come to Australia as new settlers. Their contribution to Australian society, culture and prosperity is an important factor in shaping the nation.

In the eighteenth century, transported criminals were the basis of the first migration from Europe. Starting in 1788, some 160,000 convicts were shipped to the Australian colonies. From that time, free immigrants also began coming to Australia. The rapid growth of the wool industry in the 1820s created an enormous demand for labour and sparked an increase in the migration of free people from the United Kingdom. The social upheavals of industrialization in Britain also resulted in many people emigrating to escape widespread poverty and unemployment. The myth of ‘terra nullius’, or empty land, encouraged immigration, and many people in the indigenous population were pushed from their traditional territory to cede the land, willing or not, with the newcomers. This pressure, along with conflict and serious discrimination against them, began to tell on the Indigenous population, whose numbers, influence, and visibility steadily decreased.

A major impetus for Australian immigration following its initial post-convict settlement was the discovery of vast alluvial goldfields that attracted a mass influx of immigrants in the 1850s, coupled with the extension of parliamentary democracy and the establishment of inland towns. During the Gold Rush era of 1851 to 1860, early migration peaked at arrivals of around 50,000 people a year; Chinese immigrants were the largest non-British group. More restricted immigration began by the 1880s, at the start of the movement known as ‘White Australia’, when the colony of Victoria introduced legislation to discourage immigration by taxing Chinese migrants. The ‘White Australia Policy’ reflected Australians’ fear of the ‘yellow hordes’, as they perceived Asian immigrants – indeed, as they perceived any migrants who were not from Britain or northern Europe. This policy was strongly assimilationist, and also reflected the belief current at that time that a population must be culturally homogeneous to be truly egalitarian and democratic. Pressure to assimilate was applied both to immigrants and to the indigenous population, so that the dominant Anglo-Celtic group came to be seen as ‘native’ Australians.

In the mid-twentieth century, Australia’s outlook on the world was significantly changed because of the Second World War. Australia then had a population of only 7 million people, and the devastating effects of the Depression and the war led to a policy of ‘Populate or Perish’. Australia opened the floodgates for mainly British and European migrants, many of whom had been displaced by the war and the Nazi Holocaust. Immigration policies aimed to attract migrants to the industrial workforce. A more ambitious part of Australia’s migration programme followed the end of the Second World War. The resettling of ex-servicemen, refugees, and young people were significant chapters in Australian immigration history. Australia negotiated agreements with other governments and international organizations to help achieve high migration targets. For example, a system of free passage for United Kingdom residents (the ‘ten-pound migrants’), and an assisted passage scheme for British Empire and United States ex-servicemen vastly increased immigration. Australian immigration drew heavily on its traditional connections with the British who, until the 1960s, continued to get virtually free passage for themselves and their families. At various times in the 1950s and 1960s, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Greece, Turkey, and Yugoslavia were also important sources of immigrants.

The ‘White Australia Policy’ was removed in 1973, by the then Whitlam Labor Government. Furthermore, in 1967, Indigenous people had been recognized as full Australian citizens through a national referendum.
When legislation removed race as a factor in Australia’s immigration policies, the assimilation policy was still in force, reflecting both the perceived national need for homogeneity and an opportunistic political aim of nation building through imported population growth. In the 1980s, the nation implemented this policy of multiculturalism, adopting an institutionalized diversity. The evolution of Australia’s immigration policies at several phases over time was reflected in Fact Sheet 4 of the Australian Government’s Department of Immigration and Border Protection (2013).

The policy of multiculturalism enhanced the situation of immigrants in Australia for 20 years. Unfortunately, prejudice and discrimination against the non-immigrant indigenous population was affected little by this policy. In addition, a change of government in 1996 allowed the policy to be eroded to some extent, as immigration was increasingly restricted. The situation for immigrants today is thus more fragile than in the recent past, as recent conflicts illustrate (see the Cronulla riots in the Chapter 9 Case Study). Today, nearly one in four of Australia’s more than 22 million people were born overseas, and approximately 200 languages, including indigenous languages, are spoken in the country. New Zealand and the United Kingdom are still the largest source countries for migrants, but other regions, notably Asia, have also become more significant contributors.

References


Questions for discussion

1. What factors can influence immigration flow and what effects can immigration have on receiving countries?
2. What factors can influence immigration policy change in immigrants-receiving countries?
3. When immigrants enter a new country, they often feel ‘out of place’. What roles does the host cultural environment play in influencing their sense of place?
4. Does multiculturalism pose a threat to our cultural uniqueness? Why or why not?
5. Do you think host nationals and immigrants view multiculturalism as equally beneficial? Why or why not?

FURTHER READINGS

Cultural diversity


This article reports two studies that investigated relationships among individual differences in implicit and explicit prejudice, right-wing ideology, and rigidity in thinking. The first study examined these relationships focusing on white Americans’ prejudice towards black Americans. The second study examined implicit ethnocentrism and its relationship to explicit ethnocentrism by studying the relationship between attitudes towards
five social groups. The results lead to the conclusion that implicit ethnocentrism exists and it is related to and distinct from explicit ethnocentrism.


This book is the first English translation of this major contribution to cultural studies in media research. Building on British, French, and other European traditions of cultural studies, as well as a brilliant synthesis of the rich and extensive research of Latin American scholars, Martin-Barbero offers a substantial reassessment of critical media theory.

**Globalization and global citizenship**


This text provides a coherent, accessible, and engaging introduction to the globalization of world politics from a unique non-US perspective. Its fifth edition has been fully revised and updated in light of recent developments in world politics. New chapters on post-colonialism and post-structuralism give the most comprehensive introduction to international relations available. This text is ideal for students who are approaching the subject for the first time. Features include figures, tables, maps, questions, lively examples, and case studies.


This paper discusses the relationships between government and civil society and their interaction via the public sphere, which defines the polity of society. The process of globalization has shifted the debate from the national domain to the global debate, prompting the emergence of a global civil society and of *ad hoc* forms of global governance. Accordingly, the public sphere as the space of debate on public affairs has also shifted from the national to the global and is increasingly constructed around global communication networks. The paper illustrates how public diplomacy intervenes in this global public sphere, laying the ground for traditional forms of diplomacy to act beyond the strict negotiation of power relationships by building on shared cultural meaning, the essence of communication.


The promotion of global citizenship has emerged as a goal of education in many countries, symbolizing a shift away from national towards more global concepts of citizenship. This paper constructs a typology to identify and distinguish the diverse conceptions of global citizenship. The typology incorporates the political, moral, economic, cultural, social, critical, environmental, and spiritual conceptions. The paper illustrates how the typology can be used to evaluate the critical features of a curriculum plan to promote global citizenship in England.