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Theorizing The Effects of Color, Environmental Space, Culture and Gender on Communication

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THEORIZING

THE EFFECTS OF COLOR, ENVIRONMENTAL SPACE,

CULTURE AND GENDER ON COMMUNICATION

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Humanities

By

David A. Brucker
B.A., Wright State University, 1982

2013
Wright State University

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

April 5, 2013

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY
SUPERVISION BY David A. Brucker ENTITLED Theorizing The Effects of Color,
Environmental Space, Culture and Gender on Communication BE ACCEPTED IN
PARTIAL FULFULLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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ABSTRACT

Brucker, David A. M.H., Master of Humanities Program, Wright State University, 2013. Theorizing the Effects of Color, Environmental Space, Culture and Gender on Communication.

Extant literature indicates it is our physical, psychological interactions, and perceptions with certain colors and space and our culture and gender influence the way we verbally and nonverbally communicate. I discuss how the meanings of different colors have been depicted throughout history. Summarize my research on the physiological and psychological effects on individuals and show how certain colors are used. Describe environmental space in terms of natural, acute, chronic space and the psychological effects of different spaces. Describe how the perception and use of space affects how we feel. Explore how culture strongly influences the "windows" of the world we look through and our perceptions. Investigate how physiological gender differences and stereotypes concerning gender affect the messages and how these messages are perceived. Overall research strongly indicates that the physiological and psychological effects of certain colors, environmental space, culture, and gender influence the way we verbally and nonverbally communicate.

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Acknowledgments

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Introduction

There are many things that affect how we communicate: color, space, culture and gender influence how we communicate. These phenomena positively or negatively influence the communication process. Extant literature indicates that it is our physical, psychological interactions, and perceptions with certain colors and space and our culture and gender that influence the way we verbally and nonverbally communicate.

For this project, I briefly discuss how the meanings of different colors have been depicted throughout history. I summarize my research on the physiological and psychological effects on individuals and show how certain colors are used. Next I describe environmental space in terms of natural, acute, chronic space and the psychological effects the different spaces have on individuals. I then describe how the perception and use of space affects how we feel. I explore how an individual's culture strongly influences the "windows" of the world we look through and our perceptions/interpretations of the messages we receive. Last, I investigate how physiological gender differences and stereotypes concerning gender affect the messages we transmit and how these messages are perceived by the same or different gender. Socialization and learning are very important when analyzing how gender and culture affects communication. With this information, I argue that physiological and psychological effects of certain colors, environmental space, cultural and gender must influence the way we verbally and nonverbally communicate. It is these effects that influence the way we interact. My discussion of perception has been simplified. Human perception is an extremely complex physiological, psychological process and is different

for every individual. Perception involves many factors including experiences, education, physiology, psychology, attitudes, values and beliefs. Before I discuss the overview of this project, I present a discussion on the key concepts of the communication process, the communication model, to help us understand how communication works. I begin by presenting the reader with a description of the effects of color, environmental space, culture, and gender on communication. Since communication is the process by which we communicate, I feel it necessary to provide a discussion on the communication model and how it works.

Communication is the transmission of messages from one person to another or to a group of people. It is symbolic and aims at the creation of shared meanings and influence, but other phenomena, as I will discuss in this project, also influence the communication process. The communication process typically involves the sender (encoder), receiver (decoder), feedback channels, the environment, and noise. The sender or encoder translates the mental symbols into understandable prose, so when the message reaches the receiver, the receiver must make sense out of the message. The feedback channel involves the mechanism through which messages are transferred. For example, messages can be transferred through face-to-face conversations, telephones, email, facial expressions, and so forth. The environment is the physical location where the message is delivered, for example, classroom setting, private setting, or a public setting. Last, noise is anything that interferes with the transmission of a message. Noise can be internal or external. Internal noise is psychological. When a person experiences internal noise he or she might be psychologically distracted by other thoughts. On the other hand, external noise is the noise around us that makes it difficult for us to hear a message. Given this

communication model, we can extrapolate the communication process to color, space, culture, and gender. Each of these phenomena can affect the communication process or the way we verbally and/or nonverbally communicate or the way messages can verbally and/or nonverbally influence us.

Effects of Color on Communication

When considering the effects of color, it is necessary to contemplate the following. Color communication is a specific desired message to indicate, for example, extreme danger warning signs for explosive or electrical hazards. Such signs are not painted green or pink because they may not immediately communicate the potentially dangerous problems. It is no mistake that traffic lights are colored red, yellow and green. Color, the use of it, and the desired effects are paramount when considering communication. Therefore, the intent of this study was to investigate the way certain colors have been used in history because different colors have been associated with different meanings. In ancient Egypt, redheaded youths and red oxen were sacrificed to the gods to assure an abundant harvest.

The Egyptians dreaded red and brown cats and saw divine powers in black ones (Birren, Human Response 42). In America, the black cat is perceived as bringing bad luck. Colors were also used as good luck tokens to bless the households. Syrians used a special red design. In Ireland, India, Turkey, and Mexico, the red hand shielded families from harm and in Jerusalem a blue hand was painted on walls and dwellings (43). Beyond this, the use of color has strong symbolism. For Christians, yellow was despised for its pagan allusions and the hue of Judas was yellow. The Venetians once forced Jews to wear yellow hats. In tenth century France, doors of the abodes and hovels of

criminals, felons, and traitors were painted yellow. In World War II, Hitler made the Jews wear yellow armbands and restricted them to yellow painted benches in public parks (44). There are many more examples of how different colors have been used throughout the centuries. Color had powerful meanings and influences throughout time. Artists used color before color research and color theories were established. They tried to convey certain feelings or meanings by using certain colors. One of the first great color theorists was Leonardo de Vinci. He recognized the primary colors of red, yellow, and blue. His Treatise on Painting, which discussed color theories, their rituals, and painting have a great influence today in schools and the academies (142).

The physiological effects of different colors on individuals are measured by a polygraph (lie detector) to measure respiration, pulse, palmer conductance (skin response), and other physiological actions. An electroencephalograph (EEG) measures brain waves. These different effects of color have been verified again and again (Birren, Human Response 23). Over 50 years ago, Sidney L. Pressey investigated color response and wrote an article titled "The Influences of Color Upon Mental and Motor Efficiency." There were researchers and chromotherapists like Edwin D. Babbitt that held credence despite the denials of the recognized medical profession (Birren 24). It is important to note the effects of color are always temporary. Exposure to color does not cause reactions of any substantial duration, and this reaction is not unusual for any intense or prolonged exposure to a stimulus. The biological responses for human beings to the two extremes of the color spectrum, red and green or blue are interesting. Red tends to raise blood pressure, pulse rate, respiration, and skin response (perspiration) and to excite brain waves. There is noticeable muscular reaction (tension) and greater frequency of eye

blinks. Blue tends to have reverse effects, to lower blood pressure and pulse rate. Skin response is less, and brain waves tend to decline. The green region of the spectrum is more or less neutral. Reactions to orange and yellow are similar to the reactions to red but less pronounced. Reaction to purple and violet is similar to reaction to blue (23-25).

Effects of Cultural Factors on Communication

Culture refers to learned and shared values, beliefs and behaviors common to a particular group of people (Bruess and Orbe 156).   It also includes common artifacts, music, customs, food, language, dress and celebrations. There are other dimensions of culture, called co-culture. Social scientists use the term co-culture to describe the perception of membership in a group that is part of an encompassing culture (Bruess and Orbe 156). Some co-cultures in North American society include: age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, physical disability and religion. Culture and communication are inseparable and communication is a key source of meaning and decision making within cultural settings. Culture is our perspective through which we perceive the world and through which we socially construct our existentialism. One theory is called stand-point theory, in which individuals who share a common culture typically share a common set of experiences that influences how they see the world (Bruess and Orbe 157). Culture is learned through communication called enculturation, a process of communicating one's culture (socialization via family, education, media, religion, etc.). Language reflects culture and vice versa. The use of language in intra-group and inter-group identification knowledge and terminology is used differently. Communicating with others who share a common set of experiences is different from communicating with those who do not. For example; women sometimes use girl or bitch to refer to themselves and other women and

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soldiers/airmen who share a common experience use acronyms and military specific slang. Intercultural communication is communication of group members that is influenced by different cultural perceptions, symbols both verbal and nonverbal. Degrees of cultural significance can be viewed as most intercultural, least intercultural and third culture. Most intercultural is a situation where the differences between the backgrounds and beliefs of communicators are high. Least intercultural is a cultural difference that makes little difference. Third culture is a unique relationship shared by two or more people. It happens when communicators from different cultures are trying to establish some degree of relationship and understanding.

Effects of Environmental Space on Communication

Human beings primarily perceive our universe spatially. For example, the use of space in architectural design is critical to achieve the desired effects. Micrographic research, conducted in both laboratory and natural settings, has shown the arrangement of boundaries and objects in various situations can control whom we meet, when, where and for how long. Also, the spatial arrangement can affect the quality of the interaction. Proximity not only affects the frequency of interaction but also determines who will fill certain roles in a group.

