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journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ijintrelIntercultural personhood: Globalization and a way of being[☆]Young Yun Kim^{*}

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ABSTRACT

This theoretical essay makes a case for “intercultural personhood” as a viable model for human development in today’s increasingly integrated world. Critiquing the largely static, monolithic, and value-laden perspective on cultural identity prevalent in social science literature, the author emphasizes the complex and evolving nature of identity. The term, intercultural identity, is employed as a counterpoint to, and as an extension of, cultural identity, and as a concept that represents the phenomenon of identity adaptation and transformation beyond the perimeters of the conventional, categorical conception of cultural identity. The stress–adaptation–growth dynamic in the author’s integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation provides a systemic account for the identity development process as the interplay of acculturation and deculturation. The author argues that, through prolonged and cumulative intercultural communication experiences, individuals around the world can, and do, undergo a gradual process of intercultural evolution. The emerging intercultural personhood is characterized by two interrelated key patterns in self–other orientation: individuation and universalization. Empirical evidence for this theoretical argument is offered through some of the pertinent research findings as well as case illustrations based on publicly available personal testimonials and biographic narratives.

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1. Introduction

We live in a world of “simultaneous events and overall awareness” (McLuhan, 1962, p. 40). In the dizzying interface of national, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious traditions, the once clear definitions of “us and them” are being blurred. The tightly knit system of communication and transportation has brought differing cultures, nationalities, races, religions, and linguistic communities closer than ever before in a web of interdependence and a common fate. The business-as-usual ways of doing things are fast losing their relevance, as culture in its “pure” form has become more a nostalgic concept than a reality. Individuals are challenged to face one another’s various differences and search for human similarities, so as to be able to move beyond their customary imagination in search of creative solutions to problems. In Toffler’s (1980) words, we find ourselves “[facing] a quantum leap forward. [We face] the deepest social upheaval and creative restructuring of all time. Without clearly recognizing it, we are engaged in building a remarkable new civilization from the ground up” (p. 44).

Ours is also a world of clashing traditions and collective identities. The very forces that diminish physical boundaries exacerbate ethnic and national rivalries, rendering alarming daily news headlines and a deeply unsettling political

[☆] Some of the ideas discussed in this paper with respect to intercultural identity development and intercultural personhood have been presented elsewhere (Kim, 2006b). In writing the present theoretical essay, the author has sought to refine her ideas and arguments further and to apply them to the broader context of globalization.

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landscape. To many people around the world, the seemingly innocent banner of some kind of group identity is now a compelling sore spot galvanizing them into us-against-them posturing. Some of the most passionate domestic and international conflicts headlining the daily media involve differing identities, particularly along tribal, racial, and religious lines. From long-festered prejudices, discriminations, and hatreds to the more recent acts of violent rage and terror, people in all corners of the world are witnessing so many angry words, hurt, and destruction. The relatively simple civic consensus in the vision of a diverse yet peaceful and democratic society is being challenged by one that upholds a particular group identity in place of the larger identity of national and world citizenry. Often absent in the identity polemics are the main ideals of multiculturalism itself, that is, people with different roots can coexist, that they can learn from each other, and that they can, and should, look across and beyond the frontiers of traditional group boundaries with minimum prejudice or illusion, and learn to strive for a society and a world that celebrates diversity side by side with unifying cohesion.

Pragmatic concerns such as these underpin, and signify, the central aim of this theoretical essay, that is, to describe, explain, and make a case for *intercultural personhood* as a constructive way of being a member of our increasingly integrated communities, both local and global. This is a way of relating to oneself and others that is built on a dynamic, adaptive, and transformative identity conception—one that conjoins and integrates, rather than separates and divides. This alternative model of identity is built on an open systems meta-theoretical perspective of a human being as a complex and evolving entity (Bertalanffy, 1956; Jantsch, 1980). It includes a vital component of an outlook on humanity that is not locked in a provincial interest of one's ascribed group membership, but one in which the individual sees himself or herself to be a part of a larger whole that includes other groups, as well.

The term “cultural identity” is employed here broadly as a generic term that is interchangeable with other terms commonly used in both international and domestic contexts such as national, ethnic, ethnolinguistic, and racial identity, or more generic concepts such as social identity and group identity. In this sense, the present use of the term, culture, is inclusive of common ethnic, linguistic, racial, and historical backgrounds. Correspondingly, intercultural identity is employed inclusively and exchangeably with interethnic, interracial, and intergroup identity.

