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11 Managing a World of Problems
The Implications of Globalization for Applied Communication Research

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The linkage between macrolevel and microlevel communication systems has been the subject of investigation in most areas of applied communication scholarship, including groups (e.g., Frey, 2003), organizations (e.g., C. Stohl, 2005), and communities (e.g., Dearing, 2003; Ford & Yep, 2003). As the number of studies in each area grows, the importance of the global interconnectedness in human communication increasingly becomes clearer. Thus, although applied communication research has been conducted around the world for several decades, especially with respect to development (see Kincaid & Figueroa, this volume), the need for applied research reflective of global systems never has been more acute than it is today. This need is due, in part, to the growing realization that what happens in the daily lives of people in places such as Bangalore, India very much affects the lives of people in places such as Lincoln, Nebraska and Fort Wayne, Indiana. As people from differing cultures and nations engage each other with greater regularity, many experience greater economic, social, and political opportunities. At the same time, new tensions emerge between nations and many people feel a sense of unease or loss due to the influence of those who used to be more distant and with whom they had less contact. In recognition of the systemic connection of people, regardless of national boundaries, Williams (2002), echoing Barber’s (1995) argument in his book Jihad vs. McWorld, noted in the introduction to a special issue of Communication Studies devoted to globalization that “the dialectical relationship between ‘globalism’ and ‘localism’ is perhaps the defining dialectic of international and intercultural dynamics at the beginning of the new millennium” (p. 1).

This chapter focuses on the importance of conducting applied communication research in response to the rapid changes that grow out of this defining dialectical tension between globalism and localism, generally considered a key feature of globalization. Specifically, I explore the role that applied communication research can play in facilitating the management of a number of issues related to the growing use of information technology and computer-mediated communication, global health concerns (such as HIV and flu pandemics), trans-border conflicts, global issues in public relations and advertising, international commerce, and the increasing volume of intercultural communication. Although development communication is an important area of applied research with a long history, it is the focus of another chapter in this volume and, hence, a discussion of that body of work largely is excluded here.

Globalization

Globalization, a term coined in the 1980s to capture the phenomenon of the growing interconnectedness of the world’s population, has developed a broader meaning and usage over the ensuing decades. For some, such as Toynbee (2000), globalization can be
considered a synonym for the “Americanization” of global culture. In defining globalization that way, Toynbee evoked the metaphor of a giant strawberry milkshake covering the globe with what might be considered the worst of Western culture—mostly, U.S. consumer values and practices seeping into every crevice of humanity. However, many scholars view globalization as something more than the spread of U.S. culture across the world; they see it as an increasing interconnectedness between all people that is changing, in fundamental ways, through mutual and reflexive influence, how everyone lives, regardless of where they reside. Thus, although Western culture, in general, and U.S. culture, in particular, are major influences around the world, it also is the case that people and events elsewhere are shaping the West. Such influence occurs not only through catastrophic events, such as September 11, 2001, but also through more mundane influences as well. For example, although the United States historically has been a net food exporter, it has shifted to a net importer in the last few years because of an increasing appetite for various “ethnic” foods and year-round fresh produce.

Although Hutton and Giddens (2000b, p. vii) noted that “every generation believes it is living through great change,” the increasing interrelatedness among the world’s population is not itself a new trend; globalization, in fact, “is a relatively new term used to describe a very old process” (What is Globalization? n.d., ¶ 1). From the beginning of human existence on Earth, people constantly have spread across the planet, creating and strengthening relationships that span the globe. However, many scholars argue that the current processes of globalization are qualitatively different in a number of important ways from those of previous eras (e.g., Charan, 2006; Hutton & Giddens, 2000a; Prestowitz, 2005; Sachs, 2005).

To contrast globalization in the current age with that of previous eras, Prestowitz (2006) and Sachs (2005), among many authors, suggested that globalization can be understood as unfolding in three waves. The first wave, capped by the Industrial Revolution, occurred in the centuries leading up to World War I. According to Sachs, technology, trade, and communications had developed to such a degree during the Industrial Revolution that many people felt a sense of inevitability about the order of things that is not dissimilar to many voices heard today. As Sachs noted:

This was the first era of globalization, an era of global trade, an era of global communications over telegraph lines, an era of mass production and industrialization—in short, what would seem to be an era of inevitable progress. And it was globalization under European domination. It was viewed as not only economically unstoppable, but also the natural order of things. This imagined natural order gave rise to the infamous “white man’s burden,” the right and obligation of European-descended whites to rule the lives of others around the world which they blithely did with a contradictory mix of naiveté, compassion, and brutality. (p. 43)

However, with the ending of World War I, this period effectively was laid to rest.

