Constructive Intercultural Contact
A deliberate choice

Hans Walter Spijkerman

Institute for
Management Research

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Constructive Intercultural Contact

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"It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are,
far more than our abilities."

(Professor Dumbledore in: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets.)

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Preface

The Road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the Road has gone,
And I must follow, if I can,
Pursuing it with eager feet,
Until it joins some larger way
Where many paths and errands meet.
And whither then? I cannot say.

This walking song of Bilbo Baggins, from The Lord of the Rings, was the motto of my master's thesis in sociology, 50 years ago. In this thesis, I examined the methodological challenges within social sciences of isomorphism and the correspondence between a theoretical model, an operational model, and social reality. Rereading that paper after 50 years, I was surprised, not only about the level of abstraction, but particularly about how methodological aspects of this dissertation reflected issues I discussed then. An operational model, such as a scale, is an instrument that makes a theoretical concept useful, but it is also a reduction of the social reality this concept is referring to. After years of different "paths and errands", I have returned to the path I had left after my master's degree.

After a professional career at Novib, now Oxfam Novib, I became managing director of Osmose, a consultancy for multicultural issues in the province of Gelderland in the Netherlands. It was during my last year in this function that I took the first steps on the path of this dissertation.

Contacts between colleagues of the Dutch majority and cultural minorities, as well as between cultural minority colleagues themselves, were regularly hindered by impulses based on mutual prejudices. Even despite the intercultural competencies and abilities of Osmose colleagues had increased over the years. The more general question "what can be done to make intercultural contacts more positive and effective?" changed eventually into the leading question of this dissertation: "what can people DO to make their intercultural contacts positive and rewarding for both participants." I name "what people can do" a Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC).

When I took the first step on this path, I only knew that, aside from answering the question, in the end I wanted to obtain my degree. I had learned at Osmose the difference between a "project" (has a start and a result as end) and an "activity"

(can go on indefinitely because the result is not defined). I started a project. While following this path, I discovered not only what CIC is, but also what studying means and what writing a scientific (peer reviewed) paper means. I learned that a good text needs to be polished and polished again (in my case at least three times and more). I learned a lot, every chapter revealed new aspects and details about CIC. These "moments of discovery" were the most joyous moments in the process. Every chapter was also a challenge, and regularly the path was bumpy and difficult. Several friends, who after a number of years considered this project to be one without an end, were surprised by my perseverance. However, the journey was never boring, to a large extent thanks to all of my "travel companions". I am sincerely grateful for the support they provided. Some of them I would like to thank personally because this project could not have been completed successfully without their support.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Yvonne Benschop, my supervisor, for believing in me and this project for so many years. "Inspiring me" is characterizing your supervision from day one, and your enthusiasm was energizing. After almost every meeting, I returned home with renewed energy to go on. When, in our first meeting, I had explained my plan to evaluate a training, your first question, "What's in it for science and society?", sparked my ambition. After supporting the planning of my PhD trajectory, you kept inspiring me during the long execution of this plan. After every version of every chapter, I felt stimulated to improve and shape the next version because of the clarity of your questions and suggestions. You showed me always helpful commitment combined with professional distance and, very important, flexibility to "go with the flow" of my path.

I would like to thank my co-supervisor, Joost Bücker, for making my empirical research possible. "Precision" is the word to characterize your supervision. You often provided the finishing touches of texts and arguments during the whole process. A very significant contribution was to include the concept of CIC in your course of Cross-Cultural management and Communication. You invited me to give lectures and workshops for the participating students. I experienced this as a recognition of the potential utility of the concept CIC. Moreover, after several years of looking in vain for respondents, I was given the opportunity to do empirical research with student samples.

I thank these students for providing the data needed for the empirical part of this dissertation. I particularly appreciate the students who allowed me to analyze their reflection reports about their first experiences with CIC.

I would also like to thank Jan Pieter van Oudenhoven of the University of Groningen for introducing me into the field of intercultural effectiveness and the International Academy for Intercultural Research. His invitation to the biennial conference of this organization in 2007 initiated my interest in intercultural studying. Thank you, Jacomijn Hofstra and Michaela Carriere, for being my travel companions in Groningen during my writing attempts in the context of evaluating the Intercultural Effectiveness Training.

I like to thank the Gender Group for their welcoming attitude when I began the Nijmegen part of this PhD path. Mieke, Marieke, Laura B. and Laura V., Joke, Channa, Marjolein, Inge and others supported the preparation of my first paper with their critical encouraging feedback. Inge, thank you for your assistance in the first contact with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An international Journal, the publisher of this paper.

I would also like to thank the Radboud University, particularly the Nijmegen School of Management for allowing me to finish this project. Thank you, staff members of the faculty for your essential supportive work in the background.

A special thank you to Lex Bouts for his statistical support, for teaching me patiently the principles and the execution of the statistical procedures and SPSS, needed for this dissertation. Our many sessions with coffee and pastries often ended in discussing life and the world. From supervising volunteer you became a friend to me. I would like to thank Edurne and Dick for introducing me to Lex and for their ongoing encouragement.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my neighbor and friend Jan Merkus, retired teacher English language and literature, for all the screening of my concepts. You carefully and meticulously examined and corrected my texts. Given my English proficiency, I believe it must have been “a hell of a job”.

Finally, I would like to thank Anne, my girlfriend for 53 years and my wife for 28 years, for being my companion in life. You have been all along the Road, my loving, generous, critical and supporting companion. Thank you, for willing to go hand-in-hand with me on my road through life.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

Osmose

The first impulse for this study came in 2007 during my time as managing director of Osmose, a "consultancy on multicultural issues." The name "Osmose" refers to the organization's vision of cultural integration as "mutual adaptation." The objective of Osmose was to support groups and organizations in becoming more effective at working with people from different cultural backgrounds. Osmose's services included counseling, support, public debate, publications, and training. In collaboration with the University of Groningen, Osmose presented a new program of intercultural training for Dutch professionals, known as Intercultural Effectiveness Training (IET). The University of Groningen's invitation to discuss Osmose's praxis at the biennial conference of the International Academy for Intercultural Research in 2007 prompted me to learn more about acculturation processes, which ultimately led to this dissertation on intercultural contact.

By following the lectures during the conference and reading literature about acculturation processes, I was able to explain what I had seen happening in society and organizations, including Osmose—that is, that intercultural contacts often were troublesome, despite participants' positive intentions. At Osmose, where 60% of the employees were members of various cultural minorities, I was confident that intentions were positive, because of the motivation of the employees and their common goal. Nonetheless, within Osmose, as within many other organizations with culturally diverse workforces, mutual prejudices and stereotypes often made intercultural contacts difficult. I wondered: What can people do to improve these contacts? That became the leading question of this dissertation.

In the following paragraph, I present the theoretical context of this research, which draws on literature on inclusion, intergroup contact, and intercultural learning.

Theoretical position

Inclusion literature

The growing ethnic and cultural diversity of societies has a significant impact on both the customer bases and workforce compositions of organizations, presenting a challenge for organizations that must find ways to include all different groups into effective, cooperating workforces (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Cook & Glass, 2009; Knights et al., 2016; Ng & Sears, 2018). Notably, it is not only environments that

affect organizations; organizations also affect their environments. Potentially, organizations can provide their members with opportunities to learn and practice how to handle growing diversity, which would be beneficial both inside and outside of the organization. For example, an organization could be a motivating context for this learning process by promoting heterogeneous but interdependent working groups to implement necessary cooperation (Fiske, 2000; Reskin, 2000).

These kinds of measures are part of specific strategies that organizations can use to address the challenge of the growing diversity of their workforces. Several authors have presented promising strategies according to the concepts of "integration and learning" *(*Ely and Thomas, 2001) and "learning and development" (Ortlieb & Sieben, 2013). According to these strategies, cultural minorities, integrated into organizations, bring fresh perspectives and insights that favor process and product innovation. Today, these topics are studied under the labels of diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI). Literature on inclusion distinguishes several constructs that refer to different levels of organizations. According to Shore et al. (2018), "workgroup inclusion" focuses on the individual experiences of minority members of groups; "leader inclusion" centers on the inclusiveness of managers as perceived by employees; and "organizational inclusion" refers to the role of senior leadership in the practice of enhancing inclusion. Recently, the construct of "inclusive climate" has gained support as a promising way to benefit from a diverse workforce (Nishii, 2013; Guillaume et al., 2014; Dwertmann et al., 2016; Yadav & Lenka, 2020). In a climate of inclusion, members of all kinds of groups feel a sense of belonging, have access to resources, and are able to influence decision-making processes (Shore et al., 2011; Ng & Sears, 2018). Shore et al. (2011) developed the Inclusion Model for work groups, defining the values of "uniqueness" and "belongingness" as central issues for individual employees, with uniqueness referring to the human need to be recognized as an individual person and belongingness referring to the need to be accepted by others as similar (Brewer, 1991). The Inclusion Model depicts four positions (see Figure 1).

		Uniqueness	
		high	*low*
Belongingness	*high*	**inclusion**	**assimilation**
	low	**differentiation**	**exclusion**

Figure 1: Inclusion Model

Several studies find that perceived inclusion is the value that is most beneficial to organizations (Mor Barak, 2000; Roberson, 2006; Mor Barak et al., 2016; Shore et al., 2018; Chung et al., 2020).

Because literature highlights inclusion at both the organizational and individual levels, in my dissertation I aim to examine how inclusion is experienced in everyday dyadic intercultural employee–employee and manager–employee interactions (Nishii, 2013; Guillaume et al., 2014). An inclusive climate means that, in everyday intercultural interactions, arbitrary status and power differences will be eliminated and mutual trust will be created (Nishii, 2013; Shore et al., 2018). However, because it remains unclear what this means for everyday interactions. In this dissertation I want to discover which interactional behavior is favourable for an inclusive climate.

In the following subsection, which pertains to intergroup literature, I delve further into the interactions among members of diverse cultural groups.

Intergroup literature

Intergroup literature conveys a dual message; on one hand, it explains how prejudices and stereotypes make intergroup contact difficult, and on the other hand, it maintains that intergroup contact itself can be helpful to overcoming these difficulties. I begin by elaborating on prejudices and stereotypes, which are issues that are troubling to intergroup contact. I then focus on the potential beneficial outcomes of intergroup interaction.

Prejudices and stereotypes

Prejudices and stereotypes are fundamental sources of problematic intercultural contacts; they cause feelings of anxiety and uncertainty (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Brewer, 2000; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Social identity theory (SIT) explains that basic human needs for categorization and positive self-image lead to in-group and out-group classifications that involve biased images and prejudices related to outgroups. It is noteworthy that 'perceptions' are decisive here, and not necessarily real issues (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). These perceptions result in stress and anxiety among out-group members. Although some aspects of SIT are criticized (for an overview see: Brown, 2020), the theory is valued as a "general framework.….for understanding….social behavior in intergroup settings" (Brown, 2020 p.14.), when people are perceived as acting as members of a group.

According to the stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2002) out-groups stereotypically are evaluated on two dimensions: warmth and competence. Perceived warmth leads to likability, and perceived competence leads to respect. For most people, along with having a positive self-image, being liked and respected are important goals (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Fiske et al., 2009). The structure of the society as it is experienced is predictive; perceived status is connected to competence and

perceived cooperation is connected to liking (Fiske et al., 2009). These associations lead to stereotypical prejudices, based on perceived arbitrary status differences between (cultural) groups and perceived competition between (cultural) groups (Fiske et al., 2002; Lee & Fiske, 2006; Caprariello et al., 2009). These perceived stereotypical prejudices make intergroup contact difficult (Fiske et al., 2002).

A noteworthy aspect of the effects of categorization and stereotyping is that the resulting prejudices typically function as "implicit stereotypical associations" (Wigboldus, 2006; Durrheim, 2021; Walker & Wang, 2021), which are implicit associations between specific qualities or behaviors and specific groups or categories of people. These associations develop during the socialization process within people's personal in-groups. They are triggered not only by (shallow) contact with or by seeing someone of other groups, but also by hearsay or the media. The more frequent the activation, the stronger the association. The implicit nature of these associations implies that people are unaware of them and of how they influence their behavior (Wigboldus, 2006)—suggesting that prejudiced behavior is almost inevitable.

However, human social behavior is controlled by two parallel functioning systems in the brain: impulsive and reflective (Strack and Deutsch, 2004). The impulsive brain system steers behavior according to implicit associations, and the reflective brain system steers behavior according to intentions and decisions grounded in personal beliefs and values. Although the reflective brain system can overrule the impulsive system, it needs more energy and time than the very efficient and automatically functioning impulsive system (Strack & Deutsch, 2004). The practical consequence of this phenomenon is that in stressful situations or even in routine behaviors, the impulsive system is easily "in charge." The activation of the reflective system is necessary to correct this, which requires a deliberate choice. That is, the steering of social behavior using the reflective system requires intention, attention, and time.

Acculturation

A specific issue faced by cultural groups is "acculturation," which refers to the process of change resulting from contacts between two or more cultural groups and their members (Sam, 2006). Several models have been developed to describe how migrants position themselves within new or dominant cultural environments (Bourhis et al., 1997; Piontkowski et al., 2002; Berry, 2006a). Recently, these models have been deemed suitable for diverse cultural groups within multicultural and urbanized societies (Van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2022).

According to Berry (2006a), the models address two major issues: the acculturation strategies of different cultural groups and the ("perceived) fit" between these strategies. Acculturation strategies are the result of valuing two goals: "cultural maintenance" and "intercultural contact." This valuation leads to strategies, such as "integration," which is high on both cultural maintenance and intercultural contact, "assimilation," which is high on intercultural contact and low on cultural maintenance, "separation," which is high on cultural maintenance and low on intercultural contact, and "marginalization," which is low on both. According to Berry (2006a), "strategies" refer to attitudes and preferences as well as actual behaviors.

The specific issue for cultural groups pertains to the (perceived) fit between the strategies of the different groups. The fit between the strategies of minority cultural groups and the strategies of other more dominant groups strongly influences the way in which cultural groups and their members can implement their preferred strategies (Berry, 2006a; Brown & Zagefka, 2011). Research shows that low (perceived) fit often creates acculturation stress, which negatively affects contact (Berry, 2006b; Van Oudenhoven et al., 2006; Van Oudenhoven, 2008; Brown & Zagefka, 2011). This stress is one of the reasons for the detrimental effects of cultural diversity within organizations (Mor Barak et al., 2016).

To summarize, literature on intercultural contact indicates that it is complicated by implicit prejudices and stereotypes, perceived competition, perceived arbitrary status differences, and perceived poor fit between acculturation strategies. However, another strand of research shows that intergroup contact can be beneficial in diminishing these problems.

Intergroup contact

According to contact theory, intergroup contact can reduce prejudices and improve relations between identity groups (Allport, 1954/1979 ed.; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). According to Allport (1954/1979 ed.) this can arise when the following conditions are fulfilled—that is, when contact participants have equal status, are cooperating toward a common goal, have personal contact, and have institutional or normative support. An extensive meta-analysis by Pettigrew & Tropp (2006) confirmed that intergroup contact reduces prejudices not only toward the participants in a contact but also toward the entire out-group of the other participants and even toward members of other out-groups. According to Pettigrew et al. (2011), the meta-analysis also revealed that the conditions cited by Allport (1954/1979 ed.) are favorable, but not essential, and that the beneficial effects of contact extend

beyond ethnic groups. Moreover, the authors found that diminished "intergroup anxiety" and experiencing of "empathy" are powerful mediators of positive contact.

According to these findings, Brown and Zagefka (2011) consider the contact dimension of acculturation strategies to be of significant importance because of its impact on intergroup relations. For instance, the perceived desire of a minority group to establish contact has a favorable impact on the intergroup attitudes of both majority and minority groups; it appears that acculturation is a dynamic and mutual process among minority and majority groups and their members in which interactions are crucial (Brown & Zagefka, 2011; Van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2022).

However, research also shows that negative perceived contact more effectively increases prejudice than positive perceived contact decreases prejudice (Paolini et al., 2010; Barlow et al., 2012). Moreover, most of the research considered by Pettigrew and Tropp's (2011) meta-analysis of contact theory was conducted from the majority perspective, with a limited amount conducted from the minority perspective, and even less from both perspectives. Possibly, this majority perspective explains why authors have found the beneficial effects of contact to be significant for majority members but less evident for minority members (Binder et al., 2009). This explanation is supported by a more recent meta-analysis of intergroup contact (Paluck et al., 2021), which indicates that the prejudice-diminishing effects of contact are insufficient regarding ethnic and racial prejudices. The analysis also finds that earlier research findings were not clear about what happened within contact interventions, and that the impact of the Allport (1954/1979 ed.) conditions was not tested. Accordingly, Paluck et al. (2021) regard the conclusion of Pettigrew et al.'s (2011) initial meta-analysis (namely, that the conditions are "not essential" for the positive effects of contact) as equivocal. This conclusion makes sense, because two conditions—"cooperation on a common goal" and "equal status"—address two possible complicating aspects of intercultural contact: "perceived competition" and "arbitrary status differences." Therefore, these conditions can be expected to have a positive impact on the results of contact.

In summary, most contact research focuses on outcomes, specifically the positive effects of diminished prejudice on intergroup relations. However, these effects are weaker for ethnic and cultural groups (Paluck et al., 2021), a finding that could be attributed to neglect of the perspectives of these specific minority participants. Moreover, it remains unclear what occurs within contacts.

The overall implication is that to diminish prejudice and stereotyping during an intercultural interaction, it is imperative to consider the perspectives of both majority and minority participants, to emphasize what occurs within the interaction and to refrain from neglecting the Allport (1954/1979 ed.) conditions.

Intercultural contact literature provides several theoretical explanations for the many possible difficulties of intercultural contact and for why positive outcomes of intercultural contact are not easily achieved. Therefore, we should expect that positive intercultural contact will not be possible without learning and practicing. In the next subsection, I share some insights from relevant literature on intercultural learning.

Intercultural learning literature

Intercultural learning and training has a long history; it has evolved from focusing on knowledge to focusing on the development of competence (Pusch, 2004). Throughout this evolution, many methods and instruments have been developed (Fowler & Yamaguchi, 2020). At first, learning and training was designed primarily to help expats improve their functioning abroad. Today, it aims to develop people's abilities to cooperate in work-related settings with people from different cultural backgrounds, both at home and abroad (Landis & Bhawuk, 2020).

According to Landis and Bhawuk (2020), intercultural learning is a process of cross-cultural competence development. Over several stages, people develop intercultural sensitivity or competence, which is the ability to understand and deal with cultural differences (M.J. Bennett, 1986; Bhawuk, 1998). Intercultural training is essential for development along the stages, and this training must be linked to the subjective experiences of the trainees (J.M. Bennett, 1986; Landis & Bhawuk, 2020).

To correspond to the subjective experiences of trainees, the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) has been integrated into the process of competence development. In line with Anderson (1990), Landis and Bhawuk (2020) developed a General Model of Intercultural Expertise Development by blending didactical and experiential learning (Anderson, 1990; Landis & Bhawuk, 2020). The model's key points are: people need training to develop intercultural expertise; ideally, this training should include cognitive, behavioral, and affective goals; and it should have outcomes in the fields of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Furthermore, it should follow didactic and experiential processes. Because a single training is likely to be insufficient, to create an ongoing learning process it is important to adopt Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle with its alternating action/experience/

reflection process (Barmeyer, 2004; Triandis, 2006; Landis & Bhawuk, 2020). Feedback and critical reflection are essential elements of this experiential learning process (Anderson, 1990; Barmeyer, 2004; Kolb & Kolb, 2018).

To summarize, learning to engage in positive intercultural contact requires training and experience in a process that has didactical and experiential phases. For ongoing learning after a training, critical reflections on experiences are essential.

Conclusion

This brief discussion of literature demonstrates that intercultural interactions become complicated because of implicit prejudices and stereotypes, perceived competition, perceived arbitrary status differences, and perceived poor fit between acculturation strategies. These complicating factors may cause stress and anxiety among contact participants. To improve intercultural contact, it is necessary to diminish the influence of the complicating factors that cause stress and anxiety. Therefore, this dissertation contributes to literature by focusing on the interactional behavior of contact participants and accounting for the perspectives of both majority and minority participants in intercultural contact. I define such an intercultural interaction as Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC) that is meant to be perceived as positive and satisfying by all participants.

In the next subsection, I present the aim of this study and the research questions that led to my research.

Aim and research questions

This study aims to contribute to the improvement of intercultural contact in organizations by developing the new concept of CIC. I will accomplish this aim by (a) conceptualizing CIC in terms of behavioral elements, and (b) considering the perspectives of all contact participants, because the perspectives and realities of the different cultural groups to which they belong can be quite different, making the difficulties they experience different. My research contribution is that I focus on interactions themselves and on the "inputs" of the participants, rather than on the outcome effects on intergroup relations.

The overall research question of this dissertation is: What can people do to improve their intercultural contacts?' To answer this question, I address the following subquestions:

1. The first question concerns the conceptualization of the new concept. What can members of different cultural groups do to have CIC, so that their interactions become positive and rewarding experiences for all?
2. The second research question is: how can CIC be measured? As my new concept of CIC is meant to clarify everyday intercultural interactions within organizations, it must be operationalized by measurable actions. I develop a CIC scale (CICS) that can be used by organizations to examine whether employees and managers are acting in accordance with CIC.
3. The third research question is: how can CIC be learned? Literature on intercultural learning clarifies that learning to engage in positive intercultural contact means developing intercultural competence. This learning requires both training and experience in a process that includes didactic and experiential phases. The same requirement applies to learning the interactional behavior of CIC. To learn CIC, the process consists of several elements: knowledge (i.e., knowing what CIC behavior means and why it is important); skills (i.e., actual behavior); and attitude (i.e., attention to the perspective of the other participant). Learning these elements requires a training design that has didactic and experiential components.
4. The fourth research question is: what happens when people practice CIC? To learn behavior, both feedback and reflection on experiences are essential. The experiential phase of the learning process—that is, when people practice CIC—can demonstrate whether and how feedback and reflection are actually occurring and with what effects.

These questions represent four stages of development of this new concept: (1) conceptualization, (2) operationalization (3) learning and (4) practicing. Therefore, to answer the research questions, I must apply various methods. In the following subsection, I discuss the methodological aspects of this study.

Methodological aspects

The starting point of this dissertation is to avoid an essentialist approach to culture, wherein people are reduced to their cultures or seen as "having" a culture (Piller, 2012). Osmose's view on cultural integration as "mutual adaptation" led me to consider members of cultural groups as people with certain cultural backgrounds that allow for personal or subgroup differentiation without reducing them to their culture. Cultural identities are multiple, fluid, and dynamic; they can change. For instance, in intercultural contact, a person's cultural identity and how one defines

another's identity can change (Ward, 2004). Therefore, I position the concept of CIC in a social constructionist approach, in which our social reality has no "ontological status apart from the human activity that produced it" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 60). Accordingly, there is no CIC other than in the interaction of two people from different cultural backgrounds, who are constructing their particular constructive contact. My definition of CIC is meant to describe the characteristics of this specific interaction; CIC is not something that is external to those who are interacting.

The previously mentioned various stages of development of the concept of CIC require different methods, making this dissertation multi-method. Although I provide detailed descriptions of the research methods used in the ensuing chapters, here I briefly summarize the methods used in each consecutive stage.

The first stage is conceptualization; it is a theoretical stage that involves extensive exploration and review of multiple relevant strands of literature. Firstly, a clear understanding of the issues that could arise during intercultural contact is required. Next, it is necessary to theorize about positive intercultural contact to develop the concept of CIC, which is a construct of five behavioral dimensions with specific challenges for the different contact participants.

In the second stage, the concept of CIC is operationalized by constructing and validating a scale that can be of ongoing use to various organizations. This operationalization stage is empirical; it requires quantitative methods. A scale requires generalizability, suggesting an objective existence beyond specific participants. The methods used in this stage are based on a positivist approach modeled on the natural sciences; they involve testing a hypothesis on the "fit" between reality (in this instance, social reality), the measurement instrument (in this instance, a scale), and a theoretical construct (in this instance, CIC) (DeVellis, 2017). The hypotheses are that the operational items of the scale provide a valid and reliable picture of CIC, and that the measurement outcomes of the developed scale confirm the extent to which CIC can occur in social reality. This process requires testing for reliability and validity, using statistical methods based on data from relatively large numbers of respondents.

There are two phases to the third (learning) stage. The first phase involves the creation of a specific CIC intervention, according to literature on intercultural training and experiential learning. Literature shows that experiential learning takes place in a continuing cycle (Barmeyer, 2004; Kolb & Kolb, 2018) of action and reflection: Many items from the CICS appeared to be inviting reflection, such that CIC

is an interaction in which action and reflection can alternate—potentially adding an experiential learning dimension to the concept of CIC. The second phase of the learning stage is an empirical study that tests the hypothesis that this intervention provides a distinct CIC learning effect. Therefore, the methods in this phase also should be quantitative and empirical, and the results should be reproducible and adhere to a positivist approach. It is important to ensure that the intervention is solely responsible for the effect and that similar results can be expected when the intervention is applied again to a new target group. Therefore, in this phase, statistical methods and testing for reliability and validity also are necessary, as are data from numerous respondents before and after the intervention.

The fourth stage relates to how CIC is practiced. It also is an empirical stage that uses qualitative methods that follow a social constructionist approach. I apply discourse analysis (Taylor, 2013; Fairclough, 1992) to examine written reports about students' CIC experiences and identify specific discourses about the role and influence of CIC dimensions in practice. The results of this analysis provide a more comprehensive understanding of the meaning of CIC. Reliability and validity in this qualitative research have a different meaning: The reliability of the qualitative research is determined by the consistency of the process and results. The validity of qualitative research lies in the appropriateness of the tools, processes, and data (Leung, 2015). Then other researchers can agree that the results of the analysis reflect a consistent execution of the process and that the selected tools, processes, and data are adequate for answering the research question.

In summary, using various methodologies, this dissertation is a multi-method study aimed at developing and understanding CIC.

Structure of the dissertation

In this subsection, I introduce the chapters of this dissertation. Each chapter contains a separate study related to one of the research questions and applied method.

Chapter 2 Conceptualizing Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC)

The research question of this chapter is: What can employees from different cultural groups do to make their intercultural interaction comfortable and rewarding for both? I answer this question by exploring and reviewing literature on acculturation, intergroup contact, and inclusion.

The first step is to obtain a clear picture of the problematic characteristics of intercultural contact. The second step is to develop five behavioral dimensions that are designed to cope with critical incidents connected with these problems. Consideration of the different perspectives of all participants distinguishes specific challenges for majority and minority members as well as for managers and employees of organizations. When participants make a mistake during a constructive intercultural interaction, they can regain CIC by reactivating one or more of the dimensions. Notably, CIC refers to the process of the interaction rather than the result.

Chapter 3 Operationalizing Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC): developing a new scale

The research question of this chapter is: How can CIC be measured or operationalized in measurable actions?

The first step is to review existing scales used in the contexts of diversity and cross-cultural management. Whereas most of these scales appear to measure attitudes or personality traits, and a small number also contain behavioral dimensions, all are intended to assess intercultural competencies (Bücker, 2013). Therefore, a CIC scale that measures behavior instead of competencies will be a novel addition.

The development of a CIC scale follows the process advised by Hinkin (1998). For data collection I used a CIC questionnaire of 36 items, divided almost evenly across the five dimensions of CIC. A nomological network incorporates items from three existing scales. Data are obtained from three samples of bachelor-level students of Business Administration at Radboud University.

Steps to establish the validity of the resulting scale include assessment of internal consistency using reliability analysis, construct validity using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and convergent and discriminant validity through correlation analysis of CIC and its dimensions and the scales of the nomological network.

The resulting CICS consists of 15 items and measures respondents' perceptions of their behavior when in intercultural contact.

Chapter 4 Learning Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC): developing an experiential learning program

The research question of this chapter is: How can CIC be learned? I answer this question in two phases, first by creating a CIC learning intervention and second by measuring the effect of this intervention.

I construct an online CIC learning intervention based on literature on intercultural learning and training and experiential learning (Anderson, 1990; Kolb & Kolb, 2018; Fowler & Yamaguchi, 2020; Landis & Bhawuk, 2020). This intervention has both a didactical and experiential part and contains the following cognitive, behavioral, and affective components: information on CIC and its background, an opportunity for exercise and reflection, an assignment to apply the acquired knowledge, and a reflection paper on the experiences of this practice. This intervention was part of a course on Cross-Cultural Management and Communication (CCMC) for bachelor-level students at Radboud University in Nijmegen. This intervention was online because of the Covid-19 measures in 2021.

Next, I use a standard pretest–post-test design to measure the effect of this intervention with a sample of bachelor-level students of Business Administration at Radboud University from the CCMC course. I took the first measurement at the start of the course, and the second after the students completed their reflection papers (after 4–5 weeks).

The result is a small and significant learning effect for CIC total and all of its dimensions.

Chapter 5 Practicing Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC): analyzing CIC in practice

The research question of this chapter is: What happens when people practice CIC? I answer this research question using discourse analysis of students' reflection reports.

These reflection reports were the last component of the learning intervention. After completing the didactical part of the intervention, the students followed the experiential part of learning CIC by engaging in two intercultural contacts with different fellow students of other nationalities. They were asked for a reflection report containing their experiences and critical incidents when trying to act according to CIC, as well as their reflections on these experiences and critical incidents.

In discourse analysis, "discourse" is considered a social practice that stems from a certain social structure and at the same time establishes this social structure (Fairclough, 1992). When I analyzed the reports of the students using discourse analysis, I considered that their writing represented not just their intercultural contacts. In writing their reports, they constituted and constructed a specific meaning for them (Fairclough, 1992). Therefore, not only what they wrote about their experiences was important, but also how they wrote about them.

I proceeded with the analysis according to the "critical incidents" that the students reported, to ascertain how CIC was beneficial in addressing these incidents.

In practicing CIC, the students performed the experiential part of the learning intervention. Therefore, I focused my analysis not only on CIC and its dimensions but also on the experiential learning process of the students.

The analysis revealed four specific discourses that students were using to cope with their experienced critical incidents. These discourses clarified that some dimensions are conditional on learning, and that learning from experiences requires critical self-reflection. Furthermore, the analysis confirmed the process characteristics of CIC.

Chapter 6 Discussion and conclusion

In this chapter, I reflect on the results of this study and describe the limitations and suggestions for future research.

1

Chapter 2

Conceptualizing Constructive Intercultural Contact

This chapter has been published as: Spijkerman, H., Benschop, Y. & Bücker, J. (2018). Constructive Intercultural Contact: Yes We Can. Introduction of a new concept. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An international Journal, 37 (7),* 649-663. A previous version of this chapter has been presented at the 10th Biennial Conference of the International Academy for Intercultural Research in New York in 2017.

Introduction

A well-integrated Turkish Dutchman speaks Dutch with an accent. When he is collecting his driver's license at the Town Hall, the official addresses him very slowly and emphatically with great gestures to explain what to do. The Turkish Dutchman feels belittled and is not sure how to respond appropriately.

A Dutch nurse, handing out medication in a hospital, hears a lot of noise coming from a patient's room. It turns out to be half a dozen loudly talking family members visiting their Antillean-Dutch grandmother. The nurse tells them that on behalf of the comfort of other patients only two visitors are allowed at the same time. The grandmother's daughter angrily claims their right to visit their mother and accuses the nurse of discrimination. The nurse does not know how to respond.

During the lunch break an Antillean-Dutch employee discusses an upcoming meeting with some native Dutch colleagues. Smilingly, they tease him by saying he has to be on time at the meeting, "because you lot are always late." He is annoyed but unsure how to react.

The preceding examples of challenging intercultural contacts in everyday work situations were used in an intercultural training program (Hofstra & Van Oudenhoven, 2013). They showed how intercultural contact runs the risk of becoming a negative experience for the participants because of feelings of uncertainty, aggression, or threat. This negativity is a challenge for organizations that operate in multicultural societies because their employees must be able to interact effectively with people from different cultures.

Academics and practitioners try to address this challenge according to the approach of managing diversity. Currently, the notion of "inclusive climate" is gaining popularity as a way for organizations to reap the benefits of a diverse workforce (Pless & Maak, 2004; Nishii, 2013; Guillaume et al., 2014). Despite the promise of diversity, many organizations pay lip service to the cultural diversity of their employees (Hoobler, 2005), or they are not very successful in implementing their diversity policies because of organizational and societal factors (Guillaume et al., 2014; Stoermer et al., 2016). Although various authors point to the interactions of employees and managers as decisive for successful diversity management and beneficial organizational outcomes (Nishii, 2013; Guillaume et al., 2014), stereotypes and prejudices about other groups (Stephan & Stephan, 2000) often make it difficult for organizational members to interact effectively with colleagues and customers from different cultural backgrounds.

The reduction of prejudice between groups is the subject of many theories and models (Allport, 1954/1979 ed.; Brewer, 2000; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). An influential perspective is contact theory, which states that intergroup contact generally leads to a decrease of prejudice toward other groups (Allport, 1954/1979 ed.; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). However, though research shows this effect to be substantial for members of majority groups, it is less clear how it affects members of minority groups (Binder et al., 2009). A striking aspect of many studies on intergroup contact is that they are executed mainly from the perspective of majority groups; by focusing on how intergroup contact diminishes the prejudices of members of majority groups, they rarely take the perspectives of minority groups into account (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011).

Several recent studies show how the different perspectives and realities of majority and minorities cause misunderstandings during contacts between members of these groups (as illustrated in our introductory examples) (Demoulin et al., 2009a; Fiske et al., 2009; Shelton et al., 2009; Yzerbyt et al., 2009). The idea is that "by understanding…interactive processes, intergroup misunderstandings can be avoided, and accurate and open communication can form the foundation for constructive intergroup relations into the future" (Demoulin et al., 2009b, p. 3). Of course, creating such a foundation is important for organizations with diverse workforces that operate in multicultural societies.

Most research on intergroup contact focuses on its outcome, that is, the prejudice-diminishing effect of contact. Generally, positive intergroup contact is defined by this outcome. Literature that studies the interaction elements that make intergroup contact positive is scarce (Colvin & Volet, 2014) and the input of the participants is particularly underexposed. Although earlier work has provided important insights into outcomes of intergroup contact, interactions themselves and the role of both majority and minority participants in the contact remain understudied.

This chapter seeks to fill these research gaps. Its main research question is: What can majority and minority members do to make their intercultural interactions into positive and rewarding experiences? To answer this question, the first focus is on the interaction itself and the exploration of the different perspectives that participants may have of their intercultural contacts. The second step is to examine the roles that both, majority and minority participants in intercultural contacts have in making the contacts into positive experiences. The focus is on the interactions themselves and the input of both majority and minority participants. We define an intercultural interaction that leads to contact which is perceived as positive and satisfying by both participants, as a Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC). This

new concept is explored by integrating elements from intergroup, acculturation, and contact theories within the context of organizations. Special attention is given to intercultural contact within hierarchical relations because of the role managers play in the implementation of diversity measures within organizations (Ng & Sears, 2012; Ortlieb & Sieben, 2013; Guillaume et al., 2014).

