

Communication Between Cultures

7th ed.

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Chapter 4 Overview

Culture and the individual: cultural identity

- **Identity, cultural identity defined**
- **Selected social identities**
- **Models of cultural identity development**
- **Identity in intercultural interactions**
 - Stereotypes, Prejudice, Ethnocentrism, Racism**

Identity defined

Self-concept, who we think we are

Cultural identity defined

Social construction

- **dynamic**
- **composite of multiple (integrated) identities**

Identity categories (Turner)

- human - set apart from other life forms
- social - race, ethnicity, occupation, age, hometown, etc.
- personal - talent, achievement, personality

Identity categories (Hall)

- personal - distinctions from others
- communal - nationality, ethnicity, gender, religious
and political affiliations
- relational - relationships with others

Selected social identities

Racial - social construct categorizing people into different groups

Tied to biological heritage that produces similar, identifiable physical characteristics.

Modern science finds very little genetic variation among humans; intercultural marriage further challenges this social construction.

Ethnic - shared heritage, history, traditions, values, similar behaviors, area of origin, and in some cases, language

Frequently transcends national borders; grounded in common cultural beliefs.

In U.S., hyphenated ethnic identity (e.g. Mexican-American) separates and connects two cultural traditions. Passage of time, relocation, and interethnic marriage can dilute strong ties.

Selected social identities (continued)

Gender - how particular culture differentiates masculine and feminine social roles

Different from biological sex or sexual identity.

Distinctions may include appearance/fashion, language.

National - where born, or immigrated/naturalized

National character: resemblance in fundamental matters of belief and conduct more than resemblance to members of other nations.

Regional - varying cultural traits within a country

May be manifested through ethnicity, language, accent, dialect, customs, food, dress, or historical/political legacies.

Selected social identities (continued)

Organizational - occupational affiliation

Stronger in collectivist cultures where group membership stressed.

Personal - different cultures give rise to different construals of self, others, and interdependence between the two

Individualists work to exemplify differences from others; collectivists emphasize membership, connection to others.

Cyber/Fantasy - Internet-constructed best, alternate version of self

- Additional:
- age
 - religion
 - physical ability
 - socio-economic class
 - minority status

Identity development a process of:

- **familial and cultural (including media) socialization**
- **exposure to other cultures**
- **personal development**

Models of cultural identity development (two theories)

Phinney's 3-stage model, minorities:

- (1) unexamined ethnic identity - lack of interest, little thought given*
- (2) examined identity search - stimulated, movement toward own ethnicity*
- (3) ethnic achievement - clear, confident understanding of cultural identity*

Martin and Nakayama's 4-stage model, minorities and majority:

Minorities

- (1) unexamined identity*
- (2) conformity - seek to fit*
- (3) resistance - separation*
- (4) integration*

Majority

- (1) unexamined identity*
- (2) acceptance - acquiesce to inequities*
- (3) resistance - increased interaction*
- (4) redefinition and reintegration*

Identity in intercultural interactions

Cultural identity focal element in interaction

Varying expectations for identity display and communication style carry potential for anxiety, misunderstandings, conflict.

Intercultural competence occurs when display matches expectation, or adjustments (accommodations toward middle ground) render communication effective.

Identity in multicultural society

Increasing numbers “in between” cultural identities due to cultural integration, interracial marriage, international adoption

Growing willingness, ability to cross cultures, to don new ethnicities, identities

Intercultural transients: workers, travelers regularly alternating residence between homeland and host foreign country

Potential adverse effects of cultural preference: Stereotyping, prejudice, ethnocentrism, racism

Stereotypes

- *learned in a variety of ways*
 - *from parents*
 - *from peers*
 - *from religious, social groups*
 - *from mass media*
 - *from fear of difference*
- *defined: form of categorization containing perceiver's knowledge, beliefs, expectancies about particular collections of people*
- *difficulty lies with overgeneralization and negative evaluations (attitudes and prejudices)*
- *even positive evaluations can narrow perceptions, jeopardize intercultural communication*

Effect of stereotyping on intercultural communication: Harmful for four reasons

- *Filtering quality only allows in information consistent with held beliefs*
- *Rigid preconceptions prevent correct assessment that all in any group do not have same traits*
- *False assumptions (untrue premises, half-truths, exaggerations, oversimplifications) alter/distort communication*
- *Resistance to change, increased strength from early exposure, reinforcement by in-group, pre-existing associations*

Early and/or increased interaction diminishes effects

Prejudice

- *defined: deep negative feelings associated with a particular group; irrational (inflexible) generalizations with little/no direct evidence*
- *characteristics*
 - *directed at specific groups (social class, sex, sexual orientation, age, political affiliation, race, ethnicity)*
 - *involves evaluative dimension*
 - *centrality (extent to which belief is important to individual)*
- *functions of prejudice*
 - *ego-defensive: protects individual from taking responsibility*
 - *utilitarian: justifying inequities*
 - *value-expressive: expression of culture's moral values*
 - *knowledge: making sense of the world by grouping (even if inaccurately)*

Expressions of prejudice

- antilocution: *talking about target group in negative, stereotypic terms*
- avoiding, withdrawing *from contact with target group*
- discrimination: *excluding target group from employment, housing, political rights, educational/recreational opportunities, churches, hospitals, other social institutions*
 - ethnocentrism: notion that one's own culture superior to any other*
 - *universal*
 - *contributes to cultural identity*
 - *strongest in moral and religious contexts*
(emotion over rationale may cause hostility)
 - *offset negative effects by being open to new ideas, difference*
- physical attacks
- extermination: *lynching, massacres, genocide*

Causes of prejudice

- societal sources: *built into major organizations and institutions; help maintain power of dominant groups over subordinate ones*
- maintaining social identity: *strengthening bond with person's culture)*
- scapegoating: *singling out group to bear blame for circumstance, events*

Avoiding prejudice: two techniques

- *personal contact*
- *education*

Racism

- *defined: belief in the inherent superiority of a particular race; denies basic equality of humankind; assumes success or failure depends on genetic endowment rather than access to opportunity*
- *core racism driven by culture, economics, psychology, history*
- *manifestations, expressions of racism*
 - *racial slurs, ethnic jokes*
 - *intimidation*
 - *racial graffiti, property damage, physical violence*
 - *institutional racism: racial inferiorizing, antipathy*

Avoiding racism

- *honestly inspect personal views*
- *object to racist remarks*
- *respect freedom*
- *examine historical roots of racism* _____

Next ...

Chapter 5:
Shaping interpretations of reality -
Cultural values

