

The Next Buddha may be a Community



The Next Buddha may be a Community:  
Practising Intercultural Competence  
at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

By

Sabine Krajewski

**CAMBRIDGE  
SCHOLARS**

---

P U B L I S H I N G

The Next Buddha may be a Community:  
Practising Intercultural Competence at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia,  
By Sabine Krajewski

This book first published 2011

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2011 by Sabine Krajewski

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-3011-9, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-3011-9

For Miglio.  
For my friends.

“The Buddha, Shakyamuni, our teacher, predicted that the next Buddha would be Maitreya, the Buddha of love.... It is possible that the next Buddha will not take the form of an individual. The next Buddha may take the form of a community, a community practicing understanding and loving kindness, a community practicing mindful living. And the practice can be carried out as a group, as a city, as a nation.”

—Thich Nhat Hanh, “The Next Buddha May Be A Sangha” in *Inquiring Mind*, Vol 10, No. 2, Spring 1994.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



List of Figures.....	x
List of Tables .....	xi
Preface .....	xii
Foreword .....	xv
Hartmut Schröder	
<b>Chapter One: Internationalization and Intercultural Competence .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Introduction .....	2
Darla K. Deardorff	
Culture, Communication and Identity .....	5
Globalization and Hybrid Identities: Australia's <i>Living in Harmony</i> Concept.....	8
Internationalization and Intercultural Competence at Universities.....	12
Intercultural Competence as Part of Quality Teaching and a Graduate Capability of Macquarie Students .....	14

Internationalization: A Brief Survey in Preparation of the Study.....	18
<b>Chapter Two: A Delphi Study about Intercultural Competence at Macquarie University .....</b>	<b>19</b>
The Delphi Method.....	20
The Delphi Study: Pre-survey .....	21
The Expert Panel .....	22
Opinions Expressed in the Pre-Delphi Round .....	24
Delphi Round 1.....	28
Delphi Round 2/3 .....	30
Delphi Round 3.....	43
<b>Chapter Three: The Student Voice .....</b>	<b>45</b>
Student Participants .....	46
Student Survey Results.....	49
Students and Staff on Intercultural Competence .....	53
Open Questions .....	55
Student Focus Group .....	57
<b>Chapter Four: Intercultural Communication and the Internal Diversity of Intelligences.....</b>	<b>63</b>
Towards Successful Communication: A Brief Outline of Concepts and Models .....	64
Cultural Intelligence vs. Intercultural Competence .....	70



<b>Chapter Five: Goals of Intercultural Learning: Accepting Ambiguity and Building Meaningful Relationships .....</b>	<b>75</b>
Meaningful Relationships – The Notion of Friendship .....	76
Macquarie Model of Intercultural Competence .....	82
Supporting Intercultural Learning .....	86
References .....	91
Appendix A .....	99
Internationalization Survey	
Appendix B.....	103
Questionnaires	
Index .....	117

## LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1-1 Macquarie Graduate Capabilities Framework .....	17
Fig. 2-1 Should students' intercultural competence be assessed?.....	27
Fig. 2-2 Openness .....	31
Fig. 2-3 Appreciation.....	34
Fig. 2-4 Communication Skills .....	37
Fig. 2-5 Which intercultural skills can be developed?.....	39
Fig. 2-6 How do we develop IC.....	42
Fig. 5-1 MQ university model of IC.....	88
Fig. 5-2 MQ university model of IC 2.....	88

## LIST OF TABLES

### **Chapter Two: A Delphi Study about Intercultural Competence at Macquarie University**

2-1 General Statements about IC .....	30
2-2 Openness .....	32
2-3 Awareness .....	32
2-4 Respect .....	33
2-5 Appreciation .....	35
2-6 Knowledge and understanding .....	35
2-7 Basic IC skills .....	36
2-8 Communication skills.....	38
2-9 Higher order competencies.....	39
2-10 How to develop IC .....	40
2-11 Skills of interculturally competent people.....	40
2-12 How intercultural competence should be measured depends on .....	41
2-13 Measuring IC.....	41
2-14 Methods of assessing Intercultural Competence .....	44
2-15 Problems in assessing IC .....	45
2-16 Measurable parts of IC .....	46

