Chapter 1

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

• Explain the regulators of human behavior and identity.
• Understand the meanings and connotations of the terms culture, subcultures, co-cultures, subgroups, and microcultures.
• Describe how communication is defined by different cultures, and understand how people of diverse cultures communicate differently.
• Describe the relationship between culture and media.
Have you ever considered why there’s not just one human culture rather than many cultures? Biologists Rebecca Cann, Mark Stoneking, and Allan C. Wilson (1987) studied genetic material from women around the world and contend that all humans alive today share genetic material from a woman who lived some 200,000 years ago in sub-Saharan Africa. Their African “Eve” conclusion is supported by linguistic observations. Cavalli-Sforza, Piazza, Menozzi, and Mountain (1988) have shown that considerable similarity exists between Cann’s tree of genetic relationships and the tree of language groups, which hypothesizes that all the world’s languages can be traced to Africa.

The languages that vary the most from other languages today can be found in Africa. This suggests that these African languages are older. Africa’s Khoisan languages, such as that of the !Kung San, use a clicking sound that is denoted in writing with an exclamation point. Such evidence, along with genetic evidence, suggests that all 7 billion of us alive today share ancestry from one group in Africa. Yet among the 7 billion of us there are diverse ways of understanding the world, of languages, of beliefs, and of ways of defining our identities. In this chapter you’ll first read about the regulators of human behavior and identity. Then you’ll read about the related concepts of culture, subculture, co-culture, subgroup, and microculture. Finally, you’ll read about the concept of communication as something that is itself a
product of culture, meaning that how communication as a concept is defined and how communication is performed are very much part of each cultural group—so much so that it has been said culture and communication can only be understood together.

Sources of Identity

How, then, did so many distinct human identities develop? Climate changes and other pressures led to migrations out of Africa. The first wave may have been along the coastline of southern Asia through southern India into Australia. The second wave may have traveled to the Middle East, and from there, one branch went to India and a second to China. Those who left the Middle East for Europe may have actually traveled first through Central Asia and then throughout the world to other parts of Asia, Russia, the Americas, and Europe (Wells, 2002). Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio (2010) contends that our world, our environment, is so complex and so varied on the planet that diverse social networks developed to regulate life so that we could survive. Centuries of geographical separation lead to the development of diverse social network regulators of human life. These social network regulators of human life over the history of humanity have been the basis for ways of understanding the world, for beliefs, and for shared individual identities, which at times resulted in confrontations and conflicts between groups. Understanding these identities and the resulting confrontations explains our past, provides insights about the present, and predicts our future. Sir David Cannadine (2013) posits six forms of regulators of human life and identity: religion, nation, class, gender, race, and civilization.

Religion and Identity

Cannadine (2013) argues that religion is the oldest source of human identity and conflict. Religion can clearly be a regulator of how we live our lives and provide a clear sense of identity. Religious wars are those clearly caused or justified by differences in religious beliefs exclusive of other issues. Even with that restrictive definition, religious wars have resulted in tens of millions of deaths. The Crusades of the 11th through 13th centuries against the Muslims were blessed as a bellum sacrum (“holy war”) by Pope Urban II. In the 16th century there was a succession of wars between Roman Catholics and Protestants known as the French Wars of Religion. The Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) pitted Islam
against Christianity, as does ongoing violence in the Central African Republic. In the early 1990s, Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks in the former Yugoslavia were divided along Orthodox, Catholic, and Muslim lines. In Iraq, Muslims are divided between Sunni and Shi­ite. At other times, of course, religious groups have coexisted without conflict.

Let’s look in more detail into Cannadine’s remaining five sources of human identity and conflict.

**National Identity**

The nation-state may be the most significant political creation of modern times. For much of humanity from the 18th century on, national identity has superseded religious identity as a primary identity in many parts of the world. It has become common practice today to equate nation-state identity with cultural identity. In most cases, this is largely true. Ladegaard (2007), for example, demonstrated that in a large global corporation employing some 8,500 people in nearly 40 countries, employees perceive their nation-states as the frame of reference or identity while any conceptualization of a global identity is perceived as a hypothetical construction.

An individual born and raised in Spain who has worked for years for the Swedish technology company Ericsson at its service center in India most likely self-identifies as Spanish.

National identity is not descriptive when arbitrarily drawn political boundaries do not reflect peoples’ identities. For example, in Europe there are several examples of popular support for secessionist states. In the United Kingdom, a vote for independence for Scotland was held in 2014. In a hotly contested election, nearly 45% voted for independence. While the referendum failed, British Prime Minister David Cameron pledged reforms granting Scotland greater autonomy. Catalonia is a region of about 7.5 million people in northeastern Spain with its own culture and language. In late 2014, more than 80% of voters in Spain’s Catalan region voted to support secession in an unofficial, nonbinding poll. Against Spain’s government’s objections, the region’s parliament has begun the process of separating from Spain. In Belgium, Dutch-speaking Flemings in the north have pressed for separation from the French- and German-speaking Walloon population in the south.

Just as religious identity has been the basis for conflict, obviously national identity has been the basis for millions and millions of deaths from conflicts. Cultures provide diverse ways of interpreting the environment and the world as well as relating to other peoples. To recognize that other peoples can see the world differently is one thing. To view their interpretations as less perfect than ours is another.

How differences can lead to conflict can be seen in the evolution of the connotative meaning of the word *barbarian* from its initial use in the Greek of Herodotus to its meaning in contemporary English (Cole, 1996). To better understand the origins of hostilities between the Greeks and the Persians, Herodotus visited neighboring non-Greek societies to learn their belief systems, arts, and everyday practices. He called these non-Greek societies *barbarian*, a word in Greek in his time that meant people whose language, religion, ways of life, and customs differed from those of the Greeks. Initially, *barbarian* meant different from what was Greek.

Later, the Greeks began to use the word *barbarian* to mean “outlandish, rude, or brutal.” When the word was incorporated into Latin, it came to mean “uncivilized” or “uncultured.”
The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives the contemporary definition as “a rude, wild, uncivilized person,” but acknowledges the original meaning was “one whose language and customs differ from the speaker’s.” Conflict between nations often begins with the judgment that how others live their lives is in some ways less perfect than how we live our own.

**Class and Identity**

Marx and Engels (1850) claimed that identities were not created by religions or countries, but in the relationship to the means of production, that is, the capitalists who own the means of production and the proletariat, or “working class,” who must sell their own labor. The opening sentence of *The Communist Manifesto* is “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle” (Marx & Engels, 1850). In this understanding of class, conflict is inevitable. The collapse of Communism, though, has demonstrated that this understanding of class is not pervasive nor an all-encompassing source of identity (Cannadine, 2013). Max Weber believed that social class was determined by skill and education rather than by one’s relationship to the means of production. Following this, class refers to one’s economic position in a society. Basically, this is the basis of today’s use of the terms *upper*, *middle*, and *lower class*.

While classes may exist in any society, how clearly defined they are and how much they are a source of identity varies. When asked to identify an example of social classes, some think of British television drama series such as *Upstairs, Downstairs* and *Downton Abbey*, two of the most widely watched television dramas in the world, which depicted the lives of servants and masters. Others identify the Indian Hindu caste system as one of the oldest and most rigid. Based on heredity, castes ranked from the Brahmin to the Kshatriya, to the Vaishya caste of artisans, farmers, and merchants, to the lower castes of Shudra and Ati-shudra laborers. Below these were the Dalits (formerly known as Untouchables), who continue to experience social and economic marginalization 70 years after India’s constitution outlawed caste-based discrimination. Additionally, there were a large number of subcastes.

In France, the States-General established in 1302 provided a legislative assembly ranking members by hereditary class. The First Estate were the hightborn sons of families who had devoted themselves to religion. The Second Estate were the hightborn sons devoted to war. The Third Estate were the richest members of the bourgeoisie. The rigidity of the French hereditary system was one cause of the French Revolution. The United Kingdom’s Parliament reflected the European class structure. In the 19th century the term *Fourth Estate* was used to identify the press.
While in many countries it is not popular to accept that class is a regulator of human life and provides identity, a system of social classes that divides people, assigns values to differences, and is a source of identity can lead to conflicts.