For the discussion of environmental space, the term needs to be defined for the scope of this paper. Environmental space is the way we perceive space and our knowledge of a specific environment. I describe environmental space in terms of neutral, acute, chronic space and the psychological effects the different types of space have on individuals. The perception of space and how it is used affects how we feel. Neutral space refers to the physical environment. Space is a container for our activities and a support structure for

our lives. In neutral space, life and its physical environment are separated. An example would be the physical environment of our home. That is, the physical environment must be conducive to our ability to communicate with others within that spatial environment. If individuals live too closely within a confined space, this tight space can create tension between the individuals and the communication process can break down. Acute space is open and invokes vivid spatial feelings. The boundaries between our spatial contexts and ourselves dissolve. The feelings have a framed quality to them and a finite duration. We know when we are in acute space because it is not ordinary like neutral space. Acute space inspires us and enters our experiences as something (Glenn 5). The feeling student pilots experience on his or her first solo flight or the feeling mountain climbers feel when they have climbed to the top of a mountain or the feeling parachutists feel when they are free falling through the air are examples of acute space, which affect our feelings in an exhilarating finite way. It is a subjective feeling for an individual, but we all can recall a situation in which we felt acute space. Chronic space is not an extraordinary space like acute space or ordinary moments. The experience of space becomes an experience of the issues in one's life. Chronic space has an unframed quality and it recurs over and over. It does not have an explicit and finite duration. Chronic space feels normal (Glenn 9). A good way to think about it is how satisfied or dissatisfied we are with our daily environment. By correcting or changing something in our everyday space makes us feel better and seem to correct something in our life.   For example, rearranging the furniture in our room changes the use of space and when it is completed we feel better. An important aspect of chronic space is ritual action. In ritual our daily actions have consequences beyond their direct impact. Ritual is not action repeated over and over in

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the course of life. What makes an action ritual is not the action itself but the context and action of it. In neutral space, action is instrumental and has explicit effects. In chronic space ritual has extended consequences by manipulating chronic space which manipulates life (Glenn 9). In the social science literature, ritual has been addressed from several overlapping viewpoints. Anthropologist Mary Douglas considered ritual as a guide to perception. Ritual focuses people's attention on an experience and controls that experience. Sigmund Freud wrote that ritual was magic action. Individuals develop rituals to ensure some kind of alteration of their lives (Glenn 10).

Effects of Gender on Communication

When children are born, they receive different traits from their parents. However, most of the qualities that individuals gain are adapted over a period of time starting at age three, approximately at the same time language is developed (Differences in Communication Styles). Whether communication is formed from genetics or learned at a young age, individuals generate a pattern of communication that stays with them for the rest of their life (Sachs). These differences are not just learned but also inherited (Fast 12). Another variable that contributes to how people act, which is formed during a young age, is playing the role of the individual's gender (Gilligan 9). When young, realization of being a boy or a girl is taken into consideration. When woman are young, they are able to play with Barbie dolls and their Susie Homemakers. Men, on the other hand, are able to play with war characters and act out violent scenes. Differences in how children are encouraged to play are taken into consideration because children learn certain social behaviors and communication through toys they are given.   To understand the difference between learned and inherited behaviors, consider this example:

When Mary was young she always wanted to be like her role-model mother. She dressed like her, tried to talk like her, and tried to be like her. When Mary was about seven, she no longer wanted to be like her role model because her parents began to argue a lot. Her father spoke to her mother with such hate and her mother was not much better. They would say the other was worthless and never helped each other out. Mary hated it. The fighting stopped when her father moved out. She learned something from this dreadful experience. She learned from her mother even though they argued all the time and said hateful things to each other. It was not because they truly hated each other; it was because they had problems with effective communication. Saying hateful things to each other was just a way to bypass the truth. Mary, now in her teens, remembers what her mother said to her and will not let anyone talk to her or someone else like that. She always tries to be honest and hopes others can do the same.

The investigation into what causes men and women to be communicatively different and similar has led researchers to the brain. The brain is made up of two tissues, the grey matter and the white matter and what they control. It affects men and women in different ways. The gray matter represents the information in the processing centers and the white matter works to network the processing centers. Richard Haier, professor of psychology, at the University of California, Irvine, conducted research that found that men use 6.5 times of their gray matter relating to intelligence compared to women, while women use 10 times the amount of white matter related to intelligence (Carey 19). Scientists found it very interesting that while men and women use two very different activity centers and neurological pathways, both perform equally well on broad measures of cognitive ability

(intelligence tests). Finding the differences in gender styles of communicating helps to discover how social and biological influences act on males and females in different ways. Men typically deal with problems by focusing on facts and seeking an immediate solution (Wood 24). Men also rarely ask questions unless they need to clarify something, which can lead to women doing more talking and the men just listening the entire time. Men and women need to realize the needs of the other and indicate who they are in relation to each other. This would allow for more effective communication in the relationship in communication.

Gender differences in communication are generally consistent with commonly held stereotypes about women and men. Women show greater communality and other directedness in their communications and men show greater agency and self assertion. A meta-analytic review of these studies revealed that men exhibit a higher percentage of task behaviors and direct disagreements than women and women exhibit a higher percentage of positive social behaviors than men (Carli 32). When applying these results to leadership styles of other genders, female leaders display a more democratic style, encouraging collaboration and involving subordinates in decisions. Male leaders tend to display a more autocratic style, discouraging participation by subordinates in favor of asserting the leader's control and authority (Eagly and Johnson 233). Women leaders also exhibit high levels of transformational leadership than their male counterpart, who in turn generally exhibit higher levels of transactional leadership. The emphasis of the transformational leader on mentoring, empowering, and encouraging subordinates reflects greater commonality compared to the transactional leader, who relies on enforcing authority through reward and punishment of subordinates. Gender differences

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in communication continue, even for those in leadership or management positions. It appears that both men and women communicate in a way that is expedient and likely to be most effective and influential, given their power, social roles and relative position in their interactions with others. Gender stereotypes thus create a double bind for women, who can be penalized for showing too little or too much agency. Women managers and leaders have overcome the double bind by displaying higher levels of transformational leadership than men. Transformation leadership has been found to be an effective style of leadership (Lowe et al. 386), particularly for women (Eagly and Johnson 233). It is a combination of communal qualities and leadership effectiveness that has provided female managers with a means of overcoming the double and excelling as leaders.

Overview of the Project

In the Prologue, I describe in more detail the effects of color, environmental space, culture and gender on communication and how we interact with each other. Overall the research strongly indicates that the physiological and psychological effects of certain colors, environmental space, culture, and gender influence the way we verbally and nonverbally communicate.

Chapter 1, "Effects of Color on Communication," discusses color communication, specific desired messages, the use of it, and the desired effects are paramount when culture and communication considering communication.

Chapter 2, "Effects of Cultural Factors on Communication," discusses as inseparable and culture as a key source of meaning and decision making. Culture is our perspective through which we perceive the world. Whether communication is formed

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from genetics or learned at a young age, individuals generate a pattern of communication that stays with them for the rest of their life.

Chapter 3, "Effects of Environmental Space on Communication," describes environmental space is the way we perceive space and our knowledge of the specific environment. It was described in terms of neutral, acute, chronic space and the psychological effects the different spaces have on individuals. The perception of space and how it is used affects how we feel and the use of space in architectural design is critical to achieve the desired effects. Culture refers to learned and shared values and beliefs and behaviors common to a particular group of people and it also includes common artifacts, music, customs, food, language, dress and celebrations.

Chapter 4, "Effects of Gender on Communication," explores both physiological and learned gender differences in communication.

Chapter 5, "Conclusions Drawn," is warranted in order for readers to gain a greater understanding of the fundamental concepts presented in the overview.

Chapter 1

Effects of Color on Communication

In the introduction, I present the reader with a description of the effects of color, environmental space, culture, and gender on communication and the process by which we communicate. Since color communicates specific desired messages, the use of it, and desired effects, they are paramount when considering communication. This chapter explores how the meanings of different colors have been depicted throughout history, specifically, the physiological and psychological effects on individuals and show how certain colors are used.

When discussing how color has been depicted throughout history, culture and symbolism are very important. Our psychological responses to color are on a subconscious level, while our conscious responses are conditioned to the symbolism behind the color and that symbolism varies from one person to another and from one culture to another. When discussing symbolism, it is not universal and has more to do with cultural and contemporary associations. The level is unassociated with natural associations, for example, green refers to the dollar bill or economic growth/greed or ecology, while blue may refer to sadness or being mentally unstable. Dual symbolism occurs in color recognition, with red being a primary example. Usually red is on sale prices because it is very energizing and bold. Yet, it is also on STOP signs all over the world. Extreme danger warning signs for explosive or electrical hazards are not painted green or pink because it does not immediately communicate the potentially dangerous hazards. It is no mistake that traffic lights are colored red, yellow, and green.

Colors have different meanings in various cultures and have changed over time. Various cultures see color differently. In India, blue is associated with Krishna (a very positive association), green with Islam, red with purity (used as a wedding color) and brown with mourning. In most Asian cultures, yellow is the imperial color with many of the same cultural associations as purple in the west. In China, red is symbolic of celebration, luck, and prosperity. White is symbolic of mourning and death, while green hats mean a man's wife is cheating on him. In Europe colors are more strongly associated with political parties than they are in the United States. In many countries, black is synonymous with conservatism, red with socialism, and brown is still associated with the Nazis (Birren, Human Response 42). Many individuals believe that blue is universally the best color as it has the most positive and fewest negative cultural associations across various cultures. Studies have shown most colors have more positive than negative associations and even when a color has negative association (Birren, Color Survey 142) it is normally only when used in a particular context. According to some researchers, people in a number of cultures have an automatic negative perception of the color black. For example, the Egyptians dreaded red and brown cats and saw divine powers in black ones (Birren, Human Response 42). In the Western world, black is the color of mourning. In America the black cat is perceived as bringing bad luck. In the early motion picture industry, the bad guys wore black and the good guys wore white because black is the color of authority and power. Black also implies submission. Priests wear black to signify submission to God. Some fashion experts say women who wear black implies submission to men. From the first half of the 20th century and earlier, widows wore black because wearing black suppressed emotions. Wearing black for mourning purposes has

been verified in many cultures for thousands of years for a period of time before they were able to resume their normal lives (bioresonant.com). Colors were also used as good luck tokens to bless the households. Syrians used a special red design. In Ireland, India, Turkey, and Mexico, the red hand shielded families from harm and in Jerusalem a blue hand was painted on walls and dwellings (43). The use of color has strong symbolism. For Christians yellow was despised for its pagan allusions and the hue of Judas was yellow. The Venetians once forced Jews to wear yellow hats. In tenth century France, doors of the abodes and hovels of criminals, felons, and traitors were painted yellow. In World War II, Hitler made the Jews wear yellow armbands and restricted them to yellow painted benches in public parks (44). Nazis also made Jews wear the yellow Star of David. There are many more examples of how different colors have been used throughout the centuries. Color had powerful meanings and influences throughout time.