### **Chapter Three: The Student Voice**

3-1 Students participating in the survey by faculty .....	51
3-2 Participants by cultural background .....	52
3-3 Student survey results: IC related statements .....	54
3-4 Comparison Delphi/Students .....	57

## PREFACE

When I joined Macquarie University in 2008 I was delighted to be teaching a postgraduate unit in Intercultural Communication with students from all over the planet. Each class typically comprises roughly 50% Asian students, mainly from mainland China but also from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, South Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand and India. Others are from Latin America (Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Argentina), Europe (France, Spain, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, UK), the US, Canada, and Australia. The university is located in Sydney, Australia's most multicultural city.

It is exciting to work with such diverse groups and most of the participants use the opportunity to share their previous knowledge and experience in other countries and to learn from each other. Nevertheless, my own research about the use and effect of experiential intercultural learning with student groups from this particular class across several semesters (Krajewski, 2011) has shown that in some cases stereotypes seem to be confirmed and students leave the class with an image of "the other" that is even more fixed. It revealed that some students find it very challenging to interact with someone from a different cultural and linguistic background and experience self-directed tasks in teams from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds as more difficult than they expected. At times, even students who consider themselves as very open towards such experiences and who crave opportunities to truly meet "the other" in as many ways as possible, reported problems while completing assignments together. Difficulties were often related to language issues and communication styles, and sometimes just to differences in personality.

If postgraduate students who choose to study a degree in International Communication encounter these problems, what does this mean for diverse student groups in other subjects? If it is so difficult to access intercultural communication in a class where awareness and knowledge of theories is a given, where everyone brings in some previous experience and skills in intercultural communication, how can universities equip all students, regardless of their field of study, with the intercultural skills graduates need and are expected to have in a rapidly globalizing world? Where does "emotional intelligence" and "cultural intelligence" come

from? What do students need to be prepared for the global knowledge society, and what does it mean to be transcultural? Key terms such as globalization, cultural hybridity, hybrid identity, intercultural, transcultural and cross-cultural are being used in various contexts and at times become so vague and void that it is hard to attach any meaning to them.

I was looking for material for a lecture about the concept of intercultural competence in education when I stumbled across American, European and Australian university websites announcing that their graduates would leave the university as interculturally competent and well rounded personalities. The school of civil engineering and architecture in Kärnten, Austria, to name only one, states that

In an increasingly globalised world, intercultural competence is a key professional qualification in every field. This demands both a reflective view on the growing multicultural diversity in one's homeland as well as looking out beyond one's own borders (<http://www.fh-kaernten.at/en/civil-engineering-and-architecture/bachelor/civil-engineering.html>).

Finding closer definitions of what that actually means was difficult and the results were scarce, though I found scattered examples of university policies, course offerings, academic support and intercultural programs that reflect an awareness of the need of intercultural dialogue in theory and practice. Using Macquarie University as an example, I aimed at defining intercultural competence as a graduate capability for university students and at finding out if related skills could and should be assessed.

When I decided on an approach to define intercultural competence at universities, I contacted Dr Darla Deardorff who had used the Delphi method to investigate intercultural competence in the US. It was her spontaneous support and encouragement that made me go ahead with this project. She and Prof Dr Hartmut Schröder whose work on intercultural communication and taboo has influenced me for years, gave continuous support and advice related to each stage of this study. It was a pleasure to have them on board and their opinions and suggestions throughout the process helped shape the results.

I am especially grateful to Ms Kristina Wolters, who successfully completed her MA in International Communication at Macquarie University, for her practical participation in this research project. In particular, her involvement in all phases of the student survey and her work with the student focus group was invaluable for this project. It was great to have a companion who contributes fresh ideas, attention to detail and a good sense of humour to the task.

I am deeply indebted to all student participants who filled in questionnaires and especially to the six students who also engaged in the focus group during a busy time when major papers and exams were due. Their input on the outcome of this study is indelible.

