CHAPTER

7

NONVERBAL CODES AND CULTURAL SPACE

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Understand how verbal and nonverbal communication differ.
2. Discuss the types of messages that are communicated nonverbally.
3. Identify cultural universals in nonverbal communication.
4. Explain the limitations of some cross-cultural research findings.
5. Define and give an example of cross-cultural differences in facial expressions, proxemics, gestures, eye contact, paralanguage, chronemics, and silence.
6. Discuss the relationship between nonverbal communication and power.
7. Define cultural space.
8. Describe how cultural spaces are formed.
9. Explain why it is important to understand cultural spaces in intercultural communication.
10. Understand the differences between the modernist and postmodern views of cultural spaces.

Nonverbal elements of cultural communication are highly dynamic and play an important role in understanding intercultural communication. Our Kenyan student Gladys describes a nonverbal misstep when she first arrived in the United States:

> *Back at home women love touching and patting each other's hair as a way of admiring it. When I moved to the United States, there was this lady who attended the same church we did. The lady was fairly friendly and even talked of inviting me to her apartment. She had long blonde hair. One day, I made the mistake of patting her hair as a way of admiring how long it was. She was so mad at me, and that occurrence strained our relationship which never recovered. Since then I became afraid of patting anyone's hair again.*

Consider expected spatial distance. A colleague recently observed that walking on the sidewalks in England, she found herself frequently bumping into oncoming pedestrians—and figured out it was because people tend to walk on the same side of the pavement as they drive on the road. So walking in England, as they approached her and she steps to her left, they step to their right.

While the consequences for these encounters may be a bit awkward, in some other instances, understanding nonverbal communication can be more consequential. For example, consider nonverbal norms for interactions with police. Cultural experts warned tourists visiting Japan for the recent Rugby World Cup that police there have every legal right to stop citizens and foreigners and ask for ID. In fact, even raising your voice can be interpreted as noncompliance, with serious consequences. Japanese citizens, when stopped by police, will stand perfectly still and speak calmly. "No sudden moves. No surprises. Nobody goes to jail" (Richards, 2019) .

You may never need to know the appropriate nonverbal behavior for encounters with Japanese police, but you certainly will find yourself in many intercultural communication situations and cultural spaces. Your own nonverbal communication may create additional problems and, if the behaviors are inappropriate for the particular cultural space, may exacerbate existing tensions. In other cases, your use of nonverbals might reduce tension and confusion.

The first part of this chapter focuses on the importance of understanding nonverbal aspects of intercultural communication. We can examine nonverbal communication in terms of the personal–contextual and the static–dynamic dialectics. Although nonverbal communication can be highly dynamic, personal space, gestures, and facial expressions are fairly static patterns of specific nonverbal communication codes. These patterns are the focus of the second part of this chapter. Finally, we investigate the concept of cultural space and the ways in which cultural identity is shaped and negotiated by the cultural spaces (home, neighborhood, and so on) that people occupy.

There are no guidebooks for reading everyday nonverbal behaviors, and nonverbal communication norms vary from culture to culture; therefore, we believe it is useless to list nonverbals to memorize. Instead, it will be more beneficial for you to learn the framework of nonverbal communication and cultural spaces so you can tap into the nonverbal systems of whatever cultural groups become relevant to your life. Understanding communication is a matter of understanding how to think dialectically

FIGURE 7-I Nonverbal behavior can communicate status and power. How are these elements expressed in the nonverbal behavior of these border-crossers and border guards? (*Johan ORDONEZ/AFP/Getty Images*)

about *systems* of meaning, and not discrete elements. Nonverbal intercultural communication is no exception.

THINKING DIALECTICALLY ABOUT NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION: DEFINING NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

In this chapter, we discuss two forms of communication beyond speech. The first includes facial expression, personal space, gestures, eye contact, paralanguage, use of time, and conversational silence. (What is not said is often as important as what is spoken.) The second includes the cultural spaces that we occupy and negotiate. **Cultural spaces** are the social and cultural contexts in which our identity forms—where we grow up and where we live (not necessarily the physical homes and neighborhoods, but the cultural meanings created in these places).

cultural space The particular configuration of the communication that constructs meanings of various places.

In thinking dialectically, we need to consider the relationship between the nonverbal behavior and the cultural spaces in which the behavior occurs, and between the nonverbal behavior and the verbal message. Although there are patterns to nonverbal behaviors, they are not always culturally appropriate in all cultural spaces. Remember, too, that some nonverbal behaviors are cultural, whereas others are idiosyncratic, that is, peculiar to individuals.

Comparing Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

Recognizing Nonverbal Behavior Both verbal and nonverbal communication are symbolic, communicate meaning, and are patterned—that is, they are governed by contextually determined rules. Societies have different nonverbal languages, just as they have different spoken languages. However, some differences between nonverbal and verbal communication codes have important implications for intercultural interaction.

Let's look at some examples of these differences. The following incident occurred to Judith when she was new to Algeria, where she lived for a while. One day she stood at her balcony and waved to one of the young Algerian teachers, who was walking across the school yard. Several minutes later, the young teacher knocked on the door, looking expectantly at Judith, as if summoned. Because Judith knew that it was uncommon in Algeria for men to visit women they didn't know well, she was confused. Why had he come to her door? Was it because she was foreign? After a few awkward moments, he left. A few weeks later, Judith figured it out. In Algeria (as in many other places), the U.S. "wave" is the nonverbal signal for "come here." The young teacher had assumed that Judith had summoned him to her apartment. As this example illustrates, rules for nonverbal communication vary among cultures and contexts.

Let's consider another example. Two U.S. students attending school in France were traveling by train to Germany, when the conductor walked into their compartment and berated them in English for putting their feet on the opposite seat. They wondered how he had known that they spoke English. As these examples suggest, nonverbal communication entails more than gestures—even our appearance can communicate loudly. The students' appearance alone probably was a sufficient clue to their national identity. One of our students described a recent experience she had as a tourist in Berlin:

> *Even though I had read that it was considered impolite to call the server in a restaurant by raising a hand/finger, I found myself doing it without thinking! Until a German friend pointed it out.*

While some nonverbal behaviors are very conscious (like wearing/not wearing a facial mask during a pandemic), as these examples show, nonverbal behavior mostly operates at a subconscious level. We rarely think about how we stand, what gestures we use, and so on. Occasionally, someone points out such behaviors, which brings them to the conscious level.

When misunderstandings arise, we are more likely to question our verbal communication than our nonverbal communication. We can search for different ways to explain verbally what we mean. We can also look up words in a dictionary or ask someone to explain unfamiliar words. In contrast, it is more difficult to identify nonverbal miscommunications or misperceptions.

Learning Nonverbal Behavior Although we learn rules and meanings for language behavior in grammar and language arts lessons, we learn nonverbal meanings and behaviors by more implicit socialization. No one explains, "When you talk with someone you like, lean forward and smile frequently, because that will communicate that you really care about him or her." In many contexts in the United States, such

STUDENT VOICES

I have a couple of good friends who are deaf, and it is evident that body language, eye contact, and visual communication are far more important in our conversations than between two hearing people. I found that both of my friends, who lived very close to me, would much rather stop by my house than call me on the relay. I can see the cultural implications of space and distance. We keep in touch mostly by using WhatsApp. It's funny because the messages that I get from those guys have more commonly used slang words than most of my hearing friends use. The question is: Do my friends understand the slang, make it a part of their language, and create a sign for it, or do they know the words through somewhat of a verbal exchange with the hearing?

—Andrea

behaviors communicate immediacy and positive meanings (Ray & Floyd, 2006). But how is it interpreted if someone does not display these behaviors?

Sometimes, though, we learn strategies for nonverbal communication. Have you ever been told to shake hands firmly when you meet someone? You may have learned that a limp handshake indicates a weak person. Likewise, many young women learn to cross their legs at the ankles and to keep their legs together when they sit. These strategies combine socialization and the teaching of nonverbal codes.

Coordinating Nonverbal and Verbal Behaviors Generally, our nonverbal behaviors reinforce our verbal behaviors. For example, when we shake our heads and say "no," we are reinforcing verbal behavior, and not surprisingly, consistency between verbal and nonverbal behaviors usually translates into perceptions of credibility and positive first impressions (Weisbuch, Ambady, Clark, Achor, & Weele, 2010). However, nonverbal behaviors can also contradict our verbal communication. If we tell a friend, "I can't wait to see you," and then don't show up at the friend's house, our nonverbal behavior is contradicting the verbal message. Because nonverbal communication operates at a less conscious level, we tend to think that people have less control over their nonverbal behavior. Therefore, we often think of nonverbal behaviors as conveying the "real" messages.

What Nonverbal Behavior Communicates

relational messages Messages (verbal and nonverbal) that communicate how we feel about others.

status The relative position an individual holds in social or organizational settings.

Although language is an effective and efficient means of communicating explicit information or content, every communication also conveys **relational messages**—information on how the talker wants to be understood and viewed by the listener. These messages are communicated not by words, but through nonverbal behavior, including facial expressions, eye gaze, posture, and even our tone of voice (Bello, Brandau-Brown, Zhang, & Ragsdale, 2010). Nonverbal behavior also communicates **status** and power. For example, employees tend to look at supervisors for cues to interpreting instructions, whereas supervisors direct their eye gaze at subordinates less often; U.S. men, with historically higher status, tend to take up more space than women when seated ("manspreading"), a pattern that some are resisting now

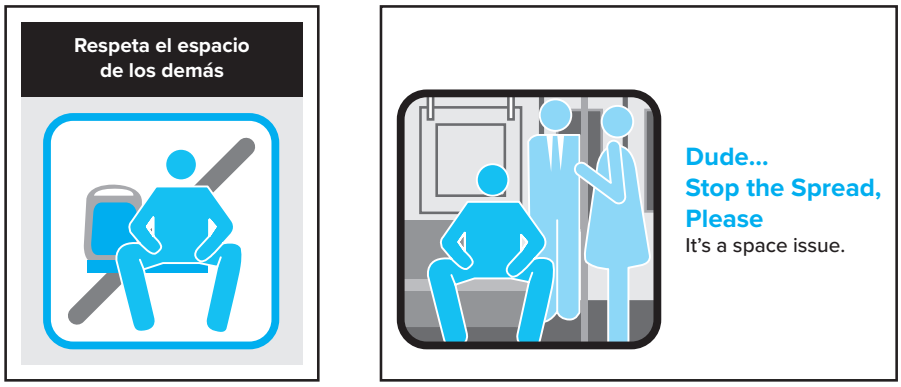


FIGURE 7-2 Signs in public transportation in Madrid and New York City signal a cross-cultural resistance to "manspreading." (*Sources: The Independent and The Guardian*)

(see Figure 7-2). Relatedly, a Korean student explained that in Korea, at family, social or business setting meals, it is customary to wait for the oldest person (with highest status) to start eating, then others can start eating. What are the consequences when people do not follow these "rules"; when women sprawl when seated or subordinates do not direct their gaze at a supervisor who is giving instructions?