The first section provides a literature review of relevant work for constructive intercultural contact. It elaborates on how the notion of climate of inclusion points to the relevance of the interaction level of CIC. It also addresses insights based on contact theory and other intergroup theories, to illustrate the significance of accounting for both majority/minority participants in intercultural interactions. The second section presents the defining elements of CIC, and the third section elaborates on the interaction patterns of majority/minority participants and managers/employees. Finally, the fourth section describes the contribution of this conceptualization to theory and research on managing diversity, together with an outline of avenues for future research.

Literature review

There are several theoretical concepts that provide clues for CIC within organizations. From diversity literature, the concept of climate for inclusion (Nishii, 2013) and an integrative model for managing diversity (Guillaume et al., 2014) point to the importance of interactions. Psychological concepts such as contact theory (Allport, 1954/1979 ed.; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011), the stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2002) and intercultural effectiveness (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000) indicate relevant aspects of the content of these interactions.

Diversity literature

Many organizations struggle with cultural diversity as they try to assimilate cultural minorities into their existing cultures and rules (Hoobler, 2005). Literature on this issue distinguishes three perspectives: "discrimination and fairness," "access and legitimacy," and "integration and learning" (Ely & Thomas, 2001). Only the last perspective aims at the integration of cultural minorities within (the strategies and practices of) the organization. Cultural minorities are supposed to bring in new insights and possibilities in favor of the organization (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Ortlieb & Sieben, 2013). This perspective focuses on inclusion, that is, participation, satisfying the needs of belongingness and uniqueness of all employees (Shore et al., 2011), with people perceiving themselves as part of critical informational and decision-making processes (Roberson, 2006).

Nishii's (2103) climate for inclusion concept shows not only how (minority) employees benefit from this perspective but also how organizations benefit. Such benefits entail fewer relationship and task conflicts, higher levels of work satisfaction, and less turnover. The elimination of arbitrary status and power differences and the creation of mutual trust by altering the interaction patterns of individual employees is essential for this change to inclusivity (Nishii, 2013). However, the scale items of this concept measure perceptions of climate for inclusion, not the interactions that constitute such an inclusive climate. It remains unclear what "altering the interaction" means for employees, and what their intercultural interactions should be like to eliminate arbitrary status differences and create mutual trust. Examination of the scale items shows that much depends on management practices (Nishii, 2013).

Guillaume et al. (2014), elaborating on this, make climate for inclusion the key element of an integrative model for managing diversity. Interestingly, in their model, management's main focus is to make employee interactions integrative. The diversity beliefs of top managers are important because they regulate the influence of the environment. This importance is in line with other literature that finds top management is significant for organizational diversity because the adoption of diversity management is contingent on top executives' instrumental, normative, and affective commitments to diversity (Ng et al., 2011). That is, the subjective perceptions of top managers are decisive regarding the extent to which cultural minorities are important to their organizations (Ortlieb & Sieben, 2013). However, it is middle managers who are tasked with the everyday management of diversity; therefore, they are key in implementing a climate of inclusion and transforming their organizations, not only by telling employees to be inclusive, but even more importantly, by showing them how inclusiveness must be practiced (Ng & Sears, 2012; Guillaume et al., 2014).

Although (top)managers are supposed to know how to interact inclusively, it is not obvious, even within organizations that have active diversity policies, that (top) managers can interact adequately with their minority employees. Stereotypes—often unconscious—also interfere at this level (Fiske, 1993; Zanoni & Janssens, 2007), and managers may replicate the stereotypes which are common in society (Zanoni & Janssens, 2007). Consequently, to diminish existing stereotypes and prejudices, eliminate arbitrary status differences, and create mutual trust, the intercultural interaction patterns of managers also must change.

In summary, though the advantages of a climate for inclusion depend on the interactions in intercultural majority/minority employee contacts and intercultural

manager/employee contacts, it remains unclear how managers and employees can take the necessary steps to engage adequately in intercultural contact.

Intergroup literature

Intergroup literature embodies two main lines of thought on diminishing the negative effects of in-group/out-group mechanisms: "categorization and identity" and "intergroup contact" (Brewer & Gaertner, 2002). In this chapter we focus on the latter, to determine what contact participants from different groups can do to reduce the negative effects of their differing group membership. Because members of different cultural groups are involved in intercultural contact, we also look to acculturation literature for useful concepts.

The leading theory on improving intergroup relations is contact theory (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011), which states that intergroup contact generally diminishes prejudices of majority groups towards minorities (Allport, 1954/1979 ed.), that is, under some favorable conditions such as equal status of the participants, cooperation on a common goal and institutional or normative support (Allport, 1954/1979 ed.). These conditions are largely met in organizations with climate for inclusion policies. Does contact theory clarify for employees and managers how they can make their intercultural interactions inclusive?

Contact theory is much-researched; Pettigrew and Tropp (2006), in their meta-analysis, conclude that intergroup contact reduces prejudices not only regarding out-group participants, but also regarding the out-group in general and even other out-groups. However, recent studies identify some problems. The first problem is that negatively perceived contact is a stronger predictor of increased prejudice than positive contact is of reducing prejudice (Barlow et al., 2012). This finding is an effect of category salience (Barlow et al., 2012). Although a certain degree of category salience is needed for generalization of contact effects (Hewstone & Brown, 1986), high category salience causes anxious or negative contact: "Negative contact typically goes together with high category salience" (Paolini et al., 2010, p. 1724). Other research shows that though negative contact is more influential, positive perceived intergroup contact is more frequent (Graf et al., 2014). Because this positive contact valence depends more on the person than the situation (Graf et al., 2014), it is important to know which input from contact persons is needed to limit their category salience. Nevertheless, most literature defines positive contact valence according to the outcomes of contacts; the inputs of participants are underexposed.

The second problem is that despite the positive results of meta-analysis, various studies show that the (positive) contact–prejudice associations are generally weaker or even negligible among members of (ethnic) minorities (Binder et al., 2009; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2011)—such that minorities run the risk of perceiving intergroup contact as negative. This difference is explained as an effect of the majority/minority status distinction in society and a consequence of a history of discrimination perceived by minority groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). Both effects result in feelings of threat, uncertainty, or anxiety, making contact difficult (Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). Therefore, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006, 2011) conclude that it is more important to reduce negative conditions such as uncertainty and anxiety than to create favorable conditions. The question remains: How can participants in intercultural encounters do that?

A third problem in contact literature makes this question even more critical. Pettigrew and Tropp's (2011) meta-analysis revealed a "relative scarcity of contact-research from the perspective of minority status groups" (p. 133). Although such scarcity is understandable in view of the origin of the contact theory, which entails research on prejudices of the majority toward the minority, this one-sidedness distorts the view of what happens within intergroup contact. First, status distinction and perceived discrimination leads to majority and minority groups and their members living in different subjective realities and having different intergroup goals and strategies (Demoulin et al., 2009b). Second, minorities are not only "objects" or "targets" within interactions; they also are responsible actors (Shelton, 2000).

To counter these problems, this study focuses on how participants in intercultural interactions can take their differing perspectives, realities, and goals into account, to reduce anxiety and prejudices.

Members of cultural groups also must deal with acculturation issues (Berry, 1997). Acculturation theories explain how cultural groups in pluralistic societies handle migration processes and adjust to each other. The most influential theory is Berry's acculturation model (1997). It addresses both identity and contact and poses two central questions. The first question relates to cultural maintenance: How important is my (original) culture for me? The second question concerns contact and participation: How important is contact with the other group in this society for me? The answers present four basic acculturation strategies: integration, assimilation, separation/segregation, and marginalization/exclusion. Although cultural minorities and dominant majority have mutual influence, the choices of majorities often restrict the possibilities of minorities (Berry, 1997; 2006a). The

preferences of minorities and the dominant majority differ, especially regarding cultural maintenance. Although "integration" leads to the best psychological adaptation and is preferred by most migrants (Berry, 2006b; Van Oudenhoven, 2008), the dominant majority often prefers "assimilation" (Van Oudenhoven et al., 2006). However, such an "enforced" redefinition of one's cultural identity causes acculturation stress (Berry, 1997; Pless & Maak, 2004; Nishii, 2013) that hinders contact and adaptation (Berry, 1997). Therefore, to diminish acculturation stress, this difference also must be taken into account.

Fiske's stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2002) explains the importance of intergroup goal differences. Out-groups are evaluated stereotypically on two primary dimensions: warmth and competence. That is, is it their intention to help (warm) or to harm (cold) and are they competent to fulfill their intentions? Perceived warmth leads to likability, and perceived competence leads to respect (Fiske et al., 2002). For most people, being respected and liked are highly valued social goals (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Fiske et al., 2009). The experienced structure of social reality is predictive: perceived social status is connected to competence and perceived cooperation is connected to warmth; therefore, deservedly or not, high status means high competence and low status means low competence; cooperative groups are perceived as warm; and competing groups are perceived as cold (Fiske et al., 2002; Lee & Fiske, 2006; Caprariello et al., 2009). The combination of perceived status and perceived cooperation results in different combinations of "stereotypical prejudices," as Figure 1 shows.

		Perceived cooperation	
		high	*low*
Perceived status	*high*	**"admiring" bias**	**"envious" bias**
	low	**"paternalistic" bias**	**"contemptuous" bias**

Figure 1. Stereotypical prejudices against different out-groups (Fiske et al., 2002).

High status and high cooperation, reflecting perceived competence and warmth, respectively, evoke "admiring" bias, mostly attributed to in-group-related groups (Fiske et al., 2002). Low status and low cooperation, reflecting incompetence and competition, evoke "contemptuous" bias, attributed to "openly parasitic low status groups" (Fiske et al., 2002, p.881). The first example in the introduction of this paper is an example of the "mixed" low status and high cooperation cell in Figure 1: The official who shows "paternalistic" bias activates a negative (meta-)stereotype (Yzerbyt et al., 2009). That is, the Turkish Dutchman feels belittled: "They think I don't understand Dutch." An angry response is understandable but also makes the

interaction uncomfortable. The "mixed" high status and low cooperation cell (Figure 1) is illustrated by the second example of the introduction: The Antillean Dutch daughter shows "envious" bias by accusing the nurse of discrimination. When the Dutch nurse is only led by her professional goal in her response, the tense situation may well escalate.

Thus, intergroup contact is complicated by misunderstandings. To diminish or avoid these misunderstandings, it is important for participants to take each other's social goals into account. For lower-status group members, this social goal is to be respected as competent; for higher-status group members, it is to be liked as cooperative (Fiske et al., 2009).

An interesting concept in acculturation literature is "intercultural effectiveness," because it combines anxiety reduction (feeling comfortable) and goal achievement. Intercultural effectiveness, initially introduced for expatriates, means being able to be socially active, that is, to make contact, to feel comfortable, and to be successful—to achieve one's goals in a new cultural environment (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). In contact literature, cooperation on a common goal is a significant favorable condition for positive contact-prejudice effects. To achieve these effects for both majority/minority participants, their different perspectives and realities must be taken into account (Demoulin et al., 2009b). Therefore, we argue that perceiving oneself as successful in intercultural contact is connected to the way the goal is reached as well as other social goals (Fiske et al., 2009).

By building on this review of relevant theories and concepts, we conclude that constructive intercultural contact is that by which both majority/minority participants perceive themselves as comfortable and successful. It requires them to try to reduce stress, anxiety, and prejudice and eliminate arbitrary status differences on both sides. Consequently, we define constructive intercultural contact (1) at the interaction level in terms of input of the participants and (2) from the perspectives of both participants.

Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC)

Defining elements

In this section, we present the five defining elements of CIC. We regard input of all five elements by both majority/minority participants as essential to creating interactions in which both perceive themselves as comfortable and successful.

Responsibility and deliberate choice to postpone judgment

The first two elements are derived from contact theory; they are meant to reduce the influence of mutual prejudices.

When members of different groups engage in contact, they act as members of their in-groups, regarding the others as out-group members, such that "group members have perceptions and experiences that they bring to the contact, which may in turn influence their responses to cross-group interactions" (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011, p. 141). They may, for example, have perceptions of incompetence or competition related to the others. This is the case not only for majority participants but also for minority participants (Shelton, 2000). Both majority and minority members are responsible for the extent to which they allow their biased perceptions, as prejudices, influence their (inter)actions.

The problem is that stereotypes and out-group prejudices often are impulsive and unconscious, that is, they are implicit stereotypical associations (Wigboldus, 2006). Their automatic activation suggests that the resulting (prejudiced) behavior is almost inevitable. However, this is not necessarily the case. Social behavior is controlled by two parallel systems in our brains: impulsive and reflective (Strack & Deutsch, 2004; Wigboldus, 2006). The first system activates non-intentional behavior based on implicit associations. The second system steers towards intentional behavior via decision processes based on personal beliefs and values. Therefore, whereas (impulsive) implicit stereotypical associations can possibly affect behavior, the parallel working reflective system can undo that influence. The reflective system enables impulse control and emotion regulation in social contact. As a result, participants in intercultural contact can diminish the influence of their out-group prejudices. However, the reflective system requires more cognitive energy than the highly efficient, automatic, impulsive system (Strack & Deutsch, 2004; Wigboldus, 2006). Control by the reflective system to overcome this "handicap" requires intention, attention, and time (Devine, 1989; Wigboldus, 2006). Activating the reflective system requires deliberate, conscious decision making. Notably, this deliberate decision making does not involve diminishing prejudices directly by avoiding specific prejudices because avoidance can invoke uncertainty and fear of making mistakes (Shelton et al., 2009) that can activate prejudices and stereotypes (Galinsky et al., 2000). The deliberate choice is the decision to postpone judgment and pay attention to others as individuals, in awareness of the presence of mutual prejudices.

Accordingly, we propose:

Proposition 1a
Participants who take responsibility for their interactions in intercultural encounters are better able to make deliberate choices.

Proposition 1b
Participants who deliberately choose to postpone judgment in intercultural encounters reduce the influence of prejudices on their interactions.

Relative relevance of cultural differences

The third element of CIC is derived from contact theory and Berry's (1997) acculturation model; it is meant to help participants perceive the individual identities of others instead of only the cultural identity.

High category salience in contact situations causes anxiety and uncertainty (Paolini et al., 2010) and an "enforced" redefinition of someone's cultural identity causes acculturation stress (Berry, 1997; Pless & Maak, 2004; Nishii, 2013), both of which hinder intergroup/intercultural contact (Berry, 1997; Paolini et al., 2010). Moreover, people's cultural identities are not solid and immutable; in intercultural contact, people define, redefine, and construct their own and others' cultural identities (Ward, 2004). Therefore, it is neither desirable to increase category salience by "locking" people into their cultural identities (Zanoni et al., 2010) nor to deny these identities (Berry 1997, 2006)—not only for members of the majority but also for members of cultural minorities.

Accordingly, we propose:

Proposition 2
Participants in intercultural contact who acknowledge the relative relevance of their cultural differences are better able to perceive others as individuals.

Perspective taking and respect

The final two elements are derived from the stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2002); they contribute to the elimination of arbitrary status differences by reducing perceptions of competition and incompetence.

The goals of participants in intercultural contact often are different, and not all can be successful or successful to the same extent. These differences easily result in

the perception of low cooperation or competition and the corresponding negative stereotyping (see Figure 1) (Fiske et al., 2002; Fiske et al., 2009; Cikara et al., 2011). To avoid perceiving their interactions as competitions to be won, participants should try to take the perspective of the other. Perspective taking (or cognitive empathy) diminishes both stereotyping and perceptions of competition and threat; it creates space for dialogue and a sense of agreement with the other (Stephan et al., 1999; Galinsky et al., 2000; Sammut & Gaskell, 2009; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011; Hoever et al., 2012). The influence of "envious" and "contemptuous" prejudices (see Figure 1) decreases.

However, perspective taking alone cannot undo negative effects of status difference. Such undoing requires respect for the competence of others. According to the stereotype content model, members of low status groups also have to deal with "paternalistic" or even "contemptuous" prejudices (Fiske et al., 2002; Fiske et al., 2009). When higher-status participants are perceived as patronizing or showing contempt by doubting the competence of lower-status participants, negative meta-stereotypes or anger are activated in lower status participants (Yoo et al., 2006; Yzerbyt et al., 2009). This activation hinders the prejudice-reducing effects of the contact (Vorauer et al., 2009). Therefore, perspective taking must be accompanied by respect (Stephan et al., 1999; Fiske et al., 2009). By acknowledging the competence of the other, the possibility arises that participants will not perceive their goal differences as competitions to be won, but as problems to be solved by dialogue (Stephan et al., 1999). Constructive contact becomes possible (Fiske et al. 2009) and both majority/minority participants can perceive themselves as successful.

Accordingly, we propose:

Proposition 3a
Participants in intercultural contact who take the perspectives of the other diminish the perception of their interaction as competition.

Proposition 3b
Participants in intercultural contact who show respect for the other acknowledge the others' competence.

With these five elements, CIC can now be defined as an interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds in which each participant takes responsibility for diminishing the influence of prejudices within the interaction, therefore

deliberately choosing to postpone judgment of the other, focusing on the other as an individual by acknowledging the relative relevance of cultural differences, and respectfully trying to take the others' perspective.

Figure 2 summarizes this concept.

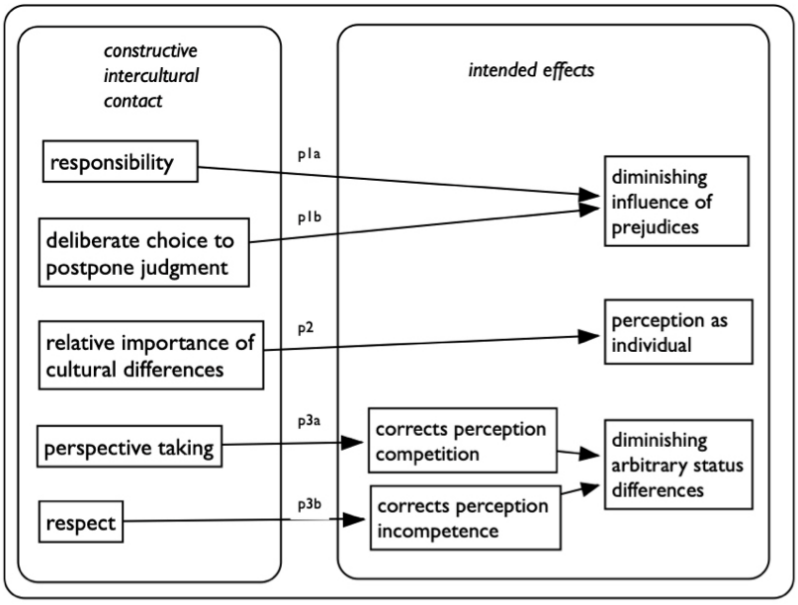

Figure 2 . Model of constructive intercultural contact (CIC)

Specifications

This subsection addresses some specifications of this model. The first concerns majority and minority members, because of their different perspectives and realities. In social reality, impulsive reactions prevail; participants rarely are triggered to change their behaviors at the same moment. However, it is likely that initially difficult intercultural contacts can be changed into positive experiences for all participants on the initiative of one of them. Ultimately, however, success depends on the willingness of the other participant to join in—which becomes easier when differing perspectives, realities, and intergroup goals are taken into account.

The second specification concerns hierarchical relationships; constructive intercultural contact tries to "correct" the arbitrary status difference between majorities and minorities which, within manager–employee relationships, interferes with their hierarchical status differences.

Majority–minority challenges

As a result of their differing perspectives and realities, members of lower-status groups have a need to be respected and members of higher-status groups a need to be liked (Fiske et al., 2009) (see also Figure 1). Therefore, when engaging in intercultural contact, majority and minority members must be aware of the importance of specific elements related to their positions. Participants from higher-status groups need to be alert to showing respect, thus acknowledging the competence of the other. Participants from lower-status groups need to be alert to perspective taking, thus reducing the perception of competition (Fiske et al., 2009). These differing challenges are complementary in diminishing the arbitrary status differences between majorities and minorities.

This difference of focus also relates to the specific responsibilities of each participant, as mentioned in Propositions 1a and 1b. These challenges are important not only at the beginning of interactions but also during the interactions. Mutual recognition, as a moral founding principle (Pless & Maak, 2004), entails different challenges for the contact participants.

Accordingly, we propose:

> *Proposition 4a*
> Majority members who are alert to showing respect to the other participant in intercultural contact help diminish arbitrary status differences by acknowledging the competence of the other.

> *Proposition 4b*
> Minority members who are alert to taking the perspective of the other participant in intercultural contact help diminish arbitrary status differences by reducing the perception of competition.

Constructive intercultural contact (CIC) in hierarchical relations

Clearly, CIC is not easy. Participants must control their impulses and "correct" majority/minority status and power differences. Because CIC requires deliberate choices, an important question is how employees are motivated to make those choices. Here, the diversity policies of organizations are important. As previously mentioned, a climate for inclusion offers the most far-reaching opportunities, but much depends on the modus operandi of managers.

Managers can "correct" societal stereotyping by creating space for cultural minorities in the structure and work guidelines of the organization (Zanoni & Janssens, 2014)—

that is, they can create a climate for inclusion. To adequately assess employees from minority groups in an organization, it is important to see their individual competencies (Fiske, 2000). Attention to these employees is needed because attention promotes individuation (Fiske, 2000). Propositions 1b and 2 refer to this notion of "attention," making the individual identity rather than the group identity of the other perceptible. It is then that the arbitrary status difference between majorities and minorities can be "corrected" by CIC. The question is to what extent this is possible within manager–employee relationships in which hierarchical status differences powerfully interfere with majority–minority status difference.

Postponing judgment is likely to be difficult for managers, because judging employees is their task. For employees, who are in dependent positions, it also is difficult to take the perspectives of their managers. The dominance of the managerial position hampers the employees' experiences of responsibility in the contact. On both sides, implicit prejudices tend to remain active and showing respect seems more complicated. Especially when their goals do not match, participants run the risk of starting a process in which cultural differences are accentuated and the perception of competition prevails (Fiske et al., 2009; Cikara, 2011).

Hierarchical challenges

We argue that CIC is possible when managers and employees take care of the right elements. As previously discussed, responsibility and mutual recognition require different actions from the participants. Whereas majority participants must pay special attention to showing respect and minority participants must pay attention to perspective taking, in hierarchical relationships, some extra emphases are needed. To diminish the influence of prejudices and pay attention to employees as individuals, managers also must be alert to postponing judgment. Such alertness is needed not only because it challenges impulses but also because it contrasts with managers' important task, which is to judge employees. For their part, employees must be alert to their responsibility to diminish the influence of prejudices and maintain personal responsibility for the interaction. Such alertness is needed because it challenges employees' positions of subordination. Therefore, to reduce the influence of prejudices and arbitrary status differences, majority managers participating in intercultural contact need to be extra alert to postponing judgment and showing respect, and minority managers need to be extra alert to postponing judgment and perspective taking. Majority employees must be extra alert to responsibility and showing respect, and minority employees must be extra alert to responsibility and perspective taking.

Accordingly, we propose:

Proposition 5a
Majority managers who are alert to showing respect and postponing judgment in hierarchical intercultural contact reduce the influence of prejudices and acknowledge the competence of their employees.

Proposition 5b
Minority managers who are alert to taking the perspectives of the other and postponing judgment in hierarchical intercultural contact reduce the influence of prejudices and the perception of competition of the employee.

Proposition 5c
Majority employees who are alert to showing respect and taking responsibility in hierarchical intercultural contact diminish the influence of prejudices and acknowledge managers' competence.

Proposition 5d
Minority employees who are alert to taking the perspective of the other and taking responsibility in hierarchical intercultural contact diminish the influence of prejudices and the perception of competition of the manager.

Figure 3 summarizes these different challenges.

	Manager	**Employee**
Majority	Respect Postponing judgment	Respect Responsibility
Minority	Perspective taking Postponing judgment	Perspective taking Responsibility

Figure 3. Majority/minority and hierarchical challenges that foster constructive intercultural contact

Within hierarchical relationships, these are "tricky" demands because they oppose implicit and explicit standards on the relationships. Nevertheless, when participants are alert to these elements, CIC is possible within hierarchical relationships.

CIC is not easy; it requires practice and repetition that an organizational context can provide.

Discussion and conclusion

This chapter aims to introduce CIC as a new concept in the field of diversity management. Its theoretical exploration leads to the conclusion that to be successful, CIC needs five key elements: (1) shared responsibility to make (2) a deliberate choice to postpone judgment together with (3) acknowledgment of the relative importance of cultural differences to diminish the influence of prejudices within the contact, along with (4) showing respect and (5) perspective taking to correct perceptions of incompetence and competition. The argument is that these last two elements require different alertness from majority and minority participants to play their complementary roles in diminishing arbitrary status differences.

It could be argued that CIC is not a new concept but a special approach of (positive) intergroup or intercultural contact. Literature generally defines (positive) intergroup/intercultural contact according to the (positive) prejudice diminishing effects of the contact (e.g. Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011), whereas CIC is defined according to the input of the participants. Literature on positive interaction elements (Colvin & Volet, 2014) is rather scarce, and even then, the input of the participants is underexposed. We argue that CIC is a new concept, because (1) the focus is on the interaction itself; (2) the input of the participants qualifies it; (3) all elements concern (cognitive) actions of the participants to control impulses; and (4) both majority and minority participants must be alert to specific complementary actions.

Therefore, by "altering the interactions" between majority and minority members, CIC can play a key role in an organization's transformation to inclusivity (Nishii, 2013; Guillaume et al., 2014). Altering these interactions is not easy, because it requires participants to make deliberate choices to postpone judgment and control their impulses to stereotype. This reflective attention to the interaction partner is possible in employee/employee relationships as well as in hierarchical manager/employee interactions.

This chapter makes four contributions to diversity management and contact literature. First, it coins the CIC concept as an interaction that becomes positive and rewarding for both majority and minority participants, because both can feel comfortable within the contact and perceive themselves as successful. This concept, though it points at individual actions, differs from literature in which capacity for emotional regulation or other individual and group characteristics are presented as advantageous for intercultural contact and successful team functioning (Strauss et

al., 2003; Yoo et al., 2006; Homan et al., 2008; Gallego et al., 2013). The CIC concept starts with individual people taking responsibility for their deliberate choices to make interactions constructive, whatever their individual characteristics.

The second contribution concerns the differentiation between majority and minority actors within the contact. It is important because the historical and societal contexts of majority and minority members lead to different perspectives and needs (Demoulin et al., 2009b). Addressing these needs makes every intercultural encounter into a new challenge at the interaction level.

The third contribution is the elaboration on the role of CIC in the context of organizations. Previous work has highlighted that everyday interactions within the organization are essential to the effectiveness of diversity management (Nishii, 2013). The argument is that CIC adds to the concept of climate for inclusion by specifying the content of those interactions between members of different cultural backgrounds.

The fourth contribution is the elaboration on the interrelationships between majority/minority and manager/employee positions, showing how complicated CIC can be in hierarchical relationships and how mistakes can be expected at the interaction level. We therefore see CIC as a process rather than a result.

These contributions are not only theoretically but also practically significant. Organizations can offer training programs in which specific elements such as postponing judgment or perspective taking, or the entire interaction process, can be learned and practiced. Role playing allows trainees, both managers and employees, to experience the effects of the presence or absence of specific elements to a degree in which they perceive themselves as comfortable and successful. Regular performance reviews enable a steady development of CIC within the organization. Moreover, elements such as postponing judgment and perspective taking can be used in the selection of managers and employees.

Future research in different organizational contexts is needed to validate elements of CIC. Comparative empirical studies could examine the subject of when and how intercultural interactions between majority managers and minority employees are perceived differently from those between minority managers and majority employees. Qualitative case studies could explore the everyday experiences of organization members engaging in intercultural contact. These case studies could reveal whether organization members perceive all distinguished elements as

equally critical for CIC, and they could elaborate on the similarities and differences between majority and minority members in intercultural contact. The next chapter starts the empirical grounding and validating of the theoretical CIC concept by building a scale.

Chapter 3

Measuring Constructive Intercultural Contact

This chapter has been presented at the 12th Conference of the International Academy for Intercultural Research: Fostering Intercultural Hearts and Minds: applying intercultural research for a sustainable future, 2022 in Rapperswil -Jona Switzerland.

Introduction

On the basis of theories and concepts from intergroup and acculturation literature, Chapter 2 formulated the new concept of Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC). This chapter develops an instrument for measuring the concept.

Increasingly, organizations operate in an international and intercultural context. Managing diversity and cross-cultural management (CCM) are important to the adaptation of businesses to this environment. Such management often is directed at creating a climate of diversity (Dwertmann et al., 2016) or a climate for inclusion (Mor Barak et al., 2016). This organizational climate positively influences the commitment and motivation of the different categories of employees and—as a result—the performance of the organization (Nishii, 2013; Mor Barak et al., 2016; Li et al., 2019). Ultimately, in a diversity climate or climate for inclusion, the everyday interaction patterns of staff members of different groups improve by diminishing the influence of prejudices and arbitrary status differences between them (Nishii, 2013). According to Dwertmann et al. (2016): "at its core, the synergy perspective relies on interpersonal and team interaction" (p. 1162).

The CIC concept is meant to define interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds. As described in Chapter 2, it consists of five behavioral elements: "taking responsibility," "postponing judgment," "taking culture into perspective", "taking perspective", and "showing respect." The concept describes what a person can do to make an intercultural contact effective for both participants. This not only applies to a majority participant, but also to a minority participant in the interaction. CIC not only addresses the interactions between employees of the same level but also interactions between employees at different hierarchical levels. This distinction is important because managers have specific influence on the organizational climate, both by telling and by showing what must be done (Gonzalez & Denisi, 2009).

In this chapter I take the next step of making the theoretical CIC concept applicable to organizations by developing a measurement instrument that operationalizes it into concrete, measurable actions. Knowledge about the interaction patterns of employees and managers, when in contact with those of other cultures, provides insight into the extent to which individual managers and employees positively adjust to the diversity of the workforce (Nishii, 2013) or act according to the synergy perspective (Dwertmann et al., 2016).

Firstly, to adequately operationalize CIC, I focus on its elements. The question is: What is their meaning and how are they related? Then, a brief review of a number of similar measurement instruments is followed by discussion of existing scales of intercultural competencies and an argument concerning where and how a CIC measure is a valuable addition. A description of the methodology of the scale development process is followed by reflection on the results of this scale development.

Theoretical background

Constructive intercultural contact (CIC): element analysis

To reflect on the various aspects of CIC that are relevant to its operationalization, I first examine the meaning of its elements and then discuss the relationship between them and how they can be measured.

The first element, "taking responsibility" for the interaction, is meant to activate the reflective brain system, thus enabling further deliberate choices (Strack & Deutsch, 2004). The second element, "postponing judgment," points to the important deliberate choice to diminish the influence of implicit prejudices (Wigboldus, 2006). The third element, "taking culture into perspective," means it is not desirable to "lock" people into their cultural identity nor to deny this identity; when acknowledging the relative relevance of cultural differences, participants in intercultural contact are better able to see the individuality of others rather than perceive them as representatives of a category (Berry, 2006; Zanoni et al., 2010). The fourth element, "taking perspective," refers to diminishing the perception of interaction as a competition, using cognitive empathy that creates space for dialogue (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). The fifth element, "showing respect," acknowledges the agency of the other participants by recognizing their competence (Stephan & Finlay, 1999).

How do these five elements operate together in intercultural interaction? As described in Chapter 2, together, the five elements contribute to three intended effects: (1) diminishing the influence of implicit prejudices, (2) enabling focus on the individuality of the other, and (3) diminishing arbitrary status differences. Taking responsibility, that is, acknowledging responsibility for the extent to which biased perceptions as prejudices influence the interaction, together with postponing judgment, actually diminishes the influence of prejudices. Taking culture into perspective allows participants to pay attention to other participants as individuals. Finally, taking perspective and showing respect together diminish the arbitrary status

differences between contact partners by correcting perceptions of competition and incompetence.

The intended result is that both majority and minority participants in interactions feel comfortable and successful during the interaction, which we classify as "interculturally effective" (Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven, 2000). "During the interaction" indicates that CIC fundamentally is the process of the interaction itself rather than a specific outcome of the interaction. A brief sketch of (a part of) a CIC interaction clarifies how the necessary elements operate together.

> *Imagine that during a meeting to discuss work with a colleague of another cultural background you want to have CIC. However, during the interaction, your colleague makes a remark that annoys you. Your impulsive brain system is activated along with your implicit stereotypes and prejudices. For instance, you perceive that your colleague lacks competence. Every response to bring the interaction back on the constructive track—in this case, showing respect—demands the (re) activation of your reflective brain system and control of your implicit judgments. When you are annoyed because you perceive competition of your colleague, taking perspective also demands reactivation of your reflective brain system and control of your impulsive judgment. In fact, every response to restoring the constructiveness of the interaction requires taking responsibility, which enables you to control your impulsive, implicit judgments.*

Taking responsibility does not stop after the start of CIC; along with controlling one's impulsive, implicit judgment, it is a *continuous* part of the interaction. However, there is no specific sequence to be expected in the activation of the other elements during the interaction process. Depending on the kinds of stereotypical judgments that are activated during the process, every element may be needed to restore CIC. The argument is that there is no hierarchy between the elements; they are equally important to the intended result.

The concept of CIC is composed of five equally important but separate elements that work together to develop and maintain interactions in which both majority and minority participants feel comfortable and successful. Measurement of CIC, that is, the process itself of the interaction, means measuring the action input of the participants of this interaction, reflecting the five elements.

The following subsection explores not only how the new measure adds to existing measures but also how existing measures inspired the development of the new measure.

Existing measures and need for a new scale

In the past years, many measures of diversity management and CCM have been developed. Much research on diversity management focuses mainly on the outcomes of organizational policy (Dwertmann et al., 2016). Measures correspond to employee perceptions of management practices and commitment to diversity, including their purposes and effects (Mor Barak et al., 2016; Li et al., 2019), personal values and attitudes, and personal comfort with diversity and perceptions of the outcomes of diversity management (Cachet-Rosset et al., 2019). Research in the context of CCM shows that corporate culture, human resource management, and (national) cultural dimensions are main topics. This subsection discusses existing measures that resemble the new intended measure, to argue for the need for a new scale to measure CIC.

One of the topics of CCM research is :"intercultural competencies" (Barmeyer et al., 2019). The measures used in this context are relevant for comparison because individual behaviors and actions are part of the instruments. In reviewing existing measures, the focus is on the item level to determine the extent to which they are expressed in action and/or reaction terms.

Although many different scales have been developed to assess intercultural competencies, an overview of 23 measurement instruments (Bücker, 2013, p. 66–83) shows that most of these instruments measure attitudes and/or personality traits. Six scales also contain behavioral dimensions (Douhitt et al., 1999; Ward & Kennedy, 1999; Caligiuri et al., 2000; Van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2000; Van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2001; Hammer, 2005; Ang et al., 2007). The following discussion relates to the various items of these instruments to determine whether the items of one or even more of these existing scales bear relevance to a CIC measure.