A Delphi Study depends on the continuous support of its participants, and it can easily fall to nothing if some of them decide to drop out – which they could, at any stage. I therefore thank my 21 colleagues who dedicated their time and lent their expertise to this study, for making themselves available over a longer period of time, for their patience with extended questionnaires, for their emails, comments and encouragement. I wish to extend my thanks to all colleagues who supported the project by advertising it to their students or by allowing Kristina and me to visit their classrooms. The person who helped make this project readable is my colleague Dr Joanna Penglase, I thank her for polishing and re-organising mobile pieces of text.

A big thank you goes to the team at Cambridge Scholars, especially to Amanda Millar and Soucin Yip-Sou for all their patient help in putting this book together.

Last but not least I thank Macquarie University for financing this study through a Macquarie Social Inclusion Grant.

## FOREWORD

The term *Intercultural Competence* has become a key issue in many countries, both within the framework of political discussions and academic discourses. However, the circumstances vary from one country to another, which becomes especially apparent in the comparison between Australia and Germany. Germany shares borders with several other countries, and therefore the meaning of *Intercultural Competence* is different from the meaning of the term in Australia. In Germany the term is always related to intercultural encounters in relation to crossing borders. This leads automatically to dialogues with neighbours, which may depict more an effort to make sense of the other than meaningful dialogue, understanding and effective and successful communication. This seems to remain untouched by political action within the framework of the European Union (EU) which aims to demonstrate that borders have become so-called “permeable borders”. In contrast, Australia can be seen as a country without shared borders and direct neighbours. This, however, does not change the important point that this country with its various waves of migration has always been a multicultural society and increasingly an example of successful globalization since the abolition of the white Australia policy in the 1970s.

In Germany, *Intercultural Competence* did not come into being as a concept that created public and academic interest until the 1980s, a point in time when it had finally become clear that Germany, too, had developed as a country of migration and globalization, which has had a deep impact on all areas of public and private life. Australia however, from the time it was colonized, has consisted of various emigrant groups who bring together all their cultural embossing and so contribute to a further, multicultural development of the state. How do these groups relate to each other? How do they act towards those who originally “owned” the country?

Another difference between Germany and Australia lays in the fact that Australia is not perceived as a typical „modern nation“ of industry that exports manufactured goods, but it is more similar to countries which had previously been seen as inferior due to unconventional and relatively unknown economic behaviour. Thus in Australia agricultural products, coal and metals are important export products.

Furthermore, because of its size and its history that is intertwined with that of Europe, Australia has alienated itself from its geopolitical past. For this reason *Intercultural Competence* as a socio-cultural phenomenon shows its effects, for instance, in the realms of religion and economy, but also in its deep impact on the relationship between different generations (within the country) and their handling of the old and new “cultural heritage”. In Australia, the discourse on the meaning of *Intercultural Competence* mainly occurs within the country, not outside of it. So, Sabine Krajewski and colleagues at Macquarie University set out to explore what the term *Intercultural Competence* actually means in an Australian context. European observers, for example, may be asking themselves whether multiculturalism in Australia is a basic truth of everyday life, or whether there is no functional multicultural society but rather a multisectorial one down under.

While intercultural situations in Australia mainly arise within the various groups of immigrants, we can assume that intercultural encounters in Europe are not only related to multiculturalism, but also to contact situations in border regions. This means that such situations are always related to complex, historical contexts. This important difference possibly also explains why the academic discourses around intercultural competence in Germany are much more theoretical, in part explicitly philosophically oriented and “intercultural trainings” achieve higher value than elsewhere. Especially now, with the shift from industrial to service society and at the end of the era of European and North American dominance over the world, it is essential to combine theory and practice of intercultural competence in the universities. In current times, at European universities it is still the case that the term *Intercultural Competence* is discussed in a theoretical way and that its practical use in economic life is more or less successful.