**Gender and Identity**

According to feminists like Germaine Greer, gender identity is more significant than religion, nation, or class. In *The Whole Woman*, Greer (1999) wrote, “Before you are of any race, nationality, religion, party or family, you are a woman” (p. 11). However, Cannadine (2013) contends it is difficult to substantiate that there is a unifying identity solidarity among all women.

For at least the past half-century, various scholars have attempted to demonstrate fundamental differences between the genders. Rather than review that research and argue for separate gender identities, one chapter in this text is devoted to how nations treat genders differently. How a nation deals with gender reveals much about that nation’s values. Gender identity may be influenced more by one’s national identity and other factors than by one’s biology alone.

**Race, Skin Color, and Identity**

While class and gender may not have the same strength of regulation of human life and of identity creation as national identity, some would argue that race and skin color do. Race has been defined from two perspectives: biological and socio-historical.

It was popularly believed that differences between peoples were biological or racial. From the popular biological perspective, race refers to a large body of people characterized by similarity of descent (Campbell, 1976). From this biologically based definition, your race is the result of the mating behavior of your ancestors. The biologically based definition is said to derive from Carolus Linnaeus, a Swedish botanist, physician, and taxonomist, who said in 1735 that humans are classified into four types: *Africanus, Americanus, Asiaticus,* and *Europeaeus*. Race became seen as biologically natural and based on visible physical characteristics such as skin color and other facial and bodily features. In the
19th century the “racial sciences” rank ordered distinct races from the most advanced to the most primitive. Such science became the basis for hospitals segregating blood supplies, Hitler’s genocidal Germany, and South Africa’s apartheid state.

While some physical traits and genes do occur more frequently in certain human populations than in others, such as some skull and dental features, differences in the processing of alcohol, and inherited diseases such as sickle cell anemia and cystic fibrosis, 20th-century scientists studying genetics found no single race-defining gene. Popular indicators of race, such as skin color and hair texture, were caused by recent adaptations to climate and diet. Jablonski and Chaplin (2000) took global ultraviolet measurements from NASA’s Total Ozone Mapping Spectrometer and compared them with published data on skin color in indigenous populations from more than 50 countries. There was an unmistakable correlation: The weaker the ultraviolet light, the fairer the skin. Most scientists today have abandoned the concept of biological race as a meaningful scientific concept (Cavalli-Sforza, Menozzi, & Piazza, 1994; Owens & King, 1999; Paabo, 2001).

The second way to define race is as a sociohistorical concept, which explains how racial categories have varied over time and between cultures. Worldwide, skin color alone does not define race. The meaning of race has been debated in societies, and as a consequence, new categories have been formed and others transformed. Dark-skinned natives of India have been classified as Caucasian. People with moderately dark skin in Egypt are identified as White. Brazil has a history of intermarriage among native peoples, descendants of African slaves, and immigrants from Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, but no history of explicit segregation policies. So in Brazil, with the world’s largest Black population after Nigeria, and where half of the population is Black, there are hundreds of words for skin colors (Robinson, 1999), including a census category parda for mixed ancestry (see Focus on Culture 1.1).

The biologically based definition establishes race as something fixed; the sociohistorically based definition sees race as unstable and socially determined through constant debate (Omi & Winant, 1986). People may be of the same race but of diverse cultures: Australia and South Africa have very different cultures that include individuals of the same ancestries. People can be of the same culture but of different ancestries: The United States, for example, is a country of people of many ancestries.

Civilization and Identity

Cannadine’s (2013) final form of identity is civilization. Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee believed civilizations to be the most significant determinant of identity but also believed that civilizations were largely self-sufficient and sealed off from one another.

In the 19th century, the term culture was commonly used as a synonym for Western civilization. The British anthropologist Sir Edward B. Tylor (1871) popularized the idea that all societies pass through developmental stages, beginning with “savagery,” progressing to “barbarism,” and culminating in Western “civilization.” It’s easy to see that such a definition assumes that Western nations were considered superior. Both Western nations, beginning with ancient Greece, and Eastern nations, most notably imperial China, believed that their own way of life was superior.

In his 1996 book The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order, Samuel P. Huntington continued the position that civilizations were the most important form of human identity. In general, Huntington identified the world’s civilizations as Western, Latin American, Sub-Saharan African, Eastern Orthodox (including the former Soviet Union), Islamic, Confucian, Hindu, and Japanese.
Focus on Culture 1.1

U.S. Census Bureau Definitions of Race

Information on race has been collected in every U.S. census, beginning with the first in 1790, but what the U.S. Census Bureau considers as a racial category has changed in almost every census.

For example, according to Gibson and Jung (2002), from 1790 to 1850, the only categories used were “White and Black (Negro), with Black designated as free and slave.” In 1890 categories included mulatto, quadroon, octoroon, Chinese, and Japanese. The 2010 survey raised some concerns in that it included the term Negro in addition to Black and African-American.

During decades of high immigration, Irish, Italians, and many central European ethnic groups were considered distinct races. “Armenians were classified as white in some decades, but not in others” (Hotz, 1995, p. A14).

In the 1930 census, there was a separate race category for Mexican; later, people of Mexican ancestry were classified as White and today as Hispanic but who could be of any race.

Immigrants from India have gone from Hindu, a religious designation used as a racial category, to Caucasian, to non-White, to White, to Asian Indian.

Michael Omi, an ethnic studies expert at the University of California, Berkeley, described the resulting confusion: “You can be born one race and die another” (quoted in Hotz, 1995, p. A14).

A recent study showed that 9.8 million people in the United States changed their race or ethnicity identity response from the 2000 census to the 2010 census (Lieblier, Rastogi, Fernandez, Noon, & Ennis, 2014).

Culture

Can each of these sources of identity be considered a “culture”? To answer this question, we need to look at definitions of culture, co-culture, subculture, subgroup, and microculture.

Traditionally, the term culture was used to refer to the following:

- A community or population sufficiently large enough to be self-sustaining, that is, large enough to produce new generations of members without relying on outside people.
The totality of that group’s thought, experiences, and patterns of behavior and its concepts, values, and assumptions about life that guide behavior and how those evolve with contact with other cultures. Hofstede (1994) classified these elements of culture into four categories: symbols, rituals, values, and heroes. **Symbols** refer to verbal and nonverbal language. **Rituals** are the socially essential collective activities within a culture. **Values** are the feelings not open for discussion within a culture about what is good or bad, beautiful or ugly, normal or abnormal, which are present in a majority of the members of a culture, or at least in those who occupy pivotal positions. **Heroes** are the real or imaginary people who serve as behavior models within a culture. A culture’s heroes are expressed in the culture’s **myths**, which can be the subject of novels and other forms of literature (Rushing & Frentz, 1978). Janice Hocker Rushing (1983) has argued, for example, that an enduring myth in U.S. culture is the rugged individualist cowboy of the American West.

The process of social transmission of these thoughts and behaviors from birth in the family and schools over the course of generations.

Members who consciously identify themselves with that group. Collier and Thomas (1988) describe this as **cultural identity**, or the identification with and perceived acceptance into a group that has a shared system of symbols and meanings as well as norms for conduct. What does knowing an individual’s cultural identity tell you about that individual? If you assume that the individual is like everyone else in that culture, you have stereotyped all the many, various people in that culture into one mold. You know that you are different from others in your culture. Other cultures are as diverse. The diversity within cultures probably exceeds the

**Focus on Skills 1.1**

**Applying Cultural Concepts**

Throughout this book, take note of special boxes marked Focus on Skills that identify intercultural communication skills appropriate to the content of that chapter.

Members of a culture share symbols and behavior norms, and identify as members of the culture. While families are not cultures, we can use that setting to explore the concept of culture.

