

DM2556

Intercultural communication

Lecture 7

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Culture is defined as a learned set of shared interpretations about beliefs, values, norms and social practices.

‘the culture’s collective assumptions about what the world **is**, shared judgments about what it **should be**, widely held expectations about how people **should behave**, and predictable **behaviour patterns** that are commonly shared.’ (IC 78)

Intercultural communication (second definition) (IC 49)

‘Intercultural communication occurs when large and important cultural differences create dissimilar interpretations and expectations about how to communicate competently.’

An iceberg floating in the ocean. The top part is above the water surface, and the bottom part is submerged. The sky is blue with white clouds. The water is dark blue. The iceberg is white and blue.

'Culture'

10% above (visible), food, music, tools, clothes, etc

Iceberg analogy

90% below the surface (invisible): core aspects of culture, conventions, deeply held *beliefs, values, norms*

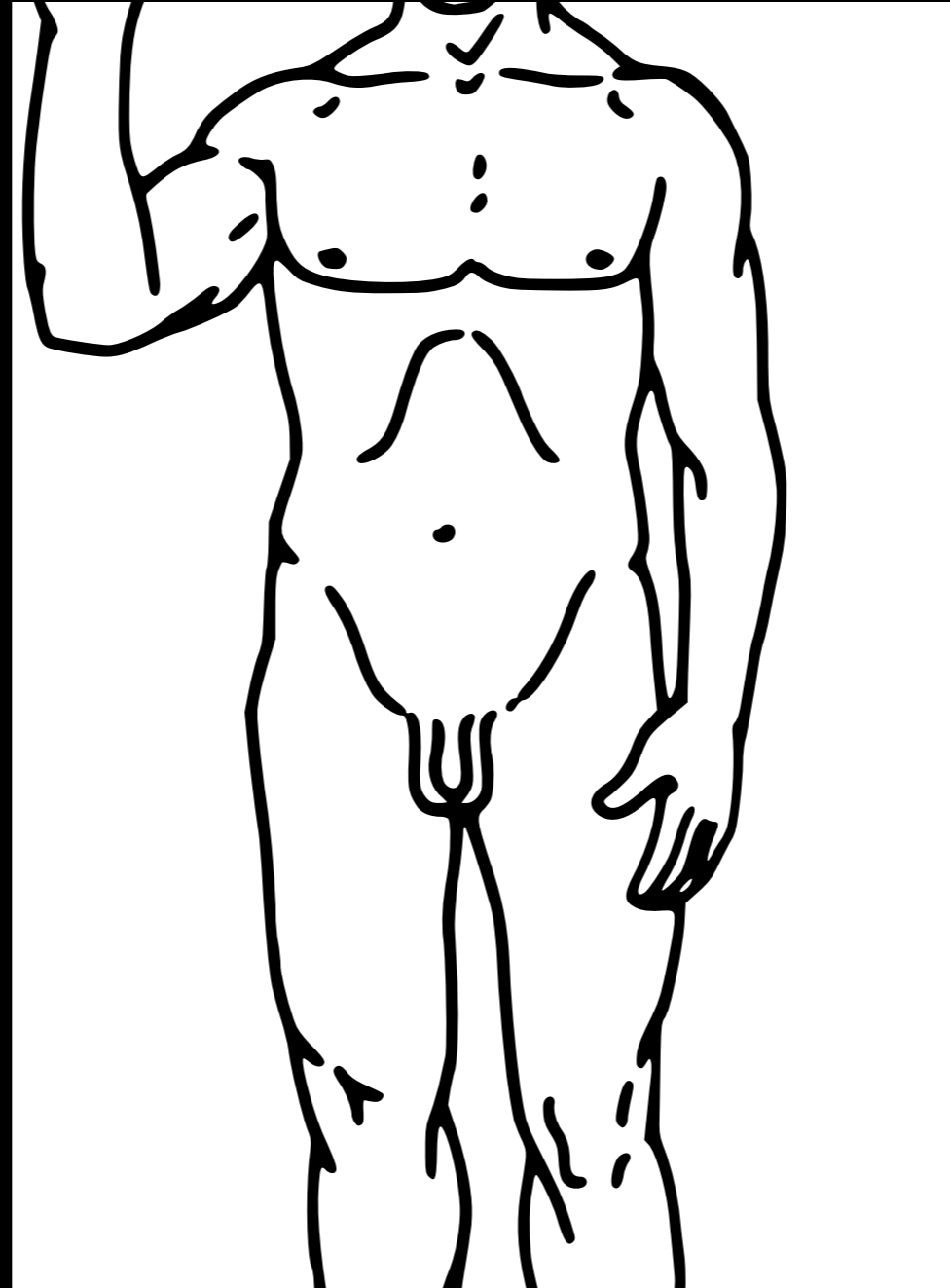
Cultural patterns

= shared patterns

Personal
identity,

Social
identity,

Cultural
identity



Identities

Enculturation - socialization into a primary culture. This takes place in and through communication.

