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How to Shake Hands with a Foreigner. Review of Stephen Bochner (Ed.), *Cultures in Contact: Studies in Cross-Cultural Interaction*

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How to Shake Hands with a Foreigner. Review of Stephen Bochner (Ed.), *Cultures in Contact: Studies in Cross-Cultural Interaction*

**Abstract**
"Culture shock" is a term that is frequently used by professionals and lay-persons alike when considering nontrivial interactions with a foreign culture. Although the term has long been understood by those who have experienced the sensation, it is only in the last decade or so that the psychology of culture shock has been seriously considered as a subject of scientific inquiry. In order to bring together research and researchers in this area, a meeting was held at Oxford University in 1979; the present volume of papers is its product.

**Disciplines**
Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education | Education | Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research | Educational Methods | Educational Psychology | International and Comparative Education | Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education
retic perspective of the effects of decision rules on group outcomes. On balance, the book gives somewhat more attention to information processing than to social-psychological issues.

Improving group decision making

This book is about improving group decision making in organizations. Improving group decision making has many different meanings. It can mean improving the quality of a decision, increasing the likelihood that group members will accept a decision, improving the satisfaction of group members, and increasing the amount of learning that takes place in the group, among others. Although several chapters, especially Hoffman’s, touch on the existence of multiple criteria of group decision-making effectiveness, I wish more attention had been given throughout the book to the existence of these multiple criteria. The consideration of multiple criteria and their interrelation is critical in arriving at an overall evaluation of the effectiveness of group decision making. It is also critical that the criteria of decision-making effectiveness be fairly specific. This is largely because variables that enhance group decision making along one criterion may not have much effect on or detract from another criterion of group decision making. For example, group satisfaction is greater in decentralized than in centralized communication networks, whereas efficiency (e.g., time to reach a solution) is greater in centralized than in decentralized networks for simple tasks (Shaw, 1976). Focusing on specific criteria enables one to identify trade-offs among various ways of enhancing different criteria of decision-making effectiveness.

Theory and practice

The interrelation between theory and practice runs throughout the book. The chapter by Hartwick, Sheppard, and Davis is closest to the theoretical end of the spectrum; practical implications are most immediate and most specific in the chapter by Cook and Hammond. Useful recommendations or techniques for improving group decision making are presented in all of the chapters. Although one book cannot cover completely a topic as large as improving group decision making in organizations, I wish the book had contained more analyses of the effectiveness of techniques recommended for improving group decision making in organizations. More information is needed about the conditions under which these techniques are likely to improve group decision making and guidance in selecting one technique over another.

This book contains several interesting perspectives on group decision making. But what is needed is more analysis of how the perspectives fit together, where they overlap, and which additional perspectives are needed to give us a complete picture of group decision making in organizations.

References


How to Shake Hands With a Foreigner

Stephen Bohner (Ed.)


Oxford, England: Pergamon Press, 1982. 246 pp. $38.00 cloth; $14.95 paper (£17.25 cloth; £7.95 paper)

Review by

Daniel A. Wagner

Stephen Bohner is senior lecturer in the School of Psychology at the University of New South Wales (Australia). He is editor of The Mediating Person: Bridges Between Cultures. Daniel A. Wagner is associate professor in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. He is coeditor of Cultural Perspectives in Child Development with H. W. Stevenson.

“Culture shock” is a term that is frequently used by professionals and laypersons alike when considering nontrivial interactions with a foreign culture. Although the term has long been understood by those who have experienced the sensation, it is only in the last decade or so that the psychology of culture shock has been seriously considered as a subject of scientific inquiry. In order to bring together research and researchers in this area, a meeting was held at Oxford University in 1979; the present volume of papers is its product.

As is often the case in postconference collections, there is little cohesion among the various chapters, which vary considerably in quality. A short but important chapter by Otto Klineberg appears in the first section of the volume. With major papers on the social psychology of stereotypes and racism as early as the 1920s and 1930s, Klineberg is clearly the doyen of the field. He briefly reviews the history of the study of ethnic and racial stereotypes and concludes with the plausible hypothesis—also dealt with variously by other contributors—that the main cause of cultural stereotypes and discrimination lies in the failure to form satisfactory social relationships with members of the “other” culture.

