Effective Leadership across Cultures

Achieving Intercultural Excellence

13

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13.1 Introduction

Organizational leaders, as the most essential drivers of mission, policy, and practice, need a particular mindset and skillset in order to be effective in their roles. During times of organizational prosperity or crisis, stakeholders (including employees and shareholders) rely on leaders for motivation, direction, and accountability. In a strategically connected world of global business, leading others effectively and efficiently requires additional knowledge, skills, and attitudes beyond traditional leadership competencies that work well in localized contexts. Furthermore, technological advances are forcing contemporary organizations to adopt new methods, such as different means of communication and new forms of human-machine cooperation, in order to remain competitive and to survive. As a result, effective leaders are becoming increasingly vital in the organizational context. Leadership is considered "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse 2019, p. 5). Engaging successfully in this complex process in a culturally and generationally diverse work setting thus demands intercultural competence (IC) of today's organizational leaders (Akdere and Hickman 2018). In this chapter, we define *intercultural* as being inclusive of but not limited to interaction across national differences, since much recent scholarship expands the term to ethnic, gender, linguistic, socioeconomic, generational, religious, and other aspects of culture that do not align neatly with national borders (Jameson 2007). IC is vital whether the application is international in scope or involves local cultural diversity. The capacity for

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IC is especially important if leaders are to attend to the varying needs of their followers and motivate them to reach their full potentials. Without IC, leaders will not have the ability to influence followers throughout the depth and breadth of their organizations as they will not be able to thoroughly understand and connect the diverse motivational and attitudinal needs of their followers who are culturally different from themselves.

We believe there is a significant gap in the existing literature on leadership theories and approaches commonly applied in today's organizational settings, as the theoretical underpinnings associated with leadership do not incorporate a dimension for IC. In this chapter, we explore leadership theories and practices through the lenses of intercultural excellence within the context of an interconnected world. Our chapter first provides an overview of the various leadership theories and approaches, followed by an introduction to models of the components of IC (Deardorff 2009) as well as of its development and maintenance (Acheson and Schneider-Bean 2019). We then shift our focus to concrete recommendations on how leaders lacking IC can learn to interact more effectively with their followers who come from different cultures. Within this section, we examine via organizational case studies how effective leaders process and bridge across cultural differences as part of their daily work to develop and foster an organizational culture that values and supports all organizational members, including those who are ethnic, generational, racial, and gender minorities. In each section, we also provide prompts to help readers apply recommendations through individual reflection or group discussion. We conclude our chapter by calling for a reexamination of existing leadership theories and the development of new models that would theoretically incorporate and empirically identify IC as part of the leadership processes.

13.2 Theoretical Frameworks

Myriads of scholars from a wide range of fields (e.g., management, psychology, communication, and more) have theorized human developmental processes. Models of development, however, often exist in disciplinary silos, uninformed by discussion in relation to other relevant constructs. In this section, therefore, we intend to synthesize various frameworks from leadership and intercultural studies by bringing them into conversation with each other to begin to build a theoretical foundation for leading with intercultural excellence.

13.2.1 Leadership Development

As a result of globalization and technological advances in organizations, the field of leadership has evolved from early stages that emphasized the trait approach to leadership in the early twentieth century into cultural approaches to leadership in the twenty-first. The trait approach focuses on innate qualities and characteristics of great societal influencers

(Stogdill 1948), while more recent frameworks tend to emphasize skills and abilities leaders can intentionally develop (Katz 1955). In addition, the current leadership literature includes many major theories of leadership, including:

