
20 Biculturalism in Management

Leveraging the Benefits of Intrapersonal Diversity

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A common refrain in business circles is that the world of business has become more global and international. Yet it is not just that *business* has become more global—*people* have become more global. Exposure to other cultures occurs through extended travel, attending universities abroad, and having work assignments in other countries. Even those who have not traveled abroad are exposed to other cultures through TV, movies and classwork. A few places in the world are intensely multicultural, due to either historic intersections of cultures (e.g., Hong Kong or Singapore) or high levels of migration (e.g., New York). In places like the U.S., more people each decade can no longer fit themselves into distinct ethnic categories, thinking of themselves as “mixed” white, black, and Asian (Goldstein & Morning, 2000). Some scholars discuss the development of a new “global” culture of people who are distinctly international (e.g. Anthias, 2001). In effect, cultural “diversity” has moved from being just a process of including different people on work teams or school classrooms to being a process that occurs *within* an individual (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2002; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993).

Recognition of this phenomenon has been advanced in recent years by the work of Hong, Chiu, and others. Hong, Morris, Chiu, and Benet-Martínez (2000), for example, have shown that Chinese in Hong Kong, who are heavily exposed to British as well as Chinese ways of thinking, are essentially bicultural, in the sense that they know and can activate either perspective, depending on the demands of the situation. They have also shown this same dynamic among Asians who have emigrated to the U.S.; these people can act consistent with American norms or Chinese norms, according to situational demands (Hong, Benet-Martínez, Chiu, & Morris, 2003). People can maintain within themselves multiple cultural systems. They add, however, that exposure to other cultures does not automatically produce biculturalism (Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002). For example, some people who learn about other cultures respond by rejecting one of them. As we will discuss in more detail below, some characteristics of individuals may make it hard for those who simply know a great deal about two cultures to comfortably operate in them both. Therefore, we define biculturalism as more than simply being extensively exposed to two cultures; we define biculturalism as the ability to *comfortably understand and use* the norms, ways of thinking, and attitudes common within two cultural systems.

In the past, many scholars looked at exposures to different cultures as potentially unsettling to the individual (Berger, Berger & Kellner, 1973) and disruptive of social interactions (Pye, 1963; Geertz, 1963). In contrast, we argue that biculturalism can be an asset that is harnessed in international business settings as well as noninternational business settings. Previous concerns about foreign exposure have come mainly from some streams of the “acculturation” literature (Berreman, 1964; Ausubel, 1960; Berry, 1997), where it is assumed that a person moves from one culture into another and has to—in effect—choose between them. Foreign exposure that takes hold of a person will make him or her differ in ways that are not helpful. The most dramatic example is the writings of Joseph Conrad in *The Heart of Darkness*, or its movie dramatization, *Apocalypse Now*, where

the westerner comes to the jungle and “goes native.” The biculturalism argument, however, suggests that this does not have to happen.

In this paper, we ask: Can biculturalism help in management? Why should scholars in organizational behavior and international management pay attention to biculturalism? We will argue that biculturalism offers two elements that can benefit organizations: adaptability and boundary spanning. Adaptability is the ability to shift one’s actions to the demands of a particular cultural audience, and boundary spanning is the ability to serve as a conduit between cultural groups. The first quality affects individual interactions with others. The second quality affects the network structures of organizations. Further, we discuss how bicultural people’s adaptability and boundary spanning benefit managerial activities, including teams, decision making, leadership, and dispute resolution. We are also aware that the benefits of biculturalism are not unconditional. We will discuss the boundary conditions and potential negative sides of biculturalism along our discussion.

THE CONCEPT OF BICULTURALISM

The origins of the concept of biculturalism may lie in the classic articles by Alfred Schertz (1944, 1945), a sociologist who created the sociological domain called phenomenology. In 1944, he wrote a piece call “The Stranger,” which explored what it is like to leave one’s home culture and enter a foreign one. The shocking experience he describes is one in which previously taken-for-granted assumptions are no longer valid. In a follow-up article, called “The Homecomer,” Schertz (1945) writes that coming back to one’s home culture does not solve the problem. That is, having been exposed to a foreign culture, a person can no longer accept the assumptions of one’s home culture as completely true. A kind of cultural relativism sets in, and the person knows that one’s home values and expectations are not inherently given, but simply reflect the way that things are done in a particular part of the world. In Schertz’s treatment, this state of mind is quite disturbing. One can feel disengaged and unanchored. There is a yearning for valid assumptions.

An elaboration of this idea is the later work on “modernization.” As economic development spread throughout much of the world during the post–World War II period, the tensions created by having people with one foot in the world of traditional society and one foot in the world of modern economic systems were expected to cause great stress and difficulty (Black, 1966; Eisenstadt, 1966; Levy, 1972). Although there was some evidence to this effect (e.g., Chance, 1965), other studies found a surprising nonchalance about this supposed problem. In his study of Indian villagers, for example, Singer (1972) showed that people could quite easily compartmentalize their lives so that they lived in the modern factory world by day and returned to their traditional lives at home. There were differences, but nothing that implied that one way of thinking had to govern one’s entire life. It is quite acceptable to be modern at work but traditional at home, and people seemed quite able to shift between these each day. Nash (1967) similarly found that modernization did not necessarily threaten traditional Mayan culture.

