# Introduction

Guido Rings and Sebastian Rasinger

*The Cambridge Handbook of Intercultural Communication* seeks to provide a comprehensive, interdisciplinary and state-of-the-art exploration of intercultural communication. To this aim, across it five parts, it offers: (I) a thorough discussion of key concepts; (II) an in-depth exploration of selected theoretical approaches; (III) a survey of particularly helpful methods and methodologies; (IV) a multidisciplinary overview of current research in various domains of application; and (V) a presentation of key issues pertaining to the assessment of intercultural communication and competence. In particular, the volume addresses the relationship between intercultural communication and power, and provides a contextual exploration of contrastive, interactional, imagological and ethical aspects.

*The Handbook* has been designed as a reference book for lecturers, researchers, professionals and students in the field of intercultural communication, including advanced undergraduate as well as postgraduate and research students. With more than thirty chapters from leading experts in the field, it serves as a collection of current research which will be of interest to a wide-ranging audience, from those working in cultural studies to those in linguistics, anthropology, intercultural business communication, sociology, psychology and other related sub-disciplines. It is, however, not intended as a textbook introducing intercultural theory. There are several introductory textbooks on the market, including, for example, Scollon, Scollon and Jones's *Intercultural Communication: A Discourse Approach* (2012), Jackson's *Introducing Language and Intercultural Communication* (2014) and Jandt's *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication: Identities in a Global Community* (2016), all of which serve this purpose.

Since 2010 there has been a proliferation of handbooks on intercultural communication on the market. Yet the majority take a comparatively

narrow approach to the topic, often with a linguistic focus. We would like to propose a more comprehensive and interdisciplinary volume that explores contrastive, interactive, imagological and interlingual approaches to intercultural communication within the context of power structures that shape cultural encounters. The groundwork for such an integrative approach has been laid by Stuart Hall's discussion of different portrayals of culture from different positions of power (1980 [1973]; 1985) and by Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (2010 [1994]). In that seminal work, Bhabha elaborates on the 'problem of cultural interaction [at the] boundaries of culture, where meanings and values are (mis)-read or signs are misappropriated' (p. 50), which leads directly to questions of basic misunderstanding examined in particular by contrastive and interactional approaches. On the other hand, his discussion of the construction of cultural difference as a consequence of 'the attempt to dominate in the name of a cultural supremacy' (p. 34) enhances critical interrogations of stereotyping, discrimination, racism and actual mechanisms of exclusion, which are more frequently addressed by imagological approaches.

Unfortunately, in the development of intercultural communication as an academic discipline, and consequently in most handbooks, readers and course books, the link between these aspects has often been overlooked. There are numerous reasons for this, but the marginalization of power questions in the discipline, which has repeatedly been highlighted by Nakayama (e.g. Halualani & Nakayama, 2010: 5), correlates in our opinion with a frequently rather narrow contrastive focus on two or more national cultures in the search for a quick fix to diplomatic and business relations from the 1950s to the 1990s. It also correlates with the similarly limited attention given to differences in speech acts within interpersonal interaction for the purpose of detailed linguistic analysis and application. On the other hand, imagological studies have far too frequently stopped at levels of deconstruction with relatively little concern for the development of applied solutions to day-to-day challenges in cultural encounters.

In contrast, this volume aims to transfer the debates of power relations to contemporary monocultural settings, within which we see a need to consider contrastive, interactional and imagological approaches to intercultural communication as well as their interdependence in a much more balanced framework. Based on original contributions to the field, *The Handbook* takes a genuinely interdisciplinary approach to examining current developments in the field. It is divided thematically into five parts: Part I *Introducing Intercultural Communication* (Chapters 1 to 4); Part II *Theoretical Approaches* (Chapters 5 to 11); Part III *Methods* (Chapters 12 to 21); Part IV *Application* (Chapters 22 to 29); and Part V *Assessment* (Chapters 30 to 32).

# 1   Introducing Intercultural Communication

This first part examines some key concepts used in critical discussions in the field. In the first chapter, 'What is Culture?', Werner Delanoy explores different definitions of culture both in their historical context and with regard to future developments in intercultural communication. As an advocate of a dialogic approach, the author argues in favour of non-essentialist and power-critical perspectives in line with a (post-)humanistic and cosmopolitan agenda.

