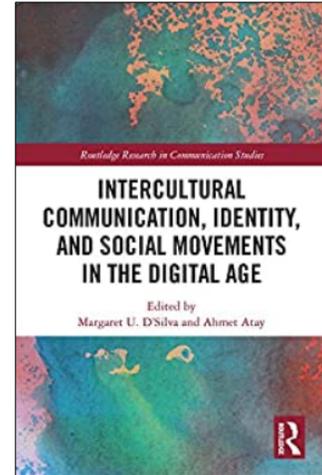Margaret U. D'Silva and Ahmet Atay (Eds.), **Intercultural Communication, Identity, and Social Movements in the Digital Age**, New York, NY: Routledge, 2019, 202 pp., $62.90 (hardcover).

Reviewed by
Liu Na
Jingchu University of Technology, China

In a digital age, mediated information exchanges among people of different cultures involve complex cultural information transfers. Although individuals and organizations are constructing, performing, and expressing cultural identities through digital communication platforms and social media, estranged from each other for political, religious, and other reasons, online communicators may engage in inconsiderate and divisive discourse, disrupting communities and creating cultural cleavages (Baysha, 2018). The book *Intercultural Communication, Identity, and Social Movements in the Digital Age,* edited by Margaret U. D'Silva and Ahmet Atay, critically examines the complex and multidimensional relationship between social media and intercultural communication with specific attention paid to identity issues and social movements in a globalized world. It contributes not only to analyzing how social media exchanges allow members of traditionally oppressed groups find their voices, cultivate communities, and construct their cultural identities in multiple ways, but also to providing interdisciplinary philosophy perspective of media and new media studies, critical intercultural communication, and academics studying social identity and social movements. This volume can function as a guidebook for scholars and students who are working in the fields of media and new media studies and intercultural communication.

This volume provides readers with an introduction and two parts that include 10 chapters. The introduction gives an overview of the purpose for analyzing how social media simultaneously facilitates a vibrant public sphere and creates intercultural and social cleavages. This introductory chapter underlies the succeeding two parts by offering a well-grounded understanding of the issues of diversity, oppression, and identity in the context of media and intercultural communication.

For the purpose of explaining how intercultural communication occurs in digital contexts and exploring the ways in which new media technologies and digital platforms offer opportunities for identity construction precisely, the first article in Part I, by author Katie Day Good, explores how the cross-cultural exchanges from pen pals to ePals present an idealized and enduring communicative practice from the Machine Age to the Digital Age. The author also places emphasis on the connection between pen pal exchanges and ePal chats. In addition, with a detailed analysis of these mediated interactions from intercultural communication dimensions, the author shows her concern about the cultural influences from the social media platform.

In chapter 2, Nathian Shae Rodriguez focuses on space differently and examines the narratives of people dispersed from their place of origin. The author highlights gay refugees from the Middle East now living in the United States to understand the complex relationship between their identity negotiation and

media use. This chapter additionally reveals how Western media motivates gay men to authenticate this aspect of their identity. Similar to Rodriguez's viewpoint, Renee Middlemost digs into exploring issues around queer culture in chapter 3, "'Serving Activist Realness': The New Drag Superstars and Activism Under Trump," which, through investigating the popularity of the stars from the reality television show *RuPaul's Drag Race*, offers these celebrities an opportunity to champion important causes. This chapter underlines the significance of using celebrity drag personalities, which not only draws attention to marriage equality but also trans inclusivity in the current difficult political climate.

By investigating CNN's and BBC's coverage of Brexit, chapter 4 emphasizes the political issues surrounding "Brexit and EU Migration on the BBC and CNN: Britishness Versus EU Identity." Author Fathi Bourmeche attempts to frame a connection among repercussions on British and global economies. In addition, it is notable that the author proves how Brexit is framed in terms of its impact on British and EU identity, and with the help of analysis, the author fully discerns that EU identity should no longer be part of the UK from the outlook of Britain's future.