The second era of globalization, defined as the period from the beginning of World War I to the end of the 20th century, largely was one of globalization disintegration that occurred between the world wars, and led to the rebuilding of a global system from 1947 on. This wave of globalization was marked by political and economic isolationism and fragmentation (Prestowitz, 2006; Sachs, 2005). Such fragmentation was especially evident in the post-World War II era, when nations were considered to be of the First, Second, or Third World, depending on the political and economic zone in which they were situated. With the end of the Cold War (the demise of the Second World) and an increasing realization that the nonaligned nations were failing to prosper (the Third World),
most nations decided to participate in the global system of the First World. This participation resulted in greater movement of people and trade among nations that had, for several decades, been politically at odds with, and economically isolated from, one another. These changes set the stage for the third wave of globalization, which was not simply a return to the steady march of interconnectedness that characterized the first wave but, instead, a new form of globalization that was viewed as transformative in nature.

Friedman (2005) labeled the current wave “Globalization 3.0” and likened the transformation to a flattening of the world, suggesting 10 key processes that drive the third wave: the fall of the Berlin Wall, work-flow software, open-sourcing, outsourcing, off-shoring, supply chaining, in-sourcing, in-forming, the wireless revolution, and Netscape going public. Charan (2006), with a more narrow focus on business, stated that “this seismic shift began roughly 10 years ago, brought about by three forces: mobility of talent, mobility of capital, and mobility of knowledge, thanks largely to the Internet” (p. 47). Giddens and Hutton (2000, p. 1) noted four key areas of change that led them to conclude that “something very new is happening in the world”: (1) the development of global communication systems, particularly the internet; (2) the shift away from an industrial-based economy; (3) the collapse of the Soviet structure; and (4) the impact of current globalization trends on everyday life. Giddens and Hutton argued that “if one puts together these four sets of influences, the level of global transformation they signal is nothing short of spectacular” (p. 2).

Communication and Globalization

It is in the transformative aspects of these global changes that we find the greatest significance of international applied communication research. Specifically, we need to understand how communication changes and is changed by the processes of globalization. Major changes in both communication and transportation technology enable people to connect with each other, either electronically or in person, with both greater speed and ease than ever before. These technologies afford people the ability to meet and work with a greater number of people at a faster pace, altering the manner in which relationships—economic, social, or those in conflict—are developed and maintained. In other words, the third wave of globalization is transformative because it is predicated on a fundamentally different communication system than previously, one that is rapid, both virtual and face-to-face, and global, with an almost infinite capacity to connect people whether they want to be connected or not. C. Stohl (2005), summarizing the connection between the key processes underlying this transformation and communication, identified six processes that are embedded in virtually all theories of globalization:

1. The dramatic increase in economic interdependence worldwide
2. The intensification and deepening of material, political, and cultural exchanges
3. The global and rapid diffusion of ideas and knowledge enabled through new information technologies
4. The compression of time and space
5. The disembedding of events and institutions, which permits new realignment and restructuring of social interaction across time and space
6. Increases in global consciousness through processes of reflexivity. (p. 247)

C. Stohl observed that “communication is central to all six dynamic processes, providing many pathways for communication scholars to contribute to the understanding of organizing and globalization” (p. 248).
One path for research is a focus on the overall processes of globalization. Although some people see unparalleled opportunities in the changes brought about by globalization, others see a need to reexamine how people and nation states engage each other politically, economically, and culturally (Best, 2005; Bruner, 2002; Faux & Mishel, 2000; Hochschild, 2000; Ingram, 2002). Many scholars, political leaders, and social advocates find that globalization has not treated all people equally, and certainly not fairly. Faux and Mishel (2000) reported that “in the spring of 1999, World Bank President James Wolfensohn observed of global financial markets: ‘At the level of the people, the system isn’t working’” (p. 93). As Faux and Mishel noted:

Today, from unemployed rioters in Jakarta, to strikers in Michigan, from sullen unpaid miners in Russia, to out of work skinheads in East Germany, one can see signs of building resentment against a globalization that leaves a large number of people behind. (pp. 95–96)

These trends continue and have resulted in protests involving thousands of people at the World Trade Organization (WTO) meetings. Studies such as those by DeLuca and Peeples (2002) and Kahn and Kellner (2004) illustrate how media can be used both to understand and facilitate protests related to the policies and practices of globally focused governments and businesses. DeLuca and Peeples’s study examined how media were used in the Seattle WTO protest, concluding that the concept of a “public screen” should be added to the notion of a “public sphere” to reference the role of media coverage of public protest and to understand more fully the impact of such demonstrations. Kahn and Kellner (2004), studying the use of Internet activism by members of social movements, found that media influence the development of globalization (or, as some suggest, antiglobalization; see, e.g., Palmer, 2007; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2002).

A second path for research is the development of communication theory on globalization. Undoubtedly, communication scholars, along with other scholars, should develop theoretical understandings that illuminate globalization processes, and applied communication scholarship should play a vital and dynamic role in that process. As noted above, C. Stohl (2005) provided a perspective that serves as a beginning frame of reference for the development of scholarship focused on the role of communication in creating, shaping, and sustaining the third wave of globalization.

