



# When Intercultural Competence & Adult Development Collide/Converge

By Douglas Stuart, Ph.D  
Director of Training, IOR Global Services

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- Consider *intercultural competence (IC)* as a developmental phenomenon
- Explore parallels between two models of adult development
  - Robert Kegan's stages of adult development
  - Milton Bennett's Developmental Model of Cultural Sensitivity
- Compare two developmental levels within those models & their impact on IC
- Discuss the implications of a developmental perspective for aspects of intercultural work

# First, Some Views on Intercultural Competence

- **A great range of perspectives**, e.g., George Simons' LinkedIn discussions of *Competence in Intercultural Professions* (146 comments on 15 topics), some quite detailed, such as
- **Core competencies**: (1) awareness of and sensitivity to the needs and wants of others as well as oneself (**knowing**), (2) willingness to adjust one's behavior to help make others feel comfortable and empowered (**doing**), (3) abilities to be at ease and in the flow (**being**), (4) showing respect, (5) being honest, ethical, and trustworthy, (6) showing kindness, empathy, and consideration, (7) not being judgmental, critical or condescending, and (8) being able to set appropriate boundaries and to deal with conflicts productively.

*Jan McNeil, LinkedIn*

# Additional, More Abstract, Perspectives

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- We define cultural intelligence as: a person's **capability** for successful adaptation to new cultural settings, that is, for unfamiliar settings attributable to cultural context. ... Cultural intelligence consists of three aspects, including **cognitive**, **motivational**, and **behavioral** elements.

*Earley & Ang, Cultural Intelligence: Individual Interactions Across Cultures*

- In general, intercultural competence is the **ability** to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts. ... Although the primary emphasis of intercultural communication is on behavior, no behavior exists separately from thought and emotion. This necessary unity can be called the *intercultural **mindset** and **skillset***.

*Bennett & Bennett, Developing Intercultural Sensitivity: an Integrative Approach to Global and Domestic Diversity*

# And Some, Even More Fundamental

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- I believe (cultural competence) to be a lifelong learning process ... I also believe that cultural competence begins with self; as we truly are only able to affect change within ourselves. Hence, I believe the development of cultural competence to be ***closely aligned with increasing consciousness.***