In Australia however, for a long time it seemed that the discussion of *Intercultural Competence* was superfluous: A strong migration and its positive effects on the economy and everyday life were regarded as a matter of course, so that research and academic study of intercultural communication at universities in general were seen more as a luxury than a necessity. Everyday life itself solved possible problems (more or less successfully, at times on behalf of the established and to the disadvantage of the weak). Despite many differences between Australia and Germany, herein lies a common ground of both countries: In both it is obvious that intercultural contact alone does not automatically lead to understanding and to *Intercultural Competence*, and it also does not lead to a development of a common identity. Sometimes it leads more to misunderstanding and



provokes conflict situations rather than coming to understanding and successful communication. This can be demonstrated by using the instance of cities in (German/Polish) border regions such as Frankfurt (Oder)/Śluby. Successful communication does not only depend on being able to use a certain level of the relevant foreign language, but it depends mainly on the overall context. In his book “Kulturschock Deutschland” (culture shock Germany), Wolf Wagner discusses the phenomenon of “culture shock” and shows current difficulties in German/German contact situations (here, the situation and relationship in question is between Germans of the former east side/GDR and Germans of the former west side/FRG). Wagner assumes that communication leads to understanding if the following criteria are met:

- both groups have the same (social) position or the representative of the minority has a higher (social) level,
- the authority supports the contact,
- the encounters take place regularly and each involved party has a close relationship to each other,
- the contact is related to important conventions of behaviour and key experiences,
- both parties in the encounters benefit from it,
- the contact is pleasant and promotes further contact,
- there are common goals (which help to overcome differences),
- aims of the contact and their results are emphasized (and goals which stress differences are less important),
- a positive, social climate.

However, an escalation of problems is possible if the following occur:

- the situation produces competition,
- if one party of the involved groups is losing face or prestige,
- if someone feels frustration and disappointment,
- if the cultural and moral expectations for all involved parties are not acceptable,
- if the representative of the minority has a lower social status.

In addition, Krajewski’s research confirms that (...) *even in a place where positive circumstances pave the way to successful intercultural communication, namely in intercultural and multilingual classrooms, guided intervention is crucial to achieving intercultural competence.*

For this reason we should ruminate over whether the concept of *Intercultural Competence* is enough to discuss all phenomena connected with it. The problem lays in the fact that (in Europe) only part of society, the highly educated part, deals with *Intercultural Competence* and its difficulties. But even within the context of this highly educated society, people use their *Intercultural Competence* only in a very superficial way: *Intercultural Competence* is only seen here as an ability to understand each other, but to understand each other is not enough to avoid conflicts or to deal with deeper cultural differences that can, in the worst case, even lead to military actions. Real communication and understanding takes place only if people gain competences in how to deal with conflicts and learn strategies which are summarized as a “competence in cultural mediation”. Such knowledge and herewith connected competence is especially necessary for people who live in border areas. Ideally, a competent “cultural mediator” would be able to recognize key issues which could lead to conflicts and could help to avoid them. Furthermore, mediators could be useful in highlighting reasons for difficulties and misunderstandings and could demonstrate possible communication strategies which lead to relaxed and successful communication. Skilled cultural mediators in general would be very important in the area of education and in mass media.

Finally, we should pose the question, whether the term “intercultural” should be better replaced by another term. According to the opinion of Hildebrand (2006), intercultural behaviour aims to overcome cultural conflict by holding intercultural dialogue, but at the same time it operates with a traditional term referring to homogenous cultures aspiring to separation (this depicts the scientific position of the Herder tradition). If we insist on a traditional term, we support a non-exchange between cultures when difficulties arise with representatives of different cultures who are unable to find common ground for communication.

Sabine Krajewski comes to a similar conclusion, having analyzed the concept of *Intercultural Competence* and establishing that most models of *Intercultural Competence* present positions only from a western point of view. The co-existence of culture-specific models may strengthen differences between cultures and contribute to communication that may be counterproductive to building meaningful relationships. The concept of transculturalism, developed in the 1990s (see Welsch, 1995), consists of the primary assumption that cultures are characterized by a plurality of different identities and permeable borders. A typical indicator of such cultures are interlinked communication structures as a consequence of migration, and further developing material and immaterial networks (e.g.

