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Fifty Years of Intercultural Study: A Continuum of Perspectives for Research and Teaching

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Abstract

Reviewing intercultural research since the publication of Hall's (1959) "The Silent Language," this study identifies five different perspectives—universal, national, organizational, interpersonal, and intrapersonal—and key scholars associated with them. Three approaches for integrating these perspectives for intercultural studies are proposed: selected lens, sequential hierarchy, and dialogic identity.

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**Fifty Years of Intercultural Study:
A Continuum of Perspectives for Research and Teaching**

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Hall's 1959 *The Silent Language* is said to mark the start of intercultural communication (Hart, 1997). As this area of study passes 50 years, some have expressed concerns regarding its research and teaching going forward. For example, Jacob (2005) posits that "the time is . . . ripe for considering new approaches to cross-cultural management." She argues that, "researchers today should employ a more robust methodology" involving "different approaches done at varying levels of analyses" (p. 515). Bargiela-Chlappani and Nickerson observe many diverse approaches but a lack of uniformity field-to-field. "The fundamental constructs of culture and communication involve an array of well-established and highly developed fields of enquiry, with their distinctive and sometimes overlapping approaches, theories and methodologies" (2003,

p. 3). But they find that intercultural communication researchers tend to focus on the individual as the unit of analysis whereas international business communication researchers prefer to work at the macro level using units of analysis such as nations and universal values.

We examined major scholarly work in intercultural communication, focusing on literature that is relevant to the global workplace. Our literature review suggests ways to bridge the micro and macro approaches. We find that past and present intercultural research may be recast as a continuum of perspectives, beginning with Hall’s (1959) *The Silent Language* and ending with Earley and Ang’s (2003) work on cultural intelligence. We suggest several ways these perspectives might be integrated for intercultural communication research and teaching: selected lens, sequential hierarchy, and dialogic identity.

Key Scholars in Intercultural Research

We concentrated on the research of Hall (1959), Hofstede (1980), Schwartz (1994a & b; 1999), Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997), and the more recent work of Earley and Ang (2003). These scholars emerge as highly relevant for several reasons. With the exception of Earley and Ang (2003), Dahl (2004) earmarked the contributions of these scholars as formative. Citations alone attest to their significance. Listings in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) and in Harzing’s Publish or Perish (POP) as of May 31, 2007 are shown in Figure 1.

Authors	Harzing’s Publish or Perish (POP)	Social Science Citation Index (SSCI)
Hall (1959; 1966)	4341	3953
Hofstede (1980)	3304	9261
Schwartz (1994; 1999)	6036	4421
Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997)	1212	548
Earley & Ang (2003)	55	23

Figure 1: Citation Counts for Intercultural Scholars

Respondents to a survey of U.S. members of the Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research, identified Hall as the most influential figure in the field of intercultural communication (Rogers, Hart, & Miike, 2002). But citations suggest the influence of Hofstede and Schwartz as well. More recent works have fewer citations, of course. But these new works are deeply grounded in the giants: Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997) in Hofstede (1980); Earley and Ang (2003) in Hall (1959; 1966).

We also earmarked these scholars for their relevance to the workplace. Hofstede discusses the implications of his broad dimensions for intercultural encounters in international business organizations, for example (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). His data are from employees in multinationals. Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner modify and apply Hofstede's dimensions to comment on the impact of culture on business and to provide tips that help managers communicate amidst cultural differences. Schwartz (1999) suggests that his theory of universal values may be applied to study societal norms about working and work and its centrality. Earley and Ang (2003) include two chapters on work environments and the enactment of communication (or behavior) is a central construct in their theory. Hall's (1976) high- and low-context model (described later) has been widely used to explain differing communication styles in business contexts (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1986; Limaye & Victor, 1991; Varner, 2000a & b).