The more recent work in psychology has shown in more detail the ways in which people may switch between thought systems. As Hong et al. (2000) have shown, the switch can occur as easily and quickly as a response to images and pictures shown in a research lab. For example, Hong Kong Chinese who are shown pictures of the Great Wall make attributions that are similar to those made by Chinese, whereas those who are shown pictures of the Statue of Liberty make attributions that are similar to Americans’. In an amazing study, Ng and Han (this volume) showed that after viewing pictures of Chinese or Western cultural icons, Chinese-Western bicultural participants engaged different parts of the brain in processing information. Friedman, Liu, Chi, and Hong (2006) were able to show that the ability to switch between cultures in response to different stimuli was evident among Taiwanese businesspeople who had extensive work or educational experience abroad.

We define biculturalism as the ability to *comfortably understand and use* the norms, ways of thinking, and attitudes common within two cultural systems. At the core of biculturalism is the *ability* of people to shift between two different cultural knowledge systems (Hong et al., 2000;

Hong, Wan, No, & Chiu, 2007). Thus, biculturals have cognitive access to two different cultural knowledge traditions (or, to extend this idea, multiculturalists have access to more than two cultural knowledge traditions). Moreover, they are able to comfortably use those cultural traditions—they accept, identify with, and believe in those traditions. Those who know about another culture and can play the script like an actor are not biculturals in the sense that we intend.

We should note that biculturalism is related to but different from cultural intelligence (Earley, 2002; Earley & Ang, 2003). Cultural intelligence is defined as “a person’s capability to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts” (Earley & Ang, 2003). Biculturalism refers to the presence within an individual of two cultural systems and the ability to shift between those different cultural systems (Berry, 1980; Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Hong et al., 2000; LaFromboise et al., 1993). Although biculturalism may contribute to cultural intelligence, cultural intelligence does not necessarily require biculturalism (adaptive ability may come from personality or family experiences). Also, whereas cultural intelligence focuses on one’s ability to work in a foreign culture, biculturalism (as we will discuss below) can have a broader impact, enhancing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral flexibility within one’s own culture as well, not just in a foreign culture.

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WHEN BICULTURAL EXPOSURE LEADS TO BICULTURALISM

Of course, it is an open question whether a particular person can successfully absorb and use multiple cultural systems, even after extensive exposure to those cultures. Americans may go to work in Beijing but live in a totally American enclave, interacting mostly with other Americans. Similarly, Chinese may come to the U.S. for school but interact only with other Chinese students. In such cases, it is unclear exactly how much of the local culture is absorbed. Moreover, there are cases where people learn two cultures only to react negatively to one culture (their home culture or learned culture), so that that person cannot really use both cultural systems. They may have *knowledge* about two cultures, but do not *identify* with those cultures (Hong et al., 2007). Recent research has identified several factors that moderate the translation of bicultural experience into full, internalized biculturalism.

The first moderator is need for cognitive closure (NFCC), an individual desire to find an answer on a given topic in order to avoid the uncomfortable experience of confusion or ambiguity (Kruglanski, 1990, p.337). People with high NFCC are motivated to find firm answers and dislike ambiguity. Since culture provides people with conventions, norms, and thus answers, compared with low-NFCC individuals, high-NFCC individuals are more strongly motivated to follow the cultural conventions that they were brought up with (Chiu, Morris, Hong, & Menon, 2000). High-NFCC individuals are less likely to receive new ideas from foreign cultures (Leung & Chiu, in press), and are less likely to adapt to foreign cultures (Kosic, Kruglanski, Pierro, & Mannetti, 2004) than low-NFCC individuals.

A second moderator is the acculturation strategy that one may take. According to Berry and colleagues (Berry, 1980; Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989), there are four acculturation strategies: assimilation (adopt the new culture while resisting one’s cultural heritage), separation (maintain one’s cultural heritage while resisting the new culture), marginalization (resist both one’s cultural heritage and the new culture), and integration (maintain cultural heritage and adopt the new culture). Only those taking the integration strategy are expected to be able to comfortably move between two different cultures (Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006; Tadmor, Tetlock, & Peng, 2006).

A third moderator is bicultural identity integration (BII; Benet-Martínez et al., 2002), which refers to the extent to which a person perceives two different cultural identities as complementary and compatible. Individuals with high BII identify with and integrate two cultures internally so that they can respond to both sets of cultural cues with feeling that there is tension or conflict. In contrast, low BII individuals see the two cultures as conflicting, and they respond to the cultural cues from one culture by engaging in behavior consistent with the other culture (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Friedman et al., 2006). For example, one study by Friedman et al. (2006) showed that

among individuals who went abroad, only those with high BII were able to switch cultural systems in response to cultural cues. Therefore, although all people with deep bicultural experiences have access to two different cultural knowledge systems, BII influences whether or not those people can smoothly switch between different cultural systems.

The fourth moderator is the lay theory of race. Some bicultural people endorse an essentialist lay theory of race, which assumes that race is a stable and enduring entity (No et al., 2008). Holding an essentialist lay theory of race leads minority bicultural people to regard their minority culture and the mainstream culture as separate entities, so that they respond to cultural cues in an incompatible manner (No et al., 2008).

Given these moderators, we need to be careful to point out that that our discussion is not simply about people who have been in two cultures. That kind of surface-level biculturalism is not enough to produce the benefits we discuss below. Indeed, surface-level biculturalism may produce negative effects. What we are referring to is deep-level biculturalism, where several cultural systems are not just known but valued, respected, and able to be comfortably used by employees. We ask: For those who are truly bicultural, what effects is that likely to have?

