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An Exploration of Mindfulness Throughout Intercultural Communication Encounters

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## Introduction/Abstract

Within the context of my study on the exploration of mindfulness throughout intercultural communication settings, I aim to answer the five core questions of

- I. How can mindfulness contribute to the cultivation of cultural competence and a productive intercultural experience?
- II. How does habitus influence behaviors in intercultural experiences?
- III. Why is it difficult to embrace differences and seek the unfamiliar throughout intercultural communication settings? What are the benefits of seeking the unfamiliar?
- IV. What are the impacts stereotypes and generalizations about a particular culture have on the relationship between individuals throughout intercultural encounters?
- V. What is envisioned as the ideal intercultural communication setting?

These questions matter as they contribute to the study as building blocks to discover the essence of intercultural communication and they also contribute to accommodating individuals to enhance their knowledge of how communication is constitutive of the relationship and dynamics between people. By addressing these questions, we can refine our approach to foster meaningful intercultural experiences. My study contributes to the area of intercultural communication as it addresses the key aspects of relationship building through the principles of mindfulness.

Intercultural communication is a crucial component of our daily lives, moreover, this study emphasizes the complex nature of cultures, people's fear of differences and the desire for sameness, the formation of assumptions, and how power is circulated throughout the media. The discussions of these topics are essential as we learn to interact with others in intercultural encounters to promote cultural competence.

## Literature review

### Habitus

Throughout my research, I was curious about how one's habitus can influence the way we interact with others in intercultural experiences. Noble and Watkin (2003) explained Bourdieu's notion of habitus as a representation and reflection of the social location we derive from (Cargile, 2011). In the same scholarly publication, Cargile also references Sweetman (2003) who highlighted that our habitus has an impact on our "predisposed ways of thinking, acting and moving in and through the social environment that encompasses posture, demeanors, outlook, expectations, and tastes" (as cited in Cargile, 2011, p. 13). Cargile stressed that when learning about one's culture, it is important to note the larger extent to which habitus can influence one's behavior, but it does not *predict* how exactly one will behave in specific situations (Cargile, 2011). To build on to the notion of habitus (which has an impact on the way individual acts in social situations), Lipari underscored that our cultural sense can be described as our "embodied habits" (Lipari, 2014, p. 127) and as a sort of "second nature" to us (Lipari, 2014, p. 150). Our culture teaches us to see through a lens that projects a particular perspective. According to Lipari, values and assumptions are embedded within these cultures. In other words, "Our past lives inside us" (Lipari, 2014, p. 129). Like Cargile (2011) and Lipari (2014), Nagata (2006) also pointed out that our perceptions of the world around us and others are shaped by our distinctive experiences and the groups we belong to (Nagata, 2006). In addition to what the other scholars mentioned, Nagata (2006) drew attention to the specific aspect of our habitus that shapes who we are. Such as the "historical, social, economic, political, and cultural structures and constraints...[that] usually have domination and oppression, and therefore suffering, built into them" (Nagata, 2006, p. 148).

## **Intercultural Communication**

A part of my research centers around exploring the dynamics of intercultural communication settings. Nagata (2006) put forth the idea that an intercultural setting is of a “dynamic, developmental, and complex nature of communicating with people of diverse cultures” (Nagata, 2006, p. 135). Oetzel (2014) expanded on the notion of intercultural communication with an emphasis on “respect.” To Oetzel (2014) intercultural communication “is a place where people from different cultural backgrounds can **learn from one another, show respect for one another**, and learn about ourselves” (as cited in Alexander et al., 2014, p. 15). Broome and Collier (2012) also contributed to the discussion of intercultural communication by drawing attention to what they call “multicultural context” -- allowing individuals from different cultural backgrounds to build relationships and build a peaceful environment away from conflicts through the “appreciation of the multidimensional context” (Broome and Collier, 2012, p. 255). Moreover, Broome and Collier (2012) brought attention to common intercultural communication topics such as “forced migration, severe economic deprivation, major community health issues, and political marginalization, as well as lack of voice in the larger society” (Broome and Collier, 2012, p. 250), which will be discussed later, introduces issues of power, hegemony, and oppression. Building on the discussion, Kim and Ebesu Hubbard (2007) made it clear that intercultural communication allows people to come together and share their life experiences whether positively or negatively (Kim and Ebesu Hubbard, 2007).

Although intercultural communication was formerly important for economic development and trade, now it is for survival – important because many facets of our lives center around diversity (Kim and Ebesu Hubbard, 2007). Expounding on the notion of intercultural communication, Walton (2013) accentuated the importance of intercultural communication in a

college setting as “microcosms of society,” stating that “university classrooms provide critical opportunities for facilitating multicultural learning experiences and cross-cultural relationships” (Walton, 2013 p. 1). Similarly, Lipari placed special emphasis on how meaning-making takes place through the “interplay of multiple, different discourses”(Lipari, 2014, p. 117). In the process of meaning-making, intercultural communication enables new discourses to develop through the intersection and expansion of existing discourses. Lipari also refers to cultures in intercultural communication as “interdependent facets of a crystal prism” (Lipari, 2014, p. 109) in which an individual is productively connected to another.

**The complexity of cultures, the negligence of the complexity, and the formation of assumptions as a result of the negligence.**

As we discuss intercultural communication as dynamic and developmental when people from different cultural backgrounds interact, we need to understand the complexity and uniqueness of ‘culture’ to prevent conflicts and the formation of mindless assumptions of other cultures. Broome and Collier spotlighted the “multi-level” (Broome and Collier, 2012, p. 253) aspect of cultures. We have to recognize and appreciate that cultures are dynamic and it is constantly changing and evolving. Broome and Collier highlighted that cultures reflect the negotiations of ideologies from the past, present, and future (Broome and Collier, 2012). Additionally, Broome and Collier build on to the discussion as they pointed out that the emergence of culture is also complex: “Cultures emerge as personal accounts and narratives, social interaction patterns that produce relationships between groups, institutional discourses, organizational policies and practices, and media discourses that circulate and form a momentary context” (Broome and Collier, 2012, p. 253). Expanding upon the conversation, Lipari stressed

that “culture is so much more than values, ritual, custom, and belief—it lives inside us as we live it out in our everyday activities: communication is culture” (Lipari, 2014, p. 109). Culture is crucial to one’s identity. It is a complex aspect of who we are, the lack of mindfulness neglects the complexity of culture. Lipari made it clear that the process of meaning-making in intercultural communication settings does not happen privately “but rather it is always in dialogue with language and thereby culture” (Lipari, 2014, p. 116).

In my research, I focused on how assumptions are developed as the complexities of cultures are neglected. When individuals lack a sense of mindfulness it leads to what Mendoza refers to as cultures being “contested” (or a site of struggle)” (as cited in Alexander et al., 2014, p. 29). Lipari continues our conversation with ‘ignorance’: “It is our habit to select some events for attention and ignore others from the continuum; some sensations recede into faint echoes while others barge forth.” (Lipari, 2014, p. 154). In connection with this, Rogers also brings light to the notion of judgments in which people uphold “automatic assessments and assumptions [that] lie at the heart of some of our most unhelpful biases, stereotypes, and self-imposed limitations” (Holly B Rogers, 2016, p. 41). Arasaratnam believes that through intercultural communication, “our implicit assumptions are confronted, and the concepts that we may have reified are exposed” (as cited in Alexander et al., 2014, p. 16). As the complexity of other cultures is neglected, people usually “ignore multivocality/within-group diversity” (Broome and Collier, 2012, p. 261). Broome and Collier drew attention to assumptions being “implicated by policies and practices from multiple institutions, strengthened by discursive orders” (Broome and Collier, 2012, p. 262), which lead to stereotypes rendered as invisible and aspects of one’s cultures as “taken for granted” (Broome and Collier, 2012, p. 262).

**Highlighting the “Differences” between players in the communication process.**

The difficulties in intercultural communication and the tendency for assumptions to develop arise from the inevitable ‘differences’ between players in the communication process. Oetzel called attention to the nature of intercultural communication as “Intercultural communication [,] in general [,] is what happens when people from **different** cultural backgrounds interact—it includes the good, the bad, and the ugly” (as cited in Alexander et al., 2014, p. 15). Broome continues this discussion by highlighting that the ‘*differences*’ lie within one’s “values, attitudes, beliefs, and experiences” (Broome, 1991, p. 236). With the presence of differences, Howell (1983) argues that “it is unlikely two strangers with different backgrounds can be “constructively empathic” with one another” (as cited in Broome, 1991, p. 236). Katz (1963, pp. 6-7) also builds onto this idea “We tend to empathize with those who are familiar to us or whose life situation is most similar to our own” (as cited in Broome, 1991, p. 236). Differences get in the way of intercultural communication as one refuses to lower themselves and listen to the other. Bhikkhu highlighted the main issue with one’s mind: “It’s causing itself suffering through its own stupidity, its own lack of skill, and usually it doesn’t want to admit this fact to itself” (Bhikkhu, 2016, p. 20). Building on to the discussion, Lipari highlights one’s failure to feel with and listen to another person stems from the limitations that one is immersed in one’s “own prior knowledge” that leads to one’s “fail[ure] to listen altogether” (Lipari, 2014, p. 179). Lipari mentions an important aspect of intercultural communication that leads people to make assumptions and neglect the complexity of another’s culture: which is the lack of courage to reveal and admit one’s vulnerability and weakness (Lipari, 2014). Buie (1981) puts forth the idea that although we are unable to experience the same thing as another person, instead we have “inferences which are based upon an assumption that we locate within our own mind something



that is analogous or homologous with that mental state of the other person which gives rise to perceived sensory cues" (as cited in Broome, 1991, p. 237). Furthermore, Suzuki (1948, pp. 142-143) once said that "Understanding means to throw away your knowledge" (as cited in Lipari, 2009, p. 52).