- The behavioral approach, which focuses on the actions leaders perform and the ways in which they treat their followers (Blake and Mouton 1964);
- The situational approach, in which leaders flexibly adapt to the demands of different contexts (Hersey and Blanchard 1969);
- The path-goal theory of aligning leaders' styles with the characteristics of followers, making pragmatic decisions based on organizational goals (House 1971);
- The leader-member exchange theory that highlights the transactional relationship between leaders and their followers (Dansereau et al. 1975);
- Transformational leadership, which aims to change and transform people and the organization through participatory processes (Burns 1978);
- Authentic leadership, focusing on the level and extent of the genuineness of leadership as well as encouraging mindfulness and the development of self-awareness in leaders (George 2003);
- Servant leadership, which places leaders in a role of service and prioritizes the needs and goals of followers (Greenleaf 1970);
- Adaptive leadership that underlines the role of leaders in change management and emphasizes encouraging followers to engage in adaptation processes (Heifetz 1994);
- Leadership ethics, which incorporates a concern for ethical behavior into leadership decision-making and communicative processes (Trevino 1986);
- Team leadership that aims to maximize small group outcomes and effectiveness, often within diverse teams (Larson and LaFasto 1989);
- Shared leadership that recommends flatter power differentials between leaders and teams so as to increase each member's leadership capacity (Bergman et al. 2012); and
- Theories of gender and leadership that highlight barriers and challenges experienced by women in the leadership pipeline, as they are significantly underrepresented in the ranks of organizational leaders while experiencing significant issues in both becoming a leader and leading that are unique as compared to their male counterparts (Chemers 1997).
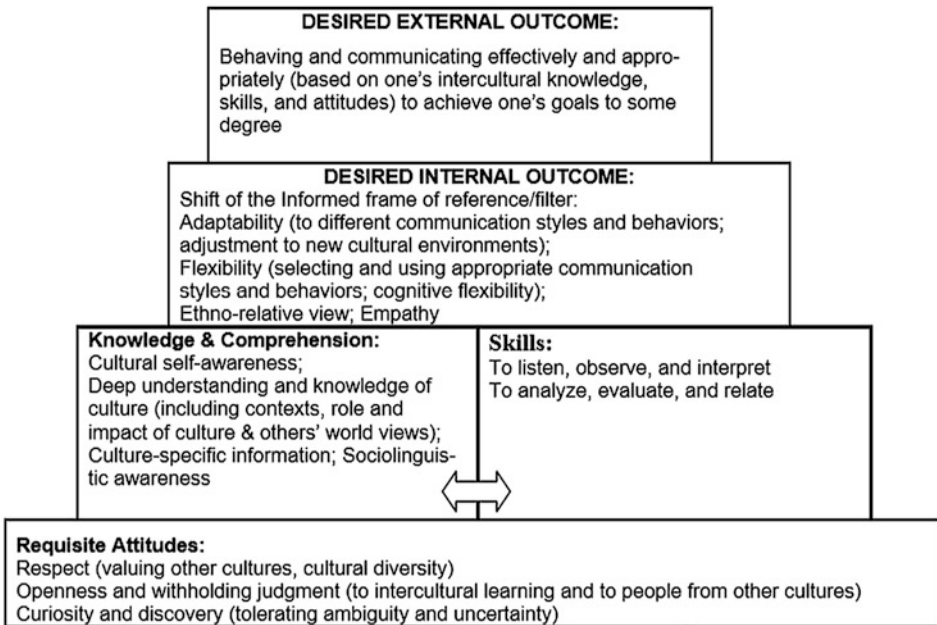
With the advances in technology and its impact in the workplace, leadership phenomena are evolving as well. Technology enables the globalization of industries and corporations, resulting in increased diversity within these settings and thus expanding the scope of leadership in traditional organizational contexts because of the greater reach of leaders through technology to diverse followers, local or otherwise. While technology is an enabler for leadership to involve broader followership, it can also erect barriers to understanding and communication across cultural differences, resulting in miscommunications as leaders would be missing contextual cues in the constrained virtual contexts which technology provides. Therefore, while leadership continues to exist in dual modalities of the workplace (physical and virtual), the demand for interculturally competent leaders is growing to not

only tackle the need for working with a more diverse followership, but also for working with such followers through non-traditional work contexts that require additional knowledge, skills, and abilities to lead.

The world of business is increasingly more connected, so both employees and leaders frequently find themselves in work situations in which they need to interact with those who are culturally different. For leaders, intercultural excellence is a mandate that goes beyond familiarity with the cultures of their customers and also encompasses their followers (Hickman and Akdere 2018). Thanks to globalization, today's leaders (both domestic and international) need to lead followers who come from many different cultural backgrounds (Steers and Osland 2019). Existing leadership theories and approaches tend not to include this emerging organizational context, which creates a significant gap in leadership practice and research. While organizational culture is perceived to be a significant space of interaction for leaders (Hughes et al. 2019; Manning and Curtis 2018; Western 2019), the role of IC in fostering an inclusive and cohesive culture that enables the organization to thrive needs to be further explored and addressed through empirical research, especially considering that "leadership is not just the province of people at the top" but "can occur at all levels and by any individual" (Bass and Riggio 2006, p. 2). As Schedlitzki and Edwards (2018) point out, various current issues in leadership practice focus on the exploration of culture, gender, followers, ethics, and authenticity, among other things. Incorporating intercultural excellence into the fabric of leadership will enable emerging and experienced leaders to address some of these issues by equipping them with much-needed knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively navigate and lead in multicultural organizational contexts and environments.

13.2.2 Intercultural Competence Development and Maintenance

Although scholars are far from having a consensus on even a single definition of IC, one common way to define the concept is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations (Deardorff 2006). Developing this capacity leads to an improved understanding of culturally different others, as well as to an increased effectiveness in bridging cultural diversity through mindful adaptation. IC is therefore considered a key business skill for individual success within globalized industries, since employees are increasingly called upon to interact successfully with diverse co-workers, clients, and suppliers (Lévy-Leboyer 2007). Many scholars and practitioners (i.e., trainers and coaches) see IC as inherently developmental in nature. That is, the construct is a set of interrelated competencies that—with a combination of exposure to learning catalysts (such as experience in multicultural teams) or work as an expatriate plus intentional and reflective processing of those potential learning opportunities—can lead to improvement over time. In other words, IC is an inherently learnable capacity rather than a static personality trait (Hammer 2015).