The Attitudinal and Behavioral Openness Scale (ABOS) (Caligiuri et al., 2000) contains four factors of which the behavioral factor, "participation in cultural activities," is an inventory of activities that reflect openness toward other cultures (e.g., "I attend ethnic festivals"), not interactional actions. The items of the Intercultural Conflict Style (ICS) scale (Hammer, 2005) reflect styles of intercultural conflict. Although they are expressed as interactional behavior (e.g., "get straight to the point"), they focus on conflict, a specific form of intercultural contact. The

Diversity of Life Experiences (DOLE), or receptiveness to dissimilar others scale (Douhitt et al., 1999) measures attitudes rather than interactions. Items refer to expectations, past experiences, and relationship patterns (e.g., "how extensively have you travelled?"). The Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) (Ward & Kennedy, 1999) measures people's behavioral adaptability in intercultural situations (e.g., "are you experiencing difficulty in dealing with people in authority?"). Although these items refer to behavior, they are not describing the actual interactions. The Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) (Ang et al., 2007) measures a person's capability "to function and manage effectively in cultural diverse settings" (Ang et al., 2007, p. 337). Although one of the four dimensions of this scale refers to interaction with people from different cultures, the respondent is asked to "….select the response that best describes your capabilities…."(Ang et al., 2007, p. 366). Therefore, the item "I change my verbal behavior (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it", although describing behavior, is meant to measure the ability to adapt to different cultural situations rather than the behavior itself.

Some limitations to the incremental validity of CQS (Ward et al., 2009) led Thomas et al. (2015) to develop the Short Form measure of Cultural Intelligence (SFCQ). This scale is not merely a short version of the CQS, but rather is based on a new theory of cultural intelligence (Thomas et al., 2008) in which cultural intelligence consists of three facets: cultural metacognition, cultural knowledge, and cultural skills. The last facet is the behavioral part and the central dimension of the scale (Thomas et al., 2015). An important resemblance to the intended CIC measure is that SFCQ is a culture-general construct in which knowledge about specific cultures is not involved (Matsumoto et al., 2013).

The SFCQ consists of two knowledge, three metacognitive, and five skills items. The number of skills items was reduced from 84 items that all had a demonstrated relationship with intercultural effectiveness. Examples include "I sometimes try to understand people from another culture by imagining how something looks from their perspective;" "I can change my behavior to suit different cultural situations and people" and "the ability to accurately understand the feelings of people from other cultures." As these examples show, although skill items refer to intercultural interactions, they are intended to measure abilities.

Finally, the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ)(Van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001) also is a culture-general instrument. Its questionnaire consists of five scales that measure competencies of intercultural effectiveness: cultural empathy, which refers to the ability to empathize with the feelings, thoughts

and behaviors of members of different cultural groups (18 items); open-mindedness, defined as a non-judgmental attitude toward different cultural groups, norms, and practices (18 items); emotional stability, which reflects an ability to remain composed in stressful situations (20 items); social initiative, which refers to the tendency to approach social situations in a proactive manner (17 items); and flexibility, which represents a tendency to adjust behaviors to changing circumstances (18 items). Examples of items for cultural empathy include "takes others people's habits into consideration" and "asks personal questions;" for open-mindedness "is curious" and "puts his or her own culture in perspective;" for emotional stability "is nervous" (reverse item) and "keeps calm at ill luck;" for social initiative "takes the lead' and "leaves things as they are" (reverse item); and "likes low comfort holidays" and "has fixed habits" (reverse item) for flexibility. Although many items relate to interactional behavior, their expression points to the competencies they intend to measure.

This overview of existing scales of intercultural competencies leads to the conclusion that the new measurement instrument can be a worthwhile addition to existing literature. Focusing on the interaction itself instead of the capacity to interact, and inspired by scales such as the SFCQ and some scales of the MPQ, I want to measure the input actions of the participants of this interaction.

Instrument Development

The development of the Constructive Intercultural Contact Scale (CICS) followed the steps advised by Hinkin (1998). Below, I first discuss the questionnaire development with the steps of item generation, questionnaire administration and initial item reduction. Second, I turn to the validity assessment with the steps of assessing internal consistency, confirmatory factor analysis, and assessment of convergent and discriminant validity.

Questionnaire development

Item generation

Item generation followed a deductive generation process (Hinkin,1998), first examining subscales such as the Social Initiative Scale, the Open-Mindedness Scale and the Cultural Empathy Scale of the MPQ (Van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001), and the SFCQ, followed by existing scales such as the Perspective-Taking Scale (Davis, 1980), the ICS and various scales that measure respect (Frei & Shaver, 2002; Hendrick & Hendrick, 2006; Augsberger et al., 2012).

The result of this exploration was a draft item pool of 34 items, most of which we rephrased to reflect better the meaning of the elements of CIC. For the elements of "taking responsibility," "postponing judgment," and "taking culture into perspective," there were 6, 5, and 4 items respectively; for "taking perspective," there were 10 items; and for "showing respect," there were 9 items. We added some extra items, especially to the first three elements, to increase the number of items for each element because "the larger the pool the better" (DeVellis, 2017, p. 113).

For practical reasons, I abbreviate the elements of CIC now as Responsibility, Judgment, Culture, Perspective, and Respect.

Part of the item-generation process was the assessment of the content validity of the questionnaire. Therefore, we evaluated our items on content and phrasing in two assessment sessions with two experts. After necessary adaptations, the item pool contained 53 items: 15 for Responsibility (e.g., "I ask for feedback"), 12 for Judgment (e.g., "I moderate my emotional reactions"), 7 for Culture (e.g., "I don't want to tackle the other person on his/her cultural background"), 12 for Perspective (e.g., "I imagine how the other person experiences the contact") and 7 for Respect (e.g., "I express my recognition of the other person's competencies"). To provide more sensitivity to the questionnaire we decided to use a 7-point rather than a 5-point Likert scale.

Questionnaire administration

In the context of questionnaire administration (Hinkin, 1998) item pool testing took place in a small pilot sample of 75 bachelor-level students of Business Administration. Analysis of the reliability of the entire set of 53 items and also of the items of each element eliminated items with a negative item-total-correlation or an item-total-correlation of less than .30. Testing the discriminative power (D) of the items eliminated items with a score of less than 15% in the lower half of the distribution (7-point Likert scale). Subjecting of the remaining items of every element to a factor analysis resulted in selection of the items with factor loadings greater than .50. This pilot resulted in a set of 28 items. Table 1 shows the results.

In a third assessment session, we reanalyzed this set of items paying particular attention to unambiguous phrasing. This resulted in the replacement of all culture items, the addition of some new items to the other elements, and the rephrasing of a number of items in reverse. The result was a list of 42 items: 9 each for Responsibility, Judgment, Culture, and Perspective and 6 for Respect.

Table 1. Results of pilot: numbers of items and alphas after pilot tests

			<.30		D		FA
	items	**α**	**items**	**α**	**items**	**α**	**items**
Complete set	53	.91	47		32		28
Responsibility	15	.83	15	.83	11	.78	7
Judgement	12	.69	10	.76	7	.67	6
Culture	7	.42	4	.64	4	.64	4
Perspective	12	.80	11	.83	8	.84	8
Respect	7	.72	7	.72	2	.51	3

According to Hinkin (1998), the minimum sample size to make confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) possible is 200. Accordingly, the questionnaire was answered by 200 bachelor-level students of Business Administration in international classes at Radboud University in the Netherlands. The measurement was part of the 2019 course "Cross-Cultural Management & Communication" (CCMC).

Initial Item reduction

In the context of item reduction, I first estimated the internal consistency of the separate elements. This analysis revealed that for Culture, with 5 remaining items and for Perspective, with 6 remaining items, the Cronbach's α's were .82 and .83 respectively. For Responsibility, Judgment, and Respect, with four remaining items each, the reliabilities were relatively low with α's of .62, .57. and .60 respectively.

To check the consistency of these results, the questionnaire was tested again in 2020 using another sample of bachelor-level students of Business Administration at Radboud University (N= 218). The results were similar to those of the first sample. All elements had the same number of remaining items as the first measurement, apart from Judgment, which had 6 remaining items in the second measurement. The α's of Culture and Perspective were slightly better than in the first measurement, respectively .87 and .86. The α's of Responsibility, Judgment, and Respect were even lower than in the first measurement, that is, 61, .52, and .60 respectively.

We reviewed again the items of especially the elements of Responsibility, Judgment, and Respect. This revealed that a number of items were not clearly expressed as actions. To remedy this problem, we deleted some items, rephrased some in a more active way, and added new items to the elements of Responsibility, Judgment, and Respect. These actions resulted in a final list of 36 items: 8 for Responsibility and Judgment, 7 for Culture and Respect, and 6 for Perspective (see Appendix 1), which were used for measurement in a third sample in 2021. This sample was also a cohort of bachelor-level students of Business Administration at Radboud University (N=204).

Table 2 shows the main characteristics of the three samples.

Table 2. Characteristics of samples and measurements

			Gender		Age			Nationalities (% Dutch)	Variables
	Time	N	%M	%F	x–y	M	SD		
Sample 1	April 2019	200	49	51	17–27	20.1	1.84	39 (59,5)	CIC, CCE, MPQ (short), SFCQ, demographics
Sample 2	April 2020	218	57	43	17–37	19.9	1.92	40 (64,7)	CIC, CCE, MPQ (short), SFCQ, PGIS, demographics
Sample 3	April 2021	204	50	50	17–30	19.7	1.87	26 (76)	CIC, CCE, MPQ (short), SFCQ, SDS, demographics

Validity assessment

Nomological network

Construction of a nomological network (Thomas et al., 2015) was required to establish the convergent, discriminant, and criterion-related or predictive validity of our scale. In addition to the 36 CIC items, I included the 4 items of the Cross-Cultural Effectiveness scale (CEE) (Bücker, 2013), to establish criterion-related/predictive validity. Although the 40 items of the short form of the MPQ, which has been proven to be as reliable as the long version (Van der Zee et al., 2013), and the 10 items of the SFCQ (Thomas et al., 2015) are related, they are different constructs added to the survey to assess convergent and discriminant validity. In sample 2 the 16 items of the Perceived Group Inclusion Scale (PGIS) (Jansen et al., 2014) were added as another possibility to establish the predictive or criterion-related validity of CIC. In sample 3 the PGIS was not included, because with student samples outside an organizational, hierarchical context it did not prove to be of much value; addition of the 7 items (X1-form) of the Social Desirability Scale (SDS) (Fischer et al., 1993) assessed socially desirable responses.

In the next subsection I report on the internal consistency and the construct validity, the convergent validity and the discriminant validity of CIC (Hinkin, 1998). Finally, I report on criterion related validity and social desirable responding.

Internal consistency

I assessed the internal consistency of CIC, with regard to both the entire set of items and the subsets of the elements, as separate dimensions of CIC, by estimating the internal consistency of the entire set of items and of the subsets of the dimensions according to Cronbach's α. I expected that every dimension would be represented by one reliable factor.

The results of this analysis were (α) .77 for Responsibility (6 items), .67, for Judgment (5 items), .83, for Culture (5 items), .90 for Perspective (6 items), and .74 for Respect (5 items). Therefore, 27 of the 36 items of the CIC questionnaire remained as CIC items.

To confirm that every dimension was represented by one factor, CFAs were conducted on all five dimensions using the open source software package JASP 0.14.1.

I followed Hooper et al. (2008), who recommend the following fit indices: root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of less than .07, 90% confidence interval (CI) (0, .08), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) of less than .05 (.08 acceptable), non-normed fit index (NNFI) of greater than .95 (> .80 acceptable), comparative fit index (CFI) greater than or equal to .95, and goodness-of-fit (GFI) greater than .95.

The models of the dimensions Responsibility, Perspective, and Respect showed a good-to-perfect fit to the data and the model fit of Judgment was acceptable. (For all fit indices see Appendix 2.) Initially, the Culture dimension model showed a poor fit. However, based on their covariance, I connected the residuals of "I ignore the cultural background of my counterpart" and "I ignore cultural differences" in the model. Because of the content of the items, this connection seemed reasonable; it resulted in an almost perfect fit of the model with the data.

As expected, every dimension was represented by one reliable factor. Factor loadings of the items of Responsibility were .52 to .73, for Judgment, .45 to .70, for Culture, .54 to .83, for Perspective, .65 to .88, and, .51 to .71 for Respect. (See Appendix 3 for these results.)

Construct validity

I first assessed the construct validity of CIC, that is, the internal structure of CIC as well as its dimensions, by means of CFAs with maximum likelihood estimation, measuring the fit between model and data. I used again JASP 0.14.1.

The sample was too small to use CFA to assess the construct validity of CIC; a minimum of 300 respondents or at least 10:1 per item is needed (Clark & Watson, 1995; DeVellis, 2017). Therefore, the 3 items with the highest factor loadings for our CIC scale were selected from each dimension. The alteration of the Culture model by connecting the residuals of two items did not change the order of the items; the items with the highest factor loadings remained the same (see Appendix 4).

This process resulted in a CICS of 15 items with factor loadings of more than .50.

Responsibility	1. I ask for feedback.
	2. I ask how my counterpart experiences the interaction.
	3. I make clear that I want a useful interaction.
Judgment	4. I ask before judging.
	5. I listen open-mindedly.
	6. I postpone judging.
Culture	7. I take cultural differences into account.
	8. I keep in mind that my culture differs from my counterpart's culture.
	9. I put culture into perspective.
Perspective	10. I imagine how I would react if I were the other person.
	11. I imagine myself to be in the position of the other person.
	12. I try to see things through the other person's eyes.
Respect	13. I show the other person my appreciation.
	14. I take care of my counterpart.
	15. I (re)act helpfully.

This scale depicts a hierarchical factor model (DeVellis, 2017) or, according to Edwards & Bagozzi, (2000, p. 163) an "indirect…model with multiple mediating constructs," in which the dimensions are the "mediating constructs." I examined the construct validity of this CICS by conducting a CFA.

The results showed a good fit between model and data: RMSEA = .06; 90% CI = (.04, .07); GFI = .99; SRMR = .05; NNFI = .94; and CFI = .95. The items loaded on the expected factors (dimensions) with loadings ranging from .51 to .85. Figure 1 shows the resulting model of CIC with standardized factor loadings and residuals.

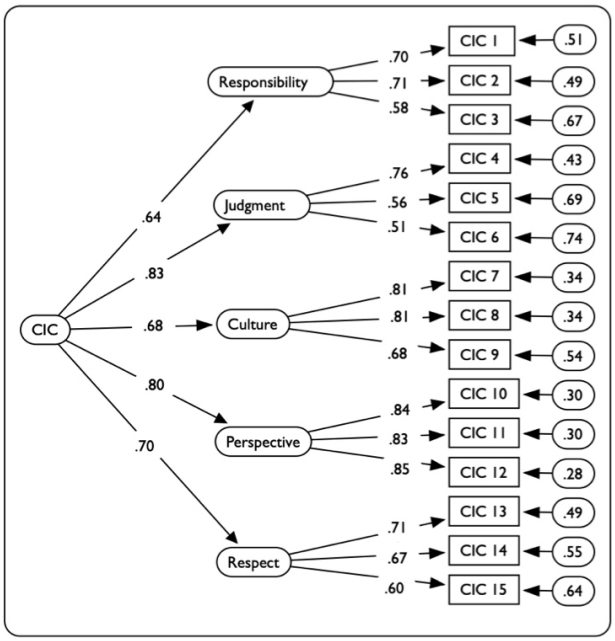

Figure 1. Hierarchical, indirect factor structure of CIC

Convergent validity

Secondly, I assessed CIC's convergent validity by examining the correlations of CIC and its dimensions. I expected strong correlations, showing convergent validity of CIC and its dimensions.

The examination showed, as expected, strong correlations of .68 to .80, among CIC and its dimensions, thereby confirming the convergent validity of CIC and its dimensions (see Table 3).

Table 3. Correlations of CIC and its dimensions (7-point Likert scale)

	Mean item	**Mean scale**	**SD**	**CIC**	**Ry**	**J**	**C**	**P**	**Rt**
CIC	*5.18*	*77.14*	*9.86*	(.86)					
Responsibility	*4.56*	*13.67*	*3.21*	.71**	(.70)				
Judgment	*5.24*	*15.71*	*2.39*	.71**	.30**	(.63)			
Culture	*5.34*	*16.01*	*2.78*	.71**	.30**	.39**	(.81)		
Perspective	*5.32*	*15.96*	*3.15*	.80**	.40**	.51**	.50**	(.88)	
Respect	*5.45*	*16.36*	*2.12*	.68**	.45**	.42**	.32**	.38**	(.70)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). (…) = α

Then, I examined the convergent validity of CIC and its dimensions with existing related measures, in particular with the SFCQ (Thomas et al.,2015) and the short form of the MPQ. Ward et al. (2009) suggest that validity indicators for CQ are correlation scores less than or equal to .20 as reflecting discriminant validity, and scores of .30 to .60 as demonstrating acceptable convergent validity. I examined the correlations of CIC with the SFCQ and MPQ at scale and subscale levels. At scale level I expected moderate to strong correlations among the CICS, the SFCQ, and the MPQ (short form). Following Ward et al. (2009), I suggest that CIC is a related but different construct when coefficients vary from .20 to .60, which shows acceptable convergent validity.

Results showed a relatively strong correlation of CIC with SFCQ (.62), but the correlation with MPQ was much weaker, .29 (see Table 4). The explanation for this weak correlation is found in the correlations of the subscales of MPQ with each other. Emotional Stability and Flexibility appeared to have weak, negative, or insignificant correlations with Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness, and Social Initiative (see Table 5). Without these two subscales, the correlation between CIC and MPQ was moderate to strong (.54) (see Table 4, MPQ 2).

Table 4. Correlations of CIC with MPQ (short form), SFCQ, CCE, and SD

	Mean item	**Mean scale**	**SD**	**CIC**	**MPQ**	**MPQ 2**	**SFCQ**	**CCE**	**SD**
Constructive Intercultural Contact	*5.18*	*77.14*	*9.86*	(.86)					
Multicultural Personality Questionnaire	*3.45*	*137.82*	*12.99*	.29**	(.85)				
MPQ 2				.54**					
Short Form Cultural Intelligence	*3.52*	*35.17*	*6.28*	.62**	.31**	.47**	(.87)		
Cross Cultural Effectiveness	*4.25*	*16.99*	*2.95*	.36**	.49**	.62**	.23**	(.61)	
Social Desirability				.13	-.01	.07	.10	-.03	--

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). (…) =α

Table 5. Correlations of MPQ (short form) and its subscales (5-point Likert scale)

	Mean item	Mean scale	SD	MPQ	CE	O	SI	ES	F
1. MPQ	*3.45*	*137.82*	*12.99*	(.85)					
2. Cultural Empathy	*3.95*	*31.63*	*3.29*	.49**	(.78)				
3. Open-Mindedness	*3.58*	*28.67*	*3.79*	.59**	.57**	(.72)			
4. Social Initiative	*3.50*	*28.01*	*4.50*	.68**	.29**	.41**	(.83)		
5. Emotional Stability	*3.32*	*26.53*	*4.97*	.61**	-.09	-.01	.25**	(.81)	
6. Flexibility	*2.87*	*22.97*	*5.02*	.61**	.03	.04	.11	.43**	(.84)

Notably, the correlation of .62 between CIC and SFCQ was rather high, which can be explained by the correlations of SFCQ and its subscales (see Table 6). The Skills subscale, at .92, is the most important of this measure and CIC, which measures behavior, is likely to have a strong correlation with SFCQ.

At the level of subscales, I expected moderately significant correlations between the subscales of CIC and SFCQ and the Cultural Empathy and Openmindedness scales of MPQ, as well as between Responsibility of CIC and Social Initiative of MPQ.

Table 6. Correlations of SFCQ and its subscales (5-point Likert scale)

	Mean item	Mean scale	SD	SFCQ	K	Skills	M
1. SFCQ	*3.52*	*35.17*	*6.28*	(.87)			
2. Knowledge	*3.54*	*7.08*	*1.66*	.78**	(.79)		
3. Skills	*3.60*	*18.00*	*3.15*	.92**	.61**	(.74)	
4. Metacognition	*3.37*	*10.10*	*2.38*	.87**	.57**	.68**	(.75)

Results showed moderate but significant correlations (.20–.29 between Responsibility, Judgment, and Respect of CIC and Knowledge and Metacognition of SFCQ. Between these two subscales of SFCQ and Culture and Perspective of CIC, the correlations were moderate to high (.31–.61). Therefore, though these values are just within the limits considered acceptable, the convergence of these subscales presents somewhat mixed results. As expected, the correlations of the CIC subscales with the Skills subscale of SFCQ were .24 to .55, and for the CIC subscales and Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness of MPQ the correlations were .23 to .52. Therefore, as expected, the correlations of the subscales of CIC and SFCQ and the Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness scales of MPQ were moderate.

Table 7. Correlations among subscales of CIC, MPQ, and SFCQ and between CCE and SD

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Responsibility	--														
2. Judgment	.30**	--													
3. Culture	.30**	.39**	--												
4. Perspective	.40**	.51**	.50**	--											
5. Respect	.45**	.42**	.32**	.38**	--										
6. Cultural Empathy	.23**	.40**	.40**	.46**	.40**	--									
7. Open-Mindedness	.38**	.39**	.52**	.46**	.40**	.57**	--								
8. Social Initiative	.18*	.10	.10	.12	.28**	.29**	.41**	--							
9. Emotional Stability	-.11	.07	-.22**	-.14*	-.04	-.09	-.01	.25**	--						
10. Flexibility	-.18**	.11	-.13	-.07	-.05	.03	.04	.11	.43**	--					
11. Knowledge	.20**	.24**	.52**	.31**	.25**	.29**	.51**	.07	-.06	.05	--				
12. Skills	.24**	.46**	.55**	.53**	.40**	.52**	.66**	.05	-.05	.08	.61**	--			
13. Metacognition	.29**	.28**	.61**	.45**	.27**	.32**	.51**	.04	-.10	-.05	.57**	.68**	--		
14. CCE	.34**	.16*	.25**	.18*	.36**	.33**	.43**	.64**	.11	.04	.26**	.21**	.15*	--	
15. SD	.06	.04	.11	.11	.16*	.10	.07	.01	-.09	-.06	.08	.09	.11	-.03	--

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

In contrast to expectation, the correlation between Responsibility and Social Initiative was rather weak (.18 at the .05 level). A second analysis of the items of these subscales showed that the items of Social Initiative accentuate the "initiative" aspect and the items of Responsibility accentuate the "process" aspect of the interaction. See Table 7 for all subscale correlations.

The overall conclusion is that on the scale level as well as on the subscale level, the correlations demonstrate an acceptable convergent validity of CIC, indicating that CIC is a related but different construct.

Discriminant validity

Thirdly, I assessed the discriminant validity of CIC by "comparing" the dimensions of CIC with the subscales of SFCQ and MPQ. I subjected the items of the CIC dimensions, together with an equal number of items of SFCQ or MPQ subscales with which the CIC dimension had the highest correlation, to a joint factor analysis (Clark & Watson, 1995). This analysis combined (1) the items of Judgment and Perspective with an equal number of items of Skills, (2) the Culture items with Metacognition, (3) the Responsibility items with Open-mindedness, and (4) the Respect items with Cultural Empathy (see Table 7). Results showed that all CIC subscale items loaded on one factor and the other items on the second (see Appendix 4 for results), leading to the conclusion that the discriminant validity of CIC is acceptable.

Criterion-related validity

Then, I examined the correlation with the CCE (Bücker, 2013) to obtain an indication of the criterion-related/predictive validity of CIC. I expected a rather high correlation of CIC with CCE because CIC is meant to contribute to cross cultural effectiveness. However, results showed that the correlation was moderate (.36) (see Table 4). Examination of the correlations of the CCE scale with CIC, MPQ and SFCQ and their subscales showed a high correlation with Social Initiative of MPQ (.64), and low correlations with Judgment and Perspective of CIC and Metacognition of SFCQ (.16, .18, and .15 respectively at the .05 level), moderate correlations with Responsibility and Respect of CIC, Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness of MPQ (.33–.43), and very moderate correlations with Culture of CIC and Knowledge and Skills of SFCQ (.25 and .21 respectively) (see Table 7). The α of the CCE scale at .61 raises questions about the usefulness of this (short) scale for our purpose. Therefore, there is no unambiguous indication of this criterion-related/predictive validity of CIC. However, because of the other validity assessments, this is not reducing the validity of CIC.

Socially desirable responding

Finally, I examined the correlation between CIC and a short form of the SDS (Fisher et al., 1993) to assess for socially desirable responding. This step was important because many items of CIC may tempt respondents to give socially desirable responses. The correlations between CIC and its subscales and the SDS were very low or not significant, indicating there was no socially desirable responding (see Tables 4 and 7).

Discussion

This chapter reports on the development of a new measure in the field of diversity management, that is, the CICS. According to the theoretical CIC concept, this new measurement instrument enables the assessment of intercultural interactions within an organization. This is useful because it affords the opportunity to measure the intercultural interactions within a team or organization not only once, but also over time, thereby tracking the development of these interactions.

The CIC concept contains five behavioral interaction dimensions which are operationalized in action items. Together they combine into a CIC Scale with five dimensions and 15 items. The theoretical model has a good fit with the data. The correlations of the CICS with measures of intercultural competencies such as the MPQ (short version) and the SFCQ show that although the CICS is related to these measures, it is a distinct instrument.

The factor loadings of the five dimensions are .64 for Responsibility, .83 for Judgment, .68 for Culture, .80 for Perspective, and .70 for Respect. They indicate the relative contribution of every dimension within CIC. The highest-loading dimensions are Judgment and Perspective, indicating that they have the greatest impact on CIC. This finding is significant, because together with Respect, these two dimensions are the challenging dimensions of CIC in hierarchical interactions, especially for managers. Judgment is challenging, because postponing it challenges the management task of judging employees. Perspective and Respect are challenging, because hierarchical status differences interfere with arbitrary status differences; these dimensions are important for reducing these status differences (see Chapter 2).

The CICS can be used to identify which dimensions of CIC need training and development at the team and/or management levels. It is important for teams and working groups because it contributes to the "change in interaction pattern" that an inclusive climate requires (Nishii, 2013, p. 1156). At the management level,

this assessment is even more useful because of the role that managers play within organizations. Managers lead their employees not only by their interventions but also by their exemplary behavior (Ng and Sears, 2012; Guillaume et al., 2014). Measurement of this behavior provides insight into the interactions of employees from different cultural backgrounds as well as into the hierarchical interactions of managers with their employees. This insight can support or improve their cooperation. Moreover, simply responding to the questionnaire can function as a form of priming for constructive interactions. In short, the CICS can contribute to improving cooperation between employees, and between managers and their employees of different cultural backgrounds within organizations.

The CICS is meant to be a culture-general measure. Although the samples consisted of students of different nationalities, the proportion of non-western participants was very limited. Consequently, determination of the measure of possible cultural bias in the content of our items was not possible. More research on CIC in non-western contexts is necessary.

To improve the CICS, larger samples are desirable, and items could be added to refine the instrument. For instance, future research within an organizational, hierarchical context could demonstrate the demand to extend CICS to enhance the previously mentioned challenging dimensions (see Chapter 2). Employees who take Responsibility in interactions with their managers may need opportunities not only to ask for but also to give feedback, and managers within this interaction who show Respect may need more opportunities to show that they recognize the competence of their employees.

Another aspect of future research on CICS is the assessment of its criterion-related or predictive validity. The scale is meant to measure an interaction process on the basis of what participants think they do within such an interaction. To obtain a more realistic picture of the interaction process, some reciprocity is advisable. This reciprocity could be achieved by adding a more extensive scale than the short CCE scale to the questionnaire and/or by adding another scale that measures how intercultural contacts are experienced. For instance, the Diversity Perceptions Scale (DPS) (Mor-Barak et al., 1998) provides information on the extent to which employees experience a diversity climate within their organizations. Combining the CICS and the DPS could reveal the extent of the contribution of CIC to the intercultural interactions and to the diversity climate of an organization. Combining the CICS with the Perceived Group Inclusion Scale (PGIS) (Jansen et al., 2014), which measures employees' experience of inclusion in their teams or working groups,

offers possibilities to establish the predictive validity of CIC. Again, this would require research in the context of organizations.

This chapter described the development of an instrument to measure CIC. Although more research is desirable, I have developed and validated the CICS that provides a useful and usable instrument to measure the input of participants in intercultural interactions.

Chapter 4

Learning Constructive Intercultural Contact

Introduction

In Chapter 2, I introduced Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC) as a new concept in the field of diversity management. The concept concerns specific behavior in an interaction process that involves persons of different cultural backgrounds. This behavior is characterized by five dimensions: taking responsibility (Responsibility), postponing judgment (Judgment), relativizing cultural differences (or "taking culture into perspective") (Culture), taking perspective (Perspective), and showing respect (Respect). The first and second dimensions are intended to diminish the influence of prejudices during contact. The third dimension is meant to enable contact participants to perceive each other as individuals, and the last two dimensions are intended to diminish arbitrary status differences that may exist between participants. Together, these dimensions represent how contact participants can act to make their intercultural interaction comfortable and successful.

In Chapter 3, the Constructive Intercultural Contact Scale (CICS) was developed, which enables measuring the actions of participants in an intercultural contact. The CICS is an operationalization of the five dimensions in 15 items. Examples of items are: "I ask for feedback" (Responsibility); "I ask before judging" (Judgment); "I put culture into perspective" (Culture); "I try to see things through the other person's eyes" (Perspective); and "'I show the other person my appreciation" (Respect). Together, they measure what people think they do when in intercultural interaction.

Both CIC and the CICS are meant to contribute to a climate of inclusion within organizations (Nishii, 2013). According to Nishii, a climate of inclusion ultimately depends on the everyday interactions of employees and managers. Measuring these everyday interactions with the CICS reveals to what extent people think they interact constructively. However, putting CIC into practice is not easy, and the everyday interactions of employees from different cultural backgrounds may not always be constructive. Several dimensions are challenging for minority as well as majority participants, particularly in hierarchical situations. For instance, diminishing arbitrary status differences by taking perspective and showing respect may be challenging in hierarchical interactions between managers and employees (see: Chapter 2). The possible difficulties of CIC in practice lead us to the central question of this chapter: How can people learn CIC?

This question relates to the field of intercultural learning, which is described as a process of cross-cultural expertise development that moves from unconscious incompetence, via conscious incompetence and conscious competence, to

unconscious competence (Bhawuk, 1998; Landis & Bhawuk, 2020). Although years of cross-cultural experience alone appear to improve a person's intercultural sensitivity (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992), intercultural training is considered to be the important instrument in the learning process. It helps people reach the next stages of cross-cultural expertise (Bhawuk, 1998; Landis & Bhawuk, 2020).

Intercultural training has long been used in various forms for the learning of effective intercultural behavior. The history of intercultural training shows an evolution from a focus on knowledge to the development of competence (Pusch, 2004). Many methods and instruments have been developed (Fowler & Yamaguchi, 2020). Whereas at the outset, training served mainly to prepare expats for functioning in specific foreign environments, today it helps people develop the ability to cooperate with those of many different cultural backgrounds, both at home and abroad (Landis & Bhawuk, 2020).

To discover how CIC can be positioned in the learning process from incompetence to competence, looking at the definition of CIC is once again required: It is the input actions of the participants in the contact, that is, specific behavior in an intercultural interaction process. Learning CIC is learning a specific intercultural behavior.

Typically, learning behavior requires training and experience (Anderson, 1990). Anderson describes three stages of expertise development: cognitive or declarative, associative or proceduralization, and autonomous. Whereas Anderson explains this process by using the example of learning to drive a car, this example may be an enlightening metaphor for the meaning of learning CIC: During driving lessons, people learn which instruments of the car are important for which actions and how to operate the different instruments. They also learn traffic rules that must be followed. Passing the driving test means meeting the requirements to set out in traffic autonomously. However, new drivers soon discover not only that routine is lacking but also that they cannot always be sure of the behavior of fellow travelers, or regularly have their expectations not met. Their learning continues, with traffic demanding ongoing adaptation, especially in environments with different and unfamiliar rules.

Similarly, with regard to CIC, people must learn what the dimensions of CIC mean, why they are important, when they need to be used, and how to act according to this knowledge. They must reflect on their experience to adapt their behavior when needed. In this context, "learning to drive" means practicing CIC in one's organization and continuing learning from each new intercultural contact.

In this chapter, I examine how people can learn CIC; I measure the effects of a CIC intervention that I developed for bachelor-level students. I first present some key processes of intercultural learning that are identified in literature and apply them to CIC. I then describe the CIC intervention that I developed. Next, I present methods and results and finally, in the discussion, reflect on the results.

Intercultural Learning and CIC

Taking inspiration from literature on intercultural learning, I highlight three basic processes of intercultural learning in connection with CIC. The first two processes describe the "what" of intercultural learning concerning intercultural competence and intercultural sensitivity, and the third refers to the "how," which is experiential learning. I begin by summarizing these processes and subsequently show how CIC fits within them.

The first process is described in Bhawuk's (1998) general Model of Cross-Cultural Expertise Development. It concerns the development of intercultural competence, defined as being able to understand and handle cultural differences. The model describes a process of four stages, from "lay person" (unconscious incompetent) via "novice" (conscious incompetent) and "expert" (conscious competent) to "advanced expert" (unconscious competent).

The second process is described in M.J.Bennett's (1986) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. It concerns how people experience cultural differences. Intercultural sensitivity means being able to comprehend cultural differences when experiencing them. This model is a description of a development from stages of ethnocentricity, such as denial (of cultural differences) and defense to ethnorelative stages such as acceptance (of cultural differences) and adaptation. According to both models, one needs intercultural training to develop to the next stage, and this training must correspond to the subjective experiences of the trainees (M.J. Bennett, 1986).

Here the third basic process—the "how"—comes into play. This basic process is known as "experiential learning;" it concentrates on experience and plays a role in intercultural training (Fowler et al., 2020; Landis and Bhawuk, 2020).