Lipari emphasizes that people are used to being in their comfort zone and seeing things from a particular perspective/lens that prevents them from lowering themselves to be mindful of the other. This ideology of self-centeredness is also elaborated by Broome as "Egocentrism", he regarded it as a concept that "stands as a major barrier to intercultural communication" (Broome, 1991, p. 245). Other than Egocentrism, S. G. Sumner (1906) also introduces us to "Ethnocentrism", similar to Egocentrism, it "refers to the tendency that most people see their own culture as the "center of the world" (as cited in Kim and Ebesu Hubbard, 2007, p. 225). Kim and Ebesu Hubbard elaborated on the concept with the understanding that ethnocentrism promotes separation from another throughout the intercultural experience as a result of viewing the world "through our own tinted glasses" (Kim and Ebesu Hubbard, 2007, p. 225). Kim and Ebesu Hubbard also refer to this self-centered view as "Cultural bias" which they define as "interpreting and judging phenomenon in terms particular to one's own culture." (Kim and Ebesu Hubbard, 2007, p. 226). In a related vein, Levinas (2001), also called attention to this self-centered notion with the quote from Dostoyevsky's *The Brother's Karamazov*: "We are all guilty in everything in respect to all others, and I more than all the others" (as cited in Lipari, 2009, p. 55). Putting oneself over another derives from the lack of mindfulness and depreciation of others' cultures.

## **Hegemonic Discourse and Power**

Meaning-making is derived from the constant negotiation of discourses or also known as hegemony. Certain customs, languages, cultural beliefs, and even assumptions/stereotypes that are well-known in social media or popular culture came to be established as the ‘dominant ideology’ through constant circulation. A scholar has commented—wherever we are situated, there is power circulated. Foucault (1991) stated that “power is exercised to produce and control individual subjects through a system of knowledge, and subjectivity is produced by disciplinary discourse” (as cited in Kim and Ebesu Hubbard, 2007, p. 230). Furthermore, Giddens (1984) called attention to power being a fundamental component of social interaction (Kim and Ebesu Hubbard, 2007). In continuation with the discussion, DeTurk called attention to how power affects the buildup of stereotypes “Viewpoints of minority and subordinate groups are silenced in a number of ways, one result of which is that they are misunderstood by dominant group members.” (DeTurk, 2001, p. 377). Further delving into the power and how it is mediated through discourse and leading certain stereotypes to stand out, Keesing (1991) also offers a compelling extension that “stereotypes are not merely inaccurate mental perceptions, but are inextricably bound with a desire for control and domination of others.”(as cited in Kim and Ebesu Hubbard, 2007, p. 230). Keesing (1991) argues that intercultural conflict stems from not only the misunderstanding of the culture of another but also “by power and politics” (as cited in Kim and Ebesu Hubbard, 2007, p. 230).

Kim and Ebesu Hubbard argue that discursive practices mediated by power like “migration, discrimination, poverty, and minority ethnic, racial and religious statuses” (Kim and Ebesu Hubbard, 2007, p. 232) are events/factors that shape identities. Moreover, Kim and Ebesu Hubbard also believe that minorities and marginalized groups face struggles and difficulties to

address the negative biases/stereotypes among their positions (Kim and Ebesu Hubbard, 2007). Concerning the discussion on power, Broome and Collier elaborated on the concept of “structural dimension” in which discourses in society, the policies in an organization, and practices in institutions construct different levels of equity, access, agency, and norms (Broome and Collier, 2012). Moving from the discussion of stereotypes and assumptions mediated by moving power, we will now discuss ways in which one can gain multicultural knowledge and awareness to promote ethics: Walton proposed a way in which one can adopt a “more active, inquisitive mindsets toward other cultural groups” (Walton, 2013, p. 4). To further expand, Broome and Collier underscore that when we understand how power is produced, structured, and organized by institutions and people in society, then it is more likely to create a mindful and harmonious alternative to promote peace. (Broome and Collier, 2012).

### **Mindfulness**

Mindfulness cultivates cultural competence throughout one’s intercultural experience. Rogers (2016) said, “Bringing mindfulness to your relationships helps you **build authentic, supportive connection[s]**” (Holly B Rogers, 2016, p. 174). She stressed that mindfulness allows one to develop skills like resilience and patience which would allow one to bounce back even under tense and stressful encounters (Holly B Rogers, 2016). Broome (1991) builds on the discussion with the interpretation that with an empathic attitude, one can strengthen mutual connectivity and engagement with others to promote cultural competence and productivity throughout the interaction (Broome, 1991). Roger (2016) highlighted that mindfulness allows one to “acknowledge negativity without adding another layer of judgment on top” (Holly B Rogers, 2016, p. 48). Other than its ability to cultivate a healthy and productive relationship with

*others*, mindfulness can be beneficial to *ourselves*. Sayrak (2019) refers to mindfulness as a “**self-help technique that** offers beneficial results such as improved concentration, less burnout, or efficiency in solving everyday life problems such as a broken photocopier” (Sayrak, 2019, p. 28). Cargile (2011) also brings forth the concept of “**expansive awareness**” (Cargile, 2011, p. 17) in mindfulness practices—in which mindfulness allows us to go beyond the shallow surface of our behaviors into the tangled roots of the problem (Cargile, 2011). Lomas (2017) also brought our attention to mindfulness in the Buddhist approach: “In its original Buddhist context, mindfulness was embedded within a comprehensive system of philosophy and practice aimed at personal transformation. Taken out of this context, its potential is arguably thus neutered and diminished” (as cited in Sayrak, 2019, p. 29). Expounding on this idea Rogers (2016) also mentioned that mindfulness has been utilized as a practice to manage stress and suffering, since about 2,500 years ago when Buddha recognized its power on his journey to enlightenment (Holly B Rogers, 2016).

An important element of mindfulness is staying in the present moment. Sayrak (2019) said, “be[ing] able to **analyze the mind in the present moment, pay attention to the demands of the present situation, and make wise decisions, all of which require mindfulness**” (Sayrak, 2019, p. 32). Jon Kabat-Zinn (2005) builds on this idea by empathizing that one has to be aware and utilize our observing mind to avoid getting caught in our thoughts (as cited in Holly B Rogers, 2016). Furthermore, Rogers (2016) explains being in the present moment allows one to stop worrying about what has happened in the past and what has yet to happen in the future, this way, one will gain greater happiness and satisfaction in life (Holly B Rogers, 2016). Likewise, Lipari offered a compelling “Nonlinear” approach: “Thinking of dialogue in terms of nonlinear time rather than as linear spatiality enables us to contemplate the vast interlacing of

time in terms of past, present, and future in the communication process” (Lipari, 2014, p. 129). A nonlinear approach to time allows us to gather the present, past, and future into one focus. Rogers (2016) brings our attention to realizing that the modern world we live in, is filled with restlessness and “an anti-mindfulness culture that values multitasking and rapid shifting of focus” (Holly B Rogers, 2016, p. 20). Lipari (2014) expands on this notion of restlessness with the comment that in this age of attention: “Our attention has become a commodity bought and sold on the open market” (Lipari, 2014, p. 202). In continuation of this discussion, Bhikkhu (2016) encourages one to step back and realize the happiness that derives when one is not a slave to hunger. Similarly, Dae Gak (1997) stressed the importance of “realizing [ing] the mind of not becoming” (Dae Gak, 1997, p. 35).

Other than immersing oneself in the present moment, Broome (1991) reinforces the importance of empathy in mindfulness practices. He regards empathy as the central trait of effective intercultural communication experience (Broome, 1991). Stewart (1976) expands on this notion: “Empathy in intercultural communication reduces the tendency to use ourselves as lightning rods, to judge others by our own feelings, choices, and preferences” (as cited in Broome, 1991, p. 244). Lipari (2009) commented that empathy allows one to imagine and immerse in another person's experience (Lipari, 2009). Along the same lines, the element of putting aside one's judgment is crucial in cultivating mindfulness. Rogers (2016) states that Non-judgment is important in observing one's surroundings “without automatically judging or categorizing it as good or bad, right or wrong” (Holly B Rogers, 2016, p. 16).

One strategy to cultivate mindfulness is through what Lipari refers to as “Listening Otherwise”. Lipari (2014) differentiates between hearing and listening: “Hearing without listening is a response without responsibility; it is a form of pseudodialogue without ethics”

(Lipari, 2014, p. 196). Likewise, Dae Gak (1997) builds on this by calling attention to listening as a fundamental practice to become one with our encounters (Dae Gak, 1997). When one listens to another, we pay full attention and as Mumford (2015) points out: we put a pause to listen **without any judgments** (as cited in Holly B Rogers, 2016, p. 169). Furthermore, listening draw us to the path of ethics—Mumford (2015) accentuated that when we listen otherwise we “can hear the voice of ethics whispering, drawing us beyond the limitations of our subjective understandings of the world so that we may shed, like a snakeskin, our old views and certainties about the world” (as cited in Lipari, 2009, p. 57). Rogers explains that when we listen deeply, we focus on the other person to an extent that “all the assumptions and arguments that bubble out of your brain” (Holly B Rogers, 2016, p. 169). Lipari also refers to the “Otherness” in Listening Otherwise as “Alterity”, it refers to letting “other be other” and to not press one’s knowledge and beliefs onto another. The concept focuses on putting others as the center rather than oneself. (Lipari, Syllabus for weeks 13&14). Building upon this preceding discussion, Arnett and Nakagawa (1983) suggest that alterity may be “a shift to a relational view of understanding might be comparable to one’s inner Copernican Revolution in which “the self, like the earth, would no longer be viewed as the center of one’s world. Instead, persons might come to see themselves as “situated in relationship with the ecological system or relational systems between persons (as cited in Broome, 1991, p. 246)”.