CORE EFFECTS OF BICULTURALISM

We argue that two core effects of biculturalism are relevant for business. The first is adaptability, or the ability to switch one's way of thinking as conditions warrant. The second is the ability to serve as a boundary spanner between cultures.

ADAPTABILITY

Adaptability is the ability to adjust to different circumstances, intellectual challenges, and social demands. The Encarta Dictionary (2007) defines adaptability as "the process or state of changing to fit a new environment or different conditions." Thus, adaptation involves both (a) the ability to change or be different and (b) a change to a state that better fits a particular environment. One element is a process of "unlocking" established cultural expectations, and the other is being aware of other cultures and thereby being able to change oneself to fit them. Biculturalism, we argue, allows people to adapt much more easily than nonbiculturals.

Using Kurt Lewin's model of change (1943), the first step in any change effort is the process of unfreezing existing conditions. Scheutz (1944) describes in rich detail the experience of being shocked by cross-cultural experiences that unfreeze cultural understandings. The opposite condition may exist, however, when there is a milder challenge to a cultural system. In studies by Erving Garfinkel (1967) researchers were asked to knowingly violate cultural norms (e.g., how far to stay from others in an elevator, or how to converse with one's spouse at home). These sorts of "strange" actions typically generate strong negative responses in others. Those who are targets of ethnomethodology experiments interpret the experimenter's actions within their existing cultural framework and interpret them as intentional attempts to violate social norms. Their angry response is an attempt to punish the experimenter for his or her violations, and thus reaffirm the influence of existing cultural norms. These people are not unfrozen from their cultural system but rather are forced into conforming with their cultural system. Thus, a brief visit to another culture should not be enough to unfreeze; sustained integration with the other cultural system is needed, enough to get the person to take seriously the legitimacy of the alternative cultural system.

A parallel argument is made by Miller and Friessen (1984), who talk about "quantum" organizational change. They note that organizational systems are integrated wholes. Consequently, outside pressures are unlikely to lead to marginal or incremental change, because such changes would create elements of the organization that were inconsistent with other elements. Instead, they argue, demands for change build up until there is enough pressure to change an entire system. Thus, organizations change in a "quantum" way rather than through a series of incremental shifts.

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Although unfreezing is one step in adaptation, a second is the ability to be open to new cultural systems. Biculturals, by definition, carry within them alternative cultural systems. They know and can abide by other norms. Hong Kong Chinese, for example, can recognize and understand both Chinese and British ways of thinking and acting and can connect to situations that occur within both cultural systems. But the ability of biculturals to move toward other cultures may not be limited to these individuals' "other" culture. Consider the effects of second-language acquisition. Cenoz and Genesee (1998) showed that people who have learned a second language have a much easier time learning a third language—they have become more adept at seeing new patterns in language and exploring meaning—and this effect is not just limited to learning similarly-structured languages. Similarly, we argue, someone who is bicultural is better able to see and understand and shift toward unfamiliar cultures and environments. They know, in Scheutz's terms, that cultural systems are not absolutes, and they should therefore be more open to think about different cultures.

The three areas where adaptability can be applied are: cognition, emotion, and behavior.

Cognitive Adaptability. People who are truly bicultural should be more flexible in their thinking than those who are monocultural. The best direct evidence for this claim comes from a study by Leung and colleagues (2006). They asked whether those people who had spent time abroad (and thus were more likely to be bicultural, we would add) were more creative when given standard problem-solving and creativity tasks. They found that spending time abroad did indeed benefit creativity, but that the benefits did not occur until the length of time abroad was at least two years. Thus, the cognitive benefits of time abroad did not kick in until one was fully engaged in the ideas and ways of thinking of that other culture. This suggests, indeed, that it takes time to "unfreeze" from past assumptions, but once it is accomplished, one is then able to think in a more unfettered way, enhancing creativity.

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What factors lead to such cognitive flexibility? The need to shift repeatedly between different cultural ways of thinking may drive this effect. We can see this type of switching in the way bicultural people respond to cultural cues (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Hong et al., 2000, 2003; Ross, Xun, Wilson, 2002), a process that Hong et al. (2000) call *cultural frame-switching*. Applying the construct of knowledge activation (Higgins, 1996), these scholars argue that biculturals have cognitive access to different cultural systems and that cultural cues can trigger or activate the use of these systems.

Not only do biculturals maintain two different cultural systems in their heads, they also are able to integrate those systems. Some individuals who are exposed to other cultures develop a separation strategy (maintaining cultural heritage while resisting the new culture) or an assimilation strategy (embracing the new culture while abandoning cultural heritages). Biculturals, however, are able to integrate multiple cultures (Berry, 1980; Berry et al., 1989). That is, they are able to adopt new cultural knowledge while simultaneously maintaining their cultural heritage and are able to shift back and forth between different cultural contexts. The accumulated experiences at processing fast-alternating cultural cues help bicultural people to develop integrative cultural representations (or *integrative complexity*, Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006). That is, bicultural people are aware of and accept different cultural perspectives on thinking, and they "develop integrative schemas that specify when to activate different worldviews and/or how to blend them together into a coherent holistic mental representation" (Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006, p174). This kind of cognitive shifting should result in more cognitive complexity and flexibility (Benet-Martínez, Lee, & Leu, 2006; Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006) so that they should be able to adjust their way of thinking to new situations.