Assume you have a sister, brother, or very close childhood friend. Think back to your relationship with that sibling or friend as a child. Probably, you remember how natural and spontaneous your relationship was. Your worlds of experience were so similar; you shared problems and pleasures; you disagreed and even fought, but that didn’t mean you couldn’t put that behind you because you both knew in some way that you belonged together.

Now imagine that your sibling or friend had to leave you for an extended period. Perhaps your brother studied abroad for a year or your sister entered the military and served overseas. For some time, you were separated.

1. Identify some of the experiences your friend or sibling had that may have changed your relationship in some way. For example, during the time your brother studied abroad, he likely acquired new vocabulary, new tastes, and new ideas about values. He uses a foreign-sounding word in casual conversation; he enjoys fast food or hates packaged food; he has strong feelings about politics.

2. Identify the ways that that separation changed how the two of you now communicate.
Superstitions

Some cultural customs are often labeled as superstitions. They are the practices believed to influence the course of events. Whether it is rubbing a rabbit’s foot for luck or not numbering the 13th floor in a building, these practices are part of one’s cultural identification. We may not follow them, but we recognize them. For example, in Japan you may see a maneki neko, or “beckoning cat” figurine with its front paw raised. The beckoning gesture brings customers into stores and good luck and fortune into homes.

In China, sounds and figures reflect good fortune. The phonetic sound of the number 8, baat in Cantonese and between pa and ba in Mandarin, is similar to faat, meaning prosperity. The number 8, then, is the most fortuitous of numbers, portending prosperity. The date and time of the 2008 Olympics opening ceremony had as many eights as possible (8:08:08 p.m., August 8, 2008). In Hong Kong, a license plate with the number 8 is quite valuable. But the number 4 can be read as shi, which is a homophone for the word for “death,” so the Lucky Dragon Hotel & Casino, the first Las Vegas Asian-themed resort, has no room numbers or phone numbers with a 4. The nine-story hotel has no fourth floor. Superstitions are only a small part of culture but certainly an interesting part. Remember, culture refers to the totality of a people's socially transmitted products of work and thought.
This understanding of the concept of culture is common in popular literature and media in reference to national sources of identity. Thus people commonly think of national citizenship as one’s culture. Yet clearly within nations there are small groups that have continuity and that function as cultures in the sense that they regulate human behavior and provide important parts of identity. The terms subcultures, co-cultures, subgroups, and microcultures have been used to identify these groups.

**Subculture**

Complex societies are made up of a large number of groups with which people identify and from which are derived distinctive values and rules for behavior. These groups have been labeled subcultures. A subculture resembles a culture in that it usually encompasses a relatively large number of people and represents the accumulation of generations of human striving. However, subcultures have some important differences. They exist within dominant cultures and are often based on geographic region, ethnicity, or economic or social class.

**Ethnicity**

The term ethnicity refers to a group of people of the same descent and heritage who share a common and distinctive culture passed on through generations (Zenner, 1996). For some, tribes would be a more understood term. In Afghanistan, for example, people identify by tribes—Tajiks and Pashtuns. According to some estimates, there are 5,000 ethnic groups in the world (Stavenhagen, 1986). Ethnic groups can exhibit such distinguishing features as language or accent, physical features, family names, customs, and religion. Ethnic identity refers to identification with and perceived acceptance into a group with shared heritage and culture (Collier & Thomas, 1988). Sometimes, the word minority is used. Technically, of course, the word minority is used to describe numerical designations. A group might be a minority, then, if it has a smaller number of people than a majority group with a larger number. In the United States, the word majority has political associations, as in the majority rules, a term used so commonly in the United States that the two words have almost become synonymous. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term minority was first used to describe ethnic groups in 1921. Since that time, advantage has been associated with the majority and disadvantage has been associated with the minority.

Just as definitions of words such as culture have changed, the way words are written has changed. There has been considerable controversy surrounding whether terms such as Italian American should be spelled open or hyphenated. It has been argued that immigrants to the United States and their descendants have been called “hyphenated Americans,” suggesting that their allegiance is divided. Style manuals such as the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 5th edition, suggest omitting the hyphen.

As you read in Focus on Culture 1.1, the U.S. Census Bureau establishes categories of identity. Figure 1.1 shows categories proposed for the 2020 census. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget is considering major revisions in how people report racial and Hispanic identity on census and other federal government forms.

That ethnic identity can be the basis of a cultural identity and affect communication with others outside that group has been demonstrated by D. Taylor, Dubé, and Bellerose (1986). In one study of English and French speakers in Quebec, they found that though interactions between ethnically dissimilar people were perceived to be as agreeable as those between similar people, those same
Census researchers are studying whether to ask people about their “categories,” rather than “races” or “origins.” “Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish” may be included as a category along with other races or origins, rather than being a separate question.

A new category may ask people whether they are of Middle Eastern or North African origin. Now, most are categorized as White.

encounters were judged less important and less intimate. The researchers concluded that to ensure that interethnic contacts were harmonious, the communicators in their study limited the interactions to relatively superficial encounters.

**Co-Culture**

Whereas some define *subculture* as meaning “a part of the whole,” in the same sense that a subdivision is part of—but no less important than—the whole city, other scholars reject the use of the prefix *sub* as applied to the term *culture* because it seems to imply being under or beneath and being inferior or secondary. As an alternative, the word *co-culture* is suggested to convey the idea that no one culture is inherently superior to other coexisting cultures (Orbe, 1998).

However, mutuality may not be easily established. Take the case of a homogeneous culture. One of the many elements of a culture is its system of laws. The system of laws in our hypothetical homogeneous culture, then, was derived from and reflects the values of that culture. Now assume immigration of another cultural group into the hypothetical culture. New immigrants may have different understandings of legal theory and the rights and responsibilities that individuals should have in a legal system. In the case of a true co-culture, both understandings of the law would be recognized.

See Focus on Culture 1.3 for a discussion of New Zealand struggling with the concept of co-culture. The Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840, was an attempt to define the relationship between the British and the Māori.

**American Indians**

The Census Bureau uses the term *American Indian*. That term is derived from a colonizer’s worldview—that is, Columbus thought he was going to India—and the land was named for another Italian navigator. It is a label applied by someone other than themselves. During the civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s, the term *Native American* came into common use as it was considered to represent historical facts more accurately (“native” predated European colonization). Yet that term as well is a label applied by outsiders and for some has the pejorative meaning from the colonial era of “primitive.”

To use the labels that people apply to themselves would be to use labels such as Cherokee, Seminole, and Navajo. However, in many cases these labels are actually derived from names created by the groups’ neighbors or enemies. *Mohawk* is a Narraganset name meaning “flesh eaters.” *Sioux* is a French corruption of an Anishinabe word for “enemy.” *Navajo* is from the Spanish version of a Tewa word. A survey reported in 1997 showed that 96% of high school and college youth with American Indian or Native American heritage identified themselves with the nation name (e.g., Cherokee, Seminole).

In Canada, the term *Indian* is generally considered offensive. The term *First Nations* is now the preferred term. At the United Nations, the term *indigenous peoples* was first used in documents in 2002. Objections to this term include that it puts all peoples under one label.

In a 1977 resolution, the National Congress of American Indians and the National Tribal Chairmen’s Association stated that in the absence of a specific tribal designation, the preferred term is American Indian and/or Alaska Native. In a 1995 survey, 50% preferred the term American Indian to
The Maori of New Zealand

The original inhabitants of what is today known as New Zealand were Polynesians who arrived in a series of migrations more than 1,000 years ago. They named the land Aotearoa, or land of the long white cloud. The original inhabitants’ societies revolved around the *iwi* (tribe) or *hapu* (subtribe), which served to differentiate the many tribes of peoples. In 1642, the Dutch explorer Abel Janszoon Tasman sailed up the west coast and christened the land Niuew Zeeland after the Netherlands’ province of Zeeland. Later, in 1769, Captain James Cook sailed around the islands and claimed the entire land for the British crown. It was only after the arrival of the Europeans that the term Māori was used to describe all the tribes on the land. Those labeled Māori do not necessarily regard themselves as a single people.