In addition, many people believe that nonverbal behavior communicates **deception**, and scholars have spent years investigating this assumption—using sophisticated research methodologies, including computer-assisted observational tools, experimental (lab) studies, and in-depth interviews with interrogators and suspects—with few conclusive results. Some suggest that people from different cultural groups exhibit different behaviors when lying (Vrij, Granhag, & Mann, 2010). Still others suggest that deception is better detected by looking at language use—at how consistent people are in their speech (Blair, Reimer, & Levine, 2018; Dunbar et al., 2019). However, scholars now conclude that the nonverbal cues to deception are "faint and unreliable and that people are mediocre lie catchers" (Vrij, Hartwig, & Granhag, 2019, p. 19).

deception The act of making someone believe what is not true.

Most nonverbal communication about affect, status, and deception happens at an unconscious level. For this reason, it plays an important role in intercultural interactions. Both pervasive and unconscious, it communicates how we feel about each other and about other cultural groups.

A useful theory in understanding nonverbal communication across cultures is **expectancy violations theory.** This theory suggests that we have expectations (mostly subconscious) about how others should behave nonverbally in particular situations. When these expectations are violated (e.g., when someone stands too close to us), we will respond in specific ways. If an act is unexpected and interpreted negatively, for example, when someone stands too close to us at a religious service, we tend to regard the person and the relationship rather negatively. However, if the act is unexpected and interpreted positively (e.g., an attractive person stands close at a party), we will probably regard the relationship rather favorably. In fact, more favorably than if someone stands the exact "expected" distance from us at a religious

expectancy violations theory The view that when someone's nonverbal behavior violates our expectations, these violations will be perceived positively or negatively depending on the specific context and behavior.

service or party. Because nonverbal communication occurs at a subconscious level, our negative or positive feelings toward someone may be due to the fact that they violated our expectations—without our realizing it (Burgoon, 1995; Floyd, Ramirez, & Burgoon, 2008).

THE UNIVERSALITY OF NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR

Most traditional research in intercultural communication focuses on identifying cross-cultural differences in nonverbal behavior. How do culture, ethnicity, and gender influence nonverbal communication patterns? How universal is most nonverbal communication? Research traditionally has sought to answer these questions.

As we have observed in previous chapters, it is neither beneficial nor accurate to try to reduce individuals to one element of their identity (gender, ethnicity, nationality, and so on). Attempts to place people in discrete categories tend to reduce their complexities and lead to major misunderstandings. However, we often classify people according to various categories to help us find universalities. For example, although we may know that not all Germans are alike, we may seek information about Germans in general to help us communicate better with individual Germans. In this section, we explore the extent to which nonverbal communication codes are universally shared. We also look for possible cultural variations in these codes that may serve as tentative guidelines to help us communicate better with others.

Recent Research Findings

Research investigating the universality of nonverbal communication has focused on four areas: (1) the relationship of human behavior to that of primates (particularly chimpanzees), (2) nonverbal communication of sensory-deprived children who are blind or deaf, (3) facial expressions, and (4) universal functions of nonverbal social behavior.

Chimpanzees and humans share many nonverbal behaviors. For example, both exhibit the eyebrow flash—a slight raising of the eyebrow that communicates recognition—one of the most primitive and universal animal behaviors. Primates and humans also share some facial expressions, and recent research reveals another gesture shared by chimps and humans—the upturned palm, meaning "gimme." There do seem to be compelling parallels between specific facial expressions and gestures displayed by human and nonhuman primates, universally interpreted to hold similar meanings. However, it still remains true that communication among nonhuman primates, like chimps and monkeys, appears to be less complex than among humans (Preuschoft, 2000).

Studies have also compared the facial expressions of children who were blind with those of sighted children and found many similarities. Even though the children who were blind couldn't see the facial expressions of others to mimic them, they still made the same expressions. This suggests some innate, genetic basis for these behaviors (Galati, Sini, Schmidt, & Tinti, 2003).

Indeed, many cross-cultural studies support the notion of some universality in function of nonverbal communication, particularly in **facial expressions**; for example, the eyebrow flash just described, the nose wrinkle (indicating slight social distancing), and the "disgust face" (a strong sign of social repulsion). It is also possible that grooming behavior is universal (as it is in animals), although it seems to be somewhat suppressed in Western societies (Schiefenhovel, 1997).

facial expressions Facial gestures that convey emotions and attitudes.

Although research may indicate universalities in nonverbal communication, some variations exist. The evoking stimuli (i.e., what causes the nonverbal behavior) may vary from one culture to another. Smiling, for example, is universal, but what prompts a person to smile may be culture specific. Similarly, there are variations in the rules for nonverbal behavior and the contexts in which nonverbal communication takes place. For example, people kiss in most cultures, but there is variation in who kisses whom and in what contexts. When French friends greet each other, they often kiss on both cheeks but never on the mouth.

Finally, it is important to look for larger cultural patterns in the nonverbal behavior, rather than trying simply to identify all of the cultural differences. Researcher David Matsumoto (2006) suggests that although cultural differences in nonverbal patterns are interesting, noting these differences is not sufficient. Studying and cataloging every variation in every aspect of nonverbal behavior would be an overwhelming task. Instead, he recommends studying nonverbal communication patterns that vary with other cultural patterns, such as values.

For example, recent research links cultural patterns of individualism and collectivism to differences in facial cues and ultimately to different uses of emoji. A study analyzing one month of emoji usage of 3.88 million active users from 212 countries/regions found that cultural groups that emphasize individualism (e.g., Australia, France) and encourage expressions of happiness over sadness do use more happy emoji (Lu et al., 2016). Might people from collectivist cultures misinterpret or think others overuse these smiley emojis?

Nonverbal Codes

Physical Appearance Physical appearance is an important nonverbal code. It includes physical characteristics like height, weight, and body shape, as well as personal grooming (including body hair, clothing choices) and personal artifacts such jewelry, glasses, and backpacks/briefcases/purses, medical facial masks.

Of course, physical attractiveness is dynamic and variable—beauty is in the eye of the beholder, to some extent (Swami et al., 2010). However, are there any universal measures of attractiveness? Do different cultures have different standards for beauty? It turns out that two aspects of beauty seems to be present in many cultures: (1) There is more emphasis on female attractiveness than male, and (2) men consistently express stronger preferences for attractive mates than women (Gottschall, 2008).

Japanese seem to prefer smaller-bodied women than the British, and in general, prefer small-headed and longer-legged women—the so-called *hattou shin* beauty (Swami, Caprario, & Tovée, 2006). Our Japanese students tell us that, generally, Japanese find thinner lips more attractive than do U.S. Americans. Concerning

POINT *of* VIEW

Whether women must wear a headscarf as a matter of faith is controversial, even among Muslims, and there are many reasons why Muslim women do or do not wear hijab.

Communication scholar Steve M. Croucher (2008) asked Muslim women in France their reasons for wearing the hijab. Their reasons included: it provides a feeling of security, a shield from public eyes, it demonstrates their commitment to their religious community, it is an expression of their identity, or sometimes even a protest against a secular (French) government.

In contrast, Asra Q. Nomani and Hala Arafa (2015) reject the interpretation that wearing the hijab is a "pillar" of Islam. They point out that hijab literally means "curtain" in Arabic, "hiding" and "isolating" someone or something, and is never used in the Koran to mean headscarf. They suggest that this interpretation is a well-financed effort by conservative Muslims to dominate modern Muslim societies and spread an ideology of political Islam, called "Islamism." For information about the difference between the various forms of covering (the Hijab, Niqab, and Burka) in different world regions, visit https://theculturetrip.com/middle-east/articles/the-difference-between-the-hijab-niqab-and-burka/

male attractiveness, in one study, Greek women showed a preference for smaller men and smaller overall body weight—than did British women (Swami et al., 2007).

How do clothing choices and artifacts like purses and backpacks figure in? We might argue that these can be individual choices that express elements of one's personality and affiliation with particular social groups—for example, goth clothing versus jock or preppie. Some clothing may reflect religious affiliation and expressions of religious identity, as we discussed in Chapter 5 (see Figure 7-3). For example, some orthodox Jewish women cover their heads at all times with scarves or hats; some of Judith's relatives wear prayer bonnets that cover the head and "cape" dresses (modest, shirtwaist dresses with an extra layer of material designed to deemphasize the female shape); Muslim women in many countries wear the Islamic hijab (headscarf) or burqa (sheet-like covering of the entire body with only eyes showing) (See Point of View on this page). As you might expect, women have various reasons for their clothing choices. Sometimes these choices conflict with secular society or norms in other cultures. For example, on a visit to Saudi Arabia where Sharia law dictates that women cover their heads in public, First Lady Melania Trump dressed modestly but without a headscarf, as did Trump's daughter Ivanka. Other leaders have also shunned the scarf including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, former British Prime Minister Theresa May, and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (Downes, 2019). In 2010, the French parliament made it illegal for Muslim women to wear the full veil, a law supported by a majority of French citizens, and there are similar sentiments in Britain (Thompson, 2011). Most U.S. Americans are not in favor, and some suggest that values of tolerance and religious freedom should prevail—banning the burqa in very limited contexts (schools, courts) where faces need to be seen. Some compare the ban to the French requiring Jews to wear a Star of David

FIGURE 7-3 Muslim women in many countries wear the Islamic burqa as an expression of religious identity. (*philipjbigg/Alamy Stock Photo*)

during World War II, emphasizing the underlying intolerance and prejudice (Zaretsky, 2010), which will be discussed later in this chapter. The context and people involved may call for different choices. During Iranian President Rouhani's 2016 trip to Europe where he made $18 billion worth of business deals, the Italians decided to cover some of their famous nude statues during his visits to art museums, in deference to Rouhani's strict theocratic sensibilities. They placed plywood boxes and panels around the nudes to obscure them from the president's vision, or at least in photo-ops (Tharoor, 2016).