Another strategy to cultivate mindfulness would be what Bhikkhu (2016) alludes to as reminding oneself what goodwill is, which, “is—a wish for true happiness—and that, in spreading thoughts of goodwill, you’re wishing that you and all others will develop the causes for true happiness” (Bhikkhu, 2016, p. 32). Spreading a wish of happiness to oneself and others (whether you like them or not) enables one to gain a sense of positivity and be mindful of one’s

actions. Embracing the strange and unfamiliar to appreciate the difference is also a method to cultivate mindfulness in intercultural communication (Lipari, 2014). Lipari (2009) argues that interacting with others will challenge the stability and comfort of what one is familiar with and known (Lipari, 2009). Furthermore, Stewart (1984) introduces the concept of “coherence perspective” which is when one recognizes the inherent openness of any quest for understanding” (as cited in Broome, 1991, p. 247). Broome (1991) built on this sense of openness that one must be willing to accept our weaknesses and inferiority to something unfamiliar or beyond our knowledge (Broome, 1991). In addition to revealing our weaknesses, Wheatley (2002) highlights the importance of maintaining a “willingness to have our beliefs and ideas challenged by what others think” (as cited in Walton, 2013, p. 4). Walton (2013) argues that one needs to obtain the commitment to not only acknowledge one’s vulnerabilities but also dare to turn them into a resource for personal and relational growth (Walton, 2013, p. 4). Lipari builds on the notion of listening otherwise and connects it with the concept of revealing one’s vulnerability: “The ethical response requires listening otherwise not merely for an exchange of signs or receipt of information, but for the emergent self-transcendence that involves opening and vulnerability” (Lipari, 2014, p. 185). To build on the aforementioned mindfulness-building strategies, Bhikkhu (2016) introduces us to “Discernment”. Which, comes in three parts: the First is “to distinguish the skillful processes in the mind from the unskillful ones”, the second is “to understand how to abandon what’s unskillful and to develop what’s skillful” and lastly “to know how to motivate yourself so that you can abandon unskillful processes and to develop skillful processes even when you’re not in the mood“ (Bhikkhu, 2016, p. 14). All three discernment abilities are developed through carefully and mindfully listening to the other.

Oetzel (2014) refers to the intercultural experience as a “learning process” about others and oneself. Oetzel believes that it focuses on growth and the desire to learn “with respect toward the other and their worldview, and the chance to learn about her/him and yourself.” (Alexander et al., 2014, p. 15). To build on this, Stewart and Thomas (1986) highlighted that understanding one another in an intercultural context requires “playfulness”, they said “We must be tentative and experimental” (Stewart & Thomas, 1986, p. 198). Stewart (1983) stressed that throughout the intercultural communication setting, two parties enter a dynamic where the outcome can be a surprise and lead to the formation of something new (as cited in Broome, 1991, p. 241). Poplin (1988) also built on the notion of intercultural communication as a learning process with the idea that learning is not just absorbing new knowledge, instead, it is rather an ongoing process of constructing and reconstructing meanings and a buildup of abundant knowledge (Walton, 2013). Additionally, Broome points out that people must merge their views with the other to establish a common ground, he underscores the importance of not getting locked up in your framework (Broome, 1991). Nagata also views intercultural communication as a learning opportunity for people to develop an understanding of our assumptions (Nagata, 2006). Lipari (2014) brings forth the belief that misunderstandings can also be a “powerful healing medicine” that enables new enrichments for growth and learning (Lipari, 2014).

Misunderstanding is inevitable and shouldn't be perceived as inherently a bad thing. Instead, Lipari encourages us to view it as an opportunity and a doorway to more understanding. Stewart (1983) refers to the dynamics in empathic understanding as “a shared, intersubjective experience that is developed and co-produced through our ongoing interactions with others” (as cited in Walton, 2013, p. 3). Intercultural communication experiences are not only solely a learning experience between one and the other but it entails a sense of interdependence. In



intercultural communication, every aspect of it is connected and interdependent. Through this state of interdependence, communicators in the experience can form what Casmir and Asuncion-Lande (1989) refer to as the Third Culture (Broome, 1991). Schutz (1967) stated that throughout intercultural communication “unconnected words and actions "constitute meaningful wholes and become discourse” (as cited in Broome, 1991, p. 242). Casmir and Asuncion-Lande (1989) capture the cruciality of third culture: “A third culture is not merely the result of the **fusion of two** or more separate entities, but also the **product** of the "harmonization" of composite parts into a coherent whole” (as cited in Broome, 1991, p. 243). Broome (1991) explains that third culture can be created when individuals are willing to open themselves to something new with a genuine attitude (Broome, 1991). Buber (1923), on the other hand, refers to this fusing or harmonization between cultures as the *between*: “Buber describes how, in every interaction between human beings, there exists a between, a real place located not in individuals or the general world, but in a space between self and other.” (as cited in Lipari, 2010, p. 130). Broome (1991) names this between/third culture as the “fusion of horizons” (Broome, 1991). Bohm (1996) notes that during intercultural encounters, “people are making something in common, i.e., creating something new together” (as cited in Broome and Collier, 2012, p. 256). DeTurk (2001) refers to the concept of third culture as “other ways of seeing the world” (DeTurk, 2001, p. 374). Lipari (2014) offers a compelling metaphor about the productive and sharing aspect of intercultural communication: “It is possible to think of communication processes as a kind of sharing rather than as a kind of sending, just as we might think of sharing (but not sending) a bowl of soup, a poem, or a beautiful sunset” (Lipari, 2014, p. 126).

Mediation serves as a valuable way to cultivate mindfulness, it allows us to listen to our minds and train our minds. Lipari (2023) refers to meditation as a practice that “helps to

strengthen the mind to deal with many of the problems of day-to-day life, because it develops qualities like mindfulness, alertness, concentration, and discernment that are useful in all activities, at home, at work, or wherever you are” (Lipari, Syllabus for week 1). In meditation, we cultivate and train the mind to choose the ethical voice rather than the destructive voice. Rogers (2016) underscored meditation’s ability to help one manage emotions effectively even during difficult situations” (Holly B Rogers, 2016). Bhikkhu (2016) also refers to meditation as training for the mind, he continued: “Training the mind to look honestly at its unskillful qualities is like talking to a person about his faults and shortcomings” (Bhikkhu, 2016, p. 20). As we delve into the discussion of meditation methods, Bhikkhu introduces us to the concept of “The Committee of the Mind” (Bhikkhu, 2016, p. 10). Which is the idea that we have many minds, voices, ideas, and versions of ourselves in our minds that make up the committee. Bhikkhu said “Some members of the committee are open and honest about the assumptions underlying their central desires. Others are more obscure and devious” (Bhikkhu, 2016, p. 11). Meditation is to bring a sense of order to the committee, transforming the less skilled members into more skillful members (Bhikkhu, 2016). Some problems that we face include what Bhikkhu (2016) refers to as mental fabrication, which is when we develop perceptions and feelings fabricated by the mind including the mind itself (Bhikkhu, 2016). Another problem during mediation is Mind-wandering or what Rogers (2016) refers to as the rushing river of thoughts. Mindfulness meditation is not practiced to stop the thoughts, but to calm them down. Rogers (2016) said “With meditation, you are not trying to stop those thoughts; you are just trying to change your relationship to them” (Holly B Rogers, 2016, p. 26). Rogers (2016) also emphasized that meditation is teaching us ways to sit “on the bank observing the river with curiosity and patience

feels very different from being in the river, caught up in the current” (Holly B Rogers, 2016, p. 27).

Rogers (2016) introduced us to the five obstacles, or hindrances to meditation that are identified by Traditional Buddhist teachings. The five obstacles are “greed, aversion, sloth or torpor, restlessness or worry, and doubt” (Holly B Rogers, 2016, p. 64). Mindfulness meditation allows us to learn about sustainable ways of managing and tackling these obstacles. Bhikkhu (2016) offered us instructions on meditation methods, these instructions are derived from the Pali Canon, which is the “oldest extant record of the Buddha’s teachings” (Bhikkhu, 2016, p. 5-6). The four main postures in meditation are sitting down, standing up, walking, and lying down. There are a variety of ways and postures you can sit in, however, it is important to avoid slouching. Bhikkhu (2016) highlights that “With any posture, if you discover that you have a tendency over time to slump your back, it may be because of the way you breathe out. Pay a little extra attention to your out-breaths, reminding yourself to keep your back straight each time you breathe out” (Bhikkhu, 2016, p. 31). Breath is significantly important in meditation practices, we breathe under all circumstances, and in all situations, we can meditate on the breath at any time (Bhikkhu, 2016). Dae Gak (1997) remarked on the importance of breath as it “returns us to our **original breathing nature**. Without breathing, there can be no listening realized. When we are holding our breath, listening is not manifest in awareness” (Dae Gak, 1997, p. 37). Dae Gak mentioned that listening to our breath is as if we are listening to our life, which would be the sound of existence (Dae Gak, 1997). As we continue the discussion on the significance of breath, it is important to highlight some of its key features throughout the meditation process. When our minds are wandering, Rogers (2016) suggests “bring your attention back to your breath” (Holly B Rogers, 2016, p. 23). Bhikkhu (2016) also suggests that you “expand your awareness to

different parts of the body to observe more subtle breathing sensations” (Bhikkhu, 2016, p. 36). Rogers (2016) shared some meditation methods such as Belly breathing to quiet your mind down when you are seeking relaxation, Dynamic breathing to wake yourself up and stay energized, and body scan to develop awareness through scanning through your body from head to toe (Holly B Rogers, 2016). Rogers (2016) also shared walking meditation that “involves walking slowly back and forth in a room or on a short path while you meditate. Instead of using your breath as an anchor, you focus your attention on the sensations in your feet as you take each step” (Holly B Rogers, 2016, p. 75). In addition, Bhikkhu (2016) adds to the discussion of walking meditation with the notion that “As you walk in a meditative way, you gain practice in protecting the stillness of the mind in the midst of the motion of the body, while at the same time dealing with the fewest possible outside distractions” (Bhikkhu, 2016, p. 43). Bhikkhu (2016) highlighted that we pay attention to our breath sensations, avoid gazing around as we walk, and bring attention back if it wanders (Bhikkhu, 2016).