In the second chapter, Jan D. ten Thije addresses the foundational question of the field in 'What is Intercultural Communication?'. His chapter explores the spectrum of scientific and societal issues referred to as intercultural communication by pointing out five different theoretical and methodical approaches. First, he discusses the interactive approach which investigates intercultural (face-to-face) interaction. He then focuses on approaches that compare and contrast cultural and linguistic systems, before discussing those that consider collective and national images of 'self' and 'other' by analysing cultural representations in various forms of (computer-mediated) communication. A fourth approach comprises studies into multilingualism and linguistic diversities, and finally, the transfer approach integrates knowledge, attitudes, capacities, reflectivity and motivation in learnable intercultural competencies. Ten Thije elaborates on the interfaces and interrelations of these approaches in how they address the notion of 'intercultural mediation'.

In the third chapter, 'Rethinking Intercultural Competence', Jürgen Bolten explores intercultural competence as a form of general 'action competence', which is implemented in intercultural, i.e. uncertain contexts. In the context of increasing social mobility at nearly all levels and in most professions, intercultural competence is highlighted as more relevant today than ever before. However, that relevance correlates with a 'rethinking' of the concept, within which intercultural competence research has to expand its own horizons by integrating the hitherto still dominant focus on national cultural diversity into the much more complex field of micro-cultural diversity.

The first part concludes with Heinz Antor's chapter on 'Interculturality or Transculturality?' (Chapter 4), which discusses the common ground of two related concepts that are frequently presented as fundamentally different. Antor presents the diverse terminology used to describe contact situations between two or more cultures by focusing on Wolfgang Welsch's seminal discussions of multi-, inter- and transculturality and the different conceptualizations of culture they are based on. The controversy sparked by Welsch is shown to have substantially enhanced a process of differentiation in the course of which cultures are no longer seen in binary terms or as

separate and relatively homogeneous spheres but rather as interlinked networks, an insight which turns a clear-cut differentiation between interculturality and transculturality into a highly complex and problematic undertaking. The anthropological and psychological dimensions of cultural concepts are shown to arise from the need of human beings as pattern-building and storytelling animals to position themselves by defining identities and alterities in a diverse environment which makes essentialist ontological self-definitions impossible. That the conceptualization of the world as an increasingly hybrid and transcultural one is not an abstract glass bead game, but rather has very concrete material, social and political consequences, is demonstrated with reference to several topical and historical examples. Antor then explores the connections between notions of cosmopolitanism and different conceptualizations of difference, particularism and universalism and their relevance, before discussing the ethical dimensions of different ways of categorizing cultures and their implications for developing intercultural and transcultural competence as the basis for constructing a peaceful and dialogic future of togetherness in difference.

## 2   Theoretical approaches

Part II offers an in-depth exploration of selected theoretical approaches in the field. In 'Critical Intercultural Communication and the Digital Environment' (Chapter 5), Thomas K. Nakayama discusses the importance of 'critical intercultural communication', an approach that he has proposed, defined and very substantially developed, with particular regard for interactions in an environment increasingly shaped by Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. Despite the rise of the network society, little attention has been paid to the ways that social media influence intercultural communication. The chapter seeks to remedy that by introducing examples that allow for an in-depth exploration of the ways that social inequality is reinforced in the digital environment, as well as the ways that people utilize social media to resist that inequality.

In 'From Shared Values to Cultural Dimensions: A Comparative Review' (Chapter 6), Elizabeth A. Tuleja and Michael Schachner explore a substantial number of very influential contrastive approaches, from Hofstede and the GLOBE study to work by Schwartz, Inglehart and Minkov. The chapter discusses these approaches from both a conceptual as well as a methodological point of view and points out the continued need for multiple perspectives on cross-cultural research in a polycultural world. Rather than opting for an either/or solution, the authors suggest that researchers, educators and practitioners such as communication consultants, want to choose the theory that best suits their needs in a given context.

In the seventh chapter, 'Towards Integrative Intercultural Communication' (Chapter 7), Liisa Salo-Lee highlights the need to transform academic and professional work in intercultural communication, which is still largely shaped by the multidisciplinary coexistence of different approaches. Her chapter presents 'integrative intercultural communication' as a proposal for an interdisciplinary approach to research and practice, which places intercultural dialogue at its core and stresses intercultural communication as an ongoing process of learning in exchange. This approach aims to provide researchers with supporting concepts and tools, e.g. the use of the rhizome as a metaphor for culture and nexus analysis as a method for cultural analysis, to tackle the complexities of the field.

