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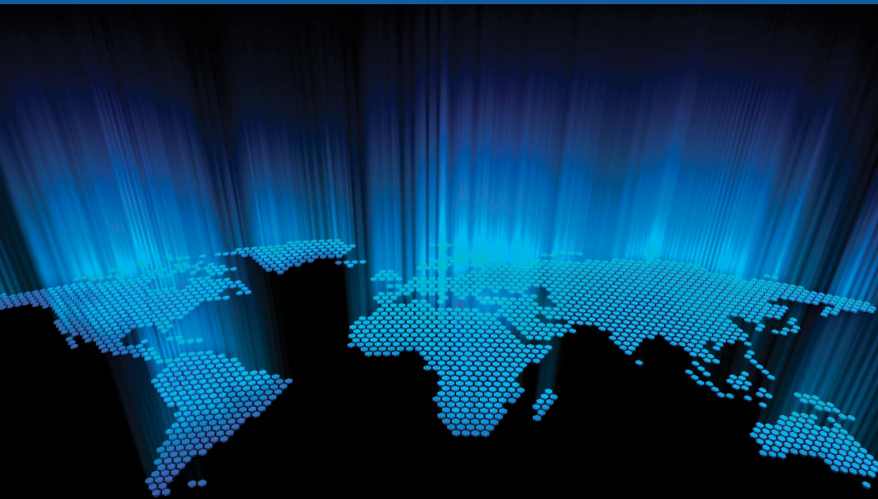
INTERCULTURAL
Communication

SEVENTH EDITION

in Contexts

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN CONTEXTS

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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN CONTEXTS

SEVENTH EDITION

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About the Authors

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

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

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

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

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

For more than 20 years, we have engaged in many different dialogues about intercultural communication—focusing on our experiences, thoughts, ideas, and analyses—which led us to think about writing this textbook. But our interest was not primarily sparked by these dialogues; rather, it was our overall interest in improving intercultural relations that motivated us. We believe that communication is an important arena for improving those relations. By helping people become more aware as intercultural communicators, we hope to make this a better world for all of us.

Brief Contents

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Contents

**PART III INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
APPLICATIONS 315**

THE INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

While the rise of digital mobile technology has provided instant connectivity to people and cultures that were once distant and isolated, worldwide political and economic uncertainties highlight the increasing importance of intercultural communication. There are now more people displaced from their homelands than ever before—65 million or 34,000 people *per day* fleeing war, droughts, and other calamities (UNHCR Global Trends, 2016). Increasing ethnic and religious tensions and the weak world economy lead us to question the ability of humanity to live peacefully and to doubt the benefits of globalization. How will the expansion of globalization be affected? If the euro fails, what happens to Europe's economy, and what kind of impact will there be on the exchange of products and movement of people around the world? How will economic changes influence where tourists, businesspeople, students, immigrants, and refugees come from and where they go? What languages will be studied, and what is the future role of English in the world? Changes such as these are likely to influence the shape of intercultural communication.

When we look back upon the international and intercultural situation at the time we first began writing this book, we recognize how rapidly the world has changed and how, as a result, these changes have raised even more pressing issues for intercultural communication scholars and practitioners. We could not have predicted that people in the United Kingdom would vote to leave the European Union nor that the United States would still be involved in conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan after 25 years. The world will continue to change in ways that we cannot predict, but we must face this dynamic world open to new challenges, rather than retreating to ways of life that are rapidly disappearing.

In this climate, the study of intercultural communication takes on special significance, because it offers tools to help us as we grapple with questions about religious and ethnic differences, hate crimes, environmental disasters, and many other related issues. Those who study, teach, and conduct research in intercultural communication face an increasing number of challenges and difficult questions: Are we actually reinforcing stereotypes in discussing cultural differences? Is there a way to understand the dynamics of intercultural communication without resorting to lists of instructions? How do we understand the broader social, political, and historical contexts when we teach intercultural communication? How can we use our intercultural communication skills to help enrich our lives and the lives of those around us? Can intercultural communication scholars promote a better world for all?

