



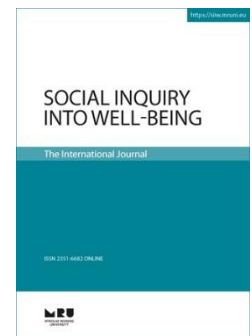
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Immigrant Identity: Part I

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Abstract

In this article first conventional definitions and the major traditional theories of self and identity are summarized. Because immigrant identity is central to other processes they too are summarized. They include the concepts of integration, assimilation, acculturation, adaptation, adjustment, and adoption. It is important and useful to review the distinctions made between integration and assimilation as well as the distinctions between self and identity that exist in the conventional sociology and psychology literature. Too often these concepts are confused or used as synonyms.

Then a final section presents a discussion of contemporary theories of immigrant identity specifically and the widely observed process of enclaving, which manifests in-group and out-group identification. The theories of cultural fusion, semantic field theory, and dimensional accrual and dissociation are summarized and applied to the phenomenon of immigrant identity.

Immigrant

The English word “immigrate” is a verb. “Immigrant” can be both a noun and an adjective. These words share the root “migrate.” In English they derive from the Latin *immigrāre*, *immigrāt-*, which means “to go into.” We also have *in-*² + *migrāre*, meaning “to depart.” The Indo-European root of “migrate,” which has acceptations and adumbrations in many languages, not only English, is *mei-*, which superficially means, “To change, go, move; with derivatives referring to the exchange of goods and services within a society as regulated by custom or law” (*The American Heritage Dictionary of Indo-European Roots*, Fourth Edition, 2000). English derivatives include *mad*, *molt*, *mutate*, *mistake*, and *migrate*.

From the Latin *meāre*, which means to go, pass, we have the root of the English word “immigrant” meaning to permeate. The suffixed o-grade form **moi-to-*. Means to be mad, from Old English **gemædan*, to make insane or foolish, from Germanic **ga-maid-jan*, denominative from **ga-maid-az*, “changed (for the worse),” abnormal (**ga-*,

intensive prefix; see *kom* which instantiates communion, commune, and communication).

Like a liquid or gas, immigrants are mobile. They penetrate, interpenetrate, pass a boundary and enter into a larger preexisting body. They are not indigenous and as such they are foreign, often seen and defined as abnormal by the indigenous element. They communicate strangely and may follow alien mores. The emphasis on abnormal difference also appears in *mew*¹, the root of molt, mutate, commute, permute, transmute, from Latin *mūtāre*, to change and the suffixed zero-grade form **mi-tā-* from Latin *sēmīta*, meaning sidetrack, side path (< “thing going off to the side”; *sēm-*, apart; see *s(w)e-*). The suffixed extended zero-grade form **mit-to-*. gives us *mis-*¹, from Old English *mis-*, *mis-*, and Old French *mes-* (from Frankish **miss-*); amiss, mistake, from Old Norse *mis(s)*, *mis(s)-*, miss, *mis-*; **c.** *miss*¹, from Old English *missan*, to miss, from Germanic **missjan*, to go wrong. **a-c** all from Germanic **missa-*, “in a changed manner,” abnormally, wrongly. The unfamiliar behavior of the immigrant is often perceived as “wrong.”

Meanwhile the immigrant may very well recognize the same mistakes she has made and be quite aware that she does not know all aspects of the host cultural ways but she attributes her mistakes to her lack of knowledge about the local environment. The immigrant does not see herself as evil or malicious or stupid, just ignorant. The immigrant will tend to attribute her mistakes to innocent ignorance, not to personal malice or disrespect for local folkways or to her own moral failing. The difference the immigrant embodies may well be attributed by the host as an inherent failing of the immigrant. For the immigrant it is not an inherent failing but a matter of innocent misunderstanding that can be ameliorated with time and experience. Thus, attribution is in the eye of the beholder. However we can learn what Jean Gebser (1949 Ger./1986 Eng.) calls an integral way of understanding which enables us to recognize both perspectives, make sense of each perspective, and work with them.

As we find with so many ancient words opposites are very often signified by a single term thus, the suffixed o-grade form **moi-n-* in compound adjective **ko-moin-i-*, means to be “held in common” (**ko-*, together; see *kom*), the common sense, the public form, the general demeanor or typical mode of communication.

Attribution and Motive

Thus the immigrant makes mistakes. A mistake means not conforming to the folkways of the host culture and not knowing the “local knowledge” (Geertz, 1973; 1983). Such social clumsiness or cultural and linguistic illiteracy may be seen by the indigenous as unfamiliar, irreverent, and outlandishly exotic. They may well see the immigrant as foolish, insane, unfit, off track, marginal, mistaken, immature, immoral, and so forth. There are current writers such as William Gudykunst and Young Yun Kim (2003) who define the immigrant identity precisely in these ethnocentric terms (Kramer, 2008, 2003, 2000). However, as attribution theory (Heider, 1958, Nisbett, 1980; Berscheid, et. al., 1983) would suggest there will be a large difference between the emic and etic perspectives on an immigrant’s overt behavior.

Borrowing from the linguistic meanings of phonetic and phonemic, Kenneth Pike (1967) coined two terms to identify how behavior is seen/evaluated and judged. The emic perspective is the internal perspective of the actor, in this case the immigrant. The etic perspective is the external observation of the immigrant’s behavior by local folk. The emic perspective makes sense of the world in terms the social agent understands. The etic makes sense of the world in terms observers understand as they observe the behavior of a person or group in question.

The host culture, with its etic perspective may see the immigrant as lacking in many competencies and even in moral character. Ethnocentrism means more than simply observing obvious differences in lifestyle and mannerisms. It involves applying one’s personal values and moral judgments to that behavior. Ethnocentrism is, therefore, a moral and ethical phenomenon. The local folk may tend to blame mistakes on the character and personality traits of the newcomer, impugning the morality and ethical judgment of

the stranger, suggesting that there is something inherently inferior, lazy, stupid, malicious, or malevolent about her. Given a lack of information they may well fall back on stereotypes and attribute the newcomer’s mistakes or odd behavior to the group to which she “belongs,” be it a racial or ethnic group, nationality, religious affiliation, level of educational attainment, even political party membership.

Host society receptivity is a measure of how welcoming a host society or group is to an outsider (Berry, 1997). This factor is essential to the success of the newcomer. Many researchers make untested presumptions about immigrant identity and host receptivity and the interaction between the two. One presumption is that simple interaction between immigrants and their hosts will eventually lead to “assimilation” meaning that their cultural identity will follow a process of adaptation whereby the immigrant abandons their original culture, values, and ways of thinking and adopts the customs, values and social attributes of the host society until she becomes indistinguishable from a majority group member (Park, 1950; Gordon, 1964). According to William Park (1950), as interactions between ethnic groups sharing a common socio-cultural boundary increase their distinct ethnicities will disappear until the groups become culturally indistinguishable.