internet, international traffic) in conjunction with economic interdependencies. Welsch (1995) proposes the point of view that in the framework of a cultural formation, the importance of national cultures and single languages is reduced, replaced by a global culture developed with a large range of interdependencies. In the sense of intercultural contact situations, this means that transcultural networks depict encounters which are orientated towards common grounds, while—at the same time—consisting of differences. Transculturalism produces diversity not only within a culture, but also in an external way. This means that individuals are ramblers between cultures, swaying between identities; they have to accept new norms and attitudes, while simultaneously passing on their own norms and attitudes. People here have to learn how to handle discontinuity in the most appropriate way. In such processes, cultural borders are regularly negotiated. Regional identities no longer exist (Hildebrand 2006).

With gratitude it is my aim now to remember that thanks to Sabine Krajewski's critical appraisal of the topic, questions of multiculturalism, interculturalism and transculturalism move into the background.

The aim of her project is explicated in the Macquarie model of intercultural competence. European models are dominated by diagrams in which arrows originate somewhere and end elsewhere to show how elements of intercultural competence relate to each other. Sabine Krajewski lets the elements generated through her study interlock in a circular frame; they are interdependent and keep “the machine” going. This practical approach leaves room for development and change: the machine is build by many; toothed wheels may be added on or moved in opposite directions. Intercultural competence therefore does not rely on the machine itself but on the people designing it. This is our space for further discussion and development within our intercultural world.

*Hartmut Schröder*

## Literature

Hildebrand, Mark (2006): *Inter- vs. Transkulturalität. Die deutsche Sprach im deutsch-deutschen Austausch nach der Wiedervereinigung.* In: *Zeitschrift für Angewandte Linguistik*, Peter Lang GmbH: Frankfurt/Main, p. 122 f.

Wagner, Wolf (1996), Kulturschock Deutschland. Hamburg: Rotbuch.  
Welsch, Wolfgang (1995), Transkulturalität. In: Institut für  
Auslandsbeziehungen (Ed.): Migration und Kultureller Wandel,  
Schwerpunktthema der Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch, 45(1),  
Stuttgart.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTERNATIONALIZATION AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE**

I know that you believe you understand what you think I said, but I'm not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant.

—Robert McCloskey (1914-2003)

# INTRODUCTION

DARLA K. DEARDORFF

An engineer works on a virtual team with colleagues on 4 different continents. A newly minted school teacher who has never been outside her own country faces a classroom with students from 15 different countries. A business woman whose parents are from 2 different countries, grew up in 3 cultures, speaks 4 languages fluently, attended a university in another country and now works in a country she has only visited previously as a tourist. These scenarios are realities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Consider this: We are currently preparing students for jobs and technologies that don't yet exist ... in order to solve problems we don't even know are problems yet. And even currently known global problems are seemingly insurmountable, some of which are outlined in the United Nations Millenium Development Goals which include ending poverty and hunger, universal education, gender equality, combating HIV/AIDs, and achieving environmental sustainability. Albert Einstein once said, "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." So, what do students need to know and do in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to tackle these global problems? One response is that students need "21<sup>st</sup> century skills" which are often referred to broadly as "intercultural" or "global" competence. Indeed, one study concluded that "the intensity of globalisation (sic) in recent years has brought intercultural competence acquisition studies back to the center (sic) stage" (Kuada, 2004, p. 10). Thus, intercultural competence development is and will play an ever greater role in the future given the growing diversity of society and within the workplace.

Yet, what is intercultural competence? Intercultural competence is an oft-discussed but rarely understood and defined term within the field of international education and beyond. This term is currently a "hot topic" within higher education in the United States as well as in other countries, with questions being asked about how post-secondary institutions can help students develop intercultural competence. Given this growing importance of intercultural competence within post-secondary education, it becomes imperative to more closely examine what this concept is and how best to

develop and assess it in our students. If educators are to be successful in helping students become more interculturally competent, it is important to explore definitions and frameworks of intercultural competence, some of which have been debated and discussed for several decades, much of it within the United States and Europe (see Spitzberg and Changnon, 2009).