Seibold (1995) posited two roles for applied communication research, the first of which is testing theory in applied settings to illuminate the relationship between theory and practice. From this perspective, as communication scholars create theories related to globalization processes, applied research testing those theories plays an important role in theory development. Such research not only advances the scholarly enterprise; it also assists practitioners in understanding how communication theory may serve as a useful guide to improving the human condition. For example, Parrish-Sprowl’s (2003) study of a group forming an organization in the nascent stages of the Polish transformation to a market economy both contributes to the development of a body of research that employs the bona fide group perspective (Putnam & Stohl, 1990, 1996; C. Stohl & Putnam, 1994, 2003) and increases our understanding of how Poland developed as a postsocialist nation.

The second category of applied communication scholarship described by Seibold (1995) is research conducted specifically to achieve applied ends. Globalization presents a number of challenges that either are a new form of an old problem or a new issue that has developed as a function of the transformation from the second to the third wave. One example of the first type of challenge is the movement, beyond offshoring low-skill fac-
tory work, to include highly skilled computer engineering positions that previously were thought to be secure. This issue raises several questions, such as, given the global movement of work, how labor organizations should appeal to potential members in various countries or how organizations can socialize members in a world where jobs are highly ephemeral and still motivate employees.

An example of the second challenge is the difficulties associated with creating a sustainable local economy in the context of greatly expanded global competition for nearly everything (Charan, 2006; Friedman, 2005; Prestowitz, 2005 Sachs, 2005). A number of communication questions emerge from this issue. For instance, a growing area of interest in many places is applied communication research about what constitutes intercultural communication training needs in different locales as organizations seek markets beyond their borders. In addition, the question arises of how culture affects the persuasion processes inherent in advertising and public relations, given differing cultural and political backgrounds across the globe. Thus, applied communication research should reflect the dynamics of globalizing processes, regardless of the locus of the situation or issues studied.

**Internationalizing Applied Communication Research**

Internationalizing applied communication scholarship does not imply a loss of focus on domestic issues, no matter the country in which the research takes place, but, rather, recognition of the relationship between the local and the global, and the concomitant need to situate research in a larger framework. Internationalizing applied communication research in these ways has at least three important implications.

First, applied communication research should reflect the greater connectedness of people across nations and cultures that has arisen from the processes of globalization. One way of moving in this direction is to focus on international populations in applied research related to theory development and testing. Many theories in communication, as well as in other disciplines, are based on research conducted within a single country. For instance, Petronio and Kovach (1997), recognizing the need to move beyond a theory’s country of origin, tested communication privacy theory (which was developed and tested only in the United States) by studying residents of Scottish nursing homes. Because the high privacy needs of Scots provided a unique environment to test communication privacy management theory (Petronio, 1991), this research study examined the utility of this theory across cultures. In another example mentioned previously, Parrish-Sprowl (2003) examined the relationship between a group and its relevant contexts in Poland, in part, because the setting provided an opportunity to study the macro–micro relationship of groups and societies from the bona fide group perspective. Never before in history had such a large-scale, multination, economic transformation been attempted, and the difficulties faced in each nation that was undergoing the myriad of changes associated with the movement to a market economy contained some commonalities, along with unique features arising from local political and economic contexts. Parrish-Sprowl’s (2003) study provided not only a different cultural context for testing the bona fide group perspective (which previously had been studied only with U.S. groups) but also explored an aspect of change that was international in scope. In using international populations, such applied studies provide an implicit recognition of connectedness in communication theory as it develops.

Crabtree’s (1998) applied communication scholarship illustrates an alternative example of incorporating connectedness, by drawing together research literatures that developed substantially independent of one another to study projects conducted in various nations. Specifically, she intertwined work on development communication, cross-cultural
adjustment, and service learning to explain applied communication projects that she and her students conducted in El Salvador and Nicaragua. Her study illustrated how concepts such as social justice and practices such as service learning (see Darling & Leckie, this volume) can serve people both directly and indirectly, across national and cultural boundaries, and acknowledged important issues arising from the local context, due to the participatory action research design that Crabtree employed. At the same time, some investigations, such as Götzenbrucker’s (2004) case study of computer-supported social networks in a mobile phone company, most likely located in Europe, can illustrate concepts and their application without explicitly indicating the specific cultural context of the study. In this case, the use of e-mail by work teams to establish and maintain social networks in a corporate setting was assessed. This study, thus, focused on connecting people by electronic communication—a medium not bound by geographical borders and ethnic cultures. By conducting research that theoretically implicitly and explicitly recognizes international connectedness, applied communication research promotes better understanding of the processes of globalization.

