negotiation and conflict management research

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Big Questions for Negotiation and Culture Research

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On April 12, 2018, at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, we hosted a conference on the frontiers of culture and negotiation research. The conference brought together scholars from two vibrant areas of research—cultural psychology and negotiation—in order to stimulate future research at the intersection of culture and negotiation.

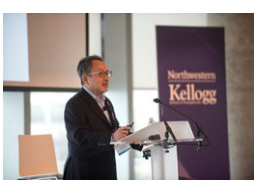
For years, these two areas remained isolated from each other: Negotiation research, which developed in the West, tended to ignore culture. Culture research, while global in its scope, tended to ignore negotiation. Back in 2003, we hosted a conference, again at Northwestern, to begin to integrate theory, research, and practice in both fields. We asked pairs of scholars from both culture and negotiation research to write on a topic relevant to both, including basic psychological processes (e.g., cognition, motivation and emotion), the social process (e.g., communication, conflict, and disputing) and the social context (e.g., intergroup relationships, third parties, justice, technology, and social dilemmas) which culminated in the *Handbook of Negotiation and Culture* (Stanford University Press). Our goals in that volume were to compile an up-to-date review of current knowledge of negotiation, to challenge negotiation theorists to more inclusive of all humankind, and to encourage cultural theorists to provide an explanation for patterns of thought and action in an important area of social interaction. The authors identified numerous knowledge lacuna—opportunities for research for decades to come—and also identified the limits of the Western culture-based findings (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Michele Gelfand and Jeanne Brett, conveners of the conference on Culture and Negotiation, April 2018, Evanston, IL.

Fifteen years later, we were excited to take stock of where the culture and negotiation research had gone and to strategize on where it should be going. The culture and negotiation conference planning took a lot of organization and coordination. Throughout it all, we had one goal in mind: to immerse all participants in meaningful dialogue and to encourage new and radical initiatives in culture and negotiation research. To do so, we constructed a program that had different formats, people, and perspectives. Throughout the conference, we had an artist from the Ink Factory who helped to make our collective ideas become part of our physical space. During each presentation, she created visual notes translating the speakers' words into images and text to represent their key concepts and themes. The audience watched in amazement as she captured our creative output in visual form.

We first wanted to provide a taste of the incredible diversity of research happening in the field, and so we started with a "rapid-fire" session where speakers each described their research in 5 minutes (a daunting task no doubt, but the session was a smashing success). Speakers covered a wide range of exciting topics, from the role of hope in negotiation and conflict resolution, emotional acculturation, agreement dynamism, power and hierarchy, concession making, fault lines, global identity, trust, and conflict cultures, among other topics. The next day, we had a fantastic lineup of keynote speakers who spoke on conflict and culture: Batja Mesquita on emotion, Shinobu Kitayama on neuroscience, Don Ferrin on trust, Yoshi Kashima on communication, and CY Chui on globalization. Figure 2 shows the keynote speakers and their topics. Videos of their presentations, their PowerPoint files, and their art boards are available for study and to share with students (https://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/research/drrc/events/conferences/keynotespeakers.aspx)

Batja Mesquita - Emotion



Shinobu Kitayama- Neuroscience

Donald Ferrin – Trust

Yoshi Kashima - Communication

Chi Yue Chiu - Globalization

Figure 2. Keynote speakers, April 2018, Evanston, IL.

Next, we constructed a panel of scholars to help *bridge* the disciplines of culture and negotiation, including Mina Cikara (neuroscience), Mara Olekalns (communication), Michael Morris (globalization), Hajo Adam (emotion), Brian Gunia (trust), and Adam Galinsky (power). Gelfand moderated the discussion, and the audience had many questions to help stimulate discussion. Figure 3 shows the panel in action. Their video and art board are available at https://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/research/drrc/events/conferences/panel%20of%20distinguished%20scholars.aspx

Figure 3. Panel of distinguished scholars—Mina Cikara, Mara Olekalns, Michael Morris, Michele Gelfand, Hajo Adam, Brian Gunia, and Adam Galinsky, April 2018, Evanston, IL.