Another way in which accommodates us in living in the present moment in a non-judgemental mindful manner is through what Dae Gak (1997) refers to as “Mantra Practices”, which allow us to reach an ideal state of mind (Dae Gak 1997). Dae Gak continued “A mantra is a word or a phrase repeated and listened to with the whole body-mind” (Dae Gak, 1997, p. 22-23). Similarly to mantra practices, Bhikkhu (2016) introduces the Chanting meditation. Which would be “helpful if you notice that your mind is carrying a lot of issues from the day. The sound of the chanting is calming, and the words of the chanting help to put you in a new frame of mind” (Bhikkhu, 2016, p. 102). Dae Gak (1997) proceeds to build upon the previous points, continuing with another meditation method: Bowing Meditation. Which, bowing itself entails the meaning of “putting aside I, me, mine, letting go of all self-centered activity. In

bowing, we cut through dualistic thinking. Just bowing” (Dae Gak, 1997, p. 22). Bowing is a useful meditation technique to utilize to connect with others while lowering yourself, it is also a method to see our errors of self-centered behaviors (Dae Gak, 1997). Lastly, we have the Eating meditation which allows us to develop an appreciation for food. Rogers (2016) presents that “Eating is typically an underappreciated activity. Though eating is an opportunity to experience pleasure multiple times throughout the day, most of us barely notice our meals, mindlessly shoving our food down while we stare at our devices” (Holly B Rogers, 2016, p. 157). The goal of this meditation is to allow us to focus our attention on the food we are eating through an observing mind. We observe the look of our food, how it feels, and the sensations it provides us in our mouth and our stomach. Eating meditation requires us to utilize our five senses to put our attention to food (Holly B Rogers, 2016). Rogers (2016) drives our attention to the understanding that humans are dependent on the connections we establish with others. Cultivating a sense of mindfulness in our everyday lives would allow communication to be a productive and constitutive practice throughout intercultural relationships and all relationships. Similarly, Lipari (2014) emphasized communication as a continuous process and as “the way we do human being[s]” (Lipari, 2014, p. 113). Broome (1991) also commented that through communication, we cannot understand others as separate entities but co-create a shared reality and discourse (Broome, 1991).

### **Method**

Throughout my research, I experimented with and utilized various research methods to accommodate the data collection/analysis process. I began my research with a syllabus customized and designed according to my working habits. The syllabus contains a well-rounded daily schedule that addresses the readings of the day, the objectives of the meetings with my

professor, and the weekly goals. The first portion of my research method is absorbing the literature and scholarly reading materials. I read published articles and books by scholars that touch upon the important subjects in my project. I took notes in my two journals (one from the readings, the other about my feelings and observations) along the way as I continued to conduct my research. Moreover, I also note down possible themes that stood out to me as the main focus/themes of my research. I learned that discernment was crucial to reading and the note-taking processes. Readings offer plenty of information that may not be used entirely for the project. As I learned to discern which readings would contribute to and support my research, I was able to narrow the sources down.

Another method I utilized in my research is to analyze my personal experiences to design a scope for the research. My experiences in intercultural encounters enable me to develop interview questions and select the study's focus area. The third portion of the method is through conducting the interviews. The interviews were crucial as they allowed me to structure the written report portion of my research. Furthermore, I could categorize the data from the interviews into blocks of themes and major concepts. As I crafted my interview questions, I was able to directly collect the data/information regarding the specific topics that I'm curious about and thus further explore. The interviews act as supportive materials that accommodate the strengthening of my arguments. I had five interviewees in total, three of whom were conducted in person with rising juniors who were participating in the Summer Research programs at Denison University. The other two interviews are conducted through Zoom with rising sophomores at Brigham Young University in Provo and the University of California Irvine. I decided to conduct five interviews (each is approximately 1+ hour long) as I believe five interviews enabled me to explore deeply within my research questions. I chose the particular five

interviewees for my research because they have plenty to share regarding uncomfortable intercultural experiences, cultural barriers, the “differences” with others, as well as successful intercultural experiences.

The interviewees consist of both individuals that grew up in multicultural and monocultural environments. The diversity of intercultural encounters the interviewees have experienced enabled my research to explore a multitude of related themes. The interview questions are crafted to allow interviewees to share their experiences openly. The questions are not intended to make the interviewees feel restricted, it is created to encourage a conversational/chatty atmosphere. Furthermore, I structured the interview questions in an open-ended and broad manner. Then, I would include follow-up questions if appropriate with the flow of that particular interview. The general idea/summary of the interview questions includes: Asking individuals to share encounters when others made assumptions about their culture and when they are aware of when they made assumptions about others’ culture. The general thrust of the interview questions also includes asking individuals to share how they react to the assumptions others make of them, and the things they keep in mind when they interact with a person from another culture. I chose not to record the interviews, rather, I undertake the method of notetaking with my laptop. The reasoning behind the decision is to ensure the authenticity of the discussion. The interviewees may feel pressured or behave overly formally in the presence of a recording device or knowing beforehand that the interviews are recorded. This would defeat the purpose of my interview in wanting to capture the most natural response from interviewees’ experiences.

My research consists of Human participants (the interviewees), and thus, it is required for me to gain approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The ethical human subjects steps

I took would be constructing a Debriefing Statement and a Form of Consent for my interviewees. The Debriefing Statement addresses the interviewees of my Research topic and the reassurance that the interview will remain confidential between my professor and me. The consent form I have received from the interviewees serves as written permission to utilize interview information as a resource for my project. The consent form also represents the interviewee's willingness to participate in my study. Throughout my research, I examined how mindfulness can contribute to intercultural communication as an applied practice. The research methods I have undertaken are through reading scholarly works about mindfulness and learning and practicing mindfulness meditation from KORU classes and the readings. Thus, I have learned to employ mindfulness strategies in my daily life and throughout my research.

### **Analysis**

#### **About Habitus...**

Habitus is defined by Noble & Watkins (2003) as the “embodiment of our social location” (as cited in Cargile, 2011, p. 12). Such embodiment is instrumental in shaping an individual's perception of the world and thereby creates an impact on the verbal and nonverbal choices an individual makes when interacting with others. Throughout the interviews I conducted, I realized that an individual's agency to be cognizant of the concept of mindfulness—which Rogers (2016) defines as the “act of paying attention to your present moment experience with an attitude of compassionate curiosity” (Holly B Rogers, 2016, p. 12)—during intercultural dialogues maintains a solid connection with one's deep-rooted habitus.

#### **Multicultural Habitus...**



I came across two main approaches from my interviewees: First, individuals that grew up in multicultural backgrounds are accustomed to interacting with people of different cultures and ethnic groups. Thus, they are more likely to appreciate, embrace, celebrate, and be culturally aware and mindful of the “differences” in communicative settings. Oetzel (2014) has commented that “differences” between people in their experiences, beliefs, values, and attitudes are contributing factors to the difficulties of intercultural communication (Alexander et al., 2014).

An example of how a multicultural habitus plays an important role in shaping one’s reflexive approach to intercultural interaction is displayed by one interviewee “A”. “A” was born and raised on the island of Guam located in the Western Pacific Ocean. Guam has a unique Island culture influenced by a mixture of Asian Cultures. “A” identifies as Japanese, Korean, Okinawan, and Caucasian. The education “A” received from kindergarten to high school allowed her to interact with classmates from different cultures. Big melting pot culture allowed “A” to develop the mindset “It doesn’t matter what culture you’re from. It just matters that you are a person and I’m going to treat you right as a human”. The multicultural environment allowed “A” to be tuned in with what Broome and Collier (2012) refer to as the “broadening notions of the multiplicity of cultures”, consequently, she was able to recognize “the complexities, histories, structures, and contested nature of identifications and representations” (Broome and Collier, 2012, p. 261). “A” explained that a multicultural environment like Guam enables her to not only become friends with people of different cultures but to participate in tremendous cultural activities and celebrations. “A” shared her viewpoint on the extent to which her background experiences influenced her perception of cultures: “I don’t want to be seen as that ‘token Asian friend’ because I didn’t grow up here being seen as a ‘token Asian friend’. I also grew up in Guam and I attended the same school with “A” throughout the majority of my education. I

recognized that the education I received and the overall environment encourages individuals to celebrate and cherish everyone's differences while appreciating, respecting, and learning about other cultures. Individuals celebrated Lunar New Year, Diwali, Chamorro Month, and more. As individuals celebrate these cultural events, their learning process transpires as what Poplin (1988) refers to as "learning is not simply taking in of new information...it is the natural, continuous construction and reconstruction of new, richer, and more complex and connected meanings by the learner" (as cited in Walton, 2013, p. 5). Intercultural encounters such as attending cultural events and participating in activities allow individuals to not only construct a solid understanding of the culture but at the same time according to Nagata (2006) "Intercultural encounters [also] offer ongoing opportunities to develop awareness of our assumptions" (Nagata, 2006, p. 148). Interviewees from Guam exclaimed that Guam is an inclusive environment that teaches us the beauty in cultures.