DESIRED EXTERNAL OUTCOME:
Behaving and communicating effectively and appro-
priately (based on one's intercultural knowledge,
skills, and attitudes) to achieve one's goals to some
degree

DESIRED INTERNAL OUTCOME:
Shift of the Informed frame of reference/filter:
Adaptability (to different communication styles and behaviors;
adjustment to new cultural environments);
Flexibility (selecting and using appropriate communication
styles and behaviors; cognitive flexibility);
Ethno-relative view; Empathy

Knowledge & Comprehension:
Cultural self-awareness;
Deep understanding and knowledge of
culture (including contexts, role and
impact of culture & others' world views);
Culture-specific information; Sociolinguis-
tic awareness

Skills:
To listen, observe, and interpret
To analyze, evaluate, and relate

Requisite Attitudes:
Respect (valuing other cultures, cultural diversity)
Openness and withholding judgment (to intercultural learning and to people from other cultures)
Curiosity and discovery (tolerating ambiguity and uncertainty)

Fig. 13.1 Deardorff's (2006) pyramid model of intercultural competence

Importantly, as a collection of competencies, IC includes components across affective (attitudes), cognitive (knowledge), and behavioral (skills) domains of learning (Spitzberg and Changnon 2009). One way to visualize these components of IC lies within a pyramid structure, as illustrated in ⊛ Fig. 13.1, where foundational attitudes such as cultural curiosity and openness to interacting across differences enable the construction of knowledge: of the self, of specific other cultures, and of generalized frameworks for cultural comparisons (Deardorff 2006). In turn, this knowledge and various skills of cultural discovery (e.g., observing, analyzing) help build internal outcomes such as perspective-taking and flexibility, as well as eventually the external outcomes of adaptation that impact relationships.

Another popular developmental model of IC is the Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC). Based on empirical evidence from a widely used proprietary psychometric instrument called the Intercultural Development Inventory, or IDI (IDI, 2021), the IDC model (Hammer 2009) posits five stages on a developmental spectrum, ranging from more monocultural perspectives such as denial and polarization to the more multicultural orientations of acceptance and adaptation, with minimization between the two ends of the spectrum as a transition stage.

In essence, the IDC represents a developmental journey with denial (an orientation that recognizes observable cultural variation but not deeper differences), the natural or naïve state of humanity. Individuals may move into other orientations throughout their lives, but such a development is not guaranteed either through simple exposure to cultural diversity
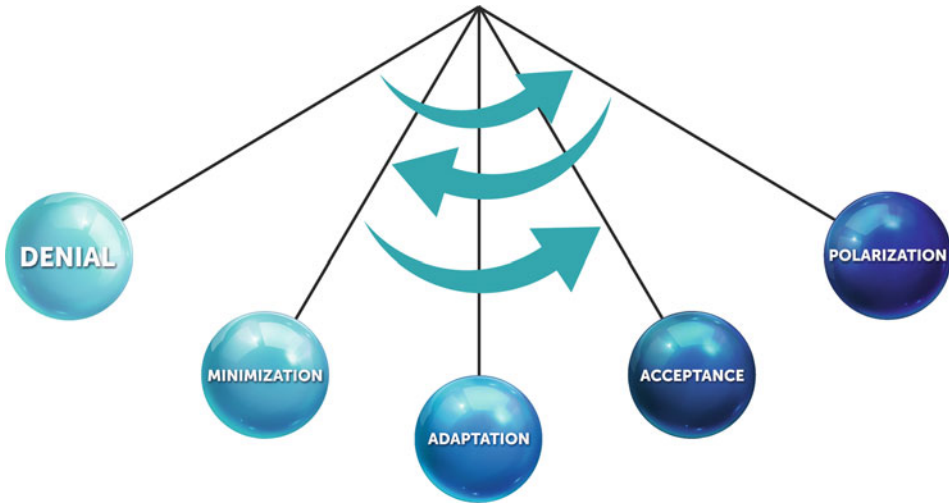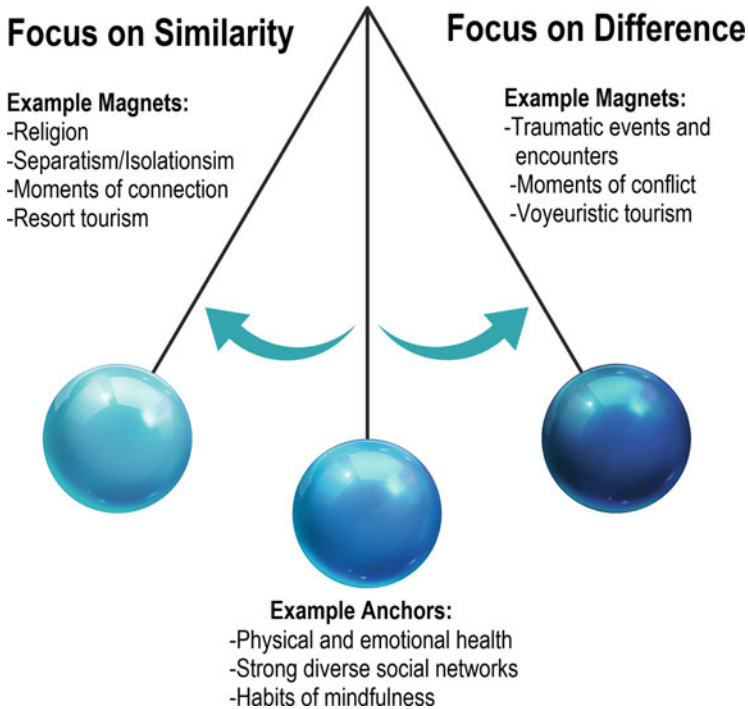
Fig. 13.2 The pendulum metaphor for IC development (Sundae Bean, LCC, 2020)