Our last keynote, from Evolutionary Biologist David Sloan Wilson, focused on how we can use evolutionary principles to accomplish positive culture change in order to better our planet. His presentation, video, and slides are available at https://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/research/drrc/events/conferences/keynotespeakers.aspx (Figure 4).

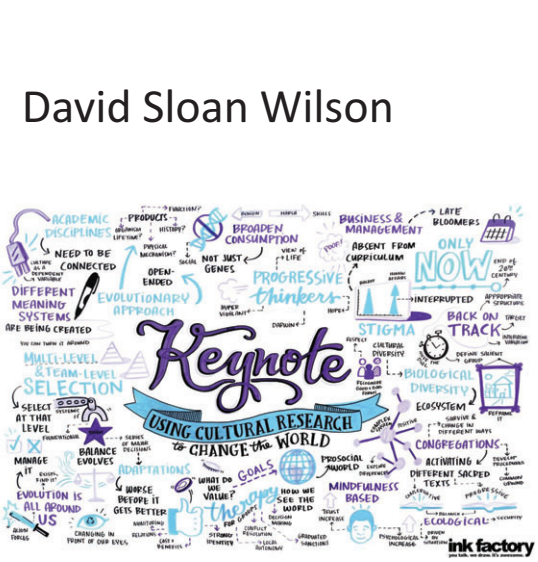


Figure 4. David Sloan Wilson, April 2018, Evanston, IL.

In order to stimulate future collaborations, we broke into six think tanks each charged with coming up with a research agenda for its respective field. We challenged the think tanks to identify critical researchable questions. Collectively, they took stock of the field and mapped the frontiers of the study of culture and negotiation. The think tank leaders summarized their groups' ideas to the rest of the conference, but here in this special issue, the think tank leaders present

their groups' ideas for collective consumption. We summarize each of these papers below. Please also see the overall conference website to access video and presentations. You may use these resources for any noncommercial purpose. Please acknowledge the ink factory for the art and the speaker for any images of models taken from PowerPoint presentations or video. https://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/research/drrc/events/conferences.aspx

In the first paper, Dejun Tony Kong and Jingjing Yao propose a new cognitive map of trust and culture in negotiations. First, they ask whether the *meaning of trust* varies cross-culturally. They identify three forms of trust: interpersonal trust (intentions), perceived trustworthiness, and trust propensity, and argue that although interpersonal trust should have the same meaning in intra- and intercultural negotiations, perceived trustworthiness and trust propensity may vary across cultures. They then discuss the *effects* of trust, pointing out that trust leads negotiators to engage in more integrative behaviors and less distributive behaviors, but the authors question whether these effects are equivalent across cultures. They also discuss research showing that some negotiators rely on assurance rather than trust, and suggest that trust may be more important in loose cultures, while assurance is more important in tight cultures, which suggests that trust incongruence may occur in intercultural negotiations. Figure 5 shows Tony Kong and Jingjing Yao in action.

Figure 5. Dejun Tony Kong and Jingjing Yao, Trust think tank leaders, April 2018, Evanston, IL.

Next, they discuss *culture and trust development*. They argue that trust formation is often studied as a static prenegotiation concept, but instead should be studied as a dynamic (longitudinal) process wherein patterns, trajectories, and mechanisms of trust development are identified. They then focus on *trust and distrust*, and speculate as to whether trust and distrust are separate constructs or bipolar opposites. They also question the assumption that trust is good and distrust is bad, as both may lead to both positive and negative outcomes in negotiations. Next, they discuss research on *trust repair* in negotiations and how these findings vary cross-culturally. Finally, they end with a discussion of *trust in virtual negotiations*. Virtual communication is less ideal for negotiation than face-to-face communication, and they suggest that trust may play a key role in helping to reduce these discrepancies. Culture adds another level of difficulty to virtual communication, and they call for more systematic research to address the conditions under which technology is beneficial versus detrimental to trust development and effectiveness in intercultural negotiation. Above all, their cognitive map provides many testable hypotheses on the culture and trust nexus. Figure 6 is the art board summarizing the trust think tank discussion.