The second implication of internationalizing applied communication scholarship is that even research focused on specific domestic issues should take into account the global context in which those issues are situated. Although the disciplinary study of communication is spreading across the globe, the largest national concentration of departments and scholars still is in the United States, making domestic research in this country a useful example to illustrate the point. Researchers, when analyzing communicative practices in natural settings, benefit from an international agenda because of both direct and indirect implications of events occurring elsewhere for domestic issues and practices. War, outsourcing, business competition, and population mobility, for instance, outside of North America all directly affect citizens in the United States. Poverty, HIV, malaria, and political unrest in other countries, to name just a few examples, indirectly influence U.S. citizens’ lives, no matter where these problems exist. Although economic developments in a small country, such as Poland, may not seem relevant to people in the United States, those developments, nonetheless, are influenced when Polish computer programmers supplant those in the United States or when profits from a General Motors (GM) or Volvo (Ford) plant built near Krakow, Poland affect stock prices on the New York Stock Exchange. Informed by an increased understanding of communicative practices in countries other than the United States, applied scholars can offer greater insight into U.S. domestic issues.

A more specific example illustrates the global implications for communication practice. The significant cuts in the number of employees in North America by the big three U.S. auto companies are well known. In particular, even as GM’s market share in North America shrinks and that of Toyota grows, in China, the opposite is happening, largely because the labor costs there are more equal, as both companies pay lower benefits and neither company has large pension obligations. Moreover, although the big three auto companies have been dramatically reducing the number of employees, European and Asian auto manufacturers have been hiring to staff their U.S. auto plants. As a consequence, the number of auto-manufacturing employees has remained fairly constant in the United States, albeit with a different employer mix. Given this situation, a communication consultant advising either GM or United Auto Workers negotiators must offer advice in a different way than if the competitive situation was more domestic than global. Scholars not only need to consider management-labor negotiations with respect to globalization; when applied researchers assess training programs, organizational structures, and other communication issues for businesses and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), they also may want to consider both practices from the perspective of other nations and the role of increased international communication between organizational members.
Third, because the local and global become intertwined, some issues are important on a world scale and should be of concern to everyone, even if those issues manifest themselves unevenly across the planet. For example, practicing safe sex to prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS is a global issue, even though, in some places, the number of people infected at present is low and the number of people infected by these diseases is disproportionately located in Sub-Saharan Africa (see Witte & Roberto, this volume). To manage HIV and AIDS effectively, these diseases must be contained everywhere possible, making it a universal problem for everyone, even for those who are not now directly affected. The management of global issues related to the economy, health, environment, and conflict, among many others, thus, merit attention from applied communication scholars. Applied communication studies focused on such global issues, however, often are either few in numbers or absent altogether.

Some recent journal articles and books focused on applied communication research have noted the need to fill the void in our knowledge of global issues. For example, Ellis and Maoz (2002), in their research on trans-border conflict between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, stated that “very little research...examines cross-cultural argument interactions between cultures engaged in extreme macro-political conflict” (p. 181). M. Stohl and Stohl (2005) offered a similar observation in their study of global regimes, stating that “the study of international regimes has been a central area of research in international relations for the last 20 years but virtually ignored in the communication literature” (p. 445). With a few exceptions, applied communication research focused on global issues (aside from development communication), has yet to go global in its reach. Even in a volume covering gender in applied communication contexts, the international dimension essentially was absent (Buzzanell, Sterk, & Turner, 2004; see also Buzzanell, Meisenback, Remke, Sterk, and Turner, this volume). This lack of attention is unfortunate, for there is no deficit of international issues and problems for which applied communication research can have a positive and substantial impact, both in improving the specific situation and increasing our understanding of the relationship between international and local contexts.

Because the third wave of globalization began to unfold in the 1990s and has continued to accelerate into the 21st century, the literature reviewed here generally is from 1995 forward. The applied international research conducted in that time frame, thus far, provides a beginning, but much more need and opportunity remain to be fulfilled. Leaving development communication aside (often treated as the use of mass communication to achieve economic development aims; see Kincaid & Figueroa, this volume), the focus here is on those broad areas that are not necessarily confined to national boundaries. These areas of research are divided into seven broad topics: (1) information technology and computer-mediated communication, (2) improving health communication, (3) trans-border conflict, (4) civil societies, (5) public relations and advertising, (6) international commerce, and (7) general intercultural issues. Each of these areas constitutes an important type of research within the context of globalization.

Information Technology and Computer-Mediated Communication

Perhaps the fastest growing area, in terms of the number of applied studies, is that of information technology (IT) and computer-mediated communication (CMC) research (e.g., Abdulla, 2007; Anderson, Fogelgren-Pedersen, & Varshney, 2003; Bouwman, 2003; Dimitrova & Beilock, 2005; Dimitrova & Connolly-Ahern, 2007; Götzemberger, 2004; Gulyás, 1998; Heaton & Taylor, 2002; Manger, Wicklund, & Eikeland, 2003; Masoodian, 2001; Mohammed, 2004; Rasanen & Kouvo, 2007; Valo, 2003; see also Lievrouw, this volume). These studies range from the implementation of information systems to the
development of relationships in various CMC cultural contexts. Given the importance of the Internet and IT in the globalization process, it is not surprising that this area has received substantial attention.