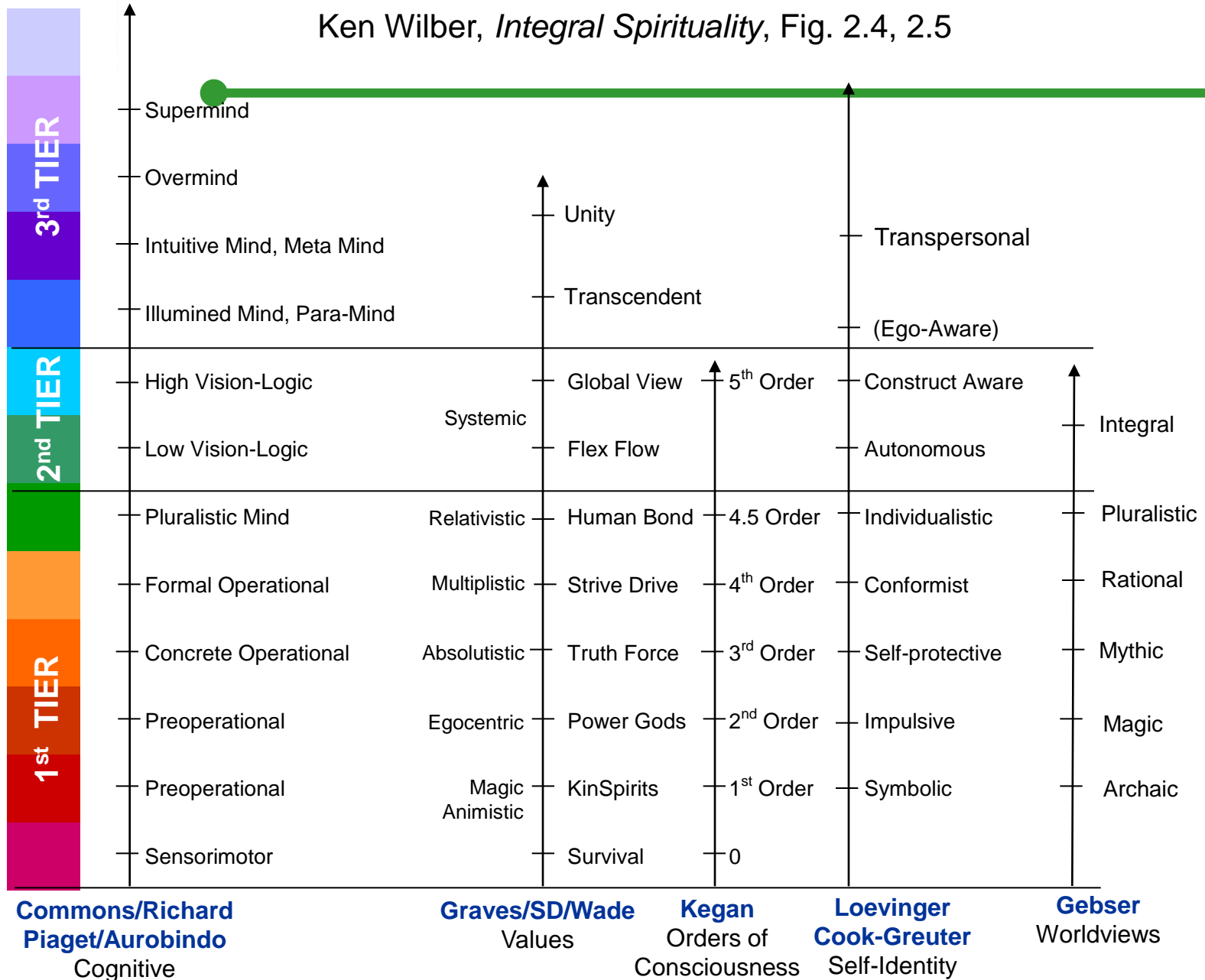
*Caroline Bouten Pinto, LinkedIn*

- Multicultural envisioning — the continuous creation and refinement of vision in order to develop personally, act more empathetically, and lead more effectively amid diversity .... Despite the differences between (developmental) models, most theorists concur on one basic idea: to continue to make progress (however defined), at some point ***the individual must undergo a major shift in consciousness.***

