

# **INTEGRATION:** IN TERMS OF COLLECTIVE CREATIVITY IN MULTICULTURAL TEAMS

Taketo Ishiguro (Rikkyo University)

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## MULTICULTURAL TEAMS AS AN INTERSECTION OF VARIED CULTURES

- On a daily basis, members of a multicultural team need to cope with **multiple ways** of being, thinking, and doing.
- They are the ones who need to accept, adapt, and **integrate** multiple cultures to leverage cultural resources for creativity.
- According to Jang (2021), “simply assembling multicultural teams **does not** always translate to high levels of creativity, as cultural diversity functions not only as a resource but also as a barrier to team effectiveness” (p. 993)
- Cultural differences → **inconsistent norms & conflicting assumptions** (Earley and Gibson, 2002).

## HOW DO WE LEVERAGE DIVERSE KNOWLEDGE, IDEAS, AND RESOURCES TO GENERATE CREATIVE OUTCOMES WHILE AVOIDING THE PITFALLS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY?

*“Multiculturals, or individuals who have internalized two or more cultural schemas, can play in culturally diverse collectives”* (Jang, 2017, p. 993)

They play the role of **cultural brokers** in multicultural teams

**Cultural brokerage** is defined as “**the act of facilitating interactions between actors across cultural boundaries** (Jang, 2017, p. 993)

Two types/coordination activities of **cultural brokerage**:

**eliciting** and **integrating** knowledge from different cultures (Jang, 2017, p. 997)

## ELICITING

- *Eliciting* refers to inquiring about or requesting relevant cultural information, ideas, or knowledge that other members hold, therefore, making resources from various cultures **accessible to the other members of the team**.
- Q: Do you often ask about or request cultural information, ideas, and knowledge of other cultures when you work in a multicultural environment? Any examples?

## INTEGRATING

- *Integrating* refers to **putting together** or **synthesizing** information, ideas, and knowledge from different cultures **into a novel whole**.
- Q: Do you often try to synthesize multiple cultures to create a novel cultural synergy? Any examples?

**INTEGRATIVE COMPLEXITY:**  
THE COGNITIVE ORIENTATION FOR  
CULTURAL BORKERS

- **Integrative complexity**: “the ability to recognize and integrate competing perspectives on the same issue” (Mell, Jang, and Chai, 2020, p. 737).
- “engaging with divergent ‘thought worlds’ can hone individuals’ capacity for integratively complex reasoning (ibid.). → **integrative complexity growth** (Tadmor et al. 2012) → more coordination behaviors for intercultural mediation with intercultural ethics

## INTEGRATION

- In the personal form of **Integration**, the predominant experience of one's self is expanded to include **a broader repertoire of cultural worldviews** (Bennett and Castiglioni, 2004)
- People with a PE of **Integration** can **move in and out of different cultural worldviews** (Bennett, 2013). → **context-shifting abilities + meta-coordination**

Q: Do you have an example of your context-shifting abilities?

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