Studies such as those by Anderson et al. (2003) and Götzenbrucker (2004) focus on the role that connectivity through CMC plays in both the structure of organizations and relationships among coworkers in a virtual context as communication crosses geographical and national boundaries. Such studies contribute to a body of literature that allows for comparison of CMC usage within one culture to that which occurs within another. More important, as Anderson et al. observed, new communication technologies facilitate business process reengineering and, thereby, reshape organizational communication as it has been studied for the past few decades. Both individuals and organizations alike benefit from greater understanding of how CMC works within, in contrast to, and across cultures as we move forward towards even greater interconnectivity. Because so much interconnectivity occurs in mediated environments, applied communication research in this area is critical for understanding globalization processes.

Adding to this knowledge are studies such as that by Masoodian (2001), which provide a starting point for examining the intersection of virtual and physical culture in CMC work environments. Recognizing that task-based methodologies for computer software design are not conducive to the development of virtual communities created by people with little or no computing technology, Masoodian offered an alternative design that facilitates the development of such communities. Creating ease of use for people interested in connecting via the Internet facilitates the growth of connections between people who otherwise might never meet, virtually or face-to-face. This research, however, needs to be paired with studies of intercultural communication to further unlock the complexities of CMC and international relationships. One example of a study that begins this process is that of Manger et al. (2003), which utilized samples from across three countries to compare interpersonal skills employed in a face-to-face context to those used in a mediated environment. Such research focuses not only on specific organizations but also sheds light on skills needed to achieve professional communication competence in a CMC-oriented international organization. As the number and importance of both face-to-face and CMC cross-national/cultural interactions grow, studies such as this should increase in number as well.

Health Communication

A decade ago, Freimuth (1995) observed that few applied health communication studies had been conducted. Since that time, a number of applied studies of health communication have occurred (see Kreps & Bonaguro, this volume), but the number of international studies still is small relative to the need for such work. Moreover, those studies that have been conducted in countries other than the United States—such as those on breast cancer (Jones, 2004; Sun, Zhang, Tsoh, Wong-Kim, & Chow, 2007), condom usage (Katz, 2006), diabetes (Andersson, Bjäräas, Tillgren, & Östenson, 2007), family planning (Boulay & Valente, 2005), health information (Underwood, Serlemitsos, & Macwangi, 2007), HIV and AIDS (Brottn, Ueno, Smith, Austin, & Bickman, 2007; Dong, Chang, & Chen, 2008; Farr, Witte, Jarato [sic; Jerato], & Menard, 2005; Lombardo & Léger, 2007; A. N. Miller, Fellows, & Kizito, 2007; A. N. Miller et al., 2008; Porto, 2007; Witte, Cameron, Lapinski, & Nzyuko, 1998; Witte, Girma, & Girgre, 2002–2003; see also Roberto & Witte, this volume), medication advertising (Dens, Eagle, & De Pelsmacker, 2008), obesity (Eagle, Bulmer, & De Bruin, 2004), reproductive health (Valente & Saba, 1998), and tobacco smoking (Brugge et al., 2002; Chang, 2005; Goodall & Appiah, 2008; Guttman & Peleg, 2003)—frequently are published in the United States, perhaps limiting access to
such research in other locales. Given the scope of the problems related to public health, along with their human and political importance, the need for such research is compelling; consequently, this is an area where applied communication scholarship can fulfill a serious need and, hence, more applied communication scholars need to respond.

Diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, and AIDS kill millions of people each year. These diseases not only exact a heavy human toll in unnecessary pain and suffering but also play a role in perpetuating a culture of poverty in places such as Sub-Saharan Africa. Although much work has been done in health communication to develop more effective approaches to health care (see Kreps & Bonanguro, this volume), the continual spread of serious health problems suggests that much more needs to be done. In addition, when health communication research is conducted, the important step must be taken to incorporate the findings into the practices of health professionals. Studies such as that by Hoffman-Goetz, Friedman, and Clarke (2005), which examined HIV and AIDS coverage in aboriginal newspapers in Canada, offer important insights into how people process information related to disease. However, although the study provided valuable insight for the development of health campaigns in Canada, the authors did not indicate whether such knowledge actually is being used in campaign design. Applied communication research, thus, is needed to assist public health officials to engage in more effective dissemination of health information to promote the requisite behavioral changes necessary to enhance community and individual health (for an exemplar of such work, see Witte & Roberto, this volume).

As Dearing (2003) noted when discussing the gap between health research and practice, through necessity, communication professionals have moved ahead with health communication programs and training, such as the Communication for Behavioral Impact (COMBI) Program of the World Health Organization. COMBI, as Parks and Lloyd (2004) pointed out, “incorporates the lessons learnt from five decades of public health communication and draws substantially from the experience of private sector consumer communication” (p. v). This communication program has achieved notable success in reducing incidents of diseases, such as lymphatic filariasis and dengue fever, in a number of countries, including Malaysia and India. However, even the creators of this program believe that it could be improved through research about the conduct of COMBI campaigns.

