A Sense-Making Study of How People Overcome Stereotypes about Others through Social Interaction

Thesis

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Abstract

Contact theory has been successfully used to predict when inter-group contact will reduce prejudice among group members. The theory, though, usually does not focus on the perspective of the person experiencing the contact and the communicative practices people engage in when they come into contact with a person of another culture.

The present study uses Sense-Making Methodology to explore how people in an intercultural contact situation encounter and deal with stereotypes about people from other cultures. It focuses on a situation where a person who holds a stereotype about a cultural other overcomes this stereotype through interacting with them. Specifically, the study examined two questions. First, how do people make sense of or interpret communicative acts in an intercultural contact situation that leads them to review a prior stereotype? Second, what role does communication play in helping people overcome a stereotype? Ten individuals who identified themselves as voluntary seekers of intercultural contact were interviewed using the Sense-Making Methodology. Participants also completed an open-ended questionnaire. Interviews were analyzed using grounded theory techniques. The findings indicated that participants engaged in a sequence of interpretive activities that helped them overcome the stereotype. First, participants interpreted an interactional trigger as meaningful, which then set them on a series of interpretive activities. Second, participants became aware of an intense emotional reaction as well as an inconsistency in the way they were thinking about the other person.

Third, participants made communicative and relational moves to refocus their attention on the other person. Communicative moves included taking the other's perspective and showing empathy whereas relational moves included seeing similarities in the other, appreciating their differences and seeing the other as an equal. Fourth, participants recalibrated their view of the other person based on the insights gained from the situation. Participants also learned about themselves, cultures and about stereotypes when they reflected on the situation. The findings also indicated that participants overcame stereotypes through engaging in communicative as well as relational moves. Communicative practices that helped participants overcome their stereotypes included open communication, listening without judgment and asking questions. The findings also point to Sense-Making Methodology as a valid way of studying contact and one that helps participants articulate their perspective on overcoming stereotypes about another. Finally, the study contributes to contact theory by explaining how both interpretive and communicative practices during a contact situation helps one overcome a stereotype and gradually reduce prejudice.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review

The third most populous country after China and India, the United States has become ethnically and racially diverse, especially over the last three decades (Hobbs & Stoops, 2002). Trends in fertility, mortality and in internal and international migration have contributed to changes in population demographics over the last century (Hobbs & Stoops, 2002). U.S. Census data from 2000 reveal that people belonging to races other than White or African American rose to 12.5 percent in 2000 from 1.4 percent in 1970 (Hobbs & Stoops, 2002) and population diversity estimates (Census Bureau, 2008) suggest that the U.S. will be even more diverse by mid-century. By 2050, people of ethnicities that currently form a third of the population are expected to make up 54 percent of the population (Census Bureau, 2008). The implications are that no one group will have a racial majority ("Minorities expected to be Majority in 2050", 2000).

This increase in diversity presents us with the opportunity to interact with individuals of different cultures, allowing us to forge close intercultural relationships at work or in educational settings. However, research suggests that people may not be exploiting this opportunity to its fullest and in actuality, may have limited or no intercultural interaction on a daily basis. For instance, Halualani (2008) found that students from a culturally diverse university equated being in the presence of a diverse population with having actual intercultural interactions (Halualani, 2008). Simply being

part of this multicultural university was considered by these students as intercultural engagement, cultural awareness, open-mindedness and non-prejudice. Students tended to "generalize and overestimate the amount of intercultural interactions they had on campus without specifying the actual interactions" (Halualani, 2008, p. 2). As a result, individuals may be less likely to seek out and experience actual intercultural interaction because they think they are already doing so. These findings suggest that intercultural interactions are not as common as we believe them to be.

To exacerbate the situation, university students have also been seen to mingle only with those of their own kind. Buttny (1999), for instance, found that students acknowledged the "voluntary segregation" of groups on campus and also normalized this situation by attributing it to cultural differences in interests, or by reasoning that people tend to socialize with those they have something in common with. Thus the increasing cultural diversity students are exposed to every day does not necessarily imply contact or interaction between cultural groups.

I find the lack of contact between people of different cultures problematic, as researchers (e.g. Allport, 1954) have shown that lack of contact leads people to stereotype others. These stereotypes could lead to prejudice or negative feelings or attitudes towards people belonging to these groups (Allport, 1954). Prejudice, in turn, has close links to discrimination (Stangor, 2000; Allport, 1954) and hate-crimes that are perpetuated against individuals or groups that are considered different from oneself. Minority group members' awareness of negative stereotypes about them has also been found to lower their performance in academics (Maass & Cadinu, 2003; Steele 1997), which in turn

leads members of majority groups to maintain their stereotypes about minorities. The current situation therefore poses a substantive need for studying intercultural interactions and how they contribute to reducing prejudice.

Social psychologists (e.g. Pettigrew, 1998; Brewer 1996; Hewstone, 2006; Allport, 1954) who study inter-group relations have considered the intermingling of persons from different groups necessary to reduce prejudice between these groups. Over the last five decades of research on inter-group relations, a general theory known as contact theory has developed. It posits that contact with members of other groups can reduce stereotyping and prejudice. Specifically, it proposes that when groups interact with each other under certain conditions, they can gather enough positive experiences about the other that leads them to disconfirm preconceived notions about them.

However, using contact theory to understand the overcoming of prejudice presents us with some boundary conditions and gaps in our knowledge about overcoming prejudice. First, although contact theory suggests that people in a diverse society should become less prejudiced through contact with different cultural groups, inter-group relations researchers have found that this is possible only when certain "essential" or "facilitating" conditions are met (e.g. Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Allport, 1954). These four conditions considered essential to reducing prejudice are: (1) equal status between groups, (2) common goals, (3) legal sanction for the contact and (4) inter-group cooperation (Pettigrew, 1998; Allport, 1954). When all these prerequisites are not met, contact actually increases prejudice and tension between groups (Amir, 1976). Contact theory has therefore been able to successfully predict when prejudice may be overcome.

However, it has offered little explanation for "how" prejudice is overcome (Pettigrew, 2007). What, for instance, happens when one interacts with a person from a different culture? Secondly, studies using contact theory have mostly been confined to laboratory settings (Connolly, 2000) and the kind of controlled, task-based interactions in these settings may not be applicable to a real life intercultural situation.

Other methodological problems have been seen when researching prejudice (e.g. Devine & Elliot, 1995; Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2000). For instance, studies using surveys and those using in-depth interviews find differing results with respect to the levels of prejudice reported (Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2000). While research primarily using surveys suggests that society has become less prejudiced over the last few decades, data from interviews tell a different story. Researchers find that participants responding to survey items on racial issues tend to answer more positively than when interviewed in depth on the same issues (Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2000).

Accordingly, my purpose in writing this thesis is to review relevant current literature on intercultural contact, stereotyping and prejudice, to identify gaps in this literature and to propose an alternative way of studying contact, stereotyping and prejudice to address these gaps. Specifically, I am interested in examining how persons interpret communicative acts in an intercultural contact situation leading them to revise a stereotype about the other person. I am also interested in finding out the role interpersonal communication plays in helping people overcome a stereotype.

Review of the Literature

In the following five sections I give an overview of the relevant literature on

stereotypes and stereotype change. First I present key ways in which the concept of culture has been defined in research. Next, I summarize research on stereotyping with respect to how the concept has been defined and has evolved over the years. Third, I review theory and research on stereotype change. Contact theory, being an important part of the framework of this study, will be mentioned throughout the literature review but will be attended to in detail in the fourth section. Finally, in the fifth section, I present Dervin's Sense-Making Methodology as an alternative way of studying contact and stereotype change.

I. The Concept of Culture

Stereotyping can be viewed as resulting from a way of viewing people as members of a category rather than as individuals (Hinton, 2000). This categorization derives from classifying people into groups based on the similarities within and differences between cultures. I therefore begin my review with a survey of the concept of culture.

As a concept, culture is highly contested and has been described variously as a trait, as a meaning-making system and as emergent in discourse. I consider all these definitions of culture useful for the purpose of this study and will briefly review some ways in which the term has been researched. Although the different conceptualizations suggest linearity in the way they developed, all these definitions of culture are still employed in research across disciplines.

Anthropologists in the 1950s claimed that the concept of culture was scientifically promising (Kuper, 1999) and Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) compared its "explanatory

importance and generality of application... to such categories as gravity in physics, disease in medicine, evolution in biology (Kuper, 1999, p. *x*)." Culture here is conceptualized as a static system of rules (Kao, 2004), as patterns of behavior or standards handed down from one generation to the next (Benedict, 2005) by a group of people bounded, usually by geography. People belonging to such a bounded group, e.g. people from China, are presumed to be homogeneous in nature and being Chinese is considered to determine the behavior of people belonging to that culture. People possessing culture were, according to Keesing, carriers who did not have the power to control it (Kao, 2004). This conceptualization of culture as something people "have" or as a group they are members of (Baumann, 1996), contribute to a notion of "difference" between cultural groups (Baumann, 1996) as people from one culture cannot change themselves to become like those of another.

Culture has also been conceptualized as a concept closely linked to a system of symbols such as language that help people express and create experience (Kramsch, 1998). Culture here is a "semiotic concept" and consists of "interworked systems of construable signs" that do not predict social events, behavior, institutions or processes but is a context within which they can be "thickly described" (Geertz, 1973). It is a process of meaning-making that is dynamic and flexible and involves a "complicated set of interrelated concepts, interpretations, and experiences that results in a complex web of resources, goals, values, and so on" (Kao, 2004). Here, culture is viewed as a text that is read and interpreted by the observer.

In postmodern thought, the notion of culture as a unitary, fixed category is

deconstructed and is considered de-centered, fragmented and consisting of multiple and competing voices (Collins, 1989). The concept of cultures as closed, static and distinct categories are challenged (Hanson, 2007). No culture is considered to have an “absolute lock on truth” and in this way people are led to recognize the complementary relationships between their own cultures and others' (Hanson, 2007).

Summary. I align myself with the postmodern notion of culture and like Yon (2000) believe that people are ambivalent about the way they see themselves in relation to their cultural representations. Defining culture as a fixed and essential entity discounts the ambivalence in the way people “live” culture (Yon, 2000).

Through his ethnography conducted at Maple Heights, Yon (2000) talks about the value of seeing culture as not only a set of attributes but also as something that is continually being constructed. Yon (2000) shows that students belonging to culturally different groups lay claim to different identities and cultural categories and attach themselves to multiple affiliations at different times rather than seeing themselves only as Canadians, Asians, Latinos and so on. Cultural identity, according to Yon (2000) is not just a “network of constraining traditions, beliefs and practices through which ethnic and other subjects are produced. It is a more complex process of negotiating, often in ambivalent ways, the discourses through which discursive subjects are made.” Yon's (2000) conceptualization challenges the notion that if one knows another's culture one can accommodate the other's culture, join them or avoid them.

In the following pages, I summarize relevant research and theory on stereotyping.

II. Stereotyping and Stereotypes

While stereotyping and prejudice are concepts that are related they are not the same. Before I review literature specifically related to stereotypes it is important to distinguish a stereotype from the concept of prejudice.

Stereotypes and prejudice. People are prone to categorizing and thus every one may have stereotypes but this does not imply that one is prejudiced (Stangor, 2000). Prejudice is defined as a "...hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group (Allport, 1954, p. 7)." Prejudice involves an emotional component that is usually negative, such as anger, disgust, fear, or hatred (Stangor, 2000). Although stereotypes may be thought to lead to prejudice, the causal relationship between the two has not been established as stereotypes can be used to justify prejudice and vice versa (Schneider, 2004).

I will now define the concept of stereotypes and briefly trace its evolution in research literature.

Early definitions of stereotypes. The word "stereotype" has been defined in various ways since Walter Lippmann (1922) first used it to describe how we deal with others who are separated from us by physical distances and when we lack the time to know them intimately. In this situation, Lippmann says, we "notice a trait" about the person "that marks a well-known type, and fill in the rest of the picture by means of the stereotypes we carry in our heads (p. 89)." Lippmann's stereotype had a distinctly social nature in that it derived from what we are "told about the world before we see it (p. 90)"

and this contributed to the creation and maintenance of the repertoire of stereotypes. The stereotype is also formed through emphasizing the familiarities and the strangenesses of objects that are "aroused by small signs," which could be a true index or just a vague analogy (Lippmann, 1922).

This conception of a stereotype was somewhat retained by Allport (1954), in his classic book on prejudice. However Allport (1954) made a clear distinction between a stereotype and a category. He called a stereotype a fixed idea that accompanies a category. The stereotype is thus "an exaggerated belief associated with a category" (for instance, women are sensitive) that functions to justify (or rationalize) "our conduct related to that category (Allport, 1954 p. 191)."

Allport also assumed that a stereotype has some element of truth in that the perceiver is making a "correct judgment in terms of probability" that is sustained by selective perception and selective forgetting (Allport, 1954). Stereotypes have a "kernel of truth" and exist because they help people simplify their categories, justify hostility towards people and "serve as projection screens for our personal conflict (Allport, 1954, p. 200)." However, one of the main reasons that stereotypes continue to exist, according to Allport (1954) is because they are "socially supported, continually revived and hammered in" by the mass media (p. 200).

Concept Development

While Lippmann (1922) and Allport (1954) espoused the view that stereotypes were a product of "faulty thinking" that needed to be remedied, subsequent conceptualizations saw them as "a result of the psychological and cognitive need to

categorize and simplify a complex social world" (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998, p. 629).

A review of the contemporary social psychological literature on stereotyping by Augoustinos and Walker (1998) yields five different ways in which stereotypes have been conceptualized in recent research. The first is a conceptualization of stereotypes as schemas that arise from the fundamental human need to simplify the world into categories based on identifiable characteristics such as race, gender. age, etc. (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998).

Schemas. Stereotypes here are cognitive mental heuristics used to process social information. Researchers working with this conceptualization view stereotypes as "theory driven, stable structures in memory, have internal organizational properties and are learned by individuals in their early years (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998, p. 631)." Although cognitive conceptualizations have held sway in mainstream research there have been efforts to incorporate social processes as part of stereotype formation and change. For instance, to show that responses to out-groups were not inevitable as previously supposed, Wheeler and Fiske (2005) used applied techniques from brain imaging and cognitive-social psychology to investigate how social goals control prejudiced responses. Participants in this study were shown pictures of African-American and White faces and were given the goals of social categorization, social individuation, and simple visual inspection. Wheeler and Fiske recorded brain activity and measured cognitive activation of stereotypes with lexical priming (2005). They found that both brain activity and stereotype activation on being shown photos of the racial out-group depended on perceivers' current social-cognitive goal and neither was inevitable (Wheeler & Fiske,

2005). The study showed that one's conscious social goals influenced the process of person perception even at early stages and hence shaped prejudiced responses (Wheeler & Fiske, 2005).

Psychologically valid representations. Another way of thinking about stereotypes as psychologically valid representations has emerged from Social Identity theory and Self Categorizing theory (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998). In these theories, the focus is on how stereotypes obtain their form and content; the theories view stereotyping as a cognitive and psychological process that people use to orient themselves toward the actualities of group life. Haslam et al. (1999), for example, investigated the socially shared nature of stereotypes and demonstrated through an experiment that perceivers are more likely to generate a shared in-group stereotype when they defined themselves and interacted in terms of a common social category membership. Manipulations were designed to prime either the social identity or the personal identity of participants and participants were asked to complete a checklist task individually as well as in groups. Haslam et al. (1999) found that when participants were primed with social identity, the content of self-categorizations were affected leading to enhanced stereotype consensus and favorableness. The results pointed to the capacity for internalized group memberships to structure and regulate cognition (Haslam et al., 1999).

Social representations. In the third conceptualization, stereotypes are seen as "social representations" (Moscovici, 1988) in which they are shared symbolic and collective representations. This conceptualization realizes the political and ideological function of stereotypes. Stereotyping is seen as cognitive as well as a social activity that

is “driven by the ideological and political needs of a particular social context and environment” (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998).

Ideological representations. A fourth conceptualization views stereotypes as ideological representations (Jost & Banaji, 1994) that have a system justification function. Stereotypes exist as a way of rationalizing the status quo and “why things are the way they are” (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998). For example, Jost, Kivetz, Rubini, Guermandi, & Mosso (2005) demonstrated through studies conducted in three different cultures that complementary stereotypes serve the ideological function of justifying socioeconomic status differences between groups and contribute to the perceived legitimacy and stability of the existing social system. In Italy, England and Israel, where the studies were conducted, high-status group members were generally stereotyped as agentic and achievement-oriented, whereas low-status group members were stereotyped as communal and interpersonally oriented. Jost et al. (2005) found that these complementary stereotypes reflected a high degree of consensus across high and low-status perceiver groups regardless of people's social identities, geographical locations or climates. The studies also indicated that complementary stereotypic differentiation was affected by chronic and temporary activation of the social psychological need to justify the system.

Discursive constructions. In a fifth view adopted by discursive psychologists (e.g. Wetherell & Potter, 1993) stereotypes are discursive constructions and are social constructions that are constituted by language (Auguoustinos & Walker, 1998). Here social categories are neither formed inside people's heads nor are they “static structures

organized around prototypical representations of the category" (Auguoustinos & Walker, 1998, p. 640)." Stereotypes are instead constituted in discourse. They are a "complex and subtle social accomplishment" through spoken and written discourse used to "accomplish goals such as blamings or justifications" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 116). This point of view stresses on the inconsistencies and variability that emerge from the way people use stereotypes when talking about others.

Implications of stereotype conceptualizations. The way stereotypes are conceptualized in research has implications for how they are thought to be formed, maintained, reinforced and changed. While these five conceptualizations are useful ways for thinking about stereotypes, seeing them as merely cognitive schemas implies the notion of their being an "inevitable consequence of human cognitive functioning" which leaves out the discursive aspect (Langenhove & Harre, 1994). The "built-in" nature of human cognitive functioning also implies that a stereotype cannot be changed (Langenhove & Harre, 1994). However, we know that stereotypes do undergo revisions although this may be a slow process (Devine and Elliot, 1995; Brewer, 1996). Devine and Elliot (1995), in their study on 147 White students, used a revised list of adjectives from those used in the Princeton Trilogy studies by Katz & Braly (1933), Gilbert (1951), and Karlins, Coffman & Walters (1969). They distinguished between contemporary stereotypes of African-Americans and personal beliefs of respondents and measured respondents' level of prejudice towards African-Americans using the 7-item version of the Modern Racism Scale. Although there was a highly negative contemporary stereotype associated with African-Americans, they found an equally consistent set of personal

beliefs that were positive. Devine and Elliot (1995) concluded that the African-American stereotype per se was not fading but that people's personal beliefs about African-Americans were undergoing revision.