### **Monocultural habitus...**

The second approach is to which individuals that grew up in monocultural backgrounds are not accustomed to interacting with something or someone 'different'. Therefore, intercultural communication settings may be presented as more challenging as a result of the lack of familiarity with the 'difference'. As Katz (1963) said, "We find it more difficult to empathize with strangers. ... It is a matter of common experience that we find it more difficult to establish empathy with those who are different from us. ... We tend to empathize with those who are familiar to us or whose life situation is most similar to our own" (as cited in Broome, 1991, p. 236). Nonetheless, in my research, I additionally stumbled upon the discovery that with the presence of mindfulness, there are great possibilities for individuals from monocultural

backgrounds to expand their horizons to embrace differences while learning something new along the way. Rogers (2016) described mindfulness as “An approach to life that involved learning to give the bulk of your attention to your present-moment experience, instead of wasting time worrying about the future or regretting the past” (Holly B Rogers, 2016, p. 1). Applying the concept of mindfulness in intercultural communication, individuals can pay full attention to listening to another person and according to Lipari (2014): *to feel with and be with* another.

An example of how a monocultural background plays a role in creating a challenge for individuals in intercultural interactions with people of different cultures can be seen through the interviewee’s observations throughout their experiences in college. Interviewees described the monoculturalism-focused environment they encountered. One interviewee said: “People here in California do not know much about other places' ' and another interviewee recalled: “In Utah, most people grew up in White neighborhoods and they never have to interact with multicultural people. And they were never taught how.” Interviewees from Guam who attend college in the geographical U.S. described the education system in the United States as failing to educate students about the importance of its territory and resource—Guam. An interviewee stated that one paragraph in a U.S. history textbook about Guam in WW2 does not allow students to have an established impression of the island. The majority of uncomfortable intercultural communication experiences recounted by the interviewees were connected with the lack of mindfulness from individuals primarily exposed to monocultural environments that expressed unwillingness to learn and listen to others. When one refuses to listen to another, it is described by Lipari as being “so immersed in the limitations and presuppositions of my prior knowledge that I fail to listen altogether” (Lipari, 2009, p. 47). With prior knowledge and experiences, it can be hard for individuals to lower themselves down to pursue the unfamiliar.

**Fear of the “Differences” and the pursuit of “Sameness”.**

Communication is a continuous process that allows interpersonal relationships to be constructed and sustained. During an intercultural communication setting, individuals from both monocultural backgrounds or multicultural backgrounds both encounter a degree of disconnection and perhaps ‘fear’ of the ‘unfamiliar’. To monocultural individuals, interacting with others of different cultural backgrounds is presented as ‘unfamiliar’ to the mode of communication they are used to (as I shared above). However, multicultural individuals who interact with others from *different levels of cultural exposure* are also likely to experience new intercultural situations (like college) as ‘unfamiliar’ comfort zones. In other words, the differences in communication patterns, boundaries, and discourses present a gap with the ‘other’ in general. Hall (2001) elaborated on the idea of discourse: “Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language...It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the ways that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. It also influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others” (Hall, 2001, p.72). Consequently, the college community presents an opportunity for individuals to expand their horizons away from the familiar pattern of social interaction in one single discourse or one familiar system of discourses to one larger discourse. Intercultural communication settings in college “disrupts the sameness and familiarity of the always already known” (Lipari, 2009, p. 45), but it also provides a chance to get to know each other. Lipari (2014) said that “opening to the other is a process of defamiliarization in which we renounce the familiar and embrace the strange” (Lipari, 2014, p. 185). The ability to recognize the strange and something unfamiliar allows one to learn about ourselves and others.

An example of individuals' uneasy perception and inexperience to handle the 'unfamiliar' is shown through the interviews I have conducted. The majority of my interviewees highlighted the detachment they felt while interacting with the other person of another culture, interviewee "F," said: "I didn't realize how disconnected I would be to people who are not POC". The differences in habitus can create a gap between people. Interviewees have experienced cultural shocks that are so-called "shocks" because of misaligned cultural customs. The notion of 'shock' in cultural differences interviewees discussed touched on the topics of the relationship between parents and children, the appreciation and taste for food, and work ethics. These 'shocks' feature the distinguishing ideals of Eastern and Western societies. Assumptions, misconceptions, generalizations, stereotypes, and fear derived from these 'differences' people obtain and do not necessarily attempt to learn about.

### **Assumptions from the lack of knowledge...**

The unfamiliarity one upholds toward another's culture can potentially engender the formation of a misrecognized assumption. Dr. Lily A. Arasaratnam (2014) argues that throughout our intercultural experiences, the implicit assumptions we uphold are brought to question and challenged, moreover, the concepts and beliefs we have established within our understandings are brought into light (Alexander et al., 2014). The unfamiliarity derives from the lack of knowledge coupled with an ignorant attitude and the lack of mindfulness towards another's culture resulting in conflicts or discomfort throughout intercultural experiences. In continuation of the discussion, Broome (1991) and Buie (1981) underscored that "We can have no direct knowledge about the mental experience of another person; rather we have "inferences which are based upon an assumption that we locate within our own mind something that is analogous or

homologous with that mental state of the other person which gives rise to perceived sensory cues" (as cited in Broome, 1991, p. 237). Interviewees shared the tendency to make impulsive assumptions even with limited knowledge of one's culture. Rather than engage with modesty and willingness to learn, the other would rather impose a presupposed limitation on the interviewees and thus create discomfort.

**Example:** One interviewee "K" who is ethnically Vietnamese shared an encounter with a high school faculty member. The faculty commented to "K" that she would automatically assume an Asian person is Chinese by their appearance. This assumption and cognitive shortcut the faculty member obtains demonstrates her lack of knowledge about the diverse Asian ethnicities. Hence, as Lipari (2014) emphasized that "For when we assume that understanding is contingent upon continuity, similarity, or agreement, we leave little room for discovery or for others." (Lipari, 2014, p. 140). The faculty member revealed her puzzlement about the distinction between China and Vietnam being the same countries. "K" clarified that this confusion stemmed from her assumption that since both Vietnam and China are located in Asia, consequently, the two must certainly be correlated. "K" recalled the discomfort and exclaimed that "People put you in a box, and don't give you the chance to show who you are". As a result of the encounter, "K" not only felt as if the faculty was confined within a framework of restrictions and limitations, but it also suggested that the faculty was enclosing herself within a box, as discussed by Rogers (2016) "Every judgment or assumption you hold without questioning is a bar in a cage you are building around yourself" (Holly B Rogers, 2016, p. 42). The inconsiderate attitude and the lack of reflection before speaking create a cognitive shortcut that influences the possible formation of a 'bridge' between two parties in an intercultural experience. Other interviewees also provide me with a robust list of examples to which people make assumptions from the lack of knowledge

and thus cause discomfort in social settings. One significant example would be when interviewee “T” encountered an Uber driver asking her the question: “Are you doing alright in your country? Are you running away?”. The assumption that “T” is not doing well is derived from the limited understanding of the history of Vietnam in the World War.

### **Assumptions from ignorance...**

Throughout intercultural experiences, Interviewees remembered their uncomfortable intercultural experiences and concluded that the other may not be coming from malicious intent, but driven by an ignorant one. There were occasions when the ‘other’ is unwilling to and strongly resist to lower themselves to listen. This extreme ignorance can lead to the formation of feelings beyond discomfort, such as anger. Interviewees shared similar experiences to which the others would engage in intense arguments with them about their own cultures and resist abandoning their preconceived notions. Likewise, Kim and Ebesu Hubbard (2007) bring our attention to “Cultural Bias”, in which one judges and decodes a phenomenon based on one’s culture rather than making [an] effort to see things from another’s point of view (Kim and Ebesu Hubbard, 2007). The interviewees recalled that the others produce assumptions in statement form and ignorant comments like “Well, I don’t really think that matters. Anyways...”, “But you really do look like that Chinese girl”, “Well since you are from Guam, you are technically an international student”. There is a need for individuals to recognize that careless statements that may appear innocent or casual in an intercultural context result in discomfort, helplessness, and a bad experience. Lipair (2014) stressed that “If you’ve ever seen a world map from a country far from your own, the likelihood is great that the map will look quite different from the one you are accustomed to seeing, because what a map of “the world” looks like depends on the culture”

(Lipari, 2014, p. 112), being accustomed to the comfort zone and particular lens of seeing can act as a barrier from being mindful throughout intercultural experiences.

Communication is constitutive of interpersonal relationships. However, if an inattentive attitude is employed throughout the communicative discourse, then communication would not be productive; it would rather be one-sided because only one party is willing to teach, and the other is absent in the position of a listener. Thoughtlessness in intercultural experiences would create a gap between the participants of the communication process. Interviewees have expressed feeling “guarded” or overthinking as a result of the other’s carelessness. The indifferent attitude would produce the impression that the two parties are not ‘equal’ but rather one thinks of themselves as superior to the other. Broome (1991) introduces us to “Egocentrism” in which one puts themselves as the center in disregards the other. Broome (1991) regarded Egocentrism as a significant obstacle to intercultural communication (Broome, 1991).

