

Critical Intercultural Communication Studies: Formation: From Crossroads to Trajectories and Urgencies on Shifting Terrain

Rona Tamiko Halualani¹ and Thomas K. Nakayama²

¹ San José State University

² Northeastern University

Formation: Giving shape, making space, excavating and filling gaps, reflecting, pushing, questioning, moving ...

Critical intercultural communication studies has been taking dynamic form over the last 20 years – carving a path as a significant formation of the power-embedded worldmaking for the field of intercultural communication and the communication discipline. In 2010, the first iteration of the *Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication* proffered a comprehensive focus on the burgeoning and vital area of study, inquiry, and praxis known as *critical intercultural communication studies*. That handbook traced the historical formation of critical intercultural communication studies (via its impetuses and catalysts) while also delineating key theorizings and significant projects that see, understand, and know the integral role of power in constituting culture and framing intercultural relations. Now that over a decade has passed since the publication of the first critical intercultural communication handbook, we present the next iteration of this handbook and the critical projects and work that have been taken up since. These projects reflect significant commitments, trajectories, and urgencies that have been invoked and pursued by critical intercultural communication scholars over the last 13 years. Here, in this introduction, we revisit the crossroads from which this handbook was born in 2010 as well as elucidate the trajectories and urgencies that have further built up and advanced critical intercultural communication studies over the past 13 years. In so doing, we take notice of the current moment – a time in which a more vigorous critical intercultural communication area, now stands – one that is even more engaged, interrogative, and relentless in its pursuit of examining the power dimensions that pervade culture and intercultural communication.

Peering Back at the Crossroads

It is important to peer back at the crossroads of critical intercultural communication from 2010 and reflect on the “lingering questions” that lay before us at that time. We also pause in order to see the extent to which those questions have been approached, confronted, and even challenged, leading to the formation of different, more specific, and/ or nuanced queries for critical intercultural communication studies. This “peer back” view will also shine a light on questions that we have not fully engaged and or that we continue to grapple with because these stem from complex systems, legacies, and contexts of power and or shifting power dynamics (for e.g. the normative power order [the center] itself rebrands as the “margin” or “persecuted”). In turn, by peering back, the *trajectories* that scholars have carved out over the last 13 years in critical intercultural communication studies, rise to the surface, highlighting incisive insights in response to power *urgencies* of the past, present, and the delineated future. For us, a *trajectory* refers to a pathway that a critical scholar sets out to engage, fill up, and plot with a specific power relation in mind (legacies of power – systems and structures of power – ideologies and normative hegemonies – communities and groups – individuals – memories and experiences – agentic forms and possibilities) and through a situated context or project of focus. Such pathways are constituted by projects with theoretical concepts, historical contexts, situated power dynamics, and modes of inquiry. In critical intercultural fashion, trajectories are created and etched in relation to *urgencies*, or the ongoing and sudden power struggles, moves, threats, and clashes that come with an ever shifting and moving sociopolitical terrain.

Critical Intercultural Communication Studies

So many have dared to take the difficult roads and routes – where others steer clear or find insignificant and irrelevant: across and through the junctures and ruptures of historical authority, legacies of power, formidable structures, and systems of control, colonial regimes, and power forces that touch our encounters, relationships, and everyday lives; inside the fragmentations and displacements of cultural groups and identities – ours and those of others for whom we care; in and around the contours of our intersecting positionalities in relation to surrounding ideologies and hegemonies of society, and deep within the struggles over power among cultural groups, members, and dominant structures and forms. We have traversed these trajectories in the overlap among corollary areas such as rhetorical, critical/cultural studies, critical and feminist studies, critical communication pedagogy, organizational communication, media studies, performance studies, interpersonal and family communication, health communication, social action, justice, and activism communication, and intercultural communication studies, critical race and ethnic studies, decolonial scholarship, critical area studies, queer studies, transgender studies, and cultural studies areas, among more in emergence, with a wonderful diversity in approach and theoretical position and a unified, steadfast focus on culture, communication, and power. Such important work has emerged and converged into a vibrant and burgeoning body of scholarship and political engagements that we refer to as “critical intercultural communication studies.”

Critical intercultural communication studies represents a vigorous, productive, and rapidly growing area of inquiry within the field of intercultural communication in the larger communication discipline and one that connects with and joins other situated critically framed subfields and areas in communication (for example, performance studies, critical rhetorical studies, critical/cultural studies, feminist studies, queer communication, transgender communication, critical race communication, critical communication pedagogy, and critical pedagogies across the discipline, critical organizational communication, critical media studies, critical interpersonal and family communication, critical health communication, social action, justice, and activism communication and more). This area, critical intercultural communication, foregrounds issues of power, context, socioeconomic relations and historical/structural forces

as constituting and shaping culture and intercultural communication encounters, relationships, and contexts (Collier et al. 2001; Martin and Nakayama 1999; Halualani, Drzewiecka, and Mendoza 2003; Mendoza, Halualani, and Drzewiecka, 2002; Starosta and Chen 2001, 2003). According to Martin and Nakayama (1999), a critical perspective is defined as one that addresses issues of macro contexts (historical, social, and political levels), power, relevance, and the hidden and destabilizing aspects of culture. These scholars explain that the critical perspective seeks to “understand the role of power and contextual constraints on communication in order ultimately to achieve a more equitable society” (p. 8). Additionally, Halualani (2022) defines a critical intercultural communication perspective as one that “explores and views intercultural communication encounters through a specific focus on power and how cultural groups are positioned in different ways through larger, unseen sociopolitical structures, histories, and conditions” (p. 10). Moreover, a critical perspective in intercultural communication requires that we “understand how relationships emerge in historical contexts, within institutional and political forces and social norms that often are invisible to some groups” and how intercultural communication relations are “constrained and enabled by institutions, ideologies, and histories” (Collier 2002, pp. 1–2; see Lee et al. 1995).

Although to some extent, prior to 2010, scholars in the field courageously began to imagine and envision what critical intercultural communication studies could be (see e.g. Collier et al. 2001; Martin and Nakayama 1997, 1999; Moon 1996; Ono 1998; Starosta and Chen 2001), there was still more to be done in terms of fully engaging and exploring such imaginings in terms of a wider range of theoretical strands and foci, the unifying points of convergence, and the stakes involved that constituted critical intercultural communication studies. The 2010 *Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication*, therefore, stood as the “crossroads” moment for critical intercultural communication studies to reflect back on the what it took to come into being, take stock of where we were at that time, and where we still needed to go.

Looking Back: The History of Critical Intercultural Communication Studies (1970s–Early 2000s)

As we did in our first *Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication*, we look back, reflect, and honor the works that paved the way for critical intercultural communication studies. In reflecting back, several junctures paved the way for the emergence of an area of study generally termed as “critical intercultural communication studies.” In their genealogy, Halualani, Mendoza, and Drzewiecka (2009) traced the significant junctures and moves that set critical intercultural communication studies into motion. They discussed the importance of scholars’ calls (Asante 1980; González and Peterson 1993; Lee et al. 1995; Mendoza 2005; Moon 1996; Prosser 1970; Smith 1979) for closer attention to historical specificity and contextual grounding in intercultural studies. Overlapping this stretch of time was a period in which several critiques of the predominant theoretical construct of culture as nation circulated (see e.g. Altman and Nakayama 1992; Asante 1980; González and Peterson 1993; Moon 1996; Ono 1998; Smith 1981). Yet another juncture that occurred was the rise of works that argued for the retheorizing of culture as “sites of struggle” based on power relations and ideologies (Collier et al. 2001; Cooks 2001; Martin and Nakayama 1999; Moon 1996; Starosta and Chen 2001). These junctures gradually opened up and stretched the boundaries of intercultural communication inquiry and research and ignited new, complex questions about culture and communication.

These historical moves should also be contextualized in terms of the prevailing tide of knowledge formation in the field of intercultural communication in the areas of scholarly research (in the field’s journals and monographs) and textbook materials. We contend that through this body of knowledge, intercultural communication was proscribed in a very specific way: as a privatized, interpersonal (one on one), equalized and neutral encounter/transaction between comparable national group members (and in some cases, racial/ethnic group members

within a nation) and as such, in terms of individual (interpersonal) skill development to bridge equalized differences among cultures regardless of the context, setting, or historical/political moment. Likewise, past intercultural communication research has led to the romanticized and exoticized framing of cultures as “fascinating strangers” with hard-wired cultural behaviors.