Scholarly Perspectives

We propose that Hall (1959; 1966), Hofstede (1980), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997), Schwartz (1999), and Earley and Ang (2003) represent different but overlapping perspectives. A perspective, we suggest, is a vantage point from which a scholar or sojourner views intercultural communication. A perspective may manifest itself in the level of analysis employed. For example, when Hofstede (1991) studied employees in organizations, his analyses tended to center around individuals' *national* cultural identity. Much of his interest has been the "*collective mind*" (1980, p. 21). By contrast, Earley and Ang's (2003) research on cultural intelligence centers around helping the *individual* sojourner adapt to new cultural

environments (see also Earley, Ang, & Tan, 2006; Ang, Van Dyne, Koh, C, Ng, Templer, Tay, & Chandrasekar, 2007).

The continuum we envision places Schwartz on one end and Earley and Ang on the other. Schwartz identifies *universal* values followed by Hofstede who elaborated *national* differences; meanwhile, Hall observes *interpersonal* interactions while Earley & Ang lean toward *intrapersonal* issues. Emphasizing *organizations* and the multi-cultural issues managers face, Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner fall in the middle, as shown in Figure 2.

	Schwartz	Hofstede	Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner	Hall	Earley & Ang
Perspectives	Universal Values flowing from humans' most basic needs	National Cultural differences among nations as seen in societal systems & collective values	Organizational Adaptation in business contexts through awareness of intercultural differences and self examination	Interpersonal Individual behaviors and the hidden cultural roles governing them	Intrapersonal Cognition & motivation influencing the individual's acquisition, processing, and reaction to social situations

Constructs	Identified universal values that can be compared:	Identified “invisible” cultural differences:	Identified five cultural dichotomies operating in business organizations:	Observed culture “before our eyes” such as the use of time & space.	Introduced “cultural intelligence,” a person’s ability to adapt to new cultural settings.
	1. Individual relate to group: Conservatism vs Autonomy;	1. Power distance	1. Universalism-- Particularism	Introduced two dimensions of culture:	CQ involves:
	2. Preserving Social Fabric: Hierarchy vs Egalitarianism;	2. Individualism	2. Community-- Individual	1. High- and low-context	1. Cognition
	3. Humans relating to natural & social world: Mastery vs Harmony.	3. Masculinity	3. Neutral-- Affective emotion	2. Polychronic versus monochronic time orientation	2. Motivation (molar mental functioning)
		4. Uncertainty avoidance	4. Diffuse-- Specific (private) self revelation		3. Behavior (in daily living)
		5. Long/short term orientation.	5. Achievement-- Ascription (doing vs being)		

Figure 2: Perspectives & Related Constructs of Intercultural Scholars

Universal

Schwartz sought to answer the question: Are there *universal* aspects in the structure and content of human values (1994a; 1999)? He identified values that are shared and have similar meanings across cultures. For one study he asked 25,863 individuals to rank the extent to which 56 different values were guiding principles for their lives (1994a). From these data he identified four higher-order, bipolar value dimensions, each associated with motivational values that he found to have near universality across individuals:

- openness to change (including the motivational values of self-direction and stimulation) versus conservation (including tradition, conformity, and security) and
- self-enhancement (including achievement and power) versus self-transcendence (benevolence and universalism).

In 1999 he refined and expanded these categories to include:

- conservatism versus autonomy (observing the individual related to the group)
- hierarchy versus egalitarianism (involving preserving the social fabric), and
- mastery versus harmony (involving humans relating to the social world)

Schwartz's primary goal was to identify universal values that have shared meanings across individuals and cultures. But he also used these for country-to-country comparisons. For example he determined that francophone Swiss seem to be most influenced by "intellectual autonomy" yet they, more than any other group, rejected "conservatism values" (Schwartz, 1999, p. 37). Schwartz's interest in national differences overlaps with Hofstede (1980).

It should also be noted that Schwartz believed his universal values could be used to study the individual. On the ecological level, he wrote, values "presumably reflect the different solutions that societies evolve to the problems of. . . human activities" (1994b; p. 92). Values on the individual level reflect "psychological dynamics of conflict and compatibility that individuals experience in . . . pursuing their different values in everyday life" (1994b, p. 92).