In this study, I conceptualize stereotypes as a way of thinking about an other that is constituted, maintained, reinforced and changed through the discourses one encounters and engages in.

III. Theories of Stereotype Change

In this section, I review relevant theory and research on stereotype revision. Stereotypes are generally considered resistant to change once they are formed. In reviewing stereotypes, Hilton and Hippel (1996) note four models of stereotype change that have been proposed to date. The first or the bookkeeping model proposed by Rothbart (1981) supports the notion of incremental change in which every inconsistency processed leads to a small change in the held stereotype. When there is substantial disconfirming evidence over confirming evidence, the stereotype undergoes a change (Schneider, 2004). The conversion model, also proposed by Rothbart (1981), proposes a more dramatic change based on encountering a critical level of inconsistency. Although it is difficult to specify the conditions that lead to this conversion, extreme disconfirmations by one or more exemplars are supposed to be necessary (Schneider, 2004). A third model called sub-typing proposed by Weber and Crocker (1983), asserts that inconsistent information is re-categorized under a new subsidiary classification. This is more a model of how one resists changing stereotypes (Schneider, 2004). In the fourth exemplar-based model proposed by Smith and Zarate (1992), stereotypes undergo a change when new

exemplars or representations of individuals are added or retrieved as one perceives an inconsistency or gains a new perspective.

Research on Stereotype Change

There are two main ways of effecting a change in stereotype that have been addressed in previous research. The first is through providing consensus information to prejudiced individuals and the second, through inter-group contact. I provide a brief review of both methods below.

Consensus information. One way to effect a change in stereotypes has been to make highly prejudiced people aware of consensus information or others' positive stereotypes about a group. Sechrist and Stangor (2001) demonstrated through an experiment that when people learn that others share their inter-group beliefs, it can influence the strength of the attitude-behavior relationship. The study found that when highly prejudiced individuals learned that their prejudiced beliefs were consensually shared they were more likely to engage in negative inter-group behaviors when compared with those provided with low-consensus information. In the study, high-prejudiced individuals whose beliefs were validated sat further away from an African-American confederate compared with those who did not have their beliefs validated. High-prejudiced individuals were also more likely to endorse their negative stereotypes whereas persons low in prejudice were more likely to endorse favorable stereotypes. In contrast, low prejudiced individuals who found that their views were shared would engage in more favorable inter-group behaviors compared with those provided with low consensus information. Hence, consensus information was found to influence the cognitive accessibility of favorable and

unfavorable stereotypes. Sechrist and Stangor, (2000) therefore suggest that interventions be designed to modify negative beliefs by giving people information about in-groups who have favorable beliefs about the out-group. This, according to the researchers, could be a direct and effective way of changing stereotypes.

Contact theory. A second way of bringing about stereotype change has been through inter-group contact. Shook and Fazio (2008) investigated the nature of long-term interracial contact and how it affected automatically activated racial attitudes in a real-life situation. The study was conducted in a college dormitory and looked at freshman white students' attitudes about African-American or white roommates randomly assigned to them. The study also used an implicit measure of racial attitudes to control for motivational factors influences on participants' verbal responses. Shook and Fazio (2008) found that white freshmen randomly assigned to an African American roommate were less satisfied, less socially involved and less comfortable with their roommates than those assigned a white roommate. However, at the end of the quarter, automatically activated racial attitudes of participants with African-American roommates were more positive while those of same-race rooms did not change. Participants in interracial rooms also reported decreased inter-group anxiety toward African-Americans while those assigned to white roommates did not change on this measure.

Rudman et al. (2001) showed that implicit prejudice and stereotypes are malleable through affective processes in a study about students enrolled in a prejudice and conflict seminar. “Explicit orientations” consisted of attitudes and beliefs that people were willing to report. “Implicit orientations,” on the other hand, were those that consisted of

automatic associations (e.g. African-Americans and criminality) that were unavailable to introspection and required implicit measures. The researchers tested if people who volunteered to enroll in a diversity education course would show decreased automatic and controlled prejudice and stereotyping. They found that the students enrolled in the seminar with an African American professor showed significantly reduced implicit and explicit anti-Black biases compared with students in the control situation who were enrolled in a research methods course with a white professor. The students enrolled in the diversity seminar were expected to show reduced prejudice compared to the control group. Students were assessed for implicit orientations using the Implicit Association Test and were given the Modern Racism Scale and self-reports of stereotypes to assess explicit inter-group orientations. The students' implicit change scores covaried with factors suggestive of the presence of favorable attitudes towards the professor and prosocial contact with out-group members. Explicit change scores covaried with increased cognitive awareness of and motives to counteract own biases. The researchers also found that these effects were evident for self-report as well as automatic methods.

Part of the challenge associated with changing a stereotype also relates to being able to control oneself from stereotyping or applying a known stereotype to an individual. All people are supposed to have stereotypes about others as a result of socialization practices common in their culture. However, this is not problematic as long as these stereotypes are not internalized and automatically activated. Following is a review of relevant research on stereotype activation and control.

Stereotype Activation

Devine's (1989) study of automatic and controlled processes involved in prejudice challenges the notion that prejudice is an inevitable consequence of utilizing stereotype knowledge. Automatic processes, according to Devine (1989) are those that involve the "unintentional or spontaneous activation of some well-learned set of associations or responses that have been developed through repeated activation in memory (p. 6)." Controlled processes, on the other hand, are "intentional and require the active attention of the individual (p. 6)." Devine (1989) found that both high- and low-prejudice persons were aware of the content of the cultural stereotype of African-Americans. A second study showed that automatic stereotype activation was equally strong and equally inescapable for high- and low-prejudice participants. When participants were unable to consciously monitor stereotype activation, both high- and low-prejudice subjects produced stereotype-congruent evaluations of ambiguous behaviors of a race-unspecified person. A final study demonstrated that in an anonymous consciously directed thought-listing task about African Americans, low-prejudice subjects censored and inhibited negative stereotype congruent information. These subjects consciously replaced the stereotype with thoughts that expressed non-prejudiced values. High-prejudiced individuals' thoughts meanwhile were more consistent with the cultural stereotype about African Americans.

In an explanation of the results, Devine (1989) says that the stereotype change process involves developing associations between stereotype content and personal belief structure. For change to happen, every time a stereotype is activated a person should

think about their personal beliefs so that it will provide rival responses to the ones that follow from automatic activation. In other words, the strong association between prior negative beliefs about a group needs to be weakened and the new non-prejudiced attitudes and beliefs need to be strengthened and made conscious (Devine, 1989).

Devine's (1989) stereotype model implies the universal automatic activation of stereotypes, which some scholars reject. Research has accumulated since Devine's (1989) study that challenges the notion of the unconditional activation of stereotypical or evaluative biases in response to group members. For instance, Macrae, Mitchell, & Pendry's (2002) study on the role of subjective familiarity of forenames in triggering categorical thinking showed that stereotype activation does not apply equally to all members of a group. The researchers found that category-based knowledge was more accessible when triggered by familiar than unfamiliar forenames (Macrae, Mitchell, & Pendry, 2002). Participants were asked to identify the gender of familiar and unfamiliar forenames and took less time to verify the gender of familiar forenames (Macrae, Mitchell, & Pendry, 2002). Semantic priming was stronger when stereotype-related material followed the presentation of familiar than unfamiliar items. Familiar forenames were also seen to receive more extreme gender-based evaluations than unfamiliar ones (Macrae, Mitchell, & Pendry, 2002).

In a different line of research, stereotype change has been attributed to individual differences that determine if stereotypes will be automatically activated or not (e.g. Lepore & Brown, 1997). Moskowitz et al. (1999) for instance found that individuals who reported chronically egalitarian values and goals showed little stereotype activation.

Others (e.g. Devine, 1989) take a more state-based view or that situationally induced motives determine when stereotypes are automatically activated and when they are controlled.

Summary

Earlier notions about stereotypes being resistant to revision are now undergoing a change. The two main ways of effecting stereotype change are to provide consensus information and through the intergroup contact theory. In the first method, prejudiced people are provided with positive views held by their peers that gradually lead to a change in their beliefs. In the second method, people are encouraged to interact with one another so that they can gather disconfirming evidence against their stereotype and thus overcome them. Stereotyping is also beginning to be seen as a process one can control as opposed to being automatically activated.

My own view is that the difference in automaticity or the controlled nature of stereotypes lies in the way individuals attend to the phenomenon of encountering a stereotype during an interpersonal interaction with a member of an Othered group. I do not view this as a trait- or state-based difference. In other words, what is different is the way in which persons make sense of an interpersonal contact situation where they encounter a stereotype about an Other and find effective ways to deal with it. I argue that communication, specifically in the interpersonal context, contributes to how an individual gains control over an automatically activated stereotype. I first review research on how communication has been linked to stereotype change and then present my interpretation of this line of research.

IV. Communication and Stereotyping

In this section, I review research that links stereotyping, social interaction and interpersonal communication. I then lay out my conceptualization of communication in the study.

Stereotyping as Social Activity

Much of the literature on stereotypes assumes that information about other group members is obtained through direct observation or social interaction (Kashima, Fiedler, & Freytag (2008). In cases where we have limited contact with members of other social groups the information we have about these groups is obtained in a secondhand manner or through hearsay (Kashima et al., 2008), through interpersonal interactions that we have. Some social cognitive researchers (e.g. Semin, 2008; Yzerbyt & Carnaghi, 2008; Lyon et al., 2008) take the view that stereotype formation, maintenance and change involve the interplay of intrapersonal as well as interpersonal processes. These dynamics are socially situated (Yzerbyt & Carnaghi, 2008) and do not occur in "social vacuum" (Yzerbyt & Carnagi, 2008, p. 2).

Stereotypes and Communication

Semin (2008) differentiates stereotypes from pictures in the head and cognitive schemas by defining them as "specific social phenomena that are manifested in communicative contexts and have the characteristic of inducing social distance between a speaker and a receiver" (p.12). Semin (2008) draws on Hutchins' "Stereotypes in the Wild" to describe cognition as a phenomenon emerging in interpersonal communication. Stereotypes are thus considered to manifest in the public domain and is "the result of

socially situated interactions between individuals, rather than a product." And stereotyping is an "emergent process that is driven by systematic biases in language use during communication (Semin, 2008)."

Research on stereotyping and communication. Maass, Salvi, Arcuri & Semin's (1989) study was one of the first to provide evidence for the Linguistic Intergroup Bias (LIB). The LIB is a phenomenon by which stereotypes are perpetuated and maintained in inter-group contexts through a biased use of language. In this study, participants were recruited from among groups competing against one another in an annual horse racing competition in Italy called *palio.* Members of two *contrada* (competing sides) were presented with 16 single-frame cartoons in which a member of either their own *contrada* (in-group) or a competing *contrada* (out-group) performed a behavior. In one experiment, participants had to choose from four alternative ways of describing the behaviors while in the second they provided free response descriptions of the scenes. A concrete level was coded when one described an act using verbs (e.g. John argued with Wendy) and the same act could be coded at the abstract level if participants described the act in a trait-like manner (e.g. John is aggressive). Results showed that participants tended to encode socially desirable in-group behaviors and undesirable out-group behaviors at a high level of abstraction, whereas socially undesirable in-group behaviors and desirable out-group behaviors were encoded at a low level of abstraction Maass, Salvi, Arcuri & Semin, 1989). The study suggested that people tend to use language in a way that sets apart their in-group from the out-group. This is done by using trait-like descriptives to talk about an in-group member's positive behaviors or an out-group member's negative attributes.

Stereotypes and Interpersonal Communication

In the interpersonal context, LIB has been found to be an indicator of the nature of a relationship that affects the perceived social distance between speaker and listener (Semin, 2008). Reistma-van Rooijen, Semin and van Leeuwen showed how it was possible to uncover if the people in an interaction considered their other as part of their in-group or not based on the language they used to describe behaviors of the other (as cited by Semin, 2008, p. 21). In the study, participants (transmitters) had to describe a socially responsible or irresponsible act they had performed. These descriptions were written down in an abstract or concrete manner by another participant and then returned to the transmitters. The researchers then measured social distance as a function of positive or negative behavior and the abstractness or concreteness of the message. The study found that in the abstract positive feedback and the concrete negative feedback conditions, participants were more likely to include the transmitters in their self compared to the abstract negative and the concrete positive conditions (as cited by Semin, 2008, p. 21). Thus, the implicit use of language in interpersonal situations can indicate if the speaker considers the listener a friend or an other. The process of stereotyping here is implicit and one that neither the speaker nor the listener may be aware of having engaged in (Semin, 2008).

Summary. All these examples illustrate the role that communication, specifically interpersonal communication, plays in forming, maintaining and changing stereotypes about others. Although I use these studies as a point of departure in showing why interpersonal interactions need to be studied to understand stereotype change, my own

assumptions about interpersonal communication differ from those in these studies. The studies above conceptualize "language as a device to implement cognition" (Semin, 2008, p. 14) whereas I align myself with the perspective that meanings are not in the head to be encoded using language but are constituted in discourse.

I am specifically interested in examining the juncture where one becomes aware of a stereotype one possesses and consciously works to manage its activation. I situate this juncture within the context of interpersonal communication. Through my study I explore how specific speech acts during interpersonal contact might set off sense-making processes in the person holding the stereotype. In other words, how do people make meaning of these communicative acts and how does this help them view their other in a less stereotypic fashion? To further elucidate the questions I'm interested in, I lay out my conceptions about communication and how this pertains to the present study.

The Concept of Communication

In this study communication is conceptualized as a process through which one makes meaning, at two different levels. In the first level, which is the interpretive level, it is a process by which we communicate or interact with our selves and indicate to ourselves the meaning of things. And in the second level, which is the interactive level, it is seen as a social process where at least two people are engaged in meaning-making. I describe both conceptualizations below in detail.

Communication as interpretive processes. For the first conceptualization I primarily draw on Blumer (1969) who considered individual meaning-making as a product of engaging in communication with oneself. Meaning-making here is a two-step

process. First, individuals indicate to themselves the objects that hold meaning for them. Second, through communicating with themselves, individuals examine these meanings in the light of the situation they are in and the action they are poised to take. Meaning-making therefore is not an automatic activation of the meanings one already possess but a continual process in which one revisits these meanings and revises them to guide and form future action. I will now illustrate this conceptualization in the context of my study. An individual 'A' who comes across a person 'B' from a different culture indicates to the self the meaning this person holds for him or her. 'A' can actively make and re-make the meaning 'B' holds for him or her. This re-making of meaning is made possible through a social process, which brings us to the second level in my conceptualization of communication.

Communication as social interaction. The second level of communication in my conceptualization is interpersonal interaction. At this level, persons engage in interaction to make their subjective meanings known to the other person i.e. to achieve intersubjectivity. Although individuals are agents who make meaning through a continual process of interpretation, they acquire certain meanings through the process of socialization. These meanings may be called social realities. Persons can re-construct social realities but this involves the "interplay of individual and socially constituted processes and contexts" (Grossberg as cited in O'Keefe & Delia, 1985, p. 48). In symbolic interactionism, every communicative act (with the exception of routines) between two people has a strategic aspect, as every act is an attempt to define and redefine aspects of social reality (O'Keefe & Delia, 1985). Further, actions are based on

the actor's notions about reality, which means that every act is a way of forwarding one's own conceptions of reality (O'Keefe & Delia, 1985).

In constructivism, people rely on sets of socially shared interpretive schemes to organize their interactions (O'Keefe & Delia, 1985). Interaction in constructivism is a process "in which persons coordinate their respective lines of action through schemes for the organization and interpretation of action" (O'Keefe & Delia, 1985, p. 63). These interpretive schemes need not be identical for successful interactions, but it is sufficient they are similar enough for the purposes of a particular interaction (Delia, O'Keefe and O'Keefe, 1982).

In constructivism, communication is a specific form of interaction where the "communicative intentions of participants are a focus of coordination (O'Keefe & Delia, 1985)." The fundamental focus in communication is on "the process of reciprocally imputing and negotiating intentions and meaning (O'Keefe & Delia, 1985)."

In my study, individuals are assumed to overcome stereotypes through an interpretive as well as interactive process of reconstructing reality. Stereotypes acquired through socialization and interpretive processes are preformed meanings that one possesses about another person. Interaction with this person could involve verbally or nonverbally communicating with them or observing acts they perform. I assume that these interactions lead to new interpretations and thus help one to redefine the meanings that were attached to this person.

V. Contact Theory

The contact hypothesis, which posits that contact between groups of people

reduces prejudice among members of these groups, was first put forward by Allport (1954). The idea was that since hostility between groups was due to unfamiliarity and separation, increasing contact between these groups would reduce prejudice (Brewer & Gaertner, 2004). Inter-group contact was expected to produce enough positive experiences to lead to disconfirming evidence that would then lead to a revision of earlier stereotypes (Brewer & Gaertner, 2004). Allport's (1954) original hypothesis had four essential conditions or prerequisites for a positive contact outcome. These were: (1) equal status between majority and minority groups, (2) the pursuit of common goals, (3) legal sanction for the contact and (4) contact that "leads to the perception of common interests and humanity" between members (Allport, 1954, p. 281). It was therefore necessary for certain prerequisites to be met for contact between groups to lead to a reduction in prejudice. These prerequisites were the result of studies, which claimed that contact did not always lead to reduced prejudice but that in certain cases, contact between racial groups could lead to prejudice (Dixon, 2005). In an attempt to encourage contact in a time where people were skeptical about the benefits of desegregation, Allport highlighted the prerequisites that were necessary conditions as opposed to superficial contact, which could increase prejudice (Dixon, 2005).