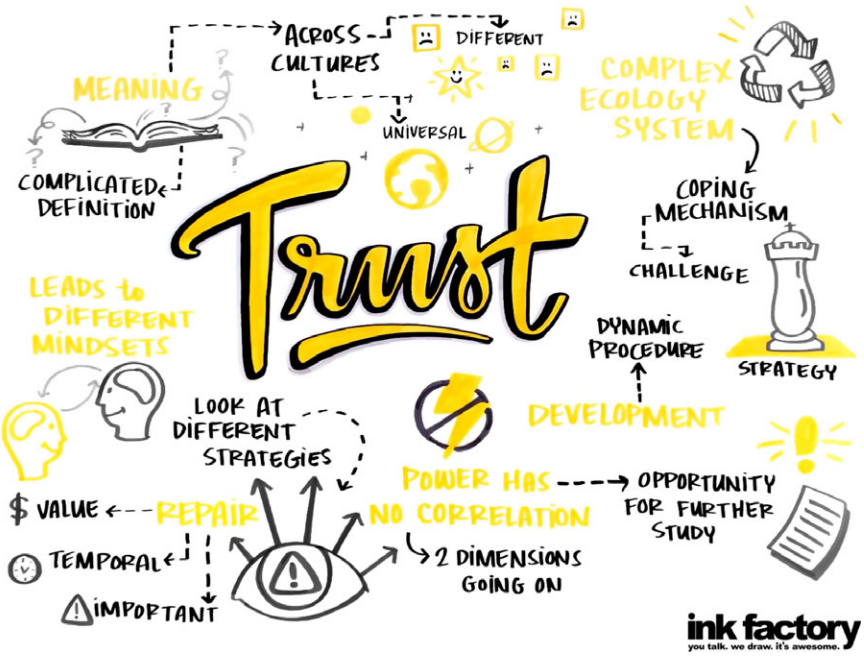


Figure 6. Trust think tank visual.

In the second paper, Laura Rees and Shirli Kopelman develop new frontiers for the study of negotiation, culture, and emotions. Although each of these is a thriving area of research, the authors conclude that there is a paucity of research at the intersection of all three. To move the field ahead, they argue that rather than using a logic of rationality that traditionally underlies decision-making and economics research, *a logic of appropriateness*—which considers what is acceptable behavior in negotiation—is a more promising foundation for the study of culture, emotions, and negotiation. This perspective fundamentally asks: "What does a person like me do in a negotiation situation like this?" rather than asking "What is rational?" Figure 7 shows Shirli Kopelman and Laura Rees presenting the emotion think tank discussion to the conference attendees.

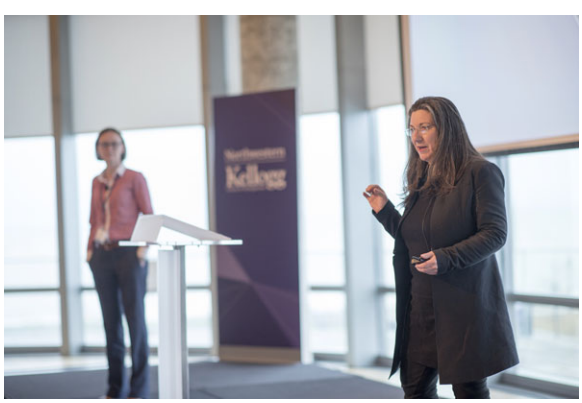


Figure 7. Laura Rees and Shirli Kopelman—Emotion think tank leaders, April 2018, Evanston, IL.