National

Hofstede's driving question has been: What "collective programming of the mind distinguishes the members of one human group from another" (1980, p. 21)? He was particularly interested in the domain of basic values that are the core of *national cultures* (1980; 1983).

Like Schwartz, Hofstede used statistical analyses of survey data from individual respondents (e.g. IBM employees from over 40 countries yielded 116,000 responses). But rather than comparing people individually, Hofstede used these data to identify central tendencies or the cultural dimensions of culture for which he has become famous (1980; 1983):

- *High versus Low Power Distance* refers to the degree to which the *less powerful* members of society expect there to be differences in the levels of power. High power distance suggests that there is an expectation that some individuals wield larger amounts of power than others. Low power distance reflects the view that all people should have equal rights. Hofstede ranked Latin American and Arab nations the highest in this category; Scandinavian and Germanic speaking countries the lowest.
- *Individualism versus Collectivism* reflects the extent to which individuals are expected to stand up for themselves, or alternatively, act predominantly as members of the group or organization. Latin American cultures rank the lowest in this category, while the U.S.A. is one of the most individualistic cultures, Hofstede concluded.
- *Masculine versus Feminine* reflects the value placed on traditionally male or female values. Masculine cultures value competitiveness, assertiveness, ambition, and the accumulation of wealth and material possessions, whereas feminine cultures place more appreciation on relationships and quality of life. Japan is considered by Hofstede to be the most "masculine" culture, Sweden the most "feminine."
- *High versus Low Uncertainty Avoidance* reflects the extent to which a society attempts to cope with anxiety by minimizing uncertainty. Cultures that scored high in uncertainty avoidance prefer rules, such as about religion and food, and structured circumstances, one circumstance being employees tending to remain longer with an employer. Mediterranean cultures and Japan rank the highest on uncertainty avoidance, Hofstede concludes.
- *Long versus Short-term Orientation* refers to a society's "time horizon", or the importance attached to the future versus the past and present. In long-term oriented societies, thrift and perseverance are valued more; in short-term oriented

societies, respect for tradition and reciprocation of gifts and favors are valued more. Hofstede found Eastern nations tending to score especially high here, with Western nations scoring low and the less developed nations very low. China scored highest and Pakistan lowest. Actually, Hofstede added this Long versus Short-term Orientation dimension after conducting a survey of Chinese employees and managers.

Hofstede's primary intent was to be "specific about the elements of which [national] culture is composed" (1980, p. 11). But like the other scholars here, his is not blind to the other perspectives suggested. For example, he explained that his cultural dimensions may allow individuals to compare their own cultural tendencies with those of individuals from other countries and groups. As we shall see, this sounds like something one might read in Earley and Ang (2003) who are keenly interested in the individual sojourner.

Organizational/Managerial

Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner deal with the question: How can cultural diversity be managed across business organizations? Building on Hofstede's cultural dimensions, they suggest seven cultural dichotomies that managers/organizations may encounter when working internationally.

- (1) Universalism versus Particularism: *What is more important, rules or relationships?*
- (2) Community versus Individual: *Do we function in a group or as individuals?*
- (3) Neutral versus Affective Emotion: *Do we display our emotions?*
- (4) Diffuse versus Specific: *Is responsibility specifically assigned or diffusely accepted?*
- (5) Achievement versus Ascription: *Do we have to prove ourselves to receive status or is it given to us?*
- (6) Sequential versus Synchronic: *Do we do things one at a time or several things at once?*

(7) Internal versus External Orientation: *Do we control our environment or are we controlled by it?*

When Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997) elucidate broad national differences it is to suggest how these may play out in the business environment—organization-to-organization across cultures. They illustrate differences with anecdotes and examples from the training programs they conducted in more than 20 countries and provide tips for doing business given various cultural dispositions they found. For example, in “future-orientated” cultures, an agreement by a firm to adhere to specific deadlines means that if the work is not completed on time then the agreement need not be kept.