Additionally, artists used color before color research and color theories were established. They tried to convey certain feelings or meanings by using certain colors. One of the first great color theorists was Leonardo de Vinci. He recognized the primary colors of red, yellow, and blue. De Vinci's <u>Treatise on Painting</u>, which discusses color theories, their rituals, and painting, has influenced schools and academies (142). Cultural factors in communication will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2 of this project.

Color psychology is the field of study devoted to analyzing the effects of color on human behavior and feeling. Color psychology is an immature field of study viewed dubiously by mainstream psychologists and viewed as "alternative medicine." Critics view it as an overstatement of what can be justified by research and point out that different cultures have completely different interpretations of color. However,

practitioners of color psychology sometimes called color consultants claim there are a number of reactions to color which seem to be noted in most persons (bioresonant.com). They also note that common physiological effects often accompany the psychological effects in that color is light and light is energy. Scientists have found that actual physiological changes take place in human beings when they are exposed to certain colors (Birren 44). Colors can stimulate, excite, depress, tranquilize, increase appetite and create a feeling of warmth or coolness. It is known as chromo dynamics. Why do people favor one color over another? Perhaps the way the color makes one feel has a profound effect on why we tend to gravitate to more vibrant colors and steer clear of the dull ones. Color is detected by the eye and the brain; however, nervous system impulses of the color do not only go to the brain, but also some impulses travel to the pituitary and pineal glands through the hypothalamus and you may be able to assume that colors affect other systems of our body as well. Color consultants claim in western cultures the psychological and physiological effects of hues in the red area of color are typically viewed as "warm," while those in the blue and green range are typically viewed as "cool" (Birren 45).

Reds are also viewed as exciting, and blues and greens are viewed as soothing and passive. It is claimed that red hues increase bodily tension and stimulate the autonomic nervous system, while "cool" hues relieves tension. Pink, which is a lighter shade of red, tends to have an opposite effect of red. Pink tends to relax the muscles and produce a calming effect (Birren 44). Both orange and yellow are uplifting and happy colors. While orange relieves self-pity, lack of self-worth, and the unwillingness to forgive (Birren 44). Yellow boosts self-confidence and optimism. Both orange and yellow are considered to

be good antidepressants (Birren 44). Orange has proven to stimulate the sexual organs

while yellow has been proven to stimulate the brain, making you more alert. Yellow also

activates the lymph system and causes the muscles to be more active making one feel

more energetic (Birren 44). Green is associated with nature, and as a result it may

produce a calming effect and make us feel lazy and relaxed (Birren 45). Green is thought

to help us relax our muscles and promote deep breathing. Green is also believed to be

good for your heart, as it helps bring physical equilibrium and relaxation (Birren 45).

However, the darker and greyer greens have, the opposite effect can actually be

detrimental to one's health, a reason why sickened characters in cartoons often turn

green. Blue is associated with both sadness and serenity (Birren 46). Whenever

individuals are depressed, they describe the feeling as blue. It does appear that too much

dark blue can be depressing, but blue is also a color that helps us relax from the chaos.

Blue may also be useful in eliminating insomnia, as the color stimulates the pituitary

gland, which regulates sleep patterns (Birren 47). Blue has also been linked to the throat

and thyroid gland, been proven to lower blood pressure, and help the skeletal structure to

keep bone marrow healthy. Purple has been thought to stimulate creativity, spiritually,

compassion and even psychic powers, and has been shown to alleviate some conditions

such as sunburns due to its purifying and antiseptic effects (Birren 46). It appears to

suppress hunger and balance the body's metabolism. Purple has also been thought to

bring peace and combating shock and fear. Indigo, a lighter shade of purple has also

been used by doctors in Texas as an anesthesia in minor operations because of its narcotic

qualities (Birren 47).

Color consultants believe the colors used in the design of an environment can have significant impact on the emotions and performance of people within that environment. When a counselor is decorating his or her office, it would be wise to include some sky blue and grass green in the color scheme to promote a calming, smoothing atmosphere. Color consultants also point to an increasing number of studies linking colors to specific responses (Birren, Light, Color and Environment 22). One study found weight lifters have more powerful performances in blue rooms and another study found that babies cry more frequently in yellow rooms (Birren 22). Even the most determined objective judgment may be affected by color. Ever since the 2004 Athens Olympics, it has been known that in such combative disciplines as wrestling or tae kwan do, athletes in red uniforms tend to outperform athletes in blue uniforms. It was originally assumed that it was the athletes who benefitted from the color association with a more aggressive color. However, a 2008 study finds that referees themselves may actually be subconsciously influenced by the color of an athlete's uniform. In the study, experienced referees were shown clips from tae kwan do bout. Unknown to them, several of the clips were absolutely identical except that the uniform color had been digitally switched. The referees consistently gave competitors in red uniforms an average of 13 percent more points (Hagemann, Leissing, and Seeing 32). To try to balance out the findings such as this one, tae kwan do associations are currently working toward an electronic scoring system similar to what is used in fencing. Thomas Gilovich and Mark Frank found that sports teams with primarily black uniforms were significantly more likely to receive penalties in historical data (74). The authors go on to state that students were more likely to infer negative traits from a picture of a player wearing a black uniform. In conducting

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their study, the authors taped stages football games with one team wearing black and another wearing white. They found that experienced referees were more likely to penalize black wearing players for nearly identical plays. Finally, the study also found that groups of students tended to prefer more aggressive sports if wearing black shirts themselves. People will actually gamble more and make riskier bets when seated under a red light as opposed to a blue light. That is one of the reasons Las Vegas Nevada is the city of red neon. Modern marketing uses a variant of operant conditioning to evolve these kinds of associations into a color "branding." While the various ecological groups quickly tagged "green" for their own and because of the natural association found, it very easy to associate green with natural/ecological issues. We can consider Coca-Cola red (drawing, not coincidentally, on the political Republican red with its undertones of family and security) vs Pepsi-Cola electric blue ("the Pepsi generation") for one ongoing example of color-branded product head-to-head marketing war. Another good example of color and symbolism is the American Flag which stands for freedom, purity, and innocence. Red represents valor and hardiness, while blue signifies justice, perseverance, and vigilance. The stars represent the heavens and all good things for which people strive, while the stripes emulate the sun's rays. Whether dealing with a client or to promote a product; a smart counselor or salesman will use color as a silent communicator to form trust and reliability and to read the non-verbal messages the person is sending. Overall color psychology is still immature field in psychology and many psychologists find the idea to be dubious. However, it is interesting to find out if certain colors really have an effect on us psychologically because of the color itself or the connotations that our society has attached to them.

Studies have consistently upheld that certain colors have a universal effect on individuals regardless of culture, religion and age influences (Birren 23). The physiological effects of different colors on individuals are measured by a polygraph (lie detector) to measure respiration, pulse, palmer conductance (skin response), and other physiological actions. An electroencephalograph (EEG) measures brain waves. These different effects of color have been verified again and again (Birren 23). Impressive qualitative data in color psychology and medicine for research techniques is indebted to the recent efforts of Gerard (Gerard 22). He painstakingly reviewed the whole area of light, color and psychophysiological influences. Probably for the first time he tested reactions to the entire organism, using advanced and modern techniques with colored beam onto the skin of the subject. Profiting from the experience of other scientists and the use of an electroencephalogram, Gerard evolved new approaches and discovered a number of significant facts. The biological responses for human beings to the two extremes of the color spectrum, red and green or blue are interesting. Red tends to raise blood pressure, pulse rate, respiration, and skin response (perspiration) and to excite brain waves (Gerard 23). There is noticeable muscular reaction (tension) and greater frequency of eye blinks. Blue tends to have reverse effects to lower blood pressure and pulse rate. Skin response is less, and brain waves tend to decline.   The green region of the spectrum is more or less neutral. Reactions to orange and yellow are similar to the reactions to red but less pronounced. Reaction to purple and violet is similar to the reaction to blue. Over 50 years ago, Sidney L. Pressey investigated color response and wrote an article titled "*The Influences of Color Upon Mental and Motor Efficiency*." Although color psychology is a relatively new area of scientific research, ancient civilizations believed in

the influence of colors on human. The ancient Chinese, Egyptian, and Indians believed in chromotherapy (Birren 24). Chromotherapy is a method of treatment that uses the visible spectrum (colors) of electromagnetic radiation to cure diseases. It is a centuries-old concept used successfully over the years to cure various diseases and is still heavily practiced today in a holistic and alternative treatment. There were researchers and chromotherapists like Edwin D. Babbitt that held credence despite the denials of the recognized medical profession (Birren 24). Babbitt was in fact among the pioneers of modern chromotherapy. He used both direct and indirect methods of color treatment, and he seemed to be well aware of the technique methodologies used in chromotherapy. His invention of different devices such as special cabinet that used natural light to produce colored light by splitting it into seven colors, used for the focalization of light onto some particular area, worked quite effectively for healing wounds and stopping bleeding, headaches, etc. The actual energy to which he referred in potentized water was not calculated by any means. He did not explain the energy change in water, its quantum states, and how different kinds of vibrations affect water in different manners (Babbitt, Principles of Light and Color 52). He did not explain the potency of potentized water, but incredible for that time it was in his correlation of magnetism with chromotherapy. His work on color healing for the first time in history proved to be comprehensive in taking both a physiological and a psychological approach. Chromotherapists today can benefit from his work as he discussed appropriate colors for diseases in detail that in a way does not contradict to the facts newly established under the influences of science. It is important to note the effects of color are temporary. Exposure to color does not cause reactions of any substantial duration. A 1970s study investigated the effect Pepto-Bismol

pink had on prisoners (Walker 19). Initial studies found the color calmed the prisoners (Walker 19). Later studies indicated that prisoners became immune to the color after a while and went back to their former aggressive behaviors (Walker 19). This reaction is not unusual for any intense or prolonged exposure to a stimulus.