Emotional Adaptability. Emotions are feelings associated with specific events, and they are usually categorized into discrete dimensions, such as anger, joy, shame, guilt, and others (Brief & Weiss, 2002). Recent research suggests that emotions are "cultural and interpersonal products of naming, justifying, and persuading by people in relationship to each other" (Lutz, 1988, p. 5; see

also Ekman, 1972; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Scherer, 1997). Particularly, culture has been found to play a crucial role in affecting (a) the conditions eliciting emotions; (b) the norms of experiencing emotions; (c) how emotions are regulated (expression and suppression of emotions); and (d) the social consequences of emotional expressions (see reviews by Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Mesquita & Frijda, 1992). In other words, different cultures may have different norms in eliciting, experiencing, regulating and evaluating emotions.

Thus, exposure to multiple cultures should provide bicultural people with greater emotional skills, since they have a comfort and familiarity with several ways to elicit, experience and regulate emotions. They are more emotionally flexible. Like language acquisition, we suspect that emotion acquisition becomes easier after learning the first set of “different” emotion rules. The mere realization that people may react emotionally quite differently to a situation allows one to anticipate and manage new and unfamiliar emotions. This realization increases awareness of the need to attend to the reactions of people, as emotions cannot be taken for granted. Moreover, persons who are exposed to different emotional systems should be able to better manage themselves emotionally—they have the experience of having to control one set of emotional responses, knowing that a different set is appropriate to a situation. They should then be more skilled at emotion work of the type described by Hochschild (1979) or Sutton and Rafaeli (1988).

Biculturals’ emotional flexibility is built from their exposure to several aspects of emotional differences across cultures. First, there are differences in emotional expression. Emotional expression, which is an important facet of self-presentation (DePaulo, 1992), is influenced by culture (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997). People are motivated to present themselves in a way that is accepted by others (Goffman, 1959). According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), people from cultures that emphasize independent self-construals are likely to express *ego-focused* emotions, which have an individual’s internal attributes as the primary referent (e.g., am I happy, sad, or joyful). However, people from cultures that emphasize interdependent self-construals are likely to express *other-focused* emotions, which have another person (or group) as the primary referent (e.g., do I show respect to her/him). Kitayama et al. (1997) found that Americans engaged relatively more in self-enhancement, whereas Japanese engaged relatively more in self-criticism. To this extent, American-Japanese biculturals, who are familiar with the emotional expressions in both American and Japanese cultures, should be able to express themselves in two different ways and know how to interpret two different sets of emotional expression.

Second, there are cross-cultural differences in the meaning of emotion-laden symbols. For example, opium may be simply regarded as an addictive drug in many cultures. In the eyes of most Chinese, however, the word *opium* is associated with the memory that the Chinese were humiliated in the 19th century by Western countries who invaded China to punish them for resisting the import of this drug. Thus, mentioning opium to Chinese people can arouse their resentment or anger (Morris & Gelfand, 2004). Chinese-American bicultural people should be aware of these differences and be able to strategically avoid (or utilize sometimes) the events or symbols with special cultural meanings in different cultures.

The greater emotion-management ability of those who know a given culture has been shown in several studies. A meta-analysis by Elfenbein and Ambady (2002) shows that people’s emotional expressions can be recognized more quickly and accurately by members of their own culture than by members of another. Expanding this logic to cross-cultural learning, Elfenbein and Ambady (2003) found that Americans’ facial expressions were identified more accurately by Chinese students who had lived in the U.S. for an average of 2.4 years than by Chinese who were living in China. To test further the effect of learning on emotion recognition, Elfenbein (2006) gave training about how emotions differ across cultures to a group of participants from two cultures (Chinese versus American) and no training to another group. She found that giving training significantly improved the accuracy of emotion recognition of the other culture for both Chinese and American subjects. Thus, cultural knowledge and learning is critical for emotional understanding. Moreover, having engaged with different emotional strategies and norms, biculturals should be more flexible in the

face of emotional surprises. In sum, biculturals should have developed, by virtue of their ability to move between cultures, a level of emotional flexibility that should extend not only to cross-cultural situations but to many social interactions.

Behavioral Adaptability. Cultural differences exist not only in cognitions and emotions, but also in behavioral patterns, scripts (Abelson, 1976; Mayer, 1992) and rituals. The literature on cultural styles is full of descriptions of rituals that vary across culture. For example, looking at Chinese rituals there are books designed for general readers (e.g., Hu and Grove, 1999) as well as businesspeople (Seligman, 1999), and there are academic texts that examine social behaviors from a more ethnographic perspective (Redding, 1993). In social psychology, much attention has been put on cross-cultural differences in negotiation scripts. Adair, Okumura, and Brett (2001) show that U.S. managers exchange information directly with each other during negotiations, while Japanese negotiators exchange information indirectly when negotiating with each other, and also use more influence tactics (such as appealing to sympathy) during negotiations. Tinsley (2001) found that during negotiations Japanese tend to appeal to social power, Germans tend to appeal to rules and regulations, and American appeal to interests. Earlier work by Shenkar and Ronen (1987) argued that there is greater emotional restraint and politeness in the behavioral patterns of Chinese negotiators compared to American negotiators. And there are readily available the lists of actions typically taken by negotiators from different cultures (Deresky, 2002).