The next three chapters explore the importance of literary, psychoanalytic and sociological approaches to intercultural communication. Birgit Neumann's chapter, 'The Power of Literature in Intercultural Communication' (Chapter 8), focuses on the specificities of literature, i.e. its distinct poetic and affective potential, to create and negotiate concepts of self and otherness, which underlie processes of intercultural communication. This includes close readings of identity constructs in Andrea Levy's *Small Island* (2004) and Teju Cole's *Open City* (2011), which illustrate how literary representations may promote, trouble or problematize intercultural communication. In 'Psychoanalytic Approaches to Memory and Intercultural Communication' (Chapter 9), Jolanta A. Drzewiecka advances a psychoanalytic discursive approach to the analysis of public memories of the Other. This includes an overview of memory studies in communication, an introduction to key concepts of Lacanian psychoanalysis and a discussion of a psychoanalytic approach examining representations of violence committed against Jews by gentiles in Poland and its implications for engaging knowledge and critical learning. Uttaran Dutta and Judith N. Martin's chapter on 'Sociological Approaches to Intercultural Communication: Exploring the "Silent Zones"' (Chapter 10) identifies influential sociological concepts and methods across various paradigmatic approaches, including the influential concept of Simmel's 'stranger' as well as the contributions of European critical sociologists (e.g. Habermas, Foucault). In particular, this chapter is a plea for more attention to the 'silent zones' in intercultural communication research – the geographical and conceptual gaps in current scholarship. It identifies historically under-researched topics (e.g. hidden/forbidden cultural practices, posthumanism) and addresses issues of socio-economic and structural disparities particularly in the silent zones of the Global South region. The aim is to incorporate community authorship, alternate wisdoms and, ultimately, facilitate meaningful societal changes towards plurality, sustainability and the ecology of culture and languages.

In closing Part II, Richard Evanoff's chapter, 'Introducing Intercultural Ethics' (Chapter 11), examines aspects that are key for most of the approaches mentioned above. Intercultural ethics is here defined as the process by which people from different cultures negotiate the norms that will govern relations between them at a variety of levels, including inter-personal, intergroup and international. The chapter then discusses descriptive, normative and meta-ethical directions as three main methodological approaches to intercultural ethics, and it concludes by considering how intercultural dialogue on ethics might be conducted. In particular, Evanoff suggests that it may be possible for people from different cultures to co-create ethical norms on the basis of 'third cultures'.

## 3   Methods

The third part provides a survey of methods and methodologies in inter-cultural communication. In line with Nakayama's plea to focus more on the continuities and discontinuities in power relations (Part II, Chapter 5), Lara Martin Lengel, Ahmet Atay and Yannick Kluch propose in their chapter, 'Decolonizing Gender and Intercultural Communication in Transnational Contexts' (Chapter 12), to theorize decolonization as a framework that emphasizes empowerment through the potential to reframe and re/envision history. The aim is to break away from dominant Western and US-centric ways of studying culture, communication and identity and the relationships among them, including especially the construction and performance of gender. This chapter also presents methodological strategies for critical intercultural communication research, particularly with focus on the intersectional nature of gender, identity, culture and power.

Peter Stockinger's chapter on 'Migration in the Digital Social Mediasphere' (Chapter 13) provides a comprehensive theoretical and methodological framework for describing and interpreting audiovisual media as 'tools' for producing and communicating cultural images in the form of 'common cultural topics'. This could be regarded as a potentially very fruitful way to take research on cultural values further (e.g. Tuleja & Schachner, Part II, Chapter 6) and it includes the elaboration of a research methodology based on structural semiotics and discourse analysis to deal with audiovisual corpora diffused on digital media platforms. More specifically, the author's aim is to reconstruct the 'meaning landscape' of cultural images of migration based on a canon of 'topoï', which are used to produce, communicate, share and advocate cultural visions of the other. The chapter interprets such cultural representations through a corpus of 150 videos uploaded to YouTube and identifies them as folk culture frameworks, which are particularly popular with so-called millennials and post-millennials.

Similar to Salo-Lee's call for an integrative, multidisciplinary approach to intercultural communication (Part II, Chapter 7), Claus Ehrhardt in his chapter on 'Linguistic Politeness' (Chapter 14) proposes an approach that considers politeness as an integrative part to intercultural communication. Intercultural communication and politeness, Ehrhardt argues, are both theoretical models and social practices, with politeness forming one of the most prominent links between languages, cultures and communication, allowing for deeper understanding of intercultural communication. At the same time, he calls for more extensive empirical work to fully explore the dynamics of social relations in intercultural communication.