Measures of Contact and Recent Research

Contact between members of different groups has been measured as both quantity and quality. While quantity is equated with frequency of contact (Aberson & Haag, 2007; Hewstone et al. 2006; Goto Sharon, 2005; Harwood et al., 2005; Voci & Hewstone, 2003; Nesdale & Todd, 2000), measures for quality usually involve self reports (e.g. Schwartz

and Simmons, 2001) or scales such as the one developed by Islam and Hewstone (1993) (e.g., Aberson & Haag, 2007). Certain studies use scales to assess how well members "get along" and how "emotionally close" they are to the other group's members (Harwood et al., 2005), while others ask participants to describe the encounter (e.g. Voci & Hewstone, 2003), or assess their interracial friendships (Sigelman et al., 1996).

Studies also simulate laboratory conditions of contact that fulfill all or some of the original essential conditions for positive contact. For instance, to create a cooperative contact situation between workgroups (Brewer, 1996), participants are first allowed to develop an affinity to their own group and then conflict is created between rival groups (e.g Wright et al., 1997). After this, two individuals from both groups were given a task to work on cooperatively, creating "strong interpersonal closeness" between the two (e.g Wright et al., 1997). Finally the groups were reassembled to work on competitive tasks and tested for levels of prejudice against rival groups (e.g. Wright et al., 1997). Laboratory settings have also been constructed based on the closeness-building task (Aron et al., 1997) involving mutual self-disclosure leading to friendships among group members (Wright et al., 1997). Ensari et al. (2002) manipulated disclosure levels in an experiment where a confederate had the option of disclosing five personal or impersonal questions to participants.

Contact studies conducted outside laboratory settings have used self-reports as well as observed contact as measures. Observational studies on contact have been conducted in natural settings such as beaches (e.g. Dixon & Durheim, 2003) and nightclubs (e.g. Connolly, 2000).

Extended contact or vicarious contact, measured (e.g. Turner et al., 2008) in terms of one's friends, neighbors or family members having friends among out-group members, has also been shown to reduce prejudice. Cross-group friendships have been studied as contact situations that fulfill all of the essential four conditions. Such friendships and self-disclosure to or by members of the out-group have been measured through self-reports (e.g. Turner et al., 2008) and are considered to lead to positive contact outcomes.

Research on Inter-Group Contact.

In a recent meta-analysis, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) selected empirical studies from before the 1960s to 2000, where inter-group contact was the independent variable and inter-group prejudice acted as the dependent variable. In this analysis, contact had to be between members of discrete groups, and either observed, self-reported or cases where direct contact was avoidable such as in focused and long-term situations, like small classrooms. The researchers found that for the 515 studies, there existed an inverse relationship between inter-group contact and prejudice, meaning that as contact between groups increased, prejudice among members of different groups reduced with a small to moderate effect size ($r = -.21$). Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) report that the effect size is highly significant ($p < .0001$) considering the large sample. Some of the other important findings of this meta-analysis were that in cases where contact was directly observed, mean effect sizes were the highest whereas significantly smaller effect sizes were obtained for samples where contact was self-reported or assumed. The study also found significant relationships between contact and prejudice across contexts with the highest

effects for contact between heterosexuals and gay men and lesbians, followed by contact research on the physically disabled, race and ethnicity, the mentally disabled, the mentally ill, and the elderly. The study found that contact research conducted in recreational settings had the highest effect sizes followed by research in the laboratory, at work, in educational settings, residential settings, and tourism and travel settings. Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analysis also found that for the types of studies conducted, contact research using experiments had the highest effect sizes, followed by quasi-experimental studies, and surveys and field studies.

Policy implications have renewed interest in the contact hypothesis which led to hundreds of studies being published on contact between groups. Although contact theory was originally developed for groups based on ethnic, racial and cultural differences, Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analysis has found that the theory is equally relevant for stigmatized groups such as gay men and lesbians, the homeless, and the mentally and physically disabled (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006).

Processes in inter-group contact. In trying to address processes involved in reducing prejudice, Pettigrew and Tropp's (2008) meta-analysis found that knowledge, threat and anxiety reduction, and empathy and perspective taking were the most commonly tested mediators between contact and prejudice. Knowledge gained about out-group members through regular interactions has been found to reduce prejudice. Lowered levels of anxiety about members of the out-group after contact has also been found to reduce prejudice. Contact research on cross-group friendships has found that the ability to take the perspective of an out-group member and empathize with them reduces prejudice.

Of these three mediators, Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) found that empathy and perspective taking had the highest effect sizes closely followed by anxiety reduction and finally, the cognitively-oriented factor of knowledge.

Recent research on contact shows that Allport's original four optimal conditions for inter-group contact are not essential but can be considered as conditions that facilitate positive contact outcomes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Of the original four essential conditions, institutional support was identified by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) as an especially important condition for facilitating positive contact outcomes, provided that the contact was non-competitive in nature and between groups of equal status. For positive inter-group outcomes, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) suggest that all four of Allport's optimal conditions be conceptualized as functioning together rather than as separate prerequisites.

Criticism against contact theory. Contact studies have often focused on finding the optimal contact situations by distinguishing favorable contact between groups from unfavorable contact (Dixon, 2005). Pettigrew (1998) opines that this has contributed to an increasing list of boundary conditions and has made the application of the theory in real world situations difficult. Another concern is with respect to the validity of contact theory and whether findings from laboratory settings can be generalized to real world situations. Further, although contact has been shown to reduce prejudice among people of different cultural groups, little is known about the processes that are involved in these interactions (Pettigrew, 2008). Contact theory has been studied and shown to be useful in laboratory settings using experiments and surveys, primarily through researcher-derived categories.

The participants' own views of the contact and their perspectives of how they overcame prejudice about an other has rarely been studied. Dixon et al. (2005) note that studying the optimal conditions of contact under the supposition that these conditions determine the success or failure of contact without paying heed to contact experiences across time and space is a "neglect of the contextual rootedness and specificity of social relations" (p. 701). The participants' own accounts of how they "make sense of their encounters with others within particular socio-historical circumstances" have largely been left out in studying the contact theory (Dixon et al., 2005, p. 701). Further, replacing participants' interpretations of contact with "analytic categories" made by researchers also conceal "how racism may be immanent within, and enacted through, the working models of contact that members of a community apply as they make sense of their changing relations with others," (Dixon et al., 2005, p. 702).

Researchers (e.g. Dixon et al., 2005; Connolly, 2000) have called for a reorientation of the study of contact so that the gap between "contact as it is represented in the social psychological literature and contact as it is practiced, experienced, and regulated in everyday life," may be bridged (Dixon, 2005, p. 709). Connolly (2000) calls for this divide to be bridged by developing a methodology that can address the "complex dialectical relationships between the nature of the inter-group contact" and the "socioeconomic and political contexts within which the participants are located (p. 176)." This methodology should also account for the "contingent, contradictory and context-specific nature" of prejudice and be "able to identify and chart" these "developments" (Connolly, 2000, p. 176).

Contact Theory from a Different Perspective

I believe that one way to overcome the challenges posed by the way contact is currently studied is to focus on critical real-life intercultural interactions that lead one to review a prior stereotype. In my study informants focus on one such intercultural interaction during which they momentarily stopped seeing the person as an other. Rather than focus on the conditions that lead to the changed view of the other, my interest is in examining the specific processes in the interpersonal interactions that stops one from automatically applying a stereotype and consciously control their prejudices. I also make it possible for informants to articulate how they make sense of their encounters with others (Dixon, 2005) and locate the study within the context of an interpersonal contact situation. Further, I use Sense-Making Methodology (SMM) to tease out the relationships between the informant's view of the other while attending to the social and political context that the individual is situated in. In the following pages, I lay out the meta-theoretical assumptions of SMM and explain how I will use this methodology to study intercultural contact.

Sense-Making Methodology

This project borrows from contact theory from social psychology and studies it from the perspective of the individuals in the contact situation. Also, the study acknowledges that culture is sometimes "lived" in rigid ways and sometimes fluidly, making it necessary to use a methodology that integrates the epistemological and ontological assumptions of multiple research paradigms. Sense-Making Methodology (SMM), developed by Brenda Dervin in 1972, is a powerful approach to comparative

theory (Dervin, 2003). The methodology focuses on the *hows* (processes) and not the static differences between individuals (e.g race, culture, age, gender, etc.), which help to compare communicative behavior by looking at how individuals define situations, use past experiences and make connections (Foreman-Wernet, 2003). SMM assumes that "reality" can sometimes be orderly and sometimes chaotic (Foreman-Wernet, 2003). For instance, if culture is conceptualized as rigid and entity-like and as a variable that can predict behavior in empirical studies, it is a process that is dynamic and elusive in interpretive studies.

Second, SMM methodology assumes that there is a fundamental human need for meaning-making and that "knowledge is sought in mediation and contest" (Foreman-Wernet, 2003, p.7). Finally, SMM assumes that differences between human beings are not inherent but that they occur due to differences in the way people experience and observe phenomena.

Whereas most research sees a human being as moving from one situation to the other in the same state (e.g individual in a culture), SMM sees human beings as agents moving from one situation to the other, sometimes finding responses to these situations using repetitive past responses and at other times, creating a new response to the situation, provided no constraining conditions exist (Dervin, 2003). When there are constraining conditions or "rigidities imposed by others" such as norms, rules, oppressions or obstacles (Dervin, 2003, p. 63), researchers are often unable to examine how individuals are sometimes enabled by these or sometimes hindered, "how humans form structures to serve human needs and sometimes succeed" (Dervin, 2003, p. 63).

SMM on the other hand, focuses on the gaps between these situations and how humans bridge these gaps as they move through time and space. Dervin (2003) explains that gaps exist

> ... between reality and human sensors, between human sensors and mind, between mind and tongue, between tongue and message created, between message created and channel, between human at time one and human at time two, between human one at time one and human two at time one, between human and culture / society / nation, between human and institution, between institution and institution, between nation and nation, and so on.

The individual is conceptualized in SMM as the "constructing, creating and repeating carrier of communicatings" (Dervin, 2003, p. 67) and gaps are where "communicatings" or the process of communication takes place. These "communicatings" are also seen as situated – in structures, at specific moments in time and space, in a "time-line linked to the past," devised by human beings that are capable of constructing and utilizing historical sense (Dervin, 2003). Therefore, to get at the "essence of the communicating moment," we need to study how actors in the moment of communicating interpret this moment that is conceptualized as a gap and how they deal with "gappiness" (Dervin, 2003). The fundamental human need to make sense and to establish facts leads one to circle phenomena from different perspectives at different times to arrive at a more comprehensive view of the situation (Foreman-Wernet, 2003).

Traditional methods of studying communication do not allow human beings to be seen as sometimes free and sometimes constrained, sometimes changing and sometimes rigid in the way they deal with situations (Foreman-Wernet, 2003). SMM, on the other hand, assumes that individuals do move through time and space repetitively sometimes but seeing them in such a way all the time, limits how much of communicating can be captured (Foreman-Wernet, 2003). Sense-Making assumes that power and force pervade

an individual's movement through time and space and that this movement may be facilitated or hindered by certain forces. Thus, as an individual moves through time-space, they can choose to see people of another culture in stereotypical ways or as dynamic individuals and may find these ways of viewing others beneficial or harmful.

Through the present study I attempt to learn how one encounters a stereotype in an interpersonal contact situation and makes sense of this stereotype. I am specifically interested in finding out the in situ communication processes that lead to intrapersonal insights about the other. Said differently, I am interested in how the informant makes sense of speech acts performed by the other and the meaning they attach to these speech acts, leading to revised thinking. This leads to my research questions for this study:

RQ1: How do people make sense of or interpret communicative acts in an intercultural contact situation that leads them to review a prior stereotype?

RQ2: What role does communication play in helping people overcome a stereotype?

Chapter 2: Method

In this chapter I describe the research design of my study and the procedures I followed for data collection and analysis. I also discuss how I attended to establishing credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

Research Design

My aim in conducting this study was to find out how an individual makes sense of a situation where they are interacting with a cultural other whom they hold a stereotype about. My objective was to examine communicative practices in the interaction that leads to a reinterpretation and hence a revision in one's stereotype. I used Dervin's Sense-Making Methodology to interview participants about a gap situation that I conceptualized as one where they were stopped in their thinking about the other. SMM's concept of the sense-making moment or "the point in time-space when a person experiences a gap while moving through time-space" **(**Naumer, Fisher and Dervin, 2007, p. 3) complemented the type of situation that I wanted to study.

An open-ended questionnaire was designed to capture information that might not be elicited during the interview. This questionnaire was given to the participants after they had completed the sense-making interview.

Participants

Ten individuals were recruited for the study and their ages ranged from 22 years to 45 years, with a mean age of 27.

There were no restrictions placed on nationality, race or gender as it was assumed that all people have stereotypes about persons they consider as their Others. Five participants identified themselves as Caucasian/European American, four of them as Indian (from India) and one self-identified as Latina. There were five males and five female participants and all were students who were either currently enrolled in a large, multicultural university or who had graduated recently. Occupations held by participants included research assistant, teaching assistant, medical interpreter, software professional and academic adviser.

Individuals were recruited for the study if they identified themselves as persons who "voluntarily seek intercultural contact situations." "Voluntary intercultural contact" was defined as persons who chose to engage in the contact situation as opposed to those not having that volition. Initially I intended to recruit at intercultural events held at The Ohio State University's center and permission was obtained for this purpose. However, after the study was approved, the multicultural center did not hold as many qualifying events as expected. Recruitment criteria were therefore expanded to include at least one of the following : a) attendance at the events at the multicultural center of the university, b) rooming with a person from a different culture or c) having studied or worked abroad.

Two participants were recruited at the university's multicultural center and the rest of the participants were obtained through "snowball" procedures from the initial participants or through persons known to the interviewer who fulfilled the recruitment criteria. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants did not receive

compensation for their time. Locating participants was not as easy as I had imagined, possibly due to the voluntary nature of participation. It took me over two months to find all ten participants.

Procedures

The university Institutional Review Board's approval was obtained for the study. Participants were interviewed one-on-one in a private room for about an hour. After the interview they were asked to complete a questionnaire that was designed to elicit information that may not have been gathered during the interview process. The questionnaire contained six open-ended items that asked participants for a) how they had come across their stereotype, b) their definition of culture, c) what cultures they considered similar to their own, d) what cultures they considered different from their own, e) how contact with similar cultures helped and/or hurt and, f) how contact with different cultures helped and/or hurt. The participants took about 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Questionnaires were used to aid in understanding the interviews and as background to the participants' responses.

Interviews

The instrument used in the study was the micro-moment time-line interview from Dervin's Sense-Making Methodology. I emailed participants the critical entry they would need to reflect on at least a week before the interview date. When participants arrived for their interview, they were shown pictures of the sense-making metaphor (see Figure 2.1) so that they could relate it to the specific gap situation they had faced. They were asked to imagine they were the person in the picture facing a gap. Participants were then asked

how they bridged gaps in the specific situation they were thinking about. Participants were also shown a list of questions they might be asked during the interview (see Figure 2.2) and were given ample time to reflect on the situation. Once participants indicated they were ready to be interviewed, they were read a critical entry that asked them to describe an intercultural interaction in which they overcame a stereotype about the other person in the interaction. The critical entry follows (see Appendix A for the complete instrument):

> Tell me about a time where you interacted or were in conversation with a person from a culture different from yours and how this contact affected or changed your views about what you had previously believed to be true about people of this culture. Start by giving me a brief description of the situation.

Participants were asked to describe the above situation as a series of steps as if they were scenes in a movie where they could talk about how they were feeling and thinking and what others were doing or saying. Then participants were asked to describe the first step.

In this case, if the informant's first step was:

"My friend responded by saying it was an arranged marriage and I was shocked and I say so you didn't choose?", the following Level 1 triangulation questions would then be anchored on this situation.

(a) What questions, confusions or muddles did you have at this point?

(b) What conclusions, thoughts or ideas did you have?

(c) How did you see power in society as related to this situation?

(d) How did this situation relate to your sense of self?

(e) How did this situation help you?

(f) How did this situation hurt?

(g) If you had a magic wand at this point, what you do and how would it have helped?

Once participants completed the above questions (known as a Level 1 Triangulation in SMM), I would pick from the responses anything I had seen that required further explanation to complete the sense-making triangle. For instance, if the participant responded with "I guess I have a negative association with arranged marriage," I would then bracket this situation and do a Level 2 Triangulation to see how it related to the participant's interpretation of the entire event. The Level 2 Triangulation, enables "deep conscientizing digs for studying the tactic, unarticulated, and unconscious" (Dervin, 2008, p. 21). The participant's responses are usually probed when they are considered to be talking hegemonically by the interviewer to enable them to articulate what they "really" think. During the Level 2 Triangulation, the participant might be asked all or some of the following questions by re-anchoring them on the above situation. For example in the above case a Level 2 Triangulation might look like this:

a) When you said you had a negative association with arranged marriage, what happened that led you to that conclusion?

b) How did that conclusion connect with your life and past?

c) What questions, muddles did that conclusion lead you to?

d) How did it relate to power in society?

e) How did it relate to your sense of self?

I initially interviewed twelve individuals. However, two initial interviews proved problematic as I was not able to sufficiently anchor questions around the time-line steps. The participants had not had enough time with the critical entry and found it difficult to think of a situation at the time of the interview. I therefore dropped these two interviews from the analysis and ensured that the critical entry was sent well ahead of time for the

subsequent interviews.

The interviews were tape-recorded and/or digitally recorded using the interviewer's computer. I interviewed all ten participants myself and took detailed notes in addition to the recordings. I wrote down participant timeline steps on note-cards at the beginning of the interview. Participants were able to look at these time-line steps during the interview and were encouraged to make changes to the steps if they thought they were required. At the end of the interview participants were thanked and administered the open-ended questionnaire that they filled out by hand.

Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed completely. Transcriptions were verbatim except for filler words and repetitions, which I left out. The ten hour-long interviews yielded about 95 single-spaced pages of transcription.

The transcribed data were analyzed inductively. The unit of analysis was the sentence. These units were then sorted into categories. A grounded theory method was used to develop the categories. However, I was also sensitized to theory and concepts I came across during my literature review and this informed my analysis of the interviews.