Facial Expressions As noted earlier, there have been many investigations of the universality of facial expressions. During the past 60 years, psychologist Paul Ekman (2003) and colleagues, through extensive and systematic research, have maintained that there are six basic emotions expressed through universal facial expressions: happiness, sadness, disgust, surprise, anger, and fear. And in a recent essay in *Psychology Today*, Ekman (2019) reports that he suspects, although he hasn't investigated it, that contempt may also be a universal emotion. Using sophisticated computer-generated digital measurement, other research found that the six basic emotions suggested earlier held true for Western Caucasians. However, East Asians showed less distinction, and more overlap between emotional categories, particularly for surprise, fear, disgust, and anger, specifically showing "signs of emotional intensity with the eyes, which are under less voluntary control than the mouth, reflecting restrained facial behaviors as predicted by the literature" (Jack, Garrod, Yub, Caldarac & Schyns, 2012, p. 7242). So this research refutes the notion that human emotion is universally represented by the same set of six distinct facial expression signals, and

early research probably neglected expressions of shame, pride, or guilt, fundamental emotions in East Asian societies.

While a smile may signal a universally positive emotion, there are cultural variations in how much and how often people are expected to smile. Recent studies show that eastern Europeans tend to smile less than western Europeans, and North Americans tend to smile more often than any other cultural group, and many Americans find it disconcerting that wearing facial masks hides their smiles. Communication experts suggest that these differences stem from deeply held cultural preferences involving friendliness and sincerity. America is a "culture of affirmation," where friendliness reigns and people should be happy, or at least appear to be happy. In comparison, French, German, and eastern European cultures place a strong emphasis on sincerity and presenting one's feelings "truthfully," so people are expected to smile only when they are truly feeling happy. In fact, someone who smiles a lot is seen as a bit loony or perhaps insincere; after all, who is truly happy all the time? In most cultures women tend to smile more than men, probably reflecting the social expectations that women are supposed to be more affiliative and communal, and smiling is a way to express these attributes (Szarota, 2010).

Proxemics Unlike facial expressions, the norms for personal space seem to vary considerably from culture to culture. **Proxemics** is the study of how people use various types of space in their everyday lives: fixed feature space, semifixed space, and informal space. Fixed feature space is characterized by set boundaries (divisions within an office building); semifixed feature space is defined by fixed boundaries such as furniture. Informal space, or personal space, is characterized by a personal zone or "bubble" that varies for individuals and circumstances. The use of each of these spatial relationships can facilitate or impede effective communication across cultures; the area that humans control and use most often is their informal space.

proxemics The study of how people use personal space.

Are there cultural variations in how people use personal space? A recent study of personal distances in six countries did find some cultural differences as well as some universals (Høgh-Olesen, 2008). First, the universal norms: We tend to place ourselves further away when we are standing near to more than one stranger, we narrow down our personal space when we are in control of our own "territory" (personal space) and expand it when we arrive in someone else's territory. Now for the cultural variations—you probably know from personal experience that when someone stands too close to you or too far in conversation, you tend to feel uncomfortable and may even move to shorten or widen the space. The same study found that people from Northern countries of Greenland, Finland, and Denmark systematically kept larger distances between them and their conversational partner than did Italians, Indians, and Cameroonians. These results support Edward Hall's 1966 observations about personal space. Hall distinguished contact cultures from noncontact cultures. He described **contact cultures** as those societies in which people stand closer together while talking, engage in more direct eye contact, use face-to-face body orientations more often while talking, touch more frequently, and speak in louder voices. He suggested that societies in South America and southern Europe are contact cultures, whereas those in northern Europe, the United States, and the Far East are **noncontact cultures**—in which people tend to stand farther apart when conversing, maintain less eye

contact cultures Cultural groups in which people tend to stand close together and touch frequently when they interact—for example, cultural groups in South America, the Middle East, and southern Europe. (See **noncontact cultures.**)

noncontact cultures Cultural groups in which people tend to maintain more space and touch less often than people do in contact cultures. For instance, Great Britain and Japan tend to have noncontact cultures. (See **contact cultures.**)

STUDENT VOICES

Our students describe their experiences with contact/noncontact cultural behavior:

"I went to a great lecture by an Italian scholar last semester (at PSU) so I decided to talk with him after the lecture. While I was talking with him, he stood so close to me that I could even feel his breath and it made me feel really uncomfortable; sometimes he even put his hand on my shoulder. I watched him after and saw he stood close to everyone who talked to him."

—Emma

In my home country of Peru, it's normal to have more contact and less distance when talking with people. I remember going to Camp at UCLA during middle school. When greeting other girls, I'd approach and try to say hi like we did back home, but they would back off and ask what I was doing. After that I figured out the people here are more used to having space.

—Magda

When I first saw people here hugging each other as greeting, I was shocked! In China, we're not used to hugging people. We shake hands, wave hands, nod heads but not hug. I'm now getting used to it.

—Wei

In my Muslim school in Indonesia, hugging is not permissible and still considered as taboo and having to experience that clash of nonverbal action (like when I went to a more permissive school in Singapore), and then here, it gives me the perspective of the more lenient side of showing affection.

—Atok

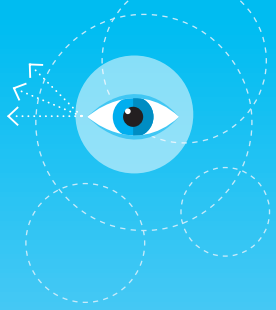
contact, and touch less often. Subsequent research seems to confirm Hall's observations, see Student Voices above.

Of course, many other factors besides regional culture determine how far we stand from someone. Gender, age, ethnicity, context, and topic all influence the use of personal space. In fact, some studies have shown that regional culture is perhaps the least important factor. For example, in many Arab and Muslim societies, gender may be the overriding factor, because unmarried men and women rarely stand close together, touch each other, or maintain direct eye contact. In contrast, male friends may stand very close together, kiss on the cheek, and even hold hands—reflecting loyalty, great friendship, and, most important, equality in status, with no sexual connotation (Fattah, 2005; Khuri, 2001). Religion may also be a factor in influencing (and regulating) proxemic behavior. Several flights were delayed in 2019 amid controversy when groups of Ultra Orthodox Jewish men refused to sit beside women—based on their interpretation of Jewish religious law prohibiting physical contact with women (https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-el-al-flight-delayed-because-haredim-wouldn-t-sit-next-to-women-1.6200187).

FIGURE 7-4 In many Asian countries, the traditional greeting is a bow. The depth of the bow signals the status relationship of the two individuals. (*Andersen Ross/Blend Images LLC*)

Gestures Gestures, perhaps even more so than personal space, vary greatly from culture to culture (see Figure 7-4), even though social media can quickly spread particular gestures throughout the world, e.g., the "finger heart" that originated in Korea (Boboltz, 2018). The consequences for this variation can be quite dramatic, as former First Lady Michele Obama discovered when she threw her arm around Her Majesty The Queen and shocked the Queen and the British media. One of the classic British rules of contact is that you never touch the Queen.

Researcher Dane Archer (1997) describes his attempt to catalog the various gestures around the world on video. He began this video project with several hypotheses: First, that there would be great variation, and this he found to be true. However, more surprising, his assumption regarding the existence of some universal gestures or at least some universal *categories* of gestures (e.g., every culture must have an obscene gesture) was not confirmed.



SHAKE HANDS? OR BOW?

Handshakes and bows are important nonverbal greetings around the world. In many Asian countries, the traditional greeting is a bow. It does not signal subservience, but rather humility and respect. The most important guideline here is to observe the other's bow carefully and try to bow to the same depth. The depth of the vow signals the status relationship of the two individuals. Too deep a bow will be seen as ingratiating, too shallow a bow will seem arrogant. In many countries now, particularly in a business context, people may combine the bow and handshake: a slight bow or nod accompanied with a handshake.

Handshakes can vary in frequency and firmness. Some Europeans shake hands at each encounter during the day and may spend as much as 30 minutes a day shaking hands. Here are some guidelines:

Germans:	Firm, brisk, and frequent
French:	Light, quick, and frequent
Latin American:	Firm and frequent
North America:	Firm and infrequent, compared to France and Latin America
Arabs:	Gentle, repeated and lingering (may place hand over heart after)
Koreans:	Moderately firm
Most other Asians:	Very gentle and infrequent

Sources: From R. E. Axtell, *Essential Do's and Taboos: Complete Guide to International Business and Leisure Travel* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2007), p. 20; T. Morrison and W. A. Conaway, *Kiss, Bow, Shake Hands* (Avon, MA: Adams Media, 2006).

He gathered his information by visiting English as a Second Language classes and asking international students to demonstrate gestures from their home cultures. He drew several conclusions from his study: First, that gestures and their meanings can be very subtle. His work "often elicited gasps of surprise, as ESL students from one culture discovered that what at first appeared to be a familiar gesture actually means something radically different in another society" (p. 87). For example, in Germany, and many other European cultures, the gesture for "stupid" is a finger on the forehead; the American gesture for "smart" is nearly identical, but the finger is held an inch to the side, at the temple. Similarly, the American raised thumb gesture of "way to go" is a vulgar gesture, meaning "sit on this" in Sardinia and "screw you" in Iran.

Second, Archer emphasizes that gestures are different from many other nonverbal expressions in that they are accessible to conscious awareness—they can be explained,

illustrated, and taught to outsiders. Finally, as noted earlier, he had assumed there would be some universal categories—a gesture for "very good," a gesture for "crazy," an obscene gesture. Not so. A number of societies (e.g., the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland) have no such gesture. In the end, he concludes that through making the video, "We all acquired a deeply enhanced sense of the power, nuances, and unpredictability of cultural differences" (p. 87). And the practical implication of the project was to urge travelers to practice "gestural humility"—assuming "that we cannot infer or intuit the meaning of any gestures we observe in other cultures" (p. 80).

eye contact
A nonverbal code, eye gaze, that communicates meanings about respect and status and often regulates turn-taking during interactions.