or via a desire to gain capacity. While generally considered useful for understanding the subjective experience of difference, the IDC has garnered a number of critiques (Witte 2014). Most recently, Acheson and Schneider-Bean (2019) noted the linearity of the model as problematic since IC can be both multifaceted in the moment and unstable in the long term. These authors analyze the IDC in the case of expatriate lived experiences, visualizing the developmental stages on a pendulum instead of along a unidirectional arrow. They arrange the five developmental stages of the IDC, from Denial to Acceptance, on a pendulum that swings between too much focus on similarity and too much focus on difference, with a balance between these extremes represented by the Adaptation stage (see ⊛ Fig. 13.2).

Rather than a linear and unidirectional developmental process followed by expatriates in the long term, the pendulum emphasizes to what extent lived experiences of this development are unstable and context-dependent. As illustrated in ⊛ Fig. 13.2, a pendulum is set into motion by change, for example, by moving into an unfamiliar context:

> This defensive reaction to a new environment is often the result of the loss of local knowledge and skills, so the more dramatic the change/the loss, the more extreme the swings of the pendulum are likely to be... Swings can be large-scale, moving you for a significant period of time to a previous orientation, or minor, shifting you from moment to moment between narrow-minded focus on similarity or difference. (Acheson and Schneider-Bean 2019, pp. 51–53)

The pendulum model also details how and why such fluctuations occur—through the metaphor of magnets that pull one towards too much emphasis on cultural similarity, or towards too much emphasis on cultural difference. Furthermore, the metaphor of anchors is

Focus on Similarity

Example Magnets:
-Religion
-Separatism/Isolationsim
-Moments of connection
-Resort tourism

Focus on Difference

Example Magnets:
-Traumatic events and
 encounters
-Moments of conflict
-Voyeuristic tourism

Example Anchors:
-Physical and emotional health
-Strong diverse social networks
-Habits of mindfulness

Fig. 13.3 Magnets and Anchors on the IDC Pendulum (Sundae Bean, LCC, 2020)

used to illustrate how we can both reactively counter the pull of magnets in order to stabilize the pendulum and proactively prevent swings from occurring. ◉ Fig. 13.3 depicts magnets and anchors that operate as forces on the pendulum. As an example, note that tourist lifestyles are listed as magnets on both sides:

> A hotel-and-guided-tour type of cultural experience might buffer us from local customs and blind us to significant cultural differences (pulling towards similarity); on the other hand, the exoticisation of foreign cultures that undergirds much tourism – that is, the performance of local rituals as a spectacle for the enjoyment of visitors rather than for their original purposes and the commodification of cultural artifacts as souvenirs – can encourage us to frame the world as us vs. them (pulling towards difference) (Acheson and Schneider-Bean 2019, p. 53).

Among other advantages, this reimagining of the IC developmental process emphasizes the fluctuating nature of IC, which better reflects the actual lived experiences of culture-crossers. In addition, the model marks the relationship between global and local aspects of IC (that is, those that are and are not transferable between distinct cultural contexts). Unlike conceptualizations of IC as being universally applicable regardless of linguistic ability, local cultural knowledge, power dynamics, and other important contextual factors (e.g., the concept of cultural intelligence), or as being specific to a very particular setting

(e.g., Spanish language skills that do not help with communicating in, say, Vietnam), the pendulum "offers a realistic sense of the partial/temporary shifts in effectiveness across difference that is likely to occur when we enter new cultural territory, carrying with us some global competencies and lacking some local ones" (Acheson and Schneider-Bean 2019, p. 56). Two additional benefits of the model are that it demonstrates the necessity of the purposeful maintenance of IC after its initial development, and that it alleviates the shame and frustration of the inevitable swings on the pendulum we all experience in response to changing circumstances.

13.2.3 Synthesizing Leadership with Intercultural Models

You may already have noticed some points of overlap between the models of leadership and IC as presented here, for example a movement away from trait-based understandings to skills-based developmental frameworks. They may even be considered mutually dependent; one cannot lead well in a diverse environment without a certain level of IC, and the same knowledge, attitudes and skills that support success in interactions across cultures contribute to effective leadership.