Color does affect people and it can be confirmed by the way color has been used culturally over time in marketing, architecture, chromotherapy and the documented effects on us. Color can be manipulated to evoke a certain response or feeling. Color was used culturally to suggest certain meanings and associated with specific symbolism. In most Asian cultures, yellow is the imperial color with many of the same cultural associations as purple in the West. Marketing companies use certain colors on their products in an attempt to convey certain meanings or depict a particular characteristic (Hagemann et al. 19). One technique is called color "branding." For example, the way various ecological groups quickly tagged "green" for their own and because of the natural association. The term "tree huggers" to denote various groups who are environmentally friendly. The way color is used in architecture to influence how the space makes us feel. When a counselor or doctor is decorating their office, a specific color scheme is used to promote a certain atmosphere. Red is on sale prices because it is very energizing and bold. It is apparent why red is used on STOP signs all over the world and it is used for danger and warning signs. In architecture the use of color is used to influence certain behaviors. People will actually gamble more and make riskier bets when seated under a red light as opposed to a blue light. That is one of the reasons Las Vegas Nevada is the city of red neon. In chromotherapy the visible spectrum (colors) of electromagnetic radiation is used treat and cure diseases. It is a centuries-old concept used successfully

over the years to cure various diseases and still practiced heavily today in a holistic and alternative treatment. The effects of color on human beings have been measured and documented by a polygraph (lie detector) to measure respiration, pulse, palmer conductance (skin response), and other physiological actions. An electroencephalograph (EEG) measures brain waves. These differences effects of color have been verified again and again.

Color is the silent communicator. Color has been used for centuries to depict specific certain meanings and different cultures see color differently. The study of color grew into the field of color psychology devoted to analyzing the effects of color on human behavior and feelings. Color consultants believe the colors used in the design of environment can have significant impact on the emotions and performance of people within that environment and have been used extensively in advertising and design. The human response to color can be measures physiologically with a polygraph. Specific colors do communicate meanings and feelings to each of us.

Chapter 2

Effects of Cultural Factors on Communication

In chapter 1, I discuss how different colors were used culturally and how their meanings were associated to one's culture. In this chapter, I explore in more detail the cultural factors that greatly influence how we communicate. When we discuss communication and culture, we should be aware of the spectrum of communication including language, non-verbal communication, customs, perceived values and concepts of time and space.

Culture refers to learned and shared values, beliefs and behaviors common to a particular group of people (Bruess and Orbe 155). It also includes common artifacts, music, customs, food, language, dress and celebrations. There are other dimensions of culture, called co-culture. Social scientists use the term co-culture to describe the perception of membership in a group that is part of an encompassing culture (Bruess and Orbe 155). Some co-cultures in North American society include age, face/ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, physical disability and religion. Culture and communication are inseparable and are key sources of meaning and decision making. Culture is our perspective through which we perceive the world. One theory is called stand-point theory, in which individuals who share a common culture typically share a common set of experiences that influences how they see the world (Bruess and Orbe 157). Culture is learned through communication called enculturation; a process of communicating one's culture (socialization via family, education media, religion). Language reflects culture and vice versa. The use of language in intra-group and inter-group identification knowledge and terminology is used differently. Communicating

with others who share a common set of experiences is different from communicating with those who do not. For example, women sometimes use girl or "bitch" to refer to themselves and other women. The United States Armed Forces that share a common experience use acronyms, military specific slang words, and identifiers. For example, Marines are referred to as jar heads or grunts; Airman are referred to as fly boys; Sailors are referred to as *swabies*; and Soldiers are referred to as ground pounders. Intercultural communication is the communication of group members that are influenced by different cultural perceptions, symbols both verbal and nonverbal. Degrees of cultural significance can be viewed as most intercultural, least intercultural and third culture. Most intercultural are situations where the differences between the backgrounds and beliefs of communicators are high. Least intercultural is a cultural difference that makes little difference. Third culture is a unique relationship shared by two or more people. It happens when communicators from different cultures are trying to establish some degree of relationship and understanding.

Cultures are subjective. There is a tendency to assume that elements of one's own culture are logical and make good sense. It follows that if other cultures, whether relationships, groups, organizations or societies look different; those differences are often considered to be negative, illogical and sometimes nonsensical. If for example, an individual happens to be in romantic relationship that is characterized by public displays of affection, a person might think the behaviors of other people who have a more reserved relational cultures may seem strange or inappropriate. The person might wonder why a romantic couple would not be more open in displaying affection to one another in public. The individual might even be tempted to conclude that the "reserved"

relationship lacks depth and intensity. This phenomenon of cultural relativism is true in a variety of situations. People who are used to informal meetings of a group might think the adherence to formal meeting rules is strange and stilted. Employees in an organization where suits are worn every day may react with cynicism and questioning when they enter an organization where casual attire is standard practice. Someone from a culture that permits one man to have only one wife may find it quite inappropriate that another culture allows one man to have multiple wives. With regard to cultural relativism, the tendency for many people is to equate "different" with "wrong" even though all cultural elements come about through essentially identical communication processes.

Cultures change over time. In fact, cultures are ever changing, though the change is sometimes very slow and imperceptible. Many forces influence cultural change. As indicated above, cultures are created through communication and it is also through communication between individuals that cultures change over time. Each person involved in a communication encounter brings the sum of his or her own experiences from other (past or present) culture memberships. In one sense, any encounter between individuals in new relationships, groups, organizations or societies is an intercultural communication event and these varying cultural encounters influence the individual and the cultures over time. Travel and communication technologies greatly accelerate the movement of messages from one cultural context to another and in small and large ways; cultures come to influence one another through communication. Phrases such as "melting pot," "world community," and "global village" speak to the inevitability of intercultural influence and change.

Cultures are largely invisible. Much of what characterizes cultures of relationships, groups, organizations or societies is invisible to its members, much as the air is invisible to those who breathe it. Language, of course, is visible, as are greeting conventions, special symbols, places and spaces. However, the special and defining meanings that these symbols, greetings, places and spaces have for individuals in a culture are far less visible. For example, one can observe individuals kissing when they greet, but unless one has a good deal more cultural knowledge, it is difficult to determine what the behavior means in the context of the culture of their relationship, group, organization or society. In other words, it is difficult to tell, without more cultural knowledge if the kiss is a customary greeting among casual acquaintances or if such a greeting would be reserved for family members or lovers. As another example, beefsteak is thought of an excellent food in some cultures. However, if one were a vegetarian or a member of a culture where the cow is sacred, the same steak would have an entirely different cultural meaning.

Extremely important aspects of cultural communication are Edward T. Hall's discovery of key cultural factors. Edward Hall was an anthropologist known for his high and low context cultural factors. High and low context indicates how much information is required for successful communication (Hall, Silent Language 78). High context communication is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little of the message is actually in words (Hall 79). Couples often can communicate with a look or a nod of the head at most. Low context communication is just the opposite: most of the information is verbalized. Twins

who have grown up together can and do communicate more economically (high context) than opposing lawyers in a courtroom during a trial (low context) (Hall 79).

In the Far East, high context communication is much higher than in North America. This can lead to serious misunderstanding. For example, a businessman was invited to lunch with a Japanese friend atop one of Tokyo's new skyscrapers, with the entire city spread below them. The Japanese host chose the occasion to give an overview of some of the sticky points in US-Japanese relations. In his own way, indirect but very clear he said there were certain things that the Americans had missed in Japanese culture (Hall, Hidden Differences 141). For the Japanese to show anger is equivalent to admitting loss of control (and face), unless things have gone too far. No warning signs are given and Westerners as well as Europeans will unconsciously push looking for structure, pattern and limits. Because they are unfamiliar with the system, they will go too far. With the Japanese culture, one must make haste slowly and engage the most skillful, subtle interpreter of culture you can find (Hall 142).

