Making Sense of Transnational Academics' Experience: Constructive Marginality in Liminal Spaces

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Throughout this volume, our authors in Asia, Europe, North America, and Oceania have consistently portrayed higher education and the academic market as increasingly global—leading to universities to hire foreign faculty members with greater frequency than ever before. Once these faculty members are "imported," they face a broader search for meaning in their new position as a transnational scholar. In her chapter, Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich describes her "ongoing liminal position as an academic other" in which one is constantly a learner and observer, thus conferring "advantages and analytical adventures." This concluding chapter is an attempt to understand better such liminality—its qualities; how transnational faculty members, their coworkers, and institutions can successfully deal with its challenges; and how an inclusive approach can enrich and benefit the work dynamics of host organizations.

Accordingly, this chapter integrates the book along five themes. First, we contemplate

what can be learned about transnational academics' acculturation process—specifically, which factors contribute to their experience of inclusion or exclusion in the workplace. Next we examine how transnational academics can effectively manage acculturation's challenges by elaborating coping strategies adopted by our authors. Third, we identify some recommended practices and programs for host institutions to leverage the diversity of transnational academics. Then we explore the theme of "weaving," or what can be learned from the papers about the relationship between scholarship and one's intercultural experience. Finally, we revisit the integration of different means of conceiving and researching culture first considered in the introduction. As academics from a variety of fields and schools of thought about culture contribute to this volume, what broader perspective can be forged from their varied theoretical, epistemological, and ontological approaches?

Each of this chapter's sections begins with a question designed to elicit insights into one of the aforementioned themes. We cull the work of our authors' chapters and synthesizer their corroborating points and supporting arguments, while at the same time supplement their findings with those from other scholars to make broader observations about transnational academics. We are very aware that our conclusion is based on a

small number of “case studies” of the “elite” and hence limited in its coverage and perspectives. Despite this limitation, however, we hope that our authors’ in-depth, nuanced and insightful accounts of their journeys is conducive to a deeper understanding of the liminal position inhabited by transnational academics and others who cross boundaries—using such liminality to enrich their lives, as well as those of fellow faculty members, administrators, staff, and the students with whom they work.

What are the main contributing factors for inclusion or exclusion of transnational academics in their workplace and by local residents?

One of the greatest barriers to the smooth adjustment of transnational academics is when they feel excluded by members of the host society—i.e., coworkers and/or local residents. David Sam faced this challenge when he perceived himself an outsider among his Norwegian graduate school colleagues. Yet Sam was not alone: his research later revealed broader trends among African students in Norway who felt excluded from society and who struggled to befriend Norwegians. Many other chapters in this volume document transnational academics’ struggles for acceptance.

As Adam Komisarof contends in his chapter, the *compatibility of acculturation*

expectations between transnational academics and their host society colleagues concerning the degree that such "foreigners" should be accepted as organizational and societal insiders powerfully impacts the quality of their relationships, daily communication, and even their joint work performance. For instance, when transnational scholars are not given the same chance as their host culture peers to perform administrative duties, participate in group decision-making processes, or gain leadership opportunities, this diminishes their contributions to the university and drains confidence that both sides can effectively work together (as Deepa Oommen corroborated in her paper). In order to avoid such negative outcomes, it is important to consider the different approaches to conceiving cultural diversity taken in our authors' countries of residence and how those approaches impact the levels of inclusion experienced by transnational academics in their institutions and host societies.

Varying regional approaches to diversity. As Komisarof's acculturation model suggests, the perceptions which transnational academics have of inclusive or exclusive interpersonal dynamics in their host institution (and by extension, society) vary depending on their communicative partner and other situational variables such as personal sense of agency or linguistic and communicative competence. From the case

studies in this book, we cannot conclude that certain countries or geographic regions, without exception, are more inclusive than others; namely, there is not enough evidence to substantiate such claims, and the contradictory, coexisting tendencies of acceptance and rejection of foreigners are themes in every chapter as well as the countries described therein.

At the same time, however, our auto-ethnographies do suggest different regional approaches to conceiving diversity and related expectations as to how transnational academics should adapt to such social constructions. Specifically, societies which are more homogenous such as Japan or Norway when David Sam first arrived may have very specific, "tight" cognitive prototypes for fellow members of their own national ingroup. In other words, language, ethnicity, culture, and citizenship are conceived as coterminous, and those who do not fit the narrow mainstream category of who is a co-national are often thought to be outsiders unable to comprehend or function competently within the host culture. For instance, a professor in David Sam's graduate program assumed that he, as someone from Ghana, could not "understand Norwegians and their mental health, let alone . . . be adequately equipped to help them resolve their problems." In the case of Japan, scholars (Befu, 2001; Kidder, 1992; McVeigh, 2004)

argue that those not meeting simultaneously all of the above criteria (i.e., native Japanese speaker, Japanese parents and ancestors, primary socialization in Japan, and Japanese nationality) are often presumed outsiders who are unable to acculturate deeply to Japan or take on a Japanese identity.

Despite such narrow conceptualizations of both the national ingroup and the seeming impermeability of their ingroup boundary, Gracia Liu-Farrer and Adam Komisarof argue that exclusive notions of Japanese identity are changing (also see Graburn & Ertl, 2008; Komisarof, 2012) and that acceptance in both Japanese organizations and society are possible. On the other hand, Komisarof and Liu-Farrer also agree that gaining such acceptance is an ongoing, evolving process; they are pioneers forging relatively new socio-cultural ground—rather than making inroads in a more traditional immigrant-receiving society where a path towards acceptance of newcomers has already been created by those immigrants and long-term sojourners who have come before. In relatively homogenous societies like Japan, transnational academics may, in the words of Liu-Farrer, become institutional and societal "guinea pigs" as they themselves act as trailblazers for those who will follow.

The auto-ethnographies in this volume also reveal a complex portrait of how diversity is conceived and idealized but encroached and contradicted sometimes in traditional immigrant-receiving societies like the U.S. and Australia. On one hand, there exists a commonplace discourse or ideology that immigrants can become members of society and by extension of the national ingroup. This set of beliefs is enabled by a presumed fundamental cultural "sameness" which can be adapted to, through acculturation, even by newcomers (like transnational academics). For instance, the promise of the American "melting pot" is that immigrants can become American if they master (American) English and adopt "American values" such as beliefs in freedom, free enterprise, and democracy (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 2000). While this potential exists, prejudice and discrimination persist alongside such opportunities, as evident in the auto-ethnographies of Maryam Borjian and Deepa Oommen, and elsewhere (e.g. Lippi-Green, 2012; Takaki, 1993). Even when racial groups such as Americans of Indian descent feel fully acculturated and structurally integrated in mainstream U.S. society, Bhatia and Ram (2009) argue that their American identity may be suddenly "erased" in certain social contexts in which they are excluded, marginalized, or otherwise seen as ethnic and cultural outsiders. Since 9/11, many Muslim Americans (or those presumed to be) have had similar experiences which are poignant reminders of

the tension and contradictions in the American immigrant experience, particularly for those who are not Caucasian.