2. Literature review: pluralism and cultural identity

From the early years of the 20th century (e.g., Simmel, 1908/1950; Stonequist, 1937), and particularly for the past several decades, the notion of identity, in general, and cultural identity, in particular, have occupied a central place in social science research, most extensively in the United States. Systematic investigations of cultural identity can be traced back to psychologist Erikson's (1950) theoretical framework. Erikson described the process of identity development as one in which the two identities—of the individual (or the personal) and of the group (or the social collective)—are merged into one. Erikson thus placed cultural identity at the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his or her “common culture.”

Erikson's identity conception has since been echoed in subsequent academic writings, but in a way that is increasingly idealized. For De Vos (1990), for example, cultural identity is rooted in “the emotionally profound self-awareness of parentage and a concomitant mythology of discrete origin,” (p. 14) and provides “a sense of common origin, as well as common beliefs and values, or common values” and serves as the basis of “self-defining in-groups” (p. 204). For Yinger (1986), ethnic attachment is a “genuine culture” that forms the person's “basic identity” and offers “a sense of historical continuity and embeddedness and a larger existence in a collectivity of one's group” (p. 21). Roosens (1989) saw cultural identity as the psychosocial driving force of individual and collective ethnic self-affirmation” (p. 15). Giordano (1974) likewise saw it essentially as a psychological foundation offering the individual a “ground on which to stand” that “no one can take away” (p. 16).

2.1. *The pluralistic turn*

Idealized conceptions of cultural identity such as the ones sampled above parallel, and mirror, the ideological shift toward greater pluralism and multiculturalism in the United States and elsewhere, beginning with the “new ethnicity” movement prompted by the civil rights movement in the 1960s in the United States. In their early work, Glazer and Moynihan (1963) concluded a sociological analysis by stating that ethnicity pervades all spheres of life among ethnic minorities: “The point about the melting pot is that it did not happen” (p. 290). Novak (1971), in *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics*, argued against assimilation and advocates “equal ethnicity for all.” He described the feelings of alienation held by one large ethnic group, Poles, who had been drawn to “ethnic power” movements in the competition for jobs, respect, and attention.

The pluralistic turn in academic conceptions of cultural identity has capitalized on the inherent and profound dilemma, that is, a contradiction arising from the inevitable gap between the assimilationist emphasis on transcending group categories and the reality of everyday life in which group categories continue to constrain ethnic minorities. In this movement, the primacy of individual identity has been challenged by contrary claims of *group identity* and the associated attempts to elevate group distinctiveness over a larger, national identity. It, thereby, has replaced the traditional “melting-pot” metaphor with newer ones such as “mosaic,” “quilt,” and “salad bowl.” In Pettigrew's (1988) words, “To many, talk of mosaics and quilts to emphasize the autonomous nature of identity and its relationships among cultural identities is both an attempt to describe the way America is headed and an effort to hurry it along” (p. 19).

Underlying the pluralistic, group-based construction of personhood and society is the presumption of collective interests as a concern to the individual, above and beyond their implications for personal self-interest. Cultural identity, in effect, is

deemed an extension of the self; it entails “a shift towards the perception of self as an interchangeable exemplar of some social category and away from the perception of self as a unique person” (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987, p. 50).

2.2. *Research as advocacy: “Whose Side Are You On?”*

Along with the pluralistic turn in the United States and now around the world, we have seen an increasing trend of departure in research addressing issues of cultural identity from the traditional normative-representational stance of value-neutrality to the stance of social advocacy and other forms of activism. This politicization of research is reflected in the increased number of traditional social scientists who are committed to the social causes of diversity and justice and who find the principally value-neutral stance of the traditional normal science approach less than satisfying (cf. Hammersley, 1995; Thornton, 1996). Academic arguments are made, for example, for a redistribution of power and resources to overcome inequalities in group status (e.g., Hacker, 1992) and for a greater diversity of the university curriculum by replacing it with one “that would focus on the achievements of marginalized peoples” (Traub, 1998, p. 25). Pressure is felt by many traditional researchers who find the field too politicized, so much so that a given theory, along with the credibility of the theorist, appears to be dismissed by some based on the implied question, “Whose side are you on?”

The shift in emphasis from value-neutral theory to value-driven activism has been fueled by the rise of radically relativistic worldviews underpinning “postmodern” schools such as “critical theory,” “cultural studies,” and “muted group and standpoint theory,” among others. They have been mounting vigorous arguments to gear research directly to “emancipatory” political goals of eliminating “White racism” at home and countering Western/American “imperialism” abroad. Tsuda (1986), for instance, criticized the Western cultural domination as the genesis of “distorted intercultural communication” around the world. Tsuda argued that the dominance of English language embodies the dominance of Western ideology, which imposed an overt restriction on non-Western peoples’ freedom of expression and damages their identity. Similarly, Young (1996) presented his criticism of Western “cultural imperialism” by depicting today’s global reality as one of power asymmetry between communicators rooted in “oppressive” and “imperialistic” Western cultural-institutional systems.