For instance, from the 1980s to the mid-1990s, academic journal articles dedicated to a focus on intercultural communication as well as scholarly monographs and books, primarily framed culture as nation and relied on postpositivist (cultural measurement) approaches (as argued by González and Peterson 1993; Martin and Nakayama 1999; Moon 1996). There was also a steady rise of intercultural communication textbooks and readers written for lower division undergraduate students that focused on a survey of intercultural communication concepts. The majority of these successful and multi-editioned textbooks focused on an interpersonal approach to intercultural communication, emphasizing individual and group-centered attitudes and communication skills. While useful and important in its own right, such an approach has glossed over the larger macro-micro process of intercultural communication, or the ways in which larger structures of power (governmental, institutional, legal, economic, and mediated forces) intermingle with microacts and encounters among/within cultural actors and groups.

In response, there were several academic critiques of the intercultural communication field and the theoretical and methodological shortcomings of the traditional social scientific and interpretive paradigms that have dominated the field historically. Among these, were works that raised overlooked questions about the relationship between and among culture, communication, and politics, in terms of situated power interests, historical contextualization, global shifts, and economic conditions, different politicized identities in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, region, socioeconomic class, generation, and diasporic positions (e.g. Collier 1998; Drzewiecka 1999; González et al. 1994; González and Peterson 1993; Hall 1992; Halualani 1998, 2000; Lee et al. 1995; Martin and Nakayama 1999; Martin et al. 1998; Mendoza 2000; Moon 1996; Ono 1998; Smith 1981). According to these critiques, a power-based perspective not only filled a void but also met the demands of many scholars, instructors, and students who were intrigued with larger macro processes that inform intercultural relations. Likewise, in the field at the time, scholars had been calling for a perspective – known as “critical intercultural communication studies” on intercultural communication (“the fifth moment”) – through a power-based lens especially from the late 1990s and early 2000s (see e.g. Collier 1998; Collier et al. 2001; González and Peterson 1993; Lee et al. 1995; Martin and Nakayama 1999; Moon 1996; Ono 1998; Smith 1981; Starosta and Chen 2001). What followed suit from these critiques were numerous identifications of gaps in knowledge, calls to fill voids in research, and the explicit need to approach intercultural communication in a dramatically different way.

Most notably, in terms of highlighting the need to include and incorporate important areas of study and pay attention to what these reveal about power, a massively shameful omission from the critical intercultural communication arena and even from our 2010 *Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication* [as well as from Halualani, Mendoza and Drzewieckas (2009) review of critical intercultural communication studies] was in NOT highlighting the importance of queer critical intercultural communication, transgender critical intercultural communication, performance critical intercultural communication, and intersectional critical intercultural communication (as pointed out by Chávez 2009, 2013a, b; LeMaster 2016; Calafell 2020; see Aiello et al. 2013; Snorton 2013; McMickens et al. 2021; Morrissey 2013; Snorton 2013; Yep 2013; Yep et al. 2019, 2020). These areas have indeed stood out as theoretically robust, methodologically rigorous, conceptually complex about power and its layered collisions of experience, subjectivity, in/visibility, violence, and agentic possibilities. Likewise, there has been an extremely strong record of outstanding scholarship (and a vast one with illustrative examples identified here) in queer critical intercultural communication (for e.g. Chávez 2009, 2013a, b; Abdi and Van Gilder 2016; Atay 2017, 2019, 2021a, b; Calafell

and Nakayama 2019; Eguchi 2015, 2021a, b; Eguchi and Asante 2016; the excellent Eguchi and Calafell 2019 collection; Eguchi and Kimura 2021; Hanchey 2021; Huang 2021; McMickens et al. 2021; Yep 2010, 2013; Yep et al. 2019; Ulla 2022; Zhang and Chen 2022), transgender critical intercultural communication (for e.g. Eguchi 2021a, b; Hanchey 2021; LeMaster 2016, 2018; Johnson 2013; Yep et al. 2020), performance critical intercultural communication (for e.g. Calafell 2020; Gutierrez-Perez 2020; De La Garza 2020; Hao 2020; McIntosh and Eguchi 2020; Oh 2020; Pindi 2020; Prasad 2020; Toyosaki 2020; Yep 2020), and intersectional critical intercultural communication (for example Johnson and LeMaster 2020; Eguchi and Kimura 2021) in and beyond intercultural communication venues. It should be noted that such scholarship is not unitary or singular focused in nature; on the absolute contrary, queer critical intercultural communication, transgender critical intercultural communication, and performance critical intercultural communication powerfully showcase the inner workings of intersectionality theory across various contexts and politics: migration, transnationalities, colonialism and empires, environmental justice, geopolitics, economic classing, caste oppression, indigeneity and land struggles, cisgendering of land, water, and nature, settler colonialism, citizenship, and much more.

To this point, Chávez (2013a) argued, “There has been an explosion of queer and trans scholarship outside of the discipline related to themes that should be of interest to intercultural and international communication scholars, including: nationalism, imperialism, international conflict, identity politics, transnational public spheres, militarism and militarization, biopolitics and necropolitics, globalization, social media, representation, and dialogue” (p. 84). Johnson (2013) also insightfully highlighted how transgender studies work (identified as “TS” in the quote below) contributes to critical intercultural communication studies:

TS can enhance IC research because of its focus on the material and representational practices of trans* subjects (Stryker 2006). TS addresses IC topics including the cultural construction of gender identity categories (Hale 2006), the performance of gender identity in everyday life (Namaste 2000), and the importance of intersectionality (Juang 2006). Furthermore, TS attends to the ways cultural dominance is exercised to surveil and/or constrain non-normative gendering as well as to the relational and personal dynamics through which institutional power manifests and is resisted*foci integral to critical intercultural scholarship (Nakayama and Halualani 2010) (p. 137).

Similarly, in highlighting a key of focus for critical intercultural communication studies, Calafell (2020) underscores the significance of the critical performative turn for intercultural communication and critical intercultural communication studies: “The critical edge performance studies bring to intercultural communication through the re-centring of the (Othered) body and critical performative reflexivity is necessary if intercultural communication as a field is going to move beyond histories of Otherizing, exclusion, and speaking for the Other. The performative turn additionally allows us to understand identities more intersectionally, challenging dominant approaches to identity in intercultural communication” (p. 410). Thus, there are no bounds to what such exemplary intersectional and empirically and theoretically layered work of queer critical intercultural communication, transgender critical intercultural communication, and performance critical intercultural communication can do to garner key insights for critical intercultural communication scholarship and to work toward intercultural justice in the world.

It is imperative then for critical intercultural communication studies to trace the elaborate illustrations of power across queer, transgender, performative, disability, and intersectional (and often all in combination) identities, communities, spaces, and contexts so as to not miss out on their tremendous gifts of insight, analytical depth, intersectional complexities, and theories for navigating ideologies, structures, and legacies of oppression. For critical intercultural communication studies, our failures in NOT recognizing key subjectivities and political

projects as well as our limited scope, should be brought to light and in turn, utilized to reflect on what the larger scope of critical intercultural work should be (what is included and neglected) and that many foci, positionalities, sets of identity politics, and political projects ultimately make us critically intercultural at the very best. Our analytical and methodological purview of what we explore in critical intercultural communication should be expansive and always in motion and critical reflection.

Trajectories Pursued and Urgencies Confronted (2010–Early 2023)

Over the last 13 years (2010–2023), scholars have greatly contributed to the further development of critical intercultural communication studies by putting forth work that opened up new trajectories and continued lines of study beyond entry points. This is evident from our “mapping” of critical intercultural communication publications (as scholarly journal articles, book chapters, scholarly book monographs) from 2010 through the beginning of 2023. Such work was pulled through a search for publications that invoked a critical intercultural perspective and or a critical perspective on culture-related, intercultural communication-related or intercultural-related topics, issues, or domains during the designated time period across all academic databases. This mapping inquiry began with an initial search on publications that directly referenced or spoke to “critical intercultural communication” but then followed the trails of critical/cultural work that connected to and branched from these initial publications. This inquiry led us to identify excellent work that sought to build out critical intercultural communication studies and/or extend it by filling a significant gap or overlooked area and push the boundaries of what we mean by critical intercultural communication projects. This mapping reveals the following “brush strokes” or the larger attributes about the nature of knowledge construction in critical intercultural communication scholarship. We share a few overview highlights from this mapping here with the larger comprehensive mapping analysis still forthcoming for other venues. When numbers are used in this mapping, it is important to note that these numbers are not credibility counts (or ones that we need in order to legitimize critical intercultural communication studies) but rather signify pattern characteristics for this area of study and signal the power relations that surround that work in the larger field of intercultural communication in the communication discipline (Kocher 2022). (Note that we focused on “critical intercultural communication studies” work in the communication discipline and not on “critical intercultural studies,” which highlights skills and literacy in intercultural education, study abroad, and language education curricula.)