Intercultural training has a long history, during which many designs, methods, and instruments have been developed (Fowler & Blohm, 2004). Training goals can be cognitive, behavioral, and/or affective (J.M. Bennet, 1986; Fowler & Blohm, 2004;

Landis & Bhawuk, 2020). Training content can be culture-specific and/or culture-general and the process can be didactic and/or experiential (J.M. Bennett, 1986; Fowler & Blohm, 2004; Fowler & Yamaguchi, 2020). Desired outcomes can be knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes (Fowler and Yamaguchi, 2020). Ideally, effective training incorporates a blend of all these approaches (Gudykunst et al., 1977; J.M. Bennett, 1986; Fowler & Blohm, 2004). However, an experiential learning process can contribute to intercultural training in a specific way. It is a long way from lay person to advanced expert, and training programs often do not provide enough time for trainees to learn (Kallschmidt et al., 2020). Therefore, by adapting the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) for intercultural learning, Hugues-Wiener (1986) developed a training program to "learn how to learn." In a blend of didactical and experiential learning, Landis and Bhawuk (2020) integrated these ideas within the general Model of Cross-Cultural Expertise Development. In intercultural interactions, one's expectations of another person's reaction regularly will appear to be incorrect (Cushner & Brislin, 1996; Triandis, 2006; Landis & Bhawuk, 2020). In a training, based on Kolb's (1984) learning cycle, one can learn how to handle these "disconfirmed expectations:" When in a "concrete experience" one's expectation of the other person's reaction is disconfirmed, "reflective observation" is important to learn, didactically, about the culture-specific aspects of that reaction and/or the distance to one's own culture. Then, "abstract conceptualization" also will help in learning, also didactically, culture-general aspects that are involved in the interaction. In the next phase, one can test what is learned in "active experimentation" (Landis and Bhawuk, 2020).

Designers of intercultural training programs, for both at home and abroad, often use Kolb's (1984) learning cycle (Fowler & Yamaguchi, 2020). For instance, Triandis (2006) argues that to develop good working relationships in organizations with multicultural workforces, the experiential learning process can help employees learn several abilities: suspending judgment, placing oneself in the position of someone of another culture, asking questions about how things are done in the other culture, and modifying one's behavior because of given or requested feedback (Triandis, 2006). Barmeyer (2004, p. 580) describes the experiential learning cycle as an adaptation process in which critical reflection of experience is processed: "Learning is like a cycle that begins with experience, continues with reflection and later leads to action, which itself becomes a concrete experience…for reflection. It is, therefore, highly interesting for cross-cultural management training."

In summary, to move through the stages of intercultural competence and intercultural sensitivity people need intercultural training. Ideally this training (1) contains cognitive, behavioral, and affective goals, (2) has culture-specific and culture-general content, (3)

has outcomes in the fields of knowledge, skills, and attitude and (4) follows didactical and experiential processes. To learn outside the training context, Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle is important for creating an ongoing learning process.

What does this mean for learning CIC, which is an intercultural interaction during which specific behavior makes both participants perceive themselves as interculturally effective, that is, feel comfortable and successful (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000)? As previously mentioned, desired outcomes of the learning process are knowledge, skills, and attitudes. However, the content of knowledge, skills, and attitudes has a specific meaning in the context of learning CIC, even though the learning processes remain the same.

"Knowledge" refers to the dimensions of CIC; participants need to know why which dimensions make CIC behavior specific. Culture and cultural differences are not prominent issues; in fact, the Culture dimension of CIC is meant to make culture of relative importance within the interaction. Nevertheless, a didactical process is needed.

"Skills" refer to the actual behavior of the CIC interaction. Learning behavior "requires learning what the new skills are…and then practicing them with… feedback" (Fowler & Yamaguchi, 2020, p. 203). Anderson (1990) also points out that practice is very important for learning a skill. The effects of this practice are influenced by factors such as spacing (repetition of limited time practice is better than one longtime practice) and feedback (a skill is learned more rapidly after direct feedback) (Anderson, 1990). That is, for skills or behavior an experiential learning process is needed in which repeated practice and feedback alternate.

The intention of CIC to account for both majority and minority participants demands a sort of "empathic attitude," that is, being open to the other participant. It is likely that one training program is not enough to learn this attitude (Fowler & Yamaguchi, 2020). Experiential learning is cyclical, and this cycle offers the opportunity to continue the learning in an ongoing adaptation process (Kolb & Kolb, 2018; Barmeyer, 2004).

I conclude that to learn CIC, there must be both a didactical process and an experiential learning phase. In the didactical process, one learns what the dimensions of CIC mean, why they are important, and when they need to be used. In the experiential phase, one applies this knowledge and practices it. Kolb (1984) refers to both requirements in his experiential learning theory of development as the "acquisition stage" of development; by repeatedly practicing and receiving feedback, the learning continues in the "specialization" stage of development.

To explore empirically how people can learn CIC, I created a CIC intervention based on these principles. I tested this intervention with students of Business Administration at Radboud University.

CIC intervention

Context

The intervention was part of the Cross Cultural Management and Communication (CCMC) course for bachelor-level students in the Department of Business Administration of Radboud University in the Netherlands. This 8-week course consisted of a number of lectures on various subjects. Its goal was for students to learn about the influence of someone's cultural environment on management processes. Important subjects in this field include global competencies, intercultural sensitivity, and cultural intelligence (CQ). The CIC intervention is added because it emphasizes how people can *act,* that is, how they can practice their intercultural sensitivity, competencies, and intelligence. Students' interest in International Business could indicate that they were not "lay persons" (Bhawuk, 1998) or "in denial or defense of cultural difference" (M.J. Bennett, 1986); they were willing to learn.

To take part in the exam, it was mandatory for all students to attend all lectures of the course, participate in the CIC intervention, and fill out the two questionnaires.

Because of Covid-19, the course and the CIC intervention were taught online.

Moreover, because it was important to provide all students with the opportunity to learn CIC and include all students in the class in the CIC intervention, I conducted this research with the limitation of the absence of a control group. A control group would have required the exclusion of some students from the intervention, which they needed for their course grade.

CIC intervention

To reach the desired outcomes in the sphere of knowledge, behavior, and attitudes, the intervention had to contain affective, cognitive, and behavioral elements (Fowler & Yamaguchi, 2020; Landis & Bhawuk, 2020). Intervention participants had to have knowledge of the meaning of the dimensions of CIC, why they are important, and when they need to be used in an interaction process. Second, they had to practice according to this knowledge, and third, they had to reflect on their experiences to be able to adapt their future behavior. The intervention consisted

of four parts: a lecture, a video, an assignment to act, and a reflection report (see Table 1). Together, these parts represented a didactical process followed by an experiential process in line with Kolb's (1984) learning cycle.

Table 1. CIC intervention

Parts	Content	Elements
1. Lecture	Information	Cognitive
2. Video	Exercise + Information/Reflection	Behavioral/Affective + Cognitive
3. Assignment	Action/Experience	Behavioral/Affective
4. Paper	Reflection	Cognitive

In the first part, a lecture explained what CIC is, why every dimension of CIC is important, and how the dimensions contribute to a contact between a majority and a minority member that is comfortable and successful for both (see: Chapter 2). This was part of the didactical process aimed at knowledge.

The second part was a video recording of the author, presenting (1) a dialogue exercise and (2) a powerpoint presentation with detailed information and reflection on CIC and its dimensions. The dialogue exercise, was meant as a first try out of practicing CIC and a preparation of the assignment. Therefore, the presenter suggested that the student-viewer, in dialogue with a friend, analyzed his/her own behavior in a previous difficult intercultural encounter. They had to agree on which of the student's actions were adequate or not. This exercise enables reflecting on prior experiences, but in a safe situation with a friend. It appeals to an empathic attitude. The powerpoint information concerned how stereotypes arise and influence intercultural contacts, how people need their reflective brain for controlling their impulses, and how the dimensions of CIC can help. It was part of the didactical process aimed at knowledge. Reflecting on this information the differing challenges for majority and minority members and for people in hierarchical relations were presented. This powerpoint information and reflection appealed to a mix of knowledge and an empathetic attitude, highlighting that CIC concerns the process of the interaction.

The third part was an assignment that followed up on the didactical process and started the experiential learning. At the end of the video, every participant was instructed to (separately) interview two fellow students of other nationalities by conducting dialogue in a CIC way *(*i.e., using the CIC dimensions), about each other's motives for the study they had chosen. They had to share and understand each other's motives for the chosen study program, compare their motives, and exchange feedback on each other's motives. They had to practice what they had

learned about CIC, possibly experience disconfirmed expectations, reflect upon these experiences, and try to come to understanding and adequate action. The aim was to practice behavior and have an empathic attitude.

The fourth part was the writing of an individual, personal reflection report of at least 450 words on how they experienced these intercultural encounters, describing their content and process—that is, reporting the results of their "thinking" about their experiences and reflections (Kolb & Kolb, 2018). These reports will be analyzed in the next chapter to learn what happens when CIC is practiced.

In the next section I present, after the research questions, relevant methodological information for the effect measurement of the CIC intervention.

Methods

Research questions

My research questions for testing this CIC intervention are:

1. Are the results showing a learning effect, indicating that respondents learned CIC?
2. Are the results showing differentiation in learning effects for dimensions or CIC total?
3. Are the effects influenced by Nationality or Gender?

Procedure

The CCMC course and CIC intervention took place in the spring of 2021. Using a standard pretest/post-test design, I measured the effect of the CIC intervention. At the start of the course, students received an online questionnaire (Measurement A). After completing the reflection reports (after 4 to 5 weeks) they received the same questionnaire (randomly mixed) again (Measurement B). Note that these measurements are not based on the CICS as presented in Chapter 3 because the data of measurement A were also required for creating CICS.

Analysis of the differences between Measurements A and B required merging of the data files into one file. Because not all students responded to both questionnaires, the N of this merged data file decreased (N = 180) (see Table 3).

For measurement of the differences between Measurements A and B I used the paired samples t-test of total CIC and of every dimension of CIC. Subtraction of Measurement A from Measurement B measured the effect of the CIC intervention,

and I calculated the t-value to test the significance of this difference. Calculation of Cohen's d measured the size of the effects (Fritz et al., 2012).

For determination of whether nationality and/or gender made any difference, I used a mixed design with Difference (the difference between Measurement A and Measurement B) as the within-subjects factor and Nationality and Gender as between-subjects factors. Effect size was calculated by Partial η2 (Fritz et al., 2012).

Reliability

Because for each CIC dimension the analysis uses the scale with optimum reliability, in some cases the number of items of the two measurements are not the same (considered acceptable because measurement is made at the dimension level rather than the item level). The total CIC scale is composed of the items of the scales of the dimensions. Appendix 5 presents all items with their α's.

Table 2 presents the number of items and the α's of all scales, showing almost all α's were adequate (i.e., > .70).

Table 2. Number of items and reliabilities of all CIC scales

	A		B	
	items	**α**	**items**	**α**
Responsibility	6	.77	7	.74
Judgment	5	.67	6	.77
Culture	5	.83	3	.75
Perspective	6	.90	6	.86
Respect	5	.74	5	.79
CIC total	27	.91	27	.92

Sample

Table 3 shows the main characteristics of the sample. Because the objective was to determine the possible influence of gender and nationality on the effect of the CIC intervention, I included these data in the merged data file.

Table 3. Overview sample characteristics

N			Gender		Nationality	
A	**B**	**A + B**	**M (%)**	**F (%)**	**Dutch (%)**	**International (nat.)**
213	189	180	92 (51)	88 (49)	135 (75)	45 (22)

Dutch = The Netherlands, Aruba & Dutch Antilles
(nat.) = number of nationalities

For nationality, I differentiated between Dutch and international students. Although the international-student subsample is highly differentiated (22 nationalities), the numbers of respondents from various countries are so small that more differentiation was (statistically) not a relevant addition.

Results

Outomes

Table 4 shows the means of Measurements A and B on CIC and its dimensions, the differences of B -/- A, the t-values, significance, and effect sizes.

Results show that all differences are positive and significant: t(179) from 3.93 to 6.60, p = .000 with effect sizes ranging from .29 to .49. Regarding the first research question these results show a significant, positive learning effect of the CIC intervention, indicating that respondents learned about CIC. Regarding the second research question, results show that the learning effects for all dimensions and for total CIC are small, the effects for total CIC and Culture nearing medium.

Table 4. Differences in means (standard errors), t-values and effect sizes of CIC total and dimensions

	A	B	Difference B - A	t (df = 179)	Sig (2-tailed)	Cohen's d
Responsibility (Ry)	4.77 (.07)	5.04 (.06)	.26 (.06)	4.26	.000	.32
Judgment (J)	5.37 (.05)	5.61 (.05)	.24(.05)	5.06	.000	.38
Culture (C)	5.25 (.07)	5.65 (.05)	.40 (.06)	6.20	.000	.46
Perspective (P)	5.22 (.07)	5.44 (.06)	.22 (.05)	4.13	.000	.31
Respect (Rt)	5.44 (.04)	5.60 (.04)	.17 (.04)	3.93	.000	.29
CIC total	5.19 (.05)	5.43 (.04)	.23 (.03)	6.60	.000	.49

Cohen's d = effect size, .2 = small, .5 = medium, .8 = large

Table 5 presents the influence of Nationality on the Difference of all dimensions and total CIC.

Results show that all Differences are significant: F(1, 178) from.5.84 to 20.91, *p*-values between .001 and .017, and effect sizes from .03 to .11. The interactions of Difference x Nationality for Responsibility and for total CIC also are significant, F(1.178) = 6.52; p = .011; small effect size, η = .04 resp. F(1.178) = 6.93; p = .009; small effect size, η =. 04. The interactions of Difference x Nationality for Judgment, Culture, Perspective, and Respect are not significant, F(1.178) from .66 to 2.85,

p-values from .093 to .418, and small effect sizes, η values from .00 to .02. Therefore, whereas Nationality had no significant influence on the measurement results of Judgment, Culture, Perspective and Respect, it had a little influence on the measurement results of Responsibility and total CIC. Nevertheless, this influence of Nationality on Responsibility and total CIC was too little to influence their Differences, which remain positive and significant.

Looking for an explanation of this influence I found that for Responsibility, the negative mean difference of the international group compared with the mean difference of the Dutch group could play a role (see Table 6). For total CIC I found that the scores of the international group on all dimensions and CIC total were higher for Measurement A than the scores of the Dutch group for Measurement B. Accordingly, it could be expected that their mean differences are smaller than those of the Dutch group. This may explain the influence of Nationality on total CIC (see Table 7).

Table 5. Influence of Nationality on Differences

2021		**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean square**	**F**	**p**	**Part. η Squared**
Responsibility	Difference (D)	1.93	1	1.93	5.84	.017	.03
	D x Nationality	2.16	1	2.16	6.52	.011	.04
	error	58.85	178	.33			
Judgment	Difference (D)	3.05	1	3.05	15.41	.001	.08
	D x Nationality	.13	1	.13	.66	.418	.00
	error	35.20	178	.20			
Culture	Difference (D)	7.66	1	7.66	20.91	.001	.11
	D x Nationality	.85	1	.85	2.31	.130	.01
	error	65.16	178	.37			
Perspective	Difference (D)	1.80	1	1.80	7.33	.007	.04
	D x Nationality	.70	1	.70	2.85	.093	.02
	error	43.72	178	.25			
Respect	Difference (D)	1.37	1	1.37	8.53	.004	.05
	D x Nationality	.13	1	.13	.79	.375	.00
	error	28.52	178	.16			
CIC	Difference (D)	2.08	1	2.08	19.57	.001	.10
	D x Nationality	.74	1	.74	6.93	.009	.04
	error	18.88	178	.11			

D = Difference B-A
D x Nationality = interaction between Nationality and Difference, that is, influence of Nationality on Difference
error = residuals, not by model explained variation
Partial η Squared = effect size .01 = small, .06 = medium, .14 = large

Table 6. Mean differences (standard errors) of Nationalities for CIC and dimensions

2021		Responsibility	Judgment	Culture	Perspective	Respect	CIC
Nationality	**N**	**Mean**	**Mean**	**Mean**	**Mean**	**Mean**	**Mean**
1 Dutch	136	.35 (.07)	.26 (.05)	.45 (.07)	.27 (.06)	.19 (.05)	.28 (.04)
2 International	44	-.01 (.13)	.17 (.10)	.23 (.13)	.06 (.11)	.10 (.08)	.07 (.08)
Total	180	.26 (.06)	.24 (.05)	.40 (.06)	.22 (.05)	.17 (.04)	.23 (.04)

Dutch = The Netherlands, Aruba & Dutch Antilles

Table 7. Means of both measurements (standard errors) of Nationalities for CIC and dimensions

2021		Responsibility	Judgment	Culture	Perspective	Respect	CIC
Nationality	**measure**	**Mean**	**Mean**	**Mean**	**Mean**	**Mean**	**Mean**
1 Dutch	A	4.65 (.07)	5.30 (.06)	5.12 (.08)	5.10 (.08)	5.37 (.05)	5.09 (.05)
	B	5.00 (.06)	5.55 (.06)	5.57 (.06)	5.37 (.07)	5.56 (.05)	5.37 (.05)
2 International	A	5.15 (.13)	5.61 (.10)	5.66 (.14)	5.57 (.14)	5.64 (.09)	5.52 (.09)
	B	5.14 (.11)	5.78 (.10)	5.89 (.10)	5.63 (.12)	5.74 (.09)	5.59 (.08)

Table 8 presents the influence of Gender on the measurement of all dimensions and total CIC.

Results show that the Difference for all dimensions and total CIC is significant, F(1, 178) from 15.73 to 43.52, p =.000, and effect sizes from medium to large, with η values from .08 to .20. The interactions of Difference x Gender for all dimensions and total CIC are not significant, F(1,178) from .03 to 3.42, p-values from .066 to .869 and (very) small effect sizes, η values from .00 to .02. Therefore, there was no influence of Gender on the measurement results.

Table 8. Influence of Gender on Differences

2021		Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	p	Part. η Squared
Responsibility	Difference (D)	6.30	1	6.30	18.69	.000	.10
	D x Gender	.98	1	.98	2.89	.091	.02
	error	60.03	178	.34			
Judgment	Difference (D)	5.05	1	5.05	25.43	.000	.13
	D x Gender	.01	1	.01	.03	.869	.00
	error	35.33	178	.20			

Table 8. Continued

2021		Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	p	Part. η Squared
Culture	Difference (D)	13.99	1	13.99	38.45	.000	.18
	D x Gender	1.24	1	1.24	3.42	.066	.02
	error	64.77	178	.36			
Perspective	Difference (D)	4.25	1	4.25	17.03	.000	.09
	D x Gender	.02	1	.02	.08	.775	.00
	error	44.40	178	.25			
Respect	Difference (D)	2.51	1	2.51	15.73	.000	.08
	D x Gender	.29	1	.29	1.82	.179	.01
	error	28.36	178	.16			
CIC	Difference (D)	4.79	1	4.79	43.52	.000	.20
	D x Gender	.02	1	.02	.19	.662	.00
	error	19.59	178	.11			

D = Difference B-A
D x Gender = interaction between Gender and Difference, that is, influence of Gender on Difference
error = residuals, not by model explained variation
Partial η Squared = effect size .01 = small, .06 = medium, .14 = large

Discussion

In this chapter, I examine how to learn CIC. In line with literature on intercultural training and the experiential learning theory of Kolb (1984), I developed an online intervention in which information was followed by practice and action and reflection. The intervention also combines cognitive, behavioral, and affective elements, aimed at outcomes in the fields of knowledge, behavior, and attitudes (Fowler & Yamaguchi, 2020; Landis & Bhawuk, 2020). I found that the intervention leads to a significant learning effect, with effect sizes between small and medium.

The meaning of this finding is that the post-test results of the students, reporting what they think they do in intercultural interactions, show improvement in CIC and its dimensions—indicating that at least they are somewhat more aware than before that CIC and its dimensions must play a role in intercultural contact. However, the period between measurements of 4 to 5 weeks was too short to say anything about more lasting effects. Moreover, based on the tests we do not have any information regarding the actual behavior of the students or how they performed the experiential stage of the intervention.

Given that there are two parts to the intervention, a didactic part and an experiential part, we can ask if their effects are equally significant. This question is appropriate because in 2019, the didactical part of the intervention was different from that of 2020 and 2021. For an answer I compare the findings of the years 2019, 2020 and 2021. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the questionnaire was improved in 2021 to increase the reliability of the CIC dimensions and create the CICS. I used this improved questionnaire to measure the learning effect of the intervention. However, in 2019, the didactical part of the intervention was a live lecture on CIC and a live workshop of four hours with several dialogue exercises, a presentation with detailed information and reflection on CIC and exercises in CIC. The video of the didactical part as previously described was an attempt to substitute for the live workshop, which was not possible to conduct in 2020 and 2021 because of Covid-19 measures. Because I expected that the impact of a live workshop would be greater than that of the online video, I also expected that the measurement results for 2019 would show greater significant differences than in 2020 and 2021. However, this was not the case. As Appendix 6 shows, neither the live workshop nor the improved questionnaire had a significant effect on the measurement results. In all three samples, two aspects of the intervention were similar: the experiential part and the repeated information about CIC and its dimensions, whereas two aspects differed: the form and weight of this repeated information, being the didactic part of the intervention, and the questionnaire. Despite these differences, the results of the measurements indicate that the CIC intervention had a generally positive effect in all samples, suggesting that neither the form of the didactic part of the intervention nor the questionnaire were decisive for the learning effect. It appears that the experiential part of the intervention, along with some form of repeated information about CIC, was decisive.

What do people learn while they acquire CIC, which is a specific intercultural interaction that combines experience with reflection, understanding, and behavior? When, for example, during an intercultural encounter, participants "ask for feedback" or "ask before judging," two items of the CIC questionnaire (see Appendix 5), they are reflecting on their experiences and trying to understand why their counterparts are (re)acting as they do. CIC is an interaction of two persons in which asking for feedback and receiving it make reflection a more effective learning moment (Kolb, 1984; Anderson, 1990). Therefore, CIC appears to involve an experiential learning process during which participants adapt to each other rather than to their cultural backgrounds. After learning CIC in the acquisition stage, they are equipped to practice intercultural interactions in everyday life and continue their learning during subsequent intercultural interactions. They can "specialize"

(Kolb, 1984) into becoming experts who have increasing intercultural competency and sensibility (M.J.Bennett, 1986;Bhawuk, 1998), capable of adapting to a growing number of counterparts from other cultural backgrounds.

My next step is to analyze the reflection reports of the students, as I hope to learn more about how they thought the intervention influenced their behavior.

Limitations

This research has limitations. First, the data had to serve two different goals: to develop the CICS (see Chapter 3) and to explore empirically how people learn CIC. Therefore, I could not base the intervention on dimensions, operationalized in action items. Then the lecture, video, and assignment of the intervention could have been more specific. However, I could not create this unambiguous operationalization of CIC before Measurement B.

The second limitation is that I conducted this study with students only. It would be interesting to repeat this research in the context of organizations, because CIC interventions, as used in this research, can be attractive for organizations that seek to improve the cooperation of employees from different cultural backgrounds—and possible behavioral effects will be easier to diagnose within teams.

The third limitation is that the intervention was part of a course with a broader content which had several limiting consequences. First, the students did possibly not perceive the intervention as a clear CIC intervention, making it likely that noise arose. Second, the rather short period of 4 to 5 weeks between the measurements, making measurement of only short term effects possible. Third, it hindered the use of an adequate control group.

My research did not have a control group. As stated before, intercultural training must fulfill many requirements related to content elements, research design, and evaluation (Landis & Bhawuk, 2020). Therefore, ideal research designs contain pre- and post-tests, a control group, and quantitative as well as qualitative elements (Kallschmidt et al., 2020).

For future research, preferably within organizations, firstly, I recommend the use of a control group to draw more specific conclusions about the effects of the intervention. Secondly, basing the intervention and measurements on the CICS items would allow the measurements to reveal the extent to which the research results of the intervention can be confirmed. Thirdly, it is important to not only

measure, as CICS does, what people think they do, but also whether their behavior influences their work and team environment—that is, how much the performance of the trainees in everyday working life improves according to their colleagues. Combining the CICS with existing scales such as the Perceived Group Inclusion Scale (PGIS) (Jansen et al., 2014) or the Diversity Perceptions Scale (Mor-Barak et al., 1998) makes it possible to measure possible correlations between trainees' behavior on the one hand and perceptions of inclusion and diversity climate within teams or organizations on the other.

Nevertheless, this study shows that for the students, the intervention had a significant learning effect. Moreover, because of the experiential learning character of CIC, when they continue to practice CIC in their intercultural encounters, they can continue to learn and further develop their intercultural competence and sensitivity. That is, they have started learning how to learn.

Chapter 5

Practicing Constructive Intercultural Contact

Introduction

> *At the end of both interviews, I asked if there was anything I could improve on for my next intercultural contact. Both counterparts indicated that they felt very comfortable during their interview and enjoyed it. This confirmed that in general, I used all five elements of Constructive-Intercultural-Contact quite well. I, as mentioned before, in one situation did not postpone my judgment as I should have done. I feel like I did take responsibility, relativize culture, take perspective, and in almost all situations showed respect and postponed judgment. (Isabel)*

In this quote, Isabel, a Dutch student, reflects on her experiential learning process of Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC). As discussed in Chapter 4, learning CIC requires a didactical learning process followed by an experiential learning process. This quote reflects on this experiential learning process.

In the didactic learning process, trainees learn what the dimensions of CIC mean, why they are important, and when they should be used in interactions. The experiential learning process is required to apply this knowledge in real-life intercultural contact. In Chapter 4, I designed an intervention in which both didactic and experiential processes could occur. Upon measuring the effects of this intervention with bachelor-level students of Business Administration, I found a modest but significant learning effect for total CIC and all its dimensions, with variances ranging from .17 to .40, standard errors (SE's) ranging from .03 to .06, a *p*-value of .000, and effect sizes ranging from small to medium (see Chapter 4).

Measurements showed improvement, that is, after the intervention, compared with before the intervention, the students appeared to have a better understanding of CIC and its dimensions. However, the measurement indicated only *that* the students learned; it did not indicate *what* they learned. For their experiential learning, the students were instructed to practice what they learned about CIC in intercultural interviews and to share their results and experiences of this practice in individual reflection reports.

In this chapter, I examine the students' reflection reports. To gain a better understanding of their interaction processes, I present a qualitative analysis of their self-reports on their intercultural communication. My research question is: What did the students learn from their experiences when they tried to practice CIC during intercultural interactions?

To investigate intercultural interaction, I combine the theoretical concept of CIC (Chapter 2) with concepts and insights from intercultural communication and intercultural learning. Regarding intercultural learning, I drew on experiential learning as a basic process in intercultural training and development (Fowler et al., 2020; Landis & Bhawuk, 2020). Regarding intercultural communication, I used a social constructionist approach (Andrews, 2012; Gergen, 2020; Phillips, 2023) rather than an essentialist approach (Piller, 2012). Regarding the latter, Piller (2012) argues that people, instead of "having" a culture or "belonging to" a culture as the essentialist approach assumes, construct their culture discursively. The social constructionist approach (Andrews, 2012; Gergen, 2020; Phillips, 2023), which "places great emphasis on everyday interactions between people and how they use language to construct their reality" (Andrews, 2012, p. 44), provides valuable guidelines for my research on the reflection reports. I use discourse analysis to analyze the self-reports and recognize that the language the students use constructs, rather than represents a reality (Fairclough, 1992).

Context

The reflection reports were part of an assignment given to bachelor-level students of Business Administration at Radboud University during a course on Cross-Cultural Management and Communication (CCMC). As explained in Chapter 4, CIC was part of this course. The instructions of the assignment, which addressed the experiential element of the learning process of CIC, were as follows:

1. Establish intercultural contact with two fellow students from (a) different nationality than your own and engage in CIC by conducting interviews with each other regarding both your motivations for your chosen course of study, sharing and understanding each other's motives for the selected study program, comparing both your motives, and exchanging feedback on each other's motives.
2. In individual reflection reports, reflect on how you acted in these contacts from the perspective of CIC, both in terms of cognition and emotion. According to the syllabus of the CCMC, each student had to reflect explicitly on two "critical incidents" during the interviews to achieve a final grade that included an evaluation and rating of this paper.

Another important contextual aspect is that during the course and assignment in 2021 the world was influenced by Covid-19. For students in the Netherlands, there were many restrictions. A very stringent regulation was the closure of universities and the provision of online lectures and other forms of communication.

So, participants in this research were bachelor-level students of Business Administration, ages 18 to 22. They received the assignment to engage in intercultural contact. Because of the pandemic, this contact was usually required to be online. Some students had experience in intercultural contact, whereas others did not. During this contact, they were asked to practice CIC by conducting interviews with each other on a specific subject. Some students had experience in interviewing, whereas others did not. To receive a grade for the course, their reports had to reflect on two critical incidents that occurred during each encounter. Therefore, they prepared their reports in a very specific context with several elements of tension, such as lack of experience in intercultural contact and/or in interviewing, as well as the need to perform for their grades. In their reports, they had to demonstrate what they have learned about CIC and their abilities to practice it.

Theoretical background

The theoretical background of this chapter is the theoretical notion of CIC as presented in Chapter 2, combined with insights from literature on intercultural communication and literature on intercultural learning.

To outline the theoretical concept of CIC, I briefly summarize Chapter 2, in which I describe CIC as a type of interaction with several specific functions known as "intended effects."

The first function is to reduce stress, anxiety, and the influence of prejudices or stereotypes on the interaction. A deliberate choice to make a positive encounter and postpone judgment is needed. The corresponding CIC dimensions are "taking responsibility" (Responsibility) and "postponing judgment" (Judgment).

The second function is to perceive one's counterparts as individuals rather than as representatives of certain different cultures. Therefore, it is necessary to take culture into perspective and to relativize the relevance of cultural differences between oneself and one's counterpart without denying them. The corresponding CIC dimension is "relativize culture" (Culture).

The third function is to diminish the influence of prejudices about (arbitrary) status differences that can exist between majority and minority members. Perceptions of competition and incompetence can be modified by applying the corresponding CIC dimensions of "taking perspective" (Perspective) and "showing respect" (Respect).

When participants practice CIC, they may experience their interactions as less stressful, less anxious, and more comfortable; they may perceive success. This requires ongoing reflection on experiences and paying attention simultaneously to various dimensions. This process is not easy; and in a split second during an interaction, something can happen that triggers participants' implicit stereotypes and activates prejudices. However, when this happens, they can recover by reactivating CIC. Practicing CIC means practicing a specific way of intercultural communicative behavior.

Regarding intercultural communication, I draw on literature that takes a social constructionist approach (Piller, 2012). Piller, referring to Anderson (1991) refers to a "culture" as an "imagined community" in which "members…imagine themselves and are imagined by others as group members." These groups, not being "real" groups, are to be considered as "discursive constructions" (Piller, 2012, p. 5). Because this discursive characteristic points to a close link between intercultural communication and discourse analysis (Monaghan, 2012), intercultural communication involves not only culture but also language (Piller, 2012). The consequence is that in analysis of intercultural communication it is important not to mistake "linguistic misunderstandings… for cultural misunderstandings" (Piller, 2012, p. 12). In intercultural contact, misunderstanding can occur because of different levels of tolerance for silence or different rules for turn-taking. These problems are quite often language problems based on personal style rather than cultural problems (Nakane, 2012; Tannen, 2012), just as are problems caused by different habits of politeness or directness in communication (Holmes, 2012; Lempert, 2012). Another consequence is that it is important to be aware of the possibility that "discourses of cultural differences are not really about culture but that they obscure relationships of inequality" (Piller, 2012, p. 12).

The assignment to practice CIC was an assignment for intercultural learning. In this context, I draw on literature on two aspects of intercultural learning: experiential learning and critical incidents. Literature on learning intercultural behavior shows that it requires a combination of training and experiential learning (J.M. Bennett, 1986; Landis & Bhawuk, 2020). After participating in an intercultural training program, it is advisable to continue intercultural learning by means of experiential learning according to the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984). In a cyclical process, an adaptive learning process can develop (Barmeyer, 2004) whereby practicing what is learned leads to critical reflection on experiences and following actions, which then leads to new experiences to reflect on. Feedback and critical reflection are essential elements of this experiential learning process (Kolb & Kolb, 2018; Anderson, 1990; Barmeyer, 2004).

Critical incident analysis is a well-known method in intercultural training (Fowler & Yamaguchi, 2020). Critical incidents correspond to the difficulties connected with culture and cultural differences. They describe adaptation problems, misunderstandings, or even conflicts based on cultural differences (Fiedler et al., 1972; Fowler & Yamaguchi, 2020). In training sessions, the goal of critical-incident analysis is that participants—through reflection—discover how they can solve difficult situations. Fowler and Yamaguchi (2020) describe how students can learn from their own experiences, using critical incidents as "trigger events." In this way, critical incidents are useful during the experiential learning process as experiences to reflect on. However, according to critical-incident-analysis literature, critical incidents are important for reflective learning under the condition that the reflection is critical self-reflection (Vachon & LeBlanc, 2011).

In summary, in the experiential learning process, feedback and critical self-reflection are essential elements for learning from critical incidents; the "what" in our question of "what the students learned" relates not only to CIC and its dimensions but also to the experiential learning process of the students. In the following, I analyze the student reports proceeding from critical incidents.

Methods

Although an observational design would have been useful for examining the students' communication behavior according to CIC, pandemic measures rendered such a design very difficult. Moreover, adding an observer to an interaction would have meant moving away from a regular, real-live interaction setting. As an alternative, I could have asked for transcripts of the interviews as data for my analysis. However, because I also wanted to analyze how the students reflected on their actions and experiences (because of the importance of reflection in experiential learning (Barmeyer, 2004; Kolb & Kolb, 2018), I requested reflection reports in which the students wrote about how and when they used or should have used CIC behavior and about how they reflected on their experiences.

I used discourse analysis to analyze these reports. According to Taylor's (2013, p. 27) definition "discourse research involves the analysis of language data as evidence of social phenomena, theorizing language as communication, practice or selective constructions derived from accrued social meanings." In line with the social constructionist approach, I considered "discourse" to be a social practice, that is, a mode of action that stems from a certain social structure and at the same time

establishes this social structure (Fairclough, 1992). Therefore, what the students wrote about their intercultural contact did not just represent it but also signified it. That is, in their writing they constituted and constructed a specific meaning of intercultural contact (Fairclough, 1992).

My interest was in how the students, in their writing about their actions and experiences, discursively constructed CIC. In connection with the assignment, I proceeded in my analysis from the critical incidents students reported. As previously described, in intercultural learning critical incidents are difficulties connected with culture and cultural differences. However, the students also reported other critical incidents, mainly about language issues. I included these critical incidents in the analysis because according to literature on critical incident analysis, a critical incident is a personal interpretation of a significant experience in a specific context (Vachon & LeBlanc, 2011). The relevant context for the students was the assignment to practice CIC, that is, to interact in such a way that all interacting participants felt comfortable and successful. Therefore, it is not surprising that students referred to each experience that caused uncomfortable or awkward feelings as a critical incident and a "trigger event" to reflect on.

I can now specify my research question into the following questions:

1. What are the characteristic discourses of the students in their coping with critical incidents?
2. How are these discourses related to the theoretical background as outlined above?
3. What do these discourses reveal about what the students have learned?

Data

According to the students' assignment, the reports (450 words) had to contain information on their actions, what they learned practicing CIC, and what their feelings and thoughts were during their interactions.