The interviews were first open coded (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) for concepts keeping in mind the research questions, which were a) to tap interpretive processes in overcoming a stereotype and b) to identity communicative practices that led to a re-interpretation. Open coding, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990) “is the part of analysis that pertains specifically to the naming and categorizing of phenomena through close examination of data.” Interview transcripts were closely read, and re-read at least

four times to identify recurring themes. Memos were made about the codes that were identified. Glaser (1978) defines a memo as the "theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding." Categories were related to participants' stereotypes, interpretive processes, reflections on the situation, and communicative practices that helped in overcoming stereotypes. I especially focused on what the participants seemed to be "doing" in the situation, as I was interested in tapping processes. After the initial categories about phenomena were developed I looked for relationships between categories and how they linked to one another. Once I made these connections I compared it for fit within and between interviews. New categories were added or old ones discarded if connections were not common to all cases or if they were not relevant to the research questions. Negative cases when found were used to revise categories and I discuss this further in the following section on trustworthiness.

Establishing Trustworthiness

While conducting the study I adopted several of Lather's (1986) guidelines for validity as re-conceptualized for qualitative studies and followed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for establishing trustworthiness. Trustworthiness refers to how an "inquirer persuades his or her audiences that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to…" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 108). Lincoln and Guba (1985) identify substitute criteria that can be used to evaluate naturalist methods of inquiry and label the sum of these criteria, trustworthiness. Trustworthiness can be established by posing questions about the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of a

study. I describe below ways in which I attended to these criteria throughout my inquiry.

Credibility is the extent to which findings represent the participant's construction of reality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I addressed credibility in the following ways. I conducted ten interviews using the SMM micro-moment time-line instrument. Sense-making interviews are designed to elicit multiple layers of interpretations of the gap situation by the participants through Level 1 and Level 2 Triangulations. The repetitive nature of the interviewing process and clarifying of participant responses through Level 2 questions helped to achieve *triangulation of sources*. Second, the study used in its framework contact theory from psychology, symbolic interactionism from sociology and concepts from constructivism in communication theory, all of which contributed to *triangulation of theory*. Third, sense-making interviews as well as an open-ended questionnaire were used to ensure participant responses were triangulated, indicating *methodological triangulation*. Finally, to attend to *observer triangulation*, my advisor coded one of my interview transcripts, which I then compared against my own codes for the same interview. Categories derived from both coders were almost identical and were used to inform analysis for the remaining nine interviews.

Next, to protect the data from my personal biases I engaged in *peer de-briefing*. For this purpose, I routinely discussed with my advisor my interviews and my ideas about them before, during and after the analysis. We discussed the categories as they were emerging, negative cases and how we might account for these.

I looked for disconfirming evidence in my data and revised categories on finding such evidence or offered alternative explanations for why *negative cases* were found. The

nature of the sense-making interview and the built in repetitions helped me to ensure face validity through *member checks during the process* of interviewing. A *terminal member check* was also conducted by going over findings with one of my participants to make sure they agreed with my categories and how I represented their quotes in my thesis. The participant confirmed verbally that the categories and the findings from the study were plausible.

Next, procedures I undertook have been described in detail so that readers can *transfer* the study to a different context if they so desire. All data, including consent forms, note-cards, questionnaires, interview recordings and transcripts with analysis notes and memos have been diligently maintained. These data can be made available for perusal if required. The interview instrument and the questionnaire are attached.

An important emerging criterion, *catalytic validity,* identified by Lather (1986) was also attended to. Catalytic validity is defined as the degree to which the process of research reorients, focuses and re-energizes participants (Lather, 1986). I have attended to the ways in which my interviews changed the way participants thought. Participants talked about ways in which the interview made them think about the situation differently and these were noted in the transcripts, my notes and in my findings. It was possible to keep track of how participants changed over the process as conscientization (Freire, 1970) is one of the objectives of SMM.

Next, I address the change in my self over the course of the. All questions across the ten interviews remained anchored on participants' time-line steps. As I gained experience interviewing participants I became confident enough to attempt Level 2

Triangulations "on the fly." These may be the only "unstructured" questions asked during the interviews and could be seen as some as being affected by my own personal bias. However, SMM requires that an interviewer dig deeper with Level 2 Triangulations if the complete sense-making triangle is not represented by the participants' responses to Level 1 questions. Also, the Level 2 questions were a good indication of member checks during the process of interviewing.

Finally, I address self-reflexivity and how my own biases and background may have contributed to the research. My study has been influenced by the literature I reviewed for this study. However my personal background considerably influenced my initial interest in the topic and the way I approached this study. I am a 30-year-old female, an international student in the United States, and a citizen of India who was raised mostly in the Sultanate of Oman. I consider myself multicultural and curious about other cultures. My personal struggles in overcoming prejudice in the cultural milieus I have lived in as well as having been the victim of Othering practices made me gravitate towards this topic. I am a keen and critical observer of intercultural interactions that I come across in the media, fiction and in real life. My interest in the subject of Othering have therefore colored the way I reviewed literature, selected my sample population and analyzed data during this study.

Chapter 3: Results

I report the results from my study in the following four sections. In the first section, I summarize the situations described by the ten informants in terms of the stereotype they were facing and the interactions that led to revisions in this stereotype. In the next section, I describe the categories that represent the interpretive activities that emerged from informants' accounts of how they overcame a stereotype. In the third section I analyze the informants' reflections on what they learned from the situation described. Finally, I analyze the communicative practices that facilitated revisions in the informants' stereotypes

I. Stereotypes and their Interactive Contexts

In this section I present categories that I derived from the participant interviews on the types of stereotypes, attributes of these stereotypes and characteristics of the interaction that led to the stereotype change. The interview was designed so that participants conceptualized a stereotype as any preconceived notion they had about the person prior to the interaction.

Stereotypes and Situations

In the interviews, informants' stereotypes clustered into five categories: race, gender, nationality, social class and cultural practices. In this section I present brief sketches of all ten interviews and organize them according to the nature of the stereotype. Informants have been assigned numbers based on the order in which the interviews were

conducted and these numbers will be used to refer to particular cases throughout the results. A summary of the sketches can be found in Table 1.

Stereotype	Stereotype attributes	Interaction leading to stereotype change and time taken
# 1 Lower-class persons cannot be good professors	Less civilized, deficient in English, shy, lack confidence, no presentation skills	A male Indian student's (age 27) interpretation of the opening lines of a Quantum Physics lecture by a professor hired through reservations[a] Stereotype changed over an hour-long class lecture
# 2 Most Hispanics have low education and low income	Frugal, lack knowledge and need to have technical vocabulary explained	A one time interaction between a White male (age 25) working at an insurance firm and a Hispanic client. Stereotype changed over a brief interaction in less than an hour
# 3 Arranged marriages are an overly conservative and traditional practice	Practice indicates a lack of independence and control over life, non-critical and traditional thinking	A specific interaction between a White male (age 31) and an Indian friend he regularly talks to on his daily commute to work. Stereotype changed in less than an hour
# 4 White, blonde people are usually not culturally sensitive	Selfish, condescending to other ethnicities, objectify other cultures	A Latina medical interpreter (age 22) interacts with a White female volunteer at a free health clinic over a period of time. Stereotype changed over a few weeks
# 5 Rwandans are likely not able to communicate well	Heavy accent, cannot understand questions or respond to them in English	A White female returning student's (age 45) interacts with a female returning student from Rwanda for group activities on orientation day. Stereotype changed in a day's time
# 6 African-Americans are violent	Unsafe, high-crime and tough neighborhoods. Takes advantage of others, deceive people	An Indian female student's (age 23) interactions with an African-American man and woman over a bus journey. Stereotype changed over the course of the 20-hour journey

Table 1. Stereotypes and Situations (Continued)

Table 1. Continued

# 7 Americans do not participate in the customs of other cultures.	Objectify Eastern cultures, restrained and inhibited in cultural situations	An Indian male student's (age 25) interactions with different American guests at an Indian wedding. Stereotype changed over a day
# 8 Most Spaniards do not value time	Rude and disrespectful, do not adhere to normal US time patterns	A White female's (age 27) interactions with different Spaniards over a time spent studying in Spain. Stereotype changed over a four-month period
# 9 The Chinese have cliques that exclude other cultures	Cling together as a group, exclude others, deficient in English	An Indian female's (age 27) interactions with a Chinese female study partner over two academic years. Stereotype changed along the course of these interactions
# 10 Most Ecuadorean males are untrustworthy and conniving	Deceptive, interested in American women only for their money or bragging rights	A White female's (age 26) interactions with a male Ecuadorean host brother/friend over an academic term spent in Ecuador. Stereotype changed over 10 weeks

[a]Reservations are a type of affirmative action in India under which lower castes are given subsidies, scholarships, government jobs and political representation. (Source: Kumar, D. (1992). The Affirmative Action Debate in India. Asian Survey, 3, 290-302)

Stereotypes about nationality. These stereotypes were based on a person's country of origin. These were the most common stereotypes mentioned with half of the informants (#5, #7, #8, #9 and #10) describing situations where they had preconceived notions about people of a particular nationality. Informants with stereotypes about nationality tended to cite language and communicative competence as reasons for their negative preconceptions. These were also characteristics that informants watched for in their interactions with their other and often aided them in overcoming the stereotype. Informants also cited deficiencies in relational attributes such as not being able to connect with people and other cultures, as reasons for having their stereotype. For instance,

informant #5 was a 45-year-old White American female who was grouped with fellow student from Rwanda at a course designed to help returning students get acclimated to college. Her first thoughts were about how well she would be able to perform in a group with someone who may not be able to speak English. In describing her stereotype she said, "I remember thinking... is she able to read English at all? I guess I was trying to be helpful but I was probably being insulting... So I suppose I... took the lead a little bit in that team."

As a guest at an intercultural wedding between an American woman and an Indian man, informant #7 expected that Americans present at the occasion would be unable to contribute to the Hindu wedding rituals. As a 25-year-old Indian male, informant #7 said his previous experiences told him that American's were curious about other cultures but were often inhibited and restrained in their behavior, which prevented them from participating fully in cultural events. In talking about his stereotype he said, "[U]sually, to me Americans have a lot of curiosity about the... Orient... some exotic notion of how the Eastern weddings are, but when it came to their own wedding, own daughter, I could not believe that they would contribute so much, in such a detailed manner to the wedding."

A White American female who spent four months studying in Spain, informant #8 found herself in situations where Spaniards would not adhere to the time agreed upon for meetings. In one such instance, she was invited to dinner with a group of Spaniards at 10.00 p.m. and arrived to find that they were only beginning to plan what groceries to buy to cook dinner. She described her stereotype: "You think... they're being disrespectful because they're not adhering to normal time patterns, like if you say you're

going to be somewhere at five they show up an hour later, and that's considered rude in our culture... ."

An Indian female student aged 27, informant #9 talked about how she formed a study partnership with her Chinese classmate. Initially she worried that the Chinese were clannish, i.e. a tightly-knit group who excluded others, and expected this to hinder the partnership. She also worried that trust, excessive competition and open communication could be problems in the partnership. "I did have some preconceived notions that people belonging to that particular culture were very clannish and they would always stick together whether it was because of inhibitions relating to language or any other form of inhibitions," she said, talking about her stereotype.

Race-related stereotypes. Three informants (#2, #4 and #6) talked about race-related stereotypes, which was the next most commonly described in the interviews. For instance, at his job in an insurance firm, informant #2, a 25-year-old White male often had Hispanic clients come in and speak with him in Spanish. He talks about one such male Hispanic client who asked him for an insurance quote. The informant responded to the client with information about the minimum coverage, which was also the option of the lowest cost. His description of the stereotype follows: "I think most of the people that moved here do so because they have low education or low income and they come here to try to make a better life for themselves or their families. So you get that image about Hispanic people... obviously I assumed that it was the minimum that they would be interested in... I supposed they needed to have to have the vocabulary and so forth explained to them."

A 22-year-old Latina, informant #4 loved working as a medical interpreter at a free clinic for Spanish speaking people. She talked about a time when a new volunteer joined the clinic. To #4 this "White" and "blonde" volunteer seemed to embody everything that she associated with the "Peace Corps syndrome," and also with her "White" father's selfish reasons for wanting to "help the Brown people." She describes the volunteer as: "[T]his overeager person who thinks she's going to come save the Brown people. She thinks that she speaks the language she's going to understand the culture... she's not going to. I just didn't think any White person, especially from Ohio, ...they're so White."

Informant #6, a 23-year-old female, was traveling on a bus to New York when it broke down. She met an African-American male and later, an African-American female with a child on this bus. She mentioned that she had gleaned from media and friends that African-Americans were violent because they came from unsafe neighborhoods. " [I] met these two Blacks on the bus and before that I had opinion from people from here that you should not interact with them, they're not good. They might try to deceive you or something."

Stereotypes related to nationality and gender. In one case, an informant mentioned having a stereotype related to all males of a certain nationality. When leaving for a study trip in Ecuador, informant #10's resident director briefed her group about what to expect once there. The 25-year-old White female student was told to beware of Ecuadorean men as they would prey on American women for their "money or for bragging rights that they had hooked up with an American." This stereotype was readily adopted by #10 as she

was also getting over a terrible relationship. She said about her stereotype: “At this point I think I sort of transferred my feelings about [ex-boyfriend] and the entire "male race" as being untrustworthy to just Ecuadorian men. Her warning in conjunction with my heartbreak gave me an excuse to swear off men completely for the quarter and see them as villains.” She began to view her Ecuadorean host brother through these lens when she first met him.

Stereotypes related to a cultural practice. A fourth type of stereotype was not related to individual members of a culture but to a specific practice they followed. Informant #3 had a stereotype about the practice of arranged marriage that is common in Eastern cultures. On his daily commute to work, the 31-year-old White American male made friends with an Indian male that he met and often talked with on the bus. He talked about a time when he asked his friend about how he had met his wife and his friend responded by saying that his marriage was arranged by his parents. Informant #3 had always thought about arranged marriage as an overly conservative and traditional practice based on what he knew about it from the media. He described his stereotype thus: “[M]e looking at it from the values perspective, I guess I have a negative association with arranged marriage and I associate it with lack of independence or control or, people controlling you and conformity.

Class-related stereotype. A fifth type of stereotype related to the social class of the person. Informant #1 who was a 27-year-old male Indian student reflected on an incident from his years as an undergraduate in India. Reservations (as affirmative action is referred to in India) were at their peak and the University was hiring a lot of faculty

through this system. Students in the class too were divided into those admitted through the reservation categories and those from the cities, who considered themselves "upwardly mobile and more civilized." He spoke of the first time his new professor in Quantum Mechanics walked into the class and his expectations about what the new professor would be like. From prior experiences with professors hired through the quota system he believed that their "shyness and... diffidence and their presenting, just lack of confidence... came out and made a lot of classes a really really horrible experience.

Summary

In sum, informants' stereotypes related to nationality, race, gender, cultural practices and social class. Informants' reflections on interpersonal encounters with persons of different cultures yielded ten accounts that varied in structure and situation type. However, the stereotypes fell into two distinct categories based on the time taken by the informant in overcoming the stereotype they held. For six of the informants (#1, #2, #3, #5, #6, #7) a single event led them to revise a stereotype whereas the process was a more gradual one for the others and required several interactions over a period of time (#4, #8, #9, #10). Informants cited socialization (#1), past interactional experience (#1, #2, #4, #5, #7, #8, #9), media (#3, #6) and hearsay (#6, #10) when asked where they first encountered the stereotype in question.

Interaction characteristics

The situations mentioned by participants took place at work- or school-related settings in five cases. Stereotypes were overcome during interactions occurring during a lecture, a business or work transactions, or problem-solving in a group. Other interactions

occurred in more casual settings such as talking while commuting, at gatherings with friends, a wedding and an informal interaction on a bus. These situations involved relating to one another on a personal basis.

II. Interpretive processes in overcoming stereotypes

In this section I discuss the interpretive activities that informants engaged in to overcome their stereotype (see Figure 3.1). I illustrate each activity with interview quotes and offer possible explanations for negative cases. Finally, I link back each of the activities to theory and/or research.

To explain "interpretive activities," I refer to the symbolic interactionist view of a human being as social organism capable of holding interactions with itself (Blumer, 1969). As they interact with others, informants indicate objects to themselves, give these objects meaning i.e. interpret them, and use this meaning as a basis for future action (Blumer, 1969). Informants are therefore not merely responding to the world around them but are agents who consciously assign meaning to the actions of others in the interaction, give these actions meaning and use these meanings to guide further action.

The interpretive activities are presented in order, as interviews suggested that informants engaged in these in a sequential fashion. All informants seemed to move from one activity to the next in the order that the categories appear below.