This undertaken mapping reveals and highlights the “exciting possibilities” and the “different views” that we encouraged in the 2010 handbook. And, in extraordinary fashion, critical scholars indeed responded with impressive contributions for critical intercultural communication studies. Following the publication of the first iteration of our handbook and specifically, from 2010 to early 2023, 129 critical intercultural communication works and projects were published. Specifically, 67% (86) of these were refereed academic journal articles, 18% (23) as scholarly book monographs, 13% (17) as scholarly book chapters, and 2% (2) as encyclopedia essays. It should be noted that 53% (36) of the refereed academic journal articles were featured in the National Communication Association’s *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* (JIIC) while 38% (26) were published in World Communication Association’s *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* (JICR). The two primary intercultural communication-focused academic journals have, therefore, served as forums for critical intercultural communication work. Additional journals that housed critical intercultural communication articles were *Departures*, *Intercultural Education*, *Howard Journal of Communications*, and the *Western Journal of Communication*. A dedicated book series on critical intercultural communication (one created in 2003) by Peter Lang Publishing, as led by

Drs. Thomas K. Nakayama and Bernadette Calafell, has also published outstanding critical intercultural work on a riveting range of topics (including but not limited to): hybrid identity and intersectional performances, intersectional identities, queer politics, migration and difference, critical performance studies, performative and narrative autoethnographies and theories of resistance, intercultural memories, identity and transnationalism, global dialectics, global marriages, postcolonial theories, intercultural praxis, and new media.

This published corpus of critical intercultural work from 2010 through early 2023 has grown steadily [18% (23) from 2010 to 2015, 77% (98) from 2016 to 2021, 5% (7) from 2022 to early 2023], with publication surges occurring in 2016 through 2018 and 2020 through 2022, with no end in sight. Critical intercultural communication studies has continued to proffer crucial and influential work and propel the importance of interrogating cultural formations in relation to power. Such work has also delved into a multitude of rich and layered theoretical and conceptual areas as evident in Table 1.1 below, with the most traversed domains being critical intercultural communication pedagogy (CICP), queer intersectionalities, and performance, identity, intersectionalities, and power.

Table 1.1 Theoretical foci and research methodologies in critical intercultural communication studies publications, 2010–early 2023.

<i>Theoretical/conceptual focus engaged</i>	<i>Research methodologies or modes of inquiry employed</i>
Adaptation, Power	Action Research
Applied Critical IC Communication	Black Feminist Intersectional Approach
Casteism, Racism	Case Studies
Critical Intercultural Communication for Cross-Cultural Management Research	Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy (CICP) Inquiry
Critical Intercultural Communication for Health Professionals; Health Disparities and Inequalities	Critical Intercultural Performance Frameworks
Critical Intercultural Communication Mentoring	Country-Country Relations Mappings, Macro Policies and Interactions
Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy (CICP)	Critical Autoethnography
Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy (CICP) as connected to Critical Communication Pedagogy (CCP)	Critical Cultural Rhetorical Methods
Colonialism	Critical Discourse Analysis
Colonialism, Ableism, Marginalized Languages, Postcolonial and Disability Studies, Communities, Identity	Critical Race Theories as Modes of Inquiry
Critical Health Intersections, Hospitals, Healthcare	Curricular Analyses
Critical Intercultural Comm	Economic and Governmental Policy Analysis
Critical Intercultural Comm; Macro Analysis of Political and Economic Structures	Essay Analysis
Critical Intercultural Relations	Ethnography
Critical Methodologies	Historiography, Historical Memory Analysis
Deaf Queer World-Making; Intersectionalities, Decolonial Communication	Ideological Analysis
Decolonizing the Curriculum	In-Depth Critical Interviews
Differential Adaptation CIC Theory; Immigrant Women Faculty in the US academy	Intersectional Autoethnography
Ecological Turn of Critical Intercultural Communication	Intersectional Discourse Analysis
Global Critical Intercultural Communication	Intersectional Oral Histories
Glocalism, Critical Intercultural Communication Strategies	Legal Case Analysis
Historical Memory	Media Analysis
Intercultural Health Communication; Critical Intersections	Narrative Analysis
Identities, Difference, Intersectionalities, Racial Ideology	Performative Critical Intercultural Communication

(Continued)

Table 1.1 (Continued)

<i>Theoretical/conceptual focus engaged</i>	<i>Research methodologies or modes of inquiry employed</i>
Identities, Differences	Performative Autoethnography
Identities, Transnationalism, Intersectionalities	Photovoice, Interviews
Identity, Difference, New Media	Qualitative-Critical Content Analysis
Identity, Difference, Social Movements	Queer Intersectional Critical
Indigenous Ethnography	Intercultural Approach
Indigenous Peoples, Agency, Subaltern Agency	Thick Intersectionality Approach
Intercultural Alliances, Faith-Based Community Organizations	Transgender Critical Approach
Intercultural Alliances, Non-Profit Organizations	
Intercultural Alliances, Non-Profit Organizations, Immigrants, Refugees, Identities	
Intercultural Communication Course; Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy	
Intersectionalities	
Intersectionalities, Migrant Activism and Discourses	
Intersectionalities; Religion, College Campuses, Race, Sexuality, Immigrant	
Jewish American Identity	
Performance, Identity, Intersectionalities, Power	
Postcolonialism in Film, Identities, Intersectionalities	
Postcolonialism, Neoliberalism, Skin Ideologies and Discourses	
Queer Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy	
Queer Intercultural Communication	
Queer Intersectionalities	
Queer Intersectionalities, Disabilities, Gender, Race, Empire	
Queer Intersectionalities; Colonialism	
Queer Intersectionalities; Digital Spaces	
Queer Intersectionalities; Transgender Intercultural Communication	
Race and Intersectionality	
Race, Racism, Critical Intercultural Communication	
Racial Histories, Racial Inequalities, Whiteness, Film	
Racial Ideologies and Discourses, Whiteness, White Privilege, US College Students	
Racial Incorporation; Whiteness, Asian Indian Immigrants	
Racism, Racial Tensions, Social Justice, Policing, Community	
Racism, Social Media, Antiracism	
Relational Pedagogy, Critical Labor	
Resistance, Art	
Social Justice, Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy (CICP), Intercultural Communication Classroom	
Social Justice, Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy (CICP), Online Pedagogy	
South Asia, Identities, Contexts	
Transgender Intercultural Communication	
Transnational Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy (CICP)	
US Dominant Ideologies, Film	
Whiteness Pedagogy; Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy (CICP); Intercultural Communication Course	

Also delineated in Table 1.1, critical intercultural scholars have utilized not only a diverse range of methodologies (30 specific methods and or inquiry tools/forms) over the past 13 years but also ones that are powerfully rich in insight such as autoethnography, performative autoethnography, intersectional methods (queer, transgender, CRT, critical disability, thick intersectional interviews, ethnographies, autoethnographies, narratives), performance frameworks, historiography and oral histories, legal case analysis, economic and governmental policy analysis, curricular analyses, and critical cultural discourse analyses. In terms of methods and modes of inquiry for critical intercultural communication studies, Willink et al. (2014) encouraged “more scholarship on methodology that speaks to CIC, specifically within the constellation of critical/rhetorical sensibilities and cultures, to further flesh out this expedition ... we invite various perspectives to engage this dialogue as we try to find our way among those embracing the critical turn in intercultural communication research, its methodological breadth, and the opportunities for transformation therein” (p. 309).

The specific settings and cultures examined through critical intercultural communication approaches are also wide-ranging and gap-filling as displayed in Table 1.2. Notably, critical intercultural communication scholarship over the last 13 years has unpacked the intersectionalities that constitute our identities and communities in terms of and across race, ethnicity, gender identities and expressions, transgender identities, sexualities, disabilities, regionalities, national framings, socioeconomic status, religious affiliations, educational level, indigeneity, diasporic identities, local-regional-national-global identities, cultural and social capital, and more. We see a concerted focus made by these studies in unpacking the intersectional nature of power in terms of the interlocking oppressions and constraints that multiplicities of identities bring as well as the performative, narrative, and memory re-workings of those constraints in those very intersections. This does not entail a singular focus on the multiplicity of identity but rather on the collisional, contradictory, and amplified nature of multiple oppressions and legacies of power that cut across and through our held and ascribed identities. That is, a critical intercultural focus allows for a closer view of the multiplicity of power and the burdens that come with it as well as its agentic spaces, energies, and widdled out possibilities.