The greater the cultural distance is, the more difficult it is to interface. An example of easy-to-interface communication would be Germany and Switzerland. The cultural distance in this case is not great since both cultures are low context as well as monochromic. Monochromic time people do one thing at a time, concentrate on the job at hand, take time commitment's seriously and are concerned not to disturb others. They tend to be rule followers, show great respect for private property, seldom barrow or lend and emphasize promptness. In addition they are low-context. Polychromic time people are almost opposites of monochromic. They are high context types, who do many things at once, are highly distractible and subject to interruptions. While they consider time

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commitments objectives to be considered, they are more concerned with relationships, especially family and friends (Hall 15). A difficult-to-interface communication would be France and the United States. If you are communicating with a German (low context), and will needs lots of information and details. If you are communicating with someone from France, they are high context and will not require as much information (Hall 28). Context is the information that surrounds an event; it is inextricable bound up with the meaning of that event. The elements that combine to produce a given meaning, events and context, are in different proportions depending on the culture. The culture of the worlds can be compared on a scale from high to low context (Hall 27). Japanese, Arabs and Mediterranean cultures, who have extensive information networks among family, friends, colleagues and clients and who are involved in close personal relations are high context. As a result, for most normal transactions in family life they do not require, nor expect, much background information. This is because they keep themselves informed about everything having to do with the people who are important in their lives. Americans, Germans, Swiss, Scandinavians and other northern Europeans are low context. They compartmentalize their personal relationships, their work and many aspects of day-to-day life. Consequently, each time they interact with others they need detailed background information. The French are much higher on the context scale than either Germans or Americans. This difference can affect virtually every situation and every relationship in which the members of these two opposite traditions find themselves.

 "Contexting" is performing multiple functions. For example; any shift in the level of context is a communication. The shift can be up the scale, indicating a warming of the relationship, or down the scale communicating coolness or displeasure, signaling

something has gone wrong with a relationship. High context people are apt to become impatient and irritated when low context people insist on giving them information they don't need (Hall 10). Conversely low context people are at a loss when high context people do not provide enough information. One of the great communication challenges in life is to find the appropriate level of contexting needed for each situation. Too much information leads people to feel they are being talked down to; too little information can mystify them or make them feel left out. Ordinarily, people make these adjustments automatically in their own country but in other countries their messages frequently miss the target (Hall 9).

Nobel Peace Laureate Jimmy Carter understood the importance of high context communication with his counterparts from Israel and Egypt in the historic Camp David peace negotiations. In one excellent example, Carter reports that Prime Minister Begin was about to leave the negotiations after several days, discouraged at having reached an impasse. Carter met Begin at his accommodations and presented him with pictures of the three heads of state, inscribed with the names of each of Begin's grandchildren. Prime Minister Begin repeated the names of his grandchildren out loud as he paused to look at the pictures, seeming to reflect on the importance of the peace negotiations to the grandchildren's futures. Carter knew instinctively that no direct, low context appeal would work to bring Prime Minister Begin back to the negotiating table. Perhaps low context requests were already tried without success. Instead, Carter relied on a high context reference to legacy, future generations and the relations Begin cared about. He invoked the communities each leader served by reminding Begin of his grandchildren (Carter, Keeping Faith 392). Though Carter's masterful, high context appeal, negations

resumed and peace was achieved between neighbors who had been in intractable conflict for many years. This example shows the importance of these two interrelated starting points, individualism/communitarianism and low/high context. While there are many exceptions to cultural patterns and all of us use different starting points depending on the context, noticing the intersections of ways of making meaning is often a useful window into conflict dynamics.

Space and territoriality are highly developed and strongly influenced by culture. It is particularly well developed in the Germans and Americans. Americans tend to establish places that we label "mine", a cook's feeling about a kitchen or a child's view or his or her bedroom. In Germany this same feeling of territoriality is commonly extended to all possessions, including an automobile. If a German's car is touched, it is though the individual himself has been touched. Space also communicates power. In Germany and America the top floor is more important than others, while for French middle floors are more important (Hall 11). Personal space is another form of territory. Each person has around them an invisible bubble of space which expands and contracts depending on a number of things: the relationship to the people nearby, the person's emotional state, culture and activity being performed. Few people are allowed to penetrate this bit of mobile territory and then only for short periods of time. Changes in personal space brought about by cramped quarters or crowding cause people to feel uncomfortable or aggressive. In northern Europe, personal space is quite large and people keep their distance. In southern France, Italy, Greece, and Spain personal space gets smaller and smaller so the distance that is perceived as intimate in the north overlaps normal conventional distance in the south. This means that Mediterranean Europeans

"get to close" to the Germans, the Scandinavians, the English and those Americans of northern European ancestry.

In some cultures, light touching of the arm or a light kiss to the cheek is very common, even among people who have just met.   People from Latin America and Eastern Europe may be very comfortable with this kind of touching. A strong, warm handshake is the traditional greeting between men in Latin America. Most Latin Americans show affection easily, male friends, like female friends, may embrace and lightly brush their cheeks together. A western woman should not initiate a handshake with a man in India. Many Indian women will shake hands with foreign women but not foreign men. People from many Asian cultures may prefer less physical contact with acquaintances. In northern Europe, one does not touch others. Even the brushing of the overcoat sleeve used to elicit an apology (Hall 11). While patting a child's head is considered to be friendly or an affectionate gesture in our culture, it is considered inappropriate by many Asians to touch someone on the head, which is believed to be a sacred part of the body. In the Middle East, the left hand is reserved for bodily hygiene and should not be used to touch another or transfer objects. In Muslim cultures, touch between opposite gendered individuals is generally considered inappropriate.

There are a number of gestures commonly used in the United States that may have a different meaning and/or be offensive to those from other cultures. One common example is the finger or hand to indicate "come here please." This is the gesture used to beckon dogs in some cultures and is very offensive. Pointing with one finger is also considered to be rude in some cultures and Asians typically use their entire hand to point to something. The "OK" sign is interrupted in Japan as a symbol for money, because the

circular shape of the index finger and the thumb together suggest the shape of a coin. In Argentina, Belgium, France, Portugal, Italy, Greece and Zimbabwe, the sign means "zero" or "nothing." In some Eastern European countries as in other countries throughout the world, the gesture indicates a bodily orifice and is highly offensive. The "thumbs up" gesture has a vulgar connotation in Iran.

In mainstream Western culture, eye contact is interpreted as attentive and honesty; we are taught that we should "look people in the eye" when talking. In Latin America, good eye contact is important in both social and business situations. In many cultures, however, including Hispanic, Asian, Middle Eastern and Native American, eye contact is thought to be disrespectful or rude and lack of eye contact does not mean the person is not paying attention. Woman may especially avoid eye contact with men because it can be taken as a sign of sexual interest. When greeting a Chinese, it is best to avoid prolonged eye contact as a sign of respect and deference. In Ghana, young children are taught not to look adults in the eye because to do so would be considered an act of defiance.

Culture has a significant influence on how we communicate. Culture and communication are inseparable and are key sources of meaning and decision making. Culture is our perspective through which we perceive the world. I have defined culture as the common artifacts, music, customs, food, language, dress and celebrations and some additional co-cultures in North American society as age, face/ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, physical disability and religion. There is a subjective nature of culture depending on one's culture and what is "normal" for one culture may be "abnormal" for another, creating cultural relativism. I discussed Edward T. Hall's

discovery of key cultural factors that were extremely important aspects of cultural

communication. He was known for his high and low context cultural factors. High and

low context indicates how much information is required for successful communication.

High context communication is one in which most of the information is either in the

physical context or internalized in the person, while very little of the message is actually

in words. Understanding Hall's high and low context aspects of culture are critical in

understanding the amount of information required to understand messages. Explored

how use of personal space and certain nonverbal motions, gestures and touching has

completely different meanings depending on your country of origin. Culture is a key

element on how we perceive and interpret the world in which we live.

Chapter 3

Effects of Environmental Space on Communication

Environmental space is so crucial to communication it must be considered if any meaningful interaction can take place. For the discussion of environmental space, the term needs to be defined for the scope of this paper. Environmental space is the way we perceive space and our knowledge of the specific environment. It will be described in terms of neutral, acute, chronic spaces and the psychological effects the different spaces have on individuals. The perception of space and how it is used effects how we feel.

Neutral space refers to the physical environment. Space is a container for our activities, a support structure for our lives. In neutral space, life and its physical environment are separated. An example would be the physical environment of our home. Acute space is open and invokes vivid spatial feelings. The boundaries between our spatial contexts and ourselves dissolve. The feelings have a framed quality to them and a finite duration. We know when we are in acute space because it is not ordinary like neutral space. Acute space inspires us and enters our experiences as something (Glenn 5). For example, the feeling a student pilot feel on their first solo flight or the feeling a mountain climber feel when they have climbed to the top of a mountain or the feeling a parachutist feel when they are free falling through the air. It is a subjective feeling for an individual, but I think we all can recall a situation in which we felt acute space. Chronic space is not an extraordinary space like acute space or ordinary moments. The experience of space becomes an experience of the issues in one's life. Chronic space has an unframed quality and it recurs over and over. It does not have an explicit and finite duration. Chronic space feels normal (Glenn 9). A good way to think about it is how

satisfied or dissatisfied we are with our daily environment. By correcting or changing something in our everyday space makes us feel better and seem to correct something in our life. For example, rearranging the furniture in our room changes the use of space and when it is completed we feel better. An important aspect of chronic space is ritual action. In ritual our daily actions have consequences beyond their direct impact. Ritual is not action repeated over and over in the course of life. What makes an action ritual is not the action itself but the context and action of it. In neutral space, action is instrumental and has explicit effects. In chronic space ritual has extended consequences by manipulating chronic space which manipulates life (Glenn 9). In social science literature, ritual has been addressed from several overlapping viewpoints. Anthropologist Mary Douglas considered ritual as a guide to perception. Ritual focuses people's attention and controls their experience. Sigmund Freud wrote that ritual was magic action. Individuals develop rituals to ensure some kind of alteration of their lives (Glenn 10).

