



European University on
Responsible Consumption and Production

Introduction to Intercultural Communication

1. History and concepts

Chapters

1

“Intercultural Communication”

Diplomacy,
business and
intelligence

2

Key Concepts

“Culture”:

- “... **as** communication”
- “... **as** mental programming”

3

Interaction, exchange and negotiation of meaning

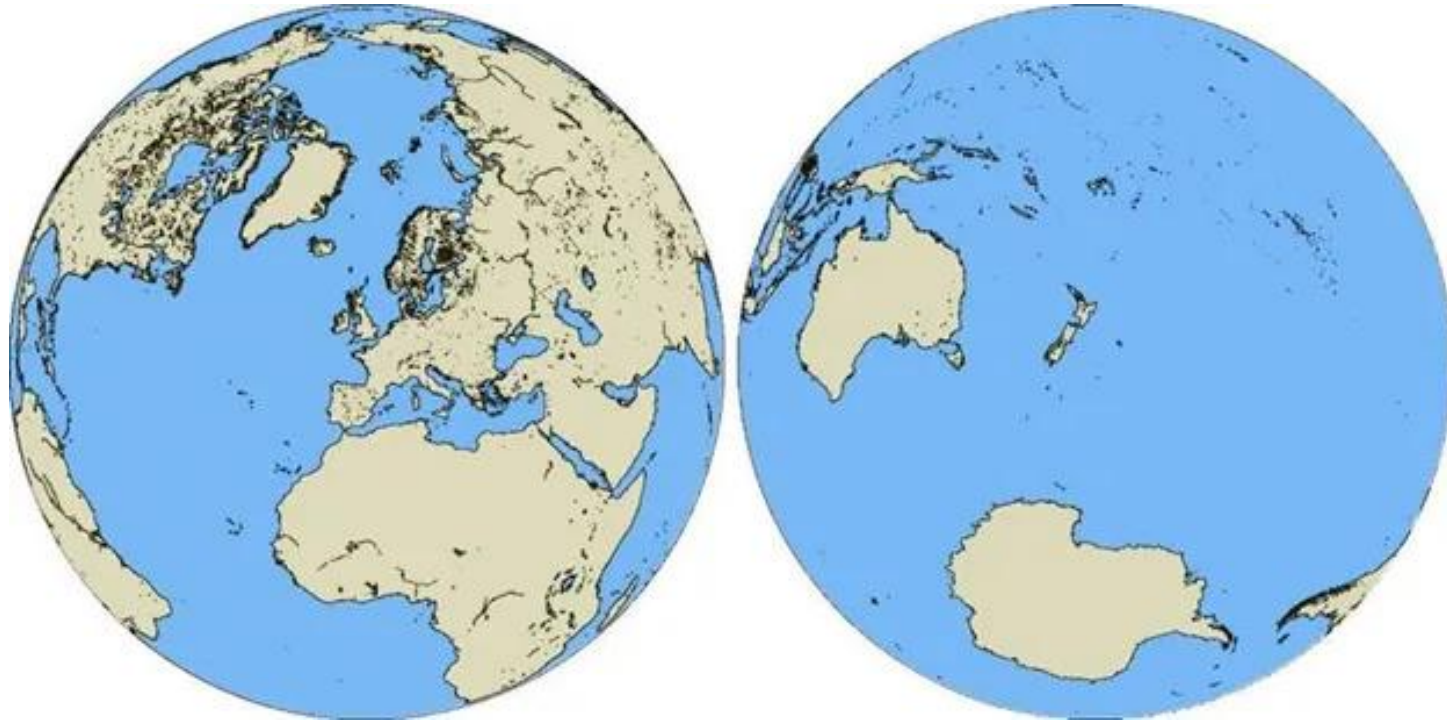
OR

Why intercultural communication matters



“Intercultural Communication”

Intercultural communication as a field



Intercultural communication as a field

Culture is rooted in our biological nature and is evolutionarily selected for *(bio-basic)*

Complex brain: symbolic and narrative thought – abstraction and planning – identity of the self and group

Language and communication: multi- level and context, genetically rooted

Social bonding: empathy and antipathy – *We and They*

Culture **as** an adaptive mechanism *(extension)*



Intercultural communication as a field

- Academic roots of intercultural communication: History, linguistics, anthropology...
- Post-World War II US diplomacy, business and intelligence:

US Foreign Service Institute tasked with training diplomats

Edward T. Hall (1914 – 2009):