Identities

Personal identity

Social identity

Professional identity

In-groups and out-groups

Gender identity

Ethnic identity

Cultural identity

National identity

Regional identity

Racial identity

Homogeneous ethnic composition

vs.

heterogenic composition

Identities

‘Indeed, in urban America today, it is the rare person who feels a clear sense of identification with one and only one group or segment of the community and nation. The typical urban person is a member of many in-groups and may relate him- or herself to many other reference groups.’ (Kim, *Becoming Intercultural*, 154)

Identities

Identity is narrative, the stories that cultures tell themselves about who they are and where they came from. Identities are both externally and internally defined - we are created by ourselves and by others at the same time.

Identities

Identities (individual/personal identities and collective/social identities) are constantly *negotiated* in everyday life

Identities

Stages of identity formation:

unexamined phase

acceptance phase

search or redefinition phase

achievement or integration phase

Identities

Multifaceted, activated in different contexts.

Roles or *personae* (Goffman)

Effects of digital and social media

Identities

Ethnocentrism

Social categories

Stereotypes
(ingroup & outgroup)

Prejudices

Intercultural transformation

*Cross-cultural adaption as a **process** of **acculturation** and **deculturation**, moving in the direction of **assimilation**.*

Cross-cultural adaptation is viewed essentially as a **communication process** between the individual and the environment (Kim, *Becoming Intercultural*, 31):

‘[...] the necessary condition of **communication** between the individual and the host environment for the occurrence of adaptation. Cross-cultural adaptation is viewed as occurring as long as the individual remains in interaction with the host environment.’ (Kim, *Becoming Intercultural*, 32)

Four key dimensions:

- Macro & micro levels
- Short & long term
- Stress response & learning
(*stress-adaptation-growth model*)
- Assimilation & ethnic plurality

Intercultural competence depends on
knowledge, *motivation* and skills

Individual predisposition (motivation):

Preparedness for change – cultural learning, voluntary, planned (or not)

Ethnic proximity – similarity/difference & compatibility/incompatibility

Adaptive personality – openness, strength, positivity

Individual predisposition:

- **Preparedness for change:** formal education; training; prior cross-cultural experience; voluntary or involuntary

- **Proximity** (or distance) of their ethnicity to (or from) that of the host environment (group level & individual level; ethnic markers & intrinsic markers)

- **Personality attributes:** adaptive personality: openness; strength; positivity

From *cultural identity* to *intercultural identity*

‘The term intercultural identity refers to an acquired identity constructed after the early childhood enculturation process through the individual’s communicative interactions with a new cultural environment.’ (Kim, *Becoming Intercultural*, 191)

Emergence of intercultural personhood: the notion of intercultural personhood focuses on the expanded psychological orientation beyond national and ethnic boundaries.

Synonyms: ‘cultural hybrid’, ‘mediating person’; double perspective; ‘third culture’

Components of intercultural competence

- inter/cultural knowledge
- tolerant of ambiguity and uncertainty
- **enactment/use** of inter/cultural knowledge and of tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty
- understanding of the **situational aspect** of communication

Strategies to develop intercultural communication competence

- Seek commonalities
- Overcome stereotyping and prejudice
- Flexibility and openness
-

‘BASIC’

- Display of respect
- Orientation to knowledge (individuals’ experiences shape what they know)
- Empathy
- Interaction management (skill regulating conversations and taking turns)
- Task role behaviour (tasks & problem-solving in groups)
- Relational role behaviour (interpersonal harmony and mediation)
- Tolerance for ambiguity
- Interaction posture (ability to respond to others in descriptive, nonevaluative & nonjudgmental ways)

Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

Six stages

Sensitivity stages

Characteristics

Ethnocentric denial

One's own culture is experienced as **the only real one**. Other cultures are avoided by maintaining psychological and/or physical distance. Here, people are generally disinterested in other cultures.

Ethnocentric defence

One's own culture is experienced as **the only good one**. The world is organized into 'us' and 'them', where we are superior and they are inferior.

Ethnocentric minimization

Elements of one's own worldview are experienced as **universal**. People expect similarities and they may insist on correcting others' behaviour to match their expectations.

Ethnocentric acceptance

One's own culture is experienced as **equal to others**. Acceptance does not have to mean agreement -- cultural difference may be perceived negatively, but the judgment is not ethnocentric. People are curious about and respectful of cultural difference.

Ethnocentric adaptation

The experience of another culture replaces perception and behaviour appropriate to that culture. One's own worldview is expanded to include worldview constructs from others. People may intentionally change their behaviour to communicate more effectively in another culture.

Ethnorelative integration

One's experience of self includes the movement in and out of different cultural worldviews.



Il corpo umano ha
la stessa forma
che il quadrato

Il braccio ha la stessa lunghezza
che il piede

Leonardo