Interesting research on perception of space and the psychological effects was conducted by E.T. Hall and R. Sommer who re-evaluated our relationship with our spatial setting and demonstrated that our conception of space is by no means confined to the volume occupied by our bodies (Porter 43). We exhibit similarities with animals in the way we carry with us various territories or bubbles of personal space which emanate from guarded intimate zones and extend across private sectors to wider and less personal frontiers. Not only does this psychological space shrink and expand between personal and less exclusive parameters, but the concept of our own physical size can fluctuate in response to a psychological spatial relationship. Our body seemingly growing in increases when confined in small spaces such as elevators and diminishing within vast

spaces such as cathedrals or auditoriums (Porter 43). When in undergraduate school I did a project on elevator behavior and communication. For the project I rode different elevators three times a week for thirty minutes and recorded my observations. All of my observations were consistent. When people rode an elevator they looked up at the floor indicators and there was a little or no attempt to verbally communicate and very little eye contact. Additionally, when someone entered the elevator the other person would move far away as possible (to the rear or other corner) to maintain personal space. To me these observations demonstrated that the close proximity in an elevator altered the individuals' perception of space and affected the way people behave and interact. The concept of non-physical space is moved to broader spectrum with K. Lewin's theory of psychological life space and the notion of action space proposed by Horton and Reynolds (Porter 43). Lewin's life space refers to the perceptual map in which we live out our life. At its core is our personal space (home, room and family) from which we journey along familiar spatial corridors for work, recreation and social contact. Extending this perceptual map are concepts of geographically distant space, its limits being electronically expanded by radio, telephone, television and the information super-highway. The theory of action space attempts to relate behavior, perception and socio-cultural attitudes. We place self-imposed limits on our location and movement through space by decisions made within socioeconomic frameworks; decisions which dictate the location of our home, workplace and mode of travel. Additional factors such as length of residence were influencing our perception of the urban environment. Such influences produce various forms of perceptual screening in different kinds of space. For example,

in a cathedral people will tend to move more slowly and speak only in whispers (Porter 43).

Studies of the way we inhabit and behave in different public spatial settings provide fascinating insight for the environmental designer. For example, there is a preference for making right turns rather than left turns when entering crowded rooms. There is a desire to sit at the edges of restaurant spaces suggesting a desire to see without being too obvious to others. In public space the role of eye contact and body language on interpersonal distance has been the subject of studies by Michael Argyle and Desmond Morris, which suggest a need for choice. A classic example of psychological choice in public space is exemplified in Anton Gaudi's serpentine seating in Barcelona's Parc Guell. The configuration of its meandering plan presents a range of options for both the introvert and the extrovert. The introvert can find a secluded vantage point sitting deep within the recess of an empty bay. The extrovert can sit at the peak of the curve and in direct eye contact with passers-by (Porter 44).

Another aspect of our spatial experience is perceptual conditioning. Culturally, we live in a rectilinear world, a world of space defined by buildings and boxes characterized by straight lines and right-angled corners. The room space you now occupy is created from planes, objects and openings derived from squares and rectangles, which have been transferred directly from the designer's drawing board (Porter 45). An overexposure to this kind of environment has meant that our vision is being continually bombarded with rectilinear information which has developed a highly conditioned and specialized perception. A by-product of this conditioning is our visual perception can be distorted to experience optical illusions. For example, during a visit to James Stirling's

Olivetti Building in Surrey, a group of young design students were asked to describe the plan of the roof above a ramped corridor. The majority believed they perceived a parallel rectangle when in fact the plan was tapered. Such optical distortion are common in our perception of the modern environment, such as the apparent upward thickening of tall apartment blocks and in two dimensions our inability to read certain shapes as being flat (Porter 45).

In comparing primitive and sophisticated perceptions, R.L. Gregory describes the world of Zulu tribesmen who have little use for corners or straight lines. Their culture is a curvilinear one in which dome shaped huts filled with rounded furniture and artifacts are entered through circular openings. The tribesmen are an agricultural society of farmers who plow not in straight lines but in curves. Gregory explains they do not experience the optical illusions common to our perception (Porter 46). Other anthropologists, such as Andrew Forge, have underlined our specialized vision by demonstrating that members of the Ablam tribe in New Guinea cannot read photographs. This inability to decipher two–dimensional images of spatial events is based on the fact that they have not learned to interpret photographic imagery because of their exposure to the natural environment. To this "primitive" perception an environment filled with corners is an environment full of mysterious and useless adjuncts of space. Spatial diversity for our visual conditioning not only influences the formation, externalization and development of ideas but predetermines that nature of a resulting architecture, which in turn conditions the perception of those who inhabit it (Porter 48).

The German philosopher Kant greatly influenced our understanding of space perception. He argued we do not build up our spatial images purely from sense

perception. He claimed we come equipped with a "prior" intuition of space (that is, a

built in method of organizing our experience spatially). Although Kant's philosophy is

not widely accepted today, his idea that we are predisposed to structure experience in

spatial ways remains important (La Gory and Pipkin 107). About two-thirds of all

sensory nerve fibers entering the central nervous system come from the eyes. This is

significant because the eye primarily detects patterns of space. Therefore we perceive

our universe in essentially spatial terms (Rock 70).

Gestalt psychology emphasizes the importance of space in perception, particularly

the role of bounded spaces in organizing visual experience. For example, in a figure with

unbounded lines of different lengths converging at a point, the figure lacks pattern.

When the same figure is bounded you can discern two patterns; both are crosses, one with

slender arms. As the observer concentrates on the central point, one cross emerges and

becomes dominant, while the other becomes part of the background. This effect is

termed the figure-ground relationship. It shows the bounds of a space affect the

perception and cognition of objects within it (La Gory and Pipkin 109). All human self-

identity and action are linked to the formation of mental categories, what psychologists'

term concept formation. We think in terms of wholes and these wholes must be bounded.

For example a beautiful painting is not considered aesthetically pleasing until it has been

framed. Our cognitive processes strive to create coherent wholes out of our perceptions.

In essence, spatial segregation both real and imagined produces an understandable

environment.

Lorenz termed a detailed knowledge of spatial relationships as the central spatial

model. Archeological evidence suggests that humans spent millions of years hunting in

the featureless grasslands of East Africa in direct competition with much stronger

predators. During that time strong selective pressures for efficient mechanisms of spatial

behavior were probably at work. To survive, humans had to develop a detailed

understanding of their environment. In humans the central spatial model appears to be

more far reaching and more highly organized that in any other animal. Our cognition of

space presumably shares features with that of other primates but it also has symbolic and

verbal aspects that seem to be unique in the animal kingdom. Lorenz and others have

described a surprisingly large segment of human mental activity in terms of the central

spatial model (La Gory and Pipkin 110).

Our perceived experience of interior and exterior architectural space is primarily a

sensual event involving movement to pass through and environment, causing a transition

between spatial impressions. Each experience affects that orchestrated function of our

senses in a variety of ways. Our eyes, ears, nose and skin register changing stimuli,

which triggers a flood of brain responses on all levels (Porter 26). For example a visit to

a theme park or fun fair can provide a gamut of heightened response through unusual and

extreme sensations of space. The helter skelter carousel and roller coaster offer

exhilarating opportunities to spin and undulate through space at speed, literally

breathtaking experiences. The fairground environment is also filled with exaggerated

levels of sound, smell, taste, and touch together with amplified volumes of form and

color. In contrast, to enter a medieval cathedral is to leave behind that sights, sounds and

smells of the ordinary outside space and to replace them with a new range of sensations

monitored by our body. The skin registers a reduction in temperature and the eyes

accommodate both the lower levels of light and the intense colored light from stained

glass windows. The nose detects musty and sometimes mysterious, exotic odors and the ears pick up the echoes of isolate, reverberating sounds against the concentrated stillness of a vast cavernous space (Porter 27).

The richness of spatial diversity is all around us in the natural and built environment and in relationships between the two. We can experience unlimited space from vantage points on high ground and tall buildings, partially defined space from within canyons and streets, and totally enclosed space from inside the scooped out depths of caves and subways or from within the confines of windowless rooms such as elevators. When revealed along a continuous viewing route, successive spatial diversity can exhilarate the human organism. Movement from restricted to expansive space, and vice versa, by their contrast seems to make the experience more impressive. This search for contrast accounts for our fascination for the funneled approach to piazzas and the spatial confinement and the release encountered in Greek Island villages and in Italian hill towns. Each experience is modified by the prevailing conditions under which it is perceived; be it midday light, dusk, rain, snow or fog. This experience of architectural space is subject to a whole series of perceptual overlays: day-night and seasonal cycles which cause it to be illuminated alternately by light from the sun, by its reflected light from the moon and by artificial light sources. All these variables influence our perception of spaciousness (Porter 29).

Human beings primarily perceive our universe spatially. Space is a container for our activities, a support structure for our lives and has an important impact on how we communicate. We all remember how certain spatial environments have made us feel. The use of space in architectural design is critical to achieve the desired effects. Also, the

spatial arrangement can affect the quality of the interaction. Proximity not only affects

the frequency of interaction but also determines who will fill certain roles in a group.

Space is one variable of nonverbal communication and spatial variables represent

elements of social interaction that are learned. Environmental space is a key variable to

communication and must be considered for any meaningful interaction can take place.