One more difference in local constructions and acceptance of national cultural diversity is that in immigrant societies, one may be able to claim multiple cultural identities (i.e., as both a member of one's heritage and the host culture) more readily than in homogenous societies with widespread coterminous conceptions of the national ingroup. As Mak reflects, "While continuing to be Hong Kong Chinese, I am also an Australian." In this case, ethnicity, citizenship, and national identity are de-linked, evidence for which Zhu Hua also found in the United Kingdom's 2011 census. In such circumstances, a broad array of ethnicities are considered, and hence acknowledged, to be potential national ingroup members—i.e., they may become citizens in legal terms and may adopt the identity of their country of residence if they so wish. Such possibilities can positively affect the degree of acceptance that transnational academics enjoy among their colleagues and more generally in society, as they feel the potential to become (or may in fact be recognized as) cultural insiders. But as the chapters of Zhu Hua, Oommen, Borjian, and Mak reveal, the promise of inclusion in multicultural societies is not always fulfilled.

Shared barriers to inclusion. Notwithstanding these divergent regional approaches to how cultural difference is constructed and managed, we can also identify barriers to inclusion which seem to exist across national boundaries—i.e., signs or markers which make one appear "different" as well as how the local population responds to them--which often raise challenges for transnational faculty members to feel accepted in their organizations and/or host societies. Many of our authors, regardless of country of residence, described the following barriers to inclusion:

1. status as a visible minority in terms of one's racialized identity,

2. being perceived as a linguistic outsider (i.e., either a non-native speaker of the national language or the local dialect), and

3. association with a "devalued" group which is low on the locally-constructed ethnic hierarchy.

Racialized identity. The first barrier to inclusion reported by multiple authors occurred when they were marked as a visible minority and assigned a racialized identity. A racialized identity is that ascribed to people, based on their physical appearance, which places them in a racial group outside of the dominant majority (Giddens, 2001). The

validity of “race” as a concept has been debated extensively, and at this point, it is broadly agreed in the scientific community that race is socially constructed, rather than a biologically useful or meaningful basis for human classification (Giddens). Still, race is broadly utilized in daily interactions to categorize and subsequently marginalize or otherwise exclude people, as many of our authors attest (see Zhu Hua, Komisarof, Mak, Oommen, Sam, and Ahn). They describe being phenotypically dissimilar from the dominant group (i.e., visible minorities) and consequently categorized as outsiders, which made it difficult for them to feel accepted in their institutions and/or society generally.

While our authors mostly experienced such dynamics as foreigners, even those who were citizens of the country where they lived were not immune. Elise Ahn found her identity challenged by fellow American students while at her U.S. graduate school (this again lending support to the earlier argument that in societies which allow comparatively flexible group boundaries, challenges exist for those who look different). Asked by Americans her nationality, she describes:

> *When I would respond that I was an American, I was often given a disapproving look as if I was being deliberately obtuse; then people would ask,*

> *"No, what are you really?" This would continue until I gave the "right" answer. Regardless of how I saw my identity (i.e., as being both Korean-American and a U.S. citizen, and theoretically a legitimate representative of "American-ness"), my ethnic heritage and ancestral homeland often became my primary identifiers to others.*

Unfortunately, her American identity was similarly delegitimized in Kazakhstan, where she was identified both by students and fellow faculty members first as Korean and second (if at all) as American. Thus, hegemonic notions of what an American supposedly looks like followed Ahn around the globe. Whether they were East Asians in predominantly Caucasian societies (Ahn, Mak, and Zhu Hua), Caucasians in East Asian societies (Komisarof), South Asians in the U.S. (Oommen), or Africans in Scandinavia (Sam), our authors describe racialization of visible minorities and its deleterious effects on the quality of their acculturation experiences (though we will see, later in this section, that not all visible minorities are treated the same).

Linguistic outsiders. Other transnational academics' acculturation experiences were shaped by their categorization as linguistic outsiders, which occurred when their "foreign" accents revealed their upbringing in another country (see Liu-Farrer in Japan,

Zhu Hua in the U.K., Mak in Australia, and Oommen and Borjian in the U.S.) or even another region of the same country (see Dewaele in Belgium and Machart in France). While this difference might not be as prominent as skin color (an accent is not heard until one speaks), the consequences of being treated as an outsider because of this difference are just as real. As Jean-Marc Dewaele deftly illustrates, linguistic and dialectical choices place the speaker in a socio-historical context and can profoundly impact interpersonal and intergroup power dynamics as well as levels of inclusion in the host society. This happens especially when one's language or dialect has been the target of marginalization or other forms of exclusion. Naturally, such negative dynamics can extend to the institutions of transnational academics.

Visible and linguistic minorities often find themselves accosted by "Nationality and Ethnicity Talk" (NET) (Zhu Hua), in which their communicative partner engages in discourse that evokes and/or orients to the ethnicity of the minority group member. In the process, speakers may try to "establish, ascribe, challenge, deny or resist" the ethnicity or nationality of the other. While NET may be used constructively to establish commonalities, learn about others' culture or personhood, or to activate cognitive schema that will help one behave in culturally-appropriate or sensitive ways,

NET can also reveal stereotypical assumptions common in the host society about the minority's ethnic group, or, simply by its frequency and predictable content, NET can make transnational academics feel ostracized. As Zhu Hua reveals:

> *I know that while some of the people who ask these questions may be just curious and interested in my background, the underlying assumption is that I am an odd one out. It constantly reminds me that as someone who works in a culture different from her home culture and who operates in a non-native language, I have to work harder to become a member of the community.*

The struggle faced both by linguistic and visible minorities is that they do not fit the cognitive schema, or conceptual prototype, among many host society members of who is "one of us." Consequently, they may be perceived unable to speak the local language when they can (Komisarof), culturally or professionally incompetent when they are not (Oommen and Sam), or even as a foreign national when they are a fellow citizen (Ahn). Such categorizations are extremely problematic, as they fuel stereotypes and treatment which are incongruent with the identities and actual capabilities of these transnational academics.

Devalued groups. Another factor which impacts the sense of belonging among many transnational academics is their position on the racial/ethnic hierarchy in their host society. Such hierarchies exist everywhere (van Oudenhoven, 2006). Transnational academics, once identified as visible or linguistic minorities, find themselves placed upon the hierarchy as it is locally constructed. Montreuil and Bourhis' work (2001) distinguishes between "valued" and "devalued" immigrant groups; host society members categorize immigrants according to ethnicity as either valued or devalued, and such perceptions impact acculturation expectations towards such groups within the host society. For example, devalued immigrants are generally expected to assimilate (i.e., abandon their heritage culture), separate (i.e., maintain their heritage culture yet eschew significant contact with the dominant cultural group), or accept marginalization (in which they forfeit their heritage culture and are denied contact with the dominant cultural group, usually leading to severe socio-economic disempowerment). Among our authors, the basis varied for their racial/ethnic group being devalued. Some were stigmatized through racism (see David Sam's struggles in Norway with the stereotype of "the inferior African") or had a history of colonial subjugation at the hands of the dominant ethnic group in their host country (Deepa Oommen). Others were negatively labelled because of a history of socio-political conflict between the transnational

academic's hosts and country of origin (Maryam Borjian).