Interpersonal

Hall (1959; 1966; 1976) tackled the question: How is culture observed when individuals interact? In a 1998 interview, he described his interest in the interpersonal aspects of intercultural communication (Sorrells, 1998, pp. 1 & 11).

I spent years trying to figure out how to select people to go overseas. This is the secret. You have to know how to make a friend. And that is it! If you can make friends and if you have a deep need to make friends, you will be successful. It's people who can make a friend, who have friends, who can do well overseas. . . . If we can get away from theoretical paradigms and focus more on what is really going on with people, we will be doing well.

As an anthropologist, Hall drew upon his experience rather than empirical data to explore how individuals behave in different cultural contexts and the hidden rules that govern their social behavior. “When I talk about culture I am not just talking about something abstract that is imposed on man and is separate from him, but about man himself, about you and me in a highly personal way,” he wrote (1959, pp. 32-33).

Hall observed two dimensions of culture that characterize the way individuals interact: high- and low-context, and polychronic versus monochronic time orientation.

High- and low-context have to do with how information is communicated: high-context interactions include minimal information and rely on what the receiver already knows. Low-context interactions include more information to make up for a lack of familiarity and contextual cues that make the meaning clear.

Hall's second dimension, polychronic versus monochronic time orientation, deals with the way time is structured in various cultures. Polychronic allows multiple tasks simultaneously and privileges interpersonal relationships over time demands, whereas monochronic time orientation focuses on "one thing at a time."

Hall believed that awareness of these hidden values governing interpersonal behavior could bring order and confidence to the individual sojourner.

Intrapersonal

Earley and Ang (2003) address the question: Why do some individuals adjust to new cultures while other do not? They introduce the concept of cultural intelligence (CQ) or "a person's capability to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts" (p. 59). This includes one's ability to interact successfully with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. But in contrast to other scholars, they spend the bulk of their time exploring an individual's internal wiring. Three of the four categories in their model—cognition, metacognition, and motivation—are intrapersonal, the fourth being external behavior.

- (1) *Cognition* or knowledge of one's self, environment, information handling, and thinking processes.
- (2) *Metacognition* or one's ability to piece together the available information to form a coherent picture.
- (3) *Motivation* or one's desire to engage the new environment given one's values, expectations.
- (4) *Behavior* or the enactment of communication by both verbal and non-verbal means in social situations.

Earley and Ang's particular interest is the individual sojourner who is committed to improving the human situation and learning more about the cultural unconscious. They overlap with Hall in their interest in behavior or the individual's knowledge of what to do and how to do it. This requires having a large behavioral repertoire of verbal and nonverbal responses from which to draw for a given situation. They posit that a culturally intelligent person must have the cognitive capability and motivation to acquire such behaviors (Earley & Ang, 2003, p. 81).

Integration for Intercultural Communication Research and Teaching

Next we propose several ways these intercultural perspectives might be systematically integrated for research and teaching. When we speak of integration we envision using the full template of perspectives to investigate a research question or to mount intercultural communication training. Integration would not mean that each perspective would be considered to the same degree in an article, dissertation, or course, but rather that all the perspectives would be considered in some way.

For brainstorming purposes, we suggest three possible ways to integrate: selected lens, sequential hierarchy, and dialogic identity.

Selected Lens

Using one perspective as the lens to observe the others, or what we've called *selected lens*, may produce a distinctive interpretive outlook and raise unique questions. Let's say the issue of interest is: How can cross-cultural teamwork be improved? Using an interpersonal lens to view how the other perspectives are related to teamwork is shown in Figure 3.

- **Universal values**
 - What interpersonal behaviors may stem from basic values team members share about relationships and work?
- Interpersonal Lens** -----→ **National heritage & belonging**
 - What interpersonal behaviors may reflect societal differences, such as the long- and short-term views of work?
 - How might different national perspectives influence what individual group members contribute?
- **Organizational membership & participation**
 - What interpersonal behaviors are associated with being a “team player” in this organization?
 - How are group members expected to interact as a team member in this organizational context?
- **Intra-individual, cognition & motivation**
 - What interpersonal behaviors stem from individual team members’ expertise and training?
 - To what degree are individual team members motivated to work together?