Bicultural individuals have multiple scripts available to them. In this sense, they are likely to be behaviorally ambidextrous. That is, they can engage people and groups in ways that are culturally expected and can adapt more easily to new situations than monocultural individuals can. They can better understand the likely intentions of a person's actions and respond more appropriately to the person's behaviors. Consequently, they have more ability to control their actions and can choose behavioral strategies that they think are appropriate. In short, whereas monocultural individuals have only one set of behavioral scripts available, biculturals have **two**, and so they can adapt more readily to the situations they face.

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Reminder of Boundary Conditions. This is a good point to restate the caveats discussed above. For those people who are high in NFCC, use a non-integration acculturation strategy, are low in BII, or have an essentialist view of race, the kind of flexibility that we discuss here is not likely to occur. Indeed, for those individuals, the opposite may be true (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; No et al., 2008).

BOUNDARY SPANNING

So far we have talked about cognitions, emotions and actions taken by bicultural individuals. Now, we switch to a more systems way of thinking, trying to understand what impact the presence of a bicultural might have within a social network. For this, we move to network analysis, which pictures individuals and their connections with each other as a network of associative links. Within a given set of people, each individual may or may not have social ties to each other person. Ties can be made up of simply knowing a given other person, trusting him or her, communicating with him or her, or seeking advice. Ties can be defined in any way that is theoretically relevant. People are then thought of as "nodes," and network analysis can describe characteristics of these nodes, such as how central they are within a total network and whether they are structurally very important to the network (such as being a unique source of connection between people who otherwise are not connected). For example, looking at Figure 20.1, we can see that person X is more central than person Y. We can also see that person Z has an especially important role to play within Cluster A, given that she is the only conduit through which Cluster A is connected to Cluster B. This person, in Burt's (1992) formulation, is filling a structural hole and thus has a great deal of leverage. The nature of that role of being between two groups is also analyzed by Friedman and Podolny (1992). They found that some people in labor management negotiations tend to be representatives of their groups, communicating

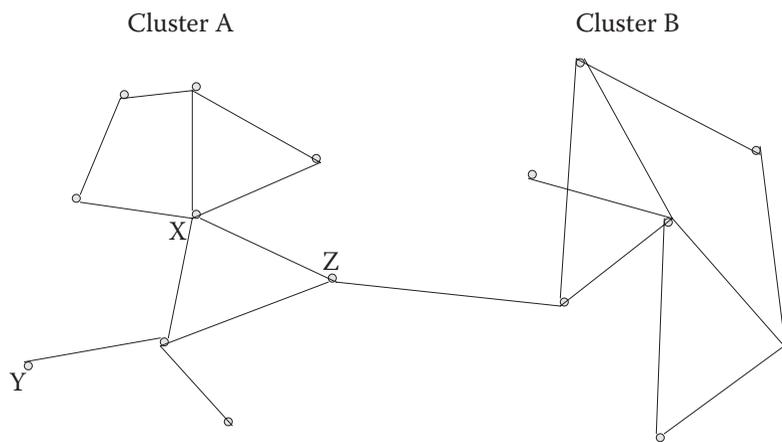


FIGURE 20.1 Sample friendship network.

out to the other group, while other people on negotiating teams are gatekeepers, communicating from the other group in toward one's own group.

We can see from these examples that the overall structure and density of a network is affected by (a) how easily each person or node connects to others, and (b) how easily such people are able to connect to people in clusters that are quite different, making connections between these different clusters easier or more difficult. We know from other research that people tend to interact most comfortably and extensively with people who are like themselves (Lincoln & Miller, 1979; Marsden, 1988; Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989). In cross-cultural situations, this means that it is more likely for interactions to occur within-culture, not across culture. Thus, if networks are made up of people who are culturally different, they are likely to have structural holes. Biculturals can dramatically affect the structure of such systems because they are able to connect to people in both cultural clusters. The overall structure of networks without biculturals is likely to be much more splintered. In this way, biculturals help span boundaries. Once that is done, then the overall network is likely to be more efficient—information is shared more broadly. Thus, the presence of biculturals in a social network is likely to enhance the efficiency of the entire network.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SUSPICION

So far we have argued that the intra-psychic aspects of being deeply bicultural can change a network structure in ways that are beneficial. However, it is also possible that some people react negatively to surface-level biculturalism. That is, those who have been abroad may be looked upon with suspicion. If there is perceived conflict between the two cultural groups, then association with the out-group may be a cause of concern. Certainly, during World War II, Americans with Japanese or German ancestry were treated with great suspicion. In negotiations, lead bargainers who spend a great deal of private time with opposing lead bargainers have to work hard to convince their own constituents of their loyalty (Friedman, 1994). Thus, while the internal characteristics of true biculturals can help expand social networks, suspicions about people with different experiences may limit these benefits.

MANAGERIAL BENEFITS

In this section, we explore some areas of management that are likely to benefit from the attributes that biculturals bring to the workplace. These include **teams**, decision making, leadership and dispute resolution.

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TEAMS

In order for teams to be effective, they need to be able to elicit and use knowledge and ideas from team members (Thompson, 2004). An ideal team will include people from different backgrounds, so that it is more likely that the team will carry within it a wider range of ideas. Biculturalism should enhance that range of ideas, since a bicultural individual inherently brings a level of intra-personal diversity of views to the team (Bunderson and Sutcliffe, 2002). Beyond just representing more ideas, biculturals should help teams with internal processes, so that existing ideas get expressed and discussed in a way that is more productive.