*Cortes & Wilkinson, Developing and Implementing a Multicultural Vision*

# Levels of Consciousness

Ken Wilber, *Integral Spirituality*, Fig. 2.4, 2.5





# Overview of Human Development Research

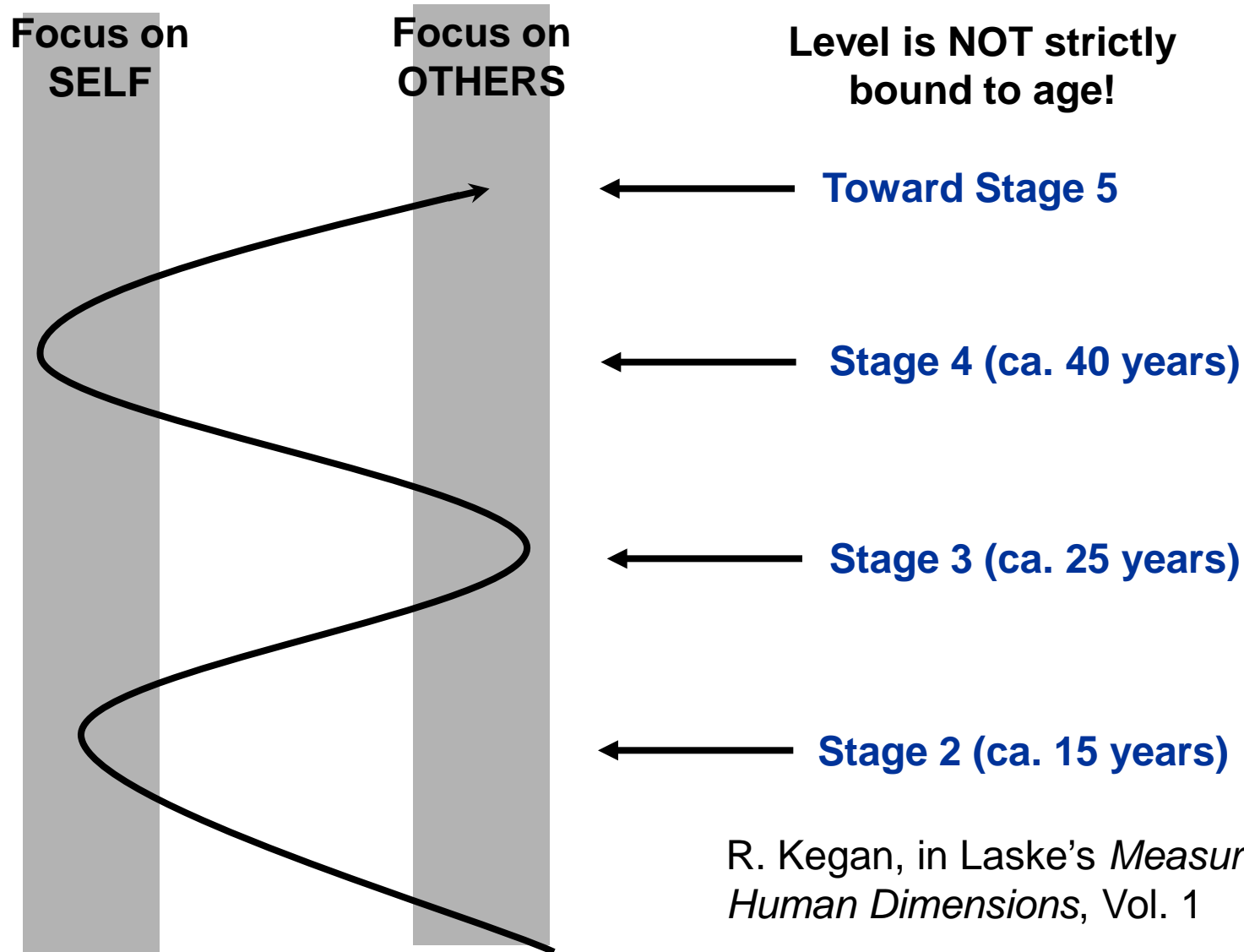
- The beginning: Jean Piaget, an early 20<sup>th</sup> century Swiss pioneer of the *constructivist* theory of knowing
- Many more stage theories of development (e.g., Maslow, Kohlberg, Gilligan); impressive ***cross-field congruencies***, as noted by Wilber (previous slide)
- Interculturalists' own developmental stage theory: Milton J. Bennett's *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS)
- Our immediate focus: Robert Kegan's stage theory of psychological development

# Subject/Object Theory of the Self

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- Successive stages are illustrated by what they make their “subject” and their “object”
- We are subject to (inside of) our present stage and cannot objectify (look at) it; what we are **subject to** today becomes the **object** of our next stage
- As we develop, we objectify (bring into conscious awareness) more and more of ourselves
- Today we ignore the first stages, of early childhood, and focus on Kegan’s Stages of Adult Development

# Interculturalists (and Everybody Else) Develop in Stages from the Inside Out



R. Kegan, in Laske's *Measuring Human Dimensions*, Vol. 1

# Robert Kegan's Stage Theory

Orientation	S-2	S-3	S-4	S-5
View of Others	Instruments of own need gratification	Needed to contribute to own self image	Collaborators, delegate, peers	Contributors to own integrity & balance
Level of Self Insight	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Values	Law of Jungle	Community	Self determined	Humanity
Needs	Overriding all others needs	Subordinate to community, work group	Flowing from Striving for integrity	Viewed in connection with own obligations & limitations
Need to control	Very high	Moderate	Low	Very Low
Communication	Unilateral	Exchange I:I	Dialogue	True communication
Organization Orientation	Careerist	Good citizen	Manager	System leader