The history of the Māori parallels the decline of other indigenous peoples in colonized lands, except for the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 by more than 500 Chiefs. The treaty was recorded in Māori and in English. Differences between the two versions caused considerable misunderstandings in later years. The Māori and the English may have had different understandings of the terms *governance* and *sovereignty*. In exchange for granting sovereignty to Great Britain, the Māori were promised full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their lands, forests, fisheries, and other properties and the same rights and privileges enjoyed by British subjects. The terms of the treaty were largely ignored as Māori land was appropriated as settlers arrived.

Activism in the late 1960s brought a renaissance of Māori languages, literature, arts, and culture, and calls to address Māori land claims as the Treaty of Waitangi became the focus of grievances. In 1975, the government introduced the Waitangi Tribunal to investigate Māori land claims, which resulted in some return of Māori land. In 1994, the government proposed to settle all Māori land claims for $1 billion—a very small percentage of current value.

Today, New Zealand’s population by descent is approximately 13% Māori and 78% Pakeha (European). New Zealand is governed under a parliamentary democracy system loosely modeled on that of Great Britain, except that there are two separate electoral rolls: one for the election of general members of parliament and one for the election of a small number of Māori members of parliament. Pakeha can enroll on the general roll only; people who consider themselves Māori must choose which one of the two rolls they wish to be on.

(Continued)
The following article appeared in an August 1999 edition of the newspaper The Dominion.

What Makes a Māori?

The definition of Māori for voting purposes ... is entirely one of self-definition. The 1956 Electoral Act defined a Māori as “a person belonging to the aboriginal race of New Zealand, and includes a half-caste and a person intermediate in blood between half-castes and persons of pure descent from that race.”

In 1975, the Labour government, prompted by then Māori affairs minister Matiu Rata, rewrote the act to define a Māori as “a person of the Māori race of New Zealand, and includes any descendant of such a person who elects to be considered as a Māori for the purposes of this act.” Such a person could choose either the Māori roll or the general roll. So, if you are descended from a Māori, then you are Māori and can choose to vote on the Māori roll.

Nigel Roberts, head of Victoria University’s School of Political Science and International Relations, says such self-identification is appropriate: “I think that ethnicity is very largely, in the late 20th century, a matter of identification—it is a cultural matter. The world has moved on from classifying people by blood, which was a meaningless definition.”

What about Treaty of Waitangi settlements? How does one prove entitlement to the land, fisheries quota, shares, and cash that are being returned to Māori in compensation for successive Crown breaches?

The definition is different again—and more stringently enforced. The South Island’s Ngai Tahu iwi was awarded $170 million compensation [in 1998] after a gruelling process of Waitangi Tribunal hearings, mandating, and negotiations. Ngai Tahu whakapapa (genealogy) unit spokeswoman Tarlin Prendergast says the iwi is in the fortunate position of having good records from an 1848 census of Ngai Tahu members, just before the Crown’s purchase of South Island land. And in 1920, a group of kaumatua had traveled around Ngai Tahu settlements recording the whakapapa of families. “Anyone who is Ngai Tahu must be able to show their lines of descent from a kaumatua alive in 1848.

“That is the basis of our tribal membership,” she says. “It is up to the individuals to align themselves with the runanga (area council) that they say they come from and to keep alive their connections. We call it ahi kaa—keeping the home fires burning.”


37% for Native American. Some activists such as Russell Means publicly are said to prefer American Indian to Native American (“People Labels,” 1995, p. 28). In the belief that people should be referred to by the term they themselves prefer, this text uses the label of specific nations or, when referring to all nations within the United States, the term American Indian.
Can one nation have two legal systems? Can two legal systems coexist equally? Some 567 distinct nations exist by treaty within the territorial limits of the United States. One is the federal government in Washington, D.C. The remaining 566 are American Indian nations recognized by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs that enjoy some areas of complete sovereignty and some areas of limited sovereignty. By treaty, the American Indian nations have their own territory, governmental structure, and laws; collect their own taxes; and are protected by U.S. federal law in the practice of their culture and religion (Dudley & Agard, 1993). The American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 proclaimed “to protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right to believe, express and exercise the traditional religions.”

Recent Supreme Court decisions, however, have negated this law. In 1988, in *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protection Association*, the Supreme Court held that the U.S. Forest Service could build a road through an area sacred to three Indian tribes. And in 1990, in *Employment Division of Oregon v. Smith*, the Court held that the state could deny unemployment benefits to two men fired from their jobs because they ingested peyote as part of their religion. The *Smith* decision has now been cited in cases involving a Sikh wearing a turban on the job, a Hmong couple protesting their son’s autopsy, and an Amish man refusing to post traffic signs. The Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 attempted to restore those rights; however, the point being made here is that the U.S. government exercises ultimate dominance over all indigenous peoples within its boundaries.

When nations adopt one system of laws, that system reflects the cultural values of one culture. But when one is surrounded by a more powerful culture or exists within the culture of the other, the less powerful culture must accept the laws and legal system of the other, thus subordinating any other understanding of legal systems. At least in this one way, the groups are not mutually powerful. The case of American Indians supports the argument that the term co-culture does not accurately reflect reality in the United States. Just as the term subculture has undesired consequences, so too does co-culture. In an attempt to avoid misunderstandings, this text avoids using either word. Instead, as much as possible, it uses the terms culture or microculture except when the terms subculture and subgroup are necessary to communicate a specific meaning.

**Subgroup**

Just as cultures are regulators of human life and identity, so are subgroups. Let’s look at the definition of the term subgroup and how subgroups can function in a similar manner to cultures.

Psychologists have long recognized that subgroups, or membership groups, have an important influence on the values and attitudes you hold. Like cultures, subgroups provide members with relatively complete sets of values and patterns of behavior, and in many ways pose similar communication problems as cultures. Subgroups exist within a dominant culture and are dependent on that culture. One important subgroup category is occupation. Think of large organizations and of occupations in which most people dress alike, share a common vocabulary and similar values, and are in frequent communication, as through magazines and Twitter. These subgroups include nurses and doctors, police officers, and employees of large organizations such as Microsoft. Subgroups usually do not involve the same large number of people as cultures and are not necessarily thought of as accumulating values and patterns of behavior over generations in the same way cultures do.

The term subgroup has at times been negatively linked to the word deviant. Actually, however, deviant simply means differing from the cultural norm, such as vegetarians in a meat-eating
society. Unfortunately, in normal discourse, most people associate deviance with undesirable activities. To understand what is meant by subgroups, you must recognize that vegetarians are as deviant as prostitutes—both groups deviate from the norm, and both are considered subgroups.

Membership in some subgroups is temporary; that is, members may participate for a time and later become inactive or separate from it altogether. For example, there are organizations devoted to Ford cars and trucks. Some people are preoccupied with that for a while and then lose interest and relinquish membership in the group. Membership in other subgroups may be longer lasting. One person may be a firefighter for life and another gay.

However, it is a mistake to think of membership in a culture or subgroup as being so exclusive that it precludes participation in other groups. All of us are and have been members of a variety of subgroups. Think of times in your life when you were preoccupied with the concerns of a certain group. At those times, you were a subgroup member. Examples range from Girl Scouts to Alcoholics Anonymous to youth gangs to religious cults to the military.

Recognize, too, that individuals can adhere to values and attitudes and behaviors of groups of which they are not members. The term reference group refers to any group in which one aspires to attain membership (Sherif & Sherif, 1953). This behavior is identified in contemporary slang as the wannabe, an individual who imitates the behavior of a group he or she desires to belong to. Some people dress like and talk like gang members but are not members of any gang.

Just as each of us has a cultural identity and one or more subcultural identities, we may also have a subgroup identity. While that group membership may be short-lived, it can, for a while, provide some symbols, rituals, values, and myths that you acknowledge and share with others.