This presumption is unfounded. And when one looks at the preservation of cultural identity over centuries among ethnic groups that live side-by-side throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America and even among others as in the case of Jews, there is much evidence to contradict this claim (Simmel, 1908 Ger./1950 Eng.). Already in 1963, Nathan Glazer and Donald Moynihan observed that while some immigrant groups assimilate others retain aspects of their native culture. Assimilation is far more complex than Park suggested or even some writers admit. Even today, and despite all the historical evidence amassed to the contrary by scholars such as Thomas Sowell (1995; 1996), some writers continue to repeat Park’s assertion made over half a century ago. An example is Gudykunst and Kim (2003): “Thus adaptation occurs *naturally* regardless of the intentions of immigrants as long as they are functionally dependent on, and interacting with, the host sociocultural system” (p. 349). Another unfounded presumption made by the original students of immigration is that the host society presents a monolithic “mainstream” culture. This is denied by the presence of modern multicultural societies such as the United States. Due to the fact that the United States was founded as a colonial entity, that it remains a colonial destination by millions of people from all over the world, and that it is the largest colony in the history of the world, it is very multicultural. Rural Nebraska is very different from San Diego, which is very different from Mobile, Alabama. And even within Mobile and San Diego you have neighborhood cultures. Unfortunately this claim that an immigrant faces a singular and simple mainstream culture, which will guide their direction of assimilation is still prevalent in some writing. As Anthony Pym (2003) following the work of Homi Bhabha (2004) puts it, culture is a product of codifying interculturalities. Like dialects and daughter languages, “All cultures stem from interculturalities, which lose secondness as they expand” (Pym 2003, p. 4; also see Pym 2004).

Another assumption made by the early scholars, and again, which is still repeated by a few current writers, is that the “direction” of change is unilateral based on the quantitative predominance of locals, which forms conformity pressure on the immigrant individual. Repeating Park, some writers reiterate his claim that the “one-sided change is [caused] by the extent the dominant power of the host culture controls the daily survival and functions of strangers, it is present as coercive pressure on them to adapt” (Gudykunst and Kim, 2003, p. 360). This false belief was already abandoned by the mid-1960’s in sociology and psychology, specifically in the work of Milton Gordon (1964) who is widely regarded as the next major figure to study immigration after Park a decade-and-a-half earlier. Gordon observed that the host culture can be greatly changed by the appearance of immigrants.

Adjustment, Adaptation, Adoption, Conformity, Integration, Assimilation, Acculturation

There is confusion in the use of concepts among some writers that needs to be addressed. For instance, Gudykunst and Kim (2003) duplicate nearly everything Park said in 1950 except that they confound the concepts he employed with great rigor. They replace Park’s “adopt” with “adapt,” a liberal use of language that Park’s rigor would not allow. But in both cases (adopt and adapt) the conformity pressure put on immigrants by the host culture, is just that, not adaptation, which involves the emergence of a new form of living, but conformity to the *status quo* (Kramer, 2000; 2003; 2009). This pressure is real. However, it affects different immigrants differently and in nearly all cases, at least some of their native culture is retained.

As we follow the evolution of the idea of immigrant identity and assimilation theory from Park to Gordon (1964) and beyond, the trajectory of the concepts adapt, adopt, adjust, assimilate, and integrate, sometimes become entangled and confused. Gordon (1964) realized that the change that constitutes assimilation is on both sides of the equation, that the host culture is changed by the presence of immigrants just as they are changed by the host culture, a process Eric Kramer (2000a; 2000c; 2003a; 2009) calls co-evolution, which also involves the co-constitution of identities (Kramer, 2009; 1993).

Park and Gordon were also very careful to distinguish between assimilation and integration for integration presumes that cultural differences between the host and the migrant will endure so that there is something to integrate. While assimilation leads to the disappearance of the immigrant culture and the ethnic identity of a person in a process of socio-cultural homogenization, integration involves the continued vitality of immigrant identity as such. They are mutually exclusive processes. Assimilation means the end of integration for integration requires difference. Gordon (1964) updated Park’s work noting that assimilation is a multidimensional process and that the change wrought by immigration affects everyone involved including the host society.

Some writers who borrow in whole and part the Park/Gordon notion of cultural adaptation/assimilation fail to be clear about the difference between assimilation and integration. For example, Gudykunst and Kim (2003) completely confuse the four concepts of assimilation, integration, adoption, and adaptation, using them interchangeably. As Gudykunst and Kim (2003) put it, “total assimilation,” which is a “lifelong goal” and equal to perfect mental health according to them, constitutes, “the highest degree of adaptation conceivable” (p. 360). They also borrow Park’s notion that assimilation is a progressive linear process. But they fail to follow his rigor as he breaks down the process into a discontinuous extension of phases of assimilation, an attempt to offer a taxonomy of assimilation that progresses in stages (Winkelman, 1994).

Stages of Culture Shock:

1) Contact-Fascination-Honeymoon Stage

Characteristics: excitement, insomnia, positive expectations, an idealized view of the host culture. In this initial stage of cultural adjustment anxiety and stress are typically interpreted positively.

2) Disintegration-Hostility-Crisis-Culture Shock Stage

This stage usually manifests within a few months of arrival. It is characterized by irritability, pre-occupations with cleanliness, safety, a devaluation of the host culture. Commonly multiple physical/psychological problems related to cortisol-mediated stress response manifest. Symptoms include anxiety, agitation, panic, conversion-hysteria, anger, aggression, poor concentration, restless sleep, low energy, a decline in appetite, loneliness, and even suicidal tendencies.

3) Reintegration-Acceptance-Reorientation-Gradual Recovery Stage

In order to be able to function effectively, there must be some adaptation to the new cultural environment. Without adaptation, the newcomer either seeks to escape or withdrawal (“flight or isolation”). This stage entails accommodating to the new rules, roles and behaviors of the host country. Adaptations will require problem solving, and gaining new perspectives on one’s own culture and the new host culture. Essential to this process is the adoption of an empathetic attitude and a suspension of judgment toward the host society. Problems and stressors do not end in this stage.

4) Adaptation-Resolution-Acculturation-Autonomy Stage

One is able to develop stable adaptations that are successful at resolving new and current problems. One gains an awareness of cultural similarities and differences with their own. The host cultural ways become normalized in one’s mind. The newcomer accepts the new culture without idealization or devaluation¹.