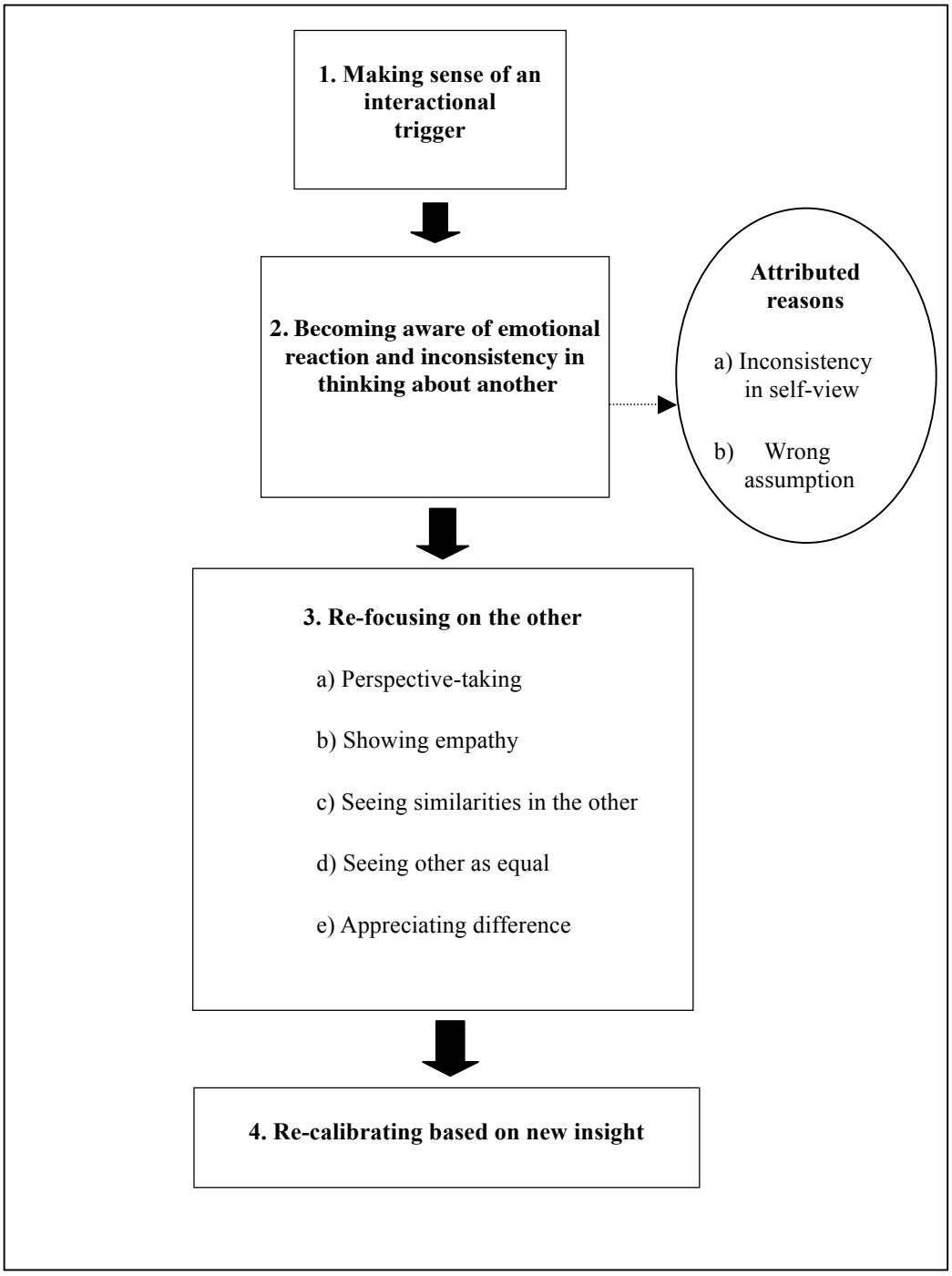

Figure 1. Interpretive processes in overcoming stereotypes

Making sense of an interactional trigger

The first among the interpretive processes in overcoming stereotypes involves a trigger event or one specific moment in an interaction that sets informants on a sense making process. In symbolic interactionist terms, this trigger event is an object that the informant indicates to themselves and to which the informant assigns meaning. Trigger situations were identified by all ten informants and can be thought of as the moment when one comes across evidence that disconfirms one's stereotype about the other. The trigger is one where the other has just made a move that violates something the informant had believed to be true up to that moment. The act that invites the informant's sense-making process could be an intentional move by the other in the interaction such as informant #3's response to what his friend told him about arranged marriage:

> He described... I got to meet her for ten minutes before I made a choice... and I was like how can you make a decision in ten minutes? Oh you just know... that really shocked. That was a situation where... everything else I knew about him, I didn't associate...

In this case the informant found it difficult to associate his stereotype about arranged marriage and everything he knew about his friend from India. To the informant, arranged marriages were a traditional practice and one that indicated a lack of independence. These were attributes that he could not associate with his friend whom he later described in this way:

> ...my past experiences with him would have thought that he would have been somebody making jokes about people that have arranged marriages as opposed to him having an arranged marriage.

There is an evident lack of fit between what the informant had previously believed about his friend and what he had just found out about him. There appeared to be a conflict in

the meaning the informant ascribed to the practice of arranged marriages (traditional) and the meaning he associated with his friend (critical) and this triggered an interpretive process within the informant.

The trigger can be any event in the interaction that is interpreted as meaningful by the informant. The informant may also attach meaning to an act that is not necessarily an intentional move by the other in the situation. An instance of such a trigger situation can be seen in informant #1's reaction to his professor's opening lines:

> I think I'm being receptive and I didn't care really. Until he opens his mouth. And the first thing he says is, the Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics is that we don't really know what's happening. Clear, direct and it's as though someone else was speaking and that's the first thought that came in my head and I realized that I expected this person not to say this...

Informant #2 also talked about how he had expected a Hispanic client to ask for the minimum insurance coverage plan and for explanations of the vocabulary as clients usually did:

> Just from the way that they were talking you knew that they had had some education and that they would be able to afford something more than the minimum.

For informant #2 who had assumed the client would need the low cost, minimum insurance coverage, this acted as a trigger as the event was not consistent with what he had previously believed. He said:

> In a way it was breaking a pattern that many of the other clients that I've had, coming in that were Hispanic... would have... the same pattern of not knowing any insurance terms. (116-117).

The trigger event therefore stopped informant #3 from thinking in terms of his stereotype about Hispanic people.

The trigger event was a recurring theme in the interviews with informants #1, #2. #3, #5, #6 and #7. For these informants the interaction was a single critical event and occurred over a relatively short period, ranging from a few minutes to a day. Informants

#4, #8, #9 and #10 did not explicitly talk about a single trigger event as these informants experienced a change in their stereotype over a period of time. Since the change was a more gradual process and required repeated interactions, the informants likely had a series of trigger events over a period of time that eventually led to the stereotype revision. For instance, informant #9 said about her interactions with her study group partner, “I started seeing signs of the fact that she also believes in similar things that I believe in.”

Summary

Informants described trigger events in the interaction that led them to re-examine their stereotype by setting into motion the process of sense-making. For some informants a single trigger event led to a stereotype revision. This was similar to Rothbart's (1981) conversion model of stereotype change where people would respond to dramatic disconfirming evidence. On the other hand, the bookkeeping model (Rothbart, 1981), where disconfirming evidence accumulated over a period of time better explains stereotype revision for other informants.

Becoming aware of one's emotional reaction and inconsistency in thinking

This step comprised of two parts: becoming aware of an inconsistency between the other in the interaction and the stereotype and also experiencing a strong emotional reaction. The change in emotion at this point was intense enough for informants to take notice of it. It is difficult to say if the awareness of this inconsistency preceded the emotional response but over half the informants took notice of a change in their emotion. For instance, informant #3 talked about his reaction to his friend's description as to how he got married:

> [S]o he started to describe that and... I was shocked, I was really really surprised. I think that was

> my primary reaction...

Later in the interview he said:

> Surprise. This feeling of everything I know about this person previously would have made me think different from that... my preconception, I was prejudiced or I don't know if prejudiced was the right word but I thought because he acts this other way, he seems to not be very traditional in many other ways and I didn't expect him to be traditional...

The intense emotional reaction to the other's actions surprises the informant and leads him to examine the reason for the strong feelings. He even considers the possibility at this point that he had preconceived notions and may have been prejudiced.

Informant #1 too described his initial response to the professor's opening lines:

> I did not, I really did not expect this man to talk like that and that is just shocking, because here I am thinking that... everyone deserves a chance, they're as bright as we are and I shouldn't even be thinking of they, them and us. And here I am being shocked. My shock was that I was shocked that this person said that the Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics is that we don't really know what's going on...

The informant was not only shocked to hear the professor's words but also shocked at his own intense emotional reaction to his words. This unusual meta-response stopped the informant in this thinking and led him to become aware of his prejudice. It forced him to examine and make sense of the inconsistency in his thinking and "reality." Informant #1 talked about this moment of reflection on his emotional reaction in the interview:

> So the next few minutes, I didn't really pay attention to what he was saying because I was still dealing with this, trying to understand why I was so shocked.

Similarly, although she does not explicitly talk about her emotions, informant #3 acknowledges that upon finding inconsistencies between her stereotype about Ecuadorean men and her Ecuadorean host brother that she experienced dissonance:

> I was realizing he (host brother) was a really quality person through our interactions - the juxtaposition of this and guys at the bar still coming on really strong caused some cognitive dissonance.

Reasons attributed to strong emotional reaction and inconsistency in thinking. Informants mentioned two reasons for the intense emotional reaction to the lack of fit between the other in the interaction and their own stereotypes about the other. One reason (e.g. informants #1 and #3) had to do with *not having their predictions right* or having *wrongly assumed*. Informant # 1 said :

> Well, the predominant feeling was that of, ... pure and simple shock.... First of all, I was shocked, and I was a little pissed with myself that I had got it wrong. I had made a prediction and I had got it so wrong.

Similarly, informant #2 said:

> I don't like to be wrong... I like to be right, think of myself as someone who's not wrong very often...

Informant #8 talked about incorrectly assuming that dinner would be ready at 10.00 pm:

> I was maybe a little frustrated, ... I had assumed incorrectly and was like, 'darn it, I didn't get this whole cultural thing right'.

Informants also talked about how *they thought of themselves as open-minded and tolerant* people and did not like that they were stereotyping others. Informants were thus comparing their view of their self in the situation that had just occurred with what they had previously thought about themselves. In a way, they were comparing themselves in the situation and their stereotypes about themselves as having egalitarian values. Having previously nurtured the notion of being an open-minded individual, informants were now aware that they had caught themselves stereotyping the other. For instance informant #2 said:

> Usually in my experience I try not to stereotype people or group them into categories and make assumptions about them before I know anything about the individual. I realized that I had been doing that and I didn't want to do that. I would like to think that I wouldn't use these stereotypes... I'd like to think I'm the kind of person who wouldn't do that.

Informants compared their thought process in this interaction with that of what they supposed was their "true self" and found it disturbing that they had not reacted as they should have. In other words, the informants had behaved in a way that was inconsistent and unpredictable. Informant # 10, for whom the stereotype change occurred over a period of ten weeks, said:

> I like to look at people as individual beings and I don't like to have preconceptions about someone. It showed me that I was being untrue to myself when I had that stereotype and then it also brought me back to who I think I am in that I like to give everyone a fair chance and that being mistrustful of people was not me.

Informant #9 and #7 did not explicitly refer to their stereotype with respect to the way they viewed their self. This could simply be because of the nature of the situation the two informants described (see Table 1). Both informants were also especially careful in the way they talked about the other and their stereotype and this may have led them to be less self-reflexive about how they dealt with their prejudices.

Summary

After being faced with a trigger event, almost all informants described how they became aware of an inconsistency in their thinking and also experienced an intense emotional response. For some informants this strong emotional reaction stemmed from the feeling that had got a prediction wrong. Some informants also believed the reaction came from the inconsistency in the way they previously viewed their self and the way they have behaved in the situation. Informants liked to think of themselves as tolerant and open-minded people and this juxtaposed with awareness that they were stereotyping the other, led to the inconsistency in the way they saw themselves. Informants were thus troubled by their having strayed from the way they had previously viewed their self. They

realized that their notions about being a tolerant person and open-minded were not frozen in time and that these were not traits that they carried around with them. This is consistent with literature on preventing stereotype activation when individuals are committed to egalitarian goals (Moskowitz, 1999).

Re-focusing on the other

Once informants realized they had been stereotyping the other and that this act was not in line with how they viewed themselves, they once again shifted their focus to the other. Informants made various communication relevant moves such as taking the other's perspective and showing empathy and relational moves such as seeing similarities in the other, appreciating their differences and seeing them as an equal (see Table 3.2). These moves allowed informants to repair the inconsistencies in their views about themselves and their emotional reactions. All informants engaged in at least one of the following five ways of focusing on the other.

Taking the other's perspective. One of the other-focused moves that informants participated in was to take the other's perspective. Here the informants tried to put themselves in the other's place and imagine the situation from the other's point of view. Two informants explicitly mentioned engaging in this activity. For instance, in talking about how his friend gave him a different perspective on arranged marriage, informant #3 said, “he didn't see it as conformity, maybe he saw it as celebrating something... embracing something he liked about that culture, that tradition.”

Showing empathy. Informants were also able to emotionally relate to their other. This involved not just taking their perspective, but also being able to imagine what they

must have felt like. Two informants engaged in showing empathy for the other. For instance, on finding that her activity partner already had a nursing degree from Rwanda, but had to go to school all over again because her degree wasn't recognized in the United States informant #5 expressed her anger. She said: "Her situation angered me... I felt anger and related it to my own." Similarly, informant #1 talked about understanding his professor: "I understood what people from a traditionally backward or economically underprivileged strata of society were up against... I did feel pity for him..., what he must have gone through to get to where he was now."

Shared experiences. Informants also began to see similarities in their other, in terms of shared experiences, interests and values. Six informants were seen engaging in this activity. This new knowledge about their other helped them bridge prior differences and brought them closer to the other. For instance, informant #5 said she felt empathy for her Rwandan activity partner and related it to her own inability to go to college when she was younger. She said:

> I felt like we, that shared experience, ... I don't want to say a bond, but we had a shared moment and a shared experience, we found something in common. So that made me feel closer to her.

Informant #9 talked about having similar values as her Chinese study partner:

> Both of us are family-oriented, she's a people's person like me. When she finds a person she likes she has a need to express herself in a similar manner that I have. I will let my friend know that that person is special to me in small ways or big ways and she does the same thing.

Informant #9 sees her study partner's need to express herself to her friends as something she has in common with her. Expressing oneself is a value that is meaningful to informant #9 and having this in common with her study partner helps her bridge differences between them.

Appreciating the other. Where similarities were not apparent, informants tried to appreciate or celebrate the differences. Often, informants did this by focusing on a perspective that the two shared and then moving towards the point of difference. For instance, informant #3 began to appreciate his friend's point of view on arranged marriage in the following lines:

> The amount of confidence, the level of commitment he has, maybe there's things to be appreciated, maybe it's not as negative a practice as I thought before. ...[I] found myself changing my position not completely but shifting it, more accepting of it.

Although informant #3 didn't completely agree with the practice of arranged marriages, he saw that his friend ascribed meaning to commitment in a relationship, just as he did. This shared meaning or perspective allowed him to soften his view on their differences and become more accepting of it.

In a similar vein, informant #6, in the course of her interaction with an African-American lady on the bus, began to see similarities and also began to appreciate how she handled her troubles:

> We were just talking all along the way about the books we like, the college she goes to, troubles she had as a single mom, balancing her education and the child and bringing her up and the situation in Harlem and everything that goes on there, ... I didn't know what to talk to her. I was feeling small in a way that people are there who are struggling through so much.

Three informants engaged in appreciating or celebrating the other's differences.

Seeing the other as an equal. A final way informants shifted their focus to the other was by seeing them as an equal. Any inequalities or differences that informants had assumed at the beginning of the interaction were now bridged based on some aspect of the interaction that appeared meaningful to the informant. For instance, informant #2 saw his Hispanic client differently after he displayed knowledge of insurance terms and implied he wanted more than the minimum coverage. He said: “I suppose that I saw them

as more like me at that time. To some degree you realize that they're in a position of power as much as you are because they have the same knowledge and abilities." Informant #5 attributed this feeling of equality to the communication between her and her other: "There wasn't a dominant power in our pairing, the power was being shared and I think that was just the communication... ." Six informants mentioned seeing their other as an equal.

Summary

When informants realized they had been stereotyping the other and that this was inconsistent with how they thought of themselves, they made at least one of the following five interpretive moves that sought to re-focus attention on the other. Some informants did this by taking the perspective of the other or by putting themselves in the other's place. This links well to current theories about perspective-taking, which has been shown to be effective in reducing the expression of stereotypes (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). Various researchers from the psychological and sociological perspectives (e.g. Eisenberg, 1997; Shantz, 1974**;** Selman 1971; Blumer, 1969; Kelly, 1955; Mead, 1934) as well as communication (e.g. O'Keefe & Delia, 1985) have linked perspective-taking or role-taking to effective communication. Informants also expressed empathy or the ability to understand the emotions of the other. Again, empathy has been shown to be effective in improving communication (Rogers, 1995) and inter-group relations (Pettigrew & Tropp 2008; Stephan & Finlay 1999) and findings from the study are consistent with this. Informants also focused on the other by finding similarities or common ground (Clark, 1996) between themselves and the other in terms of shared experiences, interests and

values. Similarity in attitudes has been shown to lead to liking and attraction (Byrne, 1971). Informants who didn't see similarities between themselves and their other began to appreciate or celebrate differences, which is a feature of dialogic communication (e.g. Rogers; 1991). Informants also said that they saw their other as an equal at this point implying that there was a power differential before. Equal status between people is considered an essential condition for reducing prejudice (Allport, 1954) according to contact theory (Allport, 1954). However, in the case of the informants, contact helped to create equal status between interactants even when there was a difference in status before this situation.

Re-calibrating based on new insight

Once they began to understand the other by taking their perspective, focusing on their similarities, appreciating their differences and seeing them as equals, informants were able to apply this perceptivity to their stereotypes. They then re-interpreted and re-calibrated prior meanings they had attached to cultures, its members and practices based on the insight they had gained from the situation. For instance, informant #3 initially viewed arranged marriage as a practice where "it felt like other people were controlling." He then gained a new perspective on this practice when he heard his friend talk about commitment, which was an important and meaningful value to the informant: "...the way he described it... someone that he was going to love, care for consistently, day after day, and I really had a lot of respect for that type of love and commitment to standing by somebody." The apparent alignment in both the interactants' beliefs about love and marriage led the informant to soften his views on arranged marriage. Further, he said:

> And seeing his apparent happiness,... that gave me a different perspective and I thought to myself

> that if it ends up in happy marriages, who am I to look down upon them?... I was reassessing my... values and my earlier assessment of that particular tradition.

The informant now began to view the practice differently. “I had this more refined view of arranged marriages where I think that they could be good or OK in certain situations.” Informant #3 further explained how he came to this changed view of arranged marriage when he related his thoughts about parental involvement in the practice to that of his own parents'.

> ...It seemed like maybe part of the arranged marriage is parents caring for their children, trying to look after their children, I could relate that to my parents, very loving, caring, kind, looking after my interests, so I could see that while on hand it seems controlling, on the other hand it was perhaps something that is done out of compassion and kindness for their children...