**Trans-Border Conflict**

The study of conflict interaction has long been of interest to communication scholars. However, despite all of the research conducted about international conflict, little has changed in the world. As Nye (2000) noted:

Some things about international politics have remained the same over the ages. Thucydides’s account of Sparta and Athens fighting the Peloponnesian War 2,500 years ago reveals eerie resemblances to the Arab–Israeli conflict after 1947. The world at the end of the twentieth century is a strange cocktail of continuity and change. Some aspects of international politics have not changed since Thucydides. There is a certain logic of hostility, a dilemma about security that goes with interstate politics. Alliances, balance of power, and choice in policy between war and compromise have remained similar over the millennia. (p. 2)

Given the importance of studying conflict, it is surprising that so little applied communication scholarship has focused on trans-border conflict (Ellis & Maoz, 2002), especially given the events of September 11, 2001.
In their studies of interactions between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, Maoz and Ellis (2001, 2006; Ellis & Maoz, 2002, 2007; Maoz, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2002) offer a notable exception that brings a communication perspective to one of the most critical trans-border conflicts in the world. In providing a thoughtful analysis of Israeli Jews–Palestinian interaction patterns, along with helping to facilitate and evaluate structured group interaction between members of these two populations, they demonstrate the potential value of applied communication research by illustrating how theory testing can be done in applied settings, which, in turn, can assist practitioners’ work (see also related work by Albeck, Adwan, & Bar-On, 2006; Bar-On, 2000). Certainly, the conflicts between Israel and its neighbors are an important ongoing set of interactions with global ramifications.

Green (2004) provided another example of applied communication research about trans-border conflict. Focusing on the 2002 bombings in Bali, Indonesia, Green examined Australian perspectives on borders with respect to what many people living there consider to be their 9/11. The bombings in Bali were aimed at hotels that normally contain a number of Australians because Bali is a major tourist destination for people from that country. The timing of the bombings proved to be no exception, with a number of Australians killed in the blasts. Thus, in a sense, Australia was attacked, even though no bombs were planted on Australian soil. Green examined the Australian response to the bombings and the attending perceptions of borders that frame Australians’ attitudes about the attack. Given the borderless nature of the “war on terror,” this study gives a sense of how people might respond in a nationalistic way to attack, even when it is not on their soil. Not only should more studies be done with respect to the conflict related to global terrorism but studies also need to focus on hot spots in more local or regional conflicts as well, such as in Sudan or the Kashmir region of India and Pakistan, both of which have a relationship to how more global conflicts unfold.

Perhaps the best exemplar of applied communication research in an international context related to trans-border conflict is the work conducted in Cyprus by Broome (2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2006; Broome & Murray, 2002). For a decade, Broome has worked to build a peaceful and cooperative island community by bringing together Greek and Turkish Cypriots to create a collective vision for peace. By conducting communal training sessions (at first separately with these populations because they could not gain permission to work together until 3 months into the process), Broome facilitated a process of sharing that has enabled members of these two groups at odds with each other to develop a shared vision of peace. His work illustrates well the interplay of theory and application in relationship building, training, mediation, and negotiation in an effort to promote peace. Although Broome cautioned against using the results of his studies as a template for conflict management in other conflicts around the world, such as the one between Arabs and Israeli Jews, his studies constitute high-quality applied communication research that can improve global conflict management.

Applied communication scholars, however, can do much more to contribute to greater conflict management. As Pearce (1989) and others have pointed out, communication scholarship in the past few decades has produced a broad and deep understanding of the dialogic properties of conflict communicative practices. Works such as Littlejohn and Domenici (2001) and Domenici and Littlejohn (2006), which have been used in various local situations (in the United States and Uganda, for example), can be extended to trans-border conflicts. In particular, extending the theory of facework in the management of communication conflict can facilitate better human relations in a number of contexts. Geographical areas such as Iraq, Israel-Palestine, the Balkans, and Sudan, among many others, deserve attention by applied communication scholars, both to manage conflict in those specific areas and to increase people’s capacity to manage conflict, in general.
Civil Societies

Trent and Friedenberg (2000), in the epilogue of their book on political communication, posed the question: “Can a nation, even a county, be adequately, much less skillfully, governed by officials and advisors whose skills reflect the demands of successful political campaigning” (p. 372). U.S. taxpayers spend a considerable sum of money each year to spread democracy around the world, supporting initiatives related to the promotion of democratic government, free and fair elections, and equal opportunity for women, as well as the reduction of ethnic discrimination. Given the role of the United States in nation building, such issues are of particular concern, both to those in the United States, because much is being done in their name, and to those outside of it, due to the potential involvement of Americans in any number of regions and nations. Through both military action and peaceful means, the United States has invested itself in the development of democratic societies across postsocialist Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Political communication (e.g., legislative discussion and debate, public policy hearings, and political campaigns; see Kaid, McKinney, & Tedesco, this volume) is at the heart of developing a civic discourse that sustains a democratic government. Although Trent and Friedenberg most likely posed their question with respect to the United States, it is in our collective best interest that such questions be explored in areas where the United States is involved in developing national institutions.