**Microculture**

We’ve seen that some believe the term subculture implies “less important.” Others point out that the term co-culture doesn’t seem to be a realistic term as history suggests that one culture will be dominant over the other. The term subgroup seems also to imply “not important.” Others now advocate using the term microculture, which in biology referred to a small culture of microorganisms. Applied to human behavior, microculture refers to any identifiable smaller group bound together by shared symbol system, behaviors, and values.

Microculture, then, clearly communicates a smaller size, but national cultures can be large while others are so small that they may be smaller than some microcultures. Some scholars now suggest just using the term culture regardless of size or other factors.

Let’s now begin to address the statement from the beginning of this chapter that “culture and communication can only be understood together.”

**Communication**

From the perspective of the study of cultures, communication has two critical functions:

- Communication is the means by which individuals learn appropriate behaviors and the means by which those behaviors are regulated.
Communication is the means by which individuals having one group identity interact with individuals with other group identities and on a more general level the means by which the groups interact with one another as formal groups.

As we saw above, the history of human interactions between groups has been fraught with suffering and death. Can there be a more critical time to study intercultural communication?

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to developing an understanding of communication. Our purpose is not to highlight any one definition or model of communication. Rather, the purpose here is to develop an understanding of how communication is defined and performed differently by diverse cultures.

Cultural Definitions of Communication

It has often been said that communication and culture are inseparable. As Alfred G. Smith (1966) wrote in his preface to *Communication and Culture*, culture is a code we learn and share, and learning and sharing require communication. Communication requires coding and symbols that must be learned and shared. Godwin C. Chu (1977) observed that every cultural pattern and every single act of social behavior involve communication. To be understood, the two must be studied together. Culture cannot be known without a study of communication, and communication can only be understood with an understanding of the culture it supports.

Focus on Theory 1.1

Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory

What are communication theories and who develops them? Foss, Foss, and Griffin (1999) define theory as “a way of framing an experience or event—an effort to understand and account for something and the way it functions in the world” (p. 8). All of us develop and test personal communication theories to guide our interactions with others. You may believe that people with degrees and offices have more knowledge. That’s a personal communication theory. Life experiences may lead you to question that theory or refine it.

William B. Gudykunst first developed anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) as a theory to define effective communication. In 1988, he applied his theory to intercultural communication. Gudykunst uses the terms *in group members* and *stranger*. In interpersonal communication with in group members, the stranger experiences both anxiety and uncertainty. When the communication is between people of different cultures, the stranger becomes hyperaware of the cultural differences. Gudykunst also introduced the concept of mindfulness. When we communicate mindlessly, we use stereotypes to predict behavior. With mindfulness, categories become more specific and accurate.

Gudykunst (2005, p. 299) developed a series of axioms with AUM theory. For example, one is that an increase in our understanding of similarities and differences between our groups and strangers’ groups will produce a decrease in our anxiety and an increase in our ability to accurately predict their behavior. This axiom certainly presents an objective for learning more about cultures other than your own as you develop in your study of this textbook (for more information, see Gudykunst, 2005).

Note: Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory was based on Uncertainty Reduction Theory (see Focus on Theory 2.1).
Confucian Perspectives on Communication

That cultures define communication in diverse ways demonstrates that communication is an element of culture (Krippendorff, 1993). Definitions of communication from many Asian countries stress harmony (Chen & Starosta, 1996). This is most notable in cultures with a strong Confucian tradition. Societies heavily influenced today by Confucian history or tradition are China, North and South Korea, Singapore, and many East Asian countries with large Chinese communities.

The Chinese scholar K’ung-Fu-tzu, a title the Jesuits later Latinized as Confucius (550–478 BCE), lived in a time when the feudal system in China was collapsing. Confucius proposed a government based less on heredity than on morality and merit.

Confucius set up an ethical-moral system intended ideally to govern all relationships in the family, community, and state. Confucius taught that society was made up of five relationships: those between ruler and subjects (the relation of righteousness), husband and wife (chaste conduct), father and son (love), elder brother and younger brother (order), and friend and friend (faithfulness). Three of these five bases of relations occur within the family. The regulating factors in family relationships

Map 1.2 Countries in Asia With Strong Confucian Influences
are extended to the whole community and state. The chief virtue is filial piety, a combination of loyalty
and reverence, which demands that the son honor and respect his father and fulfill the demands of his
elders.

Confucianism emphasizes virtue, selflessness, duty, patriotism, hard work, and respect for hierar-
chy, both familial and societal. Just as George Washington and the story of the cherry tree is used in
the United States to teach the value of honesty, Confucianism reinforces its lessons with stories about
people who represent particular virtues. For example, Chinese children learn about such heroes as Mu
Lan, a woman of the 6th century who disguised herself as a man and served 12 years as a soldier so
that her ill father would not be disgraced or punished because he could not report for military duty.
Mu Lan teaches courage and filial devotion.

Confucianism guides social relationships: “To live in harmony with the universe and with your
fellow man through proper behavior.” Confucianism considers balance and harmony in human rela-
tionships to be the basis of society. June Yum (1988) describes five effects that Confucianism has on
interpersonal communication:

1. Particularism. There is no universal pattern of rules governing relationships: No rules govern
interaction with someone whose status is unknown. Instead of applying the same rule to everyone,
such factors as status, intimacy, and context create different communication rules for diverse people.
In fact, there are several patterns guiding interaction with others whose status is known. In the Confu-
cian countries of North and South Korea, it’s quite common for strangers to find out each other’s age
in the first few minutes of conversation and adjust their language to show respect. Koreans are friends
(chingu) only with those whose age is within a few years of their own. If a male acquaintance is older
than this “friendship age range,” he must be addressed as adjussi, or if it is a female acquaintance, as
adjumoni—terms that equate roughly to “uncle” and “aunt,” respectively.

2. Role of intermediaries. Rituals should be followed in establishing relationships. In China, it’s
not unusual to use a third party to negotiate with future in-laws about wedding plans and, in gen-
eral, to use a third party to avoid direct confrontations and resolve disputes (Gao & Ting-Toomey,
1998).

3. Reciprocity. Complementary obligations are the basis of relationships. Gratitude and indebt-
edness are important parts of Chinese culture. For example, a person feels uneasy to be indebted to
someone, and payback is necessary to achieve balance in the relationship. Reciprocity is the basic rule
of interpersonal relationships (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998). Obligations in relationships are contrary
to Western ideas of individualism.

4. In-group/out-group distinction. Scollon and Scollon (1991) argue that the distinction between
inside and outside influences every aspect of Chinese culture. In-group members engage in freer and
deeper talk and may find it difficult to develop personal relationships with out-group members (Gao
& Ting-Toomey, 1998). There can even be different language codes for in-group members.

5. Overlap of personal and public relationships. Business and pleasure are mixed. Frequent con-
tacts lead to common experiences. This contrasts with Western patterns of keeping public and private
lives separate. There are several Chinese terms for the English word communication, including jiao liu
(to exchange), chuan bo (to disseminate), and gou tong (to connect among people). The Chinese term
be denotes harmony, peace, unity, and kindness. Seeking harmony with family and others is the goal
of communication in Chinese culture (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998).
As a consequence of the value placed on balance and social harmony, Chang and Holt (1991) explain how the Chinese have developed many verbal strategies such as compliments, greeting rituals, and so on to maintain good interpersonal relations. Fong (2000), for example, has described the “luck talk” (speech acts related to luck) during the celebration of the Chinese New Year.