The next three chapters link up to Neumann's exploration of the power of literature (Part II, Chapter 8), but they take her ideas on the intercultural potential of narratives in three different directions: intercultural German studies, storytelling and cinema. Gesine Lenore Schiewer's chapter, 'Contemporary Literature and Intercultural Understanding' (Chapter 15), explores approaches within intercultural German studies, which combine literary studies and communication research, to assess how dialogue competences and intercultural understanding can be trained by working with literary texts. After a presentation of selected research on intercultural communication, language learning and literature as well as a discussion of appropriate communication theories, the chapter examines selected literary texts and their potential for intercultural understanding. This leads to suggestions for applied work in the context of secondary schools, university courses, teacher training and communication training.

In 'Enhancing Intercultural Skills through Storytelling' (Chapter 16), Stephan Wolting explores storytelling as an essential contribution to the development of intercultural skills, knowledge and competences. In the light of research on individual and collective formations of identity, the author comes to the conclusion that the significance of storytelling is likely to increase in the medium and long term. Moreover, contemporary cultural and memory studies as well as research in creative and autobiographical writing highlight storytelling as an innovative and sustainable area for the development of intercultural communication.

Joanne Leal's chapter, 'Cinema as Intercultural Communication' (Chapter 17), investigates how far and how exactly cinema is able to offer a representational counterbalance to conservative notions of national belonging and exclusionary constructions of what social cohesion should mean. It considers these issues mainly within a Western European framework, asking what film can do to promote intercultural sensitivities within contemporary European contexts in which attitudes to the impact of globalization and particularly the transnational movement of people are often ambivalent and sometimes actively hostile. In particular it examines critical assessments of the positive intercultural impact of watching foreign

cinema, the possible political effects of films which encourage empathetic responses to transnational tales contained in generically familiar forms and the critical potential of two kinds of film which uses less conventional cinematic means to represent a globalized social world.

In 'Intercultural Memory and Violence in Jewish Literature' (Chapter 18), Verena Dolle examines memories written down in exemplary fictional and referential (factual) texts by Jewish Latin American writers, especially Alberto Gerchunoff's *Los gauchos judíos* (1910/1936, Argentina), Margo Glantz's *Las genealogías* (1981, Mexico) and Bernardo Kucinski's *K.* (2011, Brazil). Her chapter combines ideas of narrative power (Neumann, Part II, Chapter 8) and intercultural memories (Drzewiecka, Part II, Chapter 9) to analyse texts that address Jewish migration and adaptation to new countries. This leads to an elaboration of cultural memory of the Jewish minority in twentieth-century Latin America and highlights a strong correlation with the memory of the majority. By exploring the subjectivity and polyphony of memory reflected in literary texts, the chapter gives voice and visibility to competing narratives that stress crucial aspects in the interaction between different cultures.

Antonio López Peláez and Emilio José Gómez Ciriano's chapter, 'Intercultural Communication in Social Work Practice' (Chapter 19), draws on key ideas explored by Dutta and Martin (Part II, Chapter 10) and applies them to social work, a field that has until recently been largely neglected in intercultural communication research, although social work practice has been fundamentally shaped by international migration and globalization. López Peláez and Gómez Ciriano analyse the different frameworks within which intercultural communication is now placed in the field of social work, especially with regard to intercultural mediation. Their chapter then focuses on the extent to which intercultural communication is present in the different degrees in social work and social care studies in Spain, before it examines examples of intercultural communication in social work practice and concludes with recommendations for social workers.

The next two chapters draw on key ideas elaborated by Evanoff (Part II, Chapter 11), especially on the plea to negotiate cultural norms that govern relations between people at different levels, which correlates with the development of intracultural and intercultural competence. In 'Intercultural Education in Study Abroad Contexts' (Chapter 20), Jane Jackson rejects the assumption that tertiary students who participate in a study abroad programme will always become more interculturally competent, global-minded and proficient in a second language. Drawing on contemporary research findings, her chapter gives reasons for strikingly different sojourn outcomes and develops a rationale for intercultural interventions at all stages of the study abroad cycle: pre-sojourn, sojourn and post-sojourn.