Figure 3: Teamwork viewed through an interpersonal intercultural lens

Through the universal lens, the issue of improving teamwork would shift from the interpersonal interaction toward the underlying values that may influence teamwork as seen in Figure 4.

- **Interpersonal interaction**
 - What universal values or guiding principles do team members share that may influence their interpersonal behaviors?
 - Are different value priorities contributing to conflict between team members?
- Universal Lens** -----→ **National heritage & belonging**
 - Are there universal values that transcend national differences among team members?
 - How might these values be used to mitigate national differences and to promote team cohesiveness?
- **Organizational membership & participation**
 - What universal values can contribute to the team’s organizational goal?
 - How do organizational operations reflect universal values?
- **Intra-individual, cognition & motivation**
 - What universal values impact the beliefs of individual team members?
 - What universal values may be used to motivate individual team members?

Figure 4: Teamwork viewed through a universal lens

Viewed through a universal lens, interest in national perspective involves values shared by different groups resulting from birthplace and environment, the organizational perspective as values shared by individuals joined for a common goal, the interpersonal as values reflected in what one does or says, and the intrapersonal as values that motivate individual thought and action.

Sequential Hierarchy

Sequential hierarchy is not a chronology but rather a conceptual starting point with one perspective following from another like the birth order of a family. In contrast to the selected lens approach, which views all perspectives from one vantage point, sequential hierarchy examines the perspectives in a logical progression. One could start with universal values as foundational followed by national, organizational, interpersonal, and intrapersonal perspectives as shown in Figure 5, or vice versa.

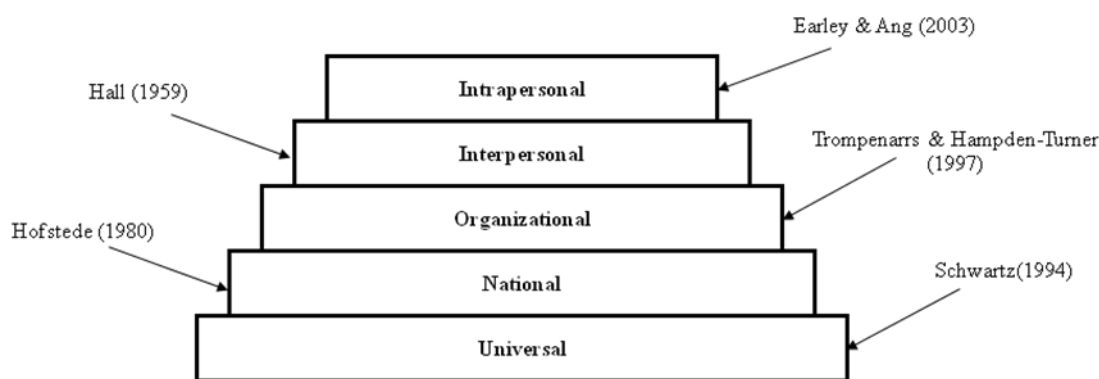


Figure 5: Universal Values as Foundational

Consider how sequential hierarchy might be used in an intercultural teaching unit, course or book. Discussion could begin with intrapersonal intercultural issues and self-analysis using issues posed by Earley and Ang (2003): What do I know about other cultures? To what extent am I motivated to learn about other cultures? How culturally intelligent am I? Which aspect of cultural intelligence can I leverage on to enhance my ability in interacting with people from other cultures? Building on this, interpersonal

interactions could be explored using Hall's (1959; 1966; 1976) observations about time orientation (polychronic versus monochronic) and degree of elaboration (low- and high-context) in interactions: How are my verbal and nonverbal behaviors different from and similar to others? This could evolve to issues related to working together drawing on Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997): Do the organizational groups to which I belong communicate differently? Hofstede's (1980; 1983; 1991; 2005) national cultural differences would be a natural extension of this. Finally, the discussion could evolve to core values individuals, groups, and nations share by nature of being human, using those Schwartz (1994 a & b; 1999) identified.