<b>Organizational Perspective</b>	<b>Highest Level of Attainment by Approximate % of Population</b>	<b>Short Characterization</b>
<b>S-2: Individualist</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>Instrumental</b>
<b>S-3: Group Contributor</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>Other-dependent</b>
<b>S-4: Manager</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>Self-authorization</b>
<b>2-5: Leader</b>	<b>&lt; 10%</b>	<b>Self-aware</b>

# The Sub-Stages Between the Stages

Stage	Progression between stages (proceeding upward from the bottom)
Y	Being 'at' Stage Y
Y(X)	Residual "hanging on" to the lower stage, espousal of the higher stage
Y/X	In conflict, with the higher stage 'winning out'
X/Y	In conflict, with the lower state 'winning out'
X(Y)	Residual 'hanging on' to the lower stage; espousal of the higher stage without really being there
X	Being 'at' Stage X

# Moving from Other-Dependent to Self-Authoring

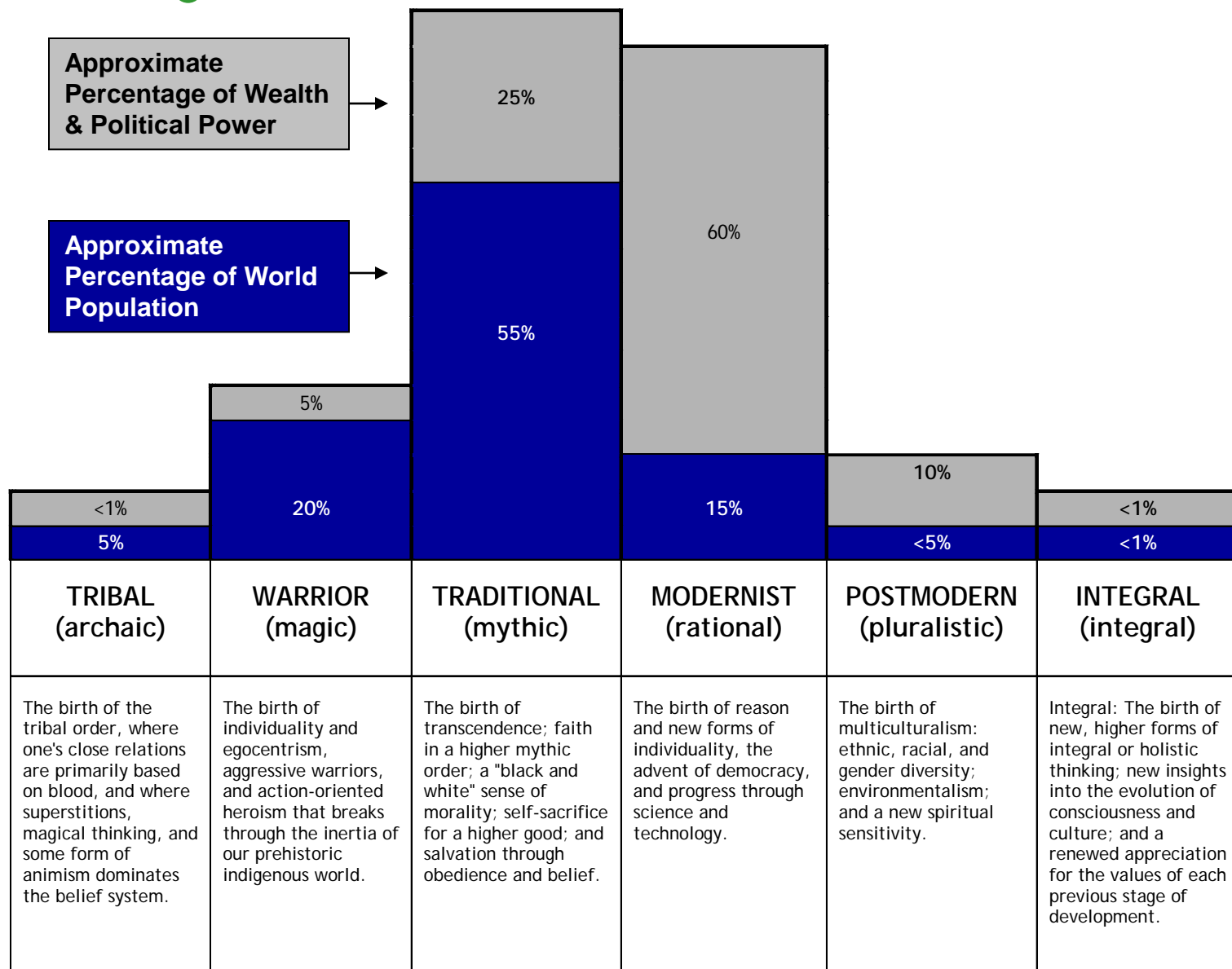
Level	Characteristics
4	Fully self-authoring decision-maker respecting others; 'my world' hypothesis
4(3)	Nearing self-authorizing, but remaining at risk for regression to others' expectations
4/3	Conflicted, but with more detachment from internalized viewpoints; resolving to Stage 4
3/4	Conflicted over or unsure about own values, direction, worth, capability; resolving to Stage 3
3(4)	In need of 'handholding' by physical others to act on own behalf
3	Made up of other's expectations; 'our world' hypothesis