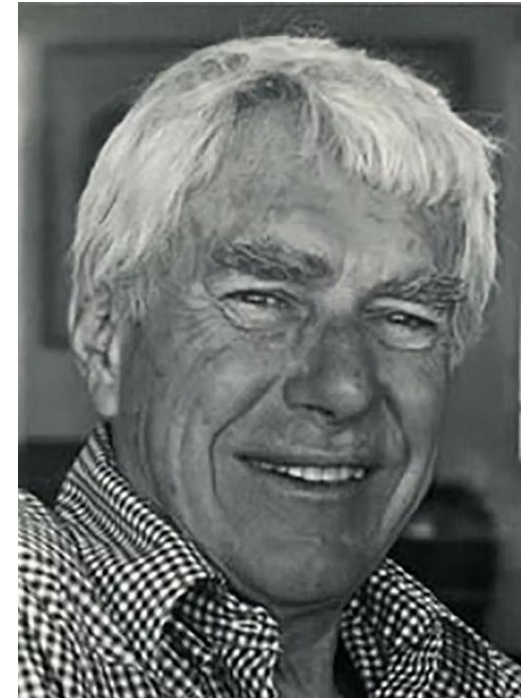
- Intercultural communication studies



Intercultural communication as a field

Edward T. Hall (1914 – 2009):