One point we would like to make to bring the models into conversation with each other is that some models of leadership may be more or less popular or appropriate in different cultural contexts, depending on the values prevalent for those cultural groups. Consider that

– More task-oriented cultures that are pragmatic and prioritize problem-solving to achieve desired results may prefer a path-goal model, while on the other end of the spectrum more relationship-oriented cultures that emphasize cultivating and maintaining interpersonal relationships might prefer the transactional approach of leader-member frameworks;
– More collectivistic societies that define identity via group membership and highly value group harmony may gravitate naturally to servant leadership instead of a more individualistic approach such as behavioral leadership that focuses mostly on leaders themselves;
– More low-power distance cultures where organizational members are less comfortable with hierarchies might find themselves better suited to shared leadership models than high-power distance cultures;
– Situational or adaptive models seem more appropriate in cultures where fatalism is a predominant philosophy, whereas transformational leadership, which actively pursues intentional change, is better aligned with cultures that value will power and agency.

Secondly, some models of leadership lend themselves more naturally to intercultural excellence. Leadership frameworks that focus on mindfulness (e.g., authentic) and those that emphasize flexibility (e.g., situational and adaptive) are particularly well-aligned with

effectiveness across cultural boundaries because self-awareness and adaptive communication skills constitute components of IC. However, as with ethics—which theoretically could and should be embedded in all leadership models–, the capacity to lead a diverse followership is an applicable skill no matter which framework for leadership is in play.

13.3   Leading with Intercultural Excellence

In this section, we leverage real-world organizational cases to illustrate a set of recommended practices for leading with intercultural excellence. For each case, we suggest a reflection or dialogue prompt to encourage leaders towards developing these practices by transferring knowledge from their own past experiences and strategically planning for their future leadership roles.

13.3.1 Negotiating "Third Culture" Spaces with Inclusive Norms

2020 was the year of diversity statements in the United States. Salesforce, for instance, released a statement committing to increasing its US representation of Black employees by 50% and to double its number of Black employees in leadership positions within three years (Zaveri 2020). Some may criticize such statements as publicity stunts or engagement in corporate social responsibility only for the sake of branding and company image. Natasha Lamb, managing partner of Arjuna Capital, pointed out in a recent Reuters article that "the rush of corporate concern belies the reality of workforce inequity," with women and people of color underrepresented in most organizations and even further minoritized in leadership positions (Kerber et al. 2020, np).

However, while recent horrific world events and the resulting social justice movements may be providing the impetus to work on issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion, organizations actually have many good reasons to focus their efforts in these areas. Scholars frequently find that having diverse management teams supports increased productivity and profit. For instance, McKinsey and Company's (2018) "Delivering through Diversity" reported that the top 25% most diverse management teams among public companies were 21% (for gender diversity) to 33% (for ethnic diversity) more likely to exceed industry means in returns. Paul Block of Merisant explained how this productivity is driven by the innovation that diversity supports: "People with different lifestyles and different backgrounds challenge each other more. Diversity creates dissent, and you need that. Without it, you're not going to get any deep inquiry or breakthroughs" (Groysberg and Connolly 2014, np).

Still, throwing together people with different perspectives is not always productive. Yielding innovation from diversity rather than conflict alone requires intentional efforts to be inclusive of those differences. When Pinterest leadership recently found themselves in the news over allegations of racial and gender discrimination by former employees, their

solution was to adopt workplace culture recommendations (Dickey 2020). Pinterest management formed a committee, commissioned an external workplace environment review, interviewed over 350 former and current employees, and accepted recommendations towards building a more inclusive workplace. In giving voice to members at all levels of the organization and, more importantly, from a number of cultural perspectives, Pinterest illustrates what scholars sometimes call a "third culture" approach to the development of a shared set of group values and norms for behavior (Casmir 1993). In essence, third culture building in most organizational settings comprises a dominant culture laying aside their claim to rule-making and inviting minoritized voices to the table so as to negotiate a shared set of expectations. This model of culture construction in a diverse workforce aligns well with principles of situational, adaptive, and team leadership models and illustrates the adaptive capacity of IC in action, synthesizing many of the frameworks presented above.

Technology is an important factor in this discussion, because communication technologies may create true third culture virtual spaces for interaction where neither party is visiting or hosting the other. Yet, on the other hand, the speed of communication facilitated by modern technology can discourage the reflection and planning that would enable more adaptive communication forms in diverse teams; firing off an e-mail, text, or group message without thought to the preferred communication styles of others can be counter-productive, for instance, even while these platforms support connectivity both globally and locally. Finally, there is the risk of technology distancing us empathetically from others even as we work to create third culture spaces across cultural and geographical barriers. The double-edged sword of technology must therefore always be considered in this endeavor.

> **Reflection/dialogue prompts:** In your organizational setting, which signs point to the need for more third culture spaces? Who would leaders need to invite to the table in order to negotiate a third culture? Which concrete steps could you take in your current or future roles to leverage this approach so as to create more inclusive workplaces and thus more effective organizations?

13.3.2 Making Intercultural Competency Development a Priority for Professional Development

Salesforce, mentioned above, is not alone in setting high goals for increasing diversity. Starbucks has promised that 30% of its US corporate as well as 40% of its US retail and manufacturing workforce will be composed of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) employees by 2025 (Haddon 2020). As we have seen in the previous case, though, hiring a diverse mix of people is no guarantee for business success. In fact, diversity hiring efforts must be paired with attempts to create the kind of inclusive environment in which employees thrive, as well as a commitment to equity in promotion practices so that diverse hires make their way up the ranks into positions of leadership. For this reason, Starbucks has also mandated anti-bias training for its executives.