Those transnational academics pegged as members of devalued groups endured many tribulations—sometimes among colleagues, and at others, in the broader society. For instance, Zhu Hua faced stereotyping and Anita Mak discrimination when targeted with racial slurs in public, while Elise Ahn's students doubted her professional competence. Deepa Oommen was similarly demeaned by graduate school colleagues and had her accent ridiculed—a form of linguistic insubordination (Lippi-Green, 2012). Racial and ethnic hierarchies were described by many of our authors—even in supposedly inclusive immigrant-receiving societies like the U.S. (Borjian and Oommen). Such hegemonic patterns were strikingly tenacious, as they could be recreated elsewhere—following people from one end of the globe to another (see Ahn from the U.S. to Kazakhstan). For each of these transnational academics, the struggle to reclaim self-esteem and contest such ostracizing dynamics proved challenging.

Other authors were treated by the host society as "valued" visible minorities, such as Adam Komisarof in Japan. Komisarof (2011, 2012) documents the advantages of being Caucasian and American in Japan but also the tendency to be cast as a cultural

"other" in ways that can make acceptance difficult—even among fellow professors. The key difference, though, is that valued groups' experiences of exclusion are at least partially mitigated by their privileged status—a luxury not afforded to devalued group members.

Though discrimination and other forms of social exclusion impact many transnational academics, Liu-Farrer reminds us the importance of distinguishing between such forms of marginalization and unrelated systemic factors which can create the *appearance* of discrimination, specifically, "a discordance of organizational logic and the inability of an organization to cope with complexity." As universities more aggressively pursue faculty talent in the global marketplace and adopt practices such as tenure systems (or in another apt example by Elise Ahn, try to find comfortable, legally-sanctioned housing for their foreign academics), the logic under globalization will conflict with the traditional logic embedded in the administrative and educational systems of such host institutions. Similar paradoxes will almost surely proliferate as global and local interpretive frameworks and organizational practices collide.

When Gracia Liu-Farrer was ultimately awarded a sabbatical and also when the neighborhood children raptly absorbed her Japanese speeches about accepting diversity, one hallmark of inclusive organizations and communities was revealed: they allow (or even encourage) new cultural practices, meanings, and identities to emerge via interactions between local hosts and transnational academics. Institutions and societies which can adapt similarly to such new logic and practices will grow more inclusive, while those that cannot will be left behind—ultimately compromising their potential to reap the benefits of globalization. For universities, this means an inability to attract and retain the best and the brightest transnational academics.

This section has expounded upon several characteristics of the liminal space occupied by transnational academics. Namely, acceptance in their organizations and broader communities are important factors in building satisfying lives abroad. These are best accomplished when transnational faculty members and their hosts share similar expectations for inclusion and enact such expectations in ways that engender complementary acculturation outcomes. The antithesis of inclusion—exclusion—negatively impacts the experiences of scholars abroad, and the most common forms described by our authors related to being "othered" as visible or

linguistic minorities, which was usually accompanied by devalued status on the local ethnic/racial hierarchy. Thus, so far, the pitfalls of liminality are clear. From now, we will focus more on the positive potential of liminality—both by detailing how transnational academics cope with its challenges and also ways in which they use its unique characteristics to enhance their lives abroad.

What coping strategies can transnational academics employ to acculturate smoothly and thrive socio-professionally in their faculties?

Despite the struggles for acceptance we have documented, throughout this book, our authors have demonstrated resilience—a combination of both flexibility and strength. They have made persistent effort to adjust to their new lands, build essential cultural and linguistic competencies, and creatively manage stress and adversity. David Sam overcame prejudice—eventually to sit among those giants in his field from whom he initially learned. Adam Komisarof broke the Rice Paper Ceiling in his department, and Maryam Borjian revels in her "hyphenated identity."

There are no panaceas for every tribulation experienced abroad, but all of our authors have managed to create a new, more comfortable space in their host countries—one

both physical and mental—where they are buffered from insensitivity and intolerance, gain strength, and go back "into the field" to thrive while coping with the many challenges of life in a foreign country. As David Sam aptly observes, the Chinese characters for "crisis" are "danger" and "opportunity." In this section, we will examine how transnational academics make the most of this potentially life-transforming move—both in terms of the coping strategies which they employ and what the newfound liminal space looks like which they create to feel at home abroad.

Citing Victor Turner, Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich characterizes liminality as a place "betwixt and between," or a grey area that lies between two cultures with enormous potential for personal growth. People living abroad in such liminal spaces may be described as *marginals*—a term which Elise Ahn notes having longstanding negative connotations. Schaetti (1998) similarly concludes that a marginal has been predominantly conceived in academic literature as a position of confusion, loss of direction, and internal conflict (and in extreme cases, pathology and deviance), as those living in foreign lands experience the contradictory pulls and throes from being lodged between opposing host and heritage cultural values.

Elsewhere, marginality has been conceived to connote the potential *benefits* of inhabiting a liminal space between cultures (Bennett, 1993). As Elise Ahn contends, "While being situated in or around the margins can be challenging, it can also become a constructive space in which one can grow both personally and professionally." For instance, marginals can develop insight into two or more divergent, even antagonistic world views—ultimately helping those who embrace conflicting beliefs to transcend their differences (Schaetti, 1998). Moreover, marginals inhabiting liminal spaces between cultures may find themselves free from many host societal norms—allowing them to claim alternative identities and enact lifestyles outside of the mainstream (Komisarof, 2012).

So what distinguishes these positive and negative manifestations of marginality? Bennett's (1993) concepts of *encapsulated* and *constructive marginals*, previously introduced by Elise Ahn, are elaborated here to frame more explicitly the types of marginality experienced by transnational academics and also to clarify strategies for improving their sense of well-being and fulfillment abroad. According to Bennett (1993), encapsulated marginals are "trapped" by marginality, or "buffeted by conflicting cultural loyalties" (p. 113). They embrace the worldviews of at least two cultures, but

they also struggle to control shifts between them because they try continuously, in vain, to conform to the conflicting requirements of each. Consequently, encapsulated marginals feel alienated, detached, frustrated with ambiguity, and lost in the margins between cultures.

Constructive marginals, on the other hand, are comfortable in those liminal spaces, locating their identity there and feeling empowered by a sense of agency as they choose which values and perspectives to act upon while also respecting those cultures which define their marginal space (Bennett, 1993, 2008). They make decisions actively by *commitments in relativism*, which Bennett (1993) explains: "[Constructive marginals come] to terms with the reality that all knowledge is constructed, and what they will ultimately value and believe is what they choose, based on the context and frame of reference they construct" (p. 128). For constructive marginals, the cultural margins may be negotiated or even challenged, particularly when people use their agency to construct contexts and create their own identity intentionally and consciously. Thus, being bicultural, multicultural, or transcultural is an additive process, and one's Interculturality becomes a resource and serves as a professional and personal asset.