3. Problematics in pluralistic conceptions

A close examination of the contemporary pluralistic academic writings on issues of cultural identity and intercultural relations, such as the ones cited above, reveals at least two main problematics: *positivity bias* and *oversimplification*. These two themes are identified based on the implicit or explicitly stated common assumptions that often fail to reflect the reality of identity experiences at the level of individuals.

3.1. *Positivity bias*

A *positivity bias* is reflected in the unconditional moral imperative commonly seen in various academic conceptions of cultural identity. Pluralistically inclined social scientists in general, and postmodern-critical scholars in particular, have been largely silent about the “dark side” of cultural identity—the tendencies of collective self-glorification and denigration of other groups. An insufficient amount of attention has been given to the fact that too strict an adherence to an cultural identity can raise even separatist sentiments, fear and distrust of other groups, and even the dangers of violence, cruelty, and political humiliation (Levy, 2000). Intended or not, some critical writings suggest a sense of “cultural identity at any cost.” Cultural identity is not only to be recognized, respected, and preserved, but also to be a means to combat unjust practices of an outgroup, real or imagined. Implicit in such a claim is the notion that cultural groups are deemed inherently equal in their original states, but that their original natures are seen as being distorted and corrupted in the process of interaction with others in society and through the development of sociocultural institutions (Tsuda, 1986, pp. 62–63). As such, equality is defined less in terms of fairness of rules as in the *procedural equality* in the sense of classical liberalism, and more in terms of group *status equality*, at least in terms of the inherent moral rights of all groups expressed in the “pride” and “dignity” of a people.

Positive values assigned to cultural identity clearly reflect the desire to offer an intellectual voice to the traditionally subordinated or oppressed people. They collectively offer a philosophical thesis urging readers to fight for change in the unjust status quo. At the same time, the positivity bias becomes problematic when it is applied selectively. There is a lack of evenhandedness and realism results in the conspicuous silence among pluralistically inclined social researchers in the face of human sufferings and systematic injustices instigated within non-Western countries. Relatedly, unconditional positive moral values assigned to cultural identity fails to acknowledge one of the basic tenets of intergroup theories such as the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). That is, individuals identify with a group in a manner that is self-serving. The way people experience cultural identity is essentially not a rational but an emotionally driven experience. When it comes to our relationships to an outgroup in competition or conflict, we are less than likely to be fair and objective, and more likely to be irrational and defensive, favoring our ingroup and discriminating against the outgroup that threatens our ingroup.

The positivity bias with respect to cultural identity is suggested in the approval in October 2005 by all members of the UNESCO, except the United States, of the convention on the “protection and promotion” of cultural diversity. The drafters

worried that globalization represented a challenge for cultural diversity, namely, in view of risks of imbalance between rich and poor countries. The fear is that the values and images of Western mass culture, like some invasive weed, are threatening to choke out the world's native flora, so to speak. Yet, as Kwame Anthony Appiah (2006), the Ghana-born professor of philosophy at Princeton University, points out, this UNESCO convention offers a misplaced moral judgment.

What's really important, then, cultures or people?..many globalization's cultural critics are aiming at the wrong targets. . . Human variety matters. . . because people are entitled to options. . . If we want to preserve a wide range of human conditions because it allows free people the best chance to make their own lives, we can't enforce diversity by trapping people within differences they long to escape. . . Cultural consumers are not dupes. They can adopt products to suit their own needs, and they can decide for themselves what they do and do not approve of. (Appiah, 2006, pp. 32–35)

3.2. Oversimplification

The positivity bias in the common conceptions of cultural identity, and the selective applications thereof, is inseparably linked to the tendency in many pluralistic academic writings to portray cultural identity as an “all-or-none” or “either-or” entity that belongs exclusively to a particular category of people. A person is often viewed to belong to one, and only one, particular ethnic group. The monolithic and static conception of cultural identity is often reflected in statements that inflate uniformity among the individuals who are associated with a particular group category. Some researchers have tended to lump together all individuals ascribed to a particular group and portray them as though they are a homogeneous group with identical characteristics. In *Two Nations*, for example, Hacker (1992) described the contemporary Black as someone who was marginal, separate, and victimized in the White world, despite the many contrary statistics presented in the book.