Based on my work on intercultural competence, which provided the first grounded-research based framework on this concept in the U.S., leading experts in the United States agreed on one essential element of intercultural competence, that of understanding the world from others' perspectives (Deardorff, 2006). Thus, it becomes imperative to explore different cultural perspectives on what it means to be successful in interacting with those from different backgrounds. In reviewing literature from other countries and regions of the world on various cultural perspectives on intercultural competence (Bordas, 2007; Chen & An, 1009; Kim, 2002; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989; Manian & Naidu, 2009; Medina & Siningen, 2009; Mato, 2009; Miike, 2003; Moosmueller & Schoenhuth, 2009; Nwosu, 2009; Nydell, 2005; Taylor & Nwosu, 2001; Ting-Toomey, 2009; Zaharna, 2009; see also a report written for UNESCO, *A comparative analysis and global perspective of regional studies on intercultural competence* by Deardorff, 2010), several overarching themes emerge. Those include the importance of relationship in intercultural competence, the necessity of considering historical, social and economic contexts (especially in immigrant societies and those with a history of colonialism), the crucial role that identity plays in intercultural competence, and the need for cultural humility, which consists of both a strong sense of cultural self-awareness and recognition of multiple viewpoints coupled with respect -of truly valuing others from diverse backgrounds.

This study by Sabine Krajewski at Macquarie University adds yet another valuable contribution to understanding intercultural competence as it explores a definition of intercultural competence from an Australian perspective, using a Delphi methodology within the context of Macquarie University. This study explores the opinions of both students and staff at Macquarie University regarding the identification of intercultural skills and relevant learning and teaching leading to the development of intercultural competence in students. The resulting intercultural competence model and related project outcomes may be used by Macquarie and other institutions seeking to apply and integrate intercultural competence into the curriculum. Ultimately, these frameworks and definitions from the various studies that have been conducted to date on intercultural competence, including this Macquarie study, can be used to guide higher

education efforts in helping students not only get along better with those from different cultures, but to work together to address pressing global challenges that confront humankind in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



# CULTURE, COMMUNICATION AND IDENTITY

Any work on intercultural competence needs to include reflections on central concepts such as culture, communication, and identity.

In Bordieu's (1973) framework of social power, culture is a form of capital. People who have access to a general set of dominant cultural values and norms will have an advantage over those who were socialised in a different culture and have different sets of cultural capital at their disposal. Power relations are influenced by the different cultural dispositions. This becomes visible in plural societies where different ethnic groups co-exist in one social space, each following their own rules and regulations. As soon as they interact in the public sphere of the market place, the moral control that regulates behaviour within each group falls apart so that one group can simply oppress another. (Rex in Guibernau and Rex, p. 219) Such plural societies are inherently unequal and counterproductive to social cohesion because they focus on the individual and on individual ethnic groups rather than on the overall community.

The notion that 'culture is ordinary' (Williams, 1958) and describes a whole way of life rather than ethnic background and values alone, has become widely accepted. Hansen and Lynch, (2005, p. 23), expand that notion when they stress that values and beliefs are being shaped not by culture, language, ethnicity and race alone, but by numerous other factors such as socioeconomic status, educational level, and personal experience. Categorizing people as similar because of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds means to merely stereotype. It is important to keep in mind that culture is only one of many features that defines individuals and it may not always be the most important one, yet culture is inseparable from the concept of identity, and it is a part that is not static but constantly changing.

Discussing intercultural competence means discussing communication. After all, one of the main goals of intercultural competence training is successful communication with people from various cultural backgrounds. All interpersonal communication is laden with physical, semantic, or psychological noise which can be seen as unwanted signals that disrupt the communication process and affect the meaning to be shared (see basic communication models such as Shannon and Weaver, 1949). Communication across cultures and peoples may be even more prone to misunderstanding