This perspective opens up a number of interesting areas for future research. For example, Rees and Kopelman suggest that the appropriateness of different emotions is highly dependent on context, and accordingly, future negotiation research needs to explicitly account for cultural norms when examining the relationships between appropriate emotional regulation, appropriate emotional expression, subsequent felt dissonance/consonance, and any downstream effects in negotiations. They also suggest that research should explore how cultural norms for expressivity influence interpersonal communication. Expressivity norms vary across cultures, as does people's knowledge of cultural expressivity norms. Thus, exploring how people interpret emotions based on knowledge of expressivity norms, and how those interpretations affect (mis)communication, is a promising area for future research. Building on this discussion, the authors also argue that future research should examine the extent to which differences in what an expresser intends to convey versus what the perceiver observes and interprets influence negotiation processes and outcomes. Given that emotional miscommunications can occur frequently in negotiations, they also explore the potential role of mindfulness in cross-cultural negotiations. They argue that mindfulness may have both beneficial and detrimental influences on negotiations, depending on the cultural background of the negotiator (individualistic vs. collectivistic), the emotion attended to (positive vs. negative), and the appropriateness of the interpersonal and cognitive processes triggered by mindful reflection. Weaving these themes together, the authors also argue that future negotiation research should look at culture as a *dependent variable* as well as an independent variable. People bring cultural norms that may affect outcomes to the negotiating table, but when new groups form, the way they negotiate also may create entirely new norms for emotional dynamics in that particular group. Finally, the authors suggest that future research should continue to explore how *technology* interacts with emotion, culture, and negotiation. In order to be successful in the world today, research needs to identify how individuals can successfully navigate emotional expression when negotiating through technology. Their road map contains many new and exciting questions for the study of culture, emotion, and negotiation. Figure 8 presents the art summarizing the emotion think tank discussion.

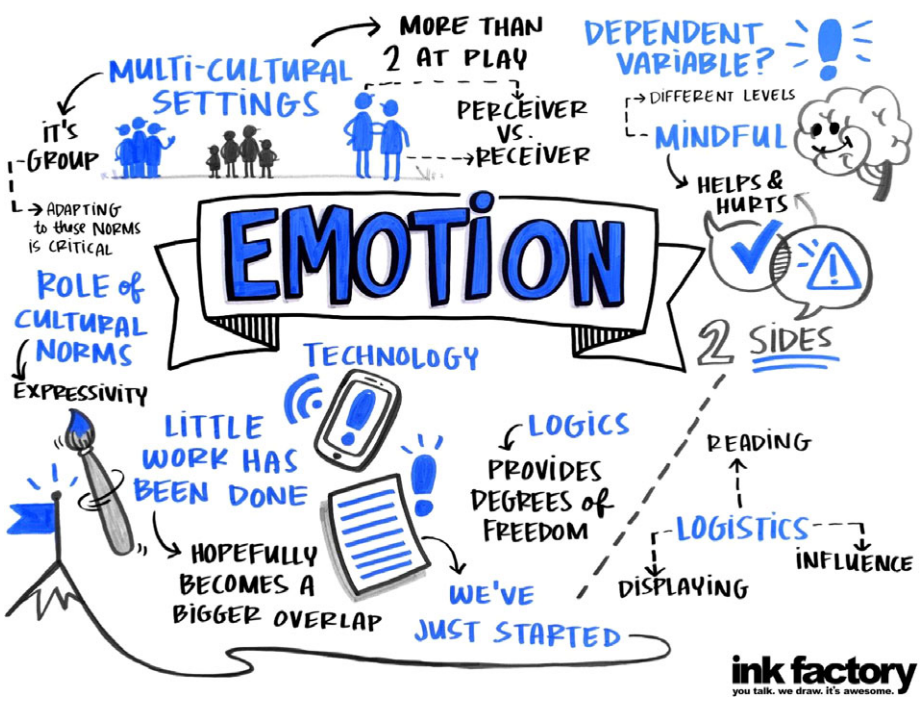


Figure 8. Emotion think tank visual.