Research using sequential hierarchy might unearth individuals' personal knowledge and motivation, interpersonal behaviors, national and organizational membership, and universal values. Aspects at all levels and their inter-connectedness would be covered to some degree. While the hierarchy is linear, it may also be seen at iterative in terms of influence--e.g. grand children follow from the parents and grandparents yet each has an impact on the others.

Dialogic Identity

We suggest a framework applying the concept of *dialogic identity* as a third way to use the template of perspectives (Kent, 1993). Dialogic identity builds on social constructionism and the belief that communities shape the discourses of members and "knowledge itself is socially constructed and contingent rather than objective" (Grobman, 2000, p. 4; Thralls & Blyler, 1993). Interpersonal interaction, or dialogue, is central. Exercises requiring students to write to a real person and receive a response, in contrast to monologic exercises such as essays written to no one in particular, comprise one classroom offshoot of this theory.

Identity refers to an individual's complex of identities—gender, ethnicity, nationality, disciplinary, for example. Cultural identity "refers to an individual's sense of self derived from formal or informal membership in groups that transmit and inculcate knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, traditions, and ways of life" (Jameson, 2007, p. 207). An individual's cultural identity is uniquely shaped and reshaped by many inputs including experiences and exposure to settings and peoples.

Greater acceptance of the view that individuals have multiple, overlapping identities has led some to critique Hall (1959) and Hofstede (1980), unjustifiably on this point we believe. As Varner observed (2000b), it's been tempting to use Hall and Hofstede's constructs to stereotype or profile individuals, and some have yielded to this temptation. Unfortunately, labeling individuals or nations with the constructs they proposed, "may help us anticipate the . . . predispositions of cultural groups, but it still leaves us tantalizingly distant from the actual processes of specific individuals" (Driskill, 1997, pp. 254-255). However, rather than dismiss Hall and Hofstede's observations as "grand typologies . . . [that] may now have outlived their utility" (Jacob 2005, p. 514), we propose that their dimensions may be used as tools for analyzing dialogue to uncover differences and similarities in cultural identity.

We suggest Hall (1959) and Hofstede (1980) be coupled with the other perspectives identified here to form an analytical framework with dialogue at its hub as shown in Figure 6.

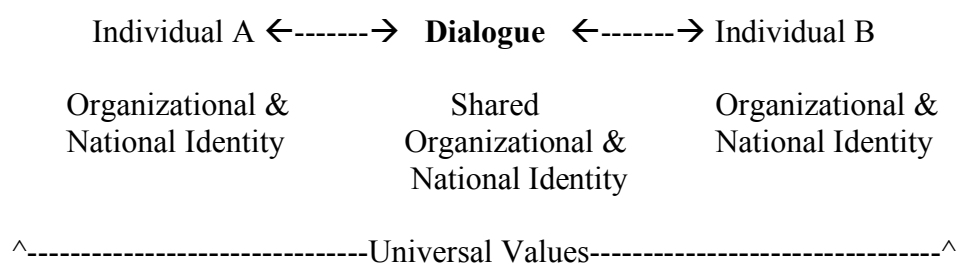


Figure 6: Dialogue Understood Via the Perspectives

The framework positions individuals with their cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral (Earley and Ang, 2003) aspects at the top. Individuals' verbal and nonverbal behaviors comprise the dialogue, which is the focus of attention here. This dialogue evidences things that are not seen, or individuals' internal wiring shaped by the national (country, region, city) and organizational (school/disciplinary, religious institutions, workplace) contexts in which they have lived, studied, and worked. An individual's verbal and nonverbal behaviors when dialoguing reveal some of these cultural influences—e.g. Individual A is ready to begin his presentation at the exact time when the meeting was scheduled to start. He talks a long time before he suggests what

he's recommending and provides less detail than Individual B would like. It's most likely that Individual A's cultural background and inclinations have influenced these verbal and nonverbal behaviors. If Individual B knows Hall (1959), Hofstede (1980), and Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner's (1997) dimensions it may help him objectively observe Individual A's behaviors and accept them as cultural differences rather than remain oblivious and possibly frustrated by them.

