Intercultural

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# Introduction

J.S. Ott defines culture as “the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time (Ott 1989). Intercultural conflict can be caused by the ethnocentric views which states that one person’s customs, foods, clothing, ways of living, etc, are superior to another’s. It takes the form of both local intercultural conflict and global- intercultural conflict. Some examples of local intercultural conflicts are intertribal conflicts in Africa, and the theories which create the base for racial and genetic superiority. So-called ‘Ethnic Cleansing’ has come about when one culture has theorized that another culture is inferior. Such as in the nineteenth century, when the French and British justified colonialism and slavery by a variety of theories revolving around ‘*scientific racism’*, and when the theory of evolution was used to categorize different cultures or races on the basis of their genetic characteristics, such as skin pigmentation (Ott 1989).

Intercultural conflict can also be on a micro-scale. For example, even a husband and wife can be from different cultures and their worldview and family traditions can cause disagreements, particularly when evaluating ways of raising children, gender expectations, and eating arrangements. Thus, long term relationship development between males and females must take into consideration these differences of views - developed as a result of living in a different culture. Subcultures within a culture can create potential conflicts as well. Those who prefer a different type of clothing, makeup, hairstyle, and music can cause an intolerant reaction with those of another subculture. This can be experienced in the so-called ‘generation gap’ when teenagers may prefer to adopt a more modern peer group and listen to metal songs; whereupon their father’s or mother’s dress is more bright and the mainstream music they prefer maybe pop. Another form of global intercultural conflict may originate for a common and simple reason. For example, as the majority of the populations of each country are living in the small groups of mono-culture, everybody can understand, predict, and even read from mimic and gesticulation of colleagues, neighbors and family members. People often do not know, that their behaviors could be understood in some other ways, which ultimately lead to global intercultural conflict.

# Development

Intercultural conflict develops because of the emphasis on the static attributes of a human being, which are often hard-earned and built. Many narratives exist, concerning the development of intercultural conflict both at a local and global level. One may need to go beyond the limited descriptive ability to understand what intercultural conflict actually is. For example, humans’ understanding of social behavior states that humans are not always reliable, they are not always rational and, no individual in a group can be guaranteed to behave as the group, as a whole, does. Some other causes of the development of intercultural conflict are as follows

## Causes

One of the major causes of intercultural conflict is ethnocentrism. Keith believes that it is very natural, as most people evaluate the worldview they possess (Keith 2019). If this is done in a positive and objective manner, then one’s own experiences may be enriched, and an assimilation of positive or more innovative traits garnered from the other culture’s perspective, may occur. If ethnocentrism occurs with a view to learning, it is a way to expand one’s experiences. However, there is another definition of ethnocentrism which can create a negative experience of one’s interaction with another culture. Keith defines such form of ethnocentrism as the belief in the inherent superiority of one's own ethnic group or culture (Keith 2019). In such situations, a person’s whole body language, attitude towards the target culture, and perceptions of the people constituting the culture, are negative. Hence, the person showing negative ethnocentrism will tend to be overly critical, to be less listening, and to stay within their own comfort zone and retreat from the culture. Hence, the guest culture will treat this negative ethnocentrism and will expand over creating intercultural differences.

According to Bell, intercultural racism is a concept used to describe a new type of racism, where the target is a cultural trait rather than racial traits (Bell 2017). The reason this turn was seen, was that studies came around to show that race isn’t a significant factor in differences between humans, so scientists turned to cultural differences to explain inequality (Bell 2017). This shift, however, caused some scholars to then take the stance that this was another form of discrimination, now dubbed cultural racism. Cultural racism in the present times is severe enough that they can cause real problems. For example, the immigration crisis in Germany and Sweden are an example of racism paving way for intercultural conflict. Lastly, prejudice against persons on the basis of genetic, ethnic, religious, sexual, or any other reason creates the basis for cultural prejudice. Intercultural conflict on the basis of prejudice takes form when it is weaved into the socioeconomic, judicial and cultural institutions and matrices of a society.

## Solutions

The solution to intercultural conflict is intercultural communication which permeates human conduct. Intercultural communication is influenced by human conduct, from the moment they are born. Culture is a general phenomenon, which include things like literature, art, philosophies, social values and norms, therefore, there are many reasons to believe that culture remains prone to conflict. In view of the general nature of culture, intercultural communication originates. Ott believes that intercultural communication is actually understanding differences and managing the conflicts between different cultures (Ott 1989). Intercultural communication is the best solution for intercultural conflicts since it develops empathy, which is the ability to put yourself in someone else’s shoes. Empathy, allows one to understand those who are different. Another benefit of intercultural communication is that it develops open-mindedness (Ott 1989). Being open-minded means being curious about other people and about their world. It also means understanding “different” and being humble enough to accept any other culture. Intercultural conflicts are also accomplished by conflict management. Conflict management refers to a constellation of methods for responding to conflict, including negotiation, mediation, arbitration, family group conferencing, trust-building, and facilitation. At a large level, conflict management takes different approaches, like assembling intercultural talks and social events. Approaches to conflict management include power-based, right-based, transformative, and therapeutic techniques. Some conflict management processes focus on helping people reach a mutually agreeable solution. Other approaches focus more on emotions, relationships, and developing insight among people of different cultures. Conflict resolution may be based on a range of biological, psychological, social, and spiritual theories.

# Conclusion

At present times, the world is witnessing rapid changes. With each passing day, someone at a distant corner of the world, raises to fame and, at times, he/she is known by the whole world. It shows how globalized, the world has become. This globalization then paves the way for conflicts and communication barriers, which gradually transforms into local intercultural conflicts and international intercultural conflicts. With the rise in intercultural conflicts, the scholars and academicians have put forward various theories, which can conform to such problems, some of which are referred above. In short, it is therefore right to argue that conflict being an inherent part of human societies have just taken another less coercive course, which we recognize as intercultural conflict.

# References:

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