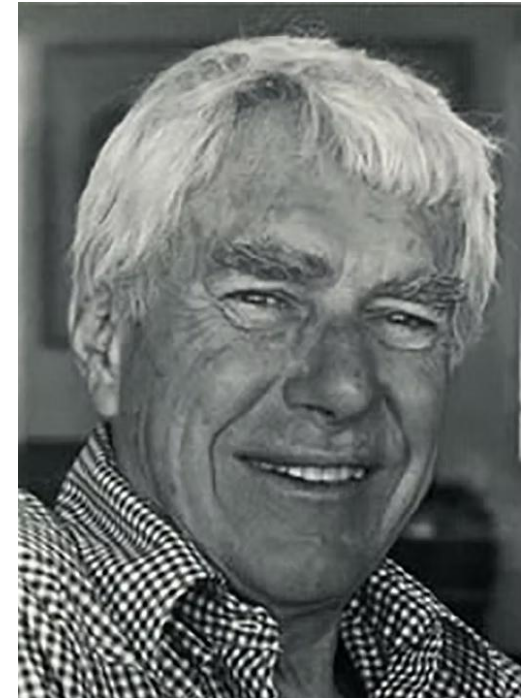
- Introduction of ***“proxemics”***

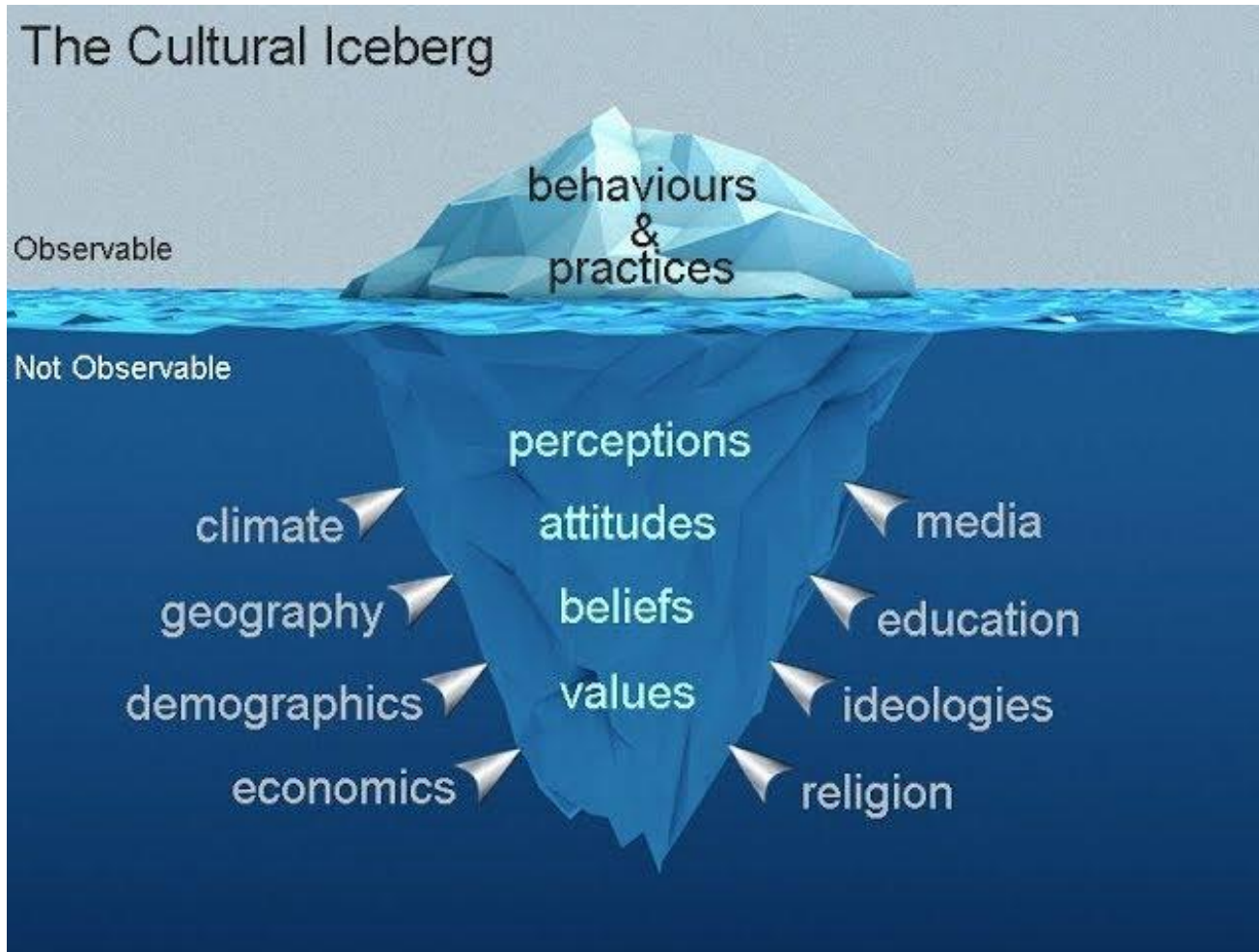


Intercultural communication as a field

(A) Cultural system:

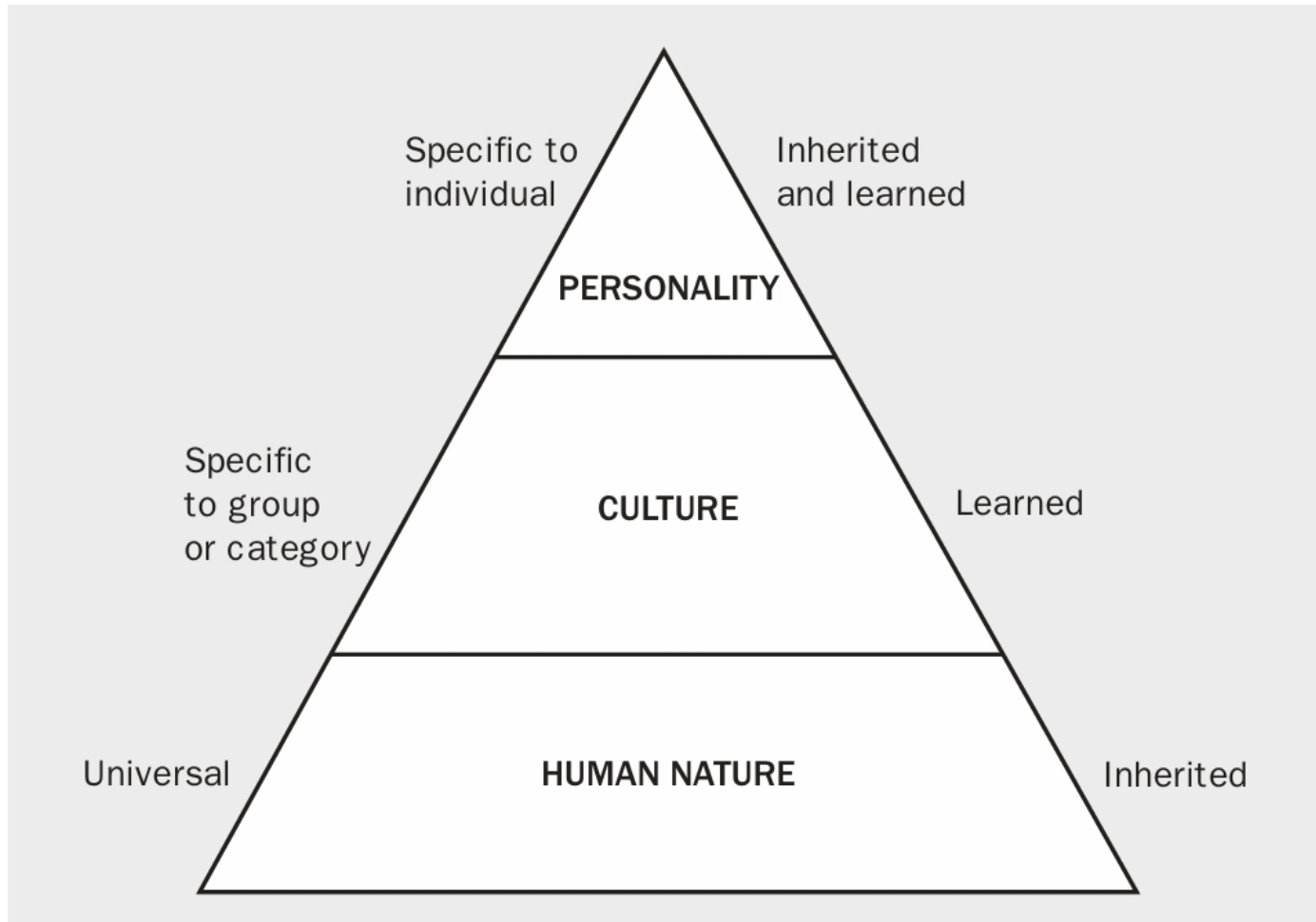
- 1. (is) Rooted in a biological activity: no breaks with the past**
- 2. (is) Capable of analysis in its own terms without reference to the other systems**
- 3. (is) So constituted that it reflects all the rest of a culture and is reflected in the rest of culture**





From:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9Z83I_g4Hw

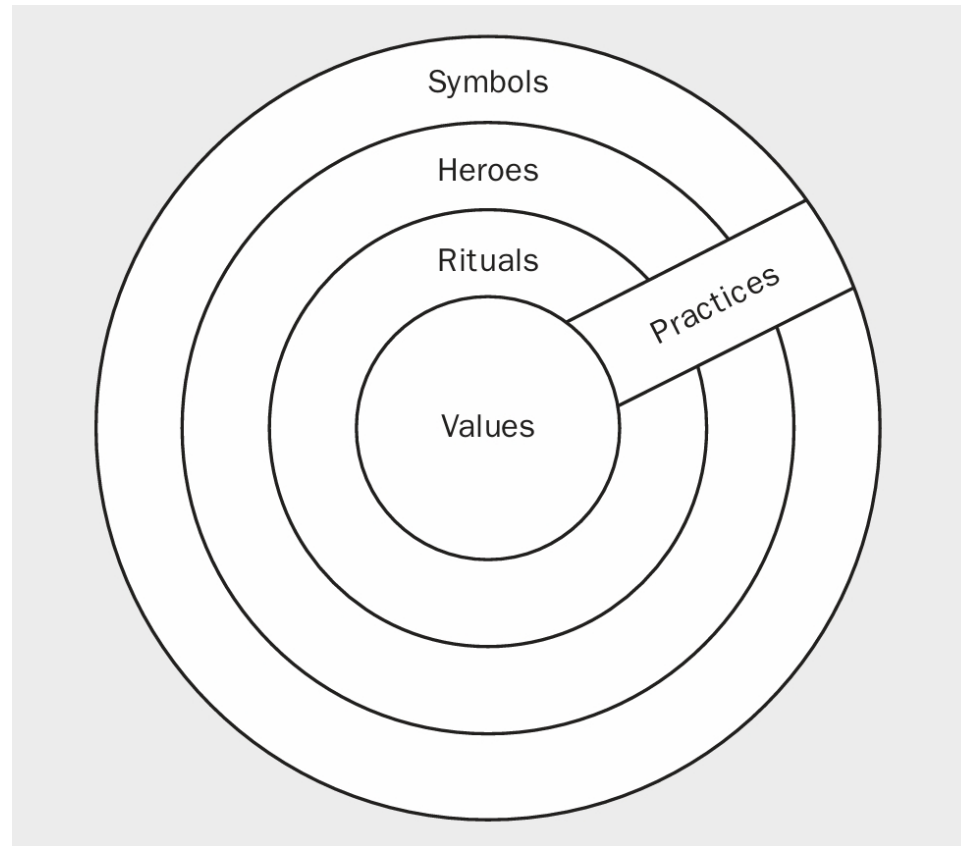




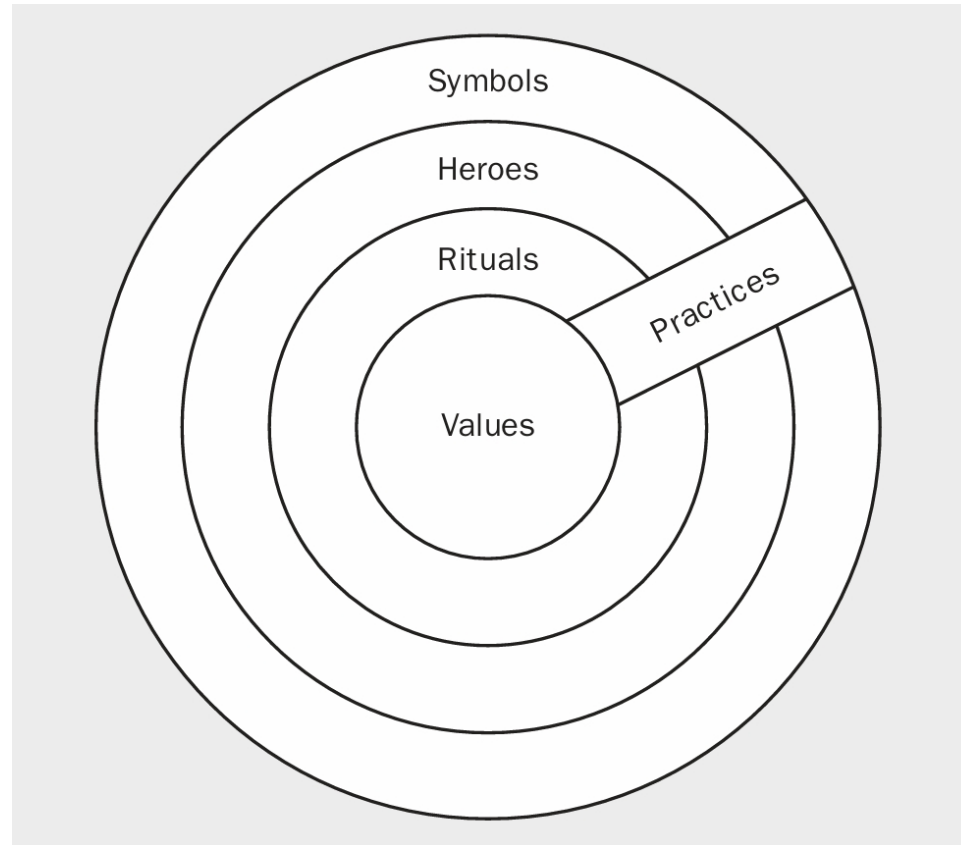
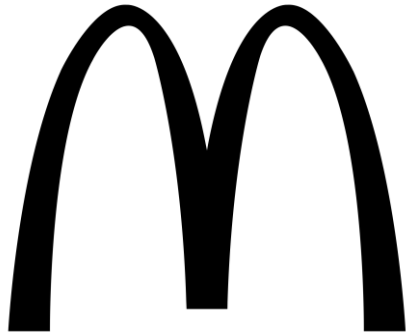
2

Key Concepts

Layers of Culture



Layers of Culture



Layers of Culture

“Myths are not lies. Nor are they detached stories. They are imaginative patterns, networks of powerful symbols that suggest particular ways of interpreting the world. They shape its meaning.”

— **Mary Midgley, *The Myths We Live By***



Culture **as** Communication

- **Hall:**

“Culture is communication and communication is culture”

Focus on:

- **Space**
- **Time**
- **Context in interactions**



Culture **as** Communication

- **Hall:**

“Culture is communication and communication is culture”

Focus on:

- **Space: Proxemics**
- **Time: Monochronic / Polychronic**
- **Context in interactions**



Culture **as** Communication

- **Space matters:** four spatial zones

- **Intimate (0–45 cm)**
- **Personal (45 cm–1.2 m)**
 - **Social (1.2–3.6 m)**
 - **Public (3.6 m+)**