### **The Complexity of Culture and Lack of Mindfulness**

The complexity of the notion of culture is oftentimes neglected through the lack of mindfulness. The Interviewee “A” is oftentimes racially and culturally misrecognized as a result of her appearance. “A” was surrounded by an environment and family with not only one culture but a fusion of cultures. Interviewee “H” is ethnically Korean, and she expressed that “It is dangerous to make assumptions, not all Koreans have the same experience”. Interviewees touch upon the complex nature of cultures and how generalizations and misrecognition can be dangerous. Broome and Collier (2012) emphasized that “Cultures are multi-level, dynamic and often contested communication structures and processes that evidence subject positions and past, present and future itineraries” (Broome and Collier, 2012, p. 253). To expand further,



assumptions are made when one is unaware of the complex nature of culture and its development through discursive practices within history, the constant hegemonic circulation of ideologies, and the dynamic power structures between societies.

### **Stereotypes, Assumptions, Generalizations: Negotiation of Discourses and the Role of Power.**

Stereotypes, assumptions, generalizations, and misconceptions do not become widely known or in other words “dominant” out of the blue. It is rather circulated and constantly negotiated through time and place by institutions and people in complex dynamics structured by power. Furthermore, Giddens (1984) pointed out that “If intercultural communication/discourse is a form of social interaction, then it necessarily involves power; power is an integral part of human action” (as cited in Kim and Ebesu Hubbard, 2007, p. 230). It is crucial to consider how power is distributed in society, Hebdige (1993) highlighted that “Some groups have more say, more opportunity to make the rules, to organize meaning, while others are less favorably placed, have less power to produce and impose their definitions of the world on the world” (Hebdige, 1993, p.14) and thus, “some [groups] gain dominance and others remain marginal” (Hebdige, 1993, p.15). Over time as hegemonic practices persist, the continuous discourse makes certain dominant ideologies (or stereotypes) difficult to dismantle, “Hegemony...is not universal and “given” to the continuing rule of a particular class. It has to be won, reproduced, sustained.” (Hebdige, 1993, 16). Thus, hegemonic practices establish social orders and normalize certain ideologies. To be more precise, when something is established as “normal”, it becomes invisible and naturalized, it gains power, becoming an ideology. Hebdige draw attention to the idea that ideologies “thrives beneath consciousness” (Hebdige, 1993, p. 11) and it “saturates everyday

discourse in the form of common sense, it cannot be bracketed off from everyday life as a self-contained set of 'political opinions' or 'biased views' (Hebdige, 1993, p.12). Hall (2001) brings attention to Foucault's finding that power is not only repressive but also reproductive, power is circulated, deployed, and exercised (Hall, 2001). To build on the notion of power to stereotypes and assumptions, I will expand with examples:

**Throughout the interviews, most interviewees held negative assumptions about White Americans, such that: (these below are direct quotations)**

- a) "White Americans don't have an appreciation for ethnic food."
- b) "They give off an unfriendly and sassy impression."
- c) "They perceive themselves as superior to others."
- d) "They are racist and they don't know their privilege."
- e) "It's hard confronting White Americans."
- f) "They are favored by the criminal justice system."

In summary, the main stereotype, that "All White Americans are privileged," transforms into these other many stereotypes cited in the bullet points above. In all of these cases, the active powers and constant negotiation of discourse throughout history allows the ideology to become dominant and established. While these assumptions might apply to some White Americans, they certainly don't apply to all. Many stereotypes contain a kernel of truth, such as the fact that White Americans are treated by the Courts more fairly than Black and Hispanic Americans and interviewees understood that these stereotypes and assumptions were based on their personal

experiences and encounters with popular culture in both East and west media, proven historical events (slavery, colonization), and other sources.

**Example:** “F” had a conversation with a White American friend who is also Latino. “F” and her friend were talking about the topic of “stealing from Target”. “F,” said she would never see herself stealing from Target. The friend was puzzled and he asked her why. “F” was astonished that he even asked her why, she was thinking “Because I am raised with morals and you as a White American male can get away with it easier than I can”. Here, the interviewee reflects the underlying assumption that White Americans are privileged -- but it also presents a bit of a critique in her implication that he wasn’t raised with morals. As mentioned above, personal trajectories or historical accounts can be supportive of the stereotype, but it is crucial to acknowledge that not all White Americans adhere to or conform to a certain behavior.

**Here are some other assumptions about one’s cultures interviewees are aware of:**

- a) Interviewee “T”: “Vietnamese girls choose to study in Korea just to marry Korean guys.”
- b) Interviewee “A”: “White people lack respect for elders.”
- c) Interviewee “F”: “Guam is not civilized and industrialized.”
- d) Interviewee “F”: “Asian food is bad.”
- e) Interviewee “T”: “In the past, when I interacted with White people. Someone thought we were refugees. They would ask me if I am doing fine in my country and if I am running away.”
- f) Interviewee “L”: “I am conscious about money decisions, and people make assumptions about my financial status.”
- a) Interviewee “H”: “White people like to party.”

- b) Interviewee “K”: “A faculty member thinks that since China and Vietnam are both in Asia, and thus, it is the same country.”
- c) Interviewees: “White people are privileged.”
- d) Interviewees: “People think since I am from Guam, therefore, I am an international student but they are not aware that Guam is part of the United States and so I am a domestic student.”
- e) Interviewees: “Asian people are smart and are always good students.”

As mentioned, the complexity of culture should be respected and reminded throughout the Intercultural experience. The interviewee “Y”, who identifies as a White American, expressed that she typically doesn’t directly receive judgments from others, but if any arises, then it is more likely that it comes from members of a minority group. She acknowledges that it may come to be a result of common discourse, however, she explains that some exceptions and generalizations should be avoided. Interviewees highlighted that assumptions they uphold would not influence the construction of a relationship with the other from another race. The impression would exist but the assumptions can grow stronger or lessens depending on future experiences and encounters. Interviewee “T” upholds the belief that the pace at which the assumptions are strengthened is greater than when it gets less intense. As the relationship with another person began to develop and strengthen positively, the discomfort she has towards another person would disappear. However, the assumption about the culture would not completely disappear. In summary, “T” expressed that it is more possible to develop more assumptions towards someone than to get rid of them. The existing impression that people uphold towards a certain culture stemmed from the unfamiliarity and distance with the idea of being ‘different’ from the other.

Furthermore, one's realization of the existing difference would enlarge the gap between the two parties.

**Example:** When Interviewee "F" shared her experiences coming from a minority race, she explained that she tends to not assume things about another person's culture because "I know how it is. Because people have assumed things about my culture. I mostly assume white culture. They don't understand our experience". "F" recognized the difference between her and the other, and thus, she thought about the other's incapability to understand the experience. It is important to understand the need to acknowledge the differences "Learning to deconstruct mass-mediated stereotypes and popularized cultural images, and adopting more active, inquisitive mindsets toward other cultural groups are among the things that can be done to enhance one's multicultural knowledge and awareness" (Walton, 2013, p. 4). To do so, mindfulness needs to be employed and exercised, which we will discuss shortly.

### **What is the stereotype of a Model Minority?**

When asked about stereotypes, all of the interviewees mentioned the "Model Minority" stereotypes. Interviewees interpreted it as a stereotype that sugarcoats Asian Americans as good studious students, successful people, straight-A holders, and individuals with overly strict and demanding parents. Most of the interviewees are aware of such stereotypes due to their widespread popularity on social media, some of which ring true. Interviewees revealed that they share some similarities with the stereotype.

**Example:** The interviewees with Asian identities take offense at the stereotype and memes. The interviewee "H" emphasized that:

“At first it appears to be a funny joke but when it becomes big it seems like people are intentionally making fun of others. If it is constant, it will eventually influence people’s way of perceiving and thinking about things.”

This Model Minority stereotype may be seemingly positive and taken as a compliment for Asians. However, it rather exerts unnecessary pressure on individuals and neglects the struggle Asian individuals face. Keesing (1991) drew attention to the idea that stereotypes are entwined with the desire to dominate others. Keesing (1991) also highlighted that intercultural conflict does not simply derive from culture/language misinterpretations, but it derives from the dynamics of politics and power (Kim and Ebesu Hubbard, 2007). The stereotype has become a dominant ideology as it is largely hegemonic, naturalized, and thus rendered invisible. As it becomes dominant across media, it can misguide others who are unfamiliar with the Model Minority stereotype to misinterpret it. Fiske (1993) pointed out that “Hegemony is necessary, and has to work so hard because the social experience of subordinated groups constantly contradicts the picture that the dominant ideology paints for them of themselves and their social relations. In other words. The dominant ideology constantly meets resistances that it has to overcome to win people’s consent to the social order that it is promoting” (Fiske, 1993, p. 167). The dominant ideology of Model Minority becomes “dominant” through constant circulation in the society and through the promotion of the ideologies by the ruling class.