Ultimately, constructive marginality and liminality have much in common. According to Schaetti (1998), liminality constitutes a psychological space between cultures, imbued with great promise and "emerging possibility," as one lives "between the ending of what was and the beginning of what will be" (p. 35). She continues:

> Liminality can be considered as the in-between place of identity. It parallels and expands upon the experience of constructive marginality. It informs the both/and identity, the dancing in-between, the life lived ongoing on the threshold with a foot in each of multiple cultural traditions. (p. 36)

So how precisely did our authors establish a sense of constructive marginality in liminal spaces? Each chapter is rich with insights. Below we explore the following ten emerging themes in turn:

- Reconceiving differences as an asset
- Negotiating identities
- Maximizing social inclusion
- Befitting social and cultural capital
- Overturning prejudice and stereotypes
- Integrating scholarship and relational dynamics

- Managing boundary shifts
- Developing institutional pragmatic and discourse competence
- Redistributing multilingual competences and making use of heterolingual practices
- Resilience

Reconceiving differences as an asset. Gracia Liu-Farrer saw the "difference" which she embodied not as a deficit, but as an asset to her organization, as she contributed towards a more global, cosmopolitan faculty culture. Her sense of mission extended beyond the workplace: "We, as foreign residents . . . symbolize the new values Japanese society aims to incorporate: namely multiculturalism and a global vision. And we have the responsibility to help construct new cultural norms and practices in Japan." Her sense of ownership in the globalization process both in her community and university made her feel more comfortable in her neighborhood and strengthened the support and inclusion which she enjoyed among fellow faculty members.

Similarly, Maryam Borjian reframed her differences as an asset, notably in the classroom, which she achieved by maintaining balance, like the Fiddler on the Roof,

between the two cultures which define her liminal space:

> *I have maintained this balance . . . by appreciating my hybrid identity and my belonging to two different (albeit seemingly incompatible and contradictory) parts of the world. . . . This hybridity is not just embedded in my language . . . but also in the way I design and teach my courses. I often draw upon Persian literature and Persian mythology, and those of other non-Western localities of the world, as a springboard—not only to add color to the otherwise dry linguistic topics, but also to introduce a new lens—a non-Eurocentric lens, through which the world with all its languages and cultures can be seen and interpreted.*

Negotiating identities. For Zhu Hua, resisting imposed, uncomfortable identities was a source of strength; namely, she maintained a keen sense of agency as she employed various discourse strategies and interactional resources to negotiate the extent of alignment between the identities which she chose and those ascribed to her by others:

> *I become very aware of the discourse strategies I have developed over the years in resisting or conforming to the cultural identities other people have chosen for me or oriented towards in conversation. "Well, I have lived here for*

a while, and I do not have any plan to go anywhere yet." . . . are some of the answers I find it useful in closing down the conversation about my roots when I need to. On other occasions, I found myself drawing from my connections with the Chinese culture and used NET as a rapport-building strategy.

Maximizing social inclusion. Both Deepa Oommen and Adam Komisarof stress the importance of socio-professional inclusion at work. Once Oommen felt accepted, she enjoyed many benefits which her research has corroborated: reduced stress and social apprehension along with more frequent collaborative behavior, greater positive affect towards coworkers, and better conflict management. Komisarof emphasizes the importance of socio-professional acceptance in his organization, but also inclusion as an acculturated, "adopted" member of the host culture's ingroup. He broke the Rice Paper Ceiling in part by selectively conforming to key norms used by the Japanese themselves for gaining acceptance in groups. Moreover, by continuously striving to improve his own cultural and linguistic competence, he built the necessary trust to be invited to join the core administrative group of his department, the Dean's Committee. Ultimately, he could inhabit socio-cultural spaces he calls *Assimilated* and *Integrated Membership*—in the former, provisionally joining the Japanese cultural-linguistic

community, and in the latter, behaving in ways congruent with his socialization in America—but in both cases, feeling accepted in his organization.

Befitting social and cultural capital. Jean-Marc Dewaele highlights the importance of transnational academics finding colleagues (and by extension, institutions) who value one's accumulated social and cultural capital and who support the further accruement of the type of capital which one cherishes. Thus, there is compatibility between the social and cultural capital that transnational academics actually possess and desire, as well as those forms of capital which are encouraged in their surrounding environment:

> *I felt a certain relief to be away from the Belgian academic market, where my social and cultural capital opened relatively few doors (being atheist and Flemish). These two characteristics did not matter on the British market, and it was with a certain degree of trepidation that I set out to make a career in British academia and accrue social and cultural capital. . . . The British panel who hired me at Birkbeck did value my social, embodied and institutionalized cultural capital, as well as my linguistic capital.*

Dewaele has thrived in his current position, becoming an international leader in his field as he has been both encouraged to build the capital befitting a top-flight scholar and had

the talent and the drive to do so.

Overturning prejudice and stereotypes. As described previously, transnational academics may be targets of prejudice and/or stereotypes, which most find hurtful and draining—especially when the process chronically repeats itself. But these negative dynamics can be coped with constructively. David Sam's motivation in building his career sprang at least in part from a palpable sense of mission—that he was working for something bigger than himself—namely, to pave an easier path in academia for those from countries with developing economies and to establish a truly meritocratic academic marketplace:

> *Being the first from Sub-Saharan Africa to be licensed as a psychologist from the University of Bergen and the first to secure a PhD have, in my opinion, opened doors for others from low-income countries. . . . Working in a globalized world, it appears that only being the best matters, and not the color of one's skin.*

With his success, he subverted the stereotype of "the inferior African" which he encountered earlier in his career—a constructive way of coping with a potentially destructive aspect of his acculturation experience.

Regis Machart has also thrived by overturning stereotypes. By moving beyond facile, absolutist notions of how culture molds people, he embraced the imperative of finding his voice and hearing clearly those of others so that identities could be recognized in all of their rich complexity:

> *I do not adhere to cultural simplification or match the national stereotypes. Instead of drawing back to simplistic cultural categories, I believe that moving away from cultural essentialism and complexifying the analysis of interactions will empower individuals and give them a voice.*

By combatting stereotypes and prejudice in such ways, transnational academics are able to see greater complexity in their socio-cultural environment and also work for something greater than themselves—social justice. These are essential tasks in the journey towards self-actualization, and in them, we can find new meaning as to what constitutes a constructive marginal.

Integrating scholarship and relational dynamics. Another key to embracing the liminal space between cultures is the integration of scholarship and the relational dynamics

faced at work and beyond (such integration will be further explored under the theme of weaving work, life, and scholarship). When transnational academics analyze their experiences through the lens of theory, it not only helps them to understand and cope with difficulties, but also to see their own struggles within the broader perspective of their research. Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich describes how she does so through the concept of ritual:

> *A huge range of academic rituals of everyday life . . . need to be de-coded, reflected on and understood in their specific cultural grammar. And doing so while viewing them as rituals, rather than personal problems, is an approach that enables migrants to meet such challenges with humor, creativity and the eagle eye of the academic researcher*.