Chapter 4

Effects of Gender on Communication

When considering gender effects on communication I will focus on two primary aspects: the influence of social learning and the physiological or structural differences of the human brain. Additionally, commonly held communication stereotypes of men and women will be discussed. The definition of gender is the learned behaviors a culture associates with being male or female (Eckstein 5). Many people use the words sex and gender interchangeability; however these words do not mean the same thing. The word sex refers to the genetic and biological status of being male or female, while gender refers to the psychological and social manifestations of being male or female, i.e. the socially defined, learned, constructed accoutrements of sex such as hairstyle, dress, nonverbal mannerisms and interests (Lippa 103). Gender focuses on the social construct regarding the behavioral, cultural or psychological traits typically associated with one's sex. It concentrates on the roles and responsibilities, expectations and aptitude of men and women that are learned and modified as a result of the interaction of culture, society and environment.

What is gender communication? Some people have used the term to signify the differences in communication due to biology and others have used it to represent differences resulting from the social, psychological and cultural interactions. For most researchers gender communication focuses on the expressions used by one gender in the relationships and roles between people. The existence of a difference in gender communication has been a topic of interest for decades with generalizations being made between the sexes. Most published work on gender differences are believed to fall into

two categories of bias: alpha where the difference is exaggerated or beta which presumes that there are few if any differences between the sexes (Dindia and Canary 32). The bias approach adopts the view that "similarities rather than differences characterize men and women" and that while "some noteworthy differences between men and women exist, when both within and between gender comparisons are made; the similarities are as important, if not more important the differences" (Dindia and Carary 32). The alpha bias can be seen especially with books such as Jennifer Coates, *Women, Men and Language*, and John Gray's, *Men are from Mars, and Women are from Venus*, and Lillian Glass', *He Says, She Says: Closing the Communication Gap Between Sexes*, that have sought to explain the gender differences in communication and falls in the category of alpha bias. Jennifer Coates (1986) wrote about her studies involving gender separated discussion groups. From her observations she noted that women revel a lot about their private lives in their conversations, stick to one topic for a long time, let all the speakers finish their sentences and try to have everyone participate. In contrast, men discussed things other than their personal relationships and feelings, change topics frequently, dominate conversations and establish an hierarchy in communication over time. The hierarchical view in communication has also been emphasized in scholarly work. Males are said to establish a status hierarchy to compete, exert control and maintain the upper hand (Eckes 58). Females also establish hierarchies, however, these are based on friendship rather than power to accomplishment. John Gray's (1992) book, based on participants' reports in relationship seminars, shows a clear and polarized depiction of men and women. Gray's theory is that woman use superlatives, metaphors, and generalizations in their speech which men interpret literally causing miscommunication between the sexes. He

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also stated that men are more direct and straightforward in their speech. However, in addition to communication difference, there is a difference in thinking, feeling, perception, reaction, response, love, need and appreciation. As a result his book is often viewed as sexist by many feminists.

When applying social learning theory, it is beneficial to consider what has been written about the basic context of social learning theory and how it can be used to understand communication patterns. Reviewing what has been written about social learning theory, it becomes evident this process was developed principally through the work of Albert Bandura. Bandura (1997) described social learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them on what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action. Overall the process of social learning is one that takes place in the context of behavioral, cognitive and environmental influences. As such, more than just the environment in which interaction takes place must be considered when examining interaction. Grusec, in his examination of social learning process, developed by Bandura argues that the process of modeling is critical to understanding how social learning takes place. According to this there are four critical issues that are essential to the development of the modeling process. The individual must pay attention to the events or behaviors that are being modeled. As such, the events or behaviors must have some meaning for the individual. Without meaning, attention would not occur. Once an event or behavior has captured the individual's attention, it must be retained. This can be accomplished by

using other representational systems that have been previously developed. Once the event or behavior has been retained, the individual must use the information garnered from the process of retention to create a similar action or behavior that is commensurate with what was observed. Finally, in order for the behavior or action to manifest, there must be an element of motivation that allows for the behavior or action to take place. These issues are critical for the process of modeling to take place and to provide a clear framework for understanding how both verbal and nonverbal communication takes place between males and females.

When a child is born, he or she receives different traits from his or her parents. However, most of the qualities that individuals gain are adapted over a period of time starting at age three, approximately at the same time language is developed (Differences in Communication Styles). Whether communication is formed from genetics or learned at a young age, individuals generate a pattern of communication that stays with them for the rest of their life (Sachs). These differences are not just learned but also inherited (Fast 12). Another variable that contributes to how people act, which is formed during a young age, is playing the role of the individuals' gender (Gilligan 9). When young, realization of being a boy or a girl is taken into consideration. When woman are young, they are able to play with Barbie dolls and their Susie Homemakers. Men, on the other hand are able to play with war characters and act out violent scenes. Differences in how children are encouraged to play are taken into consideration because children learn certain social behaviors and communication through toys they are given. To understand the difference between learned and inherited behaviors; consider this example:

When Mary was young she always wanted to be like her mother. She dressed like her, tried to talk like her and tried to be like her. When Mary was about seven she no longer wanted to be like her role model because her parents began to argue a lot. Her father spoke to her mother with such hate and her mother was not much better. They would say the other was worthless and never helped each other out. Mary hated it. The fighting stopped when her father moved out. She learned something from this dreadful experience. She learned from her mother even though they argued all the time and said hateful things to each other, it was not because they truly hated each other, it was because they had problems effectively communicating. Saying hateful things to each other was just a way to bypass the truth. Mary, now in her teens remembers what her mother said to her and will not let anyone talk to her or someone else like that. She always tries to be honest and hopes others can do the same.

The investigation into what causes men and women to be different and similar directly connected through communication has led researchers to the brain. The brain is made up of two tissues, the grey matter and the white matter and what they control. It affects men and women in different ways. The grey matter represents the information in the processing centers and the white matter works to network the processing centers. Psychology professor Richard Haier of the University of California, Irvine, led research which found men use 6.5 times of the grey matter relating to intelligence compared to women, while the women use 10 times the amount of white matter related to intelligence compared to men (Carey 21). Scientists found it very interesting that while men and women use two very different activity centers and neurological pathways men and

women perform equally well on broad measure of cognitive ability (intelligence tests).

Recent studies on structural differences in the brain of men and women account for the

greater verbal fluency by showing the corpus callosum (the huge crescent-shaped band of

never fibers connecting the brain hemispheres) is larger in women than men (Lippa 18).

Since parts of the corpus callosum as well as the anterior commissure, another connector,

appear to be larger in women and are thought to permit better communication between

hemispheres. Anne Campbell's (1989) work on brain lateralization supports the theory

of brain structure differences accounting for differences in gender communication. The

plenum temporal, a region of the brain involved in a verbal ability has been shown to

have a greater symmetry in females (Allen and Gorksi 289). Campbell concluded that

the female brain is therefore better organized for communication being less lateralized

with functions spread over both sides of their brains. This she explains the reason why

woman use words more expressively than men. Based on brain differences women are

better communicators than men, a difference that probably existed at birth. Current

research using functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) has shown the differences

in brain anatomy of males and females may explain differences in cognitive behavior

(Gur et al. 4065). The superior performance by women on verbal and memory tasks has

been explained by the difference in hemispheric specialization of cortical function.

Using this background as the basis for the study, (Gur et al. 4066) found that parallels'

between gender differences in cognition and differences in gray matter exists. Results

showed that the percentage of grey matter higher in women in the left language

hemisphere and women outperformed men on the language tasks. In a more recent study,

researchers in France have found differences amongst males and females groups on brain

activation strength linked to verbal fluency (words generation). Using fMRI, the study

showed that there is a gender effect, as well as a performance effect, on cerebral

activation. The gender effect was found regardless of performance with men activating

several regions of the brain in comparison to women having high fluency. These studies

involving magnetic resonance imaging of the brain during problem solving tasks provide

evidence that supports the theory of brain structure and gender differences in

communication. Of course, results of studies are still being debated since some studies

are being reviewed for having yielded conflicting results. Since studies have shown that

a difference exists in hemispheric activity in men compared with doing certain language

tasks and a few studies have failed to find differences in functional asymmetry. Since the

task used in the studies may not be comparable, then the results should be interpreted

with caution since a difference in task is shown rather than a gender difference. The

question of group differences in verbal abilities which might account for neurocognitive

differences elicited between men.

    The communication differences observed between the sexes range from verbal to

nonverbal communication. When considering verbal communication researchers look

into speech and voice patterns while nonverbal communication encompasses body

language, facial language and behavior (Glass 65). Literature reviews of gender

differences do not help either way when considering verbal communication. The

evidence shows that men are more talkative than women in mixed-sex groups (Eckles

58). Many linguists will have us believe that women are more talkative than men.

Women are also considered to interrupt conversations and finish sentences. However,

there are studies that contradict the idea of interruptions as a domain of women.

Scientists have sought to rationalize the reason for the lack of agreement between the studies as being a failure to define what an interruption and to distinguish between the different types as well as the environment. While there are differences in speech patterns, everyone show varying degrees of what is considered to be mescaline and feminine speech characteristics. This raises the issue of stereotyping and bias and the effect of other factors that can influence speech patterns. With the interaction of external and internal factors other than gender on communication and the controversy surrounding the two language styles, it is difficult to demonstrate differences in verbal communication based on gender only. Nonverbal communication or body language has been consistently shown to be different in the two genders (Glass 65).