In the third paper, Jimena Ramirez Marin, Mara Olekalns, and Wendi Adair present a new research agenda on cultural norms in communication, negotiation, and conflict management. First, they aptly note that much of the research on negotiation strategies has focused on dignity cultures, like the United States, and they raise an important question: How do negotiators in face and honor cultures create value? This question opens up a number of areas for research. For example, how do culture and norms affect the propensity to negotiate? How does culture affect norms for the appropriate distribution of outcomes? In the domain of disputing, how do cultural norms affect the initiation of conflict management, the use of interest, rights and power strategies, as well as the use of third parties to manage disputes? Norms and communication think tank leaders, Wendi Adair and Jimena Ramirz-Marin, are at work in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Jimena Ramirez-Marin and Wendi Adair, Norms and Communication think tank leaders, April 2018, Evanston, IL.

The authors then use the lens of tightness-looseness to explore the role of *norm violation in negotiations*. They note that norm violations can have both positive and negative effects in negotiations. For example, norm violations can make others perceive the transgressor as more powerful. They also note, however, that people in tight cultures are less accepting of norm violations than are people in loose cultures. Because norms vary across cultures, the authors suggest that negotiation strategies are more likely to be mismatched in intercultural negotiations, and suggest that negotiators from loose cultures may be better at adapting to these mismatches. Building on this discussion, they discuss positive and negative effects of miscommunications in negotiations. For example, shame and embarrassment may create tension and social distance between negotiators. They propose that negotiators from face and honor cultures may respond particularly poorly to negative emotions resulting from miscommunication. However, they also discuss potential positive consequences of miscommunication. Miscommunications due to cultural differences may redirect communication and create looser communication patterns, naturally creating short breaks in the negotiation, and ultimately encouraging perspective taking, which should improve negotiation outcomes and build empathy and shared identity. Finally, they explore the role of small talk or schmoozing for helping facilitate rapport in negotiations and raise the question of whether there are differences in what forms of schmoozing are normative and how these can facilitate or inhibit effective communication in cross-cultural negotiations. Figure 10 presents the ideas generated in the norms and communication think tank discussion.

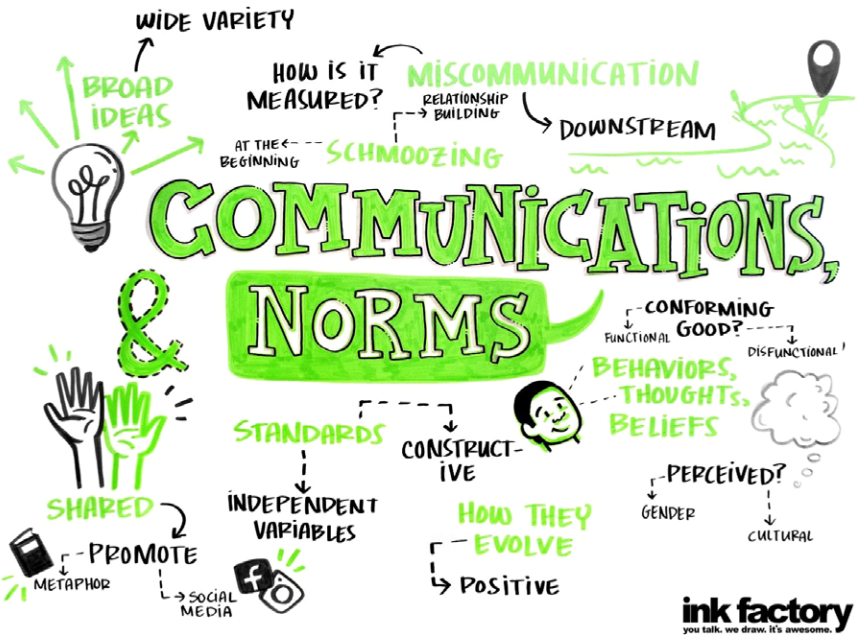


Figure 10. Norms and Communication think tank visual.

In the fourth paper, Nir Halevy and Taya Cohen identify key pressing research questions and challenges for the field of intergroup conflict. The first question the authors pose is "When and why do people engage in, and publicly display, blatant forms of intergroup hostility?" They identify some antecedents of intergroup hostility that have achieved ample attention in the literature, such as relative deprivation, direct threats to group interests, and perceived threats. They also call for research to understand neglected antecedents, such as threats to physical power and physical resources, economic adversity, and uncertainty that may give rise to blatant intergroup hostility. Nir Halevy and Taya Cohen are presenting the intergroup conflict think tank ideas in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Nir Halevy and Taya Cohen, Intergroup Conflict think tank leaders, April 2018, Evanston, IL.