In 1997 the Canadian social-psychologist John Berry (1997), set out to clarify the concept of acculturation, a process that takes two fundamentally different paths; assimilation and integration. As noted, these are mutually exclusive processes for assimilation spells the end of integration -- the end of the immigrant identity, way of behaving, thinking, and feeling. While a few writers such as Gudykunst and Kim (2003) still adhere to the idea that a

¹ This table of the stages of culture shock and acculturation is a synthesis of many descriptions

including Park (1950), Gordon (1964), and Winkelman (1994).

“functionally fit” immigrant is one who willfully “unlearns” or “deculturizes” herself via “psychic disintegration” in order to conform to the host society’s “mainstream” versions of appropriate behavior patterns, cognitive patterns, and affect patterns, Berry (1997) and Kramer (2009; 2000b; 2002; 2003a, 2003b) note that such attempts to impose assimilation often lead to resistance and social conflict. Immigrants themselves prefer to integrate and this is also most likely the “natural” path given the nature of hermeneutic horizons and cultural fusion (Kramer, 2003; 2009). One cannot learn anything new except by making sense of it from one’s perspective, which is always already operant. That perspective is one’s hermeneutic horizon and interaction involves the fusion of two or more horizons.

Berry (1997) has identified four mutually exclusive acculturation strategies. These four strategies are: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization. Berry accepts Park’s definition of assimilation whereby the immigrant eventually disappears. Integration, according to Berry is the process by which the immigrant, or immigrant group, becomes an active member of the host society, yet simultaneously maintains a distinct ethnic identity. Separation occurs when ethnic minorities refuse or are refused by the host society to become active participants in that larger society. The host society may see their culture as fundamentally incompatible and therefore the immigrant is not “assimilable.” In such a case the host society may attempt to bar their entry while welcoming more compatible immigrants. An example of this was the passage of the Chinese Exclusionary Act of 1882 in the United States. After helping to build the transcontinental railroad, Chinese were excluded from further immigration by an act of the United States Congress. At the same time the United States government welcomed more and more immigrants who were seen as more culturally compatible from Europe. Finally, marginalization, as defined by Berry, is what many contemporary writers such as Edward Said (2002) incorrectly call diaspora. Many peoples have found themselves displaced and unable to “go home” (Cohen, 1997).

Diaspora, a term taken from the Christian *Old Testament*, means to be scattered across the earth, homeless. The first use of the word is in *Deuteronomy 28:25*, referring to the “wandering Jews”: “thou shalt be a *dispersion* in all kingdoms of the earth.” Marginalization is different. In some ways it is worse because the ancient Jews never lost their sense of who they were. Marginalization, as defined by Berry (1997) occurs in migrants when they neither identify with their original cultural home, nor with that of the host society (Berry, 1997). This is common among immigrants in the modern world where change is great and swift so that after an extended stay of many years in an adopted home country, when they return to their original home, they find that it is “gone.” It has changed so much that they no longer feel like they belong. The diasporic condition means that a person feels as though she no longer belongs as a full citizen and cultural participant in either her new adopted country nor in her old homeland.

The Common Sense

The immigrant, newcomer, sojourner, does not share the common sense (Gadamer, 1960 Ger./2006 Eng.), the folk knowledge presupposed by the indigenous population. Part of intercultural adjustment means to begin to inhabit that common sense. As Hans-Georg Gadamer (1960 Ger./2006 Eng.) notes, the common sense is the sense or mode of meaning that permeates a worldview, which seems natural, obvious, logical, and rational. It is the basis of the “realism” of a worldview for those who live within that hermeneutic horizon.

For example, if I live long enough among the Mosquito Indians of Central America, I may begin to not merely appreciate how the world for them is infused with a spiritual dimension but I may actually begin to inhabit that worldview, it may take me over and I may become “superstitious” myself and begin to make sense of the world that way and come to “see” that illness may be caused by a curse. As the common sense of the Mosquito Indian *Lebenswelt* (lifeworld which is not worldview for the latter suggests that we know that our reality is merely a perspective) increasingly comes to be the way I make sense of things, their behaviors, values, beliefs and attitudes will become more and more logical to me. If you believe that making eye contact with the image of a person reflected in a mirror suspended over water will compel that person to fall in love with you, then you will logically, rationally, either seek to make eye contact or to avoid it, depending on your desire.

Communities are bound by the common sense they share, the way they make sense of the cosmos, what it means to them, which includes their sense of self, their place. One can arrogantly refuse to take another’s way of being in the world seriously because it seems “primitive,” “backward,” “ignorant,” but if you want to understand why people do what they do, you have to understand the world from their perspective. That does not mean you have to presume it as true, but in order to understand them, you have to at least take their lifeworld into account.

As Edmund Husserl (1913 Ger./1982 Eng.) and Kenneth Burke (1945) agreed, in the case of human behavior, motive is more important than material causation. And motivation always involves judgment. Studies have shown, for instance, that whether people want to or not, they judge whether a face is pretty or ugly within two seconds of seeing it. And this judgment has profound implications for the interpersonal interactions that follow.

Those who attempt to reduce culture to mere material conditions, such as Marvin Harris (1979), fail to understand the semantic field that human beings inhabit (Kramer, 1997). For instance poverty, bitterness, and resentment cannot be reduced to material possession for if that were so, monks, priests, lamas, and many others would not feel “rich” and fulfilled despite their relative paucity of material possessions. One should be able to rank order nations in terms of happiness just as easily as one can measure per capita income. Also, materialism as an explanation for human behavior ultimately can lead to genetic pre-determinism and that in turn can logically lead to eugenics. It implies that people are as they are due to inherent and

immutable properties rooted in their material biology. If that were so, then every time I eat something and my brain chemistry changes, mathematics should change. But it does not. The laws of noncontradiction, *monus ponendo ponens*, *monus tollens*, and the like apply both before and after lunch, for as Husserl noted, mathematics, logic, and all the rest of human cultural existence transcends my own direct personal observations and my own physical, contingent body. They exist as systems of symbolic interaction. Testing, a system of logic that has no color or weight proves that eyewitness accounts are notoriously fallible.

Reducing human existence to materialism can lead to the kind of justification one finds for caste systems around the world and as such it is quite at odds with meritocracy and the mountain of empirical evidence that demonstrate that genetics do not determine behavior.

Too often people confuse materialism with empiricism and then argue that these modes of awareness are the necessary conditions for doing science. All animals function fundamentally by using sensory input. A hamster is empirical in that he finds his way around via sensory information. Alchemists and many others through history have made a discipline of careful observation and systematic notation. But science takes empirical observations and adds something that is not empirical, mathematical logic. One cannot derive science from simple materialism. I point this out because Harris and others often argue that their materialism is justified because they want to do a true science of culture.