Gender differences in communication are generally consistent with commonly held stereotypes about women and men. Woman show greater communality and other directedness in their communications and men greater agency and self-assertion. A meta-analytic review of these studies revealed that men exhibit a higher percentage of task behaviors and direct disagreements than women do and women exhibit a higher percentage of positive social behaviors than men do (Carli and Olm-Shipman 19). When applying these results to leadership styles of other genders, female leaders display a more democratic style, encouraging collaboration and involving subordinates in decisions. Male leaders tend to display a more autocratic style, discouraging participation by subordinates in favor of asserting the leader's control and authority (Eagly and Johnson 233). Woman leaders also exhibit high levels of transformational leadership than their male counterparts, who in turn generally exhibit higher levels of transactional leadership. The emphasis of the transformational leader on mentoring, empowering and encouraging

subordinates reflects greater commonality compared to the transactional leader, who relies on enforcing authority through reward and punishment of subordinates. Gender differences in communication continue, even for those in leadership or management positions, it appears that both men and women communicate in a way that is expedient and likely to be most effective and influential, given their power, social roles and relative position in their interactions with others. Gender stereotypes thus create a double bind for woman, who can be penalized for showing too little or too much agency. Woman mangers and leaders have overcome the double bind by displaying higher levels of transformational leadership than men. Transformation leadership has been found to be an effective style of leadership (Lowe et al. 386), particularly for woman (Eagly et al. 234). It is a combination of communal qualities and leadership effectiveness has provided female managers with a means of overcoming the double and excelling as leaders.

In this chapter I have explored the influences of social learning theory, biological or physiological differences of the brain and common gender stereotypes on the methods and differences in communication styles. Social learning theory has worked to develop a systematic framework for understanding patterns of communication between males and females. Brain structure and information processes provide a good foundation on each gender has a distinctive communication pattern which can lead to miscommunication. Commonly held gender stereotypes quite often accurately portray communication differences. In the end, gender communication differences are linked to a larger context of many variables that influences gender identity and communication differences.

Chapter 5

Conclusions Drawn:
Effects of Color, Cultural Factors, Environmental Space and Gender on Communication

In this paper, I discussed and explored four primary variables that effect and influence how we communicate. They are color, space, culture and gender. These effects, in varying degrees, have an influence on how we perceive/interpret sensory input both physiologically and psychologically, the influence of our role in our culture and how our gender has pre-wired us for certain responses. Any one of these four variables could be an individual thesis and a very strong and compelling argument could be made that a combination of all of these variables influences how we communicate. At the conclusion of this paper, I believe it is a combination of all these variables that influences how we communicate, but for the purpose of this paper I will argue gender and culture have the greatest influence.

The most important point I would like to highlight is the <u>physiological differences</u> in the two brains of men and women. The scientific evidence is strong on how men's and women's brains are pre-wired on what parts of the brain are used for different cognitive functions. The brain is made up of two tissues, the grey matter and the white matter and what they control. It affects men and women in different ways. The grey matter represents the information in the processing centers and the white matter works to network the processing centers. Psychology professor Richard Haier of the University of California, Irvine, led research which found men use 6.5 times of the grey matter relating to intelligence compared to women, while the women use 10 times the amount of white

matter related to intelligence compared to men (Carey 21). Scientists found it very

interesting that while men and women use two very different activity centers and

neurological pathways, men and women perform equally well on broad measure of

intelligence tests.   Additionally the structural differences in the brains of men and

women account for the greater verbal fluency by showing the corpus callosum (the huge

crescent-shaped band of never fibers connecting the brain hemispheres) is larger in

women than men (Lippa 18). Since parts of the corpus callosum as well as the anterior

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verbal ability has been shown to have a greater symmetry in females (Allen and Gorksi

289). Campbell concluded that the female brain is therefore better organized for

communication being less lateralized with functions spread over both sides of their

brains. This explains the reason why woman use words more expressively than men.

Based on brain differences, it could be concluded, women are better communicators than

men, a difference that most likely existed at birth. Current research using functional

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) has shown the differences in brain anatomy of

males and females may explain differences in cognitive behavior (Gur et al. 4065).

Using this information as the basis for the study, (Gur et al. 4066) found that parallels

between gender differences in cognition and differences in gray matter exist. Results

showed that the percentage of grey matter is higher in women in the left language

hemisphere and women outperformed men on the language tasks. In a more recent study,

researchers in France have found differences amongst males and females groups on brain activation strength linked to verbal fluency (words generation). Again using an fMRI, the study showed there is a gender effect, as well as a performance effect, on cerebral activation (psychological processes of thinking/reasoning). The gender effect was found regardless of performance with men activating several regions of the brain in comparison to women having higher fluency. These studies involving magnetic resonance imaging of the brain during problem solving tasks provide evidence that supports the theory of brain structure and gender differences in communication.

Culture has a significant influence on how we communicate. Culture and communication are inseparable and are key sources of meaning and decision making. Culture is our perspective through which we perceive the world. It refers to learned and shared values, beliefs and behaviors common to a particular group of people (Bruess and Orbe 155). First, I would like to highlight the very important aspects of cultural communication are Edward T. Hall's discovery of <u>key cultural factors</u>. Edward Hall was an anthropologist known for his high and low context cultural factors. High and low context indicates how much information is required for successful communication. High context communication is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little of the message is actually in words (Hall 79). Couples often can communicate with a look or a nod of the head at most. Low context communication is just the opposite: most of the information is verbalized. Twins who have grown up together can and do communicate more economically (high context) than opposing lawyers in a courtroom during a trial (low context) (Hall 79).

The greater the cultural distance is, the more difficult it is to interface. An example of easy-to-interface communication would be Germany and Switzerland. The cultural distance in this case is not great since both cultures are low context as well as monochronic. Monochronic time people do one thing at a time, concentrate on the job at hand, take time commitment's seriously and are concerned not to disturb others. They tend to be rule followers, show great respect for private property, seldom barrow or lend and emphasize promptness. In addition they are low context. Polychronic time people are almost opposites of monochronic. They are high context types, who do many things at once, are highly distractible and subject to interruptions. While they consider time commitments objectives to be considered, they are more concerned with relationships, especially family and friends (Hall 15). Context is the information that surrounds an event; it is inseparable with the meaning of that event. The elements that combine to produce a given meaning, events and context, are in different proportions depending on the culture. The culture of the worlds can be compared on a scale from high to low context (Hall 27). Japanese, Arabs and Mediterranean cultures, who have extensive information networks among family, friends, colleagues and clients and who are involved in close personal relations are high context. As a result, for most normal transactions in family life they do not require, nor expect, much background information. This is because they keep themselves informed about everything having to do with the people who are important in their lives. Americans, Germans, Swiss, Scandinavians and other northern Europeans are low context. They compartmentalize their personal relationships, their work and many aspects of day-to-day life. Consequently, each time they interact with others they need detailed background information. The French are much higher on

the context scale than either Germans or Americans. A difficult-to-interface communication would be France and the United States. If you are communicating with individuals from the German culture, a low context culture, they will need lots of information and details. If you are communicating with individuals from France, a high context culture, they will not require as much information (Hall 28). This difference can affect virtually every situation and every relationship in which the members of these two opposite traditions find themselves.

"Contexting" is performing multiple functions. For example; any shift in the level of context is a communication. The shift can be up the scale, indicating a warming of the relationship, or down the scale communicating coolness or displeasure, signaling something has gone wrong with a relationship. High context people are apt to become impatient and irritated when low context people insist on giving them information they don't need (Hall 10). Conversely low context people are at a loss when high context people do not provide enough information. One of the great communication challenges in life is to find the appropriate level of contexting needed for each situation. Too much information leads people to feel they are being talked down to; too little information can mystify them or make them feel left out. Ordinarily, people make these adjustments automatically in their own country but in other countries their messages frequently miss the target (Hall 9). Personally, when I am first communicating with someone I just met, I try to assess the receivers' knowledge level on subject matter and adjust information in my communication by asking questions (low context). Based on the type of communication (casual, business, educational, etc…), and the receivers' knowledge level the amount of context is adjusted accordingly.

The best and most notable example is Nobel Peace Laureate is Jimmy Carter's understanding of the importance of high context communication with his counterparts from Israel and Egypt in the historic Camp David peace negotiations. Carter reports that Prime Minister Begin was about to leave the negotiations after several days, discouraged at having reached an impasse. Carter met Begin at his accommodations and presented him with pictures of the three heads of state, inscribed with the names of each of Begin's grandchildren. Prime Minister Begin repeated the names of his grandchildren out loud as he paused to look at the pictures, seeming to reflect on the importance of the peace negotiations to the grandchildren's futures. Carter knew that no direct, low context appeal would work to bring Prime Minister Begin back to the negotiating table. Perhaps low context requests were already tried without success. Carter relied on a high context reference to legacy, future generations and the relationships Begin cared about. He invoked the communities each leader served by reminding Begin of his grandchildren (Carter, Keeping Faith 392). Though Carter's masterful, high context appeal, negations resumed and peace was achieved between neighbors who had been in intractable conflict for many years. This example shows the importance of these two interrelated starting points, individualism/communitarianism and low/high context. While there are many exceptions to cultural patterns and all of us use different starting points depending on the context, noticing the intersections of ways of making meaning is often a useful window into conflict dynamics.

In this thesis, I have discussed and described four of many variables that influence how we receive/perceive communication messages, how it makes us feel and how we respond. Communication is a complex process. In this manuscript, I make the case that

there is strong evidence that gender and culture powerfully affect how we communicate. Whether communication is formed from genetics or learned at a young age, individuals generate a pattern of communication that stays with them for the rest of their lives. Culture and communication are inseparable as culture is a key source of meaning and decision making. Culture is our perspective through which we perceive the world and shapes our communication process.

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