Such questions are driven by rapidly changing cultural dynamics—both within the United States and abroad. On the one hand, natural disasters like earthquakes in Chile, Indonesia, Nepal, and elsewhere, flooding in Europe and Sri Lanka and elsewhere, deadly Ebola outbreak in West Africa, and the spread of the Zika virus have elicited a variety of positive responses, including tremendous caring and compassion across intercultural and international divide. On the other hand, the increasing number of terrorist attacks in many countries, the tightening of national borders in response to global migration, conflicts between police and communities of color in the United states, and the racist and hateful content posted on social media exemplify continuing intergroup conflict. These extremes demonstrate the dynamic nature of culture and communication.

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

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

Throughout this book, we acknowledge that there are no easy solutions to the difficult challenges of intercultural communication. Sometimes our discussions raise more questions than they answer. We believe that this is perfectly reasonable. The field of intercultural communication is changing, but the relationship between culture and communication is as well—because that relationship is, and probably always will be, complex and dynamic. We live in a rapidly changing world where intercultural contact will continue to increase, creating an increased potential for both conflict and cooperation. We hope that this book provides the tools needed to think about intercultural communication, as a way of understanding the challenges and recognizing the advantages of living in a multicultural world.

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SIGNATURE FEATURES OF THE BOOK

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

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

NEW TO THE SEVENTH EDITION

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

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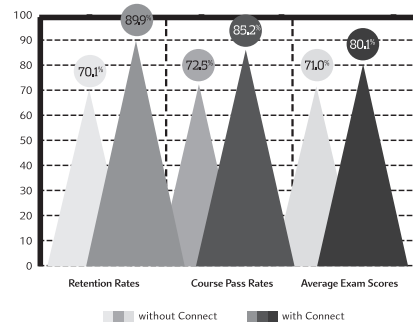
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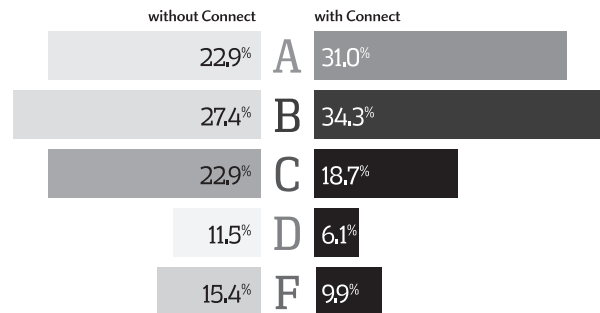
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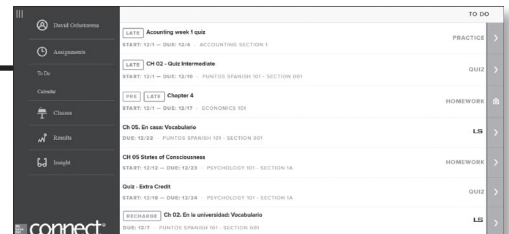
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CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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

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

We begin Chapter 1 with a focus on the dynamics of social life and global conditions as a rationale for the study of intercultural communication. We introduce ethics in this chapter to illustrate its centrality to any discussion of intercultural interaction. In this edition, we have emphasized the importance of social justice and engagement with communities including indigenous and homeless and introduced the notion of cultural humility as an important element in intercultural effectiveness. We have also updated our discussion of the impact of globalization and immigration policies on intercultural encounters.

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

In Chapter 3, we focus on four basic intercultural communication components— culture, communication, context, and power. In this edition, we've updated the Hofstede framework to reflect recent research and included a discussion of cyberspace as a cultural context. We have also provided new examples of interpretive ethnographic research and extended our discussion of the critical impact of social media on cultural resistance.

Chapter 4 focuses on the importance of historical forces in shaping contemporary intercultural interaction. We have added the concept of altered histories to discuss the ways that the past has been retold to serve certain cultural needs and interests. We also highlight the importance of using careful language when communicating about the past, by pointing to an error made by President Obama that soured relations with Poland.