Culture **as** Communication

- **Time matters:** Monochronic vs. Polychronic Time
 - **Monochronic:** linear time, scheduled tasks (e.g. Germany, US)
 - **Polychronic:** multitasking, flexible time (e.g. Mexico, Egypt)



Culture **as** Communication

- **Context matters:** High-Context vs. Low-Context

- **High-context:** Implicit, shared understanding (e.g. Japan)
 - **Low-context:** Explicit, direct communication (e.g. US)
 - **Culture shapes message delivery**



Culture **as** Mental Programming

Gerard Hendrik Hofstede (1928 – 2020)

- Culture = collective mental programming
- Studied IBM employees in 70s
- Identified measurable cultural dimensions



Culture **as** Mental Programming

“Cultural Dimensions”

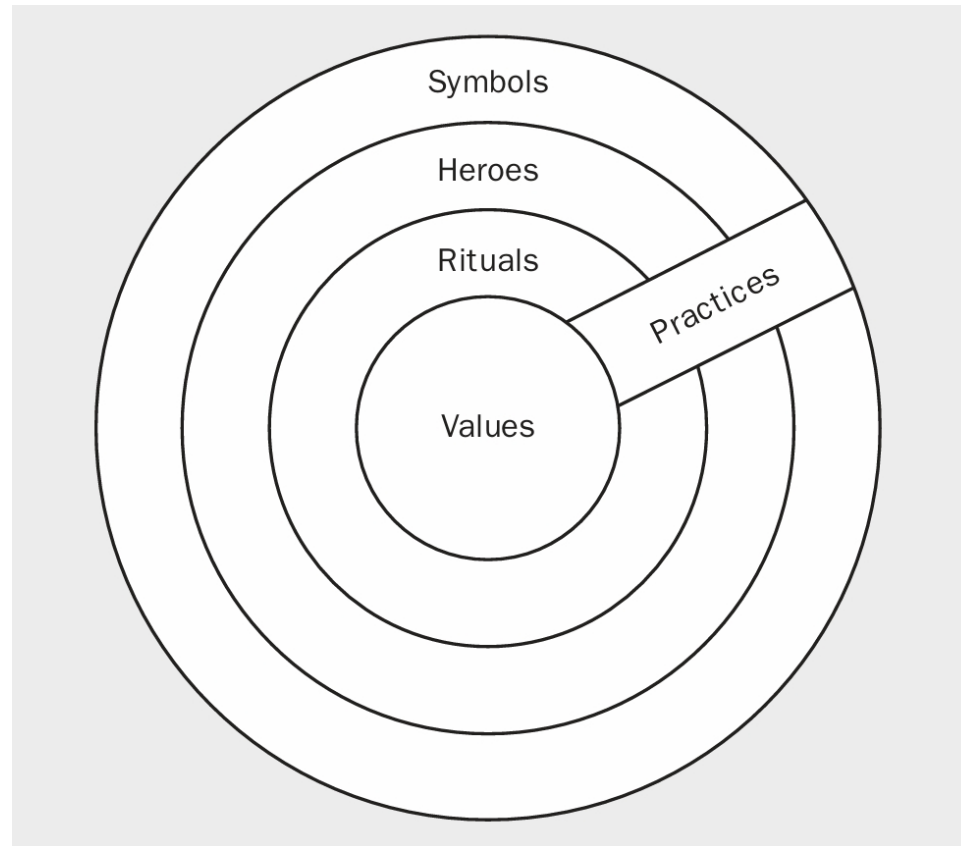
- **Power Distance**
- **Individualism vs. Collectivism**
 - **Uncertainty Avoidance**
 - **Masculinity vs. Femininity**
- **Long- vs. Short-term Orientation**
 - **Indulgence vs. Restraint**



3

**Why intercultural
communication matters**

Culture **as** a Projection of Values



Culture **as** a Projection of Values

- Culture = shared values made visible in communication and behavior
- Intercultural dialogue:
 - reveals what people prioritize: family, authority, freedom, nature
 - requires understanding and engaging differing value systems
 - allows us to negotiate meaning without imposing dominance



Culture **as** a Projection of Values

- Culture = shared values made visible in communication and behavior
- Intercultural dialogue:
 - offers better understanding of one's **own** culture and its underlying values and assumptions



Reflection

- α . Are there elements of your behavior that you consider “typical” of your culture? How important are these elements to you?**
- β . Can you relate at least one of these elements to a given value or a combination thereof?**





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