Furthermore, many such efforts at simple reductionism involve type 1 and type 2 inference errors whereby causation is either mistakenly reversed or mistakenly presumed. Racism is a classic example. The fact that night and day are highly correlated does not mean that one causes the other. Correlations of material events are not explanations. Materialism as a theory is not only not self-evident but also not meaningful. Human beings always already interpret material conditions. That is why two groups faced with basically identical material conditions come up with very different solutions and ways of living. The lowest common material denominators such as a need for shelter and food are what Clifford Geertz (1973) calls “banal generalities,” that utterly miss and fail to explain the great cultural diversity we see. It also fails utterly to explain why life forms have proliferated far beyond the single-celled organism, which proved early on to be so fantastically successful.

So if we accept Husserl’s and Burke’s claims that motivation is more important to understanding and subsequently explaining human behavior than brute material causation, then we must examine motivation. Abraham Maslow agreed and set out to try to do just that. He famously offered a hierarchy of needs that he believed explained motivation. However, he bemoaned the fact that writers refused to read his work and properly, honestly cite him (Maslow, 1968). Maslow discussed the human needs for esteem and self-transcendence and he also says very clearly in his influential *magnum opus Motivation and Personality* (1954) that a simple hierarchy cannot explain phenomena such as aesthetics and other aspects that are so essential to choices, behaviors and judgmental comparisons of cultural

expressions. People will starve, fight, and steal for art. He understood this. People will voluntarily undergo physical hardships in order to build cathedrals and pyramids. Clashes of culture can be rarely reduced to physical needs, on one hand, or self-actualization on the other.

If cultural materialism were an adequate explanation for human behavior then we could simply say that the richer a society, the happier it must be, but that is not so. And as the first scientific work in social studies demonstrated, suicide is most prevalent among the richest industrialized nations, not “poor” agrarian ones or Neolithic villagers (Durkheim, 1897 Fr./1997 Eng.).

Emmanuel Levinas (1961 Ger./1969 Eng.) notes that many physical structures can protect a person from the weather but only one is “home.” The qualitative difference is profound and leads to many behaviors that make no sense unless you take this fact into account. For the immigrant, the host culture may afford shelter, even a more luxurious version of it, but it is not home until they fuse horizons with it, as Gadamer says (1960 Ger./2006 Eng.). Identification is a one-dimensional, largely emotional relationship with a person, object, group, or place (Gebser, 1949 Ger./1986 Eng.).

The status of being an immigrant means one who crosses boundaries between groups, which usually means crossing from one common sense ecology into a different lifeworld. What we have then is a status, an identification of a person who is on the move between groups. It is also a mood, a state of mind, a set of mannerisms and an expressed custom that is not merely contingent but has serious moral implications. From the German *gemütlichkeit* we have the sensibility of congeniality. Often immigrants try their best to get along with the indigenous ways they encounter even if they do not understand. They may make mistakes and misinterpretations and harbor different values, but they typically try to get along. It is not in their interest to conflict with the local folk.

Culture and Identity

Before continuing on with a very specific discussion of immigrant identity, it is important to summarize the conventional use of the concepts “culture,” “identity,” and “self” that constitutes the social scientific tradition.

Who Am “I?”

In my country I am regarded as a great hero who resisted the domination of invaders and who was tragically captured and hung but who inspired my people to unify and liberate my land. All my countrymen, even today, know my name. Do you know me? My name is Васил Левски. Many know me as Vasil Levski. I am Bulgaria.

In my explorations I walked, canoed and snow-shoed nearly 40,000 miles and surveyed over one million square miles of my country, ten times as much as the United States explorers Lewis and Clark did in their country. All my countrymen know me even today. For 20 years I explored the second largest country on Earth, Canada. Do you know me? My name is David Thompson.

One thing communities share are attachments to iconic personalities that are often identified with the founding of

their own national identities. Often the difference between groups starts with such iconic identification and sense of origin. Ancient Greek city-states such as Argos were founded by eponymous heroes. Each citizen regarded himself as a direct descendant of the legendary founder. Qualities the people want to believe they have are embodied in their legendary founders. Rome was founded by and named after Romulus, the United States too has its semi-sacred founders whose names and exploits are taught to its children and which naturalized citizens must learn and be tested on before being granted citizenship. For instance, one question is: What is the name of the ship that brought the pilgrims to America? A) the *Constitution*, B) the *Mayflower*, C) the *Titanic*. Nearly all United States citizens know the name and story of the Mayflower, but someone from Kyrgyzstan very well may not. But the Kyrgyz people know all about, take pride in, and identify with Manas, the hero in an epic tale twenty times longer than Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* combined, a poem regularly recited at festivals by men held in high esteem called *Manaschis*.

If a person does not know such common knowledge, then that person may well be seen by the community as not belonging, as not knowing who they are.

Importance of the Self

Multicultural understanding begins with an understanding of the self. The ability to perceive (including cultural perception) all starts with and is dependent on the self. The **self** is distinguished from **identity** and **consciousness**. None of these aspects of a person is regarded as a fixed object among other fixed objects. Instead, each is in constant flux. Primarily an exterior phenomenon, **identity** emerges as dependent on how others see us. It is the most superficial of the three and the most easily changed. **Self** is much more complex. It is not as "social" as identity. Nonetheless, self is a cultural construct. The self is the domain of beliefs, values, attitudes, wants, and needs.

The self has a core of beliefs and attitudes that are very unlikely to change after adulthood. While these terms will be defined further on, it may help to begin with basic definitions. **Beliefs** describe what each individual holds to be "true," from the most mundane (e.g., "It's Tuesday") to the most sublime (e.g., "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah"). **Values** describe what is held to be right (e.g., "Self-Sacrifice for one's country is noble," and wrong (e.g., "Thou shalt not lie"). **Attitudes** describe sets of preconceived notions toward or against some object (e.g., "I like rollercoasters"). **Wants** describe the states of being or material things desired by a person but not required for survival. Those things one must have in order to survive are **needs**. **Consciousness** is the ability to have awareness.

The claim that a person has a set of core values and many superficial beliefs that are constantly changing is an essential concept to the overall theory of **cultural fusion** (Kramer, 1997, 2000, 2002).

Several scholars of symbolic interactionism have argued that the "self" is a complex system (Schutz, 1970; Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Harre, 1979; Mead, 1934; Cooley,

1902; Blumer, 1969; Becker, 1953; Hickman and Kuhn, 1956). Symbolic interactionists agree on five basic tenets.