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

Chapter 5, on identity, has extended coverage of religious identity, multicultural identity, and sexual identity (in addition to gender identity). This chapter now includes a deeper exploration of cisgender and transgender identity, and its current status in various cultures. We also introduce the many different terms used to attempt to capture the diversity of gendered and sexual identities. We also discuss microaggression as a communication strategy used to demean another identity in subtle ways.

Chapter 6 addresses language issues, with new examples of slang, the evolution of new Englishes as well as code switching. There are also new discussions of the impact of digital translation tools on language learning and the impact of social media on language and communication styles.

Chapter 7 focuses on nonverbal codes and cultural spaces and includes new examples of cultural variations in nonverbal behavior, including emojis. There is also a discussion of recent research questioning the universality of facial expressions, and examples of nonverbal microaggressions and the implications for intercultural communication.

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

Chapter 8 addresses intercultural transitions. In this edition, we have added more focus on refugees. We have also added a discussion on the problems of integration and assimilation, as well as the issues of working overseas for global businesses.

In Chapter 9, we focus on popular and folk culture and their impact on intercultural communication. We have included new updated examples and an enhanced discussion of how social media is used to shape culture, including Twitter, because of the power of user-generated content.

Chapter 10 explores intercultural relationships. In this edition, we update the discussion of sexuality and intimate relationships in multicultural environments, as well as tensions over these changes, and the implications for intercultural communication.

Chapter 11 emphasizes an integrated approach to intercultural conflict, using the recent riots in London and Paris, as well as global terrorist attacks as case studies. We have expanded the discussion on intractable conflicts and important strategies in peacebuilding, as well as the role of social movements (e.g., Black Lives Matter) in intercultural conflict.

Chapter 12 includes a new discussion of cosmopolitanism as a way to think about and negotiate cultural differences and continues to emphasize practical experience in striving for intercultural competence in everyday encounters.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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

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

Above all, we must recognize the fine work of the staff at McGraw-Hill: Jamie Laferrera, Brand Manager; Jasmine Stanton, Editorial Coordinator; Meredith Leo, Marketing Manager; and Lisa Bruflodt, Production Manager and the **ansr**source developmental editing team lead by Anne Sheroff and Poornima H arikumar.

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

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

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

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

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

COMMUNICATING IN A DYNAMIC, MULTICULTURAL WORLD

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

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

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

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

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

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

IMPROVING YOUR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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

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

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

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PART I

Foundations of Intercultural Communication

1

WHY STUDY INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION?

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

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

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

—Mohamad

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

—Adrianna

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

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

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

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

THE SELF-AWARENESS IMPERATIVE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If you are white and middle class, intercultural learning may mean an enhanced awareness of your privilege. A white colleague tells of feeling uncomfortable staying in a Jamaican resort, being served by blacks whose ancestors were brought there as slaves by European colonizers. On the one hand, it is privilege that allows travelers like our colleague to experience new cultures and places. On the other hand, one might wonder if we, through this type of travel, are reproducing those same historical postcolonial economic patterns.

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

THE DEMOGRAPHIC IMPERATIVE

You have probably observed that your world is increasingly diverse. You may have classes with students who differ from you in ethnicity, race, religion, and/or nationality. College and university student bodies in the United States are becoming increasingly diverse. Statistics show that college enrollment for all racial and ethnic minorities has grown in the past 20 years, especially for Latino students where college enrollment has more than tripled. In fact, for the first time, the rate of Hispanic college enrollment has now surpassed that of whites, and whites make up a smaller proportion of students on campus today than they did 20 years ago, when three out of every four college students were white (Krogstad & Fry, 2014).

Sports are also a very visible part of increasing diversity. The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport issues diversity "grades" for various U.S. American professional and college teams. In the most recent report, the National Basketball Association and Women's National Basketball Association received the highest grades for racial and gender hiring practices; the Major League Baseball organization also received high marks for diversity in administration (office staff, managers, etc.) and now almost 40% of its players are ethnic/racial minorities. In the National Football League 4 of the 12 teams in the 2013 playoffs had either an African American head coach or general manager. College sports are maintaining their diversity, and probably the greatest prospects for expanding opportunities exist in college sports rather than at the professional sport level because of the number of jobs available (Lapcheck, 2013). In addition, team diversity can apparently improve performance. One research study of European soccer teams (with players from almost 50 different nationalities) found that the most linguistically diverse teams had the best winning records (Malesky & Saiegh, 2014).