Table 1.2 Settings/contexts and cultures of focus, 2010–early 2023.

Settings/contexts and cultures of focus

Academy, Neoliberal Universities
 African Representations, Western Ideologies
 African Students
 African, Black, Latinx Communities
 Asia
 Asian American Gay Men
 Asian Americans, Violence, Intersections
 Asian, Black, Gay
 Black, Feminist
 Collective Memory
 Communities, Conflict
 Critical Intercultural Praxis
 Critical Intercultural; Nations, Regions
 Decolonial Scholarship, Black Africans
 First Generation Students; Families
 Gender, Race, Queer, Region, Class
 Ghana
 Global Cultures
 Global Race Configurations
 Global Work, Migration

(Continued)

Table 1.2 (Continued)*Settings/contexts and cultures of focus*

Hawaiian Language Settings
 Identities, Difference
 Immigrants
 Incarcerated Student Identities
 India
 Indigenous
 International Students on US Campuses
 Iranian American women
 Iranian Americans
 Japan
 Japan; Gender, Sexuality, Bodies
 Japaneseness
 Jewish Americans
 Everyday Performances, Counter-Dominant Narratives
 Kenya
 Latina/o/x
 Mexico
 Middle Eastern and North African, Arabs, Arab Americans, Iranians, Iranian Americans
 Migration, Immigration Policy
 Neoliberalism
 Neoliberalism, Universities
 Nigeria
 Postcolonial Contexts
 Prison Classroom
 Queer and Trans Africanfuturism
 Queer Asian-Black Relationalities, Desire
 Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality, Chinese Queerness
 Religion
 Resistance in the Intercultural Classroom
 Russia, United States, Mexico
 Russia, Ukraine
 Sexual Non-Normativity
 Teaching Race
 Transnational Hybridity in Identity Spaces
 Transnational Queer Studies in Private and Public Spaces
 Transnational, Asian Americans
 Transnational, Global
 US-Japan Macro Relations to Micro Encounters; Power

Here there is also a shift of reengaging neglected or objectified parts of the world of past traditional intercultural communication research such as Africa, Asia, Central and Latin America, and Middle Eastern and North African countries but through different lenses via critical race intersectionalities, queer intersectionalities, performative critical intersectionalities, transgender studies, intersectional feminist studies, decolonial theories, settler colonialism and indigeneity, diasporic politics, and macro aspects such as governmental policy, economics, the law, global markets, commerce, and the military. Moreover, the settings that have been analyzed through the past decade of critical intercultural communication scholarship represent spaces of learning, identity formation and relationship negotiation, and community such as the academy, the intercultural communication course/classroom, dating platforms, and community spaces and organizations. How we shape and give voice to our identities and experiences

as intercultural/cultural teachers, scholars, and intersectional members inside/outside of the academy for ourselves and our students absolutely constitutes an important topic of study for critical intercultural communication studies as demonstrated by critical intercultural work since 2010. Again, CICIP as an area of study, has created such a vibrant space for us to be reflexive about who we are as teacher-scholars and the role of power in shaping our roles and our students' relationships to reflecting on and making sense of their identities and the educational apparatus' framing of such identities and agentic pathways (see Atay and Chen 2021; Atay and Toyosaki 2017; Atay and Trebing 2017; Calafell and Gutierrez-Perez 2018; Chen and Lawless 2019; Lawless and Chen 2019, 2020; Sobre 2017). Our roles as intercultural teachers and cultural members is therefore not only germane to education-focused areas (communication education, intercultural education) but also to critical intercultural communication studies especially as our instructional-life roles are constituted by a larger field of power forces and intersectional histories and oppressions. In so doing, the area of CICIP also has a robust alliance with critical pedagogies like critical communication pedagogy.

The last 13 years, 2010–early 2023, have been an exuberantly significant period for critical intercultural communication studies to take further form, question its gaps, realize its possibilities, and create trajectories of work that have deeply and powerfully elucidated the power intricacies, interwebs, collisions, ruptures, overloads and nuances that constitute and frame our cultural meanings, subjectivities, identities, experiences, everyday movements and performances, memories, relations and encounters, and world-making. The last 13 years have opened up the trajectories for critical intercultural communication studies to move and develop further amid today's persistent and ongoing urgencies. Today, we stand at the cusp of an even more enthralling time but with questions that linger and those that arise with newly surfaced problematics.

Still Linger and Extended Questions amid Unrelenting Problematics

As we continue to “take stock” of critical intercultural communication studies in this introduction, we harken back to the “taking stock” phase from the late 1990s to the early 2000s, which productively elucidated significant questions that had yet to be fully engaged. These questions formed the road ahead at the time or the “forks” in the road that needed to be confronted in 2010. Our 2010 handbook identified several questions that emerged and lingered at that juncture. Since that time, with the proliferation of impressive critical intercultural communication work, these “lingering questions” have been broached, responded to, and extended with even more meaningful queries. We highlight these “lingering questions” from the 2010 “crossroads” juncture and what these mean for us now 13 years later in light of the critical intercultural communication works and projects that have transpired since.

In order for critical intercultural communication studies as an area of study to continue to grow, develop, and stay attuned to the larger historical, sociopolitical, global, and economic folds of the world, we need to continually gauge where we are in relation to several lingering questions regarding the nature, key assumptions, lines of work and collaboration with other schools/areas of thought/inquiry, and challenges for the future of critical intercultural communication.

What does it mean to do critical intercultural work in communication?

The aforementioned critiques of the field underscored the need for a critically infused approach to culture and communication but did not fully articulate what this meant in terms of larger goals and the role of a critical intercultural communication scholar. Indeed, many initial summaries of a critical perspective described the larger goal of a critical intercultural communication approach as “making change,” “to push against the grain of the status quo,”

and to “interrogate dominant power relations and structures” (Martin and Nakayama 1997, 1999; Moon 1996). But what does this mean for us as scholars in terms of framing and conducting our research? How do you begin to engage power when the stakes involve the larger goals of liberation, justice, voice and the power to name, the dismantling of legacies of colonial oppression, and creating conditions for a culture’s self-determination? And with what larger objective in mind: as an intellectual project only or one that progresses into a form of advocacy, activism, and or action effort? Scholars, with their critical intercultural work, are still working out the contours of these questions and time will tell as we struggle to fulfill the promise of a critical spirit in line with intercultural justice. It is still important to designate what our work is aspiring to be and do and our unique role as academics, scholars, educators, intellectuals, activists, and practitioners. How can our critical intercultural work transform legacies and structures of power and create real social change for those impacted the most? We must always remember Stuart Hall’s (1996) reading of Gramsci’s concept of the “organic intellectual” who must “work on two fronts at one and the same time”:

On the one hand, we had to be at the very forefront of intellectual theoretical work because, as Gramsci says, it is the job of the organic intellectual to know more than the traditional intellectuals do: really know, not just pretend to know, not just to have the facility of knowledge, but to know deeply and profoundly ... the second aspect is just as crucial: that the organic intellectual cannot absolve himself or herself from the responsibility of transmitting those ideas, that knowledge, through the intellectual function, to those who do not belong, professionally, in the intellectual class. And unless those two fronts are operating at the same time, or at least unless those two ambitions are part of the project of cultural studies, you can get enormous theoretical advance without any engagement at the level of the political project (Hall 1996, p. 268).

As “organic intellectuals” and critical intercultural communication scholars, teachers, advocates, activists, and practitioners in our communities, we must continue to navigate through and stay true to the highest quality of analyzing power and paving the way to transgress and break down that with which we interrogate.