- First, that meaning is a product of social life.
- Second, society is a network of social interactions in which participants assign meaning to their own and others' actions.
- Third, individuals are actors and not just reactors, which means that people initiate social behavior.
- Fourth, a person plays many different roles or has many different "selves," which has led to the dramaturgic school of social behavior analysis (Burke, 1945, 1966; Gergen, 1985; Delia, 1987; Goffman, 1974; Bormann, 1980).
- Fifth, the self has at least two dimensions designated by the "I" and the "me" (Mead, 1934).

For George Herbert Mead the "I" is the impulsive part of the person while the "me" is a reflection of how others generally see one. In many ways, Mead's idea of the "I" is similar to Sigmund Freud's notion of the *id*, and Mead's "me" is like Freud's superego (Freud, 1923). Mead's "I" is impulsive and the "me" must control the "I's" energy.

The concept of self is somewhat similar to Mead's "I," while identity has some similarity to Mead's "me." But neither the self nor identity is fixed. In terms of intersubjective (social) interaction, identity is a consequence of context. You have many identities and identity is based on how others see and react to you. Unlike Mead's generalized other, others are not generalized, such that we have more than one "other" and therefore more than one "me" or identity. You are not in control of your own identities. How others react to you involves many factors that you cannot control. The phrase "I am..." is indicative of identification. I am an employee of Coca Cola. I am Japanese. I am a sports team member. I am a woman. I am a student. I am a son. I am happy. I am smart. I am sick, *et cetera*.

There are two kinds of characteristics that constitute the self, which in turn signifies in-group and out-group membership. They are **primary** and **secondary characteristics**. Primary characteristics are ones that cannot be changed or transferred, such as race, (in most cases) sex, and age. Secondary characteristics are ones that can be changed, such as (in most cases) religion or nationality.

Core of the Self. "I am..." is a statement of identity and it can also signify the self. But the statement "I am..." involves beliefs, attitudes, emotions, values, and needs. A **belief** is an assertion that is perceived to be true. Beliefs are not necessarily facts in the objective sense, because we often believe things that are not objectively true. An attitude is a more generalized cognition. **Attitudes** are different from beliefs in that attitudes have three dimensions, which are: an evaluative component (good versus evil); a belief component (true versus false); and a behavioral component. Attitudes are typically learned and are therefore relatively enduring. Attitudes are usually learned from watching the reactions of others to situations and events. **Values** are generalized evaluations of right and wrong and are usually learned from our culture and are used to judge the behavior of ourselves and others. One may have an overall good attitude regarding a friend and that can create a "halo effect" or attribution that makes you see even her "bad behavior" as

not so bad as it would seem if done by a stranger or a person with a negative halo.

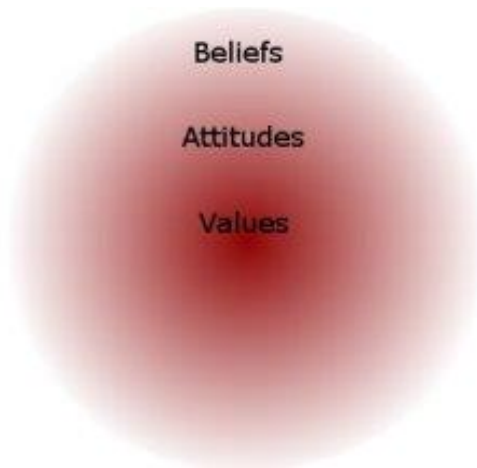


Figure 1. Relative Depth of Evaluative Dimensions

Values. Values go beyond human interrelations and include the land and animals. For instance, the Maori of New Zealand hold very strong feelings about the inheritance of land. Among the Navaho, matrilineal kinship rules give women their own plots of land (Dodd, 1998). For many plains natives of North America, the land is conceived as the Earth Mother. With regards to the relationship between humans and animals, again cultural values, which are also personal values, vary greatly. The Kwakuutl of Vancouver Island claim animals to be their ancestors while the Balinese do not regard animals as being at all human-like and are repulsed by “animal-like” behavior.

As a value, friendship is valued in every culture but differs in many respects from one culture to another. For instance, among Euro-Americans in North America friends are quickly made and abandoned. The level of personal obligation between friends is relatively low. But among Native Americans such as the Kiowa, it takes a long time to move from the status of an acquaintance to that of a friend, and friendship is a lifelong relationship and it means sharing at a very intimate level with much obligation.

Attitudes. An attitude is a generalized favorable or unfavorable evaluation of some object or behavior. Attitudes are relatively enduring because we seek cognitive consistency. That is why it is hard for us to see friends as doing bad things or as being bad people. A friend, for whom we have a positive attitude, is seen as a good person who did a bad thing. A belief is an assertion that we perceive to be true. Beliefs differ from attitudes in that beliefs are more specific. Attitudes are closely related to beliefs. For instance a positive attitude about someone or something will lead to the belief that that thing or person is truly good. Attitudes are the foundations upon which specific beliefs rest. For instance, if I have a negative attitude toward racism then it is likely that I will not support specific behaviors like racial segregation or slavery. Knowing a person’s beliefs can be clues to their more general attitudes.

Edward Steele and Charles Redding (1961) conducted surveys of North American values. They found that North Americans generally value individuality, achievement and success, progress, effort and optimism, equality, efficiency, humor, generosity, competition, and quantification. In parts of Africa, in particular with the Ashanti, and in Asia (e.g., the Chinese), respect for ancestors is a deeply held value. Other than the veneration Americans feel toward the “Founding Fathers,” this value is generally not found in the United States, certainly not to the extent of performing ancestor worship. The same is true concerning respect for elders.

By contrast, dishonesty perpetrated on another member of the group does not seem to be a value in any culture. However, cleverness in business is, as in the Middle East, and while bribery is perceived as dishonest in some cultures such as Germany, it is viewed as a courtesy and payment for favor in others such as Mexico. Indeed, the fancy business lunches and small gifts most American businesspeople (and tax collectors) would consider bribery are commonplace in Irish commerce (Levy, 2000).

Beliefs. Milton Rokeach (1968) argues that our belief systems have five different levels. He uses an onion as a metaphor for explaining belief system. This metaphor has two important implications. First some beliefs, the ones on the outer skin of the onion, are easily changed while the deeper layers at the core of the onion constitute our most powerfully held beliefs. Second the outer layer beliefs are dependent on the deeper ones. If a core belief changes, like belief in a god, all the outer layer beliefs will be affected. But if a weakly held belief on the outer skin changes like I decide that my favorite color is not red but blue, this has no effect on the deeper structures of beliefs.