Korea adopted Confucianism as a state religion for six centuries. Yum (1987) explains how the Korean language easily accommodates the Confucian rules of relationships. For example, a grammatical form of direct address, called an honorific, shows respect. English speakers might vary in how they ask a child, a friend, or a grandparent “to sit” by using a sentence, whereas Korean speakers would use different forms of the root abn̄ta, meaning “to sit or to take a seat”:

- to a child, younger person, or person of lower rank: abnjo or abnjara (informal)
- to a friend or person of equal rank: abnjuseyo (polite)
- to an elder, person of higher rank, or honored person: abnjushipshio (more polite)

Korean has special vocabularies for each sex, for different degrees of social status and degrees of intimacy, and for formal occasions. When two people are introduced, they first engage in small talk to determine each other’s social position so they know who should use common language and who should use honorific language. And ironically, because Confucianism does not consider relationships with strangers, Koreans are said to ignore—often to the point that some in other cultures would consider rude—anyone to whom they have not been introduced.

In modern Korea, a generation gap exists: Junior business associates may address seniors with familiar rather than honorific language. The collectivist values of Confucianism mandate a style of communication in which respecting the relationship through communication is more important than the information exchanged. Group harmony, avoidance of loss of face to others and oneself, and a modest presentation of oneself are means of respecting the relationship. One does not say what one actually thinks when it might hurt others in the group.

In some sense, the same ethic can be found in business dealings. Much of commercial life in China is lubricated by guanxi, a concept best translated as “connections” or “personal relationships.” Guanxi is an alternative to the legal trappings of Western capitalism in that business is cemented by the informal relationships of trust and mutual obligation. Sometimes viewed as bribery, guanxi is less like using professional lobbyists than relying on mutual friends among whom trust can be maintained.

A Confucian perspective on communication would define it as an infinite interpretive process in which all parties are searching to develop and maintain a social relationship. Carey (1989) describes this as a ritual model of communication that “is directed not toward the extension of messages in space but toward the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs” (p. 18).

**Western Perspectives on Communication**

The study of communication in Western culture has a recorded history of some 2,500 years and is said to have begun in Greece with Aristotle’s *Rhetoric and Poetics*, which described the process of communication as involving a speaker, the speech act, an audience, and a purpose. To demonstrate how a communication theory reflects Western culture, let’s review one well-known theory made popular by David Berlo’s (1960) *The Process of Communication*. There are many other models available, but we will use this one to highlight the components of communication and how communication models themselves reflect the culture within which they were developed.
Cultural Understandings of Gift-Giving Practices

Assume you work as an intake interviewer at a taxpayer-funded U.S. social service agency that helps low-income residents achieve self-sufficiency. Your agency provides employment services, English as a second language instruction, a clearinghouse for support services in the community, and immigration services. As a county employee you received a copy of the county ethics policy that prohibits “soliciting or accepting gifts of any value from persons or firms doing business with the county that could reasonably tend to influence you in the performance of your duties or give the appearance of influence.”

At an interview with a Chinese couple and their children in early October, the mother offers you a wrapped gift. You say you cannot accept a gift. She insists, saying it is a mooncake. You bring the interview to a close and escort them out of your office, putting the gift back in her hand on the way out. That night you look up “mooncake” on the Internet and learn that in a Chinese family mooncakes are shared as a symbol of unity. But some also give them as part of the guanxi custom.

1. Should you violate laws to accommodate another’s cultural behavior?
2. Should you have handled the situation differently?
3. The couple is coming in for another interview. Do you say or do anything about the gift?

Focus on Skills 1.2

Components of Communication. Because the transmission models of communication clearly identified components in the communication process, they are particularly useful in beginning a study of communication. You are better able to understand communication when you understand the components of the process (DeVito, 1986). The components of communication, shown in Figure 1.2, are source, encoding, message, channel, noise, receiver, decoding, receiver response, feedback, and context.

Source. The source is the person with an idea she or he desires to communicate. Examples are CBS, the White House, your instructor, and your mother.

Encoding. Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately), humans cannot share thoughts directly. Your communication is in the form of a symbol representing the idea you desire to communicate. Encoding is the process of putting an idea into a symbol. The symbols into which you encode your thoughts vary. You can encode thoughts into words, and you also can encode thoughts into nonspoken symbols. Tobin and Dobard (1999), for example, have shown how messages were encoded in quilts made by slaves.
**Message.** The term *message* identifies the encoded thought. Encoding is the process, the verb; the message is the resulting object.

**Channel.** The term *channel* is used technically to refer to the means by which the encoded message is transmitted. Today, you might feel more comfortable using the word *media*. The channel or medium, then, may be print, electronic, or the light and sound waves of face-to-face communication.

**Noise.** The term *noise* technically refers to anything that distorts the message the source encodes. Noise can take many forms:

- External noise can be the sights, sounds, and other stimuli that draw your attention away from the message. Listening to an iPod while reading is an example of external noise.
- Internal noise refers to your thoughts and feelings that can interfere with the message. For example, being tired or hungry can distract you from paying complete attention to the message.
- Semantic noise refers to how alternative meanings of the source’s message symbols can be distracting. For example, a speaker’s use of uncalled-for profanity can cause us to wonder why the speaker used profanity and draw attention away from the message itself.

**Receiver.** The *receiver* is the person who attends to the message. Receivers may be intentional—that is, they may be the people the source desired to communicate with—or they may be any person who comes upon and attends to the message.
Decoding. Decoding is the opposite of encoding and just as much an active process. The receiver is actively involved in the communication process by assigning meaning to the symbols received.

Receiver Response. Receiver response refers to anything the receiver does after having attended to and decoded the message. That response can range from doing nothing to taking some action or actions that may or may not be the action desired by the source.

Feedback. Feedback refers to that portion of the receiver response of which the source has knowledge and to which the source attends and assigns meaning. You as a reader of this text may have many responses, but only when you respond to a survey or send an e-mail to the author does feedback occur. When a radio interview show host receives enthusiastic telephone calls and invites a guest back, feedback has occurred. Feedback makes communication a two-way or interactive process. Linear and interactive models seem to suggest that communication is an isolated single discrete act independent of events that preceded or might follow it.

Context. The final component of communication is context. Generally, context can be defined as the environment in which the communication takes place and helps define the communication. If you know the physical context, you can predict with a high degree of accuracy much of the communication. For example, you have certain knowledge and expectations of the communication that occurs within synagogues, mosques, and churches. At times, you intentionally plan a certain physical environment for your communication: You may want to locate your romantic communications in a quiet, dimly lit restaurant or on a secluded beach. The choice of the environment, the context, helps assign the desired meaning to the communicated words.

In social relationships as well, the relationship between the source and receiver may help define much of the meaning of the communication. Again, if you know the context, you can predict with a high degree of accuracy much of the communication. For example, knowing that a person is being stopped by a police officer for speeding is enough to predict much of the communication. Certain things are likely to be said and done; other things are very unlikely. Culture is also context. Every culture has its own worldview; its own way of thinking of activity, time, and human nature; its own way of perceiving self; and its own system of social organization. Knowing each of these helps you assign meaning to the symbols.

The component of context helps you recognize that the extent to which the source and receiver have similar meanings for the communicated symbols and similar understandings of the culture in which the communication takes place is critical to the success of the communication. From this perspective, communication is intentional, is symbolic, and involves at least two people. You might say that communication occurs when symbols are manipulated by one person to stimulate meaning in another person (Infante, Rancer, & Womack, 1993).

Not everyone agreed with the Berlo (1960) model. For example, semanticist S. I. Hayakawa (1978) noted that decoding—or listening—seems to give the receiver a subordinate role to the source. When someone speaks, others stop what they are doing to listen. Therefore, it would seem that the source is viewed as more active and as more important in the process. Hayakawa’s observation makes it clear that cultural beliefs affect how the process of communication is defined.
The Berlo model can lead you to think of communication as consisting of an active source and a passive receiver. Speaking may be considered a more noble activity and may demand that others cease other activities to listen. Indeed, in many cultures, listening does place one in a subordinate role to that of the source. In other cultures, where the group’s history and knowledge are told and retold verbally, the role of the listener who accurately remembers is critical. The story is told that the Puritans, believing themselves to have been called to save heathens, preached to the American Indians. The Indians affirmed conversions to Christianity to the delight of the early settlers. Then the Indians told the Puritans the Indian story of creation and asked the settlers to affirm it. The Indian communication style was not to disagree but to listen and affirm. The Puritans were disappointed that communication, in the Western understanding of communication, had failed. In the American Indian understanding of communication, it had not.