The categorical characterizations belie the complexities in the way cultural identity plays out in the grass-roots reality, particularly in the United States. Revealing the continuing transcendence of group categories, the United States has seen a significant increase in the percentage of Americans who approve of marriage between blacks and whites from 25% in 1972 to 61% in 1995 (*USA Today*, August 8, 1995, p. A11). In terms of actual inter-marriages, the number has escalated roughly from 310,000 in the 1960s to more than 1.1 million in the 1990s. In 2005, more than 7% of America's 59 million married couples are reported to be interracial, compared to less than 2% in 1970 (Crary, 2007). Correspondingly, the incidence of births of mixed-race babies has multiplied 26 times as fast as that of any other group. As of the early 1990s, 52% of Jewish Americans, 65% of Japanese Americans, and 70% of Native Americans are reported to have married out of their faith, race, or ethnic heritage (Smolowe, 1993, pp. 64–65).

A broader indication of complexity in the reality of cultural identity lies in the attitudes and opinions of the American public at large concerning cultural identity and interethnic relations in the United States (Kim, 2006a). Despite the contentious identity polemics dominating media headlines, identity orientations of the majority of American people today a significant level of adaptation to the increasingly interethnic social environment. Straddled between the poles of traditional assimilationism and the counter-pole of pluralism, the majority Americans have been making strides in reconciling the two ideological poles and rejecting any ideological extremes. This observation echoes the conclusion Wolfe (1998) makes when he characterizes “the new middle-class morality” in the United States. Based on 200 in-depth interviews conducted in the Boston, Atlanta, Tulsa, and San Diego metropolitan areas, Wolfe finds “little support for the notion that middle-class Americans are engaged in bitter cultural conflict with one another” (p. 278). Instead, they are “struggling to find ways in which their core beliefs can be reconciled with experiences that seem to contradict them” (p. 281), while insisting on a set of values “capacious enough to be inclusive but demanding enough to uphold standards of personal responsibility” (p. 322).

4. Intercultural communication, adaptation, and transformation

Many of the current theories in social psychology and intercultural communication address such individual variations in cultural or ethnic identity orientations. For example, identity variation and flexibility are also noted in several models of intercultural communication competence or effectiveness. Imahori and Cupach (2005) highlight the fact that individuals are able to manage their cultural identity when interacting with individuals of differing backgrounds, and that “facework” or the ability to handle each other's cultural identity flexibly is a key to being a competent intercultural communicator. A similar identity conception underlies Ting-Toomey's (2005) theory that places “identity negotiation” at the center of “communicative resourcefulness” in intercultural encounters. Likewise, Kim's (2005b) contextual theory of interethnic communication identifies “identity inclusivity” and “identity security” as the key communicator characteristics that help explain the degree to which individuals tend to engage themselves in associative interethnic behaviors and activities. Although varied in focus, scope, and perspective, theoretical models such as these offer conceptions of identity that are not fixed or monolithic but flexible and varied across individuals and situations.

Moving beyond individual variations and flexibility in identity orientation, the present author (Kim, 1988, 2001, 2005a) has theorized about, and documented empirical evidence for, its dynamic and evolving nature. Grounded in the General Systems perspective (Bertalanffy, 1956), this theory argues that each person is an “open system” that exchanges information with the environment through communication, and co-evolves with the changing environment. As such, the theory characterizes a person's identity undergoing changes throughout life. Plasticity, the ability to learn and change

through new experiences, is highlighted as one of the most profound characteristics of the human mind and as the very basis upon which individuals acquire an identity.

4.1. *Acculturation and deculturation*

This theory (Kim, 1988, 2001, 2005a) is intended primarily to explain the common adaptive experiences of individuals who are born and raised in one cultural or subcultural environment and have relocated to a new and different one for an extended length of time. Yet, the core concepts and the theoretical arguments are applicable to the broader context of the increasing intercultural communicative interface accompanying the process of globalization. One no longer has to leave home to experience acculturation. Through mass media and other technological means of communication, people around the world are increasingly exposed to the images and sounds of once distant cultures. In large urban centers, local people are routinely coming in contacts with foreign-born individuals. In many ways, globalization presents individuals with numerous situations that deviate from the familiar original cultural script.