### **Complexity of cultures**

Other interviewees asserted that although memes over social media are meant for entertainment and as a joke, nevertheless, it is still a generalization of the whole Asian culture as it lacks a nuanced understanding of the complexity and diversity of cultures. The interviewee

“F”, who attends a predominantly Asian institution, experienced her peers in college as “feeding in” to the Model Minority stereotype. “We (Asian people) have to do well to get a kind of acknowledgment in society”. “F” witnessed the direct effect the stereotype has on her friends’ mental health. “F” believes that parents are pushing their children hard, leading to the kids pushing themselves above and beyond their limits. Other interviewees shared that model minority derived from a complex origin to which early Asian immigrant parents immigrated to the U.S. leaving everything behind and seeking the unknown for the sake of their children. Kim and Ebesu Hubbard (2007) stressed that “Minorities have struggled to define and counter the polarized oppositions on which this marginalization is often based” (Kim and Ebesu Hubbard, 2007, p. 229). The notion of the model minority stereotype can be traced back to a child’s demonstration of gratitude in showing their parents that their sacrifices were meaningful. Although the widespread memes can be meant to be a source of lightweight entertainment and provide people with some laughs it is important to recognize that individuals do have to go through such societal pressure to gain recognition and to show appreciation to their parents.

### **The Reactions when faced with assumptions and discomfort throughout intercultural communication experiences...**

#### **First Reaction: Third culture from “The willingness to teach and the willingness to listen”**

Interviewees reacted differently when faced with assumptions and discomfort throughout their intercultural communication experiences. Before I begin my discussion with the various reactions, I will first discuss one fundamental goal of the productive intercultural communication process that I recognized throughout my research—which is the formation of what the scholars Casmir and Asuncion-Lande (1989) refer to as the “third culture”. The third culture enables both

parties of the intercultural experience to expand their horizons and discover new lenses for perceiving the world. The goal of intercultural communication centers around the notion of discovering something new rather than being locked inside one's framework. Yin (2014) emphasized that "The ultimate goal of interculturality, I would argue, in the words of the Chinese anthropologist, Fei Xiaotong, ought to be sharing our diversity to create unity" (as cited in Alexander et al., 2014, p. 25). Broome (1991) also expanded on the goal of intercultural communication with the idea that "Rather than being told to completely abandon their perspectives, which is an impossible directive, students can learn to work at merging their views with those of the other in order to form common understandings" (Broome, 1991, p. 246). That "common understandings" and "mutuality" between the participants is indispensable throughout the entirety of the intercultural experience. In light of this crucial understanding of one important goal in intercultural communication—a 'third culture', I will now unravel the first reaction of the interviewees when faced with assumptions: "The willingness to teach and the willingness to listen". This reaction involves a strong bond between the communicators in the context of the holistic intercultural experience. The willingness to teach and listen" enables the development of the 'third culture'. When one party patiently and passionately explains their culture to another at the same time the other is willing to abandon their presupposed knowledge/inner assumptions to listen without judgments—a bond would be created and the horizons are also expanding. It is difficult to understand what another person experienced because we have different habitus, and experiences from another, however, as Lipari (2014) highlighted, it is possible for us to *feel with* another person. We can be willing to listen to another person as a way to demonstrate care and compassion for another (Lipari, 2014). Interviewees that display this reaction were faced with genuine questions the other proposed out of curiosity about their cultures.



**Example of First Reaction–Third Culture:**

Interviewees don't fault the other for not understanding their cultures, instead, they expressed the attitude: "For me, it is just like, 'ok I will take time to educate you if you are willing to be taught'". The two interviewees that grew up on the island of Guam expressed a tinge of disheartenment in the U.S. education system for not being able to educate students about Guam leading to cases of students making assumptions and creating discomfort. Interviewees that were able to form the 'third culture' with the other party took the experience as a learning opportunity for the other. Interviewee "A" who grew up in a multicultural environment said: "It doesn't matter what culture you're from. It just matters that you are a person and I'm going to treat you right as a human." On the interviewee's part, they took it upon themselves as sharing and spreading awareness about the importance of their own culture. The interviewees uphold a positive attitude toward the other shown through their eagerness to broaden one another's understanding and cultural awareness.

Individuals express acknowledgment toward others that share different habitus, experiences, and cultures, this can be shown as stated by interviewee "F": "It's not difficult to respect others, but at the same time I understand how people struggle if they don't grow up in that situation". The interviewees find the concept of 'disagreement' to be natural and impeccable. Instead of viewing disagreements as a means of producing cultural conflicts and discomfort, interviewees that engaged in the formation of a third culture took others' "misunderstanding and/or not understanding" of their culture as a learning experience for both parties. Lipari (2014) stressed that misunderstanding can be a remedy that enables learning and growth (Lipari, 2014). Broome (1991) also highlighted that "Third culture can only develop through interaction in which participants are willing to open themselves to new meanings, to

engage in genuine dialogue, and to constantly respond to the new demands emanating from the situation. The emergence of this third culture is the essence of relational empathy” (Broome, 1991, p. 243). Interviewee “A” expressed her thoughts on how intercultural experience can embrace mindfulness and promote the formation of a third culture: “I think there is a benefit if you can educate yourself and make sure you are more aware of other cultures. I think it is just very interesting if you can learn more and become smarter in that sense”.

### **Self-control in Third Culture**

I recognize that developing the willingness to teach others about one’s culture requires a multitude of self-control. Sometimes this self-control may include tactics of the ability to tolerate silence in the dialogue. Silence in this case is not avoidance of the situation. Avoidance is associated with a sense of ignorance, whereas self-control is associated with a sense of recognition of the other. Interview “A” expressed that “You can’t control the other person, you can’t control what they think, you can’t control how they respond but I *can* only control myself.” Mindfulness meditation promotes the cultivation of self-control, Bhikkhu (2016) commented “Meditation focuses your attention on the present moment because the present moment is where you can watch the workings of the mind and direct them in a more skillful direction. The present is the only moment in time where you can act and bring about change” (Bhikkhu, 2016, p. 10). Throughout the discussion of meditation and self-control, Bhikkhu (2016) also stressed that the first thing to note down in learning about meditation is “keeping control of your mouth. If you can’t control your mouth there’s no way you’re going to control your mind” (Bhikkhu, 2016, p. 92). It is crucial for one to mindfully examine and process the words that will come out of their mouth before releasing them to the other. When encountering differences, it is crucial to

recognize the value of giving yourself and giving the other a chance to embrace the difference and seek the strange instead of occupying the sameness and the familiar. Having this mindset allows one to promote a sense of ethics in one's doings. Interviewees expressed the criticality to not dismiss the other but to listen to them. In doing so, one rejects a blunt approach of ignorance and speaking without thinking. Interviewee "H," said: "You have to know them by their characteristics but not their culture".

### **Respect in Third Culture**

Acknowledging and embedding the significance of 'respect' in intercultural relations is key to the formation of the 'third culture'. Interviewee "H" highlighted the notion of respect in this statement: "Don't view another person as a "culture" but as an individual "person". A sense of recognition of the diverse nature of our society (and immigration) plays a role in cultivating mindfulness and awareness of others. Interviewees stressed that we need to acknowledge other people's struggles. An effective approach to embracing a sense of recognition for others is through listening to oneself and others with goodwill. Bhikkhu (2016) associates goodwill with wishing and spreading happiness. Regardless of one's liking for the other or not, listening to them with goodwill grants both parties an opportunity to be heard and to listen (Bhikkhu, 2016). The reasoning behind listening with goodwill is to avoid situations where we say things we would later regret.

Interviewees exhibit the tactics of listening in ways such as mediating the conversation and calming the mood and putting a pause to the situation and thinking 'Okay so what can I do? What is the most productive thing here?'. Some interviewees conveyed the viability of silence in conversations. Silence in this case would not be considered as avoidance of the situation. When

hindered in a conversation due to misalignment in stance, remaining silent can be useful to give oneself and others space to regain rationality and avoid the domination of our sensitive/emotional sides. Continuing this discussion of various “sides” we acquire, Bhikkhu (2016) draws attention to the concept of “The committee of the mind”: “So there are many different ideas of “you” in your mind, each with its agenda. Each of these “yous” is a member of the committee of the mind. This is why the mind is less like a single mind and more like an unruly throng of people: lots of different voices, with lots of different opinions about what you should do” (Bhikkhu, 2016, p. 11). As one mediates the intercultural dialogue and puts a pause on the situation as one listens to another, this allows one to bring a sense of order to the committee to prevent conflict in the mind (Bhikkhu, 2016). George Mumford (2015) describes the mindfulness practice of listening as “the practice of stopping and listening without judgment or advice” (as cited in Holly B Rogers, 2016, p. 169). Rogers commented that when listening to the other, allows assumptions to exit from one’s brain (Rogers 2016). Along the same lines, Lipari accentuated that the practice of listening to the other allows the other to be the other (Dr. Lipari, Syllabus for weeks 13 & 14).

### **Second Reaction–Confrontations:**

The second reaction interviewees displayed during the intercultural experience is “Confrontation”. Confrontation usually takes place when one party makes an assumption about the other’s culture and refuses to listen to the other educate them. In other words, a confrontation occurs when the other is not listening and the mutual relationship between the two parties is not established. Interviewees reveal that the other person refuses to lower themselves and listen, instead, they continually insist on their point of view even though they are wrong. Interviewee

“A” expressed her annoyance when others tell her that she is wrong about her own culture. She believes that the other person has no right to do so. As a result of the lack of mutuality throughout the intercultural experience, interviewees choose to give up their willingness to teach. “A,” said: “I think that there also comes to an extent that you just recognize that the person isn’t *listening*. And so why am I wasting my time? Why are you wasting your breath? So I would just walk away.” After multiple patient explanations, and receiving the other’s ignorant comment: ‘I don’t think it matters’, it becomes pointless to reiterate one’s point.