Our understanding of nation building, however, should not be limited to those projects in which the United States is involved. Lengel (2000, p. 3), in her edited book, predicated her work, in part, on the argument advanced by Kluver and Powers (1999) that “civil society is formed discursively.” Although most of the work in Lengel’s book is not applied per se, it does create the foundation for applied research that assists in understanding how to build democratic governments and societies that embrace fair and equal opportunities to participate by all. The events of 9/11 are a graphic reminder that the development of a civil society anywhere in the world is not a local or regional problem alone; it is a global one whose breadth and depth is complex. The growing interconnectedness brought on by the processes of globalization offers an imperative to create a rich understanding of the consequences of nation building for all countries, regardless of whether a given nation is directly involved in the process. Applied communication research that offers insight into creating constructive global civic discourse that deepens our collective understanding of nation-building activities in various contexts, thus, is an important need.

Providing a beginning to such research, a small number of applied studies cover a range of issues related to civic discourse in a number of countries, including those dealing with political leaders (Frankel, 1991), ethnic issues (Steyn, 2004), the postsocialist transition in Europe (Ognianova & Scott, 1997), presentations of history (Oteiza, 2003), and gender (Rodriguez, 2001). At the core of all of these issues is the need to understand how to communicate in ways that help governments to be responsive to the needs of their polity and, in turn, to create a polity with the experience and sophistication necessary to govern those who lead. Globalization, thus, creates a practical need for everyone to understand the political discourse of other nations because it is quite likely that their country will become engaged with another country, with understanding of each other needed to create functional civil societies.

Key to understanding effective civic discourse in democratic nations is to illuminate political discourse in nations where citizens have little opportunity to participate in the governing process. Research related to political discourse in undemocratic countries, therefore, enhances our general understanding of those countries and illuminates possible policy alternatives in a given nation’s relationship with those countries. Applied research, consequently, should illuminate how communication works, regardless of the
desirability of the outcome. For example, countries such as North Korea, Iran, and Syria are problematic for the United States, in part, because so many voters in the United States, as well as a number of people in the U.S. government, need a better understanding of the political discourse of those nations. If civil society is formed discursively, we learn as much from studying how not to create a desirable society as we do from understanding how to achieve one.

Advertising and Public Relations

Advertising and public relations, almost by definition, offer rich opportunities for internationalizing applied communication research. Although both areas have grown steadily worldwide over the past few decades, the volume of advertisements and public relations campaigns exploded with the decline of socialism. With some exceptions, countries from the former Soviet bloc went from virtually no advertising and public relations to having huge industries in just a decade. However, even with all of the accumulated wisdom of decades in the business, multinational advertising firms still frequently managed to stumble when entering these markets, often due to a lack of cultural understanding with respect to the new markets they were entering (e.g., Winter, Carveth, & Parrish-Sprowl, 1994). Without taking culture into account, businesses run the risk of alienating their markets in the process of trying to develop them (Carveth & Parrish-Sprowl, 1998). Public relations and advertising professionals in Poland, for example, recognized the value of applied communication research for helping their economic transformation and, in 1997, invited communication scholars from the United States to address a national meeting in Krakow on good practices (Face '97). This conference was significant in linking applied communication scholars focused on the development of advertising and public relations in the Polish cultural context. Such international linkages are an example of positive globalization processes and provide important opportunities to share applied communication scholarship.

Although the issues facing those in public relations and advertising often are the same in all nations, the cultural context offers a sometimes large and nuanced set of unique features that affect these communication processes. Thus, when Ihlen (2002) studied crisis management in the case of Mercedes Benz in Scandinavia, the issue of how to respond (standing one’s ground versus admitting an error) could happen anywhere, but the nature of the response required acknowledging the cultural context. Specifically, Ihlen examined the crisis spurred by pictures published in a Swedish motor magazine of the overturn of a Mercedes A-Class car during a standard maneuver in a Nordic motor test, called the “elk test” or the “moose test.” Without some sense of the importance of such a test in Nordic nations, one might fail to grasp the importance of this crisis for the manufacturer. The same can be said for the studies of advertising and public relations in Australia (Jones, 2004); Bulgaria (Braun, 2007); China, including Hong Kong (Chan & Chan, 2005; Lee, 2004; Lock, 2003; Paek & Pan, 2004; Wu & Chan, 2007); Egypt (Keenan & Yeni, 2003); Israel (Avraham & First, 2003); Japan (Kawashima, 2006); Korea (Paek, 2005; Park, Lee, & Song, 2005); Mexico (Beltran, 2007); New Zealand (Eagle, Bulmer, & De Bruin, 2004); the Soviet Union (Tolstikova, 2007); Taiwan (Chang, 2005, Yang, 2004); Thailand (Punyapiroje & Morrison, 2007); Trinidad and Tobago (McFarlane-Alvarez, 2007); and the United Kingdom (Dee, 2007); as well as research about public service announcements in Belgium (Hatfield, Hinck, & Birkholt, 2007) and Finland (Lowe & Alm, 1997).