Eye Contact **Eye contact** often is included in proxemics because it regulates interpersonal distance. Direct eye contact shortens the distance between two people, whereas less eye contact increases the distance. Eye contact communicates meanings about respect and status and often regulates turn-taking.

Patterns of eye contact vary from culture to culture. In many societies, avoiding eye contact communicates respect and deference, although this may vary from context to context. For many U.S. Americans, maintaining eye contact communicates that one is paying attention and showing respect.

When they speak with others, most U.S. Americans look away from their listeners most of the time, looking at their listeners perhaps every 10 to 15 seconds. When a speaker is finished taking a turn, he or she looks directly at the listener to signal completion. However, some cultural groups within the United States use even less eye contact while they speak. For example, some Native Americans tend to avert eye gaze during conversation, as a sign of respect.

paralinguistics
The study of vocal behaviors includes voice qualities and vocalization.

Paralinguistics **Paralinguistics** refers to the study of paralanguage—vocal behaviors that indicate *how* something is said, including speaking rate, volume, pitch, and stress. Saying something very quickly in a loud tone of voice will be interpreted differently from the same words said in a quieter tone of voice at a slower rate. There are two types of vocal behavior—voice qualities and vocalizations.

voice qualities
The "music" of the human voice, including speed, pitch, rhythm, vocal range, and articulation.

Voice qualities—or the nontechnical term, tone of voice—mean the same thing as vocal qualities. Voice qualities include speed, pitch, rhythm, vocal range, and articulation; these qualities make up the "music" of the human voice. There do appear to be some universal meanings for particular vocal qualities. A recent study found that vocalizations (e.g., screams, laughter, tone of voice showing disgust, fear) communicating the six basic emotions were recognized equally by two dramatically different cultural groups: European native English speakers and residents of remote, culturally isolated Namibian villages. The researchers conclude that some emotions are psychological universals, communicated by vocal signals that can be broadly interpreted across cultures that do not share language or culture (Bänziger, Patel, & Scherer, 2014; Sauter, Eisner, Ekman, & Scott, 2010). We all know people whose voice qualities are widely recognized. For example, actor Harvey Fierstein's raspy voice or James Earl Jones' deep resonant voice, especially in his Darth Vader role. Paralinguistics often lead people to negatively evaluate speakers in intercultural communication contexts even when they don't understand the language. For example, Chinese speakers often sound rather musical and nasal to English speakers; English speakers sound rather harsh and guttural to French speakers.

Vocalizations are the sounds we utter that do not have the structure of language and include vocal cues such as laughing, crying, whining, and moaning as well as the intensity or volume of one's speech. They also include sounds that aren't actual words but that serve as fillers, such as "uh-huh," "uh," "ah," and "er." The paralinguistic aspects of speech serve a variety of communicative functions. They reveal mood and emotion; they also allow us to emphasize or stress a word or idea, create a distinctive identity, and (along with gestures) regulate conversation. Paralanguage can be a confusing factor in intercultural communication. For example, Europeans interpret the loudness of Americans as aggressive behavior, whereas Americans might think the British are secretive because they talk quietly. Finnish and Japanese are comfortable having pauses in their conversations, whereas most U.S. Americans are seen to talk rapidly and are pretty uncomfortable with silences.

vocalizations
The sounds we utter that do not have the structure of language.

Chronemics **Chronemics** concerns concepts of time and the rules that govern its use. There are many cultural variations regarding how people understand and use time. Edward Hall (1966) distinguished between monochronic and polychronic time orientation. People who have a **monochronic** concept of time regard it as a commodity: Time can be gained, lost, spent, wasted, or saved. In this orientation, time is linear, with one event happening at a time. In general, monochronic cultures value being punctual, completing tasks, and keeping to schedules. Most university staff and faculty in the United States maintain a monochronic orientation to time. Classes, meetings, and office appointments start when scheduled; faculty members see one student at a time, hold one meeting at a time, and keep appointments except in the case of emergency. Family problems are considered poor reasons for not fulfilling academic obligations—for both faculty and students.

chronemics
The concept of time and the rules that govern its use.

monochronic
An orientation to time that assumes it is linear and is a commodity that can be lost or gained.

In contrast, in a **polychronic** orientation, time is more holistic, and perhaps more circular: Several events can happen at once. Many international business negotiations and technical assistance projects falter and even fail because of differences in time orientation. For example, U.S. businesspeople often complain that meetings in the Middle East do not start "on time," that people socialize during meetings, and that meetings may be canceled because of personal obligations. Tasks often are accomplished *because* of personal relationships, not in spite of them. International students and business personnel observe that U.S. Americans seem too tied to their schedules; they suggest that U.S. Americans do not care enough about relationships and often sacrifice time with friends and family to complete tasks and keep appointments. Time orientation can differ even for different ethnic/language groups. For example, an American businessman scheduled a meeting with French-speaking and Flemish speaking Belgian media personnel; the Flemish delegation arrived on time and asked pointed and direct questions about the project efficiency. In contrast, the French-speaking Belgian delegation slowly trickled in 15 to 20 minutes late and were more concerned about the project's team synergies and creativity (Pant, 2016).

polychronic
An orientation to time that sees it as circular and more holistic.

Silence Cultural groups may vary in the degree of emphasis placed on silence, which can be as meaningful as language (Acheson, 2007). One of our students recalls his childhood:

> *I always learned while growing up that silence was the worst punishment ever. For example, if the house chore stated clearly that I needed to take the garbage out, and I had not done so, then my mother would not say a word to me. And I would know right away that I had forgotten to do something.*

In most U.S. American contexts, silence is not highly valued. Particularly in developing relationships, silence communicates awkwardness and can make people feel uncomfortable. According to scholar William B. Gudykunst's (1985, 2005) uncertainty reduction theory, the main reason for communicating verbally in initial interactions is to reduce uncertainty. In U.S. American contexts, people employ active uncertainty reduction strategies, such as asking questions. However, in many other cultural contexts, people reduce uncertainty using more passive strategies—for example, remaining silent, observing, or perhaps asking a third party about someone's behavior. Scholar Covarrubias has described the important role of silence in many traditional Native American communicative practices where silence is not seen "as an absence, but, rather, as a fullness of opportunity for being and learning" (2007, p. 270) and she suggests that these American Indian perspectives can contribute to our knowledge of communication in many cultural contexts.

Recent research has found similar patterns in other cultures. For example, the *asiallinen* (matter-of-fact) verbal style among Finnish people that involves a distrust of talkativeness as "slickness" and a sign of unreliability (Carbaugh & Berry, 2001; Sajavaara & Lehtonen, 1997). Silence, for Finns, reflects thoughtfulness, appropriate consideration, and intelligence, particularly in public discourse or in educational settings like a classroom. In an ethnographic study investigating this communication pattern, Wilkins (2005) reports two excerpts from interviews that illustrate this pattern—one interview with a Finnish student and one with an American student:

Excerpt 1

Finnish Student: I have been to America.

Wilkins: Can you tell me what the experience was like?

Student: The people and the country were very nice.

Wilkins: Did you learn anything?

Student: No.

Wilkins: Why not?

Student: Americans just talk all the time.

Excerpt 2

Wilkins: Do you like Finland?

American Student: Oh yes, I like it a lot.

Wilkins: How about the people?

Student: Sure, Finns are very nice.

Wilkins: How long have you been at the university?

Student: About nine months already.

STUDENT VOICES

Giving gifts seems to be a universal way to please someone, if the gift is appropriate. One colleague of mine, Nishehs, once tried to impress our boss, Joe. Nishehs brought a well-wrapped gift to Joe when they first met with each other in person. Joe was indeed pleased as he received the gift from Nishehs, but his smile faded away quickly right after he opened the gift. Joe questioned Nishehs angrily, "Why is it green?" Shocked and speechless, Nishehs murmured, "What's wrong with a green hat?"

The miscommunication resulted from the cultural differences between them. Nishehs is an Indian, whereas Joe is Chinese. For the Chinese, a green hat means one's wife is having an extramarital affair.

–Chris

Wilkins: Oh, have you learned anything?

Student: No, not really.

Wilkins: Why not?

Student: Finns do not say anything in class.

In addition to a positive view of silence, nonverbal facial expressions in the *Asiallinen* style tend to be rather fixed–and expressionless. The American student, of course, did not have the cultural knowledge to understand what can be accomplished by thoughtful activity and silence.

Scholars have reported similar views on talk and silence in Japanese and Chinese cultures influenced by Confucianism and Taoism. Confucius rejected eloquent speaking and instead advocated hesitancy and humble talk in his philosophy of the ideal person (Chang, 1997; Kim, 2001). As one of our Taiwanese students told us, "In America, sometimes students talk about half the class time. Compared to my classes in Taiwan, if a student asked too many questions or expressed his/her opinions that much, we would say that he or she is a show-off."

In a review of scholarly research on silence, communication scholar Kris Acheson (2007) acknowledges that silence in the United States has often been associated with negative, unhealthy relationships, or with disempowerment; for example, when women and/or minorities feel their voices are not heard. However, like Covarrubias, Carbaugh (1999) and other scholars, Acheson encourages us to consider the contribution of positive and sometimes powerful uses of silences in certain contexts. For example, nurses and doctors are encouraged to honor silent patients and learn to employ silence in their ethical care; young people are advised to seek out silence in their lives for the sake of health and sanity, to even noise-proof their homes in an attempt to boost health. In business contexts, sometimes keeping quiet is the best strategy and talking too much can kill a business deal. In education, teachers can create a space for understanding rather than counterarguments by asking for silent

reflection after comments or performances. In religion, the Quakers have a long tradition of approaching silence as a deeply meaningful communicative event and important part of decision making (Molina-Markham, 2014). Finally, she admits that in some contexts, like politics and law, silence is still seen as completely negative; for example, pleading the Fifth equates silence with guilt, and silence by politicians is often viewed as too much secrecy.