Rokeach outlines the five layers of the onion stating that the outer-most layer is the one of “inconsequential beliefs.” **Inconsequential beliefs** concern personal tastes such as “I hate pizza,” or “I like sushi.” The next layer into the onion is that of “**derived beliefs.**” Derived beliefs come from authorities in one’s life such as the news media, teachers, and/or religious leaders. Derived beliefs come to us more subtly and are much longer lasting than inconsequential beliefs. The next layer is called “**authority beliefs.**” These are more specific and concern whom you can and cannot trust. Authority beliefs dictate that I should trust my parents more than a stranger.

The two layers that comprise the inner core of beliefs are the “**primitive without consensus beliefs**” and the “**primitive with consensus beliefs.**” These two together constitute the core values of your *cultural self*.

Core Values of the Cultural Self

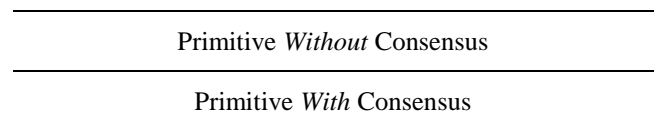


Figure 2. Core Values and Cultural Self

Primitive without consensus beliefs are often called “ideological.” They are doctrines that guide your life but you realize that there are some people who do not share them

with you. This would involve your religious faith, your political party allegiance, and so forth. The absolute core of your belief system, the primitive with consensus beliefs, is constituted of beliefs that are indisputable to you such as “I am a student,” “I need air to live.”

Values and needs also form hierarchies of importance and help to identify who we are (Maslow, 1968). They are transmitted to us by authority figures from our childhood such as parents, teachers, and religious leaders. Our most deeply held values are generally those of our culture. *In fact, culture can be seen as a complex of shared behaviors, values and beliefs and derivative motives, expectations, and behavior patterns.* Values are expressed as evaluations of people, things and events. An example would be that Japanese are better than Nigerians. Or that Thai food is not as good as Italian food. Evaluations of right and wrong, good and bad are at the core of cultural selves and are also the source of ethnocentrism. **Ethnocentrism** is more than just the recognition of difference. It is the evaluation of that difference first into normal and abnormal, which often becomes good and bad or right and wrong, and then more disputable beliefs and judgments. It is true that many people from Africa have dark skin. This is a widely shared belief. But to then say that dark skin is abnormal or bad is a value judgment.

In this sense the self and culture cannot be separated. The core beliefs and values of a person come from their culture via socialization from childhood (Brislin, 1993). Becoming a member of a society and culture involves the formation of self. Bronislaw Malinowski (1961) studied the Trobriand islanders. From this experience, Malinowski concluded that cultural systems, including values, are organized around three categories of underlying needs. **Basic needs** are those related to survival such as food and water. **Derived needs** are those associated with social coordination such as divisions of labor and resource distribution. Finally **integrative needs** are those needs for social harmony and security, which give rise to cultural expressions like magic, myth, and art (Nanda, 1980).

However, not all cultures conceive of the self in the same way. For instance, according to Rom Harré (1983), for the Innuite (Eskimos) the self is seen as a part of a social network. Although Innuite people, like everyone else, have private feelings and opinions these are generally considered unimportant. Important issues regarding the self are discussed in terms of qualities of relationships with others. For the Innuite, emotions are regarded as public displays instead of private feelings. Emotions are expressed as a group so they all laugh together and cry together. Innuite virtues are all social in nature. Probably due to the harsh environmental climate within which they live, survival of the individual depends on survival of the group, which requires a great deal of social cooperation. Furthermore, Innuite do not have a sense of individual creativity. In Innuite art, artists believe that they are not creating something that does not already exist but instead that they are merely releasing that which is already present in the wood or ivory they carve.

According to Harré, the intensity and force of one’s personal powers depends on one’s self-concept. In Western and Westernized modern industrial culture people see themselves as individual units, as singular and independent

wholes. By contrast, the Javanese perceive and conceive themselves as having two distinct parts, an inside of feelings and an outside of observed behaviors. Moroccans have a different self-concept. They tend to see themselves and others as embodiments of places and situations. For Moroccans the identity of an individual is always a manifestation of situation, the self is a situational product.

Emotions. Some cultures allow one to express emotions more than others. People of Anglo-Saxon descent tend to treat emotions as if they just happen to them and are internal phenomena. For such people, emotions are privately manifested and individually realized. Emotions are seen as passive (i.e., the “stiff upper lip”). But many persons of Southern European culture see emotions as public, collective, and active. Emotions for Southern Europeans -- for people from Spain, Italy, and Greece -- are frequently believed or assumed to be created by the group and are displayed in social situations.

While Harré has suggested that emotions are constructed concepts, James Averill (1980) has argued that in fact emotions are social constructs, which express cultural variance. For Averill emotions are belief systems that define situations for group members. Emotions consist of internalized norms that are the result of enculturation. According to Averill emotions are syndromes.

A **syndrome** is a cluster of responses that go together. Combining and labeling feelings is a learned part of culture. The ability to make sense of emotions is socially constructed. **Emotional syndromes** are learned through interaction with others. We learn what a cluster of behaviors means and how to perform particular emotions in an appropriate way through socialization. **Emotions** are acted out in specific ways and these ways of behaving and displaying emotion vary across cultures.

For example, what should grief look like? It depends on the culture. For people of Northern European culture, emotions tend to be suppressed and muted. The aforementioned Anglo-Saxon “stiff upper lip” is an example. There is a joke that Finnish people tell about themselves which goes: “There was once a Finn that loved his wife so much that he almost told her.” Grief in many cultures is publicly and collectively expressed. For instance, in Mediterranean countries and the Middle East, there even exist professional mourners, women who make a living going to funerals and wailing very prominently, loudly, and conspicuously. In Japan, great shows of emotion are not appropriate. One’s feelings and information about one’s self are relatively muted. If you were to watch a traditional sumo wrestling match, you could hardly tell by the look on the contestants’ faces who won and who lost because such displays of emotion are strongly discouraged.

The inappropriate display of emotion is a major mistake in people’s intercultural communication. Often the way an immigrant displays emotion is evaluated by the indigenous folk as inappropriate and even as proof that they are not merely deviant but morally inadequate. Showing too much or too little emotion or the wrong kind can disrupt intercultural relations greatly.

According to Averill, there are four kinds of learned rules that govern emotional behavior. First are “**rules of appraisal.**” These rules guide the person as to what an

emotion is, whether it is positive or negative, and how it is directed. Second are “**rules of behavior**,” which determine how to respond to a feeling. Third are “**rules of prognosis**.” These rules define the progression and course of emotions. Finally, **rules of attribution** dictate how or if an emotion needs to be explained or justified.