Underlying national and organizational impacts are the universal values that Schwartz (1994a & b; 1999) proposed. Individual A may understand that Individual B, like himself, is resistant or open to change. Individual A, like Individual B, will be self-interested, but also able to transcend this. These universals operate in their dialogue. Consider the choice of descriptive words, for example. Individual A's persistent use of different words to describe a problem than Individual B, suggests resistance to change. Negotiating language (sometimes unobserved) can coincide with negotiating change. Accepting change or real agreement may manifest itself when the language used to express a problem becomes uniform.

Or for example, the competing values of self-interest and self-transcendence may be observed in dialogic "turn-taking." Turn-taking has to do with the amount of speaking time an individual affords himself relative to others. Taking too many turns or frequently interrupting another individual's turns may reveal a degree of self-centeredness that does not jibe with universal expectations for appropriate behavior. Dialogic behaviors that step outside universally held values may be open to correction through many channels ranging from self monitoring to hearing another individual's suggestions regarding conversational fairness. These are ways that Schultz's values may be used to teach and research the use of dialogue.

Taking this a step further, Rogers (2008) suggests that the *dialogue itself* can be appropriated not only to analyze cultural differences but also to explore them. Building on Earley and Ang's (2003) notion of cultural intelligence, she proposed "CQ Talk" or "an individual's deliberate verbal and nonverbal behavior during an evolving interaction to find out what needs to be learned interculturally" (Rogers 2008, page to be determined).

CQ Talk may involve an individual asking about what s/he sees and hears in the dialogue.

- “If we set the meeting time at 2pm, when would you like us to start the presentation?” (Recall Hall’s polychronic versus monochronic time orientation.)
- “So given our personal commitment here, are you saying that we don’t need to follow the organization’s specifications for trading in this case? (Recall Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s universalism versus particularism regarding the importance of rules relative to relationship.)

CQ Talk may also involve questions about preferences, such as:

- “Do you need to consult with upper management or can we make a decision now? (Recall Hofstede’s notion of power distance.)
- “What has been your practice in the past? Would you anticipate changing this going forward?” (Recall Hofstede’s long- versus short-term orientation.)

Or when an individual reveals something about his/her national, disciplinary, or organizational background and how it might influence the interaction, s/he is using CQ Talk. Consider these examples:

- “Unfortunately, I’ve never worked in Germany before, so I’m not sure what’s appropriate. Might you assist me? (Recall Earley and Ang’s notion that cultural intelligence stems from the motivation to learn about other cultures.)
- “Ever since I studied engineering at MIT I’ve tended to write this way.” (Recall Earley and Ang’s notion of cognition and the influence of what one has learned.)
- “In our meetings we usually handle several major items. Would you prefer to look at these one at a time?” (Recall Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s sequential versus synchronic dimensions.)

Dialogic identify can involve not only observing but also using the dialogue to find out what one needs to know in order to work with another individual intercultural. We propose that this can be facilitated via exposure to Schwartz's universal values, Hall, Hofstede, and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's dimensions, and Earley and Ang's notions cognition, metacognition, motivation, and behavior.

Conclusion

This review of key intercultural studies over the last 50 years—Hall (1959; 1966; 1976; 1997), Hofstede 1980; 1983; 1991), Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997), Schwartz (1994a & b; 1999), and Earley & Ang (2003)--suggests a continuum of perspectives: intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, national, and universal. We recognize that the proposed perspectives are not rigid or constrained and scholarship by its nature does not fit into neat frames. But “perspectives” differ from frames. A frame isolates some aspects and excludes others; a perspective is a way of seeing that can accommodate peripheral vision. These scholars see wide and are overlapping in their interests, but we propose that they each look deeply at particular aspects. Integrating their perspectives may provide a more “robust methodology” involving “different approaches done at varying levels of analyses (Jacob 2005, p. 515).

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