*Thus, the stance of being shaped by our surround is actually insufficient to handle modern life. Rather, we are called on to have an internal authority by which we ourselves are able to name what is valuable, or respond to the claims and expectations on us, sort through them, and make decisions about which ones we will and will not follow. **So we are not just made up by or written on by a culture, but we ourselves become the writer of a reality that we then are faithful to.***

*Can we relate this statement to intercultural competence?*

- “If we are to overcome the tribal hostilities and the big lesions in the human family, then more and more people need to develop fourth order self-authoring consciousness. ***That is the modal growing edge of the species as a whole.***”
- If Stage 4 is the “modal growing edge,” there is a further, smaller, leading edge of Stage 5, in Wilber’s Second Tier. The USA has elected a S-5 President.

# A History of Human Development



- Dr. Bennett's theory, a 6-stage Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, first published in 1986.
- Version 1 of the *Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)* developed by Bennett & Mitchell Hammer in 1993; redeveloped into v. 2 in 2004.
- V. 3, developed by Dr. Hammer based on extensive additional research, reduces the developmental stages to 5 and validates the distinctions between 1 & 2, and between 4 & 5; 2008

# DMIS Stage 1: Denial of Differences

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***The inability to construe cultural difference.*** Indicated by benign stereotyping (well-meant but ignorant or naive observations) and superficial statements of tolerance. May sometimes be accompanied by attribution of deficiency in intelligence or personality to culturally deviant behavior. Tendency to dehumanize outsiders.

## **Denial/Disinterest:**

**Isolation in homogeneous groups fails to generate either the opportunity or the motivation to construct relevant categories for noticing and interpreting cultural differences.**

## **Denial/Avoidance:**

**Isolation in homogeneous groups fails to generate either the opportunity or the motivation to construct relevant categories for noticing and interpreting cultural differences.**

There are no categories or only broad categories for cultural difference.