After a first reading of reflection reports, I excluded those that were not usable for analysis (for instance, they were reflections on other elements of the CCMC course than CIC). After requested agreement from the students, the data set contained 40 reports. Using Atlas.ti 23.1.1 software, I divided these reports into four author groups—Dutch male students (12), Dutch female students (13), male international students (8) and female international students (7)—to account for possible differences based on gender or nationality. No significant gender differences

emerged, and I will subsequently address nationality differences. For privacy reasons, I refer to all student authors and counterparts using pseudonyms and to the countries of international students (when needed) as areas.

Data analysis

The first step in the analysis was a second reading during which, using Atlas.ti 23.1.1, I carried out an inductive coding process. The most frequently occurring code was "critical incident" because students were instructed to use critical incidents as stepping-stones for their report. They reported at least one, but generally two, critical incidents. Many of these incidents related to "differences" that students experienced. Another important category of incidents related to "failure" experienced in linguistic performance. A number of students were "satisfied" about how they practiced CIC, and often "expectations" of students about themselves and/or about their counterparts were "disconfirmed." They frequently reported "uncomfortable" or "awkward" feelings. Because the assignment was to interview each other, "asking" was the most-mentioned verb. Generally, the students preferred the words "conversation" or "dialogue" over the word "interview." Other frequently used verbs were "assessing," "assuming," "comparing," and "interrupting."

The second step was a deductive coding process along the dimensions of CIC. I looked for positive indications, such as "showing respect," and for negative or critical indications such as "not showing (enough) respect." The most frequently mentioned dimensions were Respect, Judgment, and Perspective, followed by Responsibility. The dimension of Culture was least-mentioned.

In the third and final step, I drew on discourse analysis, in which discourse is connected to social structure. That is, by means of discourse, people (re)construct the social worlds they live in (Fairclough, 1992). I used Fairclough's three-dimensional framework for analysis: discourse as text, discourse as discursive practice, and discourse as social practice (Fairclough, 1992; Dick, 2013).

1. In discourse as text, I sought to understand what a text wanted to achieve and how it was done. I was interested in the ways the students wrote about their coping with and learning from critical incidents. My analysis focused on the (self-)reflection the students describe, because this is important for learning from experiences and critical incidents (Barmeyer, 2004; Vachon & LeBlanc, 2011; Kolb & Kolb, 2018). I identified four different discourses that showed the various coping behaviors of the students, and selected fragments of the reports to present those discourses.

2. In discourse as discursive practice, I examined the context in which the text was produced. How were the four discourses shaped by their social context? I took into account that both the Dutch context and the course context influenced what the students reported as well as how they reported it.
3. In discourse as social practice, I examined whether the texts showed signs of implicit ideological propositions, with "ideological" meaning from a dominant discourse that generally is taken as "true" (Dick, 2013). I analyzed some texts as ideologically inspired by a national self-image.

In summary, my analysis examined how the students, in their reports, constructed their intercultural contacts, which critical incidents they experienced, which discourses in their reports revealed their coping with these critical incidents, and how they reported about their learning from these critical incidents. That is, I was interested in what the students wrote, how they wrote it—and what they did not write.

Findings

Analysis of the reports revealed two main groups of critical incidents. The first related to "language usage" in the students' intercultural interactions. The second referred to "experiencing differences" which was an important aspect of the content of their intercultural interactions. The practice of CIC is meant to be helpful in coping with these critical incidents. The context, as previously described, is a specific experiential learning situation in which mistakes will occur—mistakes that can be used to learn from and improve on next time. This process requires knowledge about what went wrong, and reflection is helpful (Kolb, 1984; Anderson, 1990).

According to the students' reports, I distinguished the following four discourses that they draw on to deal with their critical incidents: "defense," "superiority," "self-critical," and "adaptive."

Defense discourse

In the first discourse of "defense," students try to mitigate their responsibility for the critical incidents they experienced by pointing to external factors:

> **Ulbe:** *I coincidentally interrupted (my counterpart) by a suggestive follow-up question, which made her only react 'yes,' where she otherwise possibly would have made her point differently. I think that this incident*

was largely due to the fact that the interview was online, since there sometimes was a delay of one or two seconds during the interview.

Anna: *I experienced a feeling of awkwardness in my critical incident. Reasons for this incident were that I sometimes did not know whether I could say something or that she continued with her story since she took long breaks. I found this kind of frustrating because I thought of myself as rude sometimes since I was talking over her even though that was never my intention.*

In his report, Dutch student Ulbe recalls interrupting a "*minor*" critical incident; it happened "*coincidentally*," filling up small silences. Although Ulbe states that he "*interrupted*," his reference to it as a minor incident and that it happened' coincidentally suggests that he sees it as a "mistake." Apparently, he felt the need to fill silences of one or two seconds. These "*delays*," he says, were the result of technical issues outside his influence. With this statement, he supports the "mistake" characterization of his incident. Rather than reflecting on the interaction itself (i.e., questioning his counterpart's reaction in combination with his suggestive follow-up question), he focused on the circumstances of the interaction, making his learned lesson more "technical:" "*In the future, I should wait longer before responding, especially when there is a possible delay due to the online setting.*"

Dutch student Anna talks about the "*long breaks*" of her counterpart as being frustrating because, in filling up these silences, her self-image is damaged by her "*talking over*" reaction. In communication studies, "talking over" someone is a descriptive category and "interruption" is an interpretative category that reflects judgment about intentions or "rights to the floor" (Tannen, 2012). Despite describing her "mistake" (i.e., it was never her intention), she judges her behavior as "*rude*," which suggests the violation of a rule. She supports this judgment with her "*feeling*" that her *"counterpart did mind her interruptions*'" but just went on with the interaction. Then she explains: "*Moreover, the student thought the dialogue to be an actual interview so, in the beginning, it was not going that smooth since after she answered a question, she stopped talking and expected me to ask her a question again.*" With her use of the word "*moreover*," she explains the "*long breaks*" but she also makes clear there was a misunderstanding on the side of her counterpart about the kind of interaction she—Anna—wanted. The focus of Anna's reflection is on her counterpart's role in this critical incident and how she is affected emotionally by it. She does not mention how she can do better next time (i.e., prevent a misunderstanding like this one).

Despite the differences, such as the role of the counterpart in the situations, I observed three common elements in these reflections. The first is that both students show that they judge their interrupting as problematic. The second is that apparently even small silences needed to be filled, because they make the interactions disturbing, that is, less "smooth." Third, they "defend" themselves by externalizing their responsibility for this behavior.

Interrupting is part of turn-taking behavior, which can be an issue in intercultural communication because countries and cultures have different turn-taking habits and rules (Tannen, 2012). There are different expectations about the length of pauses between turns. Speaking at the same time can be a "mistake" when it is done at a "transition-relevant place," but it is an "interruption" when it violates the turn-taking rules (Tannen, 2012). In some countries, the dominant rule is that one speaker talks at a time; turn-taking is regulated by the perception that a speaker has completed a turn and at such a "transition-relevant place," turn-taking is adequate (Tannen, 2012). The critical opinion about their interrupting suggests that these students feel obliged to follow this turn-taking rule: one speaker at a time.

Partly connected to turn-taking, the meaning and function of silence also are issues in intercultural communication (Nakane, 2012). For instance, the acceptable lengths of inter-turn pauses differ among countries and cultures. Tolerance for silence—and valuing of silence—play a role (Nakane, 2012). That even small silences are disturbing for these students shows that their tolerance for silence is rather low.

Under the influence of the course context, these students' reflections on their turn-taking behavior construct what could be referred to as a defense. Because they are aware that the reader of their reports is the course leader who is judging them and assigning their grades, when they see external causes for their "mistakes" they report accordingly. I call their discourse a "defense" discourse, that is, a discourse to mitigate the responsibility for their behavior.

Dutch student Casper also defends his interrupting behavior:

> **Casper:** *The second critical incident was not really a single incident but the same incident twice or so. I accidentally cut her off a couple times. I quickly said that it was an accident and I let her finish. It did however happen about two times and I did feel as though maybe she felt a bit rushed by me. This might be because in the Netherlands we are very to the point, whereas other countries might not be.*

Casper mentions in his report that first he "*quickly ran through the Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC) steps"* and then interviewed his brother's girlfriend from an Eastern European country. He "*accidentally cuts off"* his counterpart several times. Unlike the reflections of Anna and Ulbe, his reflection concerns the possible effect of his behavior on his counterpart instead of circumstances or his counterpart as causing the incident. In looking for the cause, he sees a cultural explanation, "*we Dutch people are very to the point*" and other countries possibly are not; based on what I see as an ideologically inspired Dutch self-image, he constructs a cultural difference between himself and his counterpart. However, he does not value this difference. Here, Caspar mistakes his language problem for a cultural problem—a mistake Piller warns against (Piller, 2012). The effect of this mistake is that, in acknowledging his "*accident*," he changes the meaning of it and shares, that is, "dilutes" his responsibility with his fellow Dutch people: "We can't help it, this is how we are." In his "defense discourse" he points to his culture.

In summary, I found "defense" mainly in connection with critical incidents regarding speaking rules. The rule of "one speaker at a time" predominates, along with the need for a "smooth" conversation without silences. There is low tolerance for silence. Another issue is that the students' self-images are at stake when they report critical incidents as belying their intentions or competence. I analyze that the key issue in this discourse is "responsibility," that is, the students externalize their responsibility for the critical incidents in their interactions. Ulbe blames the online situation, Anna blames her counterpart, and Casper blames his culture; though they are all very different factors, they all serve to mitigate responsibility. The students construct a defensive position, which can be explained by the assignment context of the reports that created an "attitudinal disposition," that is, how they relate to and felt toward the assignment (Vachon & LeBlanc, 2011). Their reports also function as a kind of exam about what they had learned during the CCMC course. In the background is the course leader who judges and assigns grades. Their coping behavior is aimed at diminishing responsibility for the critical incidents instead of, according to CIC, taking responsibility to try to solve them.

Superiority discourse

I refer to the second discourse as "superiority" discourse, in which students also try to externalize the source of their critical incidents, not only by constructing differences between themselves and their counterparts as Casper did, but also by valuing their positions as superior to that of their counterparts. The critical incidents relate to both language usage and differences, and we discuss them one after the other.

Language usage: language proficiency

As previously mentioned, for Ulbe and Anna, even small silences are disturbing. However, silence can have an important function in intercultural communication (Nakane, 2012), a function that becomes clear in the critical incident reported by Dutch student Sam:

> **Sam:** *My first true critical incident occurred halfway during the interview. We were talking about polite forms of address in our countries. I asked him whether there are strict rules of using the German word 'Sie.' However, what I did not expect was that my counterpart did not understand what I meant as we had spoken in English the whole time. This led to a minute of awkwardness. This critical incident can be linked to 'take perspective.' As my counterpart had to speak English, a foreign language, he had to adapt which I did not take into account. I thought that he would understand me switching to his mother tongue instantly. On the contrary, it led to a minute of silence.*

Sam experiences a minute of "awkward silence." For him, as well as for Ulbe and Anna, silence appears to be an undesirable interruption of "the flow of the conversation/ discussion." This reaction is in line with the Western prevalence of talking and low tolerance of silence (Nakane, 2012). Sam expected his counterpart, being German, to understand *"instantly"* that he switched from English to German. However, his counterpart needed a "cognitive functional silence," that is, "earning cognitive processing time in conversation" (Nakane, 2012, p. 160). Apparently not realizing that the English word "see" has the same sound as the German word "Sie," Sam concludes instantly that his counterpart fell short in adapting and misunderstood what he meant. His statement "*As my counterpart had to speak English, a foreign language, he had to adapt which I did not take into account"* infers the opinion that his counterpart was less capable than he of switching from English to German. That this incident *"can be linked"* to perspective taking seems an acknowledgement of his responsibility, but his explanation in a subtle way confirms his externalization of the source of his incident by judging the competence of his counterpart.

The same judging behavior applies to Dutch students Bente and Fleur:

> **Bente:** *I did hear the first few sentences of her answer, but after that I just could not make sense of it. That might have been because of the quality of the audio, but I think that the (home country) accent she still has quite a bit when she speaks English also played a large role in it.*

> **Fleur:** *I noticed a few critical moments while talking to my counterpart. One of the most common ones was that I sometimes could not fully understand what she was saying. This is because her German accent was quite noticeable while she was speaking English, and therefore made the pronunciation of certain words a little unclear.*

Here again there is a pattern of externalization. Although their explanations differ, Bente "*thinks*" that the accent of her counterpart caused her problem, and for Fleur "*this is because of*" that accent, both are externalizing the causes of their problems.

Bente solves her problem by nodding "*as if I understood what she was saying because I did not want to make it awkward.*" She does not want to "*hurt her feelings*" by saying that she could not understand her counterpart. She concludes that this was "*a fault on my behalf*" because she missed information of her counterpart. Fleur's solution is: "*Most of the time I asked her to repeat herself when this was the case, however, I did not want to make her keep repeating herself, and therefore also just nodded a couple of times.*" Although both consider the feelings of their counterparts—and in a way take perspective—they make their counterparts responsible for the critical incident by saying that the language proficiency of their counterparts falls short.

Because almost all students in this study use English as their second language, it is disputable that only the international counterparts of Sam, Bente, and Fleur have language difficulties. The casualness of their explanation suggests a Dutch prejudice that the English language proficiency of the Dutch is good. Although they externalize the causes of their critical incidents, these students are not practicing the "defense" discourse that Ulbe, Anna, and Casper adopt. I link this to an ideologically inspired positive Dutch self-image. They reflect on their differences of language proficiency by judging their counterparts as being less competent, implicitly declaring themselves as more competent. They construct an unequal relationship with their counterparts in what I refer to as a "superiority" discourse. By constructing their counterparts as less competent, they construct themselves as superior in language proficiency.

These foregoing examples show that the students, incited by their critical incidents, compare competencies and judge themselves as more competent than their counterparts. The CIC training is meant to be helpful for coping with these critical incidents without constructing such inequality; it is meant to *overcome* this kind of inequalities. Postponing judgment is a key dimension in this kind of situation.

Differences: personal and cultural differences

Intercultural contact reveals not only differences in language usage, but many other differences that easily can lead to comparing and judging. For example, Dutch student Emma, who experiences critical judgments from her counterpart, reports:

> **Emma:** *When I think of someone studying Data Science, I picture myself a person who is very studious but not very social. But I postponed my judgement and tried to see him apart from his study and as an individual person. I asked him whether there were things that he would get used to when he started to live in the Netherlands and he said that Dutch people are really cold in their relationships. This really surprised me as I hadn't heard it in this way before. I did my best to cover my surprise, but it may have changed the tone of the interview a bit. Another thing that surprised me was the fact that he started a course to learn the Dutch language, but after a while decided that it was not worth it. The main reason for this astonishment is because I like learning new languages and think that it would have been a great opportunity for him. I may have changed my tone after I heard it.*

This quote shows that Emma experienced two different critical incidents, though she refers to them as "*surprises*." When interviewing her counterpart about his Dutch experiences she receives, according to her text, a rather blunt not very social answer. This "cultural" judgment of her counterpart surprised her, but it is unclear what was surprising: the content of this feedback from her counterpart or the way it was given. She tried to "*cover this surprise*" but nevertheless the "*tone of the interview*" was affected. However, she does not mention why she wants to cover her surprise nor how the tone of the interview changed. After this experience of a cultural difference, she is surprised, even "*astonished*" by a personal difference about "*learning new languages*." According to her text, her counterpart made clear, again by a rather blunt judging statement, that he was not interested in learning the Dutch language. With the words "*it would have been a great opportunity for him*" she herself judges and changes her position with regard to her counterpart; she declares that her "*tone may have changed*" without explaining how it changed.

Emma's counterpart is studying Data Science at another university, and she has a somewhat "nerdy" picture of such a person in mind. Based on his study subject, she judges him as "*very studious and not very social*." She then states that she postponed judgment and *"tried to see him as an individual person*." Then she reports her "*surprising*" experiences. We observe both a lot of judging in this experiences

and at the same time that Emma herself wants to postpone judgment. She does not explain why she is "*covering her surprise*," perhaps it is part of postponing judgment. However, her astonishment about the personal difference made her judge that he missed "*a great opportunity.*" Notably, she does not report asking for clarification, giving feedback, or taking perspective to discover the background of her counterpart's judgments. She "*may have changed the tone of the interview*" twice but does not explain in what way. Nevertheless, she concludes this report with: "*Overall I would say that the interview went well,*" declaring that they *were* "*both very respectful to each other,*" suggesting that in her eyes, her surprises were mere momentary incidents. I see the description of her surprises as rather detached and clinical, as if she feels not personally addressed by the remarks of her counterpart. In the end, this appears not to be enough to allow her to cope with "*surprise*" and "*astonishment*." I interpret her discourse as becoming a "superiority" discourse by constructing an unequal relationship in which she is entitled to judge what is good for her counterpart.

International student Tessa discusses differences of national educational systems. Being familiar with the Dutch educational system, she asks the opinion of her Dutch counterpart about "*the national culture and education*." When he answers her question, she experiences her second critical incident:

> **Tessa:** *With the second critical incident, I felt a little bit attacked but also disappointed. I also felt a little bit sad because I am aware of the fact that Eastern European countries where I am coming from, ….do not have a very good education. However, when a person that I barely know said that to me I felt my mood going down and I felt like he had prejudices for the country where I came from even though he did not mention it directly but gave a close example to it, for a moment I felt like he was superior of me.*

Apparently, her counterpart criticized the education of an Eastern European country, though not her country. She admits that she thinks Eastern European countries "*do not have a very good education*." Nevertheless she felt "*attacked, disappointed and sad*" by his answer, "*like he had prejudices for her country"* and even "*like he was superior of her.*"

Although Tessa agrees with her counterpart's critics on Eastern European education, she feels "*attacked, disappointed and sad*." Interestingly however, she reduces the degree of these feelings by adding "*a little bit*." Tessa reports no follow-

up questions or feedback for her counterpart, whereby she showed these feelings. The phrase *"a person I barely know*" may be the key phrase here. On one hand she shows embarrassment and on the other hand she makes a judgment, that such a person is not entitled to make a judgment as her counterpart did. She constructs an unequal relationship with her counterpart, if only "*for a moment*." She also uses "superiority" discourse, but this time attributes to him the superior position and adopts the inferior one for herself.

Emma and Tessa both report trying to postpone judgment and having a similar experience of critical judgments about their culture or country from a person they have not met before. In the end they both respond to these judgments with judgments of their own, despite their intention not to do so. Using "superiority" discourse, they try to cope with the judgments of their counterparts. These examples can be linked to Piller's (2012) warning that discourses of cultural differences can obscure relationships of inequality.

Tessa's text contains more emotion than Emma's text, and Tessa's text shows that she feels personally addressed by the judgment of her counterpart. Emma's text is more detached; she does not mention feeling personally addressed by her counterpart's judgments.

These examples of Emma and Tessa show that "superiority" discourse also implies some defensiveness. By judging their counterparts, the students protect themselves against critical judgments connected with the experienced critical incidents.

In summary, I found evidence of "superiority discourse" in connection with critical incidents regarding language usage and personal and cultural differences. Regarding language usage, (personal) differences are created. Critical incidents experienced in the context of speaking English led to the construction of differences in competence between students and their counterparts. In their coping behaviors, students constructed unequal relationships with their counterparts, claiming for themselves better, more competent positions. Regarding differences, the issue is the entitlement to judge. Here also students construct, as defense against critical judgments, unequal relationships with their counterparts by claiming for themselves or denying for their counterpart the entitlement to judge—just as Piller (2012) warns, that discourse on (cultural) differences can obscure relationships of inequality. I observed that when not taking responsibility played a key role in the defense discourse, judging, instead of (according to CIC) postponing judgment, played a key role in this discourse. Instead of diminishing arbitrary status

differences, the actions of the students in this discourse create status differences, or at least affirm them. Moreover, in the case of "superiority" discourse, not postponing judgment has the same effect on learning as not taking responsibility in the case of the "defense" discourse: It remains unclear how to do better next time. None of these students showed what they learned from this experience, or how they think to do better in similar future situations.

Self-critical discourse

The previously cited examples are not characterized by critical reflection on personal behavior. Yet such self-reflection is needed for learning and adapting behavior (Anderson, 1990; Barmeyer, 2004; Vachon & LeBlanc, 2011; Kolb & Kolb, 2018). In the following, I present examples of what happens when students *do* reflect on their own behavior regarding their critical incidents. Again, the critical incidents are related to language usage and differences.

Cultural difference and difference in language proficiency

International student Rosa discovered on both issues that her behavior was according to what I refer to as "superiority" discourse. Then she expresses how she should have acted.

During her first interview Rosa experiences a critical incident when she expresses a stereotype. When Rosa's counterpart answers a question she raised, that he was not religious and did not follow specific cultural traditions, she reacts by telling him, based on her experience with Dutch people, that she "*already expected him to give that answer*." She reports that here her critical incident started:

> **Rosa (1):** *At that point, I reacted biased and made a generalisation. I made the mistake of universalising my experience with some Dutch people to all Dutch people. I did not think about postponing judgement, I did not think about the fact that even within cultures there is a chance of cultural differences. Moreover, by not responding to him and mentioning that I do celebrate cultural traditions, I gave him the feeling that this was better. I put my tradition superior, and thus judged and showed little respect for his attitude towards tradition and faith.*

During her second interview, Rosa just exchanges experiences with her counterpart:

> **Rosa (2):** *Another critical incident arose when we talked about studying. We are both international students and she mentioned that she*

> *sometimes had difficulties because the fellow students in study groups and break out rooms often speak Dutch. I did not respond much to this remark and told her that I did not have this problem and that although I am not Dutch, I speak Dutch fluently and can therefore converse well with Dutch people. I made a categorization and unconsciously created two groups.*

In Rosa's quote (1), she expresses rather bluntly what usually remains implicit, that is, her prejudice. Then, looking back and reflecting on her behavior she realizes that her experience with Dutch people is not universal and that she should have postponed judgment. With her use of the word "*moreover*," her reflection goes a step further. She was judging not only the (absence of) traditions of her counterpart but also valuing her own traditions as better. She concludes that she also should have shown more respect. She gives no information about any feedback of her counterpart nor about follow-up questions. Notably, though this critical incident is about cultural differences, it is only implicitly that she refers to "relativizing culture" by mentioning that "*even within cultures there is a chance of cultural differences*."

Interestingly, Rosa analyzes that her behavior during her interaction reflected what I refer to as "superiority" discourse, describing that in her interaction she constructed an unequal relationship with her counterpart. By mentioning not postponing judgment and showing little respect, Rosa refers to some specific CIC learning points.

In Rosa's quote (2), from the second interview she conducted, she exchanges experiences with her counterpart, not caring much about the difficulties her counterpart mentions. Upon reflection, she becomes aware that her reaction tells her counterpart that she, Rosa, "*belonged to an in-group -—the majority of students who speak Dutch. Whereas (her counterpart) belonged to the out-group-—the minority of students who do not speak Dutch*." She then mentions " *I did not behave according to the CIC concept as I did not show respect*" and suggests that she could have asked "*further questions about her experiences"* and could have shown "*sympathy and sensitivity towards her issues*."

Again, Rosa discovers that she constructed an unequal relationship with her counterpart, this time regarding the competence of speaking Dutch. However, unlike the first time, she now interprets this individual behavior as group behavior. With speaking Dutch, the majority language in the Netherlands, being the stumbling block, she describes what Dick (2013) refers to as an "ideological

social practice." Her implicit statement is from a dominant discourse that in the Netherlands one has to be able to speak Dutch. Referring to "*respect*," "*asking questions*," and "*perspective taking*" as what she should have done, Rosa expresses what she learned from this experience.

In her discourses, Rosa, reflecting on her behavior, acknowledges and judges the way she (re)acted. She mentions how she should have acted by using dimensions of CIC, thereby reporting what she learned. Induced by the critical incidents, she reacts in what I refer to as "self-critical" discourse, in which the students critically reflect on their own behavior and look for and find ways to do better in the future.

Language usage: interrupting

Although "self-critical" discourse may be different from the discourses previously mentioned, the critical incidents mentioned are similar. For instance, Dutch students Isabel and Ivan and international student Lars find themselves interrupting their counterparts:

> **Isabel:** *Additionally, what I noticed when watching the recording back is that I sometimes, unintentionally, interrupted my counterpart. She could have interpreted this as a sign of disrespect. However, she did not acknowledge that it bothered her which is why I think that it did not influence the flow of the interview. Fortunately, I reviewed this recording before my (next) interview and thus did not make this mistake again.*

> **Lars:** *Now, after rehearing the interview, my attention is attracted to the fact that I interrupted my counterpart at some points, adding a comment or asking a question. For me, it didn't stand out at the exact moment during the interview. But now, I have an uncomfortable feeling about this, because it is very impolite and it could have been that he picks this up as a very rude act. Besides, we didn't know each other well at that moment, which would have a negative impact on our future relationship.*

> **Ivan:** *I thought the respondent indicated being done talking by pausing. By already going into the follow-up question I interrupted the respondent. A reason for this misunderstanding could be that in the culture of the respondent silence in conversation might be more tolerated. Possible is that the respondent needed more time to express himself in English. It feels awkward for both parties to start speaking at the same time, and I could imagine he felt interrupted.*

Dutch student Isabel, when reflecting afterwards on her first interview, discovers that she "*interrupted*." Referring to interrupting that *"could be interpreted as a sign of disrespect*," she suggests she has violated a turn-taking rule. However, she "defines" her behavior as an *"unintentionally"* made "*mistake,*" without denying responsibility. Reassured by the non-reaction of her counterpart, she finds the "*flow of the interview*" not disturbed, which "discharged" her from responsibility. Nevertheless, she could "*fortunately*" prevent "*this mistake*" in the second interview. In fact, she writes that she learned from the experience of her first interview to do a better job during the second.

International student Lars reflects on his first interview and discovers that he sometimes interrupted his counterpart. Although for him "*it didn't stand out*" during the interview, he now "*feels uncomfortable*," *"because it is very impolite*." This comment makes clear that he supports the turn-taking rule of "one speaker at a time" and also that he is worried that he disturbed the relationship with his counterpart (Holmes, 2012). This concern becomes clear in his next remark that "*it could have been that he picks this up as a very rude act*" when he attributes to his counterpart his own rather strong judgment about the politeness of his behavior. However, in his report he does not mention any reaction of his counterpart to his interruptions. Nevertheless, his argument continues in his use of the word "*besides*," expressing this concern that his impolite, interrupting behavior could have negative consequences for a future relationship. He goes beyond the context of the interview and shows awareness that he is in a phase of acquaintance and is constructing a relationship with his counterpart. By suggesting which behavior would have been more "*polite,*" he formulates his learned lesson: "*Now, I know that I should have shown more respect towards him and let him end his sentence, before asking a new question*."

Unlike Anna, Dutch student Ivan leaves no misunderstanding about what he is doing: conducting an interview. He explains that he misunderstood the pausing of his *"respondent*." He states that the silences he fills in could be related to the culture of his respondent or the respondent's need of more time to find English expression. Implicitly, he refers to possible differences in tolerance or value for silence and to the cognitive function of silence (Nakane, 2012). These possible explanations are not meant to mitigate his responsibility; he simply mentions that he "*interrupted*." Supposing that "*both parties*" follow the same turn-taking rule of "one speaker at a time," in the end he states that for both parties interrupting feels awkward. He takes responsibility for this critical incident and by taking perspective explains possible causes of his counterpart's pause. In his reflection on his interviews,

he acknowledges that his interview was different from his "*casual interactions*" because, taking the interview and asking questions about his own country, he is *"in a position of power*." He writes:

> *Naturally, the respondents could feel on the spot, or be hesitant in their formulations as not to offend me. I…mostly thought about how I would handle the interview, but not necessarily how the respondent would feel. Here I can see the importance of CIC as defined….the interaction was a majority–minority interaction, and the viewpoint of the minority should not be forgotten so both can work on constructive contact.*

He became aware of the power position the interview setting gave him and acknowledges that by focusing particularly on the interview performance, he maintained a superior position and constructed a majority–minority relationship, which was not what he wanted. He understands that in the context of CIC he should have focused more on taking care of his counterpart than on the performance of the interview.

In their reflections, all three students felt responsible for their turn-taking behavior; they judge themselves rather than their counterparts. All three students show similar negative feelings regarding their turn-taking behavior. According to literature, "overlapping talk is ambiguous: it can be experienced as a negative move, an interruption, or a positive one, joining in" (Tannen, 2012, p. 144). Two styles of speaking over each other are distinguished in research: "cooperative overlap," experienced as positive, or "interrupting," experienced as negative (Tannen, 2012). The students' reports reveal no critical remarks made by their counterparts. Lars' description of "*adding a comment or asking a question*" suggests that he joined in, and the absence of critical reactions of Isabel's and Ivan's counterparts suggests the same. Their self-criticism shows that all three adhered the turn-taking rule of "one speaker at a time" and their supposed violation of that rule triggered learning.

All three students practiced "self-critical" discourse. Inspired by the Respect dimension of CIC, they became aware of specific lessons for future intercultural encounters. Although these three cases may look similar, I observe some interesting differences. Isabel learned for "*the next interview*" whereas the learning of Lars and Ivan relates to the "*relationships*" they are constructing, that go beyond only the next time. Ivan also is aware of his position of power that is inherent to an interview setting of a majority member with a minority member.

Language usage: silence

As other Dutch students, Dutch student Niels experiences silence as awkward, a critical incident. He reported that at first he expected a "*light-hearted conversation,*" but his interview became a conversation on the pandemic and mental health problems.

> **Niels:** …*this resulted in a critical incident in our conversation. With little introduction to the subject, my counterpart told me a fellow student he knew committed suicide this year. I was unsure how to react and became a bit quiet for a couple seconds. I was overwhelmed by the way he told me and my idea was to give him space to talk. This resulted in a silence, which I experienced as a bit awkward. I wanted to be respectful to the situation, but this led to us both not knowing what to say. In this situation, I wish I would have taken responsibility in the conversation by offering my condolences.*

Niels hears a shocking statement "w*ith little introduction.*" He reports *"overwhelmed"* not to know *"how to react."* His silence is meant to give his counterpart "*space to talk,*" but then both do not know what to say. Niels experiences this silence as awkward. Afterwards he wishes he had had the responsible reaction of "*offering his condolences.*" In his reflection on this interview he adds "*I should have taken more responsibility in the conversation by acting quicker and by possibly being more supportive.*" His use of "self-critical" discourse and mentioning of being "*respectful*" and "*taking responsibility*" shows how he thinks CIC could have been helpful for him.

However, silence can have a number of useful functions in intercultural communication, such as the previously mentioned "cognitive function" of silence; here Niels experiences an "affective silence," referring to the "affective function" of silence that occurs when words cannot express the (intense) emotional state of the speaker (Nakane, 2012, p. 162). Niels' silence clearly has this affective function, but his wish that he had been "*acting quicker*" together with his reference to "*awkward silence"* shows that he is not aware of this function of silence.

Silence and hesitations in intercultural communication also have "social functions," such as creating or reducing social distance, or as a politeness strategy for gaining or maintaining social control (i.e., to avoid an unwanted situation or embarrassment) (Nakane, 2012). Obviously, speakers are not (always) aware of the different functions of silence when they are interacting.

As international student Helena and Dutch student Lotte report:

> **Helena:** *The first interview started with small talk, and then I went straight forward to the questions. However I felt that this directness was a bit uncomfortable for my interview partner.…The hesitation and expression of uncomfort, made me think about my behaviour and question if I jumped too quickly into the interview questions.…I tend to be rather direct, because long introductions and small talk is not too common in (our country). I worried that this was disrespectful or expressed disinterest in the interviewee as a person.*

> **Lotte:** *The first critical incident occurred when I asked him if he had any expectations of studying in the Netherlands or expectations about Dutch people. He gasped loudly and did not know how to respond. He then says that this was a difficult question for him, so I tried to help him by asking if he has any stereotypes for Dutch people. Then he gasped loudly again which made me feel uncomfortable because I got the feeling that he did not like my interview questions and I got quite insecure about the questions I had prepared.*

Although Helena started the interview with "*small talk*," she felt that the hesitation and discomfort of her counterpart could be caused by her directness. Literature reveals that in intercultural communication different rules on directness/indirectness can play a role (Lempert, 2012). In her general reflection on the interviews, Helena mentions that she felt that her counterpart "*was not too comfortable with her directness*." Possibly, the silent hesitation represents an attempt by her counterpart to create a certain social distance against Helena's directness. The "*small talk"* may have created a certain familiar atmosphere which, according to her report, was left behind rather abruptly when Helena started asking questions. Not feeling comfortable about it, she writes: "*I was not sure how to respond to that feeling and tried to give more time for the respondent to reply.*" She was using the silence as a form of feedback to make her learn. She reacted to a clear social silence of her counterpart, but there is no mentioning of any effect of her "*trying*."

In her reflection, Helena blames her directness; she makes it, based on a national self-image, a cultural "thing." However, prompted by the hesitation and silence, that is, the "feedback" of her counterpart, she begins to question her (cultural) behavior in a "self-critical" discourse, mentioning "*disrespect*" and "*disinterest*" as points for improvement. Referring to CIC literature, she concludes: "*I reflected more about my*

own communication and actions….This experience can also help me in the future to pause a moment and reflect about my own behavior and about the person I engage with." According to her text, Helena also learned some useful functions of silence in intercultural communication.

The "*loudly gasping*" reaction of her counterpart suggests that Dutch student Lotte is asking her counterpart a rather sensitive question. When she "*tries to help him by asking if he has any stereotypes for Dutch people*," the situation does not improve. Lotte reports that she had prepared these questions to learn, among other things, about the images her counterpart has about Dutch people. In her first interview, this plan had worked rather well, because her counterpart answered the question about expectations about Nijmegen and its people "*that she already knew the city because she often went shopping in Nijmegen on the weekends*." This appears not the case for her second counterpart.

Apparently, Lotte is interested in the opinion of her counterpart about the Netherlands and the Dutch. Asking for such expectations can be confrontational, because expectations easily involve a judgment or are simply absent. Then she tries to *"help him"* by specifying that she wanted to know his stereotypes. In the context of a new intercultural contact after a course about the risks of stereotyping, it is understandable that her counterpart "*gasped loudly again*." Given this context his gasping silence could function to avoid embarrassment (Nakane, 2012). Lotte's reaction, prompted by this "feedback" of her counterpart, is doubt of the questions she had prepared. By not blaming her counterpart, or constructing an unequal relationship, this reaction suggests the beginning of "self-critical" discourse, even though she still does not mention how she could improve her questions.

So far, this discourse has appeared mainly in the context of speaking rules regarding turn-taking and silence. These examples reveal that for the students, respect is important in the foreseen improvement. According to the previously described meaning and function of "Respect" in CIC, these students show sensitivity to arbitrary status differences. In the following examples, I show how other CIC dimensions are needed to cope with critical incidents arising from experienced differences.