The problem with this approach is the limited evidence of the effectiveness of such training. Learning outcomes of diversity training are often assumed rather than measured (Shepherd 2019), and where effectiveness *is* evaluated, most workshops and courses are found to be insufficient (Bezrukova et al. 2012). In fact, required programs such as Starbucks' mandatory anti-bias training can backfire because the requirement itself may be resented either passively or actively (Dobbin and Kaley 2016). If professional development is so vital but *en masse* mandatory diversity training is ineffectual, then what is the solution? We argue that those interested in leading with intercultural excellence must seriously and continuously invest in intrinsically motivated and individualized professional development for themselves and others. The numbers support this claim: A recent study by the Korn Ferry Institute (Zes and Landis 2013) found that self-awareness, one of the key components of IC, impacts companies' bottom lines, with employee self-awareness strongly correlated to corporate financial performance. The Institute briefing recommends regular 360-degree feedback evaluations of managers in order to increase self-awareness and to reduce "blind spots".

This commitment to continual improvement is certainly an expectation of the upper management in some organizations. Merck, Nissan, General Mills, Telstra, and ABB North America are all exemplars that evaluate managers' performance based on their inclusion efforts, such as mentoring others and developing more mindfulness about equity issues (Groysberg and Connolly 2014). Likewise, Google's Project Oxygen implemented a comprehensive manager training program in the early 2000s that was so demonstrably successful in yielding statistically significant performance boosts that Google soon expanded it to employees on the lower strata of the corporation (Garvin 2013). These efforts are reflective of the many skill-based models of leadership in which leaders develop capacities deliberately rather than relying on innate abilities and character traits (e.g., the behavioral approach and authentic leadership, among others). In addition, consider how phenomena such as globalization and digitalization are transforming workforces towards Industry 4.0 (Sima et al. 2020). As societies and organizations change, adaptive and transformative models of leadership point to the need for leaders to continually upskill themselves as well as their followers in order to be successful. Developmental models of IC are also applicable here, especially the Pendulum (Acheson and Schneider-Bean 2019). This model emphasizes that not all capacities are transferable across changing contexts, thus demanding continual attention to learning about oneself and culturally different others, as well as the most effective ways to bridge the two.

Avenues for increasing intercultural excellence in leadership through professional development include individual activities such as support from a mentor, executive coaching, expatriate experiences, and informal learning opportunities. Group activities are also options: mandated or voluntary group trainings, peer learning groups or 'communities of practice', and formal leadership development cohorts. These group approaches, however, must be organized with care so as to ensure buy-in from trainees, to effectively utilize active-learning techniques, and to appropriately design training for factors such as background knowledge, aptitude, and motivation. For these reasons, while

being costlier, individualized approaches often yield a greater return on investment (Dearborn 2002).

> **Reflection/dialogue prompts:** How committed are you as a leader to life-long learning? Which avenues of IC professional development seem most feasible for you and your team, given your organizational context? Which arguments can you articulate to gain the resources you would need to accomplish this professional development in the short and long term as part of your leadership journey?

13.3.3 Practicing Self-Care to Maintain Emotional Resilience

In a 2014 study for the Australian National Health Commission, PriceWaterhouseCoopers documented the importance of organizational attention to the mental health of its members, finding that initiatives and programs that fostered an emotionally resilient workplace culture averaged a return on investment of US\$ 2.30 for every dollar spent (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2014). In contrast, organizations not making this investment in mental health had higher healthcare costs, absenteeism, and turnover among employees, all of which lowered productivity. As with life-long attention to professional development discussed above, the Pendulum model also advocates self-care as a way to anchor leaders within their adaptational capacities (Acheson and Schneider-Bean 2019). Consistently practicing self-care can help prevent regression to earlier developmental stages such as denial—that is, retreating from cultural differences—or polarization—e.g., treating culturally different others with contempt when leaders are faced with traumatic events or over time become too exhausted to function effectively.

Interestingly, a generational difference in valuing self-care and work-life balance is often evident, with millennials and Gen Z employees placing greater emphasis on working 'smarter, not harder', preferring telework options as well as casual workplace environments, and placing greater value on their lives beyond their careers (Parker 2007). We see that double-edged sword of technology at play here, too: Telework may allow us to forgo a daily commute, but it also makes us increasingly (perhaps unreasonably) accessible by cell, which could be detrimental to self-care and family life. With younger generations beginning to dominate the workforce, corporations in some industries are under increasing pressure to care for their employees' mental and physical health by designing high-quality work experiences. Thus, Glassdoor now rates companies on their work-life balance (Stansell 2020). Some top-rated companies are, as might be expected, hip young tech companies such as Slack and Zoom where many employees may not even work in traditional physical 'brick-and-mortar' workplaces. Others may provide 'perks' that are particularly attractive to young job hunters, such as napping or meditation spaces; complementary massages, snacks and beverages, as well as fitness center memberships; and organized social activities such as sports teams and book clubs (North Dakota Young

Professionals Network 2013). Yet surprisingly, some that made Glassdoor's list are not only well-established organizations but also inherently high-stress environments. Take, for example, St. Jude's Children's Hospital, which is a childhood cancer treatment center focusing on terminal illnesses such as Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. Pediatric oncology has an extremely high incidence of emotional exhaustion and career burnout (Roth et al. 2011), and yet St. Jude's was number 13 on Glassdoor's list for best work-life balance during COVID-19. How do successful organizations encourage self-care and emotional resilience, even with emotionally demanding missions and during stressful times like a global pandemic?