Biculturals may help team processes by decreasing vulnerability to the “common information” effect (that is, the tendency for teams to only talk about common information; Gigone & Hastie, 1997), and by decreasing the risk that productive task conflict turns into unproductive relationship conflict (Jehn, 1995). These benefits may be driven by the enhanced interpersonal trust that exists when an individual is high in cognitive, emotional and behavioral flexibility, as discussed above. A bicultural individual is more likely to understand and emotionally relate to team members from different cultures (or more broadly, to understand and relate to people from varying backgrounds) and to coordinate their actions to match those of others on the team. Teams with bicultural individuals are more likely to have densely-connected intra-team connections, because these individuals can help span boundaries that may exist between different cultural clusters within the team or between people from differing social backgrounds of any kind. This, too, should help build trust among the team members. Following Heider’s balance theory (1958), if the bicultural individual creates a positive relationship with parties in separate subgroups of a team, there should then exist a positive attitude between those two parties that are brought together by the bicultural team members.

High levels of trust and within-team network density should enhance team psychological safety (Edmonson, 1999), making it more likely that people will debate and share information. Higher levels of trust also make teams more likely to engage in debates about how to complete their tasks, without those differences turning into personal, emotional conflicts (Simons & Peterson, 2000) that undermine productivity. In addition, teams that trust each other more are more likely to use nonredundant information (Gruenfeld, Mannix, Williams, & Neal, 1996). That is, they are less likely to dismiss information that is not already shared by team members. We also suggest that biculturals’ adaptability and flexibility makes them less likely to enter a situation with strong predetermined ideas (a factor that enhances group vulnerability to premature decision making) (Schulz-Hardt, Frey, Luthgens & Moscovici, 2000). More broadly, cross-group friendships can enhance a team’s sense of having collective interests (rather than just self-interests) (Thompson, 2004), increasing team effectiveness.

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DECISION MAKING

One primary responsibility of managers is to make decisions. Due to bounded rationality and the complexity of environments, managers often do not make decisions based entirely on rationality, but rather rely on their perceptions, beliefs, values or even intuitions. Several well-known cognitive biases in decision making include the confirmation bias (the tendency to search for or interpret information in a way that confirms one’s preconceptions; Nisbett & Ross, 1980), anchoring (the tendency to use information one does know and then adjust until an acceptable value is reached; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974), and selective perception (the tendency for expectations to affect perception; Hastorf & Cantril, 1954)—just to name a few.

Many of these biases originate from the tendency for people to make decisions by heavily relying on preconceptions, expectations or knowledge, rather than new or unfamiliar ideas. Biculturals should be less susceptible to these biases because their cognitive processes are characterized by integrative complexity; they are more likely to approach the same issues from different angles or perspectives (e.g., Benet-Martínez et al., 2006). They are more likely to place seemingly irrelevant

concepts together, extend existing conceptual boundaries and generate creative solutions. In the creativity literature, conceptual expansion (defined as the process of broadening existing conceptual structures or loosening the confines of acquired concepts) is seen as an effective strategy to support creative activities (Ward, 1994). Indeed, the work of Leung et al. (2006) suggests that people with multicultural experience are more creative in problem solving and in negotiations than those without multicultural experience.

Decision making should also be enhanced by the emotional flexibility that comes from biculturalism. Recent work on need for closure (drawing on prior work by Kruglanski, 1990) argues that the desire to quickly (perhaps too quickly) come to a decision can come not just from individual trait need for closure, but also from environmental conditions that place stress on a decision maker, such as time pressure (Chiu et al., 2000) and ambiguity (Friedman, Liu, Chen, & Chi, 2007). If a decision maker is under emotional duress, this should also enhance situation-based need for closure, which may prematurely shut down the processing of information. If biculturals are more emotionally flexible, we argue, there will be some situations where they do not experience emotional tensions that others would feel. Thus, in some situations they may be able to make more fully-thought-out decisions. While this pattern has not been verified empirically, it is suggested by prior work.

Biculturals have another potential advantage in decision making. The fundamental ingredients to decision making are information and ideas, which can come not only from within an individual but from the ideas of others they know and meet. If biculturals serve to link different clusters of people within a social situation—especially those who are from different backgrounds and thus think quite differently—then the bicultural is likely to have better access to ideas that are different and unique. In network terms, the network range for biculturals is likely to be greater than that of monoculturals because biculturals have access to a wider range of information.

Access to different clusters of people not only provides greater information, but also different views on the decision-making process itself. For example, scholars have consistently found that Chinese were less risk-averse than Germans and Americans when making financial investment decisions (Hsee, & Weber, 1999; Weber & Hsee, 1998; Weber, Hsee, & Sokolowska, 1998). That is, given the same financial option with the same expected value and the same fluctuation, Chinese perceived less risk and were willing to pay more than Germans and Americans. A bicultural with ties to both Chinese and Germans (or Americans) is likely to hear and know these alternative perspectives on risk. In another example, due to the emphasis on harmony and relationship, Chinese people are likely to be influenced by majority's opinions when making decisions; by contrast, Westerners are more likely to base decisions on their own preferences and needs (Ng & Van Dyne, 2001; Torelli, 2006). Bicultural managers, having ties to people in both cultures, are likely to think about both sets of considerations when making a decision.