The activity of intercultural communication and new cultural learning is the essence of *acculturation*, that is, the acquisition of the new cultural practices in wide-ranging areas including the learning of a new language. Acculturation brings about a development of cognitive complexity, or the structural refinement in an individual's internal information-processing ability with respect to the target culture. An equally significant aspect of acculturation is the acquisition of new cultural aesthetic and emotional sensibilities, from a new way of appreciating beauty, fun, joy, as well as despair, anger, and the like. Acculturative learning does not occur randomly or automatically following intercultural contacts and exposures. New cultural elements are not simply added to prior internal conditions. Rather, it is a process over which each individual has a degree of freedom or control, based on his or her predispositions, pre-existing needs and interests. Such an ego-protective and ego-centric psychological principle is demonstrated in Bognar's (2001) identification of an uneven development in gender role change between male and female immigrants, and in Chang's (2001) finding in a study of Asian immigrants in Singapore of relatively higher levels of acculturation in workplace-related and public norms and values compared to private realms and home life.

As new learning occurs, *deculturation* or unlearning of at least some of the old cultural elements has to occur, at least in the sense that new responses are adopted in situations that previously would have evoked old ones. "No construction without destruction," in the words of Burke (1974). The act of acquiring something new is the suspending and, over a prolonged period, even losing some of the old habits at least temporarily. This interplay of acculturation and deculturation underlies the psychological evolution individuals undergo—from changes in "surface" areas such as outwardly expressive behaviors such as choices of music, food, and dress, to deeper-level changes in social role-related behaviors and fundamental values.

4.2. *The stress–adaptation–growth dynamic*

As the interplay of acculturation and deculturation continues, each experience of adaptive change inevitably accompanies *stress* in the individual psyche—a kind of identity conflict rooted in resistance to change, the desire to retain old customs in keeping with the original identity, on the one hand, and the desire to change behavior in seeking harmony with the new milieu, on the other. This conflict is essentially between the need for acculturation and the resistance to deculturation, that is, the "push" of the new culture and the "pull" of the old. The internal disequilibrium created by such conflicting forces can be manifested in intense emotional "lows" of uncertainty, confusion, and anxiety. Such intense situations can generate "crises" in which our mental and behavioral habits are brought into awareness and called into question.

Stress, indeed, is an expression of the instinctive human desire to restore homeostasis, that is, to hold constant a variety of variables in internal structure to achieve an integrated whole. Some people may attempt to avoid or minimize the anticipated or actual "pain" of disequilibrium by selective attention, denial, avoidance, and withdrawal, as well as by compulsively altruistic behavior, cynicism, and hostility toward the new external reality. Others may seek to regress to an earlier state of existence in the familiar "home" culture, a state in which there is no feeling of isolation, no feeling of separation. From this open systems perspective, then, the extensively investigated phenomenon of "culture shock" (e.g., Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001) or "transition shock" (e.g., Bennett, 1977) can be regarded essentially as a manifestation of the generic process that occurs whenever an individual's internal capabilities are not adequate to the demands of the new environment.

Even in the form of anguish and tribulations, however, stress presents us with an opportunity to search deep inside ourselves for new possibilities to recreate ourselves. Over time, such conflicts, in turn, make us susceptible to external influence and compel individuals to learn new cultural elements. For most people, internal changes take hold as they embrace environmental challenges and strive to stabilize themselves by overcoming the predicament and partake in the act of *adaptation*. Adaptation, as such, is defined from an open-systems perspective as the entirety of the *phenomenon of individuals who, through direct and indirect contacts with an unfamiliar environment, strive to establish and maintain a relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationship with the environment*. At the core of this definition is the goal of achieving an overall person–environment "fit," a congruence between their internal conditions and the conditions of the new environment. Adaptation, thus, is an activity that is "almost always a compromise, a vector in the internal structure of culture and the external pressure of environment" (Sahlins, 1964, p. 136).

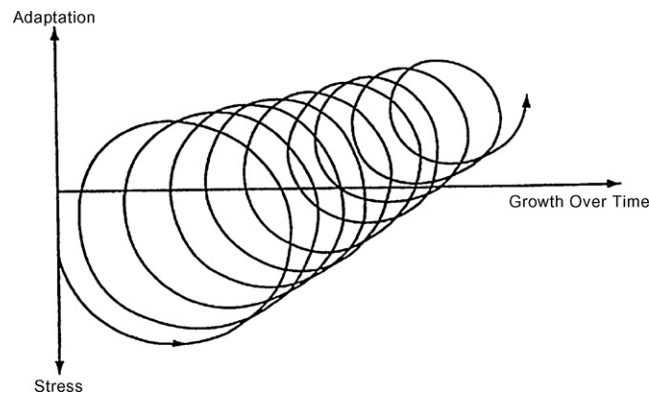


Fig. 1. The stress–adaptation–growth dynamic (Source: Kim, 2001, p. 59).