The American Psychological Association defines emotional resilience not as the avoidance of trauma or adversity but as the capacity to (a) bounce back and (b) learn from sources of stress (2012). WellRight (2020) recommends that corporations implement employee wellness programs and offer resources to encourage both emotional and physical self-care. Some solutions are intrapersonal (e.g., mindfulness training and relaxation techniques like yoga and meditation), while others are interpersonal (e.g., team-building activities to establish stronger social connections). Even activities that appear to waste time—like challenging yourself to small fitness tasks, playing games, watching animal videos on social media, and connecting with a friend—can boost physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects of resilience (McGonigal 2012). All of these approaches are supportive of IC maintenance in the Pendulum model, and they also align well with leadership models such as adaptive, transformational, and ethical leadership, particularly when we not only practice self-care ourselves but encourage others to follow our lead.

Self-care is particularly salient to theories of gender and leadership, since women often experience more tension between responsibilities at work and at home (Emslie and Hunt 2009). Paradoxically, a large-scale meta-analysis of data across 34 countries found that while organizational work-life balance initiatives are more often aimed at women, men seem to benefit most from such efforts, perhaps because they tend to find it more culturally acceptable to engage unapologetically in self-care or more highly value leisure time (Noda 2019). These issues make it imperative for organizations to focus on gender-specific leadership support, as PepsiCo has modeled by systematically promoting women to director, chief officer, and board positions and then strategically supporting the success of those female leaders through mentoring, flexible family leave, and other support programs (Beba and Church 2020).

> **Reflection/dialogue prompts:** In which situations as a leader have you demonstrated the most and the least emotional resilience? How attentive are you to self-care? Which habits should you cultivate in yourself and in those who follow your example that would support better work-life balance and sustainable productivity?

13.3.4 Inspiring Trust and Motivating Followership

As leadership should be considered central to an organization, and not only at the top, trust should be at the heart of all dyadic relationships between leaders and followers. Without trust in the leader by their followers and vice versa, the leadership process is impaired. In the case of leaders, trust is a must for their relationship with the followers (Middlebrooks et al. 2020). We see trust noted in many contemporary leadership theories and approaches, including transformational leadership (Braun et al. 2013; Kelloway et al. 2012; Zhu et al. 2013), authentic leadership (Agote et al. 2016; Clapp-Smith et al. 2009; Wong and Cummings 2009), leader-member exchange theory (Hirvi et al. 2020; Gottfredson et al. 2020; Legood et al. 2021), and servant leadership (Chan and Mak 2014; Sendjaya and Pekerti 2010; Miao et al. 2014), among others. Yet, most people find it more difficult to build trust across cultural boundaries (Kwantes and McMurphy 2021; Luo 2002; Saunders et al. 2010). These barriers to trust are sometimes complicated across the spectrum of spaces common in current business practice—that is, physical, hybrid, and virtual.

Defined as "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another" (Rousseau et al. 1998, p. 395), trust within the leadership context is considered both trust in the specific individual holding the leadership role/position and trust in general organizational leadership (anyone perceived as a leader among the senior leadership of an organization). This is generally a bi-directional concept: "The establishment of a view of trust (reciprocal and recursive) between the players is a determining factor for the growth of co-players and the productiveness of every relational system" (Godard and Lenhardt 1999, p. 104). Yet, in leadership studies, this reciprocity is expected to be initiated and established by organizational leaders. Moreover, while building trust among in-group followers can be easily accomplished, establishing trust with out-group members can be challenging for leaders. Minoritized and underrepresented organizational members typically find themselves in the position of out-group members (Dover et al. 2020), raising barriers to trust-building, no matter whether minoritized individuals are operating in leader or follower roles. Without the ability to interact with culturally different others (i.e., lacking IC), building trust with all organizational members thus becomes a daunting and impossible task for leaders. In this process, IC can serve as a catalyst to establish trust among followers, which, in turn, enables leaders to articulate persuasively their vision, mission, goals, and values to all organizational members.