Furthermore, might we also hold close from critical areas such as critical race and ethnic studies, critical and cultural studies, performance studies, queer studies, transgender studies, critical indigenous studies, critical disability studies, intersectional feminist studies, and cultural studies areas – the reconceptualization of culture and intercultural contexts, discourses, and cases as *political projects* that require intense contextualization, historicization, reflexivity about one’s interests and location, and careful consideration of the dynamic and rigid relations between structure and agency in specific sociopolitical moments? That is, our engagements of culture, power, and intercultural communication represent projects with urgencies and much at stake for real people and with real consequences. Political projects also connote a continuous line of work, change, and commitment to them; these are not fixed, one-time dalliances with a topic. Instead, these projects are sustained works that are continually pursued, worked on, and traced. In this way, critical intercultural scholars can better craft timely responses and strategies for how to interrupt dominant conditions and constructions of power in specific settings and moments and over a longer period of time as problematics and urgencies continue, adapt, and newly re-form. How we approach this question requires not only more dialogue among scholars but also more attempts to make visible (in published, online, performative forms and demos, creative expressions and arts, multimedia installments, social media, oral histories, curricula for all ages, exhibitions, games and simulations) the full cycle of critical intercultural communication work as political projects (from inquiry to analysis to reflection to praxis). To this point, in light of the 2022 scrutiny in Florida, Texas, South Carolina, Oklahoma, and Kansas on anything that resembles a “critical” thought or observation about the presence or pervasiveness of societal and structural inequalities in the USA, we need to seriously consider how to take our work beyond academia and our classrooms and into our

communities and public agencies, councils, governmental structures, and school systems. Critical intercultural praxis will continue to be a major focus as we move ahead and will help to take critical intercultural communication to the pinnacle of what it means to do critical intercultural communication work – in spirit, commitment, and action.

What is the unique role that only critical intercultural communication scholarship is meant to take up and the area that a critical perspective is uniquely designed and equipped to shed light on? And what are the larger assumptions and tenets of such work?

Looking for the uniqueness and distinction of critical intercultural communication and its value for intercultural communication and other fields, continues to be an important endeavor. Critical intercultural communication studies is best suited to pay close attention to and follow how macro conditions, colonial systems and structures of power (the authority of History and Empire, whiteness, settler colonialism, heteronormative and cisgender patriarchy, capitalism, economic and market conditions, formal political spheres, institutional arenas, oppression in the name of religion and dominant ideologies, to name several) play into and share microacts/ processes of communication between/among cultural groups/members. Critical perspectives have always been finely attuned to revealing great insight on the larger, hidden (beneath-the-surface) and visible (what we see but take-for-granted given its naturalized appearance) aspects of power that constitute intercultural communication encounters and relations. Such a view has been obscured through the field's still chronically singular focus on interpersonal acts between intercultural interactants and two-group culture-specific comparisons along scales that are presumed to be culturally shared and equivalent. A critical perspective's penchant for tracing the historical specificity, globalized systemic oppressions, and macro governmental, legal, and economic conditions surrounding and constituting intercultural contexts is especially useful given that dominant history, governmentality, law, economics, and power have always positioned cultural group members and their identities disproportionately to one another within and across contexts. There is likely much more by way of dimensions, layers, and intersections of power (and aspects that we have yet to fully recognize and understand) that can be revealed and unpacked through a critical perspective. Thus, there are limitless possibilities for what critical intercultural communication studies can shed light on in terms of the operations and manifestations of power on intersectionally embedded identities and differences as well as in constituting relations between macro structures and personal (micro) experiences, power as situated within a cultural group and across multiple dimensions of who one is, and across, through and within all of the intersectional aspects of a life. Given the aforementioned mapping of critical intercultural work over the past 13 years, the full potential of this perspective has never looked brighter and vibrant, opening up a ton of possibilities for deep engagements of culture, power, intersectionalities, identities, and the situated cultural politics at bay.

Moreover, through such a view, critical intercultural communication studies has recast (albeit loosely) what we assume about *culture*, *communication*, and *interculturality* in relation to power.

Culture

First, as Halualani, Drzewiecka, and Mendoza et al. (2003) argue, a critical intercultural perspective retheorizes *culture as an ideological struggle* between and among competing vested interests, a move that requires us to go beyond empiricist explanations to account for the constitution of intercultural interactions within the constraints of historic power relations. In other words, there needs to be a move away from an unproblematic description and characterization of culture as given, or as an essential (natural/internal) set of traits or characteristics or psychological tendencies possessed by a group of individuals merely by virtue of their

geographically “belonging together” (Halualani, Drzewiecka, and Mendoza et al. 2003). Several scholars have previously argued that it is important instead to turn to conceptualizing culture through power and “contest the notion of ‘culture’ as unproblematically shared” (Moon 1996, p. 75). In their dialectical explication of intercultural communication, Martin and Nakayama (1999) explain that “culture ... is not just a variable, nor benignly socially constructed but a site of struggle where various communication meanings are constructed ...” (p. 8). In other words, they argue that cultures are differentially positioned in relationship to one another within societal structures, material conditions, power relations and as such, culture becomes a field of forces where competing interests vie for dominance and control (Halualani et al. 2003).

There is a necessary theoretical move, then from “culture” to “ideology,” or from understanding culture as a neutral, innocent place to one always and already implicated in power relations where differently positioned subjects and social entities (e.g. the nation-state) compete for advantage and control of the process of meaning production (Halualani et al. 2003). This also entails analyzing cultural meanings and practices in the context of particular subjects’ interests and positionings vis-à-vis the ideological operation of power within a specific given social formation.

Culture is therefore an assemblage of meanings and representations that are vested with or are reified and spoken via different power interests, most notably by dominant structures (nation-state and its arms, law and governance, institutions, the economy, and the media) and cultural groups themselves (Hall 1985). Thus, to say that culture is “a site of struggle” is to point to the process whereby competing interests (dominant structures and cultural communities) shape different representations of culture from different positionalities of power (Hall 1980, 1985). The view then of culture as a set of socially created/shared meanings and practices must always go hand-in-hand with attention to the structures of power (government, law and court system, economy and modes of production, education, and the media) that attended its constitution (Halualani, Drzewiecka, and Mendoza 2003). This reconceptualization of culture does not mean that individuals are then merely passive consumers of culture; rather, in their quotidian performance of it, they participate in actively creating and recreating meanings that are made available to them by competing ideologies.

However, culture as ideology or as a site of struggle may no longer suffice for extending the analytical might of critical intercultural communication. There needs to be a variety of ways to frame and theorize culture. In her compelling call for a critical performative turn in critical intercultural communication, Calafell (2020) underscores the performative constitution of culture in terms of “performative perspectives to the study of culture to productively nuance everyday experiences as a means to use the personal narrative to reverberate with or speak alongside or against the master narrative socially, culturally, politically, and culturally” (p. 412). Thus, through a critical performance intercultural communication view, culture is not static, fixed, or dominantly framed but rather performed and analyzed in the performing of such meanings and experiences from reflexive, situated, and intersectional positionalities, thereby making space for silenced and neglected voices, vantage points, and communities. Culture as intersectional and the notion of multiple and conflicting lived oppressions also stand as a theoretically rich realm from which to understand culture and intercultural relations as living across, within, against, and in response to multiple frames of oppression (and the structural and social consequences of those). We must continue to explore multiple trajectories around the relationship between culture and power and across various forms and contexts.

Communication

The earlier notion of culture as a site of struggle imbues “communication” not as some equalizing, neutral channel of expression that is widely reproduced in the field of communication studies; communication is not just a way of speaking, a set of utterances. Communication

involves the creation, constitution, and intertwining of situated meanings, social practices, structures, discourses, and the nondiscursive. Culture is therefore a larger social formation constituted by communicative meaning-making practices (or dialectical exchanges among meanings, practices, and structures). *Communication, then, encompasses the processes and practices of articulation.* For example, Hall (1980) in his well-cited and very important essay, suggests a different way of conceptualizing communication via a four-part theory of communication (different from content analysis), particularly for mass communication research and media studies. He complicates and retheorizes the process of communication as in mass communication(s) research in which there is a circulation circuit or loop with a linear set-up between the sender, message, and receiver. Rather than being a linear, equivalent process, he argues for a structured conception of the different moments as a “complex structure of relation” (During 1993, p. 91). As described by Slack (2006), the process of communication had been theorized as the mechanism whereby correspondence between meanings is encoded (the what) and the effects that meaning generates is guaranteed. Hall challenged this, arguing that there are no intrinsic identities in a neutralizing, de-historizing process. Instead, the components of the process (e.g. sender, receiver, message, meaning) are themselves articulations, without necessarily essential meanings – thus, we are compelled to rethink communication as largely a process not of correspondence but of articulation – that there is more within communication than a reliable model of encoding/decoding (as Hall demonstrates and Morley (1980) with television news as well). So, what happens is that if every component or meaning in the process of communication is itself an articulation, then they are relatively autonomous moments, in which no one moment can fully guarantee the next with which it is articulated (Hall 1980, p. 129) – so autonomy is somewhat relative (much like Althusserian structuralism) and breaks articulation from a necessary noncorrespondence risk, thereby demonstrating that some articulations are located differently (in particular specific locations) and thus vested with different degrees of power and privilege. Through communication as articulation, we should analyze how particular meanings, practices, discourses (systems of meanings, messages, and symbols as well as practices of speaking) institutions, and relations – are all somewhat autonomous but organized into unities that are effective, which may be relatively disempowering and enabling (and with these practices as lines of tendential force). Theorizing communication in this way offers some interesting methodological detours and strategic paths. In this way, the specificity of communication allows for examining how these forces

at a certain moment, yield intelligible meanings, enter the circuits of culture – the field of cultural practices – that shape the understandings and conceptions of the world of men and women in their ordinary everyday social calculations, construct them as potential social subjects and have the effect of organizing the ways in which they come to or form consciousness of the world. (Hall 1989, p. 49)