Differences: economic difference

Dutch student Claire experiences a shocking difference between her country and that of her counterpart:

> **Claire:** *The critical instance arose when we were comparing in the corona and vaccination policy in the Netherlands of that in her country. The reason for this incident was because I had put my shoe in my mouth. I had stated that I was not content with the Dutch vaccine policy, only to hear that in her country the government will not vaccinate the population unless it is for profit. I was feeling very ashamed and aware of my privilege at that moment, which left me pretty speechless. This made it hard to make contact and value what the other speaker was saying. I can imagine the woman I interviewed was quite in shock with my lack of knowledge.*

Claire is shocked by the difference she discovers between the Netherlands and the low income home country of her counterpart. In previous text she had admitted that she was "*not prepared*" for the differences between the poor country of her counterpart and the Netherlands. With some forceful complaining about the vaccine policy in the Netherlands, she feels "*very ashamed*" about discovering how privileged she is. In an emotionally charged text, she reports not only an "affective silence" but also that she lost contact and that she is worrying about her image because of her lack of knowledge. Then she reports: "*The rest of the interview only reaffirmed how unaware I was of the differences between both countries*." This increased her "*uncertainty and embarrassment*." She concludes: "*I should have been more sensitive and not make such harsh judgments, if I did not know what the situation was like in other places in the world*."

For Claire, *"the reason for the incident*" was her "harsh" judging behavior followed by the confrontational feedback information of her counterpart. The force of the description of her shame, embarrassment, and losing contact points clearly at "self-critical" discourse, prompted by the feedback of her counterpart. With her mentions of "*more sensitive*" and "*harsh judgments,*" she refers to perspective taking and postponing judgment to do better next time.

Differences: differences of opinion

Dutch student Daniel, talking about hospitality, experiences a difference of opinion:

> **Daniel:** *During the interview a critical incident occurred while discussing his time here as a child. We were talking about hospitality focused on dinner. Here I experienced some irritation since we disagreed, my interviewee reacted with some temper, so he was also touched in some way. After the interview he told that he felt that I didn't really listen to him since I told him that I had different experiences. However, that was not*

> *my intention at all. So, I tried to look at it from his perspective and took responsibility for the fact that he felt ignored by me, I learned that I might want to use a different set of words next time to give the other a better feeling of acceptation. This was a nice way to relativize culture and learn.*

Daniel reports a difference of opinion about hospitality regarding dinner. Although he does not reveal the exact point of disagreement between him and his counterpart, according to his text, Daniel as well as his counterpart got irritated and both were "*touched*." Then, after the interview, the interaction continued, and Daniel received feedback from his counterpart. Although he thinks, according to the text, that his counterpart misunderstood him, he acknowledges his responsibility and tries to take perspective.

I see this case as interesting for two reasons. First, it is notable that Daniel reported the emotion on both sides of this disagreement. Apparently, while writing the report he could remain distant. Second, it turns out that although the interview was finished, the interaction apparently not. The later feedback of his counterpart made him concerned because his listening intentions were not understood. Apparently, both participants reflected together on their interview exchange and Daniel's counterpart explained his "*temper*." In the context of CIC, these are signs that both participants took responsibility for their interaction. The feedback of his counterpart triggered Daniel to take perspective and acknowledge responsibility for the feelings of his counterpart, in "self-critical" discourse in which he learned that responsibility and perspective could have helped him use "*a different set of words*" to prevent the negative feelings of his counterpart. Interestingly, in his last sentence he refers to "*relativizing culture*" the key issue in this case, indicating that he also learned the importance of paying attention to the individuality, rather than the cultural identity, of his counterpart.

In summary, "self-critical" discourse is that in which students acknowledge what they should have done or can do better next time. It follows critical reflection on their own behavior. This reflection can be prompted by a critical incident itself, mainly in the context of language usage, or by some form of feedback from the counterpart, mainly in the context of differences. Usually, the reflection takes place after the interaction, but occasionally it occurs during the interaction. When referring to the lessons they learned regarding CIC, students who use this discourse mainly mention in the context of language usage "Respect" and in the context of differences "Perspective" and "Judgment." Sometimes they also mention "Responsibility" and "Culture" in both contexts.

Adaptive discourse

In this section, I discuss how students reported on how they drew on dimensions of CIC to adapt their behavior during the process, to improve the intercultural interaction itself, which I refer to as "adaptive" discourse.

Personal difference and language proficiency

Dutch students Kiki and Claire report how they made a kind of transition from one discourse to another:

> **Kiki:** *My first critical incident already occurred via WhatsApp. She already was very direct and strict about which day and how late, because she had a really tight schedule. I told her that it would be fine and it is not necessary to plan our meeting so far in advance. I did not look at her perspective and way of thinking and therefore reacted with a lack of respect. To add to this, in the interview she told me that she hated the way Dutch people study. In her words 'Dutch people leave everything for the last second.' When she mentioned (this) I interpreted that she was bothered by this. However, this time I took the perspective of her situation. I listened and asked further in order to get to understand her well.*

> **Claire:** *I experienced a lot of frustration and discomfort in the run up to my first critical incidence. I was having a hard time understanding her and kept laughing uncomfortably while she was talking because I could not understand what she was saying. This was, I can imagine, quite annoying and uncomfortable for her as well. I was trying to focus on the five points, but I was getting discouraged because I could not understand her, so I was asking questions that did not really reflect that I was actively listening. So, I decided to maybe start talking about myself to make contact and hopefully become more comfortable. This led to the first critical incidence, in which I discovered that she spoke 4 languages.*

Kiki describes that her learning process already started when she made the appointment for the interview in a WhatsApp contact with her counterpart. Apparently, she and her counterpart had different norms about timing and planning. Kiki wrote "*she already was very direct and strict*" that she experienced no ambiguity whatsoever in the demands of her counterpart (Lempert, 2012). In a "self-critical" discourse, she admits that she was not giving attention to the "*tight schedule*" of her counterpart, that she failed to take perspective and also that she reacted with a "*lack of respect*." Although this admission of a lack of respect seems to suggest that she

judged her counterpart, I observe in her text that she mainly judges herself as not as polite as she should have been. Then she reports that during the interview she experienced her counterpart's judgment about "*the Dutch leaving everything to the last minute*." Although some students consider such statements to be generalizations, for Kiki it confirmed the force of her counterpart's needs; she concluded that her counterpart "*was bothered.*" Then she takes perspective, listens, and inquires further, to understand her counterpart. Kiki, without mentioning it, takes responsibility for the contact she wants and thus adapts her behavior according to CIC.

Dutch student Claire, having English as her native language but not being able to understand her counterpart, at first describes her "frustration and discomfort". She also worries about her image. Her text initially suggests that she is judging the language proficiency of her counterpart as insufficient, reflecting a "superiority" discourse. However, she does not explicitly "blame" her counterpart. When she starts "*talking about herself to make contact,*" it becomes clear that her first critical incident is not that she cannot understand her counterpart, but that she discovers that her counterpart has at least the same language proficiency as she has, but in other languages. She continues: *"This was quite an eye opener and helped me postpone judgment.*" Then she reflects in a perspective-taking way: "*How insignificant this critical incidence may have seemed at first; it really opened my eyes to the fact that of course non-native English speakers cannot speak perfect English. Expecting them too would be the same of them to expect me to speak Spanish, Portuguese, or Chinese.*"

Claire "*decided*" to take responsibility to "rescue" the contact. When she subsequently experienced the critical incident, she says that seeing the competence of her counterpart helped her to postpone judgment. Although she does not mention respect in her text, I see her showing respect.

Despite the differences, such as Kiki beginning in what I refer to as "self-critical" discourse and Claire being tempted to adopt a "superiority" discourse to deal with quite different issues, both students activated dimensions of CIC during their interactions. Their texts show they improved their behavior "on the spot," in what I refer to as "adaptive" discourse, such that they corrected or adapted their behavior according to (dimensions of) CIC during the interactions with their counterparts. Obviously, this discourse also can be induced by the critical incident itself or by feedback from the counterpart.

Language usage: turn taking

Dutch student Fleur reports how she, encouraged by postponing judgment, learned from the turn-taking behavior of her counterpart:

> **Fleur:** *The first critical moment I noticed was that my counterpart sometimes spoke over me. This was noticeable, but I tried to postpone my judgement and realized that this was a way to show me that she was really listening and paying attention to what I was saying, because she was reacting to something I was saying and sharing her input on that.*

Fleur describes that in her critical moment, her counterpart "*spoke over her*." However, she "*tried to postpone judgement*," implicitly admitting that she was judging; by postponing it, she "*realized*" that her counterpart was "joining in." Interestingly, she continues:

> *After I reflected on the interview, I noticed that while my counterpart was talking I mostly made understanding sounds, like 'uhu,' to show her I was actively listening to what she said. Furthermore, I waited until after she was done talking to refer back to something she said by asking her more questions. I thought this was an interesting difference and might be something to keep in mind for future interactions.*

In her reflection on the interview Fleur "*noticed*" that she herself prefers to take turn at a "transition relevant place." Then, pointing to "*future interactions*," she learned that "joining-in overlap" as well as taking turns at "transition-relevant places" can be successful, as indicated by her assessment of the interview: "*The interview flowed very nicely, and it really felt like I got to know her quite well.*"

Fleur's postponing of judgment was successful; she learned during her interaction to accept the possibility of different explanations of behavior and different behavioral alternatives. Her text shows, inspired by CIC, an "adaptive discourse."

Differences: personal difference

Dutch student Gwen reports how she, by taking perspective, made her interview successful and interesting:

> **Gwen:** *He said that he was very happy with me saying that, and he went along explaining things about his country's history. However, it being very interesting, I did not really see the point of this for the interview. This felt for me as the second critical incident, because I did not know how to make the conversation go back to the interview topic, this made me feel somewhat insecure, because I did not want to make it seem I was not interested. I tried to look at the situation from his perspective and*

> *it occurred to me that he probably just wanted to expand my cultural knowledge, since he before said that he feels like that is very important.*

Gwen reports that she and her counterpart were unsure how to begin the interview and that she took the lead with some "*little talk*" about how they were dealing with the pandemic. This made "*both more comfortable…to start with the interview.*" Then she asks her counterpart why he came to the Netherlands to study. After his answer, which was that he wanted to study many different cultures because companies are becoming more global, she let him know that she "*was amazed*" by this explanation. Then she experiences the critical incident above. According to her report, her "taking perspective" resulted in "*a very nice conversation and at some point, he mentioned the universities in his country and we made our way back to the interview topic.*"

After taking responsibility for a smoothly running interview, Gwen experiences a dilemma: Her counterpart is eager to explain about his country and she wants to continue the interview, but without appearing uninterested. Although she does not reflect on this dilemma or asks her counterpart about "the point" of his information for the interview, she decides to take perspective and goes along with his explanation about his country. Then she experiences not only a "*nice conversation*" but also that her goal, the interview topic, is saved.

This case shows that between the two intended aspects of a CIC experience—being "successful" and "comfortable"—an interesting dilemma can arise when not both are taken into account. Gwen's focus is primarily on her goal of being "successful," and she is tempted to give up the goal of being "comfortable." As she was unsure about finding a way to take over the lead from her counterpart again without making it uncomfortable for him, she decided to "go with the flow." She adapted by taking perspective, and in the end reported experiencing a successful and comfortable exchange.

Differences: difference of opinion

International student Julia was discussing the pandemic measures with her counterpart:

> **Julia:** *I experienced one critical incident when we shared our thoughts on the online classes. When I asked my counterpart how she thinks the university was dealing with the pandemic, I expected she has a mostly positive perspective on it, like I do. I was very surprised when it turned out she did not and for a moment I did not know what to say. I had*

> *heard Dutch students complaining about the online setting before, but I had always thought they were overreacting. While listening to her perceptions, I soon realized however that my inability to empathize with these complaints was due to my failure of taking the other's perspective.*

Julia describes a disconfirmed expectation. She is "*very surprised*" and needs a moment of "cognitive" or perhaps "social" silence. Her initial judgment of complaining Dutch students are overreacting, changed during this silence. I observe that her key text "*while listening to her perceptions*" made Julia understand that her counterpart had apparently sound reasons for her complaints. According to her following description, Julia could and did take "*the other's perspective,*" stating that for her counterpart it was "*more difficult to preserve a study-social life balance*" than it was for her. Julia then declares that once she understood, she *"so much*" wanted her counterpart to know that she empathized with her that she, Julia, interrupted her to tell her that. Julia refers to this interrupting as her second critical incident because she did it to rescue her "image." She judges her action as "*failure in showing respect*," but her counterpart did not mind the interruption.

I refer to "*listening to her perceptions*" as key because it describes a vital part of what CIC means. This "listening" apparently includes that Julia leaves her original judgment behind and opens up to other perspectives. It appears that dimensions of CIC can be complementary, as in this instance of "Judgment" and "Perspective." Julia's text shows an "adaptive" discourse; that she subsequently admits to "*failure in showing respect*" is clear proof of the process character of CIC. During an interaction something can happen that causes a mistake; then it is important to regain one's focus on CIC.

Differences: cultural difference

International student Bram begins his report by stating that he and his counterpart were going along very well, having started their exchange talking about the pandemic and their need to go to the gym again. Then he experiences his critical incident which concerns a "*shocking*" difference between the Netherlands, where he is staying, and the low income home country of his counterpart:

> **Bram:** *I asked him about a major difference between his country and the Netherlands. 'It's just awesome that you can bike anywhere you want and the lanes are perfect! And you don't get robbed when you stop at a traffic light', he told me with a smile. I first thought he was joking but he really meant it. I was speechless for a moment, felt confused and asked*

> *him to elaborate on that. This critical incident was a really shocking one. For me, it is unthinkable to get robbed in daylight at a traffic light but for him it seemed special that it wasn't the case here. Afterwards we talked about our friends and …*

Bram's first reaction is an "affective silence;" he then asks for more information. After receiving it, he declares that this information is "*unthinkable*" for him and then he continues that they "*talked about their friends*." The "*shocking*" information seems to be an "*incident*" in an otherwise "smooth" conversation, which seems confirmed by his report that "*to sum it up*" they had a "*very pleasant talk*." There are no other critical incidents. Bram mentions their shared interests and that they are both "*very familiar with international environments*." He concludes: "*I think that this familiarity made it possible for me to act according to the CIC, be respectful and designed this interview more like a dialogue between friends*."

I note four elements in his report. First, he says that his counterpart conveys the shocking difference "*with a smile*." Apparently, though the content of the information may be shocking, the way it is delivered is not; after all, in the contact they had had so far they "*got along very well*." Second, even after the "elaborated" information, Bram apparently does not express his judgment about the "*shocking unthinkable*" difference. Third, he acts according to CIC as the result of his existing "familiarity" with international environments. In Bram's opinion, his international experience made it possible for him to act according to CIC. Fourth, the effect he mentions of acting according to CIC is respectful—a "*dialogue between friends*."

Although it may seem that Bram is minimizing the "*unthinkable*" difference he experiences, I see him actually reporting an "adaptive" discourse that is based on responsibility for the contact he wants. He is focused in the first place on a "friendly" dialogue relationship with his counterpart. By not judging, he is "embedding" the critical incident within that relationship. Interestingly, this process for Bram begins with his "*international experience*." By becoming aware that he and his counterpart share experience in international environments, he discovers that acting according to CIC is more "natural" for him and this leads to his conclusion that he could engage in a respectful dialogue. He acted, according to Bhawuk (1998), as a "cross-cultural expert".

In summary, in "adaptive" discourse, students acknowledged responsibility for critical incidents that happened during their interactions and with the help of CIC were able to adapt their behavior "on the spot." It was mainly the reactions and

feedback of the counterparts that generated critical incidents, and the (critical) self-reflection of the students that made it possible to adapt their behavior. The most helpful CIC dimension was Responsibility, followed by Judgment and Perspective.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examine what the students learned when practicing CIC in an intercultural interaction. Proceeding from the critical incidents the students experienced during their interactions, I analyzed their reflection reports. I identify four characteristic discourses of the students that related to their coping with critical incidents: "defense," "superiority," "self-critical," and "adaptive." These discourses differ in the way dimensions of CIC are reported. This final section addresses the lessons learned about the reflections of the students and about CIC and experiential learning.

The first lesson is that experiential learning of CIC requires the dimensions Responsibility and Judgment. In the "defense" discourse and the "superiority" discourse, the students externalized Responsibility for the critical incidents. Their reflections were not about their own behavior, and it seems that the externalization got in the way of students' thinking about improving their behavior.

Regarding specific CIC dimensions, I note that in the "defense" discourse, not taking Responsibility and in the "superiority" discourse, not postponing Judgment were the central issues that hindered the learning process. Externalization also influenced the use of the other dimensions of CIC. For instance, when in his "defense" discourse Dutch student Casper blamed culture for his interrupting, he did not relativize Culture and when in his "superiority" discourse Dutch student Sam judged the language proficiency of his counterpart to fall short, he did not show Respect. In both examples, the dimension of Perspective did not work because of a somewhat complacent stance. Nevertheless, also in this discourses the students show concern for their counterparts. They appear to be aware that CIC is about paying attention to the counterpart.

The second lesson relates to the crucial role of critical self-reflection for CIC as well as for learning. Acknowledging Responsibility and postponing Judgment make the reflections different, as shown in "self-critical" and "adaptive" discourse. Although these discourses are similar, they differ in one important aspect: the correction of behavior during the interaction. In the "self-critical" discourse, students reported

that they discovered how they should have acted or how they will act using CIC, when they again encounter certain critical incidents. In the "adaptive" discourse, students reported that they not only discovered an alternative reaction to the critical incident, but also acted upon it using specific CIC dimensions.

In the context of intercultural experiential learning (Landis and Bhawuk, 2020) (see Chapter 3) "reflective observation" is deemed important for learning from experiences. Both literature and my analysis make clear that mere reflection is not enough. According to literature, to be effective for learning new practices the reflection must be critical and particularly self-reflective (Vachon & LeBlanc, 2011; Kolb & Kolb, 2018). In my analysis, the differences between "defensive" and "superiority" discourses on the one hand, and "self-critical" and adaptive" discourses on the other show that not every reflective observation is necessarily self-reflective. The key element in the last two discourses is critical self-reflection, in which students acknowledge their own roles in and responsibility for the critical incidents in their intercultural interactions. This self-reflection enables them to learn from their experiences. The students who authored "self-critical" discourses *told* what they had learned, and the students who authored "adaptive" discourses *showed* what they had learned.

Regarding self-reflection on the CIC dimensions, results show that the reports mention nearly all dimensions to improve or adapt behavior, with "showing respect" and "taking perspective" mentioned most often. "Showing respect" is mentioned mainly in language-related incidents, and "taking perspective" is mentioned mainly in incidents about differences. In combination, mentioning of these dimensions show sensitivity for diminishing arbitrary status differences that come from perceptions of competition or perceptions of incompetence that may occur in intercultural contact.

In short, through critical self-reflection, the students who authored "self-critical" and "adaptive" discourses learned how to learn from their experiences. Moreover, in their experiential learning process they learned how specific CIC dimensions can be helpful for coping with critical incidents that can occur during intercultural interactions.

The third lesson is that there is no linear development path from "defensive" to "adaptive" discourse; these discourses do not "represent" a development from "lay person" to "intercultural expert" as in Bhawuk's (1998) General Model of Cross-Cultural Expertise Development or from "denial stage" to "adaptation stage," as in

M.J.Bennett's (1986) Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. These models do point to developments in which, in terms of my analysis, use of "defensive" or "superiority" discourse in intercultural contact would diminish and the use of "self-critical "or "adaptive" discourse would grow with more experience.

The meaning of this lesson is illustrated by the cases of Fleur. In her first interview, she used "adaptive" discourse and in her second interview, she used "superiority" discourse. Rather than indicating that in her second interview she unlearned what she learned in the first, her discourses indicate that in every new intercultural interaction and during such an interaction things can happen which are disturbing for one or both participants. Then it is necessary to "regain" CIC dimensions. All dimensions of CIC must be "at hand" during an interaction to be able to understand what went wrong and then adapt one's behavior.

The fourth and final lesson is that CIC is not about performing a checklist; it is an interaction process in which both participants can be interculturally effective, that is, experience themselves as successful and comfortable (Van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2000). This "both participants" aspect asks for ongoing attention to the counterpart and the goal of the interaction. My analysis shows that sometimes, possibly influenced by the course context, the focus of the students on the performance of CIC is greater than their attention on their counterparts. This demonstrates a misunderstanding of CIC as a communication technique, with execution of the dimensions of CIC as a kind of checklist. It ignores the cyclical process character of CIC. As mentioned in Chapter 3, CIC is an interaction of two participants in which mutual feedback on experiences leads to reflection, understanding, and behavior/action. This mutual feedback makes the reflection effective for learning (Kolb, 1984; Anderson, 1990).

Limitation

In this chapter, I show what students learned when they tried to practice CIC. I show that in a didactical and experiential learning process, in this case a workshop and an exercise (see Chapter 4), one can acquire enough CIC expertise for further experiential learning. However, CIC is intended for organizations that seek to support a "climate for inclusion" (Nishii, 2013), which raises questions about the effects of using such learning interventions in organizational contexts. Only research on CIC in organizations can answer that question.

Nevertheless, I suggest that the critical incidents experienced by the students in our sample are not fundamentally different from the critical incidents that can occur in

organizations that are experiencing increased diversity. Because of the paradoxes that accompany such diversity (Nadiv & Kuna, 2020), critical incidents about misunderstandings, stereotypes, proficiencies, and opinions about procedures and rules can be expected. Accordingly, learning CIC also is worthwhile for managers and employees of organizations. When introducing CIC to organizations, it is important, along with an adequate training implementation process (Salas et al., 2012), to pay attention to the lessons drawn from this research.

Chapter 6

Discussion

Discussion

In this final chapter I summarize the results of my research, present my reflections, conclusions and limitations, and provide suggestions for further research.

The aim of this study is to contribute to the improvement of intercultural contact within organizations by developing the new concept of Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC). I define this concept as an interaction that is perceived as positive and rewarding by both majority and minority participants. The novelty of the concept is its focus on behavior in interaction. My central question is: What can people do to make their intercultural contacts constructive?

This question positions this study within the realm of theoretical notions such as "intergroup contact" and "acculturation" as well as in "inclusive climate of organizations." Literature on intergroup contact indicates that positive outcomes for cultural minority groups are less evident than for majority groups, and it remains unclear what is happening within the interactions (Paluck et al., 2019). It is therefore imperative to pay particular attention to both participants in intercultural contact, as well as to the content of the interaction.

Recently, authors have advocated analysis of acculturation using a dynamic approach in the context of concrete interactions because these interactions shape acculturation outcomes (Van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2022). However, it remains unclear which behaviors are required in these interactions.

Similarly, an inclusive climate is "characterized by a collective commitment to integrating diverse cultural identities as a source of insight and skill" (Nishii, 2013, p. 1754), implying that people from different cultural groups can perceive that their specific contributions are appreciated at every level of the organization (Mor Barak, 2015). The positive outcomes for organizations are the result of "the first person's talent and the second person's talent (being) coupled with the interaction between them" (Mor Barak, 2015, p. 86). Despite the significance of these (everyday) dyadic interactions, literature does not explain how they should be shaped.

The CIC concept is intended to fill these gaps. In this dissertation, I present CIC as a specific method of intercultural communication, starting from the idea that culture is not static but is constructed in interaction.

Answering the question

I divided my central question into four subquestions. The first is how can this CIC concept be conceptualized? The second and third questions regard the practical utility of this theoretical concept. The second question is: How can CIC be measured? The third is: How can CIC be learned? The fourth question is: What happens when people practice CIC?

Conceptualizing Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC)

In Chapter 2, I conceptualized CIC, exploring and adding to intergroup, acculturation, and inclusion literature. It first examined the main causes of problematic intercultural contact, identifying the following categories of problems: problems related to the implicit operation of stereotypes and prejudices, problems related to an essentialist approach to culture and cultural identity, and problems related to perceived competition, perceived incompetence, and perceived arbitrary status differences. These problems lead to "critical incidents," anxiety, uncertainty, and even conflict based on perceived cultural differences.

Second, I identified the five dimensions that are required to cope with these critical incidents and make intercultural contact constructive. The implicit operation of stereotypes and prejudices is connected to the way our social behavior is controlled by our impulsive or reflective brains (Strack & Deutsch, 2004). The highly efficient impulsive brain activates behavior based on implicit (stereotypical) associations, whereas the reflective brain steers us toward intentional behavior based on values and personal beliefs—which requires more time and energy (Devine, 1989). As a consequence, to diminish the influence of stereotypes and prejudices in an intercultural contact, it is imperative to activate the reflective brain. I defined "taking responsibility" (Responsibility) for the contact as the behavioral dimension necessary to accomplish that goal. That is, contact participants must deliberately intend to have a positive and rewarding contact. However, Responsibility is not sufficient to reduce the influence of prejudices; a deliberate decision to "postpone judgment" (Judgment) also is necessary. This decision is not meant to avoid prejudices because this invokes attention to possible prejudices (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). Responsibility and Judgment are the two behavioral dimensions of CIC that are intended to reduce the influence of (implicit) prejudices during the interaction.

Those who take an essentialist approach to culture run the risk of identifying people according to their cultural backgrounds, that is assuming that they "belong" to their cultures. This approach leads to the phenomenon of "category salience" in

intercultural contact, which causes anxiety and uncertainty (Paolini et al., 2010) and makes contact troublesome. A person's cultural identity is not solid, and during intercultural contact people redefine and construct their own cultural identities and those of others (Ward, 2004). It is important not to "lock" people into their cultural identities (Zanoni et al., 2010) nor to deny these identities (Berry, 2006b); instead, the focus should be on the individual identity of the other. The behavioral dimension that corresponds to this approach is "take cultural differences into perspective" (Culture) or to "relativize cultural differences."

Problems regarding perceived competition, perceived incompetence, and perceived arbitrary status differences are explained by the Stereotype Content Model (Fiske et al., 2002). This theory describes how perceived status and perceived competition in society can lead to specific stereotypical prejudices about other groups. For example, "envious bias" occurs when another group's status is perceived as high and its cooperation as low, and "paternalistic bias" occurs when another group's status is perceived as low and its cooperation as high. These prejudices are linked to the perceived goals of other groups: Are they perceived to be cooperative or competitive, and are they competent to achieve their goals (Fiske et al., 2002; Caprariello et al., 2009). To reduce the influence of these stereotypical prejudices in intercultural contact, it is necessary to correct possible perceptions of competition and incompetence, both of which are connected to perceived arbitrary status differences. To correct the perception of competition, it is important to "take the perspective of the other" (Perspective), because this diminishes stereotyping and perceptions of competition (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000, Sammut & Gaskell, 2009). To correct perceptions of incompetence, it is important to "show respect" (Respect) for the other's competence because this can prevent paternalistic bias. Together, Perspective and Respect are meant to diminish the influence of arbitrary status differences between the participants in intercultural contact.

Third, I examined the implications of the different perspectives and positions of participants in intercultural contact. A first implication concerns majority and minority members. Their differing (status) positions in society make some dimensions challenging. According to their different perspectives and realities, members of lower-status groups have a need to be respected, whereas members of higher-status groups have a need to be liked (Fiske et al., 2009). As a consequence some CIC dimensions can be challenging when members of these groups interact. For higher-status group members, Respect, to correct possible perceptions of incompetence may be a challenge, whereas for lower-status group members Perspective, to correct possible perceptions of competition may be a challenge.

These complementary challenges must be met to diminish the perceptions of arbitrary status differences between contact partners. These challenges also give a specific meaning to the Responsibility dimension of the two contact participants.

A second implication concerns the organizational setting, as in this setting hierarchical status differences interfere with arbitrary status differences. For managers, Judgment may be especially challenging because judging their employees is their task. For employees, Responsibility can be challenging because the hierarchical status differences put them in a dependent position. The challenges faced by majority and minority members within organizations are even more intricate, as they may encompass both hierarchical and minority/majority challenges.

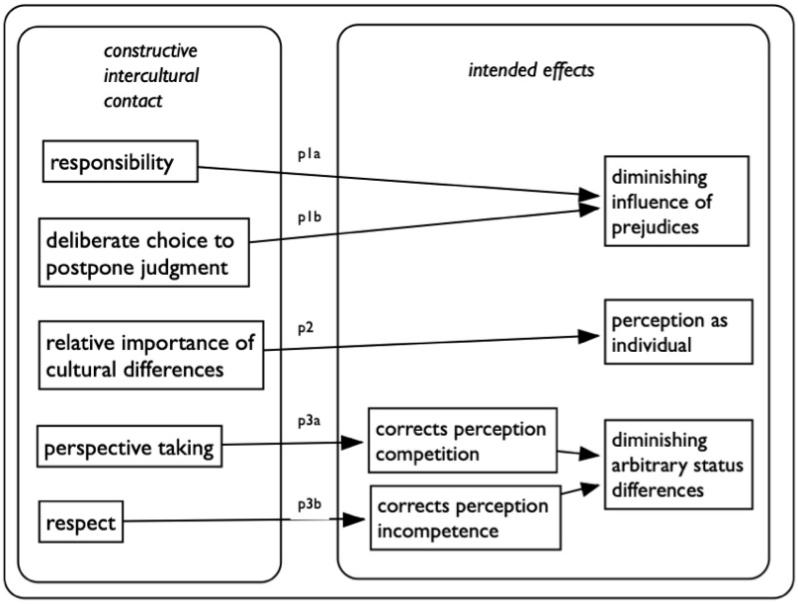

Figure 1. Model of CIC

It is evident that CIC is not easy, and it is likely that one or both participants in an intercultural contact regularly will make errors and let their impulsive brains take over. However, it is always possible to correct errors and regain CIC by attending to a corresponding CIC dimension. Therefore, CIC concerns the interaction process itself rather than the interaction outcome.

The five behavioral dimensions of Responsibility, Judgment, Culture, Perspective, and Respect represent this new concept of CIC (See Figure 1). A specific flow of actions,

based on this concept, can make intercultural contact positive and rewarding for both participants.

Measuring Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC)

After establishing theoretically that CIC comprises five distinct behavioral dimensions, in Chapter 3 I described the construction of a CIC scale (CICS) to make this concept usable for organizations.

Existing cross-cultural management (CCM) scales usually measure intercultural competencies or the outcomes of diversity management measures (Dwertmann et al., 2016; Barmeyer et al., 2019). Some scales, such as the Short Form Measure of Cultural Intelligence (SFCQ) (Thomas et al, 2015) and the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) (Van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001) also contain behavioral dimensions. Nonetheless, the emphasis is on measuring attitudes or competencies. A new scale that accounts for the interaction itself instead of the capacity to interact is a worthwhile addition. The CICS is developed to measure the behavior of participants in intercultural contact.

In line with Hinkin (1998), the first step in the development process of the new scale was creation of an item pool that contained as many items as possible that operationalize the dimensions of CIC. This process involved first extensively examining existing scales and selecting and rephrasing suitable items. The second step was the creation of new items. Some assessment sessions with the research team resulted in the rephrasing of items in terms of behavior. The resulting 59 items were tested in a pilot study with a sample of 75 students Business Administration at Radboud University, followed by a final assessment session. This process resulted in a questionnaire with 42 items, 9 for each dimension, except for Respect, with 6 items.

This questionnaire was presented in 2019 and 2020 to two different samples (200 and 218) of bachelor students Business Administration in international classes at Radboud University. When the internal consistency of the dimensions was estimated, the reliability of Responsibility, Judgment, and Respect appeared too low (α's between .57 and .62). This led to a new adaptation of the questionnaire. The final CIC list comprised of 36 items, which were used in a third sample (204) of bachelor students Business Administration in 2021.

For a nomological network, a system of related constructs for testing validity, the questionnaire included the short form of the MPQ (40 items), the SFCQ (10 items)

and the CCE (4 items). As related yet distinct constructs, these scales provide an opportunity to assess the convergent, discriminant and criterion-related/predictive validity of the CICS; 7 items from the Social Desirability Scale (Fischer et al., 1993) to assess for socially desirable responses also were included.

The validity of the scale was established first by estimating the internal consistency of CIC total and the dimensions by Cronbach's α. Next, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) determined construct validity. Convergent validity was established by examining the correlations between CIC and its dimensions as well as the correlations between the CICS and the related scales. Discriminant validity was found by a factor analysis that compared the dimensions of CIC with the highest correlated subscales of SFCQ and MPQ. The CCE appeared to be not usable to establish the criterion-related/predictive validity. Finally, the scale was tested negative for socially desirable responding.

The result is the new, validated CICS with 15 items, 3 for each dimension. These items describe the behavior of contact participants in terms of (cognitive) actions. The factor loadings of dimensions on the scale range from .64 to .83, indicating their relative impact on the desired outcome of the constructive interaction. The scale measures respondents' perceptions of their behavior when they are in intercultural contact.

Learning Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC)

In Chapter 4, I addressed the question of how to learn CIC in two ways; first I devised a suitable learning program and second, I evaluated its effectiveness.

In a review of literature on intercultural learning, I found that intercultural learning is a long-term process of cross-cultural competence development (Landis & Bhawuk, 2020). People develop intercultural sensitivity or competence in several stages, acquiring the ability to understand and deal with cultural differences; M.J.Bennett (1986) and Bhawuk (1998) argue that intercultural training is required to progress through these stages. Such training has several distinguishing characteristics. It must include cognitive, behavioral, and affective goals, aiming for outcomes in the fields of knowledge, skills, and attitude (Fowler and Yamaguchi, 2020; Landis & Bhawuk, 2020). Furthermore, both didactic and experiential processes are necessary (Fowler and Yamaguchi, 2020). Finally, for an ongoing learning process beyond a training setting, Kolb's experiential learning cycle is important (Kolb, 1984; Landis & Bhawuk, 2020). This last aspect refers to Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory of Development (Kolb 1984) which also distinguishes various stages,

including an acquisition stage comprising a didactical and experiential process, and a specialization stage for continual learning from experiences.

I developed an (online) learning program containing these characteristics. This CIC program includes cognitive, behavioral and affective goals. These goals aim at developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes, with "knowledge" referring to knowledge regarding the dimensions of CIC, their background, and their significance, "skills" referring to actual interactional behavior, and "attitudes" referring to account for the other contact participant's perspective. I ensured that the program contains both didactic and experiential processes. The didactic process comprises a lecture on CIC and its dimensions, along with a video that offers suggestions for exercise, information, and reflection on the background of CIC. The experiential process comprises an assignment to engage in CIC practice and to write a reflective paper detailing the experiences in this process. This program reflects Kolb's "acquisition stage of development" (1984). Subsequently, CIC, as it comprises action and reflection, can be instrumental to getting participants to the "specialization stage of development" (Kolb, 1984). With CIC, every new intercultural contact can be a learning experience; learning CIC is a continuous process.

The CIC program was a distinct component of a course on Cross-Cultural Management and Communication (CCMC) for bachelor-level students of Business Administration at Radboud University. I evaluated the effectiveness of the CIC program as a learning intervention, using a standard pretest–post-test design, with a sample of 180 bachelor students from the course. I conducted the initial measurement at the commencement of the course and conducted the second measurement after the completion of the reflection reports, after 4 to 5 weeks. To measure the learning effect, I used the paired samples t-test of total CIC and of each dimension. I used the set of items with the highest reliability for every dimension (α's from .67 to .92).