As the ways of business change and the gig economy takes over the marketplace, the need for IC among organizational leaders of both traditional and non-traditional markets becomes more evident than ever, because leaders often find themselves working with employees from around the world (Javidan and Zaheer 2019). Such an environment is challenging for trust-building. Recently, a number of scandals challenged public trust in Uber due to widespread harassment and discrimination towards minority-identity employees (Frei and Morriss 2020) as well as hostile attitudes among the senior leadership towards women (Taylor and Goggin 2019). Similar organizational issues have surfaced in

other multinational global technology companies such as Google, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Reddit. Despite many leadership development efforts in today's organizations, a lack of focus on interculturally competent leaders continues to impact both individual leadership practices and organizational diversity and inclusion efforts (Cherkowski and Ragoonaden 2016). IC is a solution to this issue because it enables leaders with the ability and skills to move away from their ethnocentrism to an ethno-relative perspective, enabling them to overcome their biases through cultural self-awareness. Interculturally competent leaders are well-positioned to evoke trust in their followers and to lead inclusive transformations of the organizational culture to better foster effective teamwork.

Effective communication and expressions of empathy are key factors in leaders' successful trust-building. Today's leaders will need to achieve this not only through traditional leadership approaches but also by factoring in the contemporary technology-enhanced work environments that may solely rely on non-physical virtual platforms for conducting daily work. Interculturally competent leaders strive to connect personally with all employees (not only their in-group members). In order to address the rampant work-place injuries at Tesla plants, which were reported to exceed the industry standard by 30%, CEO Elon Musk expressed his commitment to the wellbeing and safety of his employees. He demonstrated empathy and authenticity when he shared in an e-mail to all company employees that it broke his heart whenever a member of Tesla was injured at work (Boitnott 2017). Musk welcomed direct communication from employees who had problems and involved himself personally in addressing safety issues, which communicated care to his followers and built trust in his staff that he deeply felt his responsibility for their wellbeing. Leaders following Musk's example must take care to show care and empathy towards all followers without excluding out-group members. Since caretaking for in-group members comes more naturally, a real risk is to unintentionally exclude followers who are culturally different.

As part of the trust-building process, the ability to listen and consider various viewpoints in leadership practice is vital yet often ignored by leaders. IC enables them to effectively listen and to successfully incorporate different perspectives into organizational decision-making, thus creating a vision for shared leadership that is especially crucial in multicul-tural organizations. For example, in high-functioning teams, with IC, leaders must establish trust through understanding the cross-cultural formation of their teams and by structuring them for success (Molinsky and Gundling 2016). In such teams, followers feel empowered and motivated when they feel that their opinions matter to their leaders. With reference to the Pendulum of the IC model illustrated earlier (Acheson and Schneider-Bean 2019), it is important to balance a focus on similarity and difference in trust-building. Too much emphasis on similarity (denial or minimization of cultural differences) will leave followers feeling that their differences went unseen and unheard by a leader, while too much emphasis on difference (polarization) may leave team members feeling judged—neither perception is conducive to trust-building.

It is important to note that establishing trust in this way is necessarily proactive, not reactive. In other words, it must be done consistently and habitually, not as a reaction to a

crisis. Like resilience, trust must be cultivated before it is needed. Leaders must incorporate IC as part of regular leadership skillset and mindset development, which will then enable them to lead with intercultural excellence when their work with a diverse followership demands these skills and attitudes (Hieker and Pringle 2021). There is no point of mastery beyond which this developmental journey becomes unnecessary. Given the changing nature of the world of work and the impact of technology in transforming organizations, leadership processes will always demand new approaches, additional knowledge, and continued attention to leader IC development.

> **Reflection/dialogue prompts:** In which past or potential future situations has/will trust across cultural differences become an issue for your leadership? As a leader, which attitudes and attributes do you believe are critical for fostering trust, especially with out-group members? What is one concrete habit you could cultivate to foster more trust across the full range of diversity in your organizational context?

13.4   Conclusion

This chapter lays out a case for the need to incorporate IC development as part of leadership theory and practice in order to effectively manage contemporary organizations and their diverse members. In his germinal work on leadership, Burns (1978) suggested that leadership principles "can be identified that to a marked degree transcend national cultural borders, that these principles constitute both model values and end values" (p. 431). We propose that IC development be considered as a core leadership value, no matter which approach to leadership one prescribes to. Just like in earlier calls for incorporating ethics into the core of leadership (Northouse 2019), IC should be synthesized through a more holistic approach to leadership development and growth in which it becomes embedded within leadership theories, models, and recommended practices. Organizational leaders should be encouraged to develop their cultural awareness and to learn respect for other cultures in order to more effectively lead employees from any cultural background.

The current corona virus pandemic has rapidly transformed organizations and the workplace through remote work and digital technologies, showing us very clearly that we have become more interconnected through technology. Leaders must be prepared for an even more technology-driven future. Effective leadership practices should therefore strive for intercultural excellence in the age of technology—human-machine interfaces and other technological advances that continue to shape intergenerational communication, global team collaboration, and organizational communication relying heavily on virtual platforms. In the face of these new norms, existing leadership theories and practices should be revisited so as to assess and determine their applicability and utility for fostering organizational cultures that are "high-performing, collaborative, innovative, customer-focused, entrepreneurial, results-oriented, transparent, or trusting" (Leetaru 2019, p. 22). We are

just beginning to scratch the surface of the demands that will be placed on future leaders. IC can help us dig deeper and prepare for a rapidly changing world.

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