Stereotype, Prejudice, and Discrimination

As noted previously, one of the problems with identifying cultural variations in nonverbal codes is that it is tempting to overgeneralize these variations and stereotype people. For example, researchers in the early 1970s identified certain nonverbal behaviors associated with African Americans—"getting and giving skin," the stance and strutting walk of pimps and "players," and the "Afro-style" hairdo (Cooke, 1972; Kochman, 1972). Since then, these nonverbal behaviors have been used to stereotype all Blacks—still seen in pop culture images on television and film.

In any case, we would be wise to be careful about generalizations. Cultural variations are tentative guidelines that we can use in intercultural interaction. They should serve as examples, to help us understand that there is a great deal of variation in nonverbal behavior. Even if we can't anticipate how other people's behavior may differ from our own, we can be flexible when we do encounter differences in how close someone stands or how she or he uses eye contact or conceptualizes time.

While explicit racial slurs are less common today, a series of recent studies showed that bias (both negative and positive) is demonstrated through subtle facial expressions and body language in popular television programs. They also showed that the more viewers watched shows that had pro-white nonverbal bias, the more biased viewers became—even though they could not consciously identify the biased behaviors they had seen in the programs. Overall, the findings suggest that these "hidden" patterns of biased nonverbal behavior influence bias among viewers (Weisbuch, Pauker, & Ambady, 2009). These same researchers conducted similar studies regarding (positive) nonverbal biases toward slim women (Weisbuch & Ambady, 2009).

Prejudice is often based on nonverbal aspects of behavior. That is, the negative prejudgment is triggered by physical appearance or behavior. For example, prejudice is sometimes expressed toward Muslim women who wear the hijab, or toward men from the Middle East or South Asia wearing turbans, or even toward people who *appear* to belong to a particular ethnic group. Asian-appearing individuals experienced hostility directed at them during the COVID-19 pandemic, and FBI reports that hate crimes against Latinos increased in 2019 for the third straight year as well as reports of individuals who are targeted just for the color of their skin (Kaleem, 2019). Like Lizette Flores, a Latina and native Arizonan, walking back from lunch one day, passing a group of protesters at the Phoenix Capitol building. One of the them yelled "Go back to Mexico!" directed at her—and not the two light-skinned Latinas with her (Mejia, 2018).

STUDENT VOICES

A close friend I used to have in high school took honors classes and did great in school. He was Hispanic and dressed more or less like a "cholo," with baggy pants and long shirts. When he went to speak with his counselor upon entering university, the counselor came to the conclusion that my friend was going to take easy classes rather than honors classes. His mother, who had accompanied him to the advising meeting, couldn't believe what the counselor was saying! My friend's appearance obviously caused the counselor to come to a conclusion about who and what type of person my friend was.

—Adriana

There is also evidence that people draw conclusions about men and women as gay or straight based their vocal pitch, a characteristic beyond control of the speaker. More importantly, these stereotypes can lead to prejudice and discrimination—in social and professional settings (Fasoli et al., 2017).

From these kinds of experiences with prejudice, victims can often spot prejudicial behavior and people with surprising accuracy. In an interesting study, Blacks were able to detect prejudiced people (identified previously by objective survey measurement) after only 20 seconds of observation, with much higher accuracy than whites (Richeson & Shelton, 2005). Victims may also then develop imaginary "maps" that tell them where they belong and where they are likely to be rejected. They may even start to avoid places and situations in which they do not feel welcome (Marsiglia & Hecht, 1998). Can you identify places you've been where you or others were not welcome?

Stereotyping or prejudice can lead to overt nonverbal actions to exclude, avoid, or distance and are called **discrimination.** Discrimination may be based on race (racism), gender (sexism), or any of the other identities discussed in Chapter 5. It may range from subtle, nonverbal behavior such as lack of eye contact or exclusion from a conversation, to verbal insults and exclusion from jobs or other economic opportunities, to physical violence and systematic exclusion. To see how exclusion and avoidance can be subtle, consider all the communication choices people can make that affect whether other people feel welcome or valued or like outsiders who don't belong (Johnson, 2017):

discrimination
Behaviors resulting from stereotypes or prejudice that cause some people to be denied equal participation or rights based on cultural-group membership, such as race.

- Whether we look at people when we talk with them
- Whether we smile at people when they walk into the room or stare as if to say "What are you doing?" or stop the conversation with a hush they have to wade through to be included in the smallest way
- Whether we listen and respond to what people say, or drift away to someone or something else; whether we talk about things they know about, or stick to what's peculiar to the "in-group"
- Whether we acknowledge people's presence, or make them wait as if they weren't there; whether we avoid touching their skin when giving or taking something; how closely we watch them to see what they're up to

As described in Chapter 5, more assertive expressions are called "microaggressions": brief subtle denigrating messages sent by well-intentioned people who are unaware of the hidden messages being communicated. While these messages may be sent verbally ("You speak good English."—said to an Asian American whose family is been in the States for 100 years), many times they're sent nonverbally (clutching one's purse more tightly) or environmentally (symbols like the confederate flag or using American Indian mascots). Such communications are usually outside the level of conscious awareness of perpetrators. Often people who send these messages believe they are acting with the best of intentions and would be aghast if someone accuses them of committing microaggressions. Psychologist Derald Wing Sue's research (2010) suggests that most people have unconscious biases and prejudices that leak out in many interpersonal situations and decision points. While these microaggressions may seem somewhat trivial taken one at a time, the cumulative results of constant and continuing (almost daily) microaggressions have a tremendous impact on the targets of these messages: they assail self-esteem, produce anger and frustration, deplete psychic energy, lower feelings of well being and worthiness, produce physical health problems, and career costs (O'Keefe & Greenfield, 2019; Pitcan, Park, & Hayslett, 2018).

Discrimination may be interpersonal, collective, or institutional. Interpersonal racism is expressed subtly and indirectly as well as more overtly, but also more persistent. Equally persistent is institutionalized or collective discrimination whereby individuals are systematically denied equal participation in society or equal access to rights in informal and formal ways. An example of institutionalized discrimination may be when women wearing hijabs are subject to extra scrutiny by TSA security. Our student described the experience of traveling to the Middle East with a group of American women, some of whom were covered: "I watched the way that TSA agents interacted with women who were covered. They seemed often skeptical and spent an increased amount of time questioning and talking to these women. The forced choice of whether to cover or not before moving through the U.S.'s TSA was a tough one, and a choice that we all wished no one had to make. I saw firsthand the reality of stigma and prejudice based on nonverbal appearance/behavior."

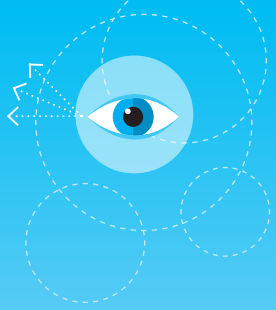
Another example can be evidenced in hiring practices where resumes (and applicants) with "foreign" or "non-white" names are routinely rejected, leading some applicants to "whiten" their resumes. This entails eliminating language in resumes that reveals race. Recently researchers tested the effect of whitened resumes. They created two sets of resumes, one whitened and the other not, and randomly sent them in response to 1,600 job postings in 16 U.S. cities. They found that whitened resumes were twice as likely to get callbacks—a pattern that held even for companies that emphasized diversity.

"The most troubling part is that we saw the same kind of rates for employers who said that they were pro-diversity [in job postings] and the ones that didn't mention it," said Kang. Thus the statements of self-described "pro-diversity employers" aren't really tied to any real change in the discriminatory practices" (Lam, 2016).

Semiotics and Nonverbal Communication

semiotics The analysis of the nature of and relationship between signs.

The study of **semiotics,** or semiology, offers a useful approach to examining how different signs communicate meaning. While semiotics is often used for analyzing language/discourse, we find it more useful in analyzing nonverbals and cultural spaces.



POLAND'S LGBT-FREE ZONES

Nonverbal spaces are created by cultural biases and can be contested, as shown in this recent Washington Post news report; cities and even entire provinces in Poland are now declared as LGBT-free zones. Consider how this might be similar or different from created cultural spaces in the United States where certain groups have been excluded: "Sundown Towns," neighborhoods or clubs exclusively for whites:

In Spring 2019, the popular Law and Justice leader, Jarosław Kaczyński turned from anti-immigrant rhetoric to a new target: LGBT community. This new focus was partly in reaction to Warsaw's mayoral support for sex education curriculum in schools—which Kaczyński referred to as "an attack on the family" and as "LGBT ideology". He further declared it a "threat to Polish identity, to our nation, to its existence and thus to the Polish state." Some parts of the Catholic church and some media agree.

Poland has always been a socially conservative country but not all Poles agree with this recent ramped-up rhetoric. In fact, a 2017 survey showed traditionally anti-gay attitudes softening and some fear that the intense rhetoric may lead to increased homophobia and hate crimes. It's a divided society. At one Polish city's first-ever LGBT rights march in July 2019, "the music could barely drown out the boos from bystanders."

Adapted from Noack, R. (2019, July 19). Polish towns advocate LGBT-free zones while the ruling party cheers them on. *washingtonpost.com,* Retrieved February 20, 2020, from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/polands-right-wing-ruling-party-has-found-a-new-targetlgbt-ideology/2019/07/19/775f25c6-a4ad-11e9-a767-d7ab84aef3e9_story.html

A particularly useful framework comes from literary critic Roland Barthes (1980). In his system, **semiosis** is the production of meaning and is constructed through the interpretation of **signs**—the combination of signifiers and signified. **Signifiers** are the culturally constructed arbitrary words or symbols we use to refer to something else, the **signified.** For example, the word *man* is a signifier that refers to the signified, an adult male human being.

Obviously, *man* is a general signifier that does not refer to any particular man. The relationship between this signifier and the sign (the meaning) depends on how the signifier is used (e.g., as in the sentence, "There is a man sitting in the first chair on the left.") or on our general sense of what *man* means. The difference between the signifier *man* and the sign rests on the difference between the word *man* and the meaning of that word. At its most basic level, *man* means an adult human male, but the semiotic process does not end there. *Man* carries many other layers of meaning. *Man* may or may not refer to any particular adult male, but it provides a concept that you can use to construct particular meanings based on the way the sign *man* functions. What does *man* mean when someone says, "Act like a real man!"

semiosis The process of producing meaning.

signs In semiotics, the meanings that emerge from the combination of the signifiers and signifieds.

signifiers In semiotics, the culturally constructed arbitrary words or symbols that people use to refer to something else.

signified In semiotics, anything that is expressed in arbitrary words or signifiers.