Anita Mak similarly utilized her research to navigate constructively and proactively the challenges of her own acculturation process:

> *My negative affective states in cross-cultural adjustment can be understood in terms of the Acculturative Stress and Coping Model. This framework emphasizes how the possession of internal and coping resources (e.g., openness and use of social support) and productive coping responses (such as those*

involving problem-solving rather than avoidance) can facilitate individuals' psychological adaptation in managing the myriad of demands in crossing cultures.

Ultimately, based on such understanding, she built the EXCELL program to impart skills that "fast-track" people towards positive acculturation outcomes. Thus, she used her tribulations not only to propel her own research forward, but also to help others in the process.

Managing boundary shifts. Another aspect of constructive marginality for transnational academics is negotiating boundary shifts when they return to their native countries—faced by Jean-Marc Dewaele. He was not going back "home" the same person, as his identity had become both transcultural (i.e., rooted in the experience of being a transnational academic) and influenced by the culture of his resident Britain: "I am perfectly happy being and acting like a Belgo-British-international professor, a persona that I use in academic communities around the world. Why would I pretend to be somebody different in a French academic context?"

By learning to manage his hyphened identities, Dewaele exemplifies the constructive

marginal, who makes a commitment to different, sometimes conflicting world views. However, Dewaele is influenced not only by national or regional cultures, but also by values commensurate with the transcultural position (i.e., a culture of one's profession that transcends national boundaries) of a transnational academic, which include cherishing one's autonomy and mobility to traverse the globe, reveling in the stimulation of new cultures and rediscovering old ones, and the intellectual freedom to ponder the intricacies of a life in liminal space while presenting and publishing one's findings. In other words, the transnational academic integrates elements from each culture where s/he has lived, and at the same time blends the transcultural experience of being a globally-mobile scholar to become part of one's core identity.

Developing institutional pragmatic and discourse competence. Mary Louise Pratt once commented, "While many people who think about language are thinking about globalization, the people who think about globalization never think about language. Language has not been a category of analysis in the literature on globalization" (Pratt, 2010, p.9, cited in Jenkins, 2013, p.18). Fortunately, in this volume, most of our contributors, as specialists in applied linguistics or communication-related disciplines, reflect on the experience of operating in a second or third language in their institutions.

We know from the rich literature on communicative competence (e.g. Bennett, 2008; Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; van Ek, 1986) that competence exists in plurality and consists of many levels. Linguistic competence, which focuses on production and interpretation of meaningful and grammatically correct utterances, and has traditionally been the focus of language learning, is only one aspect of competence. In fact, what also greatly matters for transnational academics, as evident in this collection, are the kind of institutional pragmatic and discourse competences which are rarely taught in language classrooms, university induction programs for new faculty members, or cultural awareness training materials preparing people living, studying, or working abroad. These include familiarity with the institutional discourse (i.e. which is defined by Sarangi & Roberts, 1999, p. 15, as "features which are attributed to institutional practice, either manifestly or covertly, by professionals") and the ability to interpret meaning in its local situated context while taking into account relevant social, cultural, and/or institutional expectations. These abilities help one to infer what someone really means when he says, "It is interesting" (see Dewaele's chapter) or to judge the scale of urgency when one is bombarded with email messages with "urgent" as the subject heading (see Ahn's).

Making one's points understood and getting one's voice heard at meetings require a sophisticated level of institutional pragmatic and discourse competence, because of its impromptu nature, immediacy, and the involvement of multiple parties. On one hand, there are many hidden macro–rules—i.e., expectations specific to the local culture and institution regarding the function and organization of meetings, the role of meetings in decision-making and power-wielding, turn-taking dynamics, and the role of the chair. On the other hand, there are significant key words and linguistic features at the discourse level which can be learned and thus used to put forward effectively one's views (e.g., exclusive or inclusive versions of "we"—whether "we" includes the listener or not), to acknowledge and evaluate others' contributions (e.g., "yeah" or "It was not easy, but"), or to influence the progression of the discussion (e.g., "Anyway, let's go back to the suggestion") (for a review on meetings, see Handford, 2010; Zhu Hua, 2014).

All of these pose challenges to newcomers, especially in cases when they operate in other than their first language(s) and where language expertise is bundled up with "professional expertise" and becomes an important marker of general competence

(Mahili, 2014). But for those newcomers who have developed functional linguistic, pragmatic, and discourse competence, the result is rewarding and their participation is usually welcomed by their peers, as Gracia Liu-Farrer realized when she was praised, "You finally showed a sense of ownership,' after she decided to stop being a mere "spectator" and vocalize her opinions in meetings.

Redistributing multilingual competences and making use of heterolingual practices. For almost all contributors in this volume, their experience of crossing boundaries comes with the redistribution, reevaluation, or refinement of their multilingual competences, or the way their multiple languages are mobilized. Traces of language ideologies, i.e., beliefs, or feelings about the use of languages including multiple languages, according to Kroskrity (2004), are visible in our authors' auto-ethnographies, many of whom work with languages as applied linguists and communication experts. Several contributors bring up the issues of authenticity and legitimacy, which begs the question of who "owns" English. There seems to be an assumption among many speakers and learners: English spoken by Caucasians is the most authentic and legitimate. As someone who has learned English as a child in India and feels "more connected" with English than with her first language, Malayalam, Oommen was ridiculed by her American friend

when she told him that she would teach a public speaking course. Likewise, Elise Ahn, a Korean-American, was told by her student that s/he should have taken a white American colleague's class, because "they're American. Their English is better than yours and more objective." This comment references not just the ownership issue, but also reflects the widespread belief that there is a "native speaker norm," or that native varieties of English, or any other language for that matter, sit atop the hierarchy and that other ways of speaking that language are illegitimate. This is an ideological as well a practical challenge for many of us who speak a language with "non-native" or "non-standard" accents and are hence regarded as inferior, less intelligent, or less authentic (see previous discussion on linguistic outsiders in this chapter).

For transnational academics, knowing the local language is usually desirable. It can help one to establish rapport with colleagues, facilitate career progression, and increase job mobility. In Adam Komisarof's case, his Japanese competence created a "win-win" situation: being able to deliver a speech in Japanese to prospective students at Open Campus events gave his department a "global face" literally as well as metaphorically and empowered him to perform at the same level as his Japanese colleagues. Another contributor who works in Japan, Gracia Liu-Farrer, encountered the challenge of being

evaluated on teaching performance in courses instructed in Japanese. In her case, giving lectures in Japanese was not an option. Admirably, she took extra Japanese lessons, successfully accomplished this task, and in the process, fulfilled one of her requirements to gain tenure.

According to Reine Meylaerts (2006, p. 4), heterolingualism refers to the use of "foreign languages or social, regional, and historical language varieties in literary texts." Here, we use it as an encompassing term to describe the practice of employing different linguistic repertories in communication (elsewhere referred to as "flexible" multilingual practices, by Creese & Blackledge, 2011; as metrolingual practices, Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010; cf. translanguaging, Garcia & Li Wei, 2014) or creative forms of improvisation that combine elements of more than one language. Some contributors reflect on their heterolingual practices and how they mobilized their multiple linguistic repertories when they found it inadequate to express themselves in the working language. In Gracia Liu-Farrer's case, she used a mixture of Japanese and English at faculty meetings. Zhu Hua showed sensitivity to cultural differences in address terms and naming practices. When she wrote to her Chinese colleagues in English, she used a hybrid greeting form, "*Dear Wang Laoshi*" (meaning teacher) instead of "*Dear*

Professor Wang" to acknowledge the shared cultural and linguistic code while paying respect to status and distance between the addressor and addressee. Maryam Borjian developed a unique "hybrid" English academic writing style which is ingrained with the "poetic tone of the Persian language, its rich metaphors, expressions, and literary style of articulation."