Research that examines and seeks to improve advertising and public relations in foreign contexts not only illuminates issues and practices in those countries but also offers insights that can serve the multicultural population of the United States as well.
With respect to issues related to globalization and nation building, Taylor (2000) offered an interesting perspective on the engagement of public relations strategies in the process. Examining the neighborliness campaign designed to help bridge multicultural issues in Malaysia, Taylor analyzed the Malaysian government’s program to improve relationships between those of differing ethnic backgrounds who suddenly found themselves living in proximity due to rapid urbanization. The program began with a focus on safety and expanded to encourage cooperation within neighborhoods. Taylor suggested that a public relations approach based on a relational perspective could strengthen nations with a multicultural heritage. Given the number of multicultural nations grappling with ethnic issues, such work is valuable. As research in development communication (see Kincaid & Figueroa, this volume), along with Taylor’s study suggests, the use of public relations and advertising to achieve the aims of social justice and democracy holds great promise (Moemeka, 2000). Such studies demonstrate that applied communication scholarship on public relations and advertising can offer thoughtful contributions in the international context by illuminating issues of common concern to scholars and practitioners alike.

**International Commerce**

As businesses and other organizations become more globally interconnected, the communication issues they confront grow in both number and complexity. However, as C. Stohl (2005) noted, “It wasn’t until the mid-1990s that the terms ‘globalizing’ and ‘globalization’ were found in the organizational communication literature” (p. 227). Even with calls from C. Stohl and others (e.g., Wiseman & Shuter, 1994), little has been written about organizations in international contexts (some recent examples include Diamond & Whitehouse, 2007; Dickson, Hargie, & Wilson, 2008; Maneerat, Hale, & Singhal, 2005; McCann & Giles, 2007; Wodak, 2007), especially research that is applied in focus. For instance, two recent textbooks on organizational communication by Conrad and Poole (2005) and K. Miller (2009) addressed globalization, and although both texts discussed a number of issues that applied communication research could help to illuminate, the chapters were notable for the absence of citing such research.

One example of an important issue for both business leaders and workers around the world is that of outsourcing (where businesses hire people from other companies, often in other countries, to do work that displaces employees in the home country), which currently is a $50 billion industry and is projected to continue to grow (McCue, 2005). Although McCue (2005) noted that outsourcing is beneficial to companies in some cases, it has not produced the level of economic benefits anticipated. McCue reported that a study conducted by Gartner, an information and technology research and advisory firm, stated, in part:

> Poor communication between the onsite and offshore project teams as well as between management and employees is also picked out by Gartner as a critical failure factor. “Effective communications are critical in offshore outsourcing projects. The reason many offshore deals fail is because of the propagation of misinformation and confusion due to inadequate communications among the project team and its contacts, as well as within the general employee population, executive ranks and local community,” the report said. (¶ 8–9)

Globalization, in many ways, is embodied in the practice of outsourcing, with work shifted around the world, altering relationships between workers, companies, and nations. Outsourcing is part of the reason that authors, such as Friedman (2005), see a changing
global economic structure on the horizon, one that is based less on national interest and more on the efficient conduct of business. Organizations will focus on their survival regardless of where they must operate to compete. Effectively, this means a shifting of economic power away from the West and toward India and China. Even now, however, businesses in both of those countries are looking to outsource work to become more competitive. Thus, because outsourcing is a major global factor that is likely to grow, applied communication research that illuminates its benefits and drawbacks, along with the ways and means of this practice, proves useful.

The practices, if not the study, of organizational communication have a history of global migration, such as the development of total quality management (TQM) in Japan and its importation to the United States (for an overview of this importation process, see Parrish-Sprowl, 2000). In 1997, I began to consult with a U.S. company that essentially had four major competitors in its North American market. Within 5 years, the number of competitors grew to over 70, with most of those businesses coming from other countries. Given that increased competition creates more pressure in the effort to succeed, organizations turn to various organizational communication systems and practices to survive and thrive. Although greater competitive pressure has been the case for businesses in the United States, it is a global issue. For instance, when the postsocialist nations joined the world market economy, the ways and means of organizing needed to change rapidly. In socialist times, the primary goal of organizations was full employment, not efficient production, but such practices could not survive in a market-driven economy. Applied communication research can reveal key issues and processes that facilitate the changes necessary to be successful in a competitive postsocialist economy (Parrish-Sprowl, 1994). For example, Parrish-Sprowl (2003) studied the strategic development of an organization in Poland as the principal participants attempted to develop an effective organization reflective of the new realities of the postsocialist market. As another example, Ziberi (2006) extended the work of Meares, Oetzel, Torres, Derkacs, and Ginossar (2004), which focused on employee mistreatment, into organizations in Macedonia. As the processes of globalization accelerate the interconnectedness