What do you have in mind when you think of the term *man?* How do you know when to use this signifier (and when not to use it) to communicate to others? Think of all of the adult males you know. How do they "fit" under this signifier? In what ways does the signifier reign over their behaviors, both verbal and nonverbal, to communicate particular ideas about them? We are not so much interested in the discrete, individual signifiers, but rather the ways that signifiers are combined and configured. The goal is to establish entire systems of semiosis and the ways that those systems create meaning. Semiotics allows us one way to "crack the codes" of another cultural framework.

The use of these semiotic systems relies on many codes taken from a variety of contexts and places: economic institutions, history, politics, religion, and so on. For example, when Nazi swastikas were spray-painted on synagogue steps in Lincoln, Nebraska in 2020, and a noose was pinned to a Black student's dorm room door at Michigan State University in 2019, the messages they communicated relied on semiotic systems from the past. The history of the Nazi persecution of Jews during World War II and the terrible history of murderous lynchings of Blacks in the U.S. are both well-known. The power behind the signifiers—the swastika and the noose—comes from that historical knowledge and the codes of anti-semitism/racism that it invokes to communicate the message. Relations from the past influence the construction and maintenance of intercultural relations in the present. Semiotics is a useful tool for examining the various ways that meaning is created in advertisements, clothing, tattoos, and other cultural artifacts. Semioticians have been attentive to the context in which the signifiers (words and symbols) are placed to understand which meanings are being communicated. For example, wearing certain kinds of clothes in specific cultural contexts may communicate unwanted messages (see Adriana's example in the Student Voice box, p. 279). The meanings can vary from culture to culture. For example, in China, the color red symbolizes good luck and celebration; in India, it denotes purity; however, in South Africa, red is the color of mourning. In Egypt, yellow is the color of mourning; and in Japan, yellow symbolizes courage (Kyrnin, 2008). In the United States, black clothing can hold various meanings depending on the context: in some high schools, black is considered to denote gang membership; an elegant black dress is suitable for a formal dinner event but probably has a different meaning if worn by a bride's mother at her wedding.

Yet cultural contexts are not fixed and rigid. Rather, they are dynamic and fleeting, as Marcel Proust (1981) noted in writing about Paris in *Remembrance of Things Past:*

> *The reality that I had known no longer existed. . . . The places we have known do not belong only to the world of space on which we map them for our own convenience. None of them was ever more than a thin slice, held between the contiguous impressions that composed our life at that time; the memory of a particular image is but regret for a particular moment; and houses, roads, avenues are as fugitive, alas, as the years. (p. 462)*

As this excerpt shows, there is no "real" Paris. The city has different meanings at different times for different people, and for different reasons. For example, executives of multinational corporations moving into Paris see the city quite differently from

immigrants arriving in Paris for personal reasons. Remember the 1400 immigrants evicted from a Paris "shantytown" in 2020? Therefore, to think about cultural contexts as dynamic means that we must often think about how they change and in whose interests they change.

DEFINING CULTURAL SPACE

At the beginning of this book, we provided some background information about where we grew up. Our individual histories are important in understanding our identities. As writer John Preston (1991) explains, "Where we come from is important to who we are" (p. xi). There is nothing in the rolling hills of Delaware and Pennsylvania or the red clay of Georgia that biologically determined who Judith and Tom are. However, our identities are constructed, in part, in relation to the cultural milieu of the Mid-Atlantic region or the South. Each region has its own histories and ways of life that help us understand who we are. Our decision to tell you where we come from was meant to communicate something about who we think we are. So, although we can identify precisely the borders that mark out these spaces and make them real, or material, the spaces also are cultural in the ways that we imagine them to be.

The discourses that construct the meanings of cultural spaces are dynamic and ever-changing. For example, the Delaware that Judith left behind and the Georgia that Tom left behind are not characterized by the same discourses that construct those places now. In addition, the relationship between those cultural spaces and our identities is negotiated in complex ways. For example, both of us participated in other, overlapping cultural spaces that influenced how we think about who we are. Thus, just because someone is from, say, Rhode Island or Samoa or India does not mean that his or her identity and communication practices are reducible to the history of those cultural spaces.

What is the communicative (discursive) relationship between cultural spaces and intercultural communication? Recall that we define cultural space as the particular configuration of the communication (discourse) that constructs meanings of various places. This may seem like an unwieldy definition, but it underscores the complexity of cultural spaces. A cultural space is not simply a particular location that has culturally constructed meanings. It can also be a metaphorical place from which we communicate. We can speak from a number of social locations, marked on the "map of society," that give added meaning to our communication. Thus, we may speak as parents, children, colleagues, siblings, customers, Nebraskans, and a myriad of other "places." All of these are cultural spaces.

Cultural Identity and Cultural Space

Home Cultural spaces influence how we think about ourselves and others. One of the earliest cultural spaces we experience is our home. As noted previously, nonverbal communication often involves issues of status. The home is no exception. As English professor Paul Fussell (1983) notes, "Approaching any house, one is bombarded with

class signals" (p. 82). Fussell highlights the semiotic system of social class in the American home—from the way the lawn is maintained, to the kind of furniture within the home, to the way the television is situated. These signs of social class are not always so obvious from all class positions, but we often recognize the signs.

Even if our home does not reflect the social class to which we aspire, it may be a place of identification. We often model our own lives on the patterns from our childhood homes. Although this is not always the case, the home can be a place of safety and security. African American writer bell hooks (1990) describes the "feeling of safety, of arrival, of homecoming" when as a child she would arrive at her grandmother's house, after passing through the scary white neighborhood with "those white faces on porches staring down at us with hate" (p. 42).

Home, of course, is not the same as the physical location it occupies or the building (the house) at that location. Home is variously defined in terms of specific addresses, cities, states, regions, and even nations. Although we might have historical ties to a particular place, not everyone has the same relationship between those places and their own identities. Indeed, the relationship between place and cultural identity varies. We all negotiate various relationships to the cultural meanings attached to the particular places or spaces we inhabit. Consider writer Harlan Greene's (1991) relationship to his hometown in South Carolina:

> *I often think longingly of my hometown of Charleston. My heart beats faster and color rushes to my cheek whenever I hear someone mentioning her; mirages rise up, and I am as overcome and drenched in images as a runner just come from running. I see the steeples, the streets, the lush setting. (p. 55)*

Despite his attachment to Charleston, Greene does not believe that Charleston feels the same way toward him. He explains, "But I still think of Charleston; I return to her often and always will. I think of her warmly. I claim her now, even though I know she will never claim me" (p. 67). Perhaps gay individuals in Poland today may feel as Greene did, since some towns there, supported by the ruling party, have advocated LGBT-free zones (Noack, 2018) (see Point of View, p. 281).

The complex relationships we have between various places and our identities resist simplistic reduction. These writers—hooks and Greene—have negotiated different sentiments toward "home." In doing so, each demonstrates the complex dialectical tensions that exist between identity and location.

Neighborhood One significant type of cultural space that emerged in U.S. cities in the latter 19th and early 20th centuries was the ethnic or racial neighborhood (see Figure 7-5). Historical studies show, however, that the ethnic neighborhoods of the European immigrants were rarely inhabited by only one ethnic group, despite memories to the contrary. According to labor historian D. R. Roediger (2005), even the heart of Little Italy in Chicago was 47% non-Italian, and "No single side of even one square block in the street between 1890 and 1930 was found to be 100% Italian. . . . The percentage of Russians, Czechs, Italians and Poles living in segregated neighborhoods ranged from 37% to 61%" (p. 164). However, this type of real segregation was reserved for the African Americans—where 93% of African Americans

FIGURE 7-5 Many cities abound with multiple cultural spaces. In this photo, several different cultural contexts are adjacent and emphasize the increasing significance of multiculturalism. How would people in this urban place experience cultural spaces differently from people who live in less diverse cultural spaces? How might it influence their intercultural communication patterns? (*Robert Brenner/PhotoEdit*)

lived in ghettos. By law and custom, and under different political pressures, some cities developed segregated neighborhoods. Malcolm X (Malcolm X & Haley, 1964), in his autobiography, tells of the strict laws that governed where his family could live after their house burned down:

> *In those days Negroes weren't allowed after dark in East Lansing proper. There's where Michigan State University is located; . . . East Lansing harassed us so much that we had to move again, this time two miles out of town, into the country. (pp. 3–4)*

The legacy of "white-only" areas pervades the history of the United States and the development of its cultural geography. The segregation of African Americans was not accidental. Beginning in 1890 until the late 1960s (when fair-housing laws were passed), whites in America created thousands of whites-only towns, commonly known as "sundown towns," a reference to the signs often posted at their city limits that warned, as one did in Hawthorne, California, in the 1930s: "Nigger, Don't Let the Sun Set on YOU in Hawthorne." In fact, historian J. Loewen (2005) claims that during that 70-year period, "probably a majority of all incorporated places [in the United States] kept out African Americans."

Neighborhoods exemplify how power influences intercultural contact. Thus, some cultural groups defined who got to live where and dictated the rules by which other groups lived. These rules were enforced through legal means and by harassment. For bell hooks and Malcolm X, the lines of segregation were clear and unmistakable.

In San Francisco, different racial politics constructed and isolated Chinatown. The boundaries that demarcated Chinatown—the acceptable place for Chinese and Chinese Americans to live—were strictly enforced through violence. Newly arrived immigrants were sometimes stoned as they left the piers and made their way to Chinatown or those who wandered into other neighborhoods could be attacked by "young toughs" who amused themselves by beating Chinese (Nee & Nee, 1974, p. 60).

In contrast to Malcolm X's exclusion from East Lansing, the Chinese of San Francisco were forced to live in a marked-off territory. Yet we must be careful not to confuse the experience of Chinese in San Francisco with the experiences of all Chinese in the United States. For example, newly arrived Chinese immigrants to Savannah, Georgia were advised to live apart from each other. They were told of the whites' distrust of Chinatowns in San Francisco and New York. So no Chinatown developed in Savannah (Pruden, 1990).