Resilience. This section has described an abundance of coping methods which our authors have utilized to deepen their socio-professional fulfillment abroad. At the foundation of these strategies is a quality exemplified by all of our authors: resilience, which Ehrensaft and Tousignant (2006) define as "an enduring process that integrates various coping mechanisms. . . . The resilient person may show vulnerability, and may even experience crises and failures, but will ultimately emerge stronger in the long run" (p. 470). Seeing resilience as a quality which galvanizes and empowers people to adapt to their new environment shifts away from the deficit view, i.e., "how to remedy what is wrong" (borrowing Allan, McKenna, & Dominey's term, 2014, p.10), towards an emphasis on resistance, flexibility, strength, and agency of those who find themselves in margins and liminal spaces. By employing selected coping mechanisms, supported by a resilient mindset, transnational academics can construct marginality,

engage in more effective intercultural communication, improve relationships with coworkers, feel more at home in their communities, and deepen their sense of fulfillment as they pursue careers abroad.

What are some "best practices" for universities to support transnational academics by facilitating their socio-professional integration into their organizations?

The aim of this section is to gather the insights of our authors and expound upon steps which can be taken at the institutional or departmental level to improve the socio-professional integration of transnational academics into their organizations, as well as initiatives which complement this process by encouraging a broader understanding and acceptance of diversity. We use the expression "best practices" with some trepidation, however, as we are not offering a comprehensive list, nor are we implying that certain practices will work regardless of context. Therefore, generalizable strategies are drawn with appreciation of the complex relationship between globalization and local context—thus emphasizing the importance of sensitivity to such subtleties while searching for broader applications.

The goal of each of these "best practices" is ultimately to promote positive intergroup

contact. In order to do so, Castro (2003) argues that "equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, institutional support, and 'friendship potential' are critical" (p. 81) in intercultural interactions at work—a point broadly supported in the literature on intergroup relations. These elements are staples of the Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013), which has been refined over decades to isolate these keys for building positive intercultural relations. From this, we can extrapolate that important indicators of the successful integration of transnational academics include their empowerment to participate in organizational practices and rituals, holding rights and responsibilities equitable with host culture members, and a subjective sense of socio-professional acceptance.

What kinds of specific programs and initiatives can help to achieve such results? Our authors offer many examples. Anita Mak emphasizes the importance of social support from one's colleagues. Such goals could be achieved intentionally, yet informally (as Mak did, for instance, by building collaborative research networks), or provided through a "buddy system" in which transnational academics are paired with faculty mentors. Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich elaborates why mentorship is so critical:

> *Universities are only just waking up to the fact that by leaving their*

> *international scholars without help, they are taking huge risks resulting in low retention rates. They also ignore the fact that migration in itself is a rite of passage, therefore requiring special guidance and ritual control. Help with teaching is still not forthcoming in many universities, and scholars are left to somehow figure it out. This often results in alarmingly bad student evaluations before some help is actively sought or offered.*

Deepa Oommen benefitted greatly from the mentoring she received in her department:

> *I was guided by the other faculty members in how to be successful in regards to the five criteria of performance assessment–teaching; research; professional development; contributions to student growth and development; and service to the department, university and professional community.*

Awareness programs (such as EXCELL developed by Anita Mak) about the different cultural rules around teaching and professorial job duties help migrants to understand, foresee, and navigate successfully the many traps laid out for newly-arrived scholars. For instance, Mak has trained herself and others how to promote their achievements in social conversations, make requests of supervisors, engage in communication vital for

building professional networks, and give feedback to colleagues and students.

Transnational academics may benefit most from such programs when they move from receiving to delivering them. In other words, they can improve their degree of organizational belonging by performing training for other faculty members, administrators, and students to improve their intercultural communication competence (see Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, for a discussion). This is not only a way to increase cultural sensitivity among colleagues and students, but also a means of deepening social bonds with program participants and fellow organizers while demonstrating one's value to the organization. Anita Mak offered these workshops and much more—becoming a trusted resource for improving the acceptance of diversity at her university. She recounts her experiences and gives useful advice to guide such initiatives:

> *I was invited to participate in various faculty and university-level committees on international education and on internationalization of the curriculum, contributing to policy development and design and implementation of educational innovations. In initiatives targeting the internationalization of the curriculum,* . . . intercultural outlooks and skills–*fundamental to an internationalized curriculum–require that* both faculty members and students

examine their own assumptions about, and learn to be more effective in communicating with, cultural others.

Therefore, promoting global citizenship requires all of a university's constituents—faculty, students, and administrators—to build a frame of reference and skills which empower them to work and live together with those from different cultures. This development occurs most effectively when embedded and promoted in university policies, programs, and the curriculum. Transnational academics can play a critical role in this process—serving as role models themselves for the competencies necessary to work in a global environment and also as catalysts within their universities to help enact such change.

Through the organizational practices and initiatives detailed in this section, universities can grow more inclusive of cultural diversity embodied by transnational academics and other members of the community. As Gracia Liu-Farrer illustrates, the transformation of cultural practices at the organizational level is a mutually-constructed process between transnational academics and their colleagues. Such transformations frequently engender the development of hybrid organizational cultures—or

amalgamations of practices from both the home cultures of transnational academics and their colleagues (like Liu-Farrer's bilingual faculty meetings). In high-functioning multinational teams, members are typically open to employing effective work practices from their coworkers' cultures, which may be transferred directly, combined with other practices, or otherwise modified to better match situational imperatives (Komisarof, 2011). As Komisarof (2011) observes in Japanese interactions between Japanese and American coworkers:

> *Hybrid cultural work groups . . . tended to shift flexibly between Japanese and English and demonstrate mutual understanding of each other's cultures, which inspired a cooperative atmosphere and the feeling that everyone's culture was equally valued. Through continuous mutual adaptation and openness to change, [they] created [an organizational] culture combining the best of the national cultures represented by the employees.* (p. 95)

When transnational academics co-construct such hybrid approaches with colleagues, and have the flexibility to choose effective ways of getting the job done, regardless of culture of origin, "best practices" often emerge. It is through a focus on process—where respect for diversity, equal status, and a collaborative approach to

working towards shared goals inform each step—that ideas spring forth, solutions are actualized, and a more inclusive working environment is built. Our authors have given numerous examples of such initiatives which we hope will inspire readers to think of how to achieve similar goals and results in their unique socio-professional and cultural environments.

How does the connection between work, life, and scholarship play out in transnational academics' boundary crossings?