and conflict, so it makes sense to be prepared for conflict and to develop some skills to “repair” communication gone wrong (Ting-Toomey, 1997). In intercultural communication theory (Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey, 1988; Gudykunst and Kim, 1992), culture and communication are inseparable; they depend on and constitute each other. The way people communicate is influenced by their culture. Most Asian cultures, for example, are high context cultures: they rely more on the context in which communication occurs than on the verbal message itself. Western cultures such as the US or European cultures rely mainly on verbal communication, they are low context cultures. The dimension of high and low context is part of Hofstede’s framework of categorizing national cultures from the 1980s, but it has been an integral part of later intercultural communication theory such as Ting-Toomey’s work on conflict management (1993) or Gudykunst’s theory of anxiety and uncertainty management (1988, 1993). More recent research (Parker et al., 2009) indicates that the divide between high and low context cultures may be closing because of globalization and the resulting increased interaction and communication between people, particularly as a result of increasing education and business connections. This would mean that globalization leads to mixed identities and communication styles. However, as Paquet (2008) points out in his book about deep cultural diversity, the “legitimization of ‘hybrid identities’ based on a plurality of participations in ethnies, nation, and civil society, has not developed evenly across national territories.”

Though the term *hybridity* literally means mixture, it has been discussed (and rejected) in numerous discourses about its meaning and connotations (it has, for example, along with globalization been rejected for allowing and even inviting cultural imperialism (Turnstall, 1977; Castells, 1997; Baumann, 1997). Bhaba (1994), on the other hand, takes a postcolonial approach and interprets the term not only as a mixture of two or more cultural backgrounds, but as a combination that produces a *third space* in which new identities can be produced. This new space offers new possibilities of cultural interpretations and is therefore a production site for new cultural meanings. In Kraidy’s view (2005), hybridity goes beyond coexistence and sharing values in the public sphere, it is a new creation, a result of parting and re-arranging cultural identities. He assumes that, since every culture has traces of other cultures and is to some extent mixed already, increasing hybridity is the cultural logic of globalization (Kraidy, 2005, p. 148). Globalization is not something we can prevent from happening as the resistance expressed in *glocalization* is part of globalization itself, and consequently separate cultures are a thing of the

past. Diversity is a result of globalization and it is neither something to wish for nor something to be afraid of, it is a fact of life.

## GLOBALIZATION AND HYBRID IDENTITIES: AUSTRALIA'S *LIVING IN HARMONY* CONCEPT

Since the 1970s, Australia describes itself as a multicultural country and keeps interpreting and re-evaluating the idea of multiculturalism. Multicultural societies can be, but are not per se, compatible with the idea of equality. There are two important days in Australia that reflect the country's official attitude towards itself as an immigration country and towards diversity issues in particular. *Australia Day* is a public holiday, celebrated on January 26 each year. It marks the arrival of the First Fleet at Botany Bay, which makes it a somewhat controversial celebration because it also marks the beginning of injustice towards the aboriginal people in Australia. Today, Australia Day tends to be a family-oriented event accompanied by festive speeches and culminating in fireworks. Australia pays tribute to its indigenous communities and voices its commitment to new citizens, for some of whom it is a special privilege to become an Australian citizen on that symbolic day.

Australia has learnt from its history and come a long way since the abolition of the White Australia policy in the 1970s. In February 2008, the then Prime Minister's (Kevin Rudd) official apology to the indigenous people of Australia on behalf of the Australian government set a milestone in finally implementing the respect and equality that the country identified as of highest value in living diversity.

The other important day, though it is not a public holiday like *Australia Day*, is *Harmony Day* which is celebrated on 21 March every year. Harmony day is an initiative to create awareness and to celebrate diversity in schools and local communities and the activities are supported by the government, communities and local businesses. It is part of the *Living in Harmony Program* which was introduced by the government in 1998 to promote mutual respect, Australian values, community participation and a sense of belonging for everyone (Wood and Landry, 2007, p. 275). The *Living in Harmony* program was established and administered by the former Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) which is now the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). In their article on the Australian model of multiculturalism, Syed and Kramar (2010, p. 99) point out that the removal of the word *multicultural* from the

name of the department in 2007 suggests that multiculturalism is no longer a priority at government policy level. However, under the new government in 2009, the name of the *Living in Harmony* initiative was changed to *Diverse Australia Program (diversity and social cohesion program)*, promoting that ‘everyone belongs’.