They next ask: "How do different moral motives shape individual behavior in intergroup conflict?" To address this question, they summarize research on moral identity, moral foundations, moral credentials, and moral group-based emotions. They argue based on moral foundations theory that two centrifugal moral foundations—harm/care and fairness/reciprocity—may potentially support positive intergroup interactions by expanding moral regard to include distant others. However, two centripetal moral foundations—ingroup loyalty and authority/respect—may promote intergroup conflict by justifying fighting for ingroup goals over the promotion of universal goals. They note that some research suggests that people may be more likely to express explicit prejudice when they have built up "moral credentials"—that is when they feel they have behaved morally in the past. On the other hand, they point out that research on moral group-based emotions suggests that negative emotions such as group-based guilt—which arise from the feeling that one's group has acted immorally—coupled with more inclusive social categorizations, may promote intergroup forgiveness.

Building on this discussion, the Halevy and Cohen ask "How do intragroup processes influence intergroup processes and vice versa?" For example, they suggest more research on the roles of representative negotiation and social hierarchy and leader emergence in groups as a means of facilitating intergroup conflict resolution. Integrating these lines of research, they suggest that some intractable intergroup conflicts are actually sustained by intragroup issues rather than insurmountable intergroup issues. They also discuss the emergence of various new types of virtual groups, which result from changes in technology, and highlight the need to understand the intra- and intergroup dynamics of such groups both in organizational settings and in online. Finally, the authors ask: "How will global challenges shape intergroup relations in the 21st century?" They argue that societies around the globe are facing major challenges such as exponential population growth, migration, and climate change. They ask: "How will societies manage those challenges?" noting, that most of the current research on cooperation has been done in small, relatively homogenous group contexts. They propose that future research should focus on examining which previously identified small group solutions are applicable to large heterogeneous groups and adaptable to the grand scale of current global challenges. Figure 12 presents the visual representation of the intergroup conflict think tank presentation.

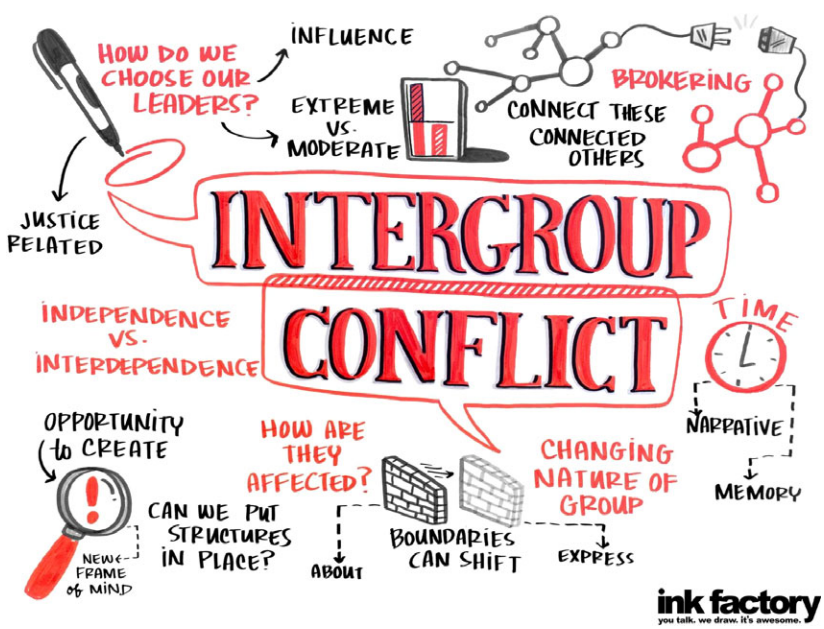


Figure 12. Intergroup Conflict think tank visual.