What follows a successful, long-term, and cumulative management of the stress–adaptation disequilibrium is a subtle and often imperceptible psychological *growth* in the sense of an increased complexity in an individual's internal system. Periods of stress pass as an individual works out new ways of handling problems, owing to the creative forces of self-reflexivity of human mentation. Together, the concepts of stress, adaptation, and growth constitute three-pronged experiences of the *stress–adaptation–growth dynamic* of psychological movement in the forward and upward direction of increased chances of success in a changing or changed environment. Stress, in this regard, is intrinsic to complex open systems and essential in the adaptation process—one that allows for self-(re)organization and self-renewal. The stress–adaptation–growth dynamic does not play out in a smooth, steady, and linear progression, but in a dialectic, cyclic, and continual “draw-back-to-leap” pattern. Each stressful experience is responded to with a “draw back” (or a state of “regression”), which, in turn, activates adaptive energy to help individuals reorganize themselves and “leap forward.” As growth of some units always occurs at the expense of others, the adaptation process follows a pattern that juxtaposes integration and disintegration, progression and regression, and novelty and confirmation. This systems-theoretic explanation echoes Dubos' (1965) view of human adaptation as “a dialectic between permanence and change” (p. 2).

The stress–adaptation–growth process continues as long as there are new environmental challenges, with the overall forward and upward movement in the direction of greater adaptation and growth. In this process, large and sudden changes are more likely to occur during the initial phase of exposure to a new or changing cultural milieu. Such drastic changes are themselves indicative of the severity of difficulties and disruptions. Over a prolonged period of undergoing internal change, the diminishing fluctuations of stress and adaptation become less intense or severe, leading to an overall “calming” of our internal condition, as depicted in Fig. 1.

4.3. Identity transformation: individuation and universalization

Emerging from the experiences of acculturation, deculturation, and the stress–adaptation–growth dynamic is an emergence of *intercultural identity*—an open-ended, adaptive, and transformative self-other orientation. The concept, intercultural identity, highlights one of the well-known central maxims for all living systems, that is, “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts” (Ruben, 1972). It depicts a dynamic and integrative transformation of identity and, thus, is differentiated from other similar terms that represent various forms of additions and subtractions of specific cultural components such as “bicultural,” “multicultural,” “multiethnic,” and even “hybrid” identity. Existing terms close to intercultural identity include “meta-identity,” “cosmopolitan” or “transcultural” identity, all of which indicate less dualistic and more meta-contextual, conceptions of self and others rather than rigid boundedness vis-à-vis conventional social categories such as ethnicity or culture.

One of the two key elements of intercultural identity development is *individuation* that involves a clear self-definition and definition of the other as a singular individual rather than a member of a conventional social category. With this capacity, one is better able to see oneself and others on the basis of unique individual qualities rather than categorical stereotypes. Individuation, thus, fosters a mental outlook that exhibits greater cognitive differentiation and particularization (Oddou & Mendenhall, 1984). Accompanying individuation is *universalization* in self-other orientation, a parallel development of a synergistic cognition “of a new consciousness. Universalization is born out of an awareness of the relative nature of values and of the universal aspect of human nature” (Yoshikawa, 1978, p. 220). As people advance in identity transformation process, they are better able to see the common humanity among different cultures and ethnicities, and locate the points of consent and complementarity beyond the points of difference and contention. They are on the way to being better able to overcome parochialism and form a vital outlook that is not locked in a provincial interest of one's own group membership, but one in which the individual sees himself or herself to be a part of a larger whole that includes other groups as well.

5. Data and illustrations

A broad array of research data offers a broad empirical support for the present theoretical accounts of acculturation and deculturation, and of the interrelationship of intercultural stress and subsequent adaptation and growth leading to a gradual identity transformation toward an increasingly intercultural personhood. Additional empirical evidence can be obtained from a variety of publicly available personal accounts told in biographical stories that provide illuminating anecdotes on intercultural identity transformation. (See Kim, 2001, for an extensive documentation of empirical studies as well as case illustrations.)

5.1. Research evidence

Direct and indirect research evidence for the acculturation–deculturation process and the stress–adaptation–growth dynamic comes largely from more than half a century of social scientific studies of immigrants and of temporary sojourners conducted in the United States and many other parts of the world. Eaton and Lasry (1978), for example, reported that the stress level of more upwardly mobile immigrants was greater than those who were less upwardly mobile. Among Japanese-Americans (Marmot & Syme, 1976) and Mexican-American women (Miranda & Castro, 1977), the better adapted immigrants had initially experienced a somewhat greater frequency of stress-related symptoms (such as anxiety and a need for psychotherapy) than the less adapted group. In addition, data from studies of temporary sojourners have shown similar patterns of relationship between stress, adaptation, and growth. Findings from Ruben and Kealey's (1979) study of Canadian technical advisors in Nigeria, for example, suggested that those who were the most effective in their new environment underwent the most intense culture shock during the initial transition period.