AVERILL'S FOUR EMOTIONAL RULES

Appraisal	Guides to what an emotion is
Behavioral	Guides how to respond to a feeling
Prognosis	Defines progression and course of emotions
Attribution	How and if an emotion should be explained or justified

For instance, each culture teaches its members how to appraise anger. One is taught what he or she is feeling and how to target or direct anger. We are taught how to define whether the anger experienced is positive like righteous indignation or negative like destructive and unfounded rage. **Behavioral rules** tell us how to express anger, whether it is appropriate to lash out or to keep quiet, to confront the target of our anger and aggress or to avoid them, to retreat. **Prognosis rules** dictate how long it is socially appropriate to be angry and for which kinds of offense. Finally, **attribution rules** guide what excuses or reasons are adequate for provoking acceptable anger and whether or not these reasons need to be publicly explained (e.g., “He stole my favorite hunting knife which made me mad”).

Some cultures teach very linear causality in their attributions. For instance, in the United States, Euro-Americans tend to say that outside forces or another's actions “made me angry.” But for Eastern Europeans, anger can be a characteristic of the individual such that they may say that, “so-and-so has a mean heart.” In such cases, anger is an inherent quality of an individual's character and there need not be an external cause to provoke the emotional display in such a person. Eastern Europeans observe that some people display a kind of inherent meanness when they are intoxicated while others consistently display an irrational euphoria when they are intoxicated. The difference is not in the alcohol but in the person's nature. According to this cultural interpretation, being mean is neither caused by the individual nor by society. It is simply the way the person is, despite their own best wishes; it is fate.

By contrast, in the United States, it is presumed that all people are basically happy by nature and that if they become angry it is due to an outside stimulus and/or force that makes them that way, perhaps faulty brain chemistry. Anger is even treated as a disease such that if one can take away the stimulus or change the brain chemistry that causes anger or rage, then the anger and rage will be “solved” or “cured.”

Such differences are clues that reveal deeper cultural differences about so-called “human nature.” In the United States, there is a kind of presumed equality, which supposes that basically everyone is the same but that they have different experiences. Few other cultures hold this belief about human nature. Instead they see individuals as having unique natures that are often expressed in their moods and behaviors, their personalities; and individuals in such cultures such as many Native American tribes are often

named in accordance with their unique qualities. This may explain why Euro-American medical practices are highly standardized while in much of the rest of the world such as in China, intimate knowledge of the individual dictates how to proceed in treatment. Chinese medicine presents a dazzling array of discrete treatments that seem unsystematic by Euro-American standards. This is because medications and treatments are often customized to fit each individual.

In some cultures emotion is seen as an expression of a collective feeling while in others it is seen as an expression of an individual's feelings. Music is universal and music is one of the ways emotion is allowed to be expressed even in cultures such as Japan where emotions are typically repressed. Thus, karaoke allows the Japanese “salaryman” (office worker) to express himself in a fashion that would never be acceptable on the job.

Characteristics of the Self

Primary characteristics are personal characteristics that are not transferable. For instance, if we call a doctor for an emergency and she arrives and must identify who is injured, you raise your hand and say, “I am the one who has been hurt.” At that instant you become “the patient.” “You” are identical with the status “patient,” and it cannot be transferred to another arbitrarily. In other words, you cannot give your injury to another. Likewise, when you say that you are “Chinese” you may share this identity with millions of others but you cannot give this identity to a person from Sweden. Nor can you lose your Chinese-ness. This is an example of **core** or **primary identity**. You speak Chinese. You cannot give that ability away any more than you can give away your skin color. If a typical Euro-American wants to speak Chinese, the American must learn it. Similarly you may learn several languages so that your linguistic community identity becomes expands. “You” change but only through addition. You may change roles and functions within a social structure but you do not change your primary cultural identity. According to the conventional view of social-psychology, genuine cultural change occurs only when core values change.

Behavior is not identical with identity. The behavioral fulfillment of a role is not the same as one's culture. Thus, a Japanese person may come to the United States and ride a horse but that does not make him a “cowboy,” nor does it make him any less Japanese. However, you can become more complex and enriched by learning from other cultures. Learning is not a zero-sum game. In other words, in order to learn about another kind of cuisine or music you do not have to forget the food and music you have known and liked before. Becoming enriched and multicultural means learning and developing a variety of styles and indexes of knowledge, repertoires of accents, ways of looking at things, appreciating them, learning how to listen to foreign music and taste foreign foods; knowing about them and learning how to learn about them.

Secondary characteristics of self are those that are transferable. This includes citizenship, job title, club memberships and the like. Secondary identity often involves achievement rather than ascription (Parsons and Shils, 1951). One **achieves** a role through free will. I run for

election of my student body and they elect me president. In that capacity I have obligations, responsibilities, and privileges that I did not have before. And after my term is finished I lose those same responsibilities and privileges. They pass on to the next president. This is a quality of roles and functions within a structured environment (Parsons, 1951; 1960). This is very different from **ascription** such as being born into royalty or into a particular caste as in India. In ascriptive cultures you are your status. It is not surprising, then, that these cultures tend to use titles more extensively and have a higher respect for organizational and social hierarchies (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

Very often how a person dresses, what they purchase, and how they behave reflects the status they wish to have rather than what they actually are. According to Desmond Morris (1969), this is why many manufacturers produce and market products that are cheap imitations of more expensive and more exclusive products. This is also why fashion changes so rapidly in the modern industrial world. The truly elite must have something exclusive -- it is how they display their elite status. Otherwise, if everyone dressed alike, and lived in the same type abodes, and acted basically the same, then status differential would be impossible to recognize. In industrial nations where fashion mimicry is part of an industry, in order to exhibit dominance, fashions must continually change. Status imitators, by copying fashions, effectively erase the difference between authentic upper class members, who really are rich, and lower class members who are always one step behind with their status mimicry. True class identity can change as a function of economic mobility. But this is possible only in societies that allow such mobility. In many traditional societies, caste, as a primary characteristic of identity, can never change no matter what kind of job one does or what kinds of material positions one has. In fact, caste dictates what kinds of jobs and positions one is allowed to occupy.

So, primary characteristics are immutable while secondary characteristics are mutable. Traditional societies tend to see the individual as being much more predetermined and immutable, born into a tribe, caste and gender, which have very rigid identities and expectations about the person's role in society (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). There is a kind of security in traditional societies in that the individual is not held responsible for his or her lot in life and therefore cannot be blamed for failing to create great accomplishments. Modern democratized societies tend to be much more individualistic, expecting people to willfully strive to change their status through merit (Hofstede, 1983). While pre-modern traditional social structures have strict expectations for individual group members, in the modern world the individual tends to stand alone, and bear the responsibility for whatever achievements he may or may not accomplish.