In this volume, we use the expression of "weaving" to think metaphorically about the relationship between work, life, and scholarship. The exploration between these different sites or domains is facilitated by the methodology of auto-ethnography, in which authors carry out ethnographical studies on themselves and dwell on their own journeys of crossing linguistic, cultural, national, institutional, and/or disciplinary boundaries in pursuing a career in a subject area related to intercultural communication. At the heart of the meta-framework and methodology is the notion of reflexivity between the researcher and the researched (in our case, the researcher's own intercultural experience) and between practice and scholarship. As defined by Finlay (2003), reflexivity is "the process of continually reflecting upon our interpretation of

both experience and the phenomena being studied," and its purpose is to "move beyond the partiality of our previous understandings and our investment in particular research outcomes" (p.108).

For those working in the field and language and intercultural education, reflexivity as a construct and process can bring us many benefits, as Byrd Clark and Dervin (2014) argue eloquently:

> Reflexivity . . . could take us to deeper levels by providing us the openness, imaginative resourcefulness, and flexibility that one needs for attempting to get at the complexities, thinking about the social processes and consequences of our practices, becoming other, and engaging with self-other relations in order to give a fairer, more meaningful image of who and what we are researching. More importantly, reflexivity could lead to meaningful action rather than being stuck and/or overwhelmed by the complexities, instabilities, and exceptions. . . . Reflexivity . . . could also serve to make one aware of or at least provide one the opportunity to engage with the vulnerabilities and blind spots of both the researcher and participants' power and representational systems. (pp. 34-35)

Our authors indeed bear out many of the above observations in their auto-ethnographies through their interpretation of the close relationship between their research and intercultural experience—for instance, how their research interests are motivated by those experiences. Anita Mak's observations and experience as a Hong Kong immigrant and international student in Australia prompted her research into the occupational concerns and well-being of Hong Kong immigrants as well as the pre-departure issues for prospective migrants from Hong Kong to Australia. For David Sam, a mundane question asked by a Norwegian at a party, "What is it like for you to be an international student in Bergen?" set the stage for his research career in acculturation psychology. In Jean-Marc Dewaele's case, his early experiences with languages (growing up speaking Dutch and French in an officially monolingual environment) awakened his interest in bilingualism and second language acquisition. Other authors discuss how their research in turn validates their experience and helps to make sense of what happens to and around them. For example, Adam Komisarof applied his acculturation framework to his experience of working with colleagues in a Japanese university, while Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich, as a cultural anthropologist researching academic mobility, was constantly aware of her own liminal position in New Zealand.

Authors also reflect on the "blind spots" in their conceptualizations and how existing research sometimes fails to capture "complexities, instabilities, and exceptions" in reality—borrowing Byrd Clark and Dervin's (2014) words. Awareness of researchers' own subjectivities and positioning is an important dimension of reflexivity. For many researchers working with culture, the blind spots lie in their subjectivity in understanding what culture is and the ways they represent linguistic and cultural groupings. Regis Machart fell into the trap of essentializing when he created "solid" cultural categories that did not match the diversity he later saw in German, Egyptian, Malaysian, or French people. By analyzing his intercultural experiences, he concluded that identities are "liquid," i.e., dynamic, changeable, and constantly evolving. By engaging in such reflection about his lived experience, he was able to deepen his understanding of identity and apply it to his subsequent research.

Weaving work, life, and scholarship also entails application of research to practice. As mentioned in the Introduction chapter, we are interested in how scholars of intercultural communication or related subjects apply their knowledge and academic insights in managing intercultural transitions, participation, and inclusion as well as everyday interactions with their colleagues, students, acquaintances, and strangers. Some

authors offer an account of their attempts to bridge the gap between scholarship and practice. Regis Machart, as a believer in the liquid Interculturality approach to culture, adopted a pragmatic approach in his roles as teacher and supervisor: “But I do not pretend to convince everybody: if only my students can realize that a different voice is possible. . .” To make sure that his students realize that a different voice is possible and to give them a choice, he carried out a series of rich discussions with his potential supervisees on post-modern Interculturality or asked them to do some reading on it before they started their research. It seems to be a win-win situation: students became aware of his stand on Interculturality and could make an informed choice of who and which paradigm they wanted to work with; he also had the privilege of being selected as a supervisor rather than being assigned as one.

For Zhu Hua, her own experience in reconciling differences in tradition, convention, and expectation between the Chinese and British ways of using names helped her to reflect on the role of the individual in “doing” cultural identities. In the literature on identity in the last two decades—in particular, those which adopt a constructionist approach—there seems to be an emphasis on the emergent, dynamic, and constructed nature of identity (e.g. Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998). However, Zhu Hua’s experience

told her that while the argument is true to a certain extent, it does not mean that all choices are possible on all occasions for the social actors involved. There is a limit to how far one can go—shaped by issues of power, ideology, as well as conventions. Therefore, she found a way of using different names in different contexts and showed sensitivity to varied practices in naming and address terms.

Thus, all of our contributors, through reflexivity, have utilized their position in the liminal space between cultures to weave work, life, and scholarship throughout the acculturation process to grow as scholars, educators, and human beings. This is another hallmark of the constructive marginal, who is at home in the margins and positively leverages this position's unique characteristics and conditions to experience life abroad in all of its richness. In other words, they are saying "yes" to marginality and the opportunities for growth afforded by inhabiting liminal intercultural spaces.

A final point before finishing this section: weaving work, life, and scholarship is an evolving process. It never stops and is part and parcel of what we do as scholars. We, as editors of the volume and contributors of two auto-ethnographies, became even more acutely aware of this as we planned, edited, and wrote. Quite a few authors, including

ourselves, found it challenging to research through and write in the format of auto-ethnography. It is an unusual genre and methodology: we need to write in the first person—rather than in the detached, supposedly more objective-sounding way that we are used to when we usually publish. We are the actors and interpreters as well as the authors of the stories. But despite uncertainty and tentativeness, the process was rewarding. One contributor told us after finalizing her draft that using auto-ethnography had been "cathartic." Another, despite the initial trepidation, enjoyed preparing his chapter so much that he was thinking of writing up his auto-ethnographic life story in a monograph.

Is it possible for different approaches to researching intercultural communication to coexist—or even better, to complement each other—when examining the work, lives, and scholarship of transnational academics?

One of the original goals of this book was to synergistically employ a variety of scholarly orientations to culture to gain greater insight into the experiences of transnational faculty members. In other words, the "crossing boundaries" in the title also implies an academic approach which crosses disciplines. The main concerns of intercultural communication studies are addressed largely separately across a number of

established disciplinary and theoretical perspectives; similarly, our authors have employed multiple ontological, epistemological, theoretical, and methodological orientations to culture as they have wrestled with this book's central themes. In this section, we will attempt to discern what we have accomplished by pursuing this multidisciplinary collaboration.