The chapter underscores the need to define key constructs (e.g. culture and interculturality) when designing an intervention and explains how recent advances in theories, pedagogy and technology are bringing about exciting changes in intercultural education in study abroad contexts. Examples of innovative intercultural pedagogy in a variety of study abroad programmes are presented, including interventions that encourage students to push past 'them versus us' discourse to acquire a more critical awareness of themselves and their positioning in the world. The chapter draws attention to the numerous benefits of linking intercultural theories and study abroad research findings with practice to help achieve some of the common aims of internationalization, including enhanced intercultural learning and engagement and global-mindedness. It also explains the importance of systematically documenting and sharing the lessons learned from intercultural interventions to improve study abroad learning, teaching and assessment practices.

Bertil Cottier's chapter, 'Intercultural Communication in the Courtroom: The Doctrine of Public Policy' (Chapter 21), explores the doctrine of *ordre public*, which allows judges to block the 'import' of unacceptable foreign customs and traditions and which has received significant attention in the context of enhanced international relations at the personal and social level, including interethnic marriages and mass immigration. The *ordre public* doctrine is examined in respect of issues pertaining to family law and succession law, two domains where its impact is most significant since marriage, divorce, filiation and inheritance are deeply rooted in social and religious values. Special attention is paid to the clash, generated by increasing immigration from Muslim countries, between Islamic legal institutions such as polygamy and repudiation and Western principles of equality and non-discrimination.

## 4  Application

The fourth part of *The Handbook* shifts focus towards the application of the different theories and approaches to intercultural communication in a range of different contexts.

Focusing on refugee students, Emmanuelle le Pichon-Vorstman, in her chapter 'Intercultural Communication in the Context of the Hypermobility of the School Population in and out of Europe' (Chapter 22), discusses how intercultural communication has imposed itself as a requirement with regard to the integration of these students in schools. In particular, le Pichon-Vorstman raises two key issues: (1) students' mobility and the organization of their educational trajectories; and (2) potential segregation and the danger of social exclusion of this vulnerable group of students.

Marie-Thérèse Claes's chapter 'Culture and Management' (Chapter 23), examines the impact of positivist theories in intercultural management and proposes three further positions that hold a scientific view of culture, making a distinction between emic and etic approaches. In particular, this chapter suggests a moves from positivist to interpretive, postmodern and critical approaches, all of which are illustrated with examples.

In line with the linguistic approaches discussed by Salo-Lee (Part II, Chapter 7) and Ehrhardt (Part III, Chapter 14), Anne Ife's 'Language and Othering in Contemporary Europe' (Chapter 24) traces attitudes towards language tolerance in Western Europe during the last half of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century. This includes an exploration of the post-Second World War climate of cultural and linguistic acceptance as well as the current climate shaped by increased fear and suspicion, and the growth of populism and resentment of incomers. Using media and documented sources and relevant research findings, this chapter examines the evidence of linguistic othering and gauges its impact on intercultural relations, notably in the UK where language issues featured prominently in political campaigns and media discourse relating to migrant communities in the lead-up to the 2016 European Union referendum.

Chapters 25 and 26 present applications to methodological suggestions regarding the power of narratives (e.g. proposed in Part III by Schiewer, Chapter 15; Wolting, Chapter 16; and Leal, Chapter 17). In 'Black British Writing: Benjamin Zephaniah's Didactic Poetics' (Chapter 25), Deirdre Osborne examines Black British poetry as a distinctly aesthetic vehicle for catalysing intercultural communication. The chapter explores the concept of 'Didactic Poetics' in relation to intercultural communication as both 'instructive', that is teaching the reader how to read, listen and (re-)contemplate culture from minoritized perspectives, and 'consequentialist', in the sense that it speaks to a collective experience of the consequences of the British Empire's aftermath and the vast inequalities caused by its legacy. In setting the parameters of cultural change from a frequently marginalized position in Britain's institutions, Black British writers challenge – Osborne argues – canonical competencies to exert a palpable influence upon intercultural awareness. Of particular interest are Benjamin Zephaniah's 1990s works *City Psalms* (1992), *Propa Propaganda* (1996) and *School's Out: Poems Not For School* (1997), because they exemplify Spivak's call to deconstruct the dominant cultural processes that denote knowledge value through 'reversing, displacing, and seizing the apparatus of value-coding itself' (1990), and to build coalitions of resistance and understanding (Lugones, 2007). Sarah Barrow's chapter, 'Cultural Encounters in Contemporary Latin American Cinema: Intersections of Transnationality' (Chapter 26), explores several examples from contemporary Latin American cinema as case studies to address some of the terms and