LEADERSHIP

The flexibility derived from being bicultural can be of great benefit to leaders. One core argument in the leadership literature is that leadership strategies and behaviors should be contingent upon the situations that leaders are facing (e.g., Fiedler, 1958), who the subordinates are (e.g., Hersey & Blanchard, 1969), or both (e.g., House, 1971). To be a good leader, one needs to have the cognitive, emotional and behavioral flexibility to manage different situations and different subordinates. For example, House's (1971) Path-Goal theory proposes that a good leader needs to clear the path for subordinates to reach a goal by engaging in different behaviors (achievement-oriented, directive, participative or supportive). The behavioral flexibility that comes from being bicultural should help a leader to adjust him- or herself to these different leadership demands; monocultural leaders are more likely to find themselves drawn back to one pattern of behavior, which may inhibit their ability to adjust to situational demands.

Another important concept in the leadership literature is leader-member exchange, defined as the exchange of material resources, information and support between employees and leaders (Graen & Cashman, 1975; Graen & Scandura, 1987). A high quality of leader-member exchange has positive effects on job satisfaction, job performance and commitment (see a meta-analysis by Gerstner & Day, 1997). Part of the exchange is subordinate mentoring (Kram, 1988). Mentoring requires not only analytic work, but also emotional work as mentors and subordinates seek to fully understand each other. Thomas (1990) has shown that social similarity between boss and subordinate helps to make that relationship more deep and effective. Some managers are better able to reach out and connect with subordinates who are different than them, while others tend to be able to only relate to those who are like themselves. The kind of emotional flexibility that biculturals have should help them to connect more deeply with a wider range of subordinates, enhancing the mentoring effectiveness, and also enhancing leader-member exchange and its benefits.

The benefits of having biculturals as leaders are even more salient in multicultural settings than in normal settings. Culture influences people's expectations for leaders, and the effectiveness of leadership styles can depend upon social context (e.g., House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). For example, scholars have documented that participative leadership is effective in Germanic, Anglo and Nordic European cultures, where the power distance between supervisor and subordinate is relatively low (Smith, Peterson, & Schwartz, 2002). By contrast, in cultures with high power-distance, such as the Middle Eastern, East European, Confucian Asian and Southern Asian cultures, directive leadership is more effective. In the high power-distance cultures, leaders are expected to be paternalistic, know more than subordinates, give specific directions to subordinates, and be involved in nonwork lives of subordinates (Javidan & House, 2001; Smith et al., 2002). Bicultural leaders, who have a wider and more flexible behavioral repertoire, are better able than monocultural leaders to meet the leadership expectations of both types of employees. For example, they are capable of using participative leadership styles when interacting with subordinates from low power-distance cultures, while using directive leadership styles when interacting with subordinates from high power-distance cultures. This should also enhance the ability of bicultural leaders to build stronger leader-member exchange with subordinates from different cultures.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

According to Mintzberg's (1973) classic study of managerial behavior, managers spend a significant amount of time managing disputes. They do this as part of their formal role as decision makers, because subordinates with differing views may come to their managers to resolve business issues. In addition, the dispute resolution role is more emotional and personal, as these sorts of task conflicts are often imbued with interpersonal and relational issues. In effect, good managers have to be able to act as good mediators, as Karambayya and Brett (1989) have shown.

But what does it take to be an effective mediator? Kolb (1985) discusses the importance of intimacy and friendship with disputants—being able to connect with and relate to disputants. More broadly, it requires behaving in a way that generates a sense of interactional justice (Bies & Moag, 1986), meaning that people feel that they are treated with respect, dignity, politeness and consideration. Politeness, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), means showing other parties that they are valued members of the community and acknowledging their autonomy as individuals. Being an effective mediator also requires that disputants feel a sense of procedural justice (Colquitt, Conlon, Porter & Ng, 2001), including the feeling the mediator is really listening to and hearing their arguments and concerns (Wall & Lynn, 1993).

The kind of emotional connection needed for interactional justice requires emotional flexibility of managers. Without real and expressed empathy for parties in a dispute, it will be harder for them to feel that there is a level of intimacy and respect needed in the interaction. At the same time, the feelings of understanding needed for procedural justice also requires a kind of emotional and cognitive flexibility, because an inability to adjust oneself to the way that disputants think and feel is

likely to be recognized by those parties. Given the importance of emotional and cognitive flexibility for mediation, we expect bicultural managers to do better than monocultural managers at resolving disputes within their organizations.

When managers act as mediators in organizations, they are not just dealing with two individuals but rather with people who are embedded in social networks. If disputants interact in more tightly knit social networks, they are more likely to share common friends, which can contain conflict escalation dynamics (Rubin, Pruitt & Kim, 1994) and ensure that parties have more shared information. If bicultural managers are better able to build ties across subgroups within an organization, then disputes should be easier to resolve in social systems that include bicultural managers.

So far, we have talked about the benefits of biculturalism in resolving general disputes. However, biculturals may be especially helpful when disputants come from different cultures. Differences in dispute resolution styles across cultures are well known. Friedman, Chi, and Liu (2006) show that Chinese are more likely than Americans to take an indirect approach to managing conflict (that is, not approach the other party to explicitly argue their case), due to a greater inherent concern for the quality of the relationship. Leung (1987) has shown that in managing disputes, the in- versus out-group nature of the relationship between parties is more consequential for Chinese than Americans. Moreover, Friedman et al. (2007) have shown that arbitrator perceptions of organizational responsibility for a shortfall in performance is more heavily biased toward internal attributions and punishment for Chinese than for American arbitrators. Looking more broadly at collectivism versus individualism, Gelfand and Realo (1999) have shown that negotiators from collectivist and individualistic cultures respond differently to being observed in negotiations, with one acting more cooperatively and the other more aggressively when they are monitored.