Nor should we assume that vast migrations of Chinese necessarily led to the development of Chinatowns in other cities around the world. The settlement of Chinese immigrants in the 13th Arrondissement of Paris, for example, reflects a completely different intersection between cultures: "There is no American-style Chinatown [*Il n'y a pas de Chinatown à la américaine*]" in Paris (Costa-Lascoux & Yu-Sion, 1995, p. 197).

Within the context of different power relations and historical forces, settlement patterns of other cultural groups created various ethnic enclaves across the U.S. landscape. For example, many small towns in the Midwest were settled by particular European groups. Thus, in Iowa, Germans settled in Amana, Dutch in Pella, and Czechs and Slovaks in Cedar Rapids. Cities, too, have their neighborhoods, based on settlement patterns. South Philadelphia is largely Italian American, South Boston is largely Irish American, and Overtown in Miami is largely African American. Although it is no longer legal to mandate that people live in particular districts or neighborhoods based on their racial or ethnic backgrounds, the continued existence of such neighborhoods underscores their historical development and ongoing functions. This is especially true in Detroit, Michigan—one of the most segregated metropolitan region in the country—where the eight-mile road was made famous by the title and the location of the film starring Detroit hip-hop artist Eminem. The eight-mile, eight-lane road separates one city that is 91% white from the other that is overwhelmingly African American. (See the Point of View box on the following page) Economics, family ties, social needs, and education are some factors in the perpetuation of these cultural spaces.

Similar spaces exist in other countries as well. Remember the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015? A number of terrorists came from the same Brussels neighborhood, Molenbeek. There is a relationship between place and human relations, as one expert described Molenbeek as one of the segregated suburbs, isolated from the wider Belgium society, where "there are problems with failed integration, socioeconomic problems, and crime that can be exploited for the jihadists" (Robins-Early, 2016).

EIGHT MILE ROAD

Sometimes called Detroit's mini Berlin Wall, sometimes called the Wailing Wall, this seemingly innocent looking wall in Joe Louis Park does little to betray its shameful past.

After World War I, some Black residents of Detroit moved into a then rural and vacant area near the intersection of Wyoming and Eight Mile. In 1940, a developer sought to build homes for middle income whites in a nearby area. However, the Federal Housing Administration's policies of that era precluded their approving loans in racially mixed areas. To secure FHA approval, this developer put up a wall six feet high, one foot in width and one half mile in length, to clearly demark the white and Black areas. His wall led the FHA to approve loans for his project.

Built in 1940, this wall presaged the racial divisions that have come to be symbolized by Eight Mile Road. (*John Ruberry/Alamy Stock Photo*)

Source: From http://detroityes.com/webisodes/2002/8mile/021106-04-8mile-berlin-wall.htm.

The relationships among identity, power, and cultural space are quite complex. Power relations influence who (or what) gets to claim who (or what), and under what conditions. Some subcultures are accepted and promoted within a particular cultural space, others are tolerated, and still others may be unacceptable. Consider Jerusalem, one of the most important contested cultural spaces in world. For Muslims, Jews and

Christians, it is not just a location, for many it is at the very core of their religious identities. The access to these holy places for each of these groups has waxed and waned depending on powerful political forces. Most recently, Trump's announcement that the U.S. embassy would be moved there, effectively confirming it as the Jewish/Israeli capital, led to protests and violence (Schulson, 2017).

Sometimes residents fight to keep their neighborhood from being changed by powerful outsiders. This is the case in Boyle Heights, a low-income Latino community of small shops, mariachis, and taco stands that is the last holdout to L.A. gentrification. Property values are skyrocketing and posters offering cash for homes are there. The residents fear that the new money and outsiders will erase their communal Chicano identity. They have organized, and their efforts, criticized by some for being violent/radical/relentless, have been successful in closing down arts galleries and businesses they see as guilty of gentrification. There is some ambivalence as some of the upwardly mobile new residents are Latinx, but the organizers say they reject *all* "gentrifiers" regardless of race—anyone who demands amenities that don't address community needs and causes rents to rise (Hurtado, 2019). Identifying with various cultural spaces is a negotiated process that is difficult (and sometimes impossible) to predict and control. The key to understanding the relationships among culture, power, people, and cultural spaces is to think dialectically.

Regionalism Ongoing regional and religious conflicts, as well as nationalism and ethnic revival, point to the continuing struggles over who gets to define whom. Such conflicts are not new, though. In fact, some cultural spaces (such as Jerusalem) have been sites of struggle for many centuries.

regionalism Loyalty to a particular region that holds significant cultural meaning for that person.

Although regions are not always clearly marked on maps of the world, many people identify quite strongly with particular regions. **Regionalism** can be expressed in many ways, from symbolic expressions of identification to armed conflict. Within the United States, people may identify themselves or others as southerners, New Englanders, and so on. In Canada, people from Montreal might identify more strongly with the province of Quebec than with their country. Similarly, some Corsicans might feel a need to negotiate their identity with France. Sometimes people fly regional flags, wear particular kinds of clothes, celebrate regional holidays, and participate in other cultural activities to communicate their regional identification. However, regional expressions are not always simply celebratory, as the conflicts in Kosovo, Chechnya, Eritrea, Tibet, and Northern Ireland indicate.

National borders may seem straightforward, but they often conceal conflicting regional identities. To understand how intercultural communication may be affected by national borders, we must consider how history, power, identity, culture, and context come into play. Only by understanding these issues can we approach the complex process of human communication.

Changing Cultural Space

Chapter 8 discusses in greater detail the intercultural experiences of those who traverse cultural spaces and attempt to negotiate change. In this chapter, however, we want to focus on some of the driving needs of those who change cultural spaces.

STUDENT VOICES

This student explains her difficulty in knowing when she is in Japan as she moves through the airport and onto the airplane. How are these cultural spaces different from national borders?

Whenever I am at LAX [Los Angeles International Airport] on the way back to Japan, my sense of space gets really confused. For example, I fly into LAX from Phoenix, and as I line up at the Korean Air check-in counter, I see so many Asian-looking people (mostly Japanese and Koreans). Then, as I proceed, getting past the stores (e.g., duty-free shops) and walk farther to the departure gate, I see a lot less Americans and, eventually and practically, NOBODY but Asian-looking people (except for a very limited number of non-Asian-looking passengers on the same flight). So, when I wait at the gate, hearing Japanese around me, I get confused—"Where am I? Am I still in the U.S.? Or am I already back in Japan?" This confusion gets further heightened when I go aboard and see Japanese food served for meals and watch a Japanese film or TV program on the screen. So, to me, arriving at the Narita International Airport is not the moment of arriving in Japan. It already starts while I am in the U.S. This is just one of the many examples of postmodern cultural spaces that I have experienced in my life.

—Sakura

Travel We often change cultural spaces when we travel. Traveling is frequently viewed as an unimportant leisure activity, but it is more than that. In terms of intercultural communication, traveling changes cultural spaces in ways that often transform the traveler. Changing cultural spaces means changing who you are and how you interact with others. Perhaps the old saying "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" holds true today as we cross-cultural spaces more frequently than ever.

On a recent trip to Belgium, Tom flew nonstop on British Airways from Phoenix to London and then on to Brussels. Because the entire flight was conducted in English, Tom did not have a sense of any transition from English to French. Unlike flying the now defunct Sabena (Belgian National Airlines) from the United States to Belgium, flying British Airways provided no cultural transition space between Arizona and Belgium. Thus, when he got off the plane in Brussels, Tom experienced a more abrupt cultural and language transition, from an English environment to a Flemish/French environment.

However, globalization and cyberspace can change the way we experience changing cultural spaces. In recent travels, Judith and Tom are struck by the similarities of big cities around the world. Shopping areas in Shanghai, Las Vegas, and Capetown have the same upscale shops: Prada, Louis Vuitton, Tommy Hilfiger, etc. with the same upscale products. In traversing these spaces one can forget that he/she is not at home. Some think that cyberspace and mobile technology may be changing the way we experience travel. For example, tourists sometimes stay in hotel rooms watching Netflix films they've downloaded, just like at home—"traveling without seeing" (Bruni 2013), or taking photo after photo, moving around, trying to get the best angle—and not really seeing or remembering what's in front of them. Cognitive

psychologists call this "the photo taking impairment effect," since it turns out that when the brain is preoccupied with camera angles, etc. the camera captures the moment, but the brain doesn't (Henkel, 2014). Do you alter your communication style when you encounter travelers who are not in their traditional cultural space? Do you assume they should interact in the ways prescribed by your cultural space? These are some of the issues that travel raises.

Migration People also change cultural spaces when they relocate. Moving, of course, involves a different kind of change in cultural spaces than traveling. In traveling, the change is fleeting, temporary, and usually desirable; it is something that travelers seek out. However, people who migrate do not always seek out this change. For example, in recent years, many people have been forced from their strife-torn homelands in Syria and Iraq and have settled elsewhere. Many immigrants leave their homelands simply so they can survive. But they often find it difficult to adjust to the change, especially if the language and customs of the new cultural space are unfamiliar.

Even within the United States, people may have trouble adapting to new surroundings when they move. Tom remembers that when northerners moved to the South they often were unfamiliar with the custom of traditional New Year's Day "good luck foods" of black-eyed peas for health and collards (for money). Ridiculing the customs of their new cultural space simply led to further intercultural communication problems.

Postmodern Cultural Spaces

Space has become increasingly important in the negotiation of cultural and social identities, and so to culture more generally. As Leah Vande Berg (1999) explains, scholars in many areas "have noted that identity and knowledge are profoundly spatial (as well as temporal), and that this condition structures meaningful embodiment and experience" (p. 249). **Postmodern cultural spaces** are places that are defined by cultural practices—languages spoken, identities enacted, rituals performed—and they often change as new people move in and out of these spaces. Imagine being in a small restaurant when a large group of people arrives, all of whom are speaking another language. How has this space changed? Whose space is it? As different people move in and out of this space, how does the cultural character change?

postmodern cultural spaces Places that are defined by cultural practices—languages spoken, identities enacted, rituals performed—and that often change as new people move in and out of these spaces.