The Media of Intercultural Communication

One component of the communication process is the channel, or medium, by which the encoded message is transmitted. In past centuries, written letters carried by human couriers were the dominant media. In the Roman Empire of the first century BCE, letters and books were copied and distributed among friends that could reach Britain in 5 weeks and Syria in 7 weeks (Standage, 2013). In the 20th century, electronic mass media became dominant. Through today’s social media, communicators create online communities to instantly share messages and images. The focus in this text is not on the form of media use but rather on how culture is reflected in media use.

Human Couriers and Intermediaries

One early form of intercultural communication still in widespread use today is human couriers. Another person can be used as a medium. You can easily imagine messages being entrusted to a courier to deliver to a faraway village.

In some cultures, intermediaries are used instead of face-to-face confrontation to reduce the risk of losing face or the value or standing one has in the eyes of others. Ting-Toomey (1985) has proposed that cultures like the United States with a greater concern for privacy and autonomy tend to use direct-face negotiation and express more self-face maintenance, whereas cultures such as China with a greater concern for interdependence and inclusion tend to use indirect-face negotiation and express more mutual-face and other-face maintenance. In a study conducted in central China, Ringo Ma (1992) confirmed that a friend or respected elder intervenes in interpersonal conflict situations, serving as a message carrier.

Telephone

It is estimated that as of 2015 there were 1.1 billion landlines in use. Alexander Graham Bell expected the telephone to be more of a broadcasting medium, more like what radio would become. Well into the 20th century, telephone executives believed the telephone was primarily a medium for business and actually discouraged “socializing” by telephone (see Figure 1.3).

Using the telephone in intercultural interactions has the barriers of the lack of contextual cues other than those related to voice. For this reason it may be the conversation openings that are significant in establishing the first impression from which the relationship develops. An opening sequence that violates a cultural expectation may lead the parties to develop negative views and attitudes toward each other (Pavlidou, 2006). Later language misunderstandings, such as the meanings of certain words, idioms, and humor, can exacerbate the problem.
Figure 1.3  Landline and Mobile Phones in Use

A. Landline and Mobile Phones in Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Landlines</th>
<th>Mobile Phones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>22.39</td>
<td>338.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>25.52</td>
<td>1,011.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>36.52</td>
<td>227.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>43.68</td>
<td>257.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>63.63</td>
<td>158.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>121.99</td>
<td>382.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>231.00</td>
<td>1,305.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Landline and Mobile Phones in Use, Percentage Penetration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Landlines</th>
<th>Mobile Phones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>131%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>95.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>125.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>159.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>118%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
<td>125.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Central Intelligence Agency (2017).

*Penetration is the percentage of the total population.
How We Answer the Telephone

France  “Allo.” The French often add their name and the phrase “Qui est à l’appareil?” That is, “Who is on the phone?”

Italy  “Pronto” or “Ready.” The caller may then ask, “Chi parla?” or “Who’s speaking?”

Germany  Last name, such as “Schmidt” or “Mueller.”

Spain  “Diga” or “Speak.”

Mexico  “Diga” or “Bueno,” meaning “Good” or “Well.”

Southeast Asia  Most commonly a version of “Hello.” Hong Kong Chinese say “Wei.”

Japan  “Moshi moshi,” the equivalent of “Hello,” or perhaps “Hai,” which is “Yes.”


What is commonly called a cell phone in the United States is called a mobile in the United Kingdom, cellular in Latin America,keitai (portable) in Japan, shou-ji (hand machine) in China, nalle (teddy bear) in Sweden, Pelephone (wonder phone) in Israel, and handy in Germany. By whatever name, the estimated number of mobile phones in 2015 was 7 billion. Because the United States relied heavily on landlines, mobile phone adoption was slower in the United States than in other countries. In Africa and Asia, where landlines were not as common, and in Europe, where mobile phone service is less expensive than landlines, mobile phone adoption was faster (Ling, 2005). In 2005, for example, 95% of European teenagers had mobile phones while 45% of U.S. teenagers did (Ling & Baron, 2007).

Text messaging is the more commonly used term in North America, the United Kingdom, and the Philippines for what other countries are more likely to refer to as short message service (SMS). Shuter and Chattopadhyay (2010) compared texting in the United States and India and found a definite relationship to each culture’s norms. For example, consider where texting is done. Consistently, people in the United States are more likely to send and read messages in public social settings like restaurants, shops, and movie theaters. Perhaps because of the area where texting is done, people in the United States text when they are with strangers and acquaintances or friends but much less than with family members. Indians text when they are with family members or boyfriends or girlfriends. People in the United States are more likely to consider it impolite to text in a classroom, in a movie theater, at dinner, and while conversing with others, especially with loud text alerts. Indians are more likely to find as impolite swearing in texts. Shuter and Chattopadhyay conclude that the social use of texting is guided by forces deeply imbedded in each culture.

In sub-Saharan Africa, with the proliferation of mobile phone networks, countries are moving directly to the digital age without costly development of extensive landline networks. Household landline access is near zero. While in 2002 one in ten in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, and Ghana owned a
mobile phone, today in some African countries, such as South Africa and Nigeria, mobile phones are as common as in the United States. The percentage of these that are smartphones with access to the Internet and apps, however, is lower.

**Internet**

The Internet can be defined as the worldwide interconnection of individual networks operated by government, industry, academia, and private parties. Since the mid-1990s, the Internet has grown to serve 3.17 billion users in every part of the world and has forever changed how we communicate. Figure 1.4 shows the 10 countries with the most Internet users.

![Figure 1.4 Internet and Facebook Users, 2017](image)

*Source: Internet World Stats (2017).*
There are more than 2.5 times the number of Internet users in China as in the United States, and
the United Kingdom has the highest percentage of Internet users. About one-half of the world’s popu-
lation now has Internet access.

Language Use. The Internet originated in the English-speaking world. Computers are English-or-
iented. Early computer systems were limited to the characters in the American Standard Code for
Information Interchange (ASCII), making, for example, texts transmitted unaltered from Francophone
keyboards appear as garbage on English-favoring keyboards; Netscape and Java are in English; search
engines were developed in and for English. At its origin, the language of the Internet was English. But
as Figure 1.4 shows, the Internet is now truly worldwide. That suggests two questions:

- Will the Internet encourage the worldwide dominance of English? Will the Internet, then,
become a major force blending the world’s population together?
- Will Internet users favor native languages, and over time will the dominance of English dimin-
ish? Will the divisions of language groups force the Internet to use other languages, perpetuat-
ing divisions based on existing language use lines?

We can’t fully answer these questions by examining the language abilities of Internet users. There
are more Internet users worldwide who can speak and read English than there are Internet users in
predominantly English-speaking countries. While these multilingual users might be able to use English,
they might also prefer to use their first language. Figure 1.5 shows the percentages of websites using
various content languages as of late 2016.

A study first reported in 2000 examined the language use of young Egyptian professionals. For the
reasons stated above, the dominant language use online was English, but a previously little-used writ-
ten form of Romanized Egyptian Arabic also was used for expressing personal thoughts and feelings.
This group used Romanized Egyptian Arabic as a reinforcement of their local identity (Warschauer,
El Said, & Zohry, 2002). Today, though, with the development of Unicode, the computing industry
standard for the consistent encoding, representation, and handling of text, most of the world’s writing
systems can be displayed reliably.

Perhaps the answer to the questions above is yes: At least in the immediate future, English may
continue to be the dominant language on the Internet, but at the same time technology is supporting
the use of local languages worldwide. Additionally, translation technology will make it possible for
everyone to use any preferred language and be understood by anyone. Google Translate provides text
translations for over 100 languages, including Chinese characters. Translations also are built into the
Chrome web browser.