## **Cognition:**

- **Inability to perceive or construe data from differing cultural contexts**
- **Aggressive ignorance – “I don’t know, and I don’t need to know.”**

## **Affect:**

- **Benign feeling expressed on the surface – “live and let live”**
- **Potentially genocidal undercurrents when pressed into cross-cultural contact**

## **Behavior:**

- **Conservative – seeking familiar patterns**

## **Exercise of Power:**

- **Possibility of exploitation**

***Recognition of cultural difference coupled with negative evaluation of most variations from native culture*** – the greater the difference, the more negative the evaluation. Characterized by dualistic us/them thinking and frequently accompanied by over negative stereotyping. Evolutionary view of cultural development with native culture at the acme. A tendency towards social/cultural proselytizing of “underdeveloped” cultures.

## **Defense/Denigration:**

**Cognitive categories for construing cultural difference are isolated by evaluating them negatively, thus protecting worldview from change.**

## **Defense/Superiority:**

**Existing cultural worldview is protected by exaggerating its positive aspects compared to all other cultures. Any neutral or positive statement about another culture may be interpreted as an attack.**

## **Defense/Reversal:**

**Tendency to see another culture as superior while maligning one’s own (“Going native”). Dualistic thinking is identical; only the poles are reversed.**

There are better-elaborated categories for cultural difference, but original worldview is protected by poor integration of the new categories (hardening of categories).

## **Cognition:**

- **Data is organized into polarized evaluative categories, making neutral statements about cultural difference impossible (“I know they have a different culture, but everything about it proves what barbarians they are” or “The more I know about my own culture, the more I think it should be a model for the rest of the world.”)**

## **Affect:**

- **Siege mentality – defense of identity against the dominate group, or defense of privilege against nondominant groups**

## **Behavior:**

- **Support for same - culture segregation in both dominant and nondominant groups**
- **Among dominant groups, “backlash” and possible support for supremacist and hate groups**

## **Exercise of Power:**

- **Exclusionary denial of equal opportunity**

# DMIS Stage 3: Minimization of Differences

***Recognition and acceptance of superficial cultural differences such as eating custom, etc., while holding that all human beings are essentially the same.*** Emphasis on the similarity of people and commonality of basic values. Tendency to define the basis of commonality in ethnocentric terms (i.e., “Since everyone is essentially like us, ‘just be yourself’.”). While still ethnocentric in orientation, this state is a transition from the more virulent Denial/Defense into Acceptance/Adaptation.

## **Minimization/Physical Similarity:**

**Emphasis on commonality of human beings in terms of physiological similarity (e.g., “After all, we’re all human!”)**

## **Minimization/Transcendent Universalism:**

**Emphasis on commonality of human beings as subordinate to a particular supernatural being, religion, or social philosophy (e.g., “We are all the children of God, whether we know it or not.”)**

Stability is maintained by subsuming difference into familiar superordinate categories.

## **Cognition:**

- Unfamiliar data is perceived in neutral terms, but it is construed in within familiar categories (“I see that they ritually eat their relatives – oh well, all families eat together!”).

## **Affect:**

- Insistently nice in one’s own cultural terms

## **Behavior:**

- Active support for universal religious, moral, or political principles (“Deep down we all want the same things.”)

## **Exercise of Power:**

- Acceptance of institutionalized privilege
- Disavowal of power, while unconsciously imposing cultural norms



# DMIS Stage 4: Acceptance of Difference

***Recognition and appreciation of cultural differences in behavior and values.*** Acceptance of cultural differences as viable alternative solutions to the organization of human existence. ***Cultural relativity.*** The beginning of ability to interpret phenomena within context. Categories of difference are consciously elaborated.

## **Acceptance/Behavioral Relativism:**

**All behavior exists in cultural context. Ability to analyze complex interaction in culture-contract terms**

## **Acceptance/Value Relativism:**

**Beliefs, values, and other general patterns of assigning “goodness” and “badness” to ways of being in the world all exist in cultural context**

# Acceptance Worldview Structure

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Differentiation and elaboration of cultural categories allows for a rich experience of different cultures, and self-reflective consciousness allows for the experience of one's self in cultural context.