It is interesting to take a moment and think about what exactly Australian values are and what images people in other countries have of the Australian way of life. The *Living in Harmony* Program lists *respect*, *fairness* and *equality for all* as distinct Australian values. This sounds progressive and reflects Australia as well prepared for globalization processes, but what does *equality for all*, for example, really mean in everyday life and on a community level? If it means equal rights before the law, does it also mean equal participation in decision processes? Australia sees itself as a multicultural society where a diversity of cultural values and individual beliefs co-exist under the umbrella of the overall Australian culture and its distinct national values (note the difference to plural societies where this “umbrella of overall culture” does not exist). This is reminiscent of studies that divide the public and the private sphere and then show how they overlap and interfere with each other, in terms of education for example. The realm of customs and beliefs regarding relationships and marriage may be clearly matters belonging to the private sphere, but these matters will be discussed and influenced by schools and universities, though education as an institutionalized entity belongs to the public sphere. This is where the Australian model would profit from the idea of a *third space* in the sense Bhaba uses it. What exactly this means needs to be looked at in light of the definition of multicultural societies. In fact, Germany’s chancellor Angela Merkel recently claimed that the attempt at multiculturalism in her country had failed (BBC News 17/10/10. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11559451>).

Germany is a comparatively small country that invited guest workers in the post war economic boom times of the 1960s and 70s, attempting to become a guest-working country rather than a culturally diverse society, which is completely different from Australian immigration patterns in the past. Full community integration and a shared identity were simply not an option for the immigrants to Germany of fifty years ago, and many of them had never planned on staying in Germany either.

Chris Bowen (Minister for Immigration and Citizenship) recently introduced Australia’s new multiculturalism strategy, claiming that for a government to be free and equal, it has to be multicultural, and vice versa.

The government will introduce a new independent advisory body, the Australian multicultural council, with broader terms of reference, to

succeed the current advisory council. The new body will act as a champion for multiculturalism in the community, will advise government on multicultural affairs, and will help ensure Australian government services will respond to the needs of migrant and refugee communities. We will also establish a national anti-racism partnership and strategy to design and deliver that anti-racism strategy (Bowen, 16 Feb 2011, in his podcast on multiculturalism in the Australian context).

Neither the German nor the Australian approach focuses on the creation of new identities and each version distinguishes between private and public spheres. In his article about multicultural and plural societies, Rex (2005) points out that sharing core values may still leave space for the individual to be free to also live and express norms and values attached to other cultural spaces, but this is problematic because of the ways in which public and private spheres interfere with each other.

Australia still has work to do to become an inclusive society, but as Dunn et al. (2007) show in their long-term study about racism in Australia, other places such as Europe or the US certainly are not any further along in building successful multicultural societies. One of the reasons for this may be the fact that Germany and France have not invited immigrants to fully participate in the public sphere, another may be that the concept of multiculturalism does not work well in its present versions and negative effects such as inequality and racism prevail.

A key finding from the racism project is that while racism is quite prevalent in Australian society, its occurrences differ from place to place. These variations have been largely overlooked by anti-racism campaigns in Australia. The findings show that most Australians recognise that racism is a problem in society. Racist attitudes are positively associated with age, non-tertiary education, and to a slightly lesser extent with those who do not speak a language other than English, the Australia-born, and with males ([http://www.uws.edu.au/arts/coa/professorial\\_lecture\\_series/prof\\_kevin\\_dunn](http://www.uws.edu.au/arts/coa/professorial_lecture_series/prof_kevin_dunn)).

The Australian Minister for Immigration and Citizenship acknowledges that Australian diversity has been of incredible advantage to the country in terms of economic as well as cultural benefits and the innovative forces that come with it. He claims that each generation has expressed some anxiety about new migration groups, implying that it takes some time to get used to each other but that in the end migrants come “not to change our values but because of them” (Bowen, 16 Feb 2011, in his podcast on multiculturalism in the Australian context). This may or may not be the case, but no matter whether migrants intend to change dominant values or not, successful migration includes passing on and sharing values, both of