Similarly, in a study in Japan among college students from the United States and a number of other countries, Milstein (2005) concluded that the sojourn experience resulted in increased levels of “self-efficacy.” Employing Kim's (2001) theoretical account of the stress–adaptation–growth dynamic, Milstein showed further that the increase in self-efficacy was linked positively to the level of challenge the students reported to have experienced and to the eventual perceived success of their sojourn. In another study employing a 15-month ethnographic fieldwork among American exchange students studying in a college in France, Pitts (2007) has described in detail how, at various stages of the sojourn, the stress–adaptation–growth dynamic plays out in the college students' intercultural experiences and in their own verbal accounts thereof.

With respect to long-term, cumulative acculturation–deculturation and intercultural transformation, Suro (1998) reported that Hispanics in the United States showed diminished Hispanic “cultural scripts” in their judgments and increased social interactions with non-Hispanics. Similarly, Murphy-Shigematsu (1987) reported that Amerasians with first-generation Japanese mothers and White American fathers struggled with their mixed racial and cultural conditions and were successful in forming their authentic identity in society. Another study by Dasgupta (1983) indicated that Asian-Indian immigrants were able to resolve the conflict between their traditional value of holism and ascription and the American cultural values of individualism, achievement, and competition by dichotomizing and attaining a healthy balance between primary ingroup relationships and achievement in their occupational lives in the larger society. Similar patterns of intercultural identity development and emergence of intercultural personhood have been observed by Shearer (2003) in native-born “mainstream” individuals, as well. Using a biographical case study method, Shearer examined two white Australians' intercultural communication experiences over the years. Through an in-depth interpretive analysis, Shearer reported that the cases of two mainstream Australians show some evidence of intercultural personhood and make identity claims comparable with minority ethnic individuals.

5.2. Case illustrations

Along with systematic research data such as the ones described above, information gleaned from publicly available first-hand personal accounts of individuals whose life stories bear witness to concrete realities of intercultural persons. Such accounts have appeared in case studies, memoirs, biographical stories, and essays of self-reflection. Many of these accounts, including the three presented below as case illustrations, provide compelling empirical support for the present theoretical articulation of intercultural identity and intercultural personhood.

5.2.1. Muneo Yoshikawa

One of the most succinct testimonials to the present conceptual formulation of intercultural personhood was offered by Muneo Yoshikawa (1978) in terms of an individualized and universalized self-other orientation. As someone who had lived in Japan and in the United States, Yoshikawa offered the following insight into his own psychological development—an insight that captures the very essence of what it means to be an intercultural person:

I am now able to look at both cultures with objectivity as well as subjectivity; I am able to move in both cultures, back and forth without any apparent conflict. . . I think that something *beyond the sum of each [cultural] identification* took place, and that it became something akin to the concept of “*synergy*”—when one adds 1 and 1, one gets three, or a little more. This something extra is not culture-specific but something unique of its own, probably the *emergence of a new attribute or a new self-awareness*, born out of an awareness of the relative nature of values and of the universal aspect of

human nature. . . I really am not concerned whether others take me as a Japanese or an American; I can accept myself as I am. I feel I am much *freer* than ever before, not only in the cognitive domain (perception, thoughts, etc.), but also in the affective (feeling, attitudes, etc.) and behavioral domains. (Italics added; p. 220)

5.2.2. Yo-Yo Ma

The many-faceted career of cellist *Yo-Yo Ma*, his life story, and his philosophy offer yet another testament to a continual search for intercultural learning and synthesis. Born to Chinese parents living in Paris, he began to study the cello with his father at age 4 and soon came with his family to New York, where he spent most of his formative years and received his musical education at the Juilliard School. He draws inspiration from a wide circle of collaborators, and has explored music as a means of intercultural communication and as a vehicle for the migrations of ideas across a range of cultures throughout the world. In his own words posted on his website (www.yo-yoma.com), Ma explains his intercultural journey as follows:

In my musical journey I have had the opportunity to *learn from a wealth of different musical voices*—from the immense compassion and grace of Bach's cello suites, to the ancient Celtic fiddle traditions alive in Appalachia, to the soulful strains of the bandoneon of Argentina's tango cafes. Throughout my travels I have thought about the culture, religions and ideas that have been influential for centuries along the historic land and sea routes that comprised the Silk Road, and *have wondered how these complex interconnections occurred and how new musical voices were formed from the diversity of these traditions*. . . In 1998, I founded the Silk Road Project to study the ebb and flow of ideas among different cultures along the Silk Road, illuminating the heritages of its countries and identifying the voices that represent these traditions today. Through this journey of discovery, the *Silk Road Project* hopes to *plant the seeds of new artistic and cultural growth*, and to celebrate living traditions and musical voices throughout the world. (Italics added)

5.2.3. Orhan Pamuk

The creative insight into human conditions rooted in the life of intercultural personhood appears to have been also the driving passion for the 2006 winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, the Turkish novelist *Orhan Pamuk*. Pamuk. Like Rushdie, Pamuk is recognized for having captured in his writings new symbols for the interlacing of cultures. In an interview with the National Public Radio following the Nobel Prize announcement ([National Public Radio, October 12, 2006](http://www.npr.org)), Pamuk was reminded by the interviewer that he had talked previously about “coming from one of those countries. . . on the periphery of the Western world where the art was developed, and being one of those writers who is grabbing that art from the center to the periphery and then *producing something new* to show the world” (Italics added). Pamuk reaffirmed this intercultural focus in his work and explained his inclusive intercultural identity as follows.

My whole book, my whole life, is a testimony to the fact that East and West actually *combine, come together gracefully and produce something new*. That is what I have been trying to do all my life. . . I don't believe in clashes of civilization. I think that was a fanciful idea which, unfortunately, is sometimes coming to be true. But no, I think that East and West meet. I think that my whole work is a testimony to the fact that *we should find ways of looking, combining East and West without any clash, but with harmony, with grace, and produce something new for humanity*. (Italics added)

6. Conclusion: toward intercultural personhood

There is a great deal of uncertainty and stress in our rapidly globalizing world. With the advent of electronic communication and globalization, distance no longer dictates the extent of intercultural communication. Whether at home or in a foreign soil, numerous people the world over are being challenged to undergo at least some degree of acculturation, deculturation, and the experience of the stress–adaptation–growth dynamic. To the individuals, social organizations, communities, and nations that are nostalgic for the age of certainty, permanence, and a fixed and unitary cultural identity, this changing global reality can represent a particularly unsettling discontinuity and malaise. One may refuse to admit this reality, but only at the cost of the immense effort of spending one's life resisting or denying it. Such a psychological posture may help one to “feel better,” at least temporarily, about oneself and one's group. Yet it is also likely to engender a further refusal to adapt.

The theoretical account presented in this essay offers a viable alternative vision of being oriented to oneself and to the world that is more open, flexible, and inclusive. It speaks to the process a uniquely human plasticity, “our relative freedom from programmed reflexive patterns. . . the very capacity to use culture to construct our identities” ([Slavin & Kriegman, 1992](#), p. 6). It projects a special kind of mindset in which cross-borrowing of identities is not an act of “surrendering” one's personal and cultural integrity, but an act of respect for cultural differences that leaves neither the lender nor the borrower deprived. The dynamic and evolutionary concept of intercultural personhood is no less genuine than the familiar ways of being and relating. It points to a way of existence that strives to embrace and incorporate seemingly divergent cultural elements into something new and unique. Intercultural personhood projects a way of relating to oneself and to fellow human beings with greater objectivity, realism, and evenhandedness.

It is, in the end, up to each person to decide for himself or herself as to how one wishes to relate to changing global cultural environment. The intercultural outlooks on self, others, and life are represented by the integrative thoughts of Muneo Yoshikawa, Yo-Yo Ma, and Orhan Pamuk. It is individuals such as these in which the viability of the present model of intercultural personhood rests. They represent numerous others around the world who bear witness to the remarkable

human spirit and capacity for self-renewal vis-à-vis the globalizing world. Their individuated and universalized identity orientations defy the simplistic and conventional categorizations of people and reveal a way of being in the world. Instead, their intercultural orientations can help to hold together, integrate, and elevate diverse cultures, to help fellow citizens see their collective “blind spots,” and to discourage excessive claims for cultural identity. Their personal insights show a way of being in the world that nurtures the primacy of individual freedom in meeting one of the singular challenges of our time, that is, the necessity of what Toffler (1980) referred to as the “personality of transcendence”:

[The individual] must reach out in totally new ways to anchor himself, for all the old groups—religion, nation, community, family or profession—are now shaking under the hurricane impact of the accelerative thrust of change. . . each time we link up with some particular subcultural group or groups, we make some change in our self image.” (pp. 121–123)

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