Similarly, for informant #1, the meaning or value he attached to the philosophical aspects of quantum mechanics and his interpretation that his professor shared these meanings, led to a revised view of people hired via the reservation system.

> Until that moment I had these notions in my head that [the] underprivileged, and scheduled castes and schedules tribes and all these people who came in from reservations... weren't up to the mark, they were not as good as us city kids, so it was a big moment for me at that time to realize that it didn't really matter if you grew up in a village or your dad was a fisherman. The Math and Physics would just flow out of these people, they couldn't speak in Hindi, they couldn't speak in English but they did their Math, they were geniuses...

Here, informant #1 re-interprets the meanings he once attached to professors' presentation and language skills and re-calibrates to reach the view that the professor's knowledge of the subject taught was more important.

In the case of informant #8, after continued interactions with Spaniards, she concluded that perhaps it wasn't that Spaniards didn't value time but that they valued people more:

> I finally realized that it's not a rudeness thing. They feel that people are valued, so if they’re on their way to a meeting at five and somebody needs help with their car or something,... they give their full attention to that friend, and then eventually make it to that meeting that they were supposed to be at five, and they figure the person will understand.

All informants did not explicitly state if and how they had revised prior stereotypes but all at least implied that they had overcome their preconceptions by the end of the situation.

Summary

As a final step, informants re-interpreted the meanings they had previously attached to persons from other cultures or their practices. The informant was able to move from having an undefined situation on hand to re-defining this situation in light of what they had just learned from it. This final step is similar to the naming of an object (Strauss, 1972), which then provides a directive for action. This stage can also be seen in terms of revising one's personal constructs (Kelly, 1991).

III. Reflections on the Situation

Despite the nature of the topic, informants were extremely open and self-reflexive throughout the course of the interview. For some informants the situation was an event that they had reflected on in detail while others said they hadn't engaged with the situation in so much depth before. Informants talked about the valuable learnings they had gleaned from the incident. Learnings broadly fell into three categories: about one’s self, about cultures and about stereotypes.

Informants were able to see themselves as having been prejudiced individuals once they had verbalized the situation. This was in stark contrast to how at least four informants had refused to accept their prejudice at the beginning of the interview and proclaimed with pride that they were free of stereotypes. Talking about the event therefore allowed the informants to see the event differently, and made it possible for

them to see the event as separate from themselves and one that they had overcome. For instance, informant #1 said he *recognized the situation as an important one that exposed his prejudices.*

> I was a little upset with myself that this had happened but I was... really satisfied with myself that this had occurred. I had a chance to let... this prejudice in me get exposed. I was also happy that it was very easy for me to deal with it. It happened very easily.

He also talked about it as a *personal discovery* and described his emotions as "this feeling of having discovered something new which is always slightly frightening and exhilarating and... it's a whole mishmash of emotions... It was an eye-opening experience. I had discovered something within myself and society,.... that was really exciting."
The initial negativity and the strong responses informants had during the situation were now seen positively and as an experience that helped to learn about oneself.

For some, verbalizing the situation made them *realize things about their self* that they hadn't known before. During the interview informant #5 talked about how she was careful not to appear insensitive to minorities. On seeing the Rwandan student, informant #5 assumed that she was African-American and proceeded to sit in the chair just next to her. She was surprised she mentioned this detail and then ruminated on why she chose to sit next to her and not skip a chair.

> Well, now that I just heard myself... saying that I wanted to just sit next to her instead of away from her, because I didn't want her to think that I didn't want to sit beside her, I think I probably have an issue with thinking that people having a different ethnicity than myself already assume that I won't want to sit beside them, does that make sense? Like I think, I probably was trying to overcompensate for some assumption I thought she would make if I didn't sit beside her.

This was a moment of self discovery for informant #5 who was able to articulate her need to appear culturally sensitive to minorities a few more times during the interview.

Informants also talked about how they *saw themselves evolve* over the course of

the situation or how it helped them stay true to who they were. Informant #10 was reflexive about her stubbornness to let go of her stereotype about Ecuadorean males in spite of come across disconfirming information. She later expressed regret that she had taken the entire ten weeks that she spent in Ecuador in getting over her stereotype and did not give the people the chance they deserved. However, she said the incident helped her in some ways:

> It definitely took me full circle back to being a pretty trusting person and maybe a little smarter. Going through the discernment of Ecuadorean guys... and meeting my host brother realizing that he was a really good guy. I think it took me back to being that trusting person, definitely a big part of who I am. I generally trust people unless I have a reason not to whereas when I went to Ecuador, it was backward so I think this process allowed me to come back to my roots I guess.

Informant #10 also realized that she needed to accommodate *more variability within cultures* and that viewing cultures through a static lens was not helpful. She said:

> I was just trying to be more discerning. I knew at this point it was not all or nothing. Of course, in any culture you have people that you get along with really well and then you have people you might not get along with, in any culture you have people who might be more likely to take advantage of you.

Towards the end of the interview informants had gained more clarity about the situation and were able to appreciate what it had taught them about themselves and about persons they had earlier seen as their others.

Six of the informants came to *realize how they had acquired their stereotypes* and that these didn't hold anymore. For instance, informant #8, who during the course of an intercultural wedding had come to see Americans as less culturally inhibited, also found out that marriages last in the American culture unlike what is portrayed in the media. He reflected on what he had learned from the events at the wedding:

> It's always very interesting when you have your ideas shaped by a lot of statistics and you find yourself in a place where people break down statistics. There was the couple who gave the toast and there were other couples who had been married long enough... it was a contrast to something you always read and it was a better picture, my past experience or information was based on things

that you always read or encounter... or whatever people tell you.

Informants were able to see how generalizations about cultures that they came across in the media didn't hold on closely interacting with persons from these cultures.

Summary

As informants looked back on the situation they saw it as one that exposed their prejudices and also one that helped them learn about themselves. They reflected on the source of their stereotypes and were also able to see cultures as a less homogeneous group than they had previously believed it to be.

Learning about the self	**Learning about culture**	**Learning about stereotypes**
a) Exposing one's prejudices b) Evolving of the self through the process	Being able to see that cultures aren't homogenous	Knowing that one's stereotypes came from media and past interactions

Table 2. Reflections about the situation

IV. Communicative Activities Influencing Stereotype Change

Although interpretive processes played an important part in getting informants to change their views of their other, some of the informants explicitly mentioned communicative activities, that they saw as important in facilitating this change (see Table

3.3). *Open communication* with the other was a recurring theme in five of the interviews. This kind of communication was one where the informant and their interaction partner were able to express themselves freely and without fearing judgment from the other. Informant #9 said about her communication with her Chinese study group partner: “I felt that she really got what I was meaning to say without in any way making a judgment about me. And that laid the foundation, literally, for our very successful study partnership over two years.” She also talked about the ease of open communication between the two in spite of her partner's not being fluent in English. *Language* did not hurt the communication according to informant #9.

> When two people have different propensity to speak a language, typically the person with less propensity will speak less right? That's the hypothesis we always make. I never found that with her and I found that despite her difficulty with the language, she never stopped short of expressing herself. Expressing her ideas, disagreeing with stuff I was saying, which was so important.

Six informants, especially those with nationality-related stereotypes, noted that the other's use of language was surprisingly not as hindering as they had believed it would be.

Three informants talked about the value of *asking questions* to clarify their misconceptions about the other as an important factor in overcoming stereotypes about them. For informant #3, his questions about arranged marriage and his friend's replies to them contributed to getting a different perspective on the practice: “Before I talked to him I had always viewed arranged marriages with a negative connotation... he kind of put a different angle on it.”

Similarly, for informant #6, talking to her other and asking “taboo” questions about the African-American community helped to rid her of the misconceptions that she

had acquired from the media and from her friends. She said:

> I was mostly interviewing her – How do you do it? How do you feel? She was the kind of person who likes to talk about themselves. ... how she saves... how she loves NY and how much she hates LA. Whatever confusion I had, I was talking to her and asking her. I was very comfortable with her... asking her, is it alright to call you Black? Why do you have a white child? How do you feel about Harlem when everyone says that it's a bad place... Basically I asked her all the taboo questions.

This interviewing of her interaction partner convinced informant #6 that the solution to overcoming prejudice is talking to people. Not talking, to her, leads to preconceptions about people based on what you hear about them from the media. Informant #6 reached the conclusion that:

> We should at least go out and talk to people and not [have] preconceptions about them. It's a wrong thing because the person may look dangerous to you just because it is out there in the newspaper telling you that certain sections of communities are bad but it's not so... .So we should at least talk to people and then make conclusions.

For informant #5, her interaction partner contributed by simply having a conversation, listening without judgment and allowing herself to relate to her. Informant #5 sees this gesture as going beyond what was required of her group partner. By focusing away from the task at hand and by engaging in a conversation, informant #5 feels that her interaction partner "participated in the moment."

> She allowed me to have that conversation. She could have just answered the questions and not related to me personally. She could have just said well, we have questions to answer and not really told me about herself anymore. The questions were designed to let you talk to each other but she certainly could have shared less about herself. So I think just her open attitude and friendliness, she participated in the moment, that was helpful.

Summary

Communication practices engaged in by the informant and the other played an important part in the stereotype change process. Informants mentioned how by indulging in open communication, by asking the other questions and simply having the other listen

without judgment contributed to their changed view of the other. Listening without judgment is similar to Rogers' (1995) concept of empathic listening. The lack of language skills did not pose a problem in communication and informants did not seem to need speech codes (Philipsen, 1992) to communicate with the other person. Asking questions has been noted as an important way of understanding the other's perspective and appreciating differences (van Zee 2000; Littlejohn and Domenici 2000; van Zee & Minstrell, 1997).

Communicative activity	Attributes of the activity
Open Communication	Express opinions freely, no fear of judgment
Asking questions	To clarify, get other's perspective, understand
Being listened to	Nonjudgmental, compassionate listening

Table 3. Communicative activities contributing to stereotype change

Chapter 4: Discussion

Through this study, my aim was to understand how individuals made sense of an interaction with another person or event about which they had a stereotype. In this chapter, I discuss what I found from the ten interviews that I conducted using Dervin's Sense-Making Methodology. I first summarize the findings from my research questions and discuss how they relate to current theory and research. Next, I identify limitations of the study. I then discuss contributions and implications of the study and finally, indicate directions for future research.

Findings and Links to Existing Research

In this section, I summarize findings from my research questions, which are presented in two parts, namely, *Interpretive Processes* and *Communicative Practices*. I then summarize findings about participants' reflections on the situation after it happened. I also relate the findings to existing theory and research.

Interpretive processes involved in overcoming stereotypes

My first research question focused on how informants interpreted moves made by a person in an interaction that led them to revise their stereotype about this person. From the interviews, I found that informants tended to pursue a series of distinct interpretive activities as they overcame their stereotype. A sequence was set into motion when the informant interpreted a move of the other person as confounding their prior notions about this person. The first interpretive activity in the series was the informants' “making sense

of an interactional trigger", forcing them to re-examine their stereotype. Both the bookkeeping and conversion models of stereotype change proposed by Rothbart (1981) have acknowledged that coming across disconfirming evidence can lead to a change in stereotype whether through a single dramatic encounter or through accumulated evidence over time. I found that for all the informants, a trigger event or event(s) emerged in the interaction, involved the informant's interpretation, and signified the beginning (or continuation) of a sense-making process that led to a change in the informant's stereotype.

Next in the series of interpretive activities was the informants' "becoming aware of an intense emotion and inconsistency in thinking." Informants attributed their emotional reaction to an inconsistency in their view of themselves and also to having made a wrong assumption about the other person. Informants' viewed themselves as tolerant and open-minded individuals and disliked that they had been stereotyping the other in the interaction. They realized that they had deviated from how they had previously viewed themselves and this led to a strong emotional reaction. Research on stereotype control has shown that individuals who are committed to the goal of egalitarianism are able to prevent activation of their stereotypes (Moskowitz, 1999) and the findings from the present study are consistent with these findings. Being voluntary seekers of intercultural contact, informants liked to think of themselves as non-prejudiced and as individuals who believed in the equality of all people. The experience of the informants in the current study further explains how individuals with egalitarian goals are able to control their stereotypes. In the study, the informants who had egalitarian goals

became aware of their prejudice, directed their thoughts to how they like to view themselves and thus worked to stop themselves from relying on stereotypes.

The third interpretive activity in the series was the informants' purposive "re-focusing on the other" to repair the inconsistency they saw between their own self as a tolerant person and as stereotyping the other in the interaction. By this activity, informants attempted to bridge the differences between themselves and the other person. At this stage, informants used communication relevant moves such as *taking the other's perspective* and *showing empathy* and also relational moves such as *seeing similarities in the other*, *appreciating their differences and seeing the other as an equal.*

Informants were seen taking the other's perspective, which is similar to role-taking or making indications to the self from the standpoint of the other (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934). This activity is also analogous to perspective-taking, which has been defined as understanding the other's cognitions or emotions (Shantz, 1974). Social perspective-taking skills have been shown to lead to lasting intimate friendships (Selman et al., 1997). When informants begin to take the other's perspective they may therefore be attempting to build intimacy between themselves and the other. Communication theory too emphasizes the importance of role-taking in achieving intersubjectivity or senses of mutual understanding between people.

Informants were also seen to focus on their other by showing empathy towards them. Empathy, according to Eisenberg et al. (1997) is an affect-related response when one understands another's emotional state or condition and this response is similar to what the other person is feeling. Similarly, Rogers (1959) describes empathy as

perceiving the "internal frame of reference of another with accuracy and with the emotional components and meanings which pertain thereto as if one were the person but without ever losing the 'as if' condition" (p.210). Empathy for another person has been linked to prosocial behavior and cooperative/socially competent behavior (Eisenberg & Miller 1987). Empathy has also been seen to reduce aggression and hostile behavior towards another (Feshbach & Feshbach, 1969). Empathy can also be understood in terms of Kelly's (1955) personal constructs where an individual is thought to construe the world through interpretive constructs that are formed and differentiated through social interaction. Interaction allows one to undergo a differentiation or a change in their constructs as a result of a better understanding of the other person. Informants in this study can likewise be seen as undergoing a differentiation in their constructs related to the other person, which allows them to take their perspective and show empathy towards them.

In talking about the importance of empathy in intercultural communication, Broome (1991) has noted that empathy does not have to mean a shared experience between persons. Instead, Broome (1991) suggests a relational view where empathy is constructed in communication and through understanding and accepting one's differences. Informants in the study were seen to engage in seeing similarities in the other as well as appreciating their differences.

Findings regarding perspective-taking and empathy can also be related to constructivist research in communication, which considers intersubjective meaning to be dependent on a momentary, partially shared interpretive frame (O'Keefe & Delia, 1985).

This ability to take another's perspective allows one to design and interpret messages based on this understanding of the other (O'Keefe &Delia, 1982). Constructivist research in communication has also shown that one's ability to take another's perspective allows one to better produce listener-adapted messages (e.g. Delia, Kline & Burleson, 1979; Delia & Clark, 1977). The informants could thus be taking the other's perspective, as a way of orienting towards the other and understanding them. This in turn allows them to communicate with the other person more effectively and achieve intersubjectivity.

Findings regarding perspective-taking and empathy are also consistent with research on contact theory which has found that increased perspective-taking and empathy in contact situations lead to a reduction in prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) note in their meta-analysis of processes in inter-group contact that empathy and perspective-taking need to be studied further as effective processes to reduce prejudice. The present study too shows that informants used these practices to help them overcome their stereotypes about the other person.

Yet another way of focusing on the other was by seeing similarities in oneself and the other's experiences, interests and values. However, like Clark's (1996) notion of common ground, informants did not necessarily have to “know” about these similarities between themselves and the other. Instead they often deduced through circumstantial or episodic evidence (Clark 1996) that such similarities existed. The similarity-attraction hypothesis posits that similar attitudes lead to interpersonal attraction (Byrne, 1971). Strangers who have similar attitudes to one’s own are better liked and are also judged to be more intelligent, better informed, more moral, and better adjusted than strangers with

dissimilar attitudes (Byrne, 1965). Discovering similarity in an out-group member expected to be different has also been shown to increase liking for them (Chen & Kenrick, 2002)

Where similarities were not apparent informants focused on some meaningful aspect that they assumed they shared with the other and used this common base to appreciate their differences. The informants' activity of appreciating the other's differences can be thought of in terms of Gadamer's views on a successful I-Thou relationship in which the other person or "the text" is treated as a subject and not an object (Roy & Starosta, 2001). Gadamer viewed prejudice not as a problem but as the basis of all human understanding (Roy & Starosta, 2001). Communicative understanding, according to Gadamer, required that one suspend one's prejudices against a person or text constructively, to learn about one's own nature and limits (Roy & Starosta, 2001). Informants similarly recognized their prejudice as such, suspended the prejudice and tried to appreciate the other's perspective. Informants' acceptance of the other's perspective is also akin to Rogers' concept of unconditional positive regard where one loves, respects and accepts another's behavior even if one doesn't agree with the other.

Yet another activity informants engaged in that focused on the other person, involved seeing the other as an equal. In contact theory, equality in status is considered a prerequisite for reducing prejudice between groups (Allport, 1954). However, informants implied that they saw a distinct power differential before the trigger situation. At this stage in the informant's sense-making interview when asked how the particular situation related to power, informants stated that they now saw their interaction partner as an

equal. Thus, once the trigger situation set in motion the informant's interpretive processes, they began to see the other as an equal. For these individuals, equal status was not a prerequisite to overcoming prejudice. Rather, the informants constructed notions of equality between themselves and the other as the interaction progressed.

The final interpretive activity that informants engaged in was to "re-calibrate based on new insight" or to revise the meanings they had attached to their stereotype in light of what they had learned about the other from the situation. This is similar to Strauss's (1972) naming of an object in the way informants are stopped in their action when they encounter the other of an unknown nature. When this happened, informants used past experiences that resembled the current situation to understand and reconstruct the other by re-naming or redefining their nature.

This activity can also be likened to Kelly's (1955) thoughts about revising one's personal constructs. The constructs that persons use to view and make sense of the world have to be alternately tightened and loosened, according to Kelly (1955), if we are to reconstruct. Construct revisions begin with the invalidation of one's construct repertory (Kelly, 1955), involves circumspection and choosing a construct or a group of simpler constructs to understand what one is dealing with. Informants similarly had their constructs invalidated by the trigger event, engaged in a process of sense-making and eventually reached a better understanding of the other through re-focusing on the other person.