Changing U.S. Demographics

U.S. **demographics** are changing rapidly and provide another source of increased opportunity for intercultural contact. The 2010 U.S. Census revealed a dramatic increase in ethnic/racial diversity, as racial and ethnic minorities are now growing more rapidly in numbers than whites. The fastest growth is among multiracial Americans, followed by Asians and Hispanics. Non-Hispanic whites make up 63% of the U.S. population; Hispanics make up 17%; blacks, 12.3%; Asians, 5%; and multiracial Americans, 2.4% (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). This trend is expected to continue as shown in Figure 1-2 (Passel & Cohn, 2008). In fact, there are now four states—Hawaii, California, New Mexico, and Texas—that are "majority-minority"—where there is no one majority ethnic group, and minority groups account for more than 50% of the population. Nevada and Maryland should gain this status by 2020 (Kayne, 2013; Teixeira, Frey, & Griffin, 2015).

There is increasing diversity in the U.S. workforce as well—representing the diversity in the general population, in race and ethnicity, people with disabilities, and straight, gay, and transgendered individuals (See Figure 1-1). The workforce continues to get older as baby boomers age, and there are also now more women in the workforce. In fact, more women than men are expected to make up the labor force by 2020 (Burns, Barton, & Kerby, 2012).

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

FIGURE I-I Rapid changes in technology, demographics, and economic forces mean that you are likely to come into contact with many people with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Although many of these communication experiences will be in professional and work situations, many other interactions will be in public and social settings. (© *Esbin-Anderson/The Image Works*)

More women are in the workforce for several reasons. First, economic pressures have come to bear; more women are single parent, and even in two-parent families, it often takes two incomes to meet family expenses. Second, the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s resulted in more women seeking careers and jobs outside the home.

Changing Immigration Patterns

The second source of demographic change is different immigration patterns. Although the United States has often been thought of as a nation of immigrants, it is also a nation that established itself by subjugating the original inhabitants and
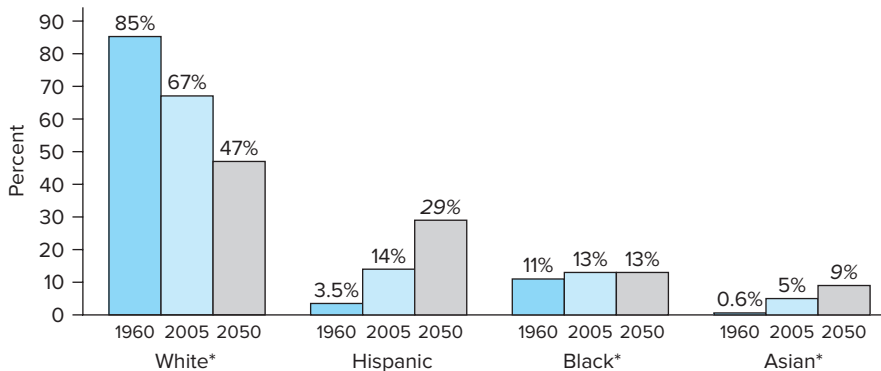
FIGURE I-2   Population by race and ethnicity, actual and projected: 1960, 2005, and 2050 (% of total).

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

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

that prospered to some extent as a result of slave labor. These aspects of national identity are important in understanding contemporary society. Today, immigration has changed the social landscape significantly. First, the foreign-born population continues to rise as a percentage of the total population, up from almost 5% in 1970 to more than 13% in 2013. However, this is still lower than it was during the great migrations in the 1800s and 1900s when most Europeans came to the United States (Zong & Batalova, 2015).