In the Introduction chapter, we outline a position allowing for the inclusion of four means of conceptualizing and researching culture, or "schools" of intercultural communication studies—each potentially valuable to understand better the work, life, and scholarship of transnational academics. We also detail a shared point of departure for conceiving culture. Specifically, cultures are both dialectic and paradoxical, as people from the same group may embrace contradictory values, attitudes, or behaviors; even the same person is likely to make different choices based on context or relationship. At the same time, we maintain that meaningful, flexible generalizations can be made about cultural patterns in values, attitudes, and behaviors, which stem from shared elements of primary socialization—i.e., those through which people internalize frameworks of meaning used to shape communicative messages, interpret responses, and generally make sense of one's social and physical environment. We also recognize

that culture occurs on many levels in addition to nation (e.g., region, socioeconomic class, gender, ethnicity, institution, profession, sexual orientation, etc.) and that such subcultural identifications can be of great use in understanding transnational academics.

While we have tried to forge common ground between these four schools of thought, they cannot be reduced to facsimiles of each other, and it is in fact their substantial differences which allow researchers from one orientation to "see" phenomena in ways that another might not. For instance, Zhu Hua's Interculturality is certainly distinct from the compositional approach delineated in the Introduction. The former stresses the key role in social interactions played by the orientation and negotiation of identity, while the latter focuses upon national cultural differences. However, by employing multiple approaches to conceiving culture, complementary insights may be drawn, though the means of arriving at them decidedly distinct. Namely, when using different theoretical frameworks and methods to analyze intercultural communication, how the researcher perceives and ultimately renders these phenomena also diverges, particularly in terms of the features which appear salient, as well as the meaning ascribed to make sense of such features. But by juxtaposing the findings from usually-disparate scholarly approaches, as we have done in this volume, we can actually enjoy a

synergistic effect: we can see more of the intercultural domain spread before us via multiple vistas that represent different scholarly viewpoints.

For example, pairing Interculturality with a more compositional approach yields highly complementary findings as to what constitutes smooth, mutually-satisfying intercultural communication and how to actualize it. Utilizing Interculturality as her base, Zhu Hua highlights the reflexive relationship between discourse and social relations and proclaims, "Negotiation of the extent of alignment and misalignment of self-oriented identity and other-ascribed identity is the key to intercultural interactions." Komisarof's model of acculturation dynamics and outcomes focuses on how the interplay between national and organizational group boundaries affects acculturators' sense of belonging abroad, though it employs a different conceptual framework, nomenclature, and theoretical assumptions. Despite distinct concerns (Zhu Hua on identity and Komisarof on group boundary permeability and belonging), they fully agree: for positive intercultural relations to be established and maintained, complementary alignments of expectations, attitudes, and communicative behaviors between those living abroad and their hosts regarding who the transnational "is" and where s/he belongs in society are of paramount importance. By allowing for both

approaches to coexist—rather than insisting on the correctness of only one—we now have a richer view of the phenomena under examination, which is enlightened by two distinct, yet complementary views. In other words, although we come from different academic traditions and perspectives, our ideas coalesce nicely.

One major obstacle to integrating the compositional approach with others is the objection that it overgeneralizes national culture as a motivation for behavior and can promote stereotypes—among other deleterious effects. As Goodman (2008) argues, "Culture in [certain schools of thought] is nothing more than a rhetoric that different interest groups draw on to legitimize their position" (p. 327). To understand how the compositional approach can be misused, it is useful to reflect on its assumptions as elucidated by Zhu Hua:

> *The "cultural account" approach . . . tends to start with cultural memberships, for example, Chinese or American, as something given and treats mis- or non-understanding in interactions as the result of differences in values and beliefs between cultural groups*.

Machart illustrates in his chapter how this can lead to fallacious conclusions about other groups. He describes research which imputed "Confucian culture" and "a collectivistic

mindset" as the reasons for Chinese exchange students remaining in groups while living abroad. What the research seemingly failed to ascertain was whether Chinese students were the only group that tended to stay together (as Machart quickly noticed when he was an exchange student, French ones did, too), as well as whether those Confucian and collectivistic values actually influenced the decisions that resulted in such behavior.

It is critical to understand, however, that studies featuring similar holes in their logic and methodology while jumping to such cause-and-effect arguments would likely be rejected from any respectable journal publishing research grounded in the compositional approach. In quantitative cultural account research, if cross-cultural differences in values or beliefs are hypothesized to be a source of behavior, the behavior under the concern first needs to be measured in each population being compared before establishing statistically-significant cross-cultural differences. A plausible connection must also be proved between the cultural value and the behavior(s) in question. Overstating the effects of cultural differences on behavior is just as problematic to scholars within the compositional school as to those outside and is a frequent reason for rejection from top-flight academic journals. Therefore, in this regard, the findings of rigorous compositional research do not need to be at odds with other schools of thought,

though scholars from divergent approaches might attribute different reasons for intercultural miscommunication. While Machart's criticisms are valid in the case of applying facile labels like "Confucian, collectivist Chinese," there is a responsible way to investigate whether and how national culture influences attitudes and behavior; moreover, if sufficient evidence is found, framing those attitudes and behaviors in terms of national culture can be helpful in better understanding and ultimately resolving the problematic intercultural communication dynamics in question.

So when well-executed research grounded in different approaches to culture is examined more closely, one could also argue that there is greater potential for agreement, or at least complementary findings, than adherents to these schools of thought often realize. For instance, many of our authors take an additive approach to acculturation—i.e., when people acculturate, they are influenced by both their heritage culture(s) and their "new" one(s). Thus, cultures are not somehow embedded in our DNA, but learned, whether it is early (i.e., during primary socialization) or later in life. Scholars from each school of thought broadly agree that culture should not be conceived as a means of constructing, legitimatizing, or reinforcing boundaries between groups, especially since a new culture can be learned, and with this, cross-cultural

understanding built.

Therefore, culture is broadly conceived as an inclusive concept which facilitates entrée into a social system with its own commonplace—but not absolute—norms, values, and attitudes. Our chapter authors, each in their own way, have demonstrated this repeatedly—showing us through their own acculturation processes that one can successfully adapt to a host culture and in the process build mutual understanding. Similarly, each of their approaches to conceptualizing and researching culture has been used to build bridges with their hosts. Using the rhetoric of culture to stereotype or exclude has not been part of the behavioral repertoire or research agenda of any of our authors, and likewise, we contend that their respective approaches are not synonymous with such negative practices, but rather serve the same end of utilizing culture as an empowering tool to promote positive intergroup relations. Thus, we believe that there is intellectual common ground, as well as a shared larger vision, which different schools of thought can utilize to move forward together.

In this concluding chapter, we have tried to make sense of our authors' contributions compositely. To our delight (but not entirely to our surprise), their auto-ethnographies

have synergistically revealed the rich complexities of liminal spaces between cultures, as well as the rewards achieved through embodying constructive marginality. Precisely because of the many contrasts between their epistemological, ontological, and theoretical research approaches, we have gained a more nuanced portrait of transnational academics and how they weave work, life, and scholarship. From these individual vantage points, we can also see how globalization is affecting universities in various regions of the world: institutions are stretching to adapt to the logic of globalization, and fueling such changes are the transnational scholars, and those like them, who inhabit the pages of this book. We truly hope that by communicating these stories, readers have gained a deeper understanding about the process of boundary crossing and that of working and living abroad—one which is experienced and shared by a growing number of people across the world.

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