In the final paper, Maddy Janssens, William Maddux, and ToTran Nguyen describe current issues and future directions in the field of globalization. The authors begin by highlighting that although globalization is the defining issue of our current age, very little work has been done to investigate the *psychological dimensions of globalization*. Psychologists, they argue, are well positioned to theorize about key elements of globalization, such as "consciousness, self-awareness, identity, loyalty, and the changing nature of interpersonal and intergroup contact in times of intensified connectivity." They propose three areas for future research for psychologists who take a bottom-up perspective and conceptualize globalization as a process that is "fundamentally about individuals and their behaviors as co-drivers of the increasing diversity of society." Maddy Janssens and Will Maddux are presenting the globalization think tanks ideas in Figure 13.

Figure 13. Maddy Janssens and Will Maddux, Globalization think tank leaders, April 2018, Evanston, IL.

First, they discuss the importance of understanding the effects of globalization on cognition and behavior. Past work shows that global experiences can have both positive effects (creativity and trust) and negative effects (negative outgroup attitudes), and thus, a key question for future research is to identify the specific aspects of global experiences that influence these divergent outcomes. Next, they suggest research should focus on hybridization and human agency in the study of globalization. They argue that hybridization is a bottom-up process that may be able to transform but also preserve people's identities, and so mitigate conflict created by globalization. They also suggest that research should examine how living in hybrid spaces affects individuals, for example, their ability to maneuver between different identity and meaning systems, and how hybrid identities may create both marginalization and cultural integration. Finally, the authors discuss the need to understand new forms of cooperation that are emerging in the context of globalization. They argue that just as globalization magnifies problems that affect people all around the world, more and more, local institutions and actors are mobilizing to drive change, thus raising the question of how diverse stakeholders can come to work toward a collective vision of change. Above all, their research agenda fundamentally calls for a multidisciplinary understanding of globalization, a reframing of culture and identity as dynamic processes, and a shift to view global and local not as two separate forces, but as an interconnected process. Figure 14 summarizes the discussion in the globalization think tank.

Figure 14. Globalization think tank visual.

Collectively, all of the think tank leaders and their groups charted new and unexplored territory at the intersection of culture and negotiation. Although each article in this special issue focuses on a specific area—trust, emotions, communication, intergroup relations, or globalization—common themes can be seen across all of the articles. One theme is the need for more *dynamic approaches* to the study of culture and negotiation. Whether the topic is changing levels of trust, the emergence of new cultures of emotions, the influence of intragroup dynamics on intergroup processes over time, or the dynamics of culture and identity in the context of globalization, the think tank authors clearly saw the need for new theories and methods that address the dynamics of change and emergence in negotiations. The authors also introduced unstudied dimensions of culture, such as honor, dignity, and face, and tightness-looseness, and suggested their potential importance in explaining cultural differences in negotiation processes and outcomes. There was also a call for more research on how *cultural incongruence* in norms and values affects negotiations, for example, differences in perceptions of expressed emotions, moral norms, the basis of trust versus assurance, and norms for communications. Research is needed to unpack the "black box" of cultural incompatibility in negotiations and interventions need to be developed that can help mitigate their effects. The authors were also uniform in calling for a more nuanced approach to culture and negotiation, arguing, for example, that many concepts in the literature, whether trust, the outcomes of globalization, norm violations, and emotional conflict, among other topics, can have *both a positive and a negative* impact on negotiating depending on the cultural context. Understanding what about culture cues positive or negative effects is a key challenge for future culture and negotiation researchers. Finally, many of the papers argue for the need for *multilevel and multimethod approaches* to the study of culture and negotiation, moving beyond static one-shot paradigms and an almost exclusive focus on experimental paradigms.

As organizers of the conference, we could not be more proud and thrilled with the process and outcomes that were generated by bringing so many brilliant and passionate scholars together to focus on

common interests. We thank all of the participants, the rapid-fire presenters, the keynote speakers, and especially the think tank leaders, for charting the next big ideas for culture and negotiation research. We also thank Shree Rajadurai and Shannon Reifsteck, conference staff, who handled all the logistics and put together the conference web site.

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