The result was a small but significant positive effect, that is, students learned about CIC. At the very least, this result suggests that the students acquired a greater understanding of the significance and value of CIC and its dimensions in intercultural contact. However, because of the absence of a control group, we have only indications but no hard evidence for the effectiveness of the intervention.

For reasons of to the improved reliability of the questionnaire, this measurement is based on data from 2021. However, data from similar samples of bachelor-level students were provided in 2019 and 2020. In 2019, the questionnaire exhibited

some deficiencies in reliability. The didactic process comprised then a live lecture on CIC and a live workshop, with exercises and a presentation for reflection. In 2020, the questionnaire was identical to that of 2019, but because of Covid-19 measures, the intervention was conducted online, as in 2021. I expected a greater impact of a live workshop than of an online video. Therefore, I also expected that the measurement results for 2019 would show more significant differences between measurements than in 2020 and 2021. However, despite the differences in questionnaire and didactic process, the results of the measurements indicated that the CIC intervention had a generally positive effect in all samples. I concluded that neither the form of the didactic process nor the questionnaire were decisive for the learning effect, but the experiential process, along with the main content of the didactic process which was the repeated information about CIC.

Practicing Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC)

In Chapter 5, I addressed the research question: What did the students learn from their experiences when they tried to practice CIC in an intercultural interaction? I conducted a qualitative analysis of the reflection reports that the students wrote for the experiential part of the learning intervention.

CIC can be regarded as a specific way of intercultural communication; I have positioned it within a social constructionist approach. Literature on intercultural communication, based on a social constructionist approach, considers cultural groups to be "discursive constructions" (Piller, 2012). This discursive characteristic suggests a connection between intercultural communication and discourse analysis (Monaghan, 2012). Accordingly, I conducted an analysis of the reflection reports of the students using discourse analysis. I examined the students' reports, that is, their constructions of intercultural contact. The analysis centered on two aspects: (1) how the students discussed their coping with the critical incidents they experienced, and (2) how they reported on their learning from their experiences.

As a result, I identified four specific discourses of the students regarding their coping with critical incidents: "defense," "superiority," "self-critical," and "adaptive."

In the "defense" discourse, not taking Responsibility was hindering the students' learning from experiences; they were externalizing the causes of critical incidents. This externalization also hindered their effective use of other dimensions of CIC. In the "superiority" discourse, not postponing Judgment was the issue that hindered their learning and adequate use of other dimensions. Nonetheless, students with these discourses expressed some concern about their counterparts.

The "self-critical" and "adaptive" discourses were similar, except for one aspect: when to adapt or correct their behavior. By acknowledging responsibility for their critical incidents, the students with these discourses discussed how they should solve their critical incident next time, or even now. They indicated they had learned from their experiences.

Occasionally, a student reported on two different critical incidents, first in "adaptive" discourse and then in "superiority" discourse. This indicates that the execution of CIC can be interrupted, for example, by surprising or unexpected reactions of the counterpart. As an effect, the learning also becomes interrupted.

My analysis also revealed that students' attention was sometimes focused on the process—that is, the performance of CIC—at the expense of the attention for the counterpart. They appeared to be using CIC as a checklist.

These results lead me to conclude that the CIC dimensions of Responsibility and Judgment are essential to learning. Mere reflection is not enough to learn from experiences; critical self-reflection is necessary. Learning CIC is not a linear process that moves from "weak" to "strong." When disruptive errors occur, resulting in new critical incidents, the process of improvement must be resumed; CIC is not a checklist to achieve optimal performance.

Reflection

In this section I will reflect upon the contributions of my empirical research to the theoretical definition of CIC.

I defined CIC as an interaction process during which five dimensions operate together to make an intercultural encounter positive and rewarding for both participants. Responsibility is meant to activate the reflective brain system to enable deliberate choices. Judgment refers to the deliberate choice to diminish the influence of implicit prejudices. Culture intends to recognize the individuality of others rather than perceiving them as representatives of their culture. Perspective is meant to diminish the perception of the interaction as a competition and Respect to correct perceptions of incompetence by acknowledging the abilities of the other. The dimensions are equally important for the intended results of the interaction process, but they have different "tasks". After the decision to take Responsibility for the interaction, every dimension may be required to engage in or resume a

constructive interaction. For example, when a cultural issue causes discomfort or anxiety, putting culture into perspective can help overcome the issue and perceive the counterpart as an individual. When the counterpart behavior is giving cause for concern, taking perspective can be helpful in continuing the interaction without a competitive attitude.

What happens to this theoretical picture as a result of the empirical parts of this dissertation?

First, The CIC Scale depicts a model in which all dimensions are separate mediating constructs, confirming that all dimensions are needed for the intended results. These intended results of CIC concern better cooperation between organization members of different cultural backgrounds, or more generally, an inclusive climate in the workplace (Nishii, 2013; Guillaume et al., 2014). In the CIC Scale, I found that the factor loadings of the five dimensions, reflecting the contribution of the dimensions in CIC, are different. The factor loadings are .64 (Responsibility), .83 (Judgment), .68 (Culture), .80 (Perspective), and .70 (Respect). The highest loading dimensions are Judgment and Perspective. This means that diminishing the influence of implicit prejudices in general, and diminishing specific prejudices, i.e. perceptions of competition, have the highest impact in CIC. Judgment and Perspective appear to be the most influential dimensions, meaning that they contribute most to the intended results of CIC.

Second, my analysis of the reflection reports on practicing CIC in Chapter 5 showed the crucial role of critical self-reflection for learning CIC. Chapter 4 showed that along with a didactic process, an experiential learning process is essential for learning CIC. Experiential learning takes place in a continuing cycle of action, experience and reflection (Barmeyer, 2004; Kolb & Kolb, 2018). My analysis in chapter 5 identified four specific discourses on coping with critical incidents, and all display reflections on experiences with critical incidents. In two discourses ("defense" and "superiority") learning was hindered because responsibility was externalized. Nevertheless, these discourses also showed reflections. Occasionally, the reflection was about culture; more often, the reflections were about the counterpart. This demonstrates that mere reflection is not sufficient for learning from experience (Kolb, 1984, 2018; Fowler & Yamaguchi, 2020; Barmeyer, 2004). Within the other two discourses ("self-critical" and "adaptive"), the experience of critical incidents prompted questions about personal behavior. These discourses clarify that reflection should be (critical) self-reflection, showing the intention to critical examine one's personal behavior.

Third, a review of the CIC scale items clarifies why (critical) self-reflection is crucial for learning CIC as self-reflection is inherent in CIC. Many items appear to be inviting self-reflection. When, for example, during an intercultural encounter, participants "ask for feedback" or "ask before judging," two items of the CIC questionnaire (see Appendix 5), they are reflecting on their behavior and experiences and trying to understand why their counterparts are (re)acting as they do. This shows that CIC can be an interaction in which asking for feedback and receiving it make self-reflection an effective experiential learning moment (Kolb, 1984; Anderson, 1990). This self-reflective characteristic of CIC adds a relevant aspect to the definition of CIC above because it means that every CIC interaction can provide an experiential learning experience. CIC potentially includes an experiential learning process.

I conclude that the theoretical definition of CIC is substantiated by the empirical studies. That is, my results show that to learn and perform CIC, it is necessary to take Responsibility for the interaction. Depending on the critical incidents experienced, all dimensions can help to keep the contact constructive. Judgment and Perspective appear to have the most impact on the intended results of CIC. As items of CIC are inviting self-reflection, every CIC interaction can become an experiential learning process through a sequence of action, experience and self-reflection. Therefore, for learning CIC is (critical) self-reflection required. Then, performing CIC means that the learning process can continue in every intercultural contact. CIC provides the opportunity to learn from every interaction.

Contributions

The scientific contribution of my research relates to the content of CIC. Whereas most research on intercultural contact focuses on its outcomes, specifically its prejudice-diminishing effects (Colvin & Volet, 2014; Prati et al., 2021; Lutterbach & Beelman, 2023), my research focuses on what transpires *during* the contact. The new concept of CIC consists of five behavioral dimensions that describe what participants from different cultural backgrounds can do to make their interactions positive and rewarding for both participants. CIC represents not the outcome, but rather the process of an intercultural interaction.

This process always begins with an act of will, a deliberate choice to take Responsibility for the interaction. For making and maintaining the contact constructive, all dimensions are necessary. Which dimension is required depends on the type of critical incident that occurs.

The societal contribution of this dissertation is its introduction of the CICS, which operationalizes the theoretical notion of CIC into an instrument that organizations can use to improve intercultural contacts within their organization and between organizational members and clients. The scale measures participants' perceptions of their behavior during interactions.

Several items from the CICS are actions that can be viewed as invitations to self-reflection. This gives CIC the character of an experiential learning process because of the sequential action-experience-reflection cycle. Every interaction can present an opportunity to improve behavior. Moreover, those who learn CIC within organizations can continue their learning as a society member outside their organizations.

With some caution because I did not conduct my empirical research in a hierarchical and organizational context, I present some possible implications for organizational practice. First, the CICS could provide organizations with a picture of their everyday intercultural interactions in the context of an inclusive climate. Repeated measurements could help monitor potential improvements in such a climate. When the CICS is combined with an existing and validated inclusion scale, several outcomes may be possible, such as possible discrepancies between self-perceptions and perceptions of other contact participants, or the measure of experiences of inclusion at the workgroup level. Second, the CICS has the potential to serve as a "priming" instrument for constructive intercultural behavior. That is, answering the scale items may serve as "reminders" of how to behave constructively. Third, the main elements of the CIC learning program, a didactic process combined with an experiential process and reflection, provide concrete opportunities for integrating learning CIC within organizational and other training programs.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

This dissertation has some limitations. The first is the relatively small number of respondents in the quantitative empirical research that is the basis for scale development and effect measurement. Second, I conducted the research with samples of students in a specific course setting, whereas CIC is intended for organizations. Possibly, samples from organizations with hierarchical status differences in a professional setting would lead to different results.

For example, in Chapter 2 I provided some theoretical implications for the dimensions of CIC, depending on the position of CIC participants in society. Majority

members have to deal with different challenges than minority members, and within organizations different hierarchical positions pose additional challenges. To deal with these challenges requires attention and time (Devine, 1989), which possibly not always matches with organizational priorities. Therefore, this kind of differentiation within the concept can and should be studied in samples from organizations.

This issue also may have an impact on scale development. An example regarding the CICS may clarify the potential impact of hierarchical status differences within organizations on the resulting scale. Among the students, the item "I ask for feedback" loaded .73 on the dimension of Responsibility, whereas the item "I give feedback" loaded .54 and was not included in the scale. It is possible that "I give feedback" would receive a higher loading within an organization because it is more aligned with what managers do. However, it may be also the result of the challenge that postponing judgment poses to managers. This effect does not necessarily change the scale fundamentally, but differences may be possible.

A suggestion for further research relates to what the CICS measures, namely respondents' perceptions of their behavior in intercultural contact. It remains unclear how their counterparts perceive this behavior, or how respondents perceive their counterparts' behavior. Such a "counterpart scale," developed and tested within the professional setting of organizations, would be an interesting addition. It would complement the CICS by also measuring people's experiences and perceptions of the behavior of their counterparts.

Regarding learning effects, organizational samples also may have an impact, as a professional setting provides different learning opportunities than a course setting. It is relatively straightforward to incorporate a CIC learning program into a Cross-Cultural Management and Communication course, and I suggest to incorporate it in a standard business administration curriculum. However, in the professional context of an organization, it is likely that the integration of a suitable CIC training will require special attention from management and human resources managers. In this context, I suggest that to introduce CIC within an organization, an adequate training implementation process is required (Salas et al., 2012). It should include a didactic CIC program that contains the previously described "lessons," such as the importance of Responsibility and assurance that CIC can be regained after errors.

Because organizations seek to know the results of their investments in staff training, before conducting introductory CIC training, it would be advisable to use the CICS to assess the starting situation and then measure the possible effects of

the training using the CICS in combination with an existing inclusion scale to learn the influence of CIC on team and organization.

It also is possible to conduct a specific CIC workshop, then measure the effects in a pretest–post-test design using a control group. However, it is uncertain that such a research program would be acceptable in an organizational context, given the demanding conditions.

Finally, as mentioned in Chapter 3, organizations can use the CICS to identify and track which dimensions of CIC require training or management attention, to enhance everyday intercultural interactions.

6

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Appendixes

Appendix 1

CIC Questionnaire

In an intercultural contact at my workplace…….

Responsibility:

1. I give feedback
2. I show how I experience the interaction
3. I ask for feedback
4. I ask how my counterpart experiences the interaction
5. I (re)act to ensure a pleasant encounter
6. I show responsibility for the contact
7. I make clear that I want a useful interaction
8. I let my counterpart take the lead (-)

Judgment:

9. I show sincere interest in my counterpart
10. I control my impulses
11. I listen open-mindedly
12. I focus on what my counterpart means
13. I (re)act intuitively (-)
14. I count to 10 before reacting
15. I ask before judging
16. I postpone judging

Culture:

17. I take cultural differences into account
18. I ignore the cultural background of my counterpart (-)
19. I keep in mind that my culture differs from my counterpart's culture
20. I ignore cultural differences (-)
21. I put culture into perspective
22. I put my own culture first (-)
23. I ask what is required in terms of my counterpart's culture

Perspective:

24. I imagine how I would react if I were the other person
25. I try to listen as if I were the other person
26. I imagine myself to be in the position of the other person

27. I imagine how the other person experiences the contact
28. I try hard to consider the matter from both sides
29. I try to see things through the other person's eyes

Respect:

30. I show awareness of the other person's qualities
31. I doubt the other person's competence (-)
32. I (re)act helpfully
33. I treat the other person as competent
34. I show the other person my appreciation
35. I show trust in the other person's agency
36. I take care of my counterpart

(-) = items in reverse

Appendix 2

Fit indices for CIC dimensions

	RMSEA (<.07)	90% CI (.00, .08)	SRMR (< .05) (acc. =.08)	NNFI (≥ .95) (acc. >.80)	CFI (≥ .95)	GFI (≥ .95)
Responsibility	.05	.00, .10	.03	.97	.98	1.00
Judgment	.10	.04, .16	.04	.86	.93	1.00
Culture	.23	.18, .29	.07	.72	.86	.99
Culture 2	.00	.00, .10	.02	1.00	1.00	1.00
Perspective	.07	.02, .12	.02	.98	.99	1.00
Respect	.00	.00, 08	.03	1.00	1.00	1.00

Appendix 3

CIC dimensions with items, alphas, and factor loadings

	Items	*factor loadings CFA*
Responsibility	*1. I ask for feedback*	.73
	2. I ask how my counterpart experiences the interaction	.68
	3. I make clear that I want a useful interaction	.58
	4. I show responsibility for the contact	.52
	5. I show how I experience the interaction	.56
	6. I give feedback	.54
	Alpha	**.77**
Judgment	*1. I ask before judging*	.70
	2. I listen open-mindedly	.58
	3. I show sincere interest in my counterpart	.45
	4. I focus on what my counterpart means	.46
	5. I postpone judging	.53
	Alpha	**.67**
Culture	*1. I take cultural differences into account*	.83 (.79)
	2. I keep in mind that my culture differs from my counterpart's culture	.79 (.76)
	3. I ignore the cultural background of my counterpart	.58 (.67)
	4. I put culture into perspective	.68 (.68)
	5. I ignore cultural differences	.54 (.63)
	Alpha	**.83**
Perspective	*1. I imagine myself to be in the position of the other person*	.88
	2. I imagine how I would react if I were the other person	.82
	3. I try to see things through the other person's eyes	.81
	4. I try to listen as if I were the other person	.75
	5. I try hard to consider the matter from both sides	.74
	6. I imagine how the other person experiences the contact	.65
	Alpha	**.90**
Respect	*1. I show the other person my appreciation*	.71
	2. I (re)act helpfully	.62
	3. I take care of my counterpart	.62
	4. I show awareness of the other person's qualities	.59
	5. I show trust in the other person's agency	.52
	Alpha	**.74**

Culture (….) = values before connecting residuals item 3 and 5.

Appendix 4

Discriminant Validity CIC dimensions

	Components	
Responsibility/MPQ Open-mindedness	1	2
I ask for feedback	**.823**	.027
I ask how my counterpart experiences the interaction	**.779**	.170
I make clear that I want a useful interaction	**.716**	.144
Starts a new life easily	-.081	**.769**
Is looking for new ways to attain his/her goal	.187	**.761**
Tries out various approaches	.341	**.624**
Judgment/SFCQ Skills	1	2
I can change my behavior to suit different cultural situations and people	.041	**.782**
I have the ability to accurately understand the feelings of people from other cultures	.197	**.767**
I sometimes try to understand people from another culture by imagining how something looks from their perspective	.158	**.759**
I postpone judging	**.833**	-.054
I ask before judging	**.794**	.243
I listen open-mindedly	**.540**	.392
Culture/SFCQ Metacognition	1	2
I take cultural differences into account	**.847**	.243
I keep in mind that my culture differs from my counterpart's culture	**.823**	.278
I put culture into perspective	**.748**	.291
I am aware of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with someone from another culture	.235	**.813**
I think a lot about the influence that culture has on my behavior ant that of others who are culturally different	.327	**.769**
I am aware that I need to plan my course of action when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people	.233	**.745**
Perspective/SFCQ Skills	1	2
I imagine how I would react if I were the other person	**.912**	.103
I imagine myself to be in the position of the other person	**.855**	.243
I try to see things through the other person's eyes	**.839**	.317
I have the ability to accurately understand the feelings of people from other cultures	.147	**.852**
I enjoy talking with people from different cultures	.209	**.751**
I can change my behavior to suit different cultural situations and people	.191	**.695**

Discriminant Validity CIC dimensions Continued

	Components	
Respect/MPQ Cultural Empathy	1	2
I take care of my counterpart	**.810**	-.010
I show the other person my appreciation	**.791**	.187
I (re)act helpfully	**.735**	.211
Sympathises with others	.078	**.740**
1 Is a good listener	.106	**.727**
Enjoys other people's stories	.144	**.657**
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.		

Component 1 = CIC dimension, component 2 = highest correlating dimension of other scale

Appendix 5

All items of both measurements with α's

	Measurement	A	B
Responsibility	I give feedback	+	+
	I show how I experience the interaction	+	+
	I ask for feedback	+	+
	I ask how my counterpart experiences the interaction	+	+
	I (re)act to ensure a pleasant encounter		+
	I show responsibility for the contact	+	+
	I make clear that I want a useful interaction	+	+
	Alpha	.77	.74
Judgment	I show sincere interest in my counterpart	+	+
	I control my impulses		+
	I listen open-mindedly	+	+
	I focus on what my counterpart means	+	+
	I ask before judging	+	+
	I postpone judging	+	+
	Alpha	.67	.77
Culture	I take cultural differences into account	+	+
	I ignore the cultural background of my counterpart	+	
	I keep in mind that my culture differs from my counterpart's culture	+	+
	I ignore cultural differences	+	
	I put culture into perspective	+	+
	Alpha	.83	.75
Perspective	I imagine how I would react if I were the other person	+	+
	I try to listen as if I were the other person	+	+
	I imagine myself to be in the position of the other person	+	+
	I imagine how the other person experiences the contact	+	+
	I try hard to consider the matter from both sides	+	+
	I try to see things through the other person's eyes	+	+
	Alpha	.90	.86
Respect	I show awareness of the other person's qualities	+	+
	I (re)act helpfully	+	+
	I show the other person my appreciation	+	+
	I show trust in the other person's agency	+	+
	I take care of my counterpart	+	+
	Alpha	.74	.79
CIC	Alpha	.91	.92

Appendix 6

Overview of results for the years 2019, 2020, and 2021

Table 1 shows the main characteristics of the three samples. Because the nationality subsamples are relatively small, Russia and Georgia are grouped within Europe and the remainder are combined under Nationality 3. Although this is a very differentiated group, the numbers of different countries are so small that differentiation is not a relevant addition. Overall, the samples appear to be similar.

Table 1. Overview of sample characteristics

	N			Gender		Nationality		
	A	**B**	**A+B**	**M (%)**	**F (%)**	**1 (%)**	**2 (%)**	**3 (%)**
2019	200	188	181	84 (47)	96 (53)	113 (62)	35 (19)	32 (18)
2020	218	194	187	104 (56)	83 (44)	124 (66)	34 (18)	29 (19)
2021	213	189	180	92 (51)	88 (49)	135 (75)	34 (16)	10 (6)

Nationality 1 = The Netherlands, Aruba & Dutch Antilles
Nationality 2 = Europe incl. Russia & Georgia
Nationality 3 = Asia, Africa (2020), N&S America, Middle East incl. Turkey, New Zealand (2019, 2020) & Australia (2020)

In 2019, the didactic part of the intervention comprised a live lecture on CIC and a live workshop, with exercises and a presentation for reflection. In 2020 and 2021, this didactic part of the intervention was conducted online, because of Covid-19 measures.

Table 2. All differences (standard errors) and effect sizes of Measurement Bs minus Measurement As

	2019		2020		2021	
	B-/-A	**d**	**B-/-A**	**d**	**B-/-A**	**d**
Responsibility	.16 (.08)	.16	.23 (.06)	.26	.26 (.06)	.32
Judgment	.30 (.04)	.54	.65 (.04)	1.10	.24 (.05)	.38
Culture	.21 (.06)	.27	.21 (,07)	.22	.40 (.06)	.46
Perspective	.30 (.06)	.39	.25 (.06)	.32	.22 (.05)	.31
Respect	.09 (.04)	.16	.08 (.04)	.13	.17 (.04)	.29
CIC Total	.20 (.04)	.47	.23 (.03)	.49	.23 (.03)	.49

Cohen's d = effect size, .2 = small, .5 = medium, .8 = large

Table 2 summarizes all measurement differences (standard errors) and effect sizes of these differences of all three samples for total CIC and its dimensions. A positive difference means that respondents made progress between the measurements.

Apart from a few exceptions, overall, the differences are positive, the standard errors are similar, and generally the effect sizes are in the middle between small and medium. The effect sizes of total CIC are medium but relatively large, indicating that the difference between the live intervention of 2019 and the online interventions of 2020 and 2021 had no substantial effect on the measurement results.

The questionnaires, used for measurement, also differed. In 2021, the questionnaire was improved to provide sufficient reliable data for scale construction. However, the data from 2019 and 2020 were suitable for measurement of an intervention effect. Analysis of each CIC dimension used the set of items with optimal reliability. In every year, total CIC is composed of the items of the sets of the dimensions. As a consequence, the number of items of the two measurements are not always the same, which is acceptable because the level of analysis is the dimension and not the item.

Table 3 presents for each year the number of items and the αs of all item sets. It shows that overall the reliability improved in the second measurement and that in 2021 all αs were adequate (> .70). The exceptions are Judgment, for which the αs of all years are lower than those of the other dimensions, and Responsibility and Respect, which in 2019 and 2020 showed moderate αs.

Table 3. Number of items and reliabilities of all CIC item sets

	2019				2020				2021			
	A		B		A		B		A		B	
	items	α	items	α	items	α	items	α	items	α	items	α
Responsibility	3	.64	idem	.72	4	.62	idem	.66	6	.77	7	.74
Judgment	4	.56	3	.60	6	.51	3	.69	5	.67	6	.77
Culture	5	.81	idem	.75	5	.86	4	.77	5	.83	3	.75
Perspective	5	.83	idem	.86	6	.85	5	.87	6	.90	idem	.86
Respect	4	.60	idem	.66	4	.60	3	.55	5	.74	idem	.79
Total CIC	21	.84	20	.88	25	.87	19	.87	27	.91	27	.92

Appendix 7

Research Data Management

The quantitative data used in this dissertation were collected by questionnaires in Qualtrix. The participating respondents/students were informed on how their data were used. The qualitative data, the reflection reports of the students, were only used for analysis after consent, which a single student refused. All data are stored in a Radboud Data Repository. All data are anonymized to protect participant identities. Access to the original data will be granted to verified researchers upon request. Ethical consideration was taken into account at all times. Data will be retained for a minimum of ten years post-publication.

English Summary

English Summary

for a non-academic audience [1]

The seeds for this study were sown when I in 2007, as managing director of Osmose, participated in the biennial conference of the International Academy for Intercultural Research. I was invited by the University of Groningen to discuss Osmose's praxis. During this conference I experienced how interesting and useful scientific research on integration and acculturation is. The lectures and literature during this conference clarified for me why in society and organizations, Osmose included, intercultural contacts often were troublesome. Despite the positive intentions of the participants, mutual prejudices and stereotypes regularly made intercultural contacts difficult. Ultimately, this led to the central question of this study: What can people do to improve their intercultural contacts, or how can they make intercultural contacts constructive?

I divided this question into four separate sub-questions. First: What is a Constructive Intercultural Contact (CIC), or, how should this concept be defined? Second: How can CIC be measured to be useful within organizations. Third: How can CIC be learned? Fourth: What happens when people practice CIC? After answering these questions, I reflect in a final section on the results of this study.

Defining the new concept of CIC

Causes of problematic intercultural contact

I first examined the main causes of problematic intercultural contact. Prejudices and stereotypes are playing a crucial role here, causing feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. To explain this phenomenon several approaches are found. One is based on basic human needs such as our need for categorization of our world, combined with our need for a positive self-image. The first leads to ingroup/outgroup classifications, where ingroups are the groups we belong to and the others are outgroups. This classification is not problematic, but the combination with the second makes it so. Our self-image is influenced by the image of our ingroup. Therefore, we evaluate our ingroup more positively than outgroups and we give our ingroup a higher status than outgroups, and we do that also when it is not justified by facts. This results in biased images and prejudices regarding outgroups. Notable is that perceptions are decisive here and not necessarily real issues. These perceptions are resulting in stress and anxiety among outgroup members.

1. For an academic summary, please refer to the Discussion (Chapter 6)

A second approach is goal related. When we encounter strangers, we have two questions. (1) Are their intentions friendly/cooperative or not friendly/competitive? (2) Are they competent to fulfill their intentions? A perceived warmth or cooperation leads to likability, and a perceived competence leads to respect. Being respected and liked are important social goals for most people. The experienced structure of society is predictive here. That is, perceived status is connected to competence and perceived cooperation to liking. Someone who is perceived as having a higher status, is perceived as more competent and someone who is perceived as cooperative is perceived as more friendly. This leads to stereotypical prejudices based on perceptions of arbitrary status differences between (cultural) groups and perceived competition between (cultural) groups. These perceived stereotypical prejudices are making intergroup contacts more difficult.

A specific issue faced by cultural groups is related to acculturation. Acculturation is the process of cultural change resulting from contact between two or more cultural groups and their members. How do migrants position themselves within a new or dominant cultural environment? Two major issues are at stake: the acculturation strategies of different cultural groups in a society, and the "fit" between these strategies. Acculturation strategies are a result of valuing two goals, "cultural maintenance" and "intercultural contact". This valuation leads to strategies such as "integration", which places a high value on both, cultural maintenance and intercultural contact; "assimilation", which places a high value on intercultural contact and a low one on cultural maintenance; "separation", which places a high value on cultural maintenance and low on intercultural contact; and "marginalization", which places a low value on both. A low 'fit' between the strategies of minority cultural groups and the more dominant groups, for instance when the minority group wants integration and the majority demands assimilation, creates acculturation stress. This demand for assimilation indicates a (too) strong identification of the other people with their culture, and this impacts contacts negatively.

A noteworthy aspect of the effects of these processes is that the resulting prejudices typically function as "implicit stereotypical associations": implicitly working associations between a particular quality or behavior and a specific group or category of people. These associations develop during the socialization process within one's ingroup. They are activated by seeing someone from the other group, as well as by 'hear-say' or media. The more frequent the activation, the stronger the association grows. The implicit nature of the associations implies that one is

unaware of the fact that and how they exert an influence on one's behavior. It appears that prejudiced behavior is almost inevitable.

However, human social behavior is controlled by two parallel functioning brain systems: the impulsive and the reflective system. The impulsive system does indeed steer behavior based on implicit associations, but the reflective system steers behavior based on intentions and decisions grounded in personal beliefs and values. The reflective system is capable of overruling the impulsive system, but it requires more energy and time than the very efficient and automatic functioning impulsive system. The practical consequence of this phenomenon is that in a stressful situation or routine behavior, the impulsive system is often "in charge". To correct this, it is necessary to activate the reflective system, which requires a deliberate choice.

In summary, I have identified the following categories of issues: issues pertaining to the implicit operation of stereotypes and prejudices, issues pertaining to an approach where culture defines an individual's identity, and issues pertaining to perceptions of competition, incompetence, and arbitrary status differences. These issues are leading to "critical incidents": difficult situations characterized by anxiety, uncertainty, and even conflict based on perceived cultural differences.

Contact as solution

Much research has shown that intergroup contact reduces prejudices between groups and improves relations between these groups. That is, under the conditions that contact participants have equal status, are cooperating on a common goal, have personal contact, and there is institutional or normative support (a leading person or institution approves contacts). An extensive meta-analysis has confirmed the prejudice reducing effects and the favorable, but not essential character of the conditions. However, other research has shown that negative perceived contact is more effective at increasing prejudices than positive perceived contact is at diminishing prejudices and that the beneficial effects of contact are indeed significant for majority members, but less evident for minority members. Research also indicates that the prejudice-diminishing effects of contact are insufficient regarding ethnic and racial prejudices. It also stays unclear what happens within the contact as explanation of these differences. It appears that most research is done from majority perspective, less from minority perspective and even fewer from both perspectives.

The implication of this is, that for an intercultural interaction, to diminish prejudices and stereotypes, it is imperative to consider the perspectives of both participants. Also clarification of what occurs within the interaction is important. This led to a specification of my central question: Which behavior is required to cope with critical incidents or what can participants do to improve their intercultural interaction into a constructive one, making the contact positive and rewarding for both?

Behavior of constructive intercultural contact

The implicit operation of stereotypes and prejudices is linked to the control by our impulsive brain. As the reflective brain tends toward intentional behavior based on intentions and values, it is imperative to activate this reflective brain in order to reduce the influence of implicit stereotypes and prejudices in an intercultural contact. "Taking responsibility" (Responsibility) for the interaction is the behavioral element which is required to accomplish that. It means that contact participants make a deliberate choice, are willing to make a positive contact by diminishing the influence of prejudices. However, Responsibility alone is not sufficient to do this. A deliberate decision to "postpone judgment" (Judgment) is also imperative. Responsibility and Judgment are two behavioral elements of CIC that are intended to reduce the influence of (implicit) prejudices during the interaction. The intention is not to avoid specific prejudices, as this will draw attention to them, and what gets attention grows bigger.

Identifying people with their cultural background, for instance by requiring "assimilation", creates more easily anxiety and uncertainty, which make the contact troublesome. Someone's cultural identity is not solid, and research has shown that during intercultural contact, individuals redefine and construct their own cultural identity and that of someone else. Therefore, it is important to not 'lock' people within their cultural identity nor to deny this identity, but instead, to focus on the individual identity of the other. The behavioral element intended to make that possible is to "relativize culture" (Culture), to take cultural differences into perspective.

The last two elements are meant to reduce the influence of perceptions of competition and incompetence. "Take the perspective of the other" (Perspective) can correct the perception of competition, as taking perspective diminishes perceptions of competition and the accompanying stereotypes. To correct perceptions of incompetence, "showing respect" (Respect) can prevent paternalistic prejudice. Together, Perspective and Respect are meant to reduce the influence of arbitrary status differences between the participants in an intercultural contact (see: Figure 1).

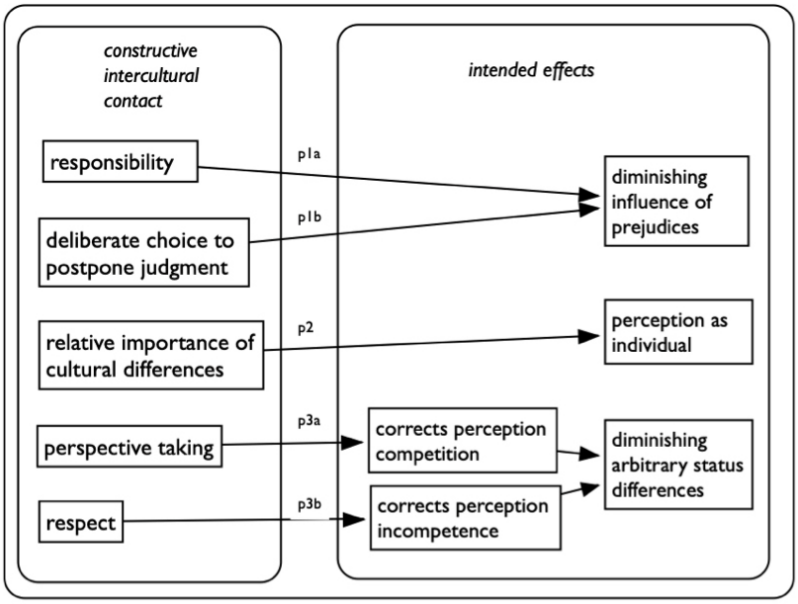


Figure 1. Model of CIC

Different cultural groups have different positions in society and different perspectives, which influence intercultural contacts. Therefore, I focused on the implications of these differences for their behavior. This led to some specifications in CIC.

A first specification concerns majority and minority members. Their different status in society makes some CIC elements more challenging. Based on their different perspectives and realities, members of lower status groups have a need to be respected, whereas members of higher status groups have a need to be liked (see above). Certain CIC elements can be especially challenging when members of these groups are in contact with each other. For higher-status group members, Respect, to correct possible perceptions of incompetence, is challenging, while for lower-status group members, Perspective, to correct possible perceptions of competition, is challenging. These complementary challenges must be met to diminish the perceptions of arbitrary status differences between the contact partners.

A second specification concerns an organizational setting, where hierarchical status differences interfere with arbitrary status differences. For managers, it may be especially challenging to postpone Judgment because judging employees is their task. For employees, it can be challenging to take Responsibility because the hierarchical status differences put them in a dependent position. The challenges

faced by majority and minority members within organizations are even more complex, being a mix of both, hierarchical and minority/majority challenges.

It is evident that CIC is not easy, and it is likely that one or both participants in an intercultural contact will make an error and let their impulsive brain take over. This does not imply that CIC has failed, as it is always feasible to correct errors and regain CIC by attending to an adequate CIC element. CIC is the interaction process itself, rather than the outcome of the interaction.

In summary, the five behavioral elements which represent the new concept of Constructive Intercultural Contact are taking Responsibility for the interaction, postponing Judgment, relativizing Culture, taking Perspective and showing Respect (see: Figure 1). A specific flow of specific actions, based on this concept, can make an intercultural contact positive and rewarding, or comfortable and successful for both participants. These specific actions will be discussed in the next section.