Urban and Rural Selves

This difference between seeing the social agent as immutable on one hand (as in the Indian caste system) and mutable on the other hand (as in current Canadian society) is closely related with the tendency of societies to favor either collectivistic or individualistic styles of living (Hofstede,

1983). It also is related to the emergence of the split between rural and urban culture (Tönnies, 1887 Ger./2001 Eng.; Durkheim, 1972; Parsons, 1960; 1968; Smelser, 1992; MacIver, 1970). Ferdinand Tönnies claims that there are fundamentally two different kinds of social cultures: rural *gemeinschaft* type community and urban *gesellschaft* type society. The difference is similar to that between an authentic community where people know each other and care about each other and the modern city, which is populated by strangers who are rather disinterested in each other. Rural communities typically exhibit close solidarity among the inhabitants (*gemeinschaft*), while urban societies tend to exhibit heterogeneity and complex divisions of labor. The urban *gesellschaft* type of social organization is typified by a more fragmented aggregation of individualists than the smaller *gemeinschaft* community (Gebser, 1949 Ger./1985 Eng.).

Gesellschaft Urban Culture. Urban culture is associated with large populations of people that may represent many different kinds of religions, races, languages, values, and norms. People are organized to achieve instrumental goals. By contrast, social order in traditional communities is organic, not preplanned with a separate goal in mind. Rural life tends to be less linear and more process oriented while modern urban life is progressive and goal oriented. In the *gesellschaft* world, people are brought together to perform functions as when a corporation hires strangers from various fields such as engineers, secretaries, accountants, sales personnel, attorneys, and so forth to come together as a fabricated team to work for a common prefabricated goal. It is in the heterogeneity of the city that the stranger comes into being. In fact, while a tribal person may spend his or her entire life in the presence of extended family or clan and so have very intimate knowledge of them, in the city, a person spends most of their life in the presence of huge crowds of absolute strangers (Simmel, 1908 Ger./1950 Eng.; 1903; 1890).

Gemeinschaft Rural Community. A common value system binds members together in the *gemeinschaft* community while legalistic contractual agreement keeps the members of urban society organized. Individualism is exaggerated by the isolation of persons in the urban world. **Individualistic** societies tend to see the individual as responsible, free, but also very often alienated. The style of communication in such societies tends to be what Edward T. Hall (1966) calls **low context** communication. Hall claims that there is a dimension of context that affects communication style. In **high context** communication, meaning is presumed by the speakers. Much meaning is taken from the context within which a person is speaking. In low context communication, by contrast, little meaning is assumed to be in the context. While high context situations require little verbal elaboration, low context situations require more elaborate messages to convey the meaning of the situation (Bernstein, 1966). Thus cosmopolitan urban people, who are strangers to each other and do not share a great deal of experience, must talk more in order to communicate than rural people who know each other well and share their lives.

Two Kinds of Decision Making

People in small collectives like tribal villages share common values so that they tend to be less argumentative in their style of communication than western and westernized big city dwellers (Ting-Toomey, 1985). In fact, while people from individualistic, low-context cultures see conflict as a useful tool of communication, people from collectivistic, high context cultures see conflict as an emotional expression that causes stress. Thus, individualists tend to have a more confrontational style than people from collectivistic cultures who value harmony over individual expression. They even argue in different ways. People from low-context cultures tend to use fact and also argue from principle (inductive and deductive reasoning) while high-context persons tend to use emotion and intuition more (Glenn, Witmeyer, and Stevenson, 1977).

Villagers tend to stress harmony and protracted negotiation over argumentation and quick judgment. Community style communication in high-context cultures tends to involve consensus building rather than deliberative defeat (Condon and Kurata, 1973). Consensus and harmonizing leaves no one out of the decision-making process, but it takes time compared to modern urban resolution. Time is a rare commodity in modern urban industrial societies. Modern cosmopolitan culture, which tends to be low-context in nature, claims to be “democratic” which means disputative. Debate is a valued mode of communication. Under this style of decision making, once a vote is taken, the losing side has little recourse but to be quiet and follow the will of the majority. Furthermore, modern society is complex, with many divisions of labor. Hierarchy and management of complex processes often leads to decision-making occurring among a few managers who set goals for the organization and decide how those goals should be pursued.

The classical Greek style of democratic decision-making, which has become the norm in Western cultures, is more efficient than non-Western styles of consensus building. In the Western style, debate occurs for a limited amount of time. Then everyone stops talking and they vote. After the vote is taken there may be no more discussion and the group moves on to “new business.” This style was refined in Robert’s Rules of Order, which modern organizations around the world now follow. After the vote is taken the minority has little chance to change events.

But in non-Western democratic decision-making, the communication style is not fragmented. Discussion

continues until a consensus emerges. This often takes a lot of time, convincing, and compromise. But in the end, compromise prevents some of the group members from becoming powerless minorities, which happens in Western style decision-making. So, while Western style decision-making is quick and final (progressive), nonwestern styles tend to be more harmonious and ambiguous, open for “further discussion.” Tribal people may well return to the same dispute many times. Individualistic *gesellschaft* type communication values speed over group harmony, results over process (Gebser, 1985; Kramer, 1997). In fact, Western culture is obsessed with the measurement of results rather than being interested in the means of achieving those results. Satisfaction in “**verb cultures**” which are collectivistic, high-context, and exhibit a *gemeinschaft* attitude comes from the doing of a behavior. Satisfaction in “**noun cultures**” which are individualistic, low-context, with a *gesellschaft* attitude, comes from measuring and otherwise inspecting and enjoying finished results. Western culture tends to prize the completion of events rather than the process involved. They work hard to shorten the process as much as possible (efficiency). When one compares means to ends, Western cultures tend to be ends oriented while nonwestern cultures tend to be means oriented. John Lennon coined a now common phrase that captures the difference: “Life is what happens while you are busy making plans.”

Individualism and Collectivism

In their daily conversations, people in individualistic cultures tend to talk more per unit of time than members of highly collectivistic cultures. But members of highly collectivistic culture spend more time overall in casual conversation. In collectivistic cultures, members share a more homogeneous reality so that more can be assumed than in highly complex urban cultures that are very heterogeneous, have greater divisions of labor and experts who do not “speak the same language.” In high-context cultures communication tends to be more prescribed and formal, as in the exchange of the *meshi* or business card in Japan. In this way the awkwardness of not knowing the stranger can be avoided by exchanging essential information about their identity and thus reduce uncertainty and the anxiety that can accompany it (Herman and Schield, 1961; Ball-Rokeach, 1973; Miller and Steinberg, 1975; Berger and Calabrese, 1975; Gudykunst, 1988).