Design Elements. As you can see in the model of communication presented earlier, communication sym-
bols can be verbal and nonverbal. While translation technology may deal to some extent with the verbal
symbols, there remain the nonverbal. Research has demonstrated that culture is reflected in the nonver-
bal aspects of the Internet. Singh, Zhao, and Hu (2003) assert that “the web is not a culturally neutral
medium,” because websites contain unique design elements that give “country-specific websites a look and
feel unique to the local culture” (p. 63). Design elements include different icons, colors, and site structures
(Barber & Badre, 1998). Schmid-Isler (2000) compared Western and Chinese Internet news sites and found
that their layout is different. She contended that this difference is related to culturally influenced percep-
tions of information storage and display. For example, Google has clean lines and uncluttered “negative
Chinese web users are accustomed to pop-ups and floating banner ads. Chinese webpages are “packed with information and multimedia graphics, requir[ing] many scroll-downs to see the whole page” (Clark, 2016, p. 166). In contrast, Google seems static and dull to Chinese web users.

**Social Media**

The term *social media* is used to describe a variety of Internet-based platforms, applications, and technologies, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, that enable people to socially interact with one another online. Social media sites are based on user participation and user-generated content. See Figure 1.4 for Facebook use worldwide. While Facebook has 1.7 billion users, it is not alone (see Figure 1.6 for leading social networks). Japan’s Mixi had nearly 27 million members.
in 2010 (about 20% of the population; “Profiling the Facebooks of the World,” 2010) and Russia has two local social network platforms that outperform Facebook.

For many Africans, smartphones became a replacement for technologies that, purchased individually, would be cost-prohibitive. A smart mobile device for African youth becomes a radio, a streaming video device, and a computer. Studies show that when Africans go online with their mobile phones, they spend much of their time on social media platforms. Facebook offers its free Internet service for mobile users in half the countries in Africa with a combined population of 635 million. As Facebook’s service does not provide full access to all of the Internet, some have labeled it “digital colonialism.” African companies are launching local social media platforms. In South Africa, MXit, a

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**Figure 1.6 Leading Social Networks Worldwide (February 2017)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Networks</th>
<th>Active Users (Millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telegram (Russia)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBM</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VKontakte (Russia)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yy (China)</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINE (Japan)</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sina Wiebo (China)</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viber</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baidu Tieba (China)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumblr</td>
<td>555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QQ Zone (China)</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WeChat (China)</td>
<td>697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QQ (China)</td>
<td>853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook Messenger</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WhatsApp</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Data from Chaffey (2017).*
free instant messaging application, has an estimated 10 million users (Essoungou, 2010; Kalan, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2015b).

Yoojung Kim, Dongyoung Sohn, and Sejung Choi (2011) compared U.S. and Korean college student SMS use and found clear cultural connections. In both countries the reasons for using SMS were the same: seeking friends, social support, information, entertainment, and convenience. The difference was that, for students in the United States, socially close others (e.g., family members, close friends) were only a minor part of their online social networks, while families and close friends were 70% of the Koreans’ networks. The researchers conclude that students in the United States tend to focus more on entertaining themselves by making new friends through SMS, while Korean students tend to focus more on existing relationships with socially close others from whom they can acquire useful information and social support. Abeele and Roe (2011) found a similar pattern comparing Flemish and U.S. new college students. Flemish students were more likely to text and instant message precollege friends, while U.S. students were more likely to text and instant message new friends.

Many countries limit or censor the Internet and social media. In 2015, Freedom House documented that 48 countries censored criticism of authorities on the Internet. Other types of content censored by a smaller number of countries include news on terrorism, accusations of corruption, political opposition, satire and ridicule commentary, content considered insulting to a religion, online petitions and campaigns, and information about minorities. For example, in the summer of 2012, Muslims and members of the Bodo tribal community in northeastern India clashed. Hate messages and altered photos of atrocities against Muslims were spread on social media sites. The government forced Twitter to block accounts and imposed a limit on the number of messages per day and forced Facebook and Google to block websites and user accounts. The Google Transparency report names India as one of the countries that routinely ask Internet firms to remove content. Freedom House documented only 14 countries with no Internet censorship (Freedom House, 2015).

Earlier you read that culture cannot be known without a study of communication, and communication can only be understood with an understanding of the culture it supports. Today’s Internet and social media use demonstrates the continuing truth of that statement. Cultures communicate with the Internet and with social media in ways that reflect the values of that culture. You’ll see this idea developed more in future chapters.

**SUMMARY**

Our culture provides regulation for life and provides individual identities. Six forms of regulators of human life and identity are religion, nation, class, gender, race, and civilization. Today, national identity has become synonymous with cultural identity. The term *culture* refers to the totality of a large group’s thoughts, behaviors, and values that are socially transmitted as well as to members who consciously identify with the group.

Twentieth-century scientists have found no single race-defining gene. The sociohistorical concept of defining race explains that racial categories have varied over time and between cultures. Worldwide, skin color alone does not define race. Scholars from a variety of disciplines have argued that White people in countries such as the United States and South Africa are observed by other groups to be distinct, superior, and unapproachable, whereas Whites themselves are relatively unaware of their racial identity compared to people of color.
The term *subculture* refers to a group that exists within a culture, usually based on social class, ethnicity, or geographic region. As the prefix *sub* can mean “less than,” some scholars prefer the term *co-culture* to indicate that no one culture is inherently superior to other coexisting cultures. Finally, the term *subgroup* refers to a group that provides members with a relatively complete set of values and patterns of behavior and in many ways poses similar communication problems as cultures. To avoid negative connotations with these words, the term *microculture* is becoming more commonly used.

A Confucian perspective on communication would define it as an infinite interpretive process in which all parties are searching to develop and maintain a social relationship. A Western perspective would define it as a process involving a speaker, the speech act, an audience, and a purpose. Components of communication can include source, encoding, message, channel, noise, receiver, decoding, receiver response, feedback, and context.

One component of the communication process is the channel or media by which the encoded message is transmitted. Today’s new media use reflects significant aspects of culture. For example, people in the United States are more likely to send and read text messages in public social settings like restaurants, shops, and movie theaters; Indians text when they are with family members or boyfriends and girlfriends. And Western and Chinese Internet news sites have different layouts, which is related to culturally influenced perceptions of information storage and display.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Damasio’s thesis is that culture is a regulator of human life and identity. Give examples of what culture provides to its members. What is not a product of culture?

2. Cannadine posits six forms of regulators of human life and identity. Which have been major sources of conflict? How can that conflict be explained?

3. Why do you believe social class differences, ethnic identity, and skin color are uncomfortable for many people in the United States to discuss?

4. One study found that interactions between ethnically dissimilar people were judged to be relatively superficial encounters. The researchers concluded that communicators were trying to ensure that the interaction was harmonious. What do you believe could explain this?

5. Address the two questions presented in this chapter: Will the Internet encourage the worldwide dominance of English, or will native language use on the Internet weaken the dominance of English?

6. What could justify a nation censoring the Internet and social media?

**KEY TERMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>channel</th>
<th>culture</th>
<th>heroes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>co-culture</td>
<td>decoding</td>
<td>honorific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication</td>
<td>encoding</td>
<td>message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confucianism</td>
<td>ethnic identity</td>
<td>microculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>context</td>
<td>ethnicity</td>
<td>myths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultural identity</td>
<td>feedback</td>
<td>noise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Recently, BCE (before the common era or current era) and CE (common era or current era) have been used to avoid the more culturally limited BC (before Christ) and AD (anno Domini, in the year of the Lord).

READINGS

All readings are from Intercultural Communication: A Global Reader (Jandt, 2004).

Claude Lévi-Strauss, “Race, History, and Culture” (p. 1)
Wally Penetito, “Research and Context for a Theory of Maori Schooling” (p. 173)
William J. Starosta, “On Intercultural Rhetoric” (p. 307)

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