Measuring Constructive Intercultural Contact

CIC is meant to be useful to organizations, for instance to learn to what extent managers and employees act according to CIC. Therefore, CIC must be "operationalized", translated into concrete actions. Answering questions like: what are you doing when you take Responsibility or when you take Perspective. Therefore, to make this concept measurable, I created, with statistical methods, the Constructive Intercultural Contact Scale (CICS).

The CICS contains 15 items, 3 per element, describing the behavior of contact participants in terms of (cognitive) actions. Some examples are: "I ask for feedback" (Responsibility), "I ask before judging" (Judgment), "I put culture into perspective" (Culture), "I imagine how I would react if I were the other person" (Perspective) and "I take care of my counterpart" (Respect). The wording of the items reveals two scale characteristics. (1)The scale measures respondents' perceptions of their behavior when they are in intercultural contact. It measures what they think they do. (2) Several of the actions are invitations for reflection, for instance "I ask for feedback" and "I imagine how I would react if I were the other person".

Learning Constructive Intercultural Contact

As CIC is not easy, an important question is: 'How to learn CIC'? I addressed this question by first devising a suitable learning program, and then evaluating its efficacy.

CIC learning program

In "intercultural learning" literature, intercultural learning is regarded as a prolonged process of enhancing intercultural competence. Intercultural competence is the ability to understand and deal with cultural differences, and intercultural training is required for learning and making progress. Outcomes of such training must be in the areas of knowledge, skills, and attitude. Moreover, both didactic and experiential processes are necessary because one must be able to practice what has been learned. Furthermore, the prolonged learning process, beyond a training setting, requires Kolb's experiential learning cycle of "action-experience-reflection". According to these requirements, I created an online learning program about CIC. Online, because due to COVID-19 measures, it was not possible to execute a live program.

CIC is about behavior. This gives a specific content to the desired outcomes of the program. "Knowledge" is not knowledge of different cultures but knowledge of the elements of CIC, their background, and their significance. "Skills" are not competencies but the actual interactional behaviors, and "attitude" refers specifically to considering also the other contact participant's perspective. The didactic process comprised a lecture on CIC and its elements, accompanied by a video that offers suggestions for exercise, and again, information and reflection on the background of CIC. The experiential process consisted of an assignment to engage in CIC practice and write a reflective paper detailing the experiences.

Evaluating efficacy

I tested the efficacy of this CIC program with bachelor students in two measurements, one before the program, the second after the completion of the reflection reports (4/5 weeks). The result was a small but significant positive effect, that is, students had learned about CIC. At the very least, this result indicates that they possess a greater comprehension of the significance of CIC and its elements in intercultural contact. It was not possible to determine more specifically which behavioral elements the students had learned because a control group (a similar group of students without the CIC program) was not available. However, the student's reflection reports on practicing CIC could possibly reveal more.

Practicing Constructive Intercultural Contact

The fourth research question was: What happens when people practice CIC? More specifically, what did the students learn from their experiences when they tried to practice CIC in an intercultural interaction? To answer this question, I conducted a qualitative analysis of the reflection reports the students wrote to conclude the experiential process of the learning program.

I used Discourse Analysis, a methodology that considers language not only as a means of representing reality, but also as a means of constructing a particular reality.

This implies that I considered the students' reports not in the first place to be their representations of their contacts, but rather as their constructions of their intercultural contacts. The analysis focused on two aspects. First, how the students discussed their strategies for coping with the critical incidents they experienced. Second, how they discussed their learning from experiences. Since the students were focusing on creating a comfortable and successful interaction, they labeled every uncomfortable experience as a critical incident. As a result, I identified four specific discourses of the students concerning their coping with critical incidents: a "defense", a "superiority", a "self-critical", and an "adaptive" discourse.

An example of the defense discourse is that a student, interrupting the counterpart, "blamed" the long breaks of the counterpart. An example of the "superiority" discourse is that a student, not understanding what the counterpart responded, "blamed" the failing English language proficiency of the counterpart. In the defense discourse, not taking responsibility was hindering the learning from experiences and in the superiority discourse also not postponing judgment. In both discourses the students externalized the source of their critical incident. This also hindered the effective use of other elements of CIC. Nevertheless, students with these discourses expressed concern for their counterparts; they had learned that focus on the counterpart is important for CIC.

The self-critical and adaptive discourses are similar, except for one aspect: when to adapt or correct behavior. An example of the self-critical discourse is a student, interrupting the counterpart because of long breaks, came afterwards to the realization that this could be because in the counterpart's culture more silence is tolerated during a conversation. An example of the adaptive discourse is a student, being interrupted by the counterpart, postponed judgment and discovered that the counterpart was demonstrating engagement and sharing input in the conversation. By acknowledging responsibility for their critical incidents, the students discussed how they should address their critical incident in the future, or even now. They showed that they had learned how CIC could be beneficial in addressing critical incidents. They expressed to have learned from their experiences.

Occasionally, a student reported on two different critical incidents, first in an adaptive discourse and then in a superiority discourse. This indicates that the execution of

CIC may be interrupted, for instance, by surprising or unexpected reactions of the counterpart. As a consequence, the learning also becomes interrupted.

My analysis also revealed that students' attention was sometimes so much focused on the process, the performance of CIC, so that this went at the expense of the attention for the counterpart. It appeared that they were using CIC as a checklist.

Apart from what the students learned, these results revealed several lessons about CIC. First, the elements 'Responsibility' and 'Judgment' are essential to learning. Second, just reflection is not enough to learn from experiences; critical self-reflection is necessary. Third, learning CIC is not a linear process from 'weak' to 'strong'. Errors may always occur, which may result in new critical incidents. Then the process of learning must and can be resumed. Fourth, CIC is not a checklist for achieving optimal performance.

Conclusions

The initial conceptualization indicated that all elements of CIC hold equal importance for the interaction process. Depending on the nature of a critical incident, each element may be necessary to engage in or resume a constructive interaction. For example, when a cultural issue causes discomfort or anxiety, putting culture into perspective can help in overcoming the issue and perceiving the counterpart as an individual. In another instance, when the counterpart is giving cause for concern, taking perspective can be helpful in continuing the interaction without a competitive attitude. Generally, this picture finds confirmation, and also some specifications in the empirical parts of this dissertation.

The CIC Scale shows that all dimensions are required for CIC, but that Judgment and Perspective contribute most to results of CIC. These results are for instance a more inclusive climate in the workplace or better cooperation between employees and managers of different cultural backgrounds.

The analysis of the reflection reports of the students showed that a precondition for learning CIC is, that in a CIC interaction the reflection is self-reflection.

Finally, reviewing the items of the dimensions shows that a number is inviting self-reflection. This makes CIC into an interaction where action and reflection can alternate as required for experiential learning. Every CIC provides a learning experience.

In conclusion, to learn and perform CIC, it is required to make a deliberate choice, willing to make a positive interaction by diminishing the influence of prejudices. In the CIC model, this is achieved through taking Responsibility for the interaction. Depending on the critical incidents one experiences, all elements can help in keeping the contact constructive. Learning CIC requires an experiential process, involving a sequence of action and critical self-reflection. The learning process of CIC will then continue in every subsequent intercultural contact. CIC is a constructive interaction in which the opportunity to experiential learning is integrated, every intercultural interaction potentially can be a learning experience.

Nederlandse Samenvatting

Nederlandse Samenvatting

voor een niet-academisch publiek [2]

Inleiding

De kiem voor dit proefschrift werd gelegd toen ik in 2007, als directeur van Osmose deelnam aan de tweejaarlijkse conferentie van de International Academy for Intercultural Research. Ik was uitgenodigd door de gastheer van de conferentie, de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, om Osmoses's werk te presenteren. Tijdens deze conferentie merkte ik hoe interessant en toepasbaar wetenschappelijk onderzoek naar processen van integratie en acculturatie was. Zo verhelderden de lezingen en literatuur van deze conferentie voor mij waarom in de samenleving en bij veel organisaties, Osmose incluis, interculturele contacten zo vaak moeizaam verliepen. Ondanks de goede intenties van de gespreksdeelnemers, bemoeilijkten wederzijdse vooroordelen en stereotypen de interculturele contacten. Uiteindelijk kwam hier de centrale vraagstelling van dit proefschrift uit voort: wat kunnen mensen doen om hun interculturele contacten te verbeteren, constructief te maken?

In eerste instantie beantwoordde ik deze vraag, via uitgebreide literatuurstudie, met een - theoretische - definitie van een Constructief Intercultureel Contact (CIC). Om dit theoretische concept praktisch bruikbaar te maken deden zich vervolgens de vragen voor: hoe kan CIC gemeten en hoe kan het geleerd worden? Een laatste vraag was: wat gebeurt er binnen een interactie wanneer mensen CIC in praktijk proberen te brengen? In de verschillende hoofdstukken van dit proefschrift zijn deze vragen beantwoord op basis van data, verkregen van bachelor studenten van de faculteit Managementwetenschappen van de Radboud Universiteit. Ik vat de hoofdstukken hierna kort samen.

Definitie van CIC

Oorzaken van problematisch intercultureel contact

Om te beginnen zocht ik in de literature naar de belangrijkste oorzaken die intercultureel contact zo lastig kunnen maken. Vooroordelen en stereotypen spelen hierbij een belangrijke rol doordat ze gevoelens van ongemak en onzekerheid veroorzaken. Voor het ontstaan en de werking van vooroordelen en stereotypen zijn verschillende verklaringen gegeven. De eerste verklaart het ontstaan van vooroordelen en stereotypen uit enkele menselijke basisbehoeften, namelijk de behoefte om de wereld te ordenen, te categoriseren in combinatie met de behoefte aan een positief zelfbeeld. De eerste behoefte leidt onder meer tot de indeling van

2. Voor een wetenschappelijk georiënteerde samenvatting, verwijs ik naar de Discussie (Hoofdstuk 6)

onze sociale omgeving in groepen, de groepen waartoe we zelf behoren, onze in-groepen, en de groepen van de anderen, de out-groepen. Op zichzelf is dit nog niet problematisch. Echter, ons zelfbeeld wordt beïnvloed door het imago van onze in-groep. De behoefte aan een positief zelfbeeld heeft dan tot effect dat we onze in-groep positiever waarderen dan de out-groepen en ook een hogere status toekennen, ook als daar geen objectieve reden voor is. Dit leidt tot misvattingen en vooroordelen over out-groepen. Het is belangrijk hierbij op te merken dat het hier gaat om "beelden", percepties, en niet per se om reële feiten. Deze percepties veroorzaken stress en ongemak bij outgroepen.

Een tweede verklaring geeft percepties over bedoelingen van anderen als bron van vooroordelen en stereotypen. Als we vreemdelingen tegenkomen stellen we onszelf twee vragen. (1) Zijn hun bedoelingen vriendelijk/coöperatief of onvriendelijk/competitief? (2) Zijn ze competent om hun bedoelingen uit te voeren? Gepercipieerde vriendelijkheid of coöperatie, leidt tot sympathie en gepercipieerde competentie tot respect. Sympathiek gevonden en gerespecteerd worden zijn belangrijke sociale doelen voor mensen. Gebleken is dat de structuur van de samenleving hier voorspellende werking heeft. Dat wil zeggen, gepercipieerde status wordt verbonden met competentie en gepercipieerde coöperatie met sympathie. Iemand wiens status als hoger wordt gepercipieerd, wordt geacht meer competent te zijn en iemand die als coöperatief wordt gezien, wordt geacht vriendelijker te zijn. Het betreft hier arbitraire statusverschillen, bijvoorbeeld gebaseerd op een meerderheids- of minderheidspositie. Deze percepties van arbitraire statusverschillen en van competitie tussen groepen leiden tot stereotypische vooroordelen en maken contacten tussen leden van deze groepen moeilijker.

Een specifiek vraagstuk voor culturele groepen heeft te maken met acculturatie. Dat is het proces van culturele verandering als gevolg van contacten tussen verschillende culturele groepen en hun leden. Het gaat over de wijze waarop migranten zich positioneren binnen een nieuwe, dominante culturele omgeving. Dit gebeurt via de beantwoording van twee vragen. (1) In hoeverre wil ik mijn eigen cultuur behouden? (2) In hoeverre wil ik contact met mensen uit deze nieuwe cultuur? Beantwoording leidt tot verschillende "acculturatie strategieën". Bij "integratie" worden beide vragen positief beantwoord en bij "marginalisatie" allebei negatief. "Separatie" is positief op cultuurbehoud en negatief op contact en "assimilatie" is positief op contact en negatief op cultuurbehoud. Complementair hieraan beantwoorden ook de mensen van de dominante cultuur deze vragen met vergelijkbare strategieën als resultaat. Wanneer blijkt dat de strategieën van

de verschillende groepen niet met elkaar overeenstemmen, bijvoorbeeld wanneer de minderheidsgroep wil integreren, maar de meerderheid verlangt assimilatie, ontstaat "acculturatiestress". De assimilatie-eis duidt op een (te) sterke identificatie van de ander met diens cultuur. Acculturatiestress heeft een negatieve invloed op contacten tussen leden van de verschillende groepen.

Een belangrijk kenmerk van de uit deze bronnen voortkomende vooroordelen is dat ze werkzaam zijn als "impliciete stereotype associaties", een onbewuste associatie tussen een kenmerk of gedrag en een bepaalde groep of categorie mensen. Dit soort associaties ontstaan al tijdens onze socialisatie en ze worden geactiveerd als we iemand van die groep zien en als we erover horen of lezen via de media. Hoe frequenter de activering plaatsvindt, des te sterker wordt de associatie. Het impliciete karakter van de associaties zorgt ervoor dat we ons er niet van bewust zijn dat en hoe deze vooroordelen ons gedrag beïnvloeden. Het lijkt er dus op dat bevooroordeeld gedrag onvermijdelijk is.

Echter, ons sociaal gedrag wordt aangestuurd door twee parallel werkende systemen in ons brein, het impulsieve en het reflectieve brein. Het impulsieve brein stuurt gedrag snel en efficient op basis van impliciete associaties (bij gevaar nemen we zonder na te denken de benen). Het reflectieve brein stuurt ons gedrag op basis van intenties en besluiten, ingegeven door wat we belangrijk vinden. Dit reflectieve brein is in staat de sturing van ons gedrag "over te nemen", maar dat vergt wel meer energie dan het zeer efficiënte en snel reagerende impulsieve brein. Dat verklaart waarom bij routinematige werkzaamheden en wanneer we onder stress bezig zijn, het impulsieve brein "in charge" is. Om dit te corrigeren moet het reflectieve brein worden geactiveerd en daarvoor is aandacht en een bewuste keuze nodig.

Samengevat, bij intercultureel contact doen zich kwesties voor die (1) voortkomen uit de impliciete werking van vooroordelen en stereotypen, (2) te maken hebben met een (te) sterke identificatie van anderen met hun cultuur, en (3) samenhangen met percepties van competitie, competentie en willekeurige, arbitraire status-verschillen. Deze kwesties leiden tot "incidenten", lastige situaties die gekenmerkt worden door onzekerheid, angst of zelfs conflict vanwege de gepercipieerde culturele verschillen.

Contact als oplossing

Gebleken is dat contact tussen (leden van) verschillende groepen leidt tot vermindering van vooroordelen en tot betere relaties tussen die groepen. Tenminste, als de volgende voorwaarden vervuld worden: de deelnemers in het contact

hebben dezelfde status, ze werken samen aan eenzelfde doel, hun contact is persoonlijk (niet uitsluitend zakelijk), en er is "normatieve ondersteuning", dit laatste betekent dat een leidend persoon of institutie het contact van belang acht. Niet alleen verminderen vooroordelen over de andere contactdeelnemer, maar ook over diens (out)groep en zelfs over andere (out)groepen. Maar ook is gebleken dat negatief ervaren contact effectiever is in het versterken van vooroordelen, dan positief ervaren contact in het verminderen ervan. Tevens blijken de gunstige effecten van contact vooral op te treden bij leden van meerderheidsgroepen en veel minder bij leden van minderheidsgroepen. Bovendien treden de gunstige effecten aanmerkelijk minder op aangaande etnische en culturele vooroordelen en wordt niet duidelijk wordt wat er gebeurt tijdens het contact wat de verschillen zou kunnen verklaren. Het meeste onderzoek naar deze effecten blijkt te zijn gedaan vanuit het perspectief van de meerderheid, weinig vanuit dat van de minderheid en nog minder vanuit het perspectief van beiden.

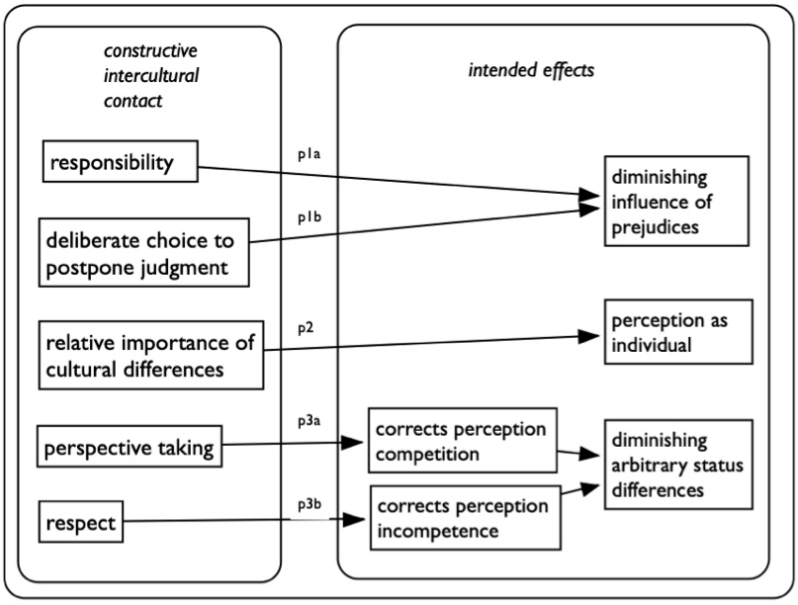
Dit alles suggereert dat wil een intercultureel contact vooroordelen en stereotypen verminderen, het cruciaal is om het perspectief van beide contactdeelnemers "mee te nemen". Ook is belangrijk duidelijk te maken wat er gebeurt binnen zo'n interactie. Mijn centrale vraag wordt dus wat specifieker: Wat kunnen de deelnemers in een interculturele interactie doen om deze constructief te maken, zodat een prettig en succesvol contact ontstaat voor allebei? Anders gezegd, welk gedrag is nodig om zodanig om te gaan met incidenten dat door beide deelnemers het contact als positief ervaren kan worden.

Gedrag behorende bij CIC

Ons impulsieve brein stuurt ons gedrag op basis van de impliciet werkende stereotypen en vooroordelen. Ons reflectieve brein stuurt op basis van intenties en waarden. Om de invloed van vooroordelen en stereotypen op ons gedrag te verminderen tijdens intercultureel contact, moeten we dus ons reflectieve brein activeren. "Neem verantwoordelijkheid voor het contact" (Verantwoordelijkheid) heb ik gedefinieerd als het gedragselement dat hiervoor zorgt. Het betekent hier dat de deelnemers in het contact een bewuste keuze maken, een positief contact willen door de invloed van vooroordelen te verminderen. Echter, Verantwoordelijkheid is niet genoeg om dat te bewerkstelligen, daarvoor is ook een besluit nodig om een "oordeel uit te stellen" (Oordeel). Verantwoordelijkheid en Oordeel samen zijn erop gericht tijdens de interactie de (impliciete) invloed van vooroordelen te verminderen. Dus niet om concrete vooroordelen te verminderen, want dan krijgen die aandacht en "aandacht doet groeien".

Mensen vereenzelvigen met hun cultuur, door bijvoorbeeld assimilatie te eisen van nieuwkomers, benadrukt het anders-zijn met grotere kans op bezorgdheid en onzekerheid en daarmee wordt vervolgens contact moeilijker. Iemands culturele identiteit is niet onveranderlijk. Onderzoek heeft uitgewezen dat mensen, wanneer ze intercultureel contact hebben, hun eigen culturele identiteit en ook die van de ander herdefiniëren en bijstellen. Het is daarom belangrijk mensen niet in hun cultuur "op te sluiten" noch hun culturele achtergrond te ontkennen, maar te focussen op hun individualiteit. Het gedragselement om dit mogelijk te maken is "cultuur relativeren" (Cultuur), culturele verschillen in perspectief zien.

De laatste twee gedragselementen van CIC beogen percepties van competitie en incompetentie te corrigeren. Ze dragen daarmee bij aan het verminderen van de invloed van arbitraire statusverschillen. "Je verplaatsen in de ander" of "het perspectief van de ander innemen" (Perspectief), vermindert percepties van competitie en de bijbehorende stereotypen. Om percepties van incompetentie te corrigeren is het "tonen van respect" (Respect) nodig omdat dit een paternalistische houding helpt voorkomen. Kortom, Verantwoordelijkheid, Oordeel, Cultuur, Perspectief en Respect vertegenwoordigen de vijf gedragselementen van CIC. Zie Figuur 1.



Figuur 1. Model van CIC

Verschillende culturele groepen hebben verschillende posities in de samenleving en daarmee ook verschillende perspectieven die van invloed zijn op hun contacten. Om die verschillende perspectieven "mee te nemen" is het nodig enige specificaties aan te brengen in de CIC gedragselementen. De verschillende status van leden van meerderheids- en minderheidsgroepen binnen de samenleving maakt enkele CIC elementen extra uitdagend. Voor leden van groepen van lagere status is gerespecteerd worden belangrijk en voor leden van groepen met hogere status is het belangrijk om positief gewaardeerd, sympathiek gevonden te worden. Voor een CIC tussen hen brengen deze verschillende behoeften verschillende uitdagingen met zich mee. Voor mensen met hogere status is extra aandacht nodig voor het tonen van Respect om percepties van incompetentie te corrigeren. Voor mensen met een lagere status is Perspectief innemen extra belangrijk om percepties van competitie te corrigeren. Als het lukt deze twee complementaire uitdagingen het hoofd te bieden kunnen de arbitraire statusverschillen tussen de contactdeelnemers verminderen. Een tweede specificatie betreft een organisatorische setting, waar de hiërarchische statusverschillen interfereren met arbitraire statusverschillen. Voor managers kan Oordeel, dat wil zeggen "oordeel uitstellen", extra lastig zijn omdat beoordelen van medewerkers hun taak is. Voor medewerkers kan het extra lastig zijn Verantwoordelijkheid voor het contact te nemen vanwege hun afhankelijke positie binnen de hiërarchische setting. Het moge duidelijk zijn dat voor mensen van verschillende culturen en dus van meerderheid en minderheden, de uitdagingen binnen organisaties nog complexer zijn.

Dit alles maakt CIC niet gemakkelijk om te doen en het mag dan ook worden verwacht dat gedurende het interactieproces een of beide contactdeelnemers de aandacht verliezen waardoor hun impulsieve brein de sturing overneemt. Dat wil echter niet zeggen dat CIC mislukt is, want het is altijd mogelijk het proces te hervatten door het reflectieve brein weer te activeren en met een van de gedragselementen een "vergissing" te herstellen. CIC is niet het resultaat van de interactie, maar het proces van de interactie.

Samengevat, de vijf gedragselementen, die samen het nieuwe concept CIC vormen, zijn Verantwoordelijkheid nemen voor de interactie, Oordelen uitstellen, Cultuurverschillen relativeren, het Perspectief van de ander innemen en Respect tonen. Specifieke gedragingen, gebaseerd op dit concept, kunnen een intercultureel contact positief en bevredigend, prettig en succesvol maken voor beide deelnemers. Welke die specifieke gedragingen zijn komt aan de orde in de volgende paragraaf.

Meten van CIC

CIC is bedoeld voor organisaties, bijvoorbeeld om te weten te komen in welke mate managers en medewerkers van verschillende culturele herkomst constructief met elkaar samenwerken. Dat vereist dat het concept CIC "geoperationaliseerd" wordt, vertaald in concrete acties. Duidelijk moet worden wat je moet doen als je Verantwoordelijkheid neemt of het Perspectief van de ander inneemt. Met behulp van statistische methoden ontwikkelde ik een schaal die CIC meetbaar maakt, de Constructief Intercultureel Contact Schaal (CICS).

De CICS omvat 15 items, 3 per element, die het gedrag beschrijven van de contact-deelnemers in termen van (cognitieve) acties. Enkele voorbeelden zijn: "ik vraag feedback" (Verantwoordelijkheid), "ik stel vragen voordat ik oordeel" (Oordeel), "cultuur is voor mij van relatief belang" (Cultuur), "ik stel me voor hoe ik zou reageren als ik de ander was" (Perspectief) en "ik heb aandacht voor de ander" (Respect). De formulering van de items laat twee aspecten van de schaal zien. (1) De schaal meet wat de respondent denkt te doen tijdens intercultureel contact, het gaat om de perceptie van de respondent over diens gedrag. (2) Verschillende items nodigen uit tot reflectie, zoals "ik vraag feedback" of "ik stel me voor hoe ik zou reageren als ik de ander was".

Leren van CIC

Omdat CIC niet gemakkelijk is om te doen, is een belangrijke vraag: Hoe kun je CIC leren? Om die vraag te beantwoorden heb ik eerst een passend leerprogramma ontwikkeld en vervolgens gemeten of dat ook het beoogde resultaat oplevert.

CIC leerprogramma

In de "interculturele leren" literatuur wordt intercultureel leren omschreven als een langdurig verbeteringsproces van interculturele competentie. Dat is het vermogen om culturele verschillen te begrijpen en ermee om te gaan. Om dit te leren en voortgang te boeken is training onontbeerlijk. Zo'n training moet resulteren in kennis, vaardigheden en houding. Hiervoor is een didactisch leerproces van kennisoverdracht vereist alsook een experientieel leerproces, een proces van ervaringsleren. De trainee moet in de gelegenheid zijn in de praktijk te brengen, te oefenen wat geleerd is. Voor het langdurige verbeteringsproces na de training, wordt de leercyclus van "actie-ervaring-reflectie" van Kolb belangrijk geacht. Op basis van deze vereisten heb ik een online leerprogramma gemaakt. "Online" omdat vanwege Covid-19 een live-programma niet mogelijk was.

CIC gaat over gedrag en niet over competentie, over wat je doet en niet over wat je kunt. Dat geeft een specifieke inhoud aan de beoogde resultaten van het leer-

programma. “Kennis” betekent niet kennis over andere culturen en dergelijke, maar kennis over de elementen van CIC, wat ze beogen te doen en waarom ze belangrijk zijn. “Vaardigheden” zijn hier geen competenties, maar het feitelijke interactie gedrag. “Houding” verwijst hier naar het rekening houden met het perspectief van de ander. Het didactisch leerproces behelsde een college over CIC en de elementen ervan, een videofilm die naast suggesties voor oefeningen ook, opnieuw, informatie en reflectie over CIC bevatte. Het experientiele proces bevatte een dubbele opdracht, (a) CIC in praktijk te brengen en (b) een reflectie verslag te schrijven over de ervaringen uit deze praktijk.

Ik testte de effectiviteit van dit programma met bachelor studenten in twee metingen, de eerste voorafgaand aan het programma, de tweede na afronding van de reflectieverslagen (4/5 weken). Resultaat was een klein, maar significant positief effect, hetgeen wil zeggen dát de studenten over CIC geleerd hadden. Ze toonden meer begrip van de betekenis van CIC en de elementen ervan voor intercultureel contact. Het was jammer genoeg niet mogelijk in dit onderzoek statistisch vast te stellen wát, welk gedrag, de studenten geleerd hadden omdat een “controle- groep” (een vergelijkbare groep studenten die het CIC programma niet hebben gevolgd) niet beschikbaar was. Maar de reflectieverslagen over de praktijkervaringen van de studenten geven enig inzicht in wát ze geleerd hebben. Dat komt in de volgende paragraaf aan de orde.

CIC in de praktijk

Mijn laatste onderzoeksvraag was: wat gebeurt er wanneer mensen proberen CIC in praktijk te brengen? De vragen over meten en leren van CIC zijn beantwoord met kwantitatieve (statistische) methoden. Deze laatste vraag heb ik beantwoord door de reflectieverslagen van de studenten over hun ervaringen met CIC, met kwalitatief onderzoek te analyseren.

Ik gebruikte daarvoor Discourse Analyse, een methode die taal niet alleen beschouwt als middel om de werkelijkheid weer te geven, maar ook als een middel om een specifieke werkelijkheid te construeren. (Een voorbeeld van deze “sociale constructie van de werkelijkheid” biedt de ervaring dat, na jarenlange communicatie in woord en geschrift over publieke voorzieningen van zorg en overheid in termen van een “commercieel discourse”, als commerciele dienstverlening, nogal wat burgers zich gedragen als “klanten” deze voorzieningen.) Ik beschouwde daarom de verslagen van de studenten niet op de eerste plaats als weergave van hun contacten, maar vooral als hun constructies ervan; met hun taal, de woorden in hun verslagen construeerden ze hun eigen specifieke interculturele contacten.

De analyse was gericht op twee aspecten: (1) hoe de studenten hun strategieën beschreven waarmee ze hun incidenten, hun lastige situaties het hoofd boden, en (2) hoe ze hun leerervaringen beschreven. Omdat de studenten bezig waren met de opdracht een prettig en succesvol contact te hebben, benoemden ze elke onprettige ervaring als incident, ook als het niet met cultuurverschil te maken had. Hieronder beschrijf ik eerst het hoe en wat van het leerproces van de studenten, daarna volgt een korte beschrijving van wat deze analyse me geleerd heeft over CIC.

Uiteindelijk identificeerde ik vier kenmerkende discoursen waarmee de studenten probeerden hun incidenten de baas te worden: een "verdedigend", een "superieur", een "zelf-kritisch" en een "adaptief" discours. Een voorbeeld van het verdedigend discours is dat een student die de gesprekspartner interrumpeert, dit wijt aan de lange pauzes van de gesprekspartner. Een voorbeeld van het superieure discours is dat een student die de gesprekspartner niet kan verstaan, dit wijt aan de Engelse taalvaardigheid van de gesprekspartner die minder zou zijn dan de eigen taalvaardigheid. In beide discoursen wordt de Verantwoordelijkheid voor het "incident" geëxternaliseerd en in het superieure discours wordt tevens een Oordeel niet uitgesteld. Dit had tot gevolg dat voor deze studenten deze ervaringen geen leermomenten waren. Bovendien werden ook andere elementen van CIC gehinderd. Toch gaven ook deze studenten wel blijk van gerichtheid op hun gesprekspartner, ze hadden wel geleerd dat dit voor CIC belangrijk is.

Het zelf-kritische en adaptieve discours zijn gelijk op één aspect na, wannéér het gedrag te verbeteren. Een voorbeeld van het zelf-kritische discours is van een student die de gesprekspartner interrumpeerde vanwege diens lange pauzes, maar zich achteraf realiseerde dat dit samen zou kunnen hangen met de grotere tolerantie voor stiltes in de cultuur van de gesprekspartner. Een voorbeeld van het adaptieve discours geeft een student die, geïnterrumpeerd door de gesprekspartner, een oordeel daarover uitstelt en dan ontdekt dat die gesprekspartner dit deed uit betrokkenheid bij het onderwerp en graag eigen ervaringen wilde delen. Hun verantwoordelijkheid voor de incidenten erkennend beschreven deze studenten hoe ze in de toekomst met een incident zouden omgaan, respectievelijk hoe ze dat tijdens de beschreven interactie gedaan hadden. Beschrijvend wat ze geleerd hadden van hun ervaringen, lieten ze zien dat ze hadden geleerd hoe CIC kon helpen incidenten het hoofd te bieden.

Incidenteel rapporteerde een student over een eerste contact in een adaptief discours en over een tweede in een superieur discours. Dit betekent niet dat deze student is "achteruitgegaan" wat betreft CIC. Het laat zien dat tijdens elke

interactie er iets onverwachts kan gebeuren waardoor het CIC proces, en zo ook het leerproces, onderbroken wordt. Tevens viel soms op dat de aandacht van studenten zozeer gericht was op het procedureel goed uitvoeren van CIC, dat dit ten koste ging van de aandacht voor de gesprekspartner. Ze leken CIC als een soort checklist te gebruiken.

De analyse van de reflectieverslagen leverde ook enkele lessen over CIC op. Ten eerste, dat Verantwoordelijkheid en Oordeel essentieel zijn voor het leren van ervaringen. Ten tweede, dat reflectie als zodanig niet voldoende is om te leren, maar dat kritische zelfreflectie nodig is. Ten derde, dat het CIC ervaringsleren niet een lineair proces is van zwak naar sterk, maar dat in elk contact vergissingen tot nieuwe incidenten aanleiding kunnen geven. Dan kan het CIC proces weer hernomen worden. Ten vierde, CIC is niet een checklist voor een "perfecte uitvoering".

Conclusies

In de definitie van CIC worden de elementen als gelijkwaardig beschouwd, alle vijf zijn even belangrijk voor het interactieproces. Afhankelijk van de aard van het zich voordoende incident, kan elk element nodig zijn om tot CIC over te gaan of om CIC te hervatten. Bijvoorbeeld, als cultuur tot een problematische situatie leidt, kan Cultuur helpen om de individuele identiteit van de gesprekspartner te zien. Of, een ander voorbeeld, als de gesprekspartner wordt ervaren als paternalistisch, kan Perspectief helpen de interactie voort te zetten zonder een competitiegevoel. In het algemeen wordt dit - theoretische - beeld bevestigd en nader gespecificeerd in de empirische delen van deze dissertatie.

De CIC Schaal laat zien dat alle dimensies nodig zijn voor CIC, maar dat Oordeel en Perspectief het sterkst bijdragen aan de resultaten van CIC. Zulke resultaten kunnen zijn een inclusiever klimaat op het werk of betere samenwerking tussen medewerkers en managers van verschillende culturele herkomst.

De analyse van de reflectieverslagen van de studenten liet zien dat een voorwaarde om CIC te leren is, dat tijdens een CIC interactie de reflectie zelf-reflectie is.

Tenslotte, een beschouwing van de items laat zien dat een aantal uitnodigt tot zelf-reflectie. Dit maakt CIC potentieel tot een interactie waar actie en reflectie elkaar kunnen afwisselen zoals vereist bij ervaringsleren. Elk CIC kan een leerervaring zijn.

Concluderend, CIC leren en toepassen vereist eerst en vooral een bewuste keuze, de wil om het contact positief te maken door de invloed van vooroordelen

te verminderen. In het CIC model wordt dit bereikt door het element Verantwoordelijkheid nemen voor de interactie. Afhankelijk van de incidenten die ervaren worden, helpen alle elementen om het contact constructief te maken of houden. Het leren van CIC vereist een experientieel proces van actie en zelfreflectie. Wanneer dit plaatsvindt bij de toepassing van CIC kan elk intercultureel contact een nieuw leerproces betekenen. CIC kan zo een constructieve interactie zijn waarin ervaringsleren geïntegreerd is.

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