Asides from the fact that the others exhibit an ignorant attitude and refusal to listen, confrontations can also stem from the lack of self-control. The differences between two parties can lead to one’s mental fabrication of the other’s intention. Some interviewees of Asian identities revealed that while they hold slight assumptions about others, it does not prevent them from becoming friends with them. However, these assumptions contribute to shaping an impression that eventually creates a gap between them and others. Interviewee “K” recognized that: “It is not because another is not good, but because I made the assumption myself.” Interviewees recognized the notion of why “assumptions” are known as “assumptions”. In some cases, assumptions have no sufficient predetermined meaning that contributes to their formation, instead, they stem from mental fabrication and display one’s struggle with different voices in their head. The goodwill of listening can be employed by individuals to foster a more profound understanding of the actual dynamics of the experience. Goodwill of listening enables one to discern whether the other meant something or if it is purely the product of one’s imagination and mental fabrication. Interviewee T expressed that if the others answer her question in a way that demonstrates effort, then it shows that the others are interested. On the other hand, if it shows that they are not making an effort then the conversation is one-sided and it would build her

assumptions up. While body language, tone of voice, and other factors can accommodate one in assessing the level of effort in the conversation, it remains plausible that it is one's mental fabrication.

### **Third Reaction–Cautions:**

I will now explore the third kind of reaction individuals exert throughout their intercultural experience. This reaction is not when interviewees are subjected to the assumptions, but rather focusing on how interviewees respond when they hold assumptions about the other. This reaction can be categorized as caution and reluctance to mention the stereotype, which is driven by the “fear of conflict”. Interviewees explained that having experienced the discomfort of others making assumptions about their culture, they are now extra cautious to avoid perpetuating such behaviors themselves. Interviewees stated that not mentioning certain stereotypes that align with another's culture can prevent hurting their feelings. Interviewee “F,” said: “On social media we see stereotypes, and I would remind myself: ‘Let's stay away from bringing that up because it can be offensive to others’”. “F” expresses that if not worded correctly, it is very likely that the other person will be uncomfortable or angry. Being cautious is important in the case where one is unclear about another's boundaries. Interviewees stressed that the existence of cultural barriers and differences alert them to keep in mind the possibilities that others would be uncomfortable about their certain habits. Interviewees mentioned that the concepts of identities and race are sensitive, therefore, to prevent the conversation from becoming aggressive they would avoid questions like: “How do you learn to speak English?”, “Where are you from?”. It occurs to me that interviewees exhibit an abundance of caution during intercultural encounters, which seems to be creating a divide between them and others. Although

it is admirable that people are employing the concept of mindfulness in intercultural encounters, however, when cautiousness to prevent conflicts is overdone—one's mental fabrication of the 'inconveniences' the difference will bring would expand. The mental fabrication will form a kind of 'fear' of differences and an overdetermined set of etiquette that prevents the formation of a third culture or a learning opportunity. It is crucial to avoid connecting discomfort with differences, instead, learn to celebrate differences and see it as an opportunity to expand one's horizon. The 'fear of differences and conflict' derived from the issue of trust, which originates from the individual's worries, concerns, uncertainties, and doubt if the 'others' can listen and be 'with' them when they share about their culture.

### **Observations from the interviews**

Some other reactions and feelings I observed from the interviewees as they shared about their uncomfortable intercultural experience are feelings of hurt, discomfort, disappointment, regret, annoyance, and anger. These feelings originate from others' careless assumptions about one's culture. Some felt uncomfortable and angry because the assumptions put them in a shackle and limited them from being who they are. Some interviewees exert a sense of irritation when the memes on social media about the Asian Minority explode, they worry that the stereotypes over-generalized some complex experiences people have had. The stereotypes can misguide others into thinking a certain way that neglects the notion of mindfulness. Most interviewees, however, refuse to blame the other for not knowing things about their culture. They take intercultural experiences as opportunities to learn and form mutuality. However, interviewees are disappointed at the other's ignorant attitude and unreasonable persistence in making presupposed

assumptions about their cultures. The other's refusal and unwillingness to lower themselves to learn instilled a sense of frustration within the interviewees.

### **Communication as a Constitutive and Productive process**

Throughout my research, I was able to expand my knowledge of the notion of 'communication as constitutive. I discovered that communication is constitutive of interpersonal relationships in intercultural communication settings as a productive process. Lipari (2014) highlighted that communication is a reproductive process that represents and stands for the objects in the world rather than being a tool, communication is "not merely an instrument for accomplishing goals, it is the way we do human being" (Lipari, 2014, p. 113). Individuals made assumptions about one another, and some were able to build relationships and form a third culture which led to the expansion of horizons. Communication is also constitutive and responsible for the formation of assumptions and stereotypes through the mass circulation of discursive practices.

### **Production of Assumption**

Interviewees revealed that the assumptions they acquire towards certain cultures derive from experiences and encounterings. Stereotypes are established as a dominant ideology through their hegemonic nature in constantly exchanged and circulated throughout discursive practices by different players, institutions, and the media.

### **Production of Interpersonal relationships**



Whether pleasant or unpleasant, an experience is produced throughout the communication process. This serves as an illustration of the assertion that communication is a productive, continuous, and constructive process.

**Example:** Interviewee “A” has assumptions about others, however, she refused to act upon her assumption. Instead, she employed the method of mediated communication with mindfulness. She was able to expand her horizon and get to know people as the relationship was built. This example demonstrates communication as constitutive of interpersonal relationships. Interviewee “H” stated that: “I think having personal relationships helps you overcome the stereotypes and realize that not everyone is like that in the culture.” Interviewee “H” builds productive relationships with others through the perception of “starting with a blank paper”. Fill in the blank paper as you get to know the other. Ask questions, share stories, and only define others the way they choose to present themselves rather than fabricate assumptions.

Interviewees elaborated on the constructive nature of communication as it establishes common ground between people of different cultures. Common grounds can be established when one party is willing to lower themselves and put aside their presupposed knowledge to listen while another party is willing to teach without judgment. The willingness to do so will allow not only the production of interpersonal relationships but also ethics. The recognition and acceptance of differences will allow one to see intercultural experiences as learning opportunities.

### **Conclusion**

This study has illustrated the critical role mindfulness plays throughout intercultural experiences. I began my research by delving into the complexity of culture, and thus, it was portrayed that one’s culture shaped the way an individual views themselves, the world around

them, others, and one's behaviors throughout intercultural settings. Intercultural experiences where individuals interact with others from different cultural backgrounds and experiences can lead to one feeling disconnected or afraid of unfamiliarities. The interviews I have conducted with interviewees display the detachment one is capable of feeling while interacting with another person of another culture (I observe this from either the interviewee themselves or the people the interviewees have interacted with from their experiences). Intercultural conflicts and assumptions one has about another often derive from the lack of knowledge (about another's culture), or ignorance and an unwillingness to learn about another culture. The formation of a misrecognized assumption can be formed through unfamiliarity with the other. The notion of the "unwillingness to learn about another culture" may not be driven by malicious intent but rather by an ignorant one.

My study has demonstrated that intercultural conflicts often stem from one's resistance to lower themselves and attempt to listen to the other. Moreover, it is common to witness one's lack of appreciation for the complexity of another's culture. My study has also displayed misrecognized assumptions derived from stereotypes and generalizations from the media. A certain ideology of the stereotype is constantly circulated and negotiated throughout media by institutions and people in complex dynamics structured by power. Findings from this study have revealed that "mindfulness" in intercultural communication settings would enable the development of the so-called "Third Culture" among people. Third culture allows the participants of the intercultural experience to expand their horizons and learn something new from others. To foster the growth of a third culture, individuals must embody self-control, respect, and the willingness to lower themselves and listen to others. The study displayed that

communication is constitutive of the productive formation of interpersonal relationships throughout intercultural communication.

The implications of my study provide an escalation for an individual's knowledge and understanding within the field of intercultural communication and mindfulness. In today's world, whether at school, work or on other occasions, we are accustomed to participating in intercultural communication settings. Furthermore, this study matters as it addressed the notions of mindfulness and discussed the formation of what the scholars Casmir and Asuncion-Lande (1989) refer to as the "third culture" (as it is constitutive of interpersonal relationships). Along the same vein, this study also highlights the complexity of culture, the common fear of the unknown, the pursuit of sameness, the nature of assumptions, the role of power in the media, and the formation of stereotypes. The discussions of these topics are critical to us as we learn to make decisions in intercultural encounters to promote cultural competence and avoid conflicts.

If I were to approach my study anew, something I would do differently is to invite more interviewees of different cultural backgrounds of different ages and broader grade levels to share their experiences and encounters throughout intercultural settings. In my earlier interviews (out of five), I was less experienced in the way I asked the questions and provided follow-up questions. However, if I were to work on my research project differently, I would employ the techniques I have learned to ensure an interview that enables a deeper conversation. To provide my study with a richer and deeper understanding of mindfulness in intercultural dialogues, I would form focus/discussion groups consisting of individuals from different cultural backgrounds to discuss various cultural issues/topics and observe/record the ambient and reactions people have. I would also love to discuss in the focus group people's understanding of an ideal intercultural experience and what their experiences are lacking that should be present to

ensure a productive dialogue. Some limitations of the study include the amount of time of five-week I had to explore the topic of mindfulness throughout intercultural settings. Throughout the interview portion of my research, I asked for the interviewee's memory for interpretation and recitation of their past experiences rather than directly observing intercultural communication phenomena taking place between people. Some questions that my study raises that deserve to be studied further would include: What are some of the impact mindfulness practices have on individuals throughout intercultural interactions? As well as: To what extent do stereotypes affect individuals' perceptions of others before intercultural interactions?

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