## **Cognition:**

- **Data is organized into cultural context**
- **Elaboration of distinctions within cultural context**

## **Affect:**

- **Non-evaluative curiosity**
- ***Ethical confusion***

## **Behavior:**

- **Seeking knowledge about and experience of different cultures**
- **Treating one's own experience in cultural terms**

## **Exercise of Power:**

- **Tends to be avoided through inaction (liberal paralysis)**
- ***Unwillingness to apply ethical principles cross-culturally***

# DMIS Stage 5: Adaptation to Difference

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***The development of communication skills that enable intercultural communication.*** Effective use of ***empathy***, or frame-of-reference shifting, to understand and be understood across cultural boundaries.

## **Adaptation/Cognitive Frame-Shifting:**

Ability to consciously shift perspective into alternative cultural worldview elements. ***Cognitive empathy***

## **Adaptation/Behavioral Code-Shifting:**

Ability to act in culturally appropriate ways based on an intuitive feel for the alternative worldview. ***Intuitive empathy***. In the case of biculturalism, behavior shifts completely into different frames without much conscious effort.

# Adaptation Worldview Structure

Cultural category boundaries become more flexible and permeable, and experience is consciously linked to particular cultural context (***self-reflexive consciousness***).

## **Cognition:**

- Not only does knowledge exist in cultural context, but so does epistemology. Shifts in cultural perspective are equated with other shifts in paradigmatic perspective.

## **Affect:**

- Stress on intentionality (mindfulness, consciousness) regarding cultural issues
- High value on exercising intercultural competence

## **Behavior:**

- Intentional perspective-taking, empathy
- Active attempt to increase one's repertoire of cultural behavior

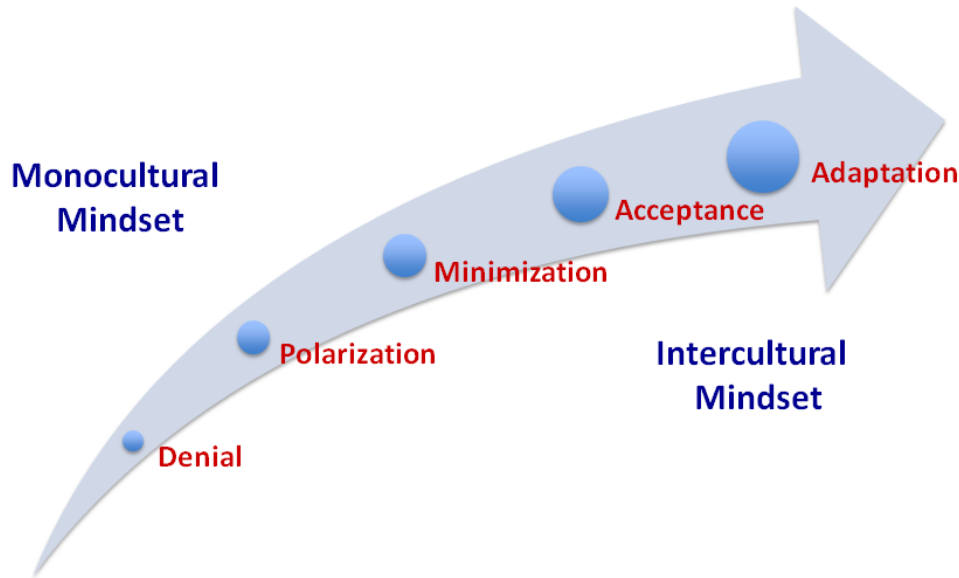
## **Exercise of Power:**

- Ability to recognize and respond to power in cultural context
- Some ability to exercise power appropriately in alternative contexts

# IDI: Stages of Intercultural Competence

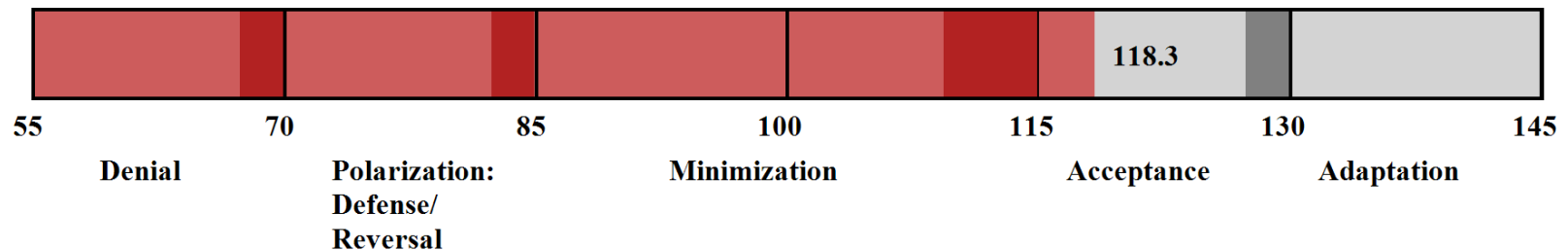
## Intercultural Development Continuum

IDI developed from  
M. J. Bennett's  
*Developmental  
Model of  
Intercultural  
Sensitivity*



*Intercultural  
Development Inventory  
v. 3, M. Hammer, Ph.D.*

### Developmental Orientation



# Congruities of Kegan's & Bennett's Models

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- Kegan's Stage 3 (other-dependent) overlaps Bennett's Stage 3 (minimization). Both are concerned with being good members of one's groups and ***minimizing difference***. Strong need to learn and follow the rules!
- Kegan's Stage 4 (self-authorization) overlaps Bennett's Stage 4 (acceptance). Both ***accept the importance of difference***, Kegan's striving for integrity and not questioning others' stances, Bennett's feeling non-evaluative curiosity and ethical confusion
- While their 5th stages also overlap, both dealing easily with cultural difference in complex multivariate situations; our concerns lie with 3 and 4, where there are clear implications for our work

- Separating **vertical** (stage) from **horizontal** learning.
  - Stage progression is 1) experientially-based, 2) happens “outside” rather than ‘in’ time; and 3) can’t be taught. It is not susceptible to training, and not directly influenced by “knowledge” as facts
- The anathema of **hierarchy**! And of **teleology**!
  - Our profession is led by Stage 4 inclusionists who abhor hierarchy. However, if we can distinguish *developmental* from *dominance* hierarchies, the problem diminishes, as we see that the former are **natural**, require **linear progression**, and **transcend and include**.



# From a Developmental Perspective: Questions for Interculturalists

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- How might the application of a developmental perspective affect our common definitions of intercultural competence?
- In our comparison of cultures (of whatever kind), must we reconsider the old maxim: not better, not worse; just different?
- When we consider the process of cultural adaptation, how does the developmental perspective affect “who should adapt to whom?”

# From a Developmental Perspective: Questions for Interculturalists

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- If one of our traditional purposes is to create better understanding across cultures, how does the developmental perspective, as applied to whole cultures, affect this? (**see *History of Human Development slide***)
- How might assessment of trainers,' coaches' & participants' developmental levels 1) impact their interface and 2) change the focus and content of effective cultural training?
- How might understanding *intercultural competence as a developmental phenomenon* reshape the education and training of interculturalists?



# In our Work with Organizations, How Might a Developmental Perspective Affect...

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- ...the selection of international assignees?
- ...the management of multicultural teams and the formation of team culture?
- ...cultural integration strategies applied in corporate mergers and acquisitions?
- ...the work of *diversity & inclusion* in corporations, NGOs, education, etc.?
- ...the discussion of professional intercultural certification?

- While tomes are written on the complexities of IC competence, it can also be reduced to **a *simple matter of the heart***... to understanding that the competence we're trying to acquire is a matter of internal opening, from ***I / it*** relationships to ***I / Thou*** relationships.
- It's finally not about skills or knowledge, but **love** - the choice to be vulnerable in the presence of another human being.
- *May I sing you a song?*



Thank you for participating in a “difficult conversation”!

[dstuart@iorworld.com](mailto:dstuart@iorworld.com)



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