If an organizational system is multicultural, parties are likely to not only have differences in interests that create disputes, but also have differences in how those very disputes should be managed. Those differences can be amplified by the fact that time pressure and ambiguity can create a situationally induced need for closure, which amplifies base cultural tendencies (Chiu et al., 2000). Under the stress of having to manage a dispute, people from different cultures are even more likely to have difficulties generating a shared mental model of the dispute resolution process. This makes dispute management in a multicultural system a great challenge.

Within that context, biculturals can be of great assistance and are likely to be in a better position to mediate cross-cultural disputes than monocultural employees are. First, they can understand the logic and emotions that drive the different cognitive, emotional and behavioral tendencies of different parties. One factor that can escalate conflict is a perception that the other party is acting maliciously, leading in turn to a lessening of communication with that party and a reduction of inhibitions against aggression toward that party (Rubin et al., 1994). Biculturals, who are more likely to understand the basic of thinking by parties in a dispute, are less likely to attribute their actions and statements to bad intentions. They are consequently less likely to contribute to conflict escalation between the parties. At the same time, they are more likely to be trusted by both parties, which is a major element of acceptance of third parties in disputes (Karambayya & Brett, 1989; Karambayya, Brett & Lytle, 1992). Lam (2000) shows in a real setting how this dynamic can play out. She found out that when American and Chinese companies negotiated, it was a common practice to have Chinese American or Chinese people with extensive life or work experience in the U.S. to act as go-betweens. When problems or conflicts emerged, it was relatively easier for these bicultural people to approach the two parties for solutions.

Bicultural individuals can also be disputants themselves in some cases. The advantage for an organization is that bicultural individuals are likely to see more people within an organization as in-group to themselves, since they should feel part of people from either culture. Since aggression tends to be less when facing in-group rather than out-group others (Sherif, 1966), biculturals themselves should not be the source of disputes as much as monocultural individuals.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF DEEP-LEVEL BICULTURALISM

While we believe that biculturalism is likely to be beneficial, there are also several downsides to biculturalism that we should point out. One potential downside risk is inconsistency, which is the inverse of adaptability. Smooth adaptation to different cultural environments may be useful at times, but adaptation can result in a person acting very differently in different situations. This may make them appear inconsistent, unstable or even unreliable. Being a cultural chameleon is not necessarily always welcome. Imagine that a bicultural leader gives a lot of freedom to an American subordinate by engaging in participative leadership, while the same leader gives a lot of direction to a Chinese subordinate by engaging in directive leadership. The two subordinates may work effectively with different leadership styles. However, when they find out that the leader treats them differently, they may wonder whether the leadership approach of the supervisor is real and whether they were indeed treated fairly (because others were treated differently).

Another downside of biculturalism is that decision making can be very time consuming. In the conflict resolution literature, scholars suggest that using an integrative conflict resolution style may be more likely to produce higher satisfaction for all of the parties, but this process is very time consuming. As a result, when decisions need to be made within a short period or if an integrative approach is used for every decision, taking an integrative approach may be inefficient or even detrimental (Thomas, 1992). A parallel argument can be applied to biculturalism. Although biculturalism can satisfy the needs of people from different cultures, it may take a lot of time for biculturals to consider different cultural aspects of a situation, analyze the environment carefully and take corresponding actions. When timing is a critical factor in making decisions, biculturalism may slow down the decision-making process. Biculturals' awareness of many different ways of thinking about a situation may also lead to a reduction of confidence in themselves. No matter which approach is used in a situation (the norms of culture A or culture B), they will likely be violating the norms of the other culture. As a result, doubts may set in so that the bicultural is more uncertain.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have argued that biculturalism provides distinct advantages in the workplace. Bicultural managers and employees have unique experiences that provide them with a kind of cognitive, emotional and behavioral flexibility. This comes from their deep understanding of multiple cultural systems and their experience stepping "outside" of one culture or perspective. Returning to the work of Alfred Schetz (1944, 1945), to have experienced being a stranger in another culture (rather than just being a tourist in that culture) reshapes world views and allows for cultural frame shifting that has been studied so much in recent years. In addition, biculturalism is likely to reshape social systems, ensuring greater connectivity between people within social networks, making it less likely that clusters of culturally different employees remain disconnected.

These core effects of biculturalism can benefit managers in a number of ways. The cognitive, emotional, and behavioral flexibility of biculturals should enhance team processes, making teams better able to draw on the knowledge of each member and less likely to be caught in typical traps of groups such as premature decision making. Biculturals should be less vulnerable to individual decision-making traps such as the confirmation bias, and better able to access information due to higher network density. Bicultural leaders should be better able to maintain productive exchange relations with subordinates, enhancing the quality of leader-member exchange. And as managers deal with disputes, biculturals should be in a better position to empathize with and understand disputants, and better able to help resolve those disputes.

These benefits, we argue, pertain to situations where organizations are multicultural, but they are not just limited to multicultural situations. In all cases—**teams**, decision making, leadership, and dispute resolution—the benefits should apply to these core managerial tasks even in monocultural

AU: Same query as above. Are "teams" themselves an area of management, or is the idea here more toward that of "team management" or "team coordination"?

situations. Biculturalism's psychological and structural effects should endow managers with a set of core interpersonal and structural advantages.

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