In the introductory chapter, Stephen Bohner, the volume editor, attempts to bring together research findings that bear on the central thesis that “relations between culturally disparate individuals are largely determined by groups to which these persons belong, and to the nature and quality of the relationships existing between existing groups” (p. 5). He goes on to describe what he terms the “dimensions of cross-cultural contact,” including, for example, length of contact (e.g., tourist vs. student vs. immigrant) and relative status and power (majority group vs. minority group). These dimensions, he says, help to determine whether cross-cultural contacts are experienced as “threatening” or “enhancing.” As Bohner also concludes, the empirical support substantiating these dimensions and other factors of cross-cultural interaction is, unfortunately, extremely thin.

In spite of its theoretical and empirical limitations, the volume treats a number of compelling and seldom considered topics in cross-cultural research. Michael Argyle uses the study of nonverbal communication among different cultural groups to demonstrate (in terms of Europeans’ empirical perceptions of facial expressions) that the Japanese “are indeed relatively inscrutable.” In addition, he describes some of the diverse cultural rules that increasingly confront the international citizen, such as different views on bribery, nepotism, use of gifts, and notions of time. Such issues have indeed played a part in cultural adaptation, as well as in the political arena, where cases of bribery, for example, point up the contrasts between idealized traditions of West and East.
Two on Research

Kenneth D. Bailey

Douglas G. Mook

Review by
Raphael Hanson

Kenneth D. Bailey is associate professor of sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is author of a chapter in D. R. Heise’s Sociological Methodology 1975. Douglas G. Mook is professor of psychology at the University of Virginia. He is coauthor with N. J. Kenney of a chapter in Drinking Behavior, J. A. W. Weijnen and J. Mendelson, editors. Raphael Hanson is professor of psychology at California State University, Long Beach. He is primarily interested in statistical inference as it contributes to advances in basic science.

Both of these books are elementary textbooks that present the purposes and methods of scientific research. Mook’s text is primarily for behavioral science students and requires for adequate understanding and appreciation previous reading of a book on general psychology. Bailey’s is primarily for social science students and requires for adequate understanding and appreciation previous reading of a book on general sociology.

Both books have the same major parts: The first part (about 14 percent of each book) is a synoptic presentation of generalities, in common abstract terms, about the general strategies that guide scientific researchers in their work and about the processes of this work. The second part (about 45 percent of each book) is a compendium of the general methods and tactics of scientific research and includes, in roughly the order of presentation, the following topics: constructing and testing a scientific theory (too briefly described in each book), determining a correlation and causation, defining and measuring a variable, sampling objects and other research factors, designing research and experiments, controlling variables to reduce obscuring or confounding of relations, and using statistical methods to reduce, describe, interpret, and report data (about 40 pages in each book). The third part (about 38 percent of Mook’s text and 34 percent of Bailey’s) is a presentation of special methods of scientific research, and the fourth part (about 3 percent of Mook’s text and 7 percent of Bailey’s) is on ethics in scientific research. Writing a report of scientific research is omitted from both books.

It is in the treatment of special methods that the two books differ. They have little in common here, and they each reflect the discipline to which they are oriented: psychology for Mook and sociology for Bailey. Many of Mook’s special methods would be applicable to behavioral biology also. Many of Bailey’s special methods would be applicable to the social sciences of anthropology, political science, and history. The special methods for studying historical documents and artifacts used by these social sciences, however, are barely considered, and the special methods used in economics and linguistics are not presented.

Mook presents special methods (mostly experimental) used in studying the following phenomena: classical conditioning, operant conditioning, perception, psychophysiology, memory, cognition, and social behavior. Notably absent are personality and social attitudes. For each phenomenon presented, two or three studies are described in which a problem requiring the development of a new special research method was solved. Sometimes the solution was arrived at in distinct steps, and the story of this progressive activity demonstrates to the reader how research studies develop sequentially—a story usually omitted from textbooks on methods of scientific research. Mook tells these stories succinctly but with sufficient detail and suspense to induce the reader to put down the book and attempt to find his or her own solution. Mook also provides a brief developmental description of many of the studies that are used to illustrate the general methods. Nevertheless, Mook neglects to present or even to give references for the development of the general methods. This is a serious omission, and it is likely to foster a misconception in the reader that general methods are not solutions to problems, whereas special methods are.

In the chapter titled “Where Research Comes From,” which presents four extended examples, Mook examines more fully the sequential development of re-