Re-visiting the situation. Although not part of the sequence of activities undertaken at the time of the situation, informants' reflections of the situation were an

important factor in helping them overcome their stereotype. This activity was much like what Denzin called (1989, p. 129) relived epiphanies, whose "effects are immediate but their meanings are given only later in retrospection and in the reliving of the event." Reflecting on the situation during the interview gave informants additional insights about the situation. Most informants displayed remarkable self-reflexivity in talking about the situation as one that exposed their prejudices. Many said they would do nothing to change the situation as this helped them learn something about themselves, their other and about their biases.

At this point many saw stereotypes as readymade notions they had acquired from different sources such as media and past interactional experiences. Informants found that the situation had helped them learn something about what they had been and the self-view that they wanted to abide by. Informants also talked about how the situation helped them realize that cultures were not homogeneous and to accept the equal likelihood of encountering difference within one's own culture as in another culture.

Communicative practices that facilitated overcoming the stereotype

My second research question asked what specific interactive practices were undertaken by the informant and the other, which aided in stereotype revision. Although overcoming a stereotype involved the informants' sense-making of the situation, there were specific communicative moves made by the other that directed their interpretation.

One of the themes that emerged from informants' interviews was open communication with the other. Informants appreciated being able to express themselves freely and not being judged for what they were saying. Informants also valued the other's

ability to listen and contribute to the conversation. Rogers (1995) describes empathic as accepting, nonjudgmental listening that is free of any evaluative or diagnostic quality. Being listened to in this way is a moment where the recipient feels connected to the human race (Rogers, 1995). The recipient of empathic listening also begins to "listen more accurately to themselves, with greater empathy towards their own visceral experiencing, their own vaguely felt meanings (p. 159)." This understanding of their own self "opens one to new facets of experience which become part of a more accurately based self-concept." This has implications for how the communicative acts of the other influences the stereotype holder and helps them look inward. Informants expressed a high regard for the other person's capability to listen to them and this could be related to the informant's changed view about the other person.

Language for many informants was initially a concern and informants raised questions about whether they would be able to communicate with the other effectively. Previous research in communication has showed that relationships between people are constituted or re-constituted and managed through situated discursive resources called speech codes (Philipsen, 1992). Knowledge of these distinctive speech codes are deemed necessary for communication, suggesting that the lack of these codes could make communication across cultures problematic. However, informants, especially those who possessed nationality-related stereotypes, mentioned that language didn't impede communication. Instead, informants tended to look for common ground (Clark, 1996) and engaged in cooperative activities such as perspective-taking and showing empathy that allowed them to coordinate their meanings with those of their other.

Asking questions was another important communicative activity that informants found helpful in revising their stereotype. Informants who saw differences between themselves and the other found that they could build understanding by asking the other questions and have them respond to these. Quirk (2006) has noted the role of communicative activities such as asking questions and analyzing responses to these as important ways to develop the ability of perspective-taking. Research on dialogic inquiry in classrooms has suggested that asking questions and dialoguing help to collaboratively make sense of a complex idea (van Zee & Minstrell, 1997; van Zee 2000). Littlejohn and Domenici (2000) call for the need to use dialoging questioning to develop the art of listening. Dialogic questioning entails asking nonjudgmental questions that are designed to learn more and satisfy one's curiosity. Such questions help us understand, appreciate and respect other's experiences and also open up avenues of thought, simulate creativity, and bring important connections and relationships to mind (Littlejohn & Domenici, 2000).

Contributions of the Study

The present study makes important theoretical and methodological contributions to the study of stereotyping.

First, the study suggests that stereotyping is overcome as a series of interconnected activities that are interpretive as well as interactional in nature. The study revealed five interpretive processes undertaken by the informant that are consistent with prior research. However, one of the main findings of the present study was that there appeared to be a sequence in the manner in which informants engaged in these

interpretive activities. Once they encountered an interactional trigger, which set in motion their sense-making, informants moved from one interpretive activity to the next in an ordered fashion. Findings are consistent with prior research but more importantly, the present study weaves together prior concepts to show how people holding a stereotype move from one interpretive activity to the other in their effort to understand the other.

Second, the study also found that informants actively re-constructed their view of the other person through a number of social and relational moves that refocused their attention on them. These moves included taking the other's perspective, showing empathy, seeing them as similar, appreciating their differences and seeing them as an equal. The changed view of the other person was thus not merely a cognitive process for the informants. The social nature of overcoming a stereotype reinforces what we know about contact theory and its power to reduce prejudice. However, we also find through the present study that contact needs to be sufficiently meaningful for a changed view to occur. For informants, a changed view occurred only when something that held meaning for them (e.g. having knowledge of a subject, having the same values, similarities etc.) helped to reinterpret. Informants need to be able to interact closely in settings such as at work and school before they are able to see the other differently.

Third, the present study points to Dervin's Sense-Making Methodology as a valid means of studying stereotyping from the perspective of those dealing with the phenomena. The study had as its focus a gap situation the informant had encountered in the past. In this situation they noted something about their other in the interaction and was stopped in thinking about them in a stereotypical manner. I aimed to tap the

interpretive processes within the informant and the communicative processes in the interaction that facilitated the interpretation. To my knowledge this is a gap situation that has not been previously examined in research. As a methodology, which is designed to examine gaps in thinking, Sense-Making Methodology made it possible for me to situate myself within this gap and make deep digs into the informants' interpretive processes. It should be noted that the design of the Micro-Moment Time-Line Sense-Making interview used in this study lends itself to eliciting sequences in individuals' sense-making. The informants are encouraged to talk about the situation as series of steps where they are asked what happened first, what happened second and so on. However, it is the informants themselves who determine what steps to include in the accounts of their sense-making and their specific order. Informants ordered the time-line steps as they saw it making sense in their minds without being prompted by the interviewer at any point. It is important to note that there was a definite pattern in the way these steps were sequenced across all ten cases. The findings of the present study can therefore be seen as a function of the methodology used to study the phenomenon of stereotyping.

Fourth, the study also makes contributions to contact theory by focusing on how one overcomes stereotyping through the perspective of the person experiencing the contact situation. Contact theory posits that inter-group contact leads to reduced prejudice among groups. The role played by social interaction and communication in the reduction of prejudice are rarely explicated in contact literature. Other researchers (e.g. Semin, 2008; Yzerbyt and Carnaghi, 2008; Lyon et al. 2008) however, have shown how stereotype formation and change are driven by language biases and have noted the role of

intrapersonal as well as interpersonal communication in this process. The present study drew on both these lines of research as well as communication theory to examine role of communication in stereotyping. The study confirmed that both interpretations of the individuals as well as interpersonal interaction had an important role to play in the informants' overcoming of stereotypes. Informants' accounts of stereotype change echoed symbolic interactionist perspectives on how both social and interpretive aspects interact to help individuals make, handle and modify meaning (Blumer, 1969). Informants relied on interactive and communicative practices that they engaged in with the other person to help them reinterpret their stereotypical view of them. Findings from the study thus offer an explanation of how interpretive and interpersonal practices work in tandem to help an individual overcome a stereotype.

This study also responded to calls for identifying processes in intercultural contact situations (Pettigrew, 2008). Researchers (e.g. Dixon, 2005; Connolly, 2000) have urged that more studies be conducted to bridge the gap between contact as it is represented in the literature and the way it is experienced in real life. The current study consciously attempted to address this gap by focusing on a real-life situation where informants had to overcome a stereotype. The study also made it possible for informants to articulate how they made sense of a situation where they realized they were prejudiced about another person. Further, most contact studies have been conducted in involuntary contexts such as the military and in schools (Schneider, 2005) while the present study focused on individuals who had voluntarily engaged in intercultural contact.

Another important finding that has implications for contact theory is that

informants constructed notions of equality as they interacted with the other person in the situation. Equality was not a pre-existing condition that facilitated a change as is assumed in literature on contact theory. Finally, the present study also found that taking the other's perspective and showing empathy were important in helping informants overcome stereotypes. This is consistent with findings from Pettigrew and Tropp's (2008) meta-analysis where perspective-taking and empathy were found to mediate inter-group contact and the reduction of prejudice. Like Pettigrew and Tropp (2008), I believe more research needs to done to understand how these mediators aid prejudice reduction.

Finally, with respect to what we know about overcoming stereotypes, the present study has important contributions to make. First, as discussed in detail later, it is unclear through the study if people ever "overcome" a stereotype. People may change the way they talk about someone as a result of the critical awareness that comes from an interaction. Like in Yon's (2000) ethnography, informants in the present study were seen to continually re-constitute themselves during the course of the interaction and were seen to situate themselves within different subjectivities to mitigate the effects of having stereotyped the other.

Next, the study fulfills Augoustinos and Walker's (1998) call for a more situated approach to stereotyping "to tap how wider collective and ideological values are imposing constraints on individual and group-based cognitive practices (p.)." The present study involved reflecting on an interaction in which the informant had changed their viewed about the other interactant. The study tapped at the individual interpretations as well as the interactive moves that led to a reinterpretation of a stereotypic view about

another person.

Finally, I situated my study at the juncture where one is consciously trying to control a stereotype from being activated. Although previous studies have looked at both stereotype control and activation, to my knowledge, none have looked at the specific point where one become aware of a stereotype and takes steps to overcome it.

I also came across findings that weren't specifically related to my research questions and will address them below.

Where does the stereotype go?

While doing this study I believed that one does overcome a stereotype about another person. However, I wish to re-examine my views on this matter after having completed the study. Below, I re-visit some of my earlier notions about stereotypes and try to flesh out how the study has influenced my understanding of the phenomenon of stereotyping.

One of the big questions that concerned me as I undertook this inquiry pertained to the stereotypes that people had about others and how these may be overcome. I now use the phrase "overcoming the stereotype" only as a way of naming the situation related to me by the informants. I did not ask informants if they did indeed "overcome" the stereotype they held. Stereotypes about others may be considered "common ground" (Clark, 1996) or "significant symbols" (Mead, 1934) that save us considerable time whenever we communicate with others. Stereotypes may thus be thought of as benign when used with the intention of achieving intersubjectivity in an efficient manner. However this does not exonerate us from critically examining the content of our

stereotype or from reflecting on how we came to acquire the stereotype in the first place. From the ten interviews, it wasn't clear if the informants did indeed shed the stereotype that they held after the interaction with the other person. I think it is less important to know what happened to the stereotype. Rather, of import were the informants' soul-searching reflections on the situation and the critical awareness they had gained from this retrospection. In other words, it is more important that we learn from the informants the need to critically examine ways in which we use language to fix our views of others. Informants reflected on how their stereotypes came from media and past interactions and use this awareness to re-interpret and re-construct a new way of seeing the other. Previous research (e.g. Semin, 2008; Yzerbyt and Carnaghi, 2008; Lyon et al. 2008) has shown that stereotyping is maintained and changed through systematic biases in language. As we acquire our stereotypes through our exposure to media and from social interaction we need to become aware that we are just as capable of perpetuating a stereotype about an other through the way we talk. In the quest to achieve intersubjectivity in communication we should take care not to overlook the fixities we use when we talk about other persons, especially those from a different culture.

Striving towards a tolerant self. Informants in the study were people who considered themselves multicultural and took pride in their ability to see others as equals. One of the reasons I wanted to study this population was to understand what drove these people to seek intercultural interactions in an environment where similarities between people are more valued than differences. All informants thought of themselves as tolerant and egalitarian and this view about themselves considerably helped in their re-

interpretation of the situation. When informants began to notice that they were applying a stereotype to the other in the interaction they realized that they had deviated from being tolerant and egalitarian which was their "true self." This inconsistency in their self was a cause of concern for most informants and they used other-focused moves to redress the situation. For a moment, informants not only realize that their view of the other person is flawed but also that their view of themselves were equally flawed. Perhaps being able to reconcile with inconsistencies in one's own self helped informants see their others as not being frozen in time and space. This change in the view of the other may be related to the informants' realization that just as their own selves are constantly evolving, their other is doing the same.

Limitations

Although the study had many strengths with respect to its methodological contributions, it was based on a sample of ten people due to constraints on time. However, the study was exploratory in nature and was an attempt to integrate multiple perspectives on stereotyping. The findings indicate significant contributions to theory and helped to conclude that further research with a larger sample is worthwhile.

Second, the informants selected for the study had to fulfill certain criteria to be eligible for participation and the findings may not be applicable to the general population. However, participants were purposively chosen as it was assumed that people who voluntarily and sometimes compulsively seek intercultural contact were different in the way they attended to the phenomena of stereotyping.

Third, I used the SMM micro-moment time-line interview instrument for the

study and strictly adhered to the structure of the instrument. Interviews could have been made better if I had integrated aspects of the SMM life-line interview, allowing participants to separate their experiences at the time the situation occurred and their reflections on the situation now.

Directions for Future Research

The study presents many avenues for further research. One of these is to examine the sequence of interpretive activities uncovered through the study. The present study focused on a very specific group of people and it would be interesting to see if the findings hold for individuals who are less exposed to other cultures.

Second, a study could be designed so that intercultural interaction partners such as roommates or friends could be interviewed separately about their experiences in getting to know and appreciate one another. This could determine if both partners respond to the same interactional triggers. The partners' interaction itself can be another component to be studied.

Third, the present study did not look as the discourses used by informants to describe the other person and this could be a possible future project. People's talk has been found to be good indicators of their social distance from the person being talked about. Perhaps examining the discourses may offer more insight as to whether stereotypes are indeed being overcome.

The role of the other-focusing moves engaged in by informants in the present study played an important part in a changed view of the other person. Future research needs to look at these moves designed to bridge the distance between the informant and

the other. Perspective-taking and empathy have already been shown to aid in reducing prejudice in inter-group contact situations. Similarly, further research needs to look at informant moves such as seeing similarities, appreciating differences and seeing the other as an equal.

The present study did not focus much on the types of stereotypes that people hold about others and the sources of these stereotypes. Although interviews showed that informants had acquired their stereotypes from media and from past interactions future studies may look at how critically aware people are about where they get their stereotypes from.

Finally, one of the first things informants needed before they changed their view of the other person was becoming aware of their prejudice. Once they were aware of their prejudice they undertook various activities to try and understand the other person. Further, many informants mentioned that they got their stereotypes from media. Perhaps an implication of these findings could be that we need to make opinion leaders and other opinion-molding persons (e.g. journalists and other media persons) aware of their own prejudices. As people that use language to represent others it is imperative that these people be aware of how their own prejudices may be contributing to the perpetuation of stereotypes about others. Sense-making studies may also be designed to help journalists and other media persons to become aware of their own biases about other cultures.

Conclusions

First, the current study was undertaken with a view to approach the grim topic of stereotyping from a different angle. Instead of focusing on how people look for ways to

construct and reify differences between themselves and others, I chose to conduct an appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) focusing on individuals who had been transformed in their experience of stereotyping. I earnestly believe the rest of us can learn from how these individuals conducted themselves in a difficult situation. In fact, one possible way of overcoming stereotype is to provide positive consensus information to people who hold stereotype. In other words, simply telling people with stereotypes about the positive views their peers hold about their other can help them shed these stereotypes.

Second, while I conducted this study, I had in mind *Elusive Culture* (Yon, 2000) a little book that my adviser introduced me to a year ago. What was remarkable about the study was the way it turned on its head the notion that people have fixed ideas about people. My study reaffirmed Yon's (2000) findings as informants grappled with articulating their views about the other. They moved between seeing the other as a monolithic object and a dynamic, multifaceted person whom they had much in common with. What is even more fascinating is the way informants struggled to define or fix their concepts about themselves.

Finally, I began the study as a way to uncover how one overcomes a stereotype. However, I now realize that there is a telling difference between using stereotypes to talk about another and being aware of the consequences this has for the way another person is viewed. Our interactions with cultural others and the way we talk about these can have implications for how listeners begin to view these cultures. It is therefore important that we critically examine the way in which stereotypes pervade our conversations so that we

don’t contribute to seeing people as fixed in time and space. Rather, we need to negotiate our use of stereotypes as a way to think and talk about people. Perhaps one way of doing this is through qualifying our talk through using meta-discursive practices that signal to the listeners what is said in earnest and what is not.

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Appendix A: Interview # 3

Sense-Making Methodology Micro-Moment Time-Line interview informed by Dervin (2008) and Dervin (personal communication, 2009).