A second change concerns the origin of the immigrants. Prior to the 1970s, most of the immigrants to the United States came from Europe; now the large majority of immigrants are from Asia and Latin America (Zong & Batalova, 2015). We should note, however, that immigration from Mexico has actually decreased in the past 10 years, as more Mexican immigrants returned to Mexico than came to the United States—probably due to the recession in the United States and lack of economic opportunities (Gonzalez-Barrera, 2015). These shifts in patterns of immigration have resulted in a much more racially and ethnically diverse population. It's not hard to see that the United States is becoming more heterogeneous. We address the issue of whites losing majority status in Chapter 5.

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

This heterogeneity presents many opportunities and challenges for students of intercultural communication. Sometimes tensions can be created by (and be the result of) world events and proposed legislation. After the devastating terror attacks in Paris in November 2015, people and governments had heightened concerns about security threat posed by Middle Eastern refugees moving into Europe. For some,

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

homogeneous
Similarity in a group, culture, or population.

this concern translated to anti-immigrant/refugee attitudes and legislation. A Bloomberg Politics poll found that 53% of U.S. Americans didn't want to accept any Syrian refugees at all; 11% more would accept only Christian refugees from Syria (Desilver, 2015); and almost half of Americans said immigrants are a burden because they take jobs, housing, and health care (Krogstad, 2015). President Obama had proposed that the United States take 10,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees fleeing from war, but the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill with an overwhelming majority that would suspend this program, and more than half the states' governors stated that Syrian refugees are not welcome in their states (see Point of View, p. 11). While the U.S. Senate eventually blocked the bill, the passage of the House bill and President Trump's travel ban orders reflects the tension and conflict regarding the issue of immigration in the United States (Fantz & Brumfield, 2015; Walsh & Barrett, 2015). Similarly, 26 states have challenged President Obama's executive actions that allowed young adults who were brought to the country illegally to avoid deportation and to apply for work permits (Cohn, 2015). Arizona's Senate Bill 1070 makes it a crime to not carry immigration papers and gives the police broad powers to detain anyone suspected of being in the country illegally (Archibold, 2010). While some feel that these are reasonable measures, others feel that they pave the way for increased prejudice and discrimination against foreigners, particularly those from the Middle East and Latin America.

diversity The quality of being different.

We should also note the potential opportunities in a culturally diverse society. **Diversity** can expand our conceptions of what is possible—linguistically, politically, socially—as various lifestyles and ways of thinking converge. In fact, a growing number of research studies show that being around people who are different can make us more creative, more diligent, and make us work harder, especially for groups that value innovation and new ideas. Specifically, innovative groups and organizations who have gender and racial diversity produce more creative ideas and outperform less diverse groups (Phillips, 2014). However, increased opportunity does not always lead to increased interaction or positive attitudes. While a recent survey found that incoming college students place greater emphasis than earlier cohorts on wanting to help promote racial understanding (41.2% rating it "very important" or "essential" (Eagan et. al., 2016), another study found that college students reported limited contact among racial groups on campus and few students reporting close interracial friendships (Halualani, 2010). In addition, there have been numerous reports of racist incidents on college and high school campuses across the country in recent years. This may be because these students are graduating from high schools that are becoming increasingly more segregated (Orfield & Frankenberg, 2014).

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

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

Today, about 2.9 million Native Americans (from 565 recognized tribes) live in the United States (American Indians by the Numbers, 2011).

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

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

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

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

Scholar and theologian Cornel West (1993) agrees that we should begin by acknowledging the historical flaws of U.S. society and recognizing the historical consequences of slavery. However, the United States has several Holocaust museums but no organized, official recognition of the horrors of slavery. Perhaps it is easier for us to focus on the negative events of another nation's history than on those of our own. On the other hand, many U.S. Americans feel that the election of Barack Obama, the first African American president, shows some progress in U.S. race relations. In Chapter 4, we explore the importance of history in understanding the dynamics of intercultural communication.

Relationships with New Immigrants   Relationships between residents and immigrants—between oldtimers and newcomers—have often been filled with tension and conflict. In the 19th century, Native Americans sometimes were caught in the middle of European rivalries. During the War of 1812, for example, Indian allies of the British were severely punished by the United States when the war ended. In 1832, the U.S. Congress recognized the Indian nations' right to self-government, but