Studying/participating in communication in terms of a struggle to mean and to connect meanings, involves a process of rearticulating contexts, that is of “examining and intervening in the changing ensemble of forces” (or articulations that create and maintain identities that have real concrete effects). “Understanding a practice involves theoretically and historically (re)-constructing its context” (Grossberg 1992, p. 55; Grossberg 2014). The goal is not to situate a phenomenon in a context, but to map a context, mapping the very identity that brings the context into focus – context is not something out there “within which practices occur or which influence the development of practices. Rather identities, practices, and effects generally, constitute the very context within which they are practices, identities, or effects” (Grossberg 1992, p. 125; Grossberg 2014). The reconceptualization of communication continues to distinguish a critical intercultural perspective from a traditional intercultural one. The critical performative turn also helps to stretch out our notion of communication in terms of an

assemblage of lived and enacted meanings that through the performative act of expression (of communication) of a culture – those very meanings could reveal the situatedness of a cultural group member’s perspective (allowing an under-the surface view of the unknown or silenced), loosen up the tighthold of dominant structures, and uncover resistive remakings of cultural experiences and roles. Critical intercultural communication scholars will need to continually stretch what we mean by “communication” to allow for incisive examinations of power and its operations (the motions, wide strokes, nuances, and details).

Interculturality

The notion of “intercultural” continues to be overly reminiscent of a traditional view of an equal line or exchange between cultural groups – a notion that the critical perspective quickly challenges and de-mystifies and will need to do so for the foreseeable future. Instead, a critical perspective reconceptualizes the terms “intercultural” and “intracultural” as broad spatial metaphors through which to analyze more fully the relationship between culture, identity, and power. Such a broadening transforms the notion of “inter” from connoting actual interaction between culturally different “dialogue partners” to the intersecting layers of cultural, discursive, and signifying practices that constitute power relations within and around groups. Instead, “‘inter’ and ‘intra’ could symbolize temporarily useful spatial metaphors for re-thinking how culture involves contested sites of identification as opposed to others and the resulting political consequences” (Halualani et al. 2009, p. 17). Interculturality as a metaphor and movement of power represents a form of articulation and communication that sutures into place as a homology the seemingly natural linkages between a place, group, and subjectivity (Lavie and Swedenburg 1996). This notion could be productively deployed to examine the different relations of power within and across contexts. It could also conceptually and theoretically link up with the notion of intersectionality and provide a means to examine within and across layers and forces of oppression and power multiplicity effects.

We must keep in mind that the assumptions above are mediated by and read through the different histories, conjectures, discourses, and theoretical positions held within a context or surrounding a group/community and the specifics of a structural-cultural project. There is a diversity of history, politics, stakes, and power interests involved across critical intercultural projects but with a loosely shared connection to these aforementioned presuppositions. Critical intercultural communication studies scholarship could further engage this notion of interculturality and how it may shed further light on the operations and constellations of power within, across, around, and through (and back around) culture and intercultural relations.

How does a critical framing of intercultural scholarship change the nature of theorizing and methodological practice?

As a result of the macro-micro focus of critical intercultural communication, the roles of theory and method become complicated. How do we “build” or identify theory with such moving contexts and factors such as history, structures, and economics? Rather than the pasting of theoretical molds onto different contexts, embracing the notion of “theorizing” could prove useful. Similar to critical cultural studies work, a critical scholar looks into a setting with a particular philosophical lens to examine culture and power, and this “context,” or the combination of metacontext and analyzed setting then informs a theoretical formation about the setting. As another movement, the theoretical framework bears meaning upon the analyzed setting. With their own philosophical assumptions, the researcher would delve into such a context and analyze its specific material conditions and history. From this critical exploration, the scholar can propose a type of theoretical framework based on examined specificities (e.g. histories, experiences, economics, social relations) about the field of forces in that context. As one example close to our hearts, the scholar would look to the

context surrounding a Native Hawaiian woman's fight to attain Hawaiian homestead land (and this specific struggle) in terms of the larger historical legacy of British and American colonialism, the long reach of settler colonialism from dominant US forces, white business interests, and Locals (or various immigrant groups brought into Hawai'i to work the land for a capitalist system), the hyper-heteronormative patriarchal hold over Native Hawaiian land and culture, and the theoretical dimensions that emanate from such a context. This theoretical framework and resulting critical analysis would then seep back into and inform the analyzed setting by uncovering its underlying cultural practices in terms of Native Hawaiian culture, land struggles, and intercultural relations based on power, profit, and Native dispossession. As a result, critical work recognizes that there is no theory in advance and no social process of culture without some theoretical sensemaking; it travels through a trajectory of theory from and toward context (e.g. metacontext and the studied setting) (Grossberg 1993).

Critical intercultural communication studies understands that theory emanates from the sociopolitical, cultural, and historical context of study and from the situated experiences and identities that are being engaged. However, critical intercultural work and even parts of the 2010 handbook collection has relied on Western theories of power and agency (British cultural studies, Marxist critical theory, European critical theories and framings of discourse). Miike (2006, 2007) and Asante and Miike (2013) remind us that critical intercultural communication studies ought to seek out and rely on situated theories – localized, indigenous theorizing and or meaningful frames – of the cultures that we are engaging and not in a Western mold or Western comparative requirement. How do we employ theories, theorizings, or forms of knowledge that derive from the cultures and communities of focus? And how might we also uncover the politics of knowledge and representation around that culture in doing so and the attacks on seemingly essentialist or romanticized cultural theories? There is a way for critical intercultural communication studies to ferret out and contest the politics of knowledge construction and citational politics of authority by establishing different and more significant cultural theoretical frameworks that are embedded in cultural contexts. (We can also lay claim to the influences of Western theories and colonizer frameworks while also disrupting those frames to rethink intercultural problematics.)

As brilliantly illuminated through queer critical intercultural communication, transgender critical intercultural communication, performance critical intercultural communication, and intersectional critical intercultural communication, theories live and move in the “flesh,” in and around our “bodies,” through our enacted meanings, routines, and stories, and in our everyday, private, and public lives and experiences. Critical intercultural scholars need to amplify different and untapped trajectories of theory; theories that highlight culture in relation to power and experience, performance and narrative, historical memory, knowledge and representation, identity intersections, collisions, and collaborations. We also need to examine the state of knowledge in critical intercultural communication not just in terms of what it tells us about culture and intercultural communication but also about power and what our specific critical intercultural work reveals about the inner workings and configurations of power across cultural contexts and groups. What do our critical intercultural projects and their embedded theorizings tell the world about the ways legacies, systems, structures, and ideologies of power work through cultures, identities, and intersectionalities? To what extent, does power move more surreptitiously and unnoticed (or blatantly in plain view) through the guise and front of “culture,” “tradition,” “cultural practices,” “community,” and “rituals” (“this is the way”)?

Methodologically speaking, examining macro to micro dimensions requires novel and multidimensional tools and processes in order to fully unpack the myriad and complex connections between culture and power. Methodologies and modes of inquiry represent a thriving area with excellent examples from extant critical intercultural communication work,

especially from 2010 to 2023. For instance, Willink et al. (2014) showcase three methodological “pathways” for critical intercultural communication studies: Critical Race Theory and Decolonizing and Indigenous Methodologies; Activist/Engaged Methodologies; and Performative Methodologies. In so doing, these scholars call for more scholarship that explores various methodological tools of inquiry into culture and tools that are open, dialogic, interdisciplinary in nature, reflexive, and interactive and allow for deeper insights into cultural voice, intersectional differences and identities, power dimensions, and experience as a “mirror” of structural and personal markings of power. Willink et al. (2014) also remind critical intercultural communication studies to seek out and enact methodologies for the insights they bring to issues of power but also for what they do as forms of knowledge production that actively work to increase marginalized voices, agency, and participation and bring about societal change (and undo the silencing and conceptual/theoretical subjugation of cultures, nations, places, and identities). In exciting fashion, there are so many useful and illuminating modes of inquiry for critical intercultural communication studies to employ in the pursuit of engaged intersectional analysis of culture and power such as: intersectional methods (queer, transgender, CRT, critical disability, thick intersectional interviews, ethnographies, autoethnographies, narratives), critical autoethnography, performative autoethnography, ethnohistoriography, critical discourse analysis, articulation, decolonizing methodologies, legal case analysis with an intersectional critical lens, policy analysis with an intersectional critical lens, oral histories or private memory interviews, critical intersectional analysis, political economy with an intersectional lens, critical quantitative methods that focus on inequities and power from critical education studies; and critical case studies (to counter the “critical moments” curricula of objectifying traditional intercultural, international education, and intercultural communication pedagogies). The expansive array of theorizings and methods suitable for critical intercultural communication analyses, may seem too wide and vast of a plane to build out an area of study. But we need to remind ourselves that the goal for critical intercultural communication studies is to not merely build or propagate research that is fully unified and conversant for its own sake but rather to yield multiple insights over time that can be shared and discussed in degree in terms of specific historical moments, sociopolitical urgencies, and problematics within, through, and across political projects.