In the concluding chapter of section one, Monserrat Fernández-Vela shows her concern about the Facebook pages of three important UN agencies under the framework of otherness, power and knowledge, positionality, and discursive practices. The Facebook pages used in this unit are rather illuminating in widening users' perception of the importance of issues such as human rights, poverty, health, gender, and refugees. Furthermore, using a critical discourse analysis of the Facebook pages of three important UN agencies serves as a way to attempt to appeal to Western audiences.

Different from the earlier chapters that focus on the occurrence of digital contexts in intercultural communication, Part II shows a shift in attention to the presentation of activism and social awareness and garners support from activists in using new media technologies. In chapter 6, serving as a crucial turning point, Nina Grønlykke Mollerup proposes extensive ethnographic fieldwork in Egypt and the strategies of holding media attention, based on the framework of communication ecologies. Through exposing the campaign's vast array of communicative practices and analyzing them in garnering corporate media attention, this project implies the necessity of creating a political awareness of the cause, which is beneficial to intercultural engagement. Chapter 7 gives a detailed report on a project by Olga Baysha, who implemented a modified unit on a conflict in a different geographical region. By examining the activities of users on SNS, for example, the unfriending during the Maidan conflict in the Ukraine, the chapter enlightens online users on how to fulfill online activities in a high rate of unfriending of opponents and cultural others. Through exposing the conflict of users on SNS, this project implies that the possibility of unfollowing can result in a more homogenous online environment, which deepens existing cultural fissures.

The following two chapters address the feminist movement using online spaces to create campaigns. In chapter 8, Huda Mohsin Alsahi explains how the implementation of a new angle entitled "Analyzing the women's right to drive campaigns" by Saudi Arabian women enriches and expands their grassroots campaign by mobilizing protests on Facebook. In addition, it is worth paying attention to the fact that online platforms such as Facebook open up alternative spaces for women to create feminist collaborations, which can help feminists incorporate religion into intersectional feminism, garnering viewers and supporters outside of Saudi Arabia. Similarly, Alex Rister and Jennifer Sandoval cite in chapter 9 a

meaningful and contextualized designator, "#DistractinglySexy," explaining how the label being used in comments on public tweets about women in science at an international conference can be proved to be a feminist hashtag. Furthermore, a critical discourse analysis is employed using humor, sarcasm, and historical pictures and inspiration to conclude that the tweets constitute a counternarrative about women in science, particularly in digital spaces.

Exploring online activism, Yuyun W. I. Surya detects Papuan political resistance on social media in chapter 10, which focuses on regionalization and internationalization of Papuan identity. This analysis, based on intercultural dimensions, reveals a Facebook group called "Prang Papua," who persist in resisting oppression from Indonesia. It shows how graphic images and descriptive captions on social media allow Papuans to generate a political affiliation with Melanesia. And it also gives a logical deduction, a continuous raising of international awareness about human rights violations in Indonesia.

Overall, some major findings in this collection need to be emphasized. First, it offers readers a new perspective for exploring the complex and multidimensional relationship between culture and social media. Second, it provides a comprehensive analysis of how social media exchanges allow members of traditionally oppressed groups to find their voices, cultivate communities, and construct their cultural identities in multiple ways. Third, it highlights the specific impact on issues of identity and social movements in a globalized world.

In summary, this volume is worth recommending to scholars in media and new media studies, for it markedly devotes itself to the application of critical analysis in intercultural communication that highlights social identity and social movements within digital domains. Through meaningful demonstrations of cultural and digital tensions, forces, and opportunities, it shows how digital paltforms can further social justice causes, build solidarity, and cultivate an awareness of environmental and political issues both nationally and globally from transnational communication scholars. The interdisciplinary nature of this volume will be of much interest to a wide range of readers, in particular researchers in the fields of media, intercultural communication, and social identity and social movements.

Reference

Baysha, O. (2018). *Miscommunicating social change: Lessons from Russia and Ukraine*. Lanham, MD: Lexington.