CRITICAL ENTRY: *Tell me about a time where you interacted or were in conversation with a person from a culture different from yours and how this contact affected or changed your views about what you had previously believed to be true about people of this culture. Start with a brief description of the situation.*

I had always thought that was sort of something that it didn't really happen anymore and I had assumed talking to him that him and his wife, it wasn't an arranged marriage, he's very modern in so many ways, didn't seem particularly conservative or traditional, so one day we were talking on the bus, that's how I met him, I travel on the bus back and forth working, we just struck up conversations,... one day somehow, I don't remember, marriage came up, he described his, the process of him having an arranged marriage and how the whole situation, ... I got to meet her for 10 minutes before I made a choice and I was like who, how can you make a decision in 10 minutes? Oh you just know... that really shocked. That was a situation where I just... everything else I knew about him, I didn't associate, for some reason I thought that was the way they used to do things... I don't know if modern is the right word, Westernized, so I was just really really surprised about that. And it kind of gave me, before I talked to him I had always viewed arranged marriages with a negative connotation and I suppose I still do but I think that because of his, because I liked him and he was just a good guy, he kind of put a different angle on it, you saw a lot of good in those types of marriages, he seemed to think that people were happier in arranged marriages than they were in typical marriages in the US and was more based on commitment and standing by the person, a different set of cultures, a different set of values around marriage and I think that while I don't necessarily agree with the idea of arranged marriage, it gave me a different perspective and perhaps a little more or appreciation for people that...
So we're both on a bus and somehow the topic of marriage comes up, maybe he's talking about his wife and maybe I say, so how did you meet your wife, how did you two meet and then he probably just said straight out, it was an arranged marriage, my parents had... I don't remember all the details but it was something to the effect of my parents knew this family and this family knew this other person and a lot of thought got put into it and he really liked this person... match... something to that effect, so he started to describe that

and I think my original, I was shocked, I was really really surprised. I think that was my primary reaction.
So the next question was, so you didn't choose your wife at all? Just disbelief questioning him, like, are you serious? Asking him more, how does all this work, I remember him replying something to the effect... I think I might have asked him, well what if you didn't like her , his reply was well, I got to meet her first and then I asked him so how does all that work and he said, well I got to meet her for, they left us alone for 10 or 15 minutes and we got to know each other and we talked and he seemed to think that they hit it off, that was their deciding period, it seemed kind of strange to me but I guess that was my reaction to that, it was still kind of bewilderment, how do you get to know someone in 15 minutes and his response was you can get the gist of somebody's personality in that brief of a time, you really can, and he could tell it in that short time that the marriage would work and I think there was a lot of... One thing I remember thinking was just the amount of confidence that he had in the marriage and it was a commitment that perhaps most people in typical US culture may not have that same level of commitment or certainly not after meeting someone so briefly. So in one way, part of me was being judgmental and say he should know better, he shouldn't be forced to conform to what his family wants, that was part of what I was thinking but then afterwards, I was like maybe there are things to be appreciated, maybe this practice is not as negative as I thought and there are some benefits and there are some positive about the way marriage is viewed? And seeing his apparent happiness, I don't know in depth of how happy his marriage is but he seemed like he had a happy marriage and that gave me a different perspective and I thought to myself that if it ends up in happy marriages, who am I to look down upon them?
Of course this is just one example and I don't want to say that this one case is representative of all arranged marriages.

Think back and tell me what happened -- what happened first, second, and so on. I like to think of this as if you were telling me the events in a movie but it's a special kind of movie in which you can include scenes of what you are doing, thinking, observing, feeling; scenes of what others are doing or saying; scenes of things that just happened. I am going to put each of these events on a separate card. As we proceed, you can add events, or combine events onto one card because as you think about it some separate events were really one.

TIME-LINE STEP 1: I was on a bus and asked my friend how did you meet your wife.
TIME-LINE STEP 2: My friend responded by saying it was an arranged marriage and I was shocked and I say so you didn't choose?
TIME-LINE STEP 3: My friend responded to my question saying you can get the gist of a person's personality

TIME-LINE STEP 4: I was feeling judgmental; I thought *he* should know better
TIME-LINE STEP 5: The amount of confidence, the level of commitment he has, may there's things to be appreciated, maybe it's not as negative a practice as as I thought before.

TIME-LINE STEP 1: I was on a bus and asked my friend how did you meet your wife.
a. QUESTIONS, MUDDLES: I don't think any at this level other than what we talked about.
b. IDEAS, CONCLUSIONS, THOUGHTS: Curiosity about how he met his wife.
c. FEELINGS, EMOTIONS: Curiosity.
d. PAST EXPERIENCE: I was just thinking that the typical answer, typical question you ask, sort of chitchat.
e. SENSE OF SELF: I don't think I had any sense of self.
f. POWER: No.
g. HELP: No.
h. HINDER, HURT: No.
i. MAGIC WAND: No.

TIME-LINE STEP 2: My friend responded by saying it was an arranged marriage and I was shocked and I say so you didn't choose?

a. QUESTIONS, MUDDLES: Surprise. This feeling of everything I know about this person previously would have made me think different from that that wouldn't have been the case, or my preconception, I was prejudiced or I don't know if prejudiced was the right word but I thought because he acts this other way, he seems to not be very traditional in many other ways and I didn't expect him to be traditional...
b. IDEAS, CONCLUSIONS, THOUGHTS: I guess initial thought was this confusion or surprise, trying to figure out why, trying to make sense of it, and then I guess, along with that, after that would be this idea that maybe a little bit of judgment, like oh, I don't know, me looking at it form the values perspective, I guess I have a negative association with arranged marriage and I tend to think of, I associate it with lack of independence or control or, people controlling you or telling you and conformity. Those are the things that I associate it with or I did associate it with, I still do to some extent and so I was starting to think about it, after the surprise, and some of that judgment, but that's probably the next emotion.
c. FEELINGS, EMOTIONS: I think that's all.
d. PAST EXPERIENCE: I must've had some... well one past experience was just knowing him for months or I don't remember how long I knew him but my past interactions with him, he was a very typical kind of person and would make fun of people

who were, in a humorous way, not in a cruel way or mean way but he's a very witty, critical type of person so my past experiences with him would have thought that he would have been somebody making jokes about people that have arranged marriages as opposed to him having an arranged marriage. So that's how my past played in in my relationship with him. And then also I'm sure at some point I must have thought about just the concept of arranged marriages and my impressions were always negative, I think of star-crossed lovers, that want to be together, their parents are forcing them to be with somebody else and not allowing true love to happen and being pushed to love someone they don't really love and... Evil parents forcing their children, so that was how I always saw arranged marriage.
e. SENSE OF SELF: Maybe, the judgment part... that may (*talking about the next TL step*), ... but I know what's right or a sense of my own values coming in, I don't know if I was necessarily aware of that or not. So I think that off hand but I just not really conscious of my thought, so I don't know.
f. POWER: Yeah, at that time I thought it was a case of family controlling the structure of this person's life and I guess I'm a very independent person, I really value, freedom and independence and so I had a view of these type of arrangements as someone else controlling me and so... someone else interfering with somebody else's life, at this point in time, that's what I was thinking or unconsciously thinking.
g. HELP: No. I guess what was helpful was I learned something about him. That's helpful.
h. HINDER, HURT: Surprise... I don't know, I'm not shaken very easily, so I don't know that it was, if I really felt super hindered, just a little bit jolted.
i. MAGIC WAND: I think that probably the way I worded the question probably might have been viewed as judgmental, I might have reworded to say, tell me about that experience, as opposed to so you didn't choose, there's a certain value judgment in the question. So I might choose to reword it to be more, to be less value laden, on the other hand I might keep it the way it was because I wanted to hear his perspective on that particular aspect of choosing. I don't know. I'm a very curious person so I don't know that I would necessarily revise what I said. Also he is, he didn't seem offended, if I felt like he was hurt by the situation, then I probably would have reworded the question or posed it in a different way. But since everything was all fine, as far as I could tell anyway, I don't have any major regrets.

TIME-LINE STEP 3: My friend responded to my question saying you can get the gist of a person's personality
a. QUESTIONS, MUDDLES: I was just thinking how can you know that much of a person in 10 minutes, how can you, there's only so many questions you can ask in that brief of a time and there's all kinds of things that you don't know about the other person

so I guess those were three things that I was thinking about the person.
b. IDEAS, CONCLUSIONS, THOUGHTS: Disbelief. A small amount of acceptance but overall skeptical.

Triangulation Level - 2 *How did this relate to your sense of self?*

I guess my own experiences, I meet people, I often feel like it takes time to know people and if I were in that situation it would scare me to... make a decision.

c. FEELINGS, EMOTIONS: Again a disbelief, shock. This whole conversation was not very emotional, in the sense that we were both friends, I wasn't feeling super judgmental or anything, it's more like learning and having... conversation so it wasn't emotional in any one of the steps.
d. PAST EXPERIENCE: My experiences with meeting people, I felt like I could know people for months and still feel like I don't know them as well as I would like to.
e. SENSE OF SELF: I guess I see myself as analytical or critical or inquisitive and maybe that's part of why I think that that's such a short amount of time, I want to explore from all different angles, learn about people. Also felt like an artificial limitation, he didn't really have just 10 minutes, because he's met this person through his parents so they've posed this limitation or the way they did this I don't see why he truly needed to decide that quickly, it seemed like an artificial constraint.
F1. POWER: I could see it as the parents controlling but also just the culture controlling, it's not just the, not so much that the parents intentionally are trying to... people, but that's just the way things are done and a power by convention, I don't know if convention is the right word, or ritual or that's just the way things are done.

Triangulation Level – 2 on F1: You said: but that's just the way things are done and a power by conventio… Could you tell me how this related to your sense of self?

Sense of self: I'm very rebellious in the sense that I rebel against things that I don't agree with and I don't, I guess I'm a nonconformist and I don't do a lot of things that other people think should conform to so I guess that's part of my identity, the way I think about myself.

g. HELP: I guess the only way one can say it was helpful was learning more about people's experiences is just helpful... in the world.
h. HINDER, HURT: No.
i. MAGIC WAND: I don't think I would have changed anything.

TIME-LINE STEP 4: I was feeling judgmental; I thought *he* should know better

a. QUESTIONS, MUDDLES: I guess I'm just reiterating the things I said before, feeling like he's so critical about so many other issues, religion or politics and he's just a very logical, rational type of thinker and I was kind of confused because I typically associate that type of independent, he definitely had an independence because he was rejecting certain things in society that was common so there was some level of non-conformity within him and so I was surprised to see him conform to this particular tradition. I mean he didn't see it as conformity, maybe he saw it as celebrating something that, embracing something he liked about that culture, that tradition.
b. IDEAS, CONCLUSIONS, THOUGHTS: The idea of, why isn't he looking at this in a more critical way, why does he think that somebody else can pick somebody better than he can pick? Why doesn't he have more confidence in his ability to find somebody to live with.
c. FEELINGS, EMOTIONS: Maybe just a tinge of guilt, after feeling for thinking that way like that, am I really, is it really right for me to be judging him in this way, in such a critical way, maybe there's more to it than meets the eye.
d. PAST EXPERIENCE: I guess... television shows of things like arranged marriage as causing problems and preventing people from marrying their true love and compromise and marry somebody who's really not right for you...
e. SENSE OF SELF: Feeling like I'm an independent person, being nonconformist and rejecting things, traditions and practices that don't ... my values
f. POWER: Yeah, definitely. It felt like other people were controlling, not him but that's how I felt and that's why I felt that projection... and I think he should reject it too, feeling like people were controlling him.

g. HELP: I don't know.
h. HINDER, HURT: I didn't really..., just feeling like, I guess this whole confusion of why aren't you seeing it my way, why do you see it in such a different perspective that I am.
i. MAGIC WAND: I don't know that I would have changed anything, I think it's important to go through emotions and, it's part of the process of experiencing new ideas that you hadn't thought of.

TIME-LINE STEP 5: The amount of confidence, the level of commitment he has, maybe there's things to be appreciated, maybe it's not as negative a practice as I thought before.

a. QUESTIONS, MUDDLES: I guess one confusion was the fact that I found myself

changing my position not completely but shifting it, more accepting of it. And I guess it was a little bit of a surprise. A little bit of woah, like I need to recalibrate how I feel about this particular...
c. FEELINGS, EMOTIONS: At some point during this process, I don't think it was a big part of it but wanting to make sure that I wasn't hurting his feeling or how I was reacting does not affect him in anyway, so after my initial reaction, judgment and wanting to step somewhat more in the way of ok let's ... I want to make sure that my friend... I don't think...
b. IDEAS, CONCLUSIONS, THOUGHTS: Maybe I had this more refined view of arranged marriages where I think that they could be good or OK in certain situations or feeling like ... the parents aren't overly pressuring that maybe there are, maybe it can be a good thing in certain situations, I still think it can be bad in other situations, as a whole I still have a rebellion for that idea, other people making those types of big decisions for you and I've a general more independent type of philosophy.
c. FEELINGS, EMOTIONS: -
d. PAST EXPERIENCE: Not really.
e. SENSE OF SELF: I think maybe a part of what I thought too, and a good part of it is that it seemed like maybe part of the arranged marriage is parents caring for their children, trying to look after their children, I could relate that to my parents, very loving, caring, kind, looking after my interests, so I could see that while on hand it seems controlling on the other hand it was perhaps something that is done out of compassion and kindness for their children... maybe that's not always the case but, I think it's probably more...
f. POWER: I guess I'd see it as power, controlling and compassion, they're kind of mixed and ultimately sometimes, interlinked and... a mother is... overprotective or controlling with their children but... sometimes about what's really good for the kid. They're too protective, this might be a similar type of situation.
g. HELP: A thing that seemed helpful or something that I just appreciated, it seemed that he had a certain level of commitment of standing by his partner that I appreciated that seemed like it was really right, the way he described it or the way, certainty tat this was, this was someone that he was going to love, care for, consistently day after day and I really had a lot of respect for that type of love and commitment to, standing by somebody.
h. HINDER, HURT: No.
i. MAGIC WAND: I wouldn't change anything.

6. LOCATING THE INFORMANT IN TIME-SPACE:
c. WHERE RESIDE:
d. YEARS EDUCATION:
e. ETHNIC HERITAGE: Caucasian white
f. YEAR BORN:
g. GENDER: male
h. MARITAL STATUS:
j. KIND OF JOB AND KIND OF PLACE:
k. KIND OF JOBS PARENTS HAD WHILE GROWING UP:

Appendix B: Questionnaire

We would very much appreciate your help with this project by completing a brief questionnaire that should take about 20-30 minutes. Your answers will be anonymous.. If you desire to learn more about our findings, we can mail you a copy of completed report if you provide us with a mailing address. Thank you for your time.

Where did you come across the cultural stereotype that you just told me about? Describe all instances where you've heard/seen this (eg. media, friends etc.).

What does culture mean to you?

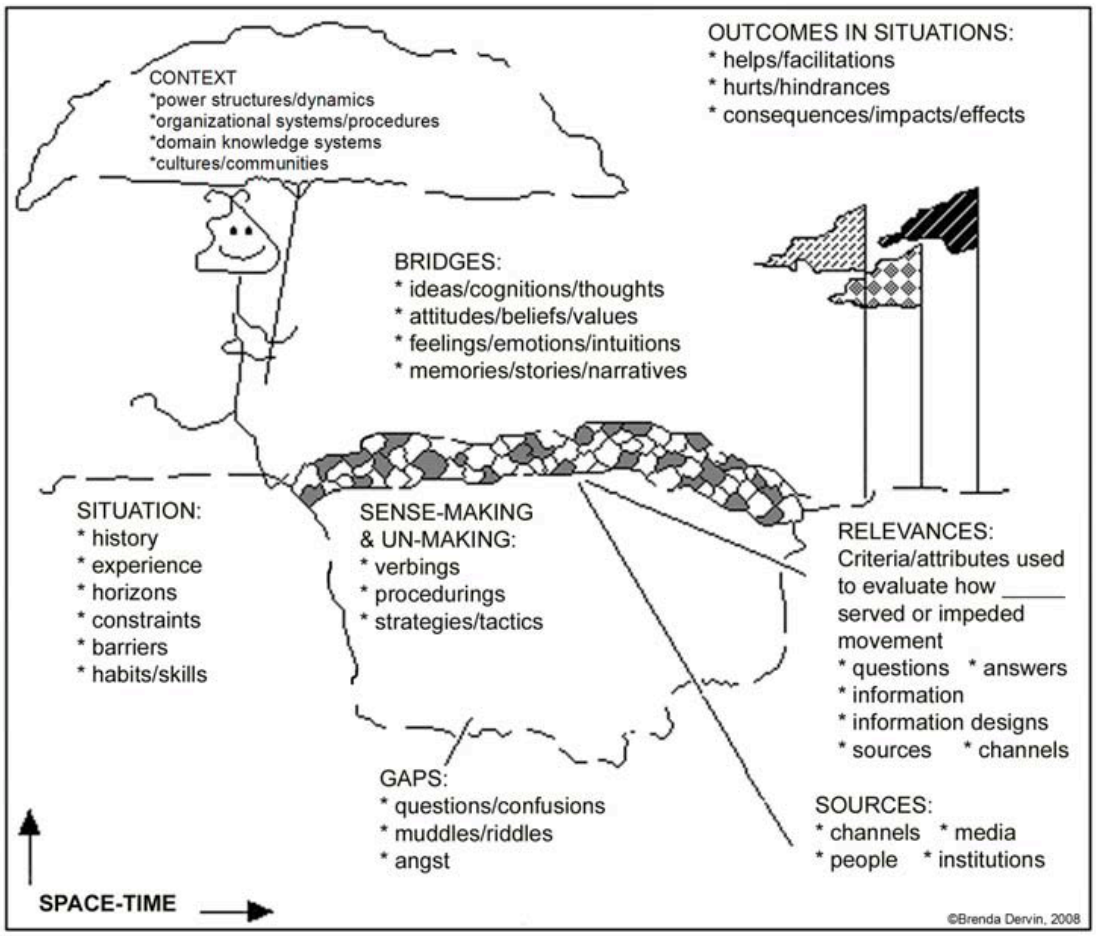
What do you see as examples of cultures that are different from yours?

What cultures would you say you belong to?

In what way does contact with people of different culture(s) help? Hurt?

In what way does contact with people of similar culture(s) help? Hurt?

Appendix C: The Sense-Making Methodology Metaphor (Dervin, 2008)



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Appendix D: Sense-Making Methodology Questions (Dervin, 2008)

TO TAP SITUATIONS
**What happened?*
**What stood in the way?*
**What were you trying to deal with?*
**How did that connect with past events?*
**How did it connect to forces of power in family, community, society?*

TO TAP GAPS
**What were your big questions?*
**What were you trying to unconfuse, figure out, learn about?*
**What did you struggle with?*

TO TAP BRIDGES:
**What conclusions/ideas/ did you come to?*
**What emotions/feelings did you come to? .*
**What led you to that conclusion/idea/emotion/feeling?*

TO TAP OUTCOMES SOUGHT AND/OR OBTAINED
**How did that [name that] help? facilitate? [And, how did that help? And, how did that help?]*
**How did that [name that] hinder? [And, how did that hinder? And, how did that hinder?]*
**If you could wave a magic wand, what would have helped?*

TO DIG DEEPER INTO GAPS AND STRUGGLES
**What was missing?*
**How did that stand in the way?*
**And, how did that prevent you getting more help?*

TO DIG DEEPER INTO WHAT LED TO AN EVALUATION
**What led you to that assessment?*
**How did that evaluation connect with your situation?*
**What was limited or incomplete about that?*

TO DIG DEEPER INTO HOW THINGS HELP
**And, how did that help?*
**What did that allow you to do/achieve/think?*

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