Think about how the same physical place might have a different meaning to someone from a different cultural group. Scholar Bryce Peake (2012) does just that. He examines the relationship between listening, cultural identity, and power negotiation in the British overseas territory of Gibraltar. He describes the interrelationships of the language soundscapes of English, Spanish, and Llanito—a local Gibraltarian creole of Spanish, Genoese, Hebrew, English, Maltese, and Arabic, particularly as demonstrated on a day of the British nationalistic parade. Llanito allows Gibraltarians to imagine themselves as a buffer between Spanish and British—a soundscape that "can be listened to in such a way that sounds like Spanish to the uninformed, and signifies 'not British' to Gibraltarians." In the frictions between the British-ness and Spanish-ness of Gibraltarians, Main Street on parade is a site where listening is used as a means to reproduce the strategies by which power is maintained and operationalized.

POINT *of* VIEW

An example of a postmodern cultural space is the mobile massively multiplayer online real-time strategy (MMMORTS) game Lords Mobile—where players develop their own bases, build armies, attack and destroy enemy bases, seize resources, and capture enemy leaders. Communities of players (guilds) from many different countries are formed across cultural, linguistic and time zone differences.

As researchers Hommodova Lu and Carradini (2019) discovered, after investigating a guild with members from 25 countries, these players support each other in various ways. For example, players' defenses can be attacked—resulting in monetary and resource loss—even when they are not online. When this happens, if the player is not online, other players jump in to defend (even in the middle of the night!). The members also form social bonds, engaging in conversations on many topics, using translators. The researchers point out that, although these rather fleeting online intercultural relationships provide important support, because of the mobile, real-time nature of the game, they sometimes interfere with work and personal obligations.

Source: From L. A. Hommadova, & S. Carradini, "Work–Game Balance: Work Interference, Social Capital, and Tactical Play in a Mobile Massively Multiplayer Online Real-Time Strategy Game," *New Media & Society,* (2019): 1–24.

"In this way, Gibraltarians speak into existence the spaces in which they speak; the codes they use—Llanito, Spanish, or English-both simultaneously construct spaces in particular ways, while being intimately affected by and tied to other noises within the soundscape—all of which are intimately tied to the construction and performance of the self" (p. 187). It will be interesting to see the effect of a recent political conflict, as residents here have voted to remain in the E.U. even as their English government has exited the E.U.

Another set of postmodern spaces that are quite familiar are those on interactive media. There are MMORPG's (massively multiplayer online role-playing games like World of Warcraft, Final Fantasy, Elder Scrolls Online), virtual worlds like Smeet, Kaneva, and Oz World where people meet in real time and interact primarily for recreational purposes and with mobile devices, these games are truly postmodern intercultural encounters, where participants from multiple countries, cultures, and backgrounds play across time zones and in cultural, physical, and cyber spaces (Hommadova Lu & Carradini, 2019) (see Point of View, above). As we discussed in Chapter 1, there are other media spaces like blogs and online discussion groups where people meet for fun, to gain information, or experience a supportive community (e.g., transgender people, ethnic communities). Of course, there are now almost 3 billion people who use social networking sites and some scholars question the effect on relationships of so much time spent in these cultural spaces. While these sites offer opportunities for connection, learning and support, and empowerment, results of one study suggest the longer someone spends on Facebook, the worse their mood gets (Hunt et al., 2018). The reasons may be jealousy that comes from constant comparisons (my friends are having such good times, traveling to exotic places, parties I'm not invited to, etc.)

In addition, they can be hostile cultural places of harassment and exclusion. As we mentioned in Chapter 1, LGBTQ individuals are more likely to be the targets of bullying than heterosexual and cisgender individuals. Women gamers and game developers are also subjected to harassment by male gamers, violent threats, and rampant misogyny (#gamergate) (Dougherty & Isaac, 2016). In addition, some experts suggest that the new digital divide may be between those who have and don't have access to the new "shared, collaborative, and on-demand" gig economy, of Uber and Lyft ride sharing, Airbnb and VRBO home sharing, and crowdfunding sites. These appear to be used mostly by the educated, urban, and young (under age 45) (Smith, 2016), whereas many who are employed in this economy tend to be ethnic/racial minorities, who work part time, and are financially insecure (Gig Economy, 2018).

The fluid and fleeting nature of cultural space stands in sharp contrast to the 18th- and 19th-century notions of space, which promoted land ownership, surveys, borders, colonies, and territories. No passport is needed to travel in the postmodern cultural space because there are no border guards. The dynamic nature of postmodern cultural spaces underscores its response to changing cultural needs. The space exists only as long as it is needed in its present form.

Postmodern cultural spaces are both tenuous and dynamic. They are created within existing places, without following any particular guide. There is no marking off of territory, no sense of permanence, or official recognition. The postmodern cultural space exists only while it is used. An example of the postmodern cultural spaces is the classroom building at the Technical University of Denmark. The rooms and walls are fluid, can be moved to accommodate the needs of any particular day's activities—classes, meetings, study groups, and a digital neon sign on the outside of the building notes the particular rooms and room numbers that will be in use that day.

The ideology of fixed spaces and categories is currently being challenged by postmodernist notions of space and location. Phoenix, for example, which became a city relatively recently, has no Chinatown, or Japantown, or Koreatown, no Irish district, or Polish neighborhood, or Italian area. Instead, people of Polish descent, for example, might live anywhere in the metropolitan area but congregate for special occasions or for specific reasons. On Sundays, the Polish Catholic Mass draws many people from throughout Phoenix. When people want to buy Polish breads and pastries, they can go to the Polish bakery and also speak Polish there. Ethnic identity is only one of several identities that these people negotiate. When they desire recognition and interaction based on their Polish heritage, they can meet that wish. When they seek other forms of identification, they can go to places where they can be Phoenix Suns fans, or community volunteers, and so on. Ethnic identity is neither the sole factor nor necessarily the most important one at all times in their lives.

The markers of ethnic life in Phoenix are the urban sites where people congregate when they desire ethnic cultural contact. At other times, they may frequent different locations in expressing aspects of their identities. In this sense, the postmodern urban space is dynamic and allows people to participate in the communication of identity in new ways (Drzewiecka & Nakayama, 1998).

Cultural spaces can also be metaphorical, with historically defined places serving as sources of contemporary identity negotiation in new spaces. In her study of academia, Olga Idriss Davis (1999) turns to the historical role of the kitchen in African American women's lives and uses the kitchen legacy as a way to rethink the university. She notes that "the relationship between the kitchen and the Academy [university] informs African American women's experience and historically interconnects their struggles for identity" (p. 370). In this sense, the kitchen is a metaphorical cultural space that is invoked in an entirely new place, the university. Again, this postmodern cultural space is not material but metaphoric, and it allows people to negotiate their identities in new places.

INTERNET RESOURCES

http://nonverbal.ucsc.edu/
This website provided by the University of California–Santa Cruz allows students to explore and test their ability to read and interpret nonverbal communication. The site provides videos that examine nonverbal codes, including personal space and gestures, to better understand cross-cultural communication.

https://www.lifewire.com/visual-color-symbolism-chart-by-culture-4062177
This website is dedicated to providing information pertaining to the color symbolism that exists throughout different cultures. Its purpose is to allow Web page designers to understand how their usage of color might be interpreted by different groups and world regions. The page also provides informative links on how gender, age, class, and current trends also play a factor in the meaning of color.

SUMMARY

- Nonverbal communication differs from verbal communication in two ways: It is more unconscious and learned implicitly.
- Nonverbal communication can reinforce, substitute for, or contradict verbal communication.
- Nonverbal communication communicates relational meaning, status, and deception.
- Research investigating the universality of nonverbal behaviors includes comparison of primate behavior, behavior of deaf/blind children, cross-cultural studies, and search for universal social needs filled by nonverbal behaviors.
- Nonverbal codes include physical appearance, facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, paralanguage, chronemics, and silence.
- Sometimes cultural differences in nonverbal behaviors can lead to stereotyping of others and overt discrimination.

- Cultural space influences cultural identity and includes homes, neighborhoods, regions, and nations.
- Two ways of changing cultural spaces are travel and migration.
- Postmodern cultural spaces, like cyberspace, are tenuous and dynamic.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does nonverbal communication differ from verbal communication?
2. What are some of the messages that we communicate through our nonverbal behaviors?
3. Which nonverbal behaviors, if any, are universal?
4. How do our cultural spaces affect our identities?
5. What role does power play in determining our cultural spaces?
6. What is the importance of cultural spaces to intercultural communication?
7. How do postmodern cultural spaces differ from modernist notions of cultural space?

ACTIVITIES

1. *Cultural Spaces.* Think about the different cultural spaces in which you participate (clubs, churches, concerts, and so on). Select one of these spaces and describe when and how you enter and leave it. As a group, discuss the answers to the following questions:
   a. Which cultural spaces do many students share? Which are not shared by many students?
   b. Which cultural spaces, if any, are denied to some people?
   c. What factors determine whether a person has access to a specific cultural space?
2. *Nonverbal Rules.* Choose a cultural space that you are interested in studying. Visit this space on four occasions to observe how people there interact. Focus on one aspect of nonverbal communication (e.g., eye contact or proximity). List some rules that seem to govern this aspect of nonverbal communication. For example, if you are focusing on proximity, you might describe, among other things, how far apart people tend to stand when conversing. Based on your observations, list some prescriptions about proper (expected) nonverbal behavior in this cultural space. Share your conclusions with the class. To what extent do other students share your conclusions? Can we generalize about nonverbal rules in cultural spaces? What factors influence whether an individual follows unspoken rules of behavior?

KEY WORDS

chronemics (275)
contact cultures (270)
cultural space (262)
deception (265)
discrimination (279)
eye contact (274)
expectancy violations theory (265)
facial expressions (267)
monochronic (275)
noncontact cultures (270)
paralinguistics (274)
polychronic (275)
postmodern cultural spaces (290)
proxemics (270)
regionalism (288)
relational messages (264)
semiosis (281)
semiotics (280)
signified (281)
signifiers (281)
signs (281)
status (264)
vocalizations (275)
voice qualities (274)

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