What are some key dimensions or foci of critical intercultural research and what does such a perspective yield in terms of insight, inquiry, and analysis of culture and intercultural communication?

Since the first 2010 handbook collection, there have been numerous studies that have shed light on a varied range of significant topics, cultures, and settings as identified in Table 1.2. We applaud this work and the entirety of critical intercultural communication to fulfill the goal of interrogating and dismantling legacies, systems, and structures of power in relation to culture and intercultural relations. From this, our pursuit to uncover the major macro aspects that can be looked at through a critical intercultural communication perspective and what can still be learned about specific cultural and intercultural communication phenomena and contexts should continue its momentum and propel forward into terrain that has not been looked at before and or areas that require new or uncovered angles. More specifically, there are topics that can be engaged for key insights not yet fully unpacked in the field of intercultural communications, topics such as intersections across critical diversity and equity studies, critical race and ethnic studies, colonialisms and empires; digital inequalities, biopolitics, platform capitalism, algorithmic oppression, neoliberal university and educational sites, technological colonialism, cultural histories and genealogies of cultural notions, cultural displacements and cultural dispossession, regulation and surveillance of bodies across difference migration, transnationalities, environmental justice, geopolitics, economic classing, caste oppression, indigeneity and

land struggles, cisgendering of land, water, and nature, settler colonialism, citizenship, and much more. In their bold essay, “Two stories, one vision: A plea for an ecological turn in intercultural communication,” Mendoza and Kinefuchi (2016) brilliantly push critical intercultural communication studies to pursue a radical turn in engaging climate change, ecosystems, indigenous constructions of land, nature, and the environment and what this reveals about culture, intercultural communication, and power. Indeed, our delimited range of what we *should* and *could* study through a critical intercultural communication perspective proves to be expansive and far-reaching. And why not? The reach of intercultural power is boundless and for that, we need to continually re-envision our scope and be open to the idea that our area of study may not have fully drawn lines and boundaries as other fields of study nor should we aspire to privilege traditional knowledge construction and parameters. By continuing to explore and extend this area of critical intercultural communication studies, our conclusions and theorizings about culture and intercultural communication can be carved out in robust and exhilarating ways.

How do we take the larger collection of critical intercultural communication research, informed by multiple theoretical and perspectival traditions and spread across various fields of communication scholarship and outside disciplines, and engage these works in meaningful and productive dialogue around insights, conclusions, and question-probing and provide these with a deeper, integrated focus to have important metacritical conversations that characterize the continual development of perspectives and forms of scholarship (as even in the case of critical theory, cultural studies work, postcolonial perspectives, feminist studies, among others)?

The idea is to not contain, “police,” or “discipline” the boundaries of critical intercultural communication studies or create some grand narrative but to stake out some positions and meeting points, if any, to build a diverse community with webs of connection, convergence, and vested stakes. With rich critical intercultural work spread out across disciplines, areas of study, communities, regions, countries, institutions, conferences, and publication/sharing outlets (by graduate students, beginning-staged faculty, and advanced stage faculty, faculty instructors, practitioners, trainers, public sector professionals), how we as a larger community amass together the collected insights and political projects and create a vehicle through which we share, communicate, converse, and push each other on our projects, can help stretch our analyses and interventions toward our aims for justice, recognition, reclamation, freedom and liberation, and meaningful, transformative change. However, we ought not seek out a unified body of work to satisfy some academic self-aggrandizing gesture as our biggest gains live in the disconnections and the breakage points across projects through which intersectionalities and power dimensions take different forms. Critical intercultural communication studies is as much about connection, joinings, and ties as it is about disconnection, fractures, and cracks. We learn what our critical intercultural projects share about culture and power and what they do not. This helps to propel and refine our knowledge construction process, theoretical and topical trajectories, and methodologies and revisit or pursue new questions and problematics from different angles. The connection-disconnection attribute is what ultimately makes us tied to what we study: the messiness and (often) incompleteness of culture, power, and political projects.

How do we not let our academic need to trace, name, identify, and record critical scholarship and its varied nature smother or undermine a necessary and key focus on historical specificity, contextualization, situated power dynamics, and fluid theorizings in critical work?

We understand the academic obsession for boundary delineation and identification of positions (especially in the United States). However, it is still important for us to consider how such a need to name, identify, and solidify may, in fact, suffocate that with which we critique

in terms of the larger contextualizations and situated power dynamics that constitute such phenomena. Reconciling these often-conflicting aspects of critical work merits more attention and careful movement so that the political projects (and the larger aims of these) always take priority.

How does such work link up to, contrast and interact with intercultural scholarship from other paradigmatic perspectives? Or does it and does it even have to?

Martin and Nakayama (1999) pushed for a dialogic approach in the field of intercultural communication among paradigmatic schools of thought so as to stretch the collective knowledge in the field. Indeed, linkages among the postpositivist, interpretive, and critical approaches can magnify great insight on culture and intercultural communication especially in terms of multilayered contexts that involve privatized experience, perception, and behavior and larger structures, conditions, and histories. But we must also ask ourselves about the areas in which these approaches depart and collide. There is no denying that there are fundamental differences in assumptions about culture and communication and the goals of intellectual work. To constantly feel the pressure of folding in to and accommodating (or dialoguing with) other perspectives may inadvertently weaken the potency of critical analyses and engagements and risk defusing and domesticating politically charged projects. We should at least ask what the risks are to our own work as critical scholars with political projects when we do this. Some may have tangled with the question of how to dialogue with a perspective that has historically reproduced and reified colonialist myths and images of a cultural group and ones that she/he/they is trying to dismantle in their work. Can we align with dominant arms of Science and Governmental Classifications and Authority that have so persistently punished a group, a people, or a land for whom/which we are advocating? The question may actually be not whether or not to link up or dialogue but when it is appropriate and useful to the contexts and groups with which/whom we work and focus on. Ultimately, critical scholars must face head-on the tricky issue of interacting and collaborating with other colliding perspectives and at what cost.

What are the future directions of critical intercultural communication work and pathways that need to be continually revisited and others that have been sorely neglected?

By peering back at the crossroads delineated in 2010 and the movement and pathways that have been carved out since, critical intercultural communication studies has proven to be an even more engaged and vibrant space of work and political projects that highlights both power constraints and agentic possibilities and navigational actions. And with this, even more questions about what the future holds for the area and for the engaged political projects rise to the surface. These include (but are not limited to) the following:

- How do we identify and pinpoint a critical intercultural communication work? Does the work need to directly reference “critical intercultural communication” or does it just need engage culture and power critically? What are the implications of this for scholars and students? Is the naming of what we do even important and for whom?
- How can we create theoretical and justice alliances with critical subareas in communication and critical fields beyond the communication discipline?
- Have we focused enough on agentic possibilities of resistance, negotiation, and action?
- To what extent are we uncovering aspects of domination and or agency and or the dynamic interchange between the two?
- What aspects of power are we engaging? And at which levels?
- How do we maximize the use-value of our critical intercultural communication projects beyond the academy?

If the amassed critical intercultural communication work from over the last 13 years is any indication, the future for critical intercultural communication studies looks even brighter and more magnificent than at the 2010 crossroads in the first handbook iteration. This current handbook, then, takes up from the crossroads and the blazing energy from the 2010–2023 critical intercultural communication work (with its calls for important and new conceptualizations and filling in the gaps, reflections, project analyses, and new trajectories, theorizings, and methods) and strives to push that momentum and energy even further by creating yet another space for continued inquiry and insight, reflection, deep engagement, confrontation, and path-charting for critical intercultural communication studies of today and tomorrow.

This Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication

Over the last 13 years, critical intercultural communication studies has flourished with a robust record of scholarship and the creation of a new generation of scholars dedicated to advancing critical intercultural communication work. Since 2010, the *Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication* stands as one of the first collections that feature all works and projects through the critical intercultural communication studies perspective in communication studies. With this second iteration of the handbook, the focus has moved from the questions “Why do we need critical intercultural communication studies?” and “What constitutes critical intercultural communication?” to “What more can critical intercultural communication studies do?” and “What aspects of culture, power, and intercultural relations still need to be interrogated, revisited, and or named?” As the need and imperative for a critical view of intercultural communication has already been established by the first handbook as well as critical intercultural work from 2010 through 2023, we now see the research in this area seeking ways to “move the dial” and chart out needed theoretical, analytical, methodological, and practical pathways for critical intercultural communication studies even further. This very *Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication* aims to provide a space and form for such pathmaking and in directions that we have not gone before or through particular angles.

This *Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication* continues to stand as a consolidated resource of essays that highlight critical intercultural communication studies, its historical inception, logics, terms, and possibilities as well as theoretical, methodological, and applied exemplars. In addition, it will also serve as a valuable tool to help graduate students, scholars, and faculty members showcase, articulate, and imagine what kinds of work can constitute and speak to the area of critical intercultural communication studies. Our handbook continues to sketch out the intellectual terrain of critical intercultural communication studies in terms of the following: (i) revisiting and reengaging important scholars and their key works (which have been updated and recast for today) that enabled such a course of study and (ii) presenting works that demonstrate the new and vibrant possibilities of engaging culture and intercultural relations and contexts in a “critical” way. It is our hope that once again, this *Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication* will help scholars revisit, assess, and reflect on the formation and vigorous development of critical intercultural communication studies and where it still needs to go in terms of theorizing, knowledge production, and social justice engagement. Our handbook will also highlight the contemporary issues and debates that are shaping the area of critical intercultural communication studies.

The handbook is organized in terms of five main sections: (i) critical junctures and reflections in critical intercultural communication studies: a revisiting, (ii) critical theoretical dimensions in critical intercultural communication studies, (iii) critical inquiry practices in critical intercultural communication studies, (iv) critical topics in critical intercultural communication studies, and (v) critical intercultural futures in critical intercultural communication studies. In addition to this opening introduction and a visioning conclusion, there are

section interludes that punctuate the handbook with specified contexts for each of these main portions. Moreover, these essays are bound together in a book structure that scaffolds up from foundation to application and allows for reflection and connection amongst sections and pieces.

The first part of the handbook will highlight the formative critical moments and “junctures” through which a critical perspective first emerged and “took flight” within intercultural communication. In unique fashion, this part includes current reflections and insights of influential intercultural communication scholars such as Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz, Thomas K. Nakayama and Judith N. Martin, Dreama G. Moon, Kent A. Ono, Ako Inuzuka, Gust A. Yep, and S. Lily Mendoza, who wrote original essays that created the impetus for and helped to shape a critical line of inquiry. As opposed to merely including the reprints of these essays, these scholars have contributed original, present-day reflections and updated insights on those essays and their thoughts in the current moment about the critical turn in intercultural communication studies in terms of the following questions: What does it mean to do critical intercultural communication work? In what historical and representation contexts is critical intercultural communication studies situated? What is the unique role that only critical intercultural communication scholarship is meant to take up? And what are the larger assumptions and commitments of such work? This section serves the purpose of referring back to several key works that historically shaped and set a critical intercultural communication course while at the same time adding a new spin to these works through the contemporary/post-reflections of the authors.

The second part of the handbook highlights the role of critically framed theories and theorizings in constituting and driving critical intercultural communication studies. By way of examining specific contexts and legacies of power, identities, communities, popular cultural forms and discourses, and public memories, these featured theories are drawn from various critical areas of study within and beyond the communication discipline and powerfully demonstrate the role of situated, embodied, intersectional, reflexive, and multivocal attuned theorizings to uncovering key insights about the relationship between culture and power. These expositions of power-attuned theories are contributed by such excellent scholars as Yoshitaka Miike, Crispin Thurlow, Bernadette Calafell and Nivea Castaneda Acrey, Yukio Tsuda, Aimee Carrillo Rowe, Shinsuke Eguchi, Kathryn Sorrells, Jolanta A. Drzewiecka, Miriam Shoshana Sobre, Jing Yin, and Antonio Tomas De La Garza and Kent A. Ono.

As a new section for this handbook, the third part provides a stage to share, delineate, and reflect upon methodologies and modes of inquiry for critical intercultural communication work. The most common and shortsighted critiques of critical intercultural communication studies is that it lacks the rigorous use of a method, has no real “data,” and that a predetermined focus on power does “not count” as a viable mode of inquiry. As demonstrated by extant critical intercultural communication research and this very section, such flimsy critiques are upended and obliterated by the stellar methodological-focused essays from Ahmet Atay, Mark P. Orbe, Lore/ta LeMaster and Michael Tristano, Jr., Gloria Nziba Pindi, Devika Chawla, Sarah Amira de la Garza, Srividya Ramasubramanian, Julius Riles, and Omotayo O. Banjo, Robert Gutierrez-Perez, and Mohan J. Dutta. An eclectic set of methods is featured – from decolonizing methods to ethnographies and autoethnographies, quantitative approaches, racialized queerness and transness performative modes, performative praxis, and culture-centered approaches in line with community organizing.

Next, the handbook proudly showcases current critical intercultural communication projects on a wide range of significant, timely, and urgent topics. Indeed, these works represent actual critical case studies and specific political projects that focus on different cultural groups, communities, identities, and contexts from a critical intercultural perspective. Such work collectively demonstrates the dynamic and interrogative nature of the critical intercultural communication studies perspective on the movements, machinations, and dynamics of power, legacies of

oppression, and tributaries of agency and action in relation to culture and intercultural communication encounters and relations. These essays – from Godfried Asante, Kristin L. Drogos and Vincent N. Pham, Yea-Wen Chen and Brandi Lawless, Santhosh Chandrashekar, Richie Neil Hao, Tina M. Harris and Meghan S. Sanders, Tiara R. Na’puti and Riley I. Taitingfong, Etsuko Kinefuchi, Josue David Cisneros and Ana Lisa Eberline, Isra Ali, LeiLani Nishime and Elizabeth Parks, Priya Raman and Deanna Fassett, Sachi Sekimoto, and Melissa Steyn and Cuthbeth Tagwirei – represent critically incisive analyses of culture and power as well as illustrations of the complexities of theorizing and researching issues of cultural politics and communication. Topics presented in this section [anti-LGBT violence in the context of Ghana; ANAPI YouTubers’ articulations of race intersectionalities; commitments of CICP; mediatized representation of Indianness; CICP and the aftermath of the Las Vegas shooting; racial representations in popular culture (*Bridgerton*); nuclear colonialism and militarism in Oceania; ecological violence and racism and speciesism; undocumented activism and stories; a Letter for Black Lives Matter and critically engaging Asian American intercultural communication; access, bodies, inclusion, and modality; bodily senses in the formation of race in the time of COVID-19; whiteness, privilege, and the White South African diaspora in the United States] all represent ongoing, contemporary concerns of critical intercultural communication scholars.

In the fifth section of this handbook, we delineate what is forming and what could be by featuring pathways for critical intercultural futures in terms of alliances with critical subareas in the discipline (critical health communication, as elucidated by Kristen L. Cole, Leandra Hinojosa Hernández, and Sarah De Los Santos Upton) and beyond (critical university studies and the “critical reclamation of the university,” as illustrated by Kathleen F. McConnell). Another pathway in motion powerfully focuses on critical intercultural communication and the ecological turn in engaging the “more than human world” with S. Lily Mendoza and Etsuko Kinefuchi’s riveting chapter. These essays present the exciting possibilities of critical alliances, intersections, and collaborations as well as bold ventures into new terrain (literally, epistemologically, physically) of ecosystems, earth and nature, and a scope beyond (but constitutive of) the human world.

Finally, we, as editors of this collection, conclude the handbook with a delineation of what is next for critical intercultural communication studies – our possible next trajectories, pathways, and or moves in the face of new and resurfacing challenges. It is our hope to envision, imagine, and aspire for what critical intercultural communication studies can continue to become and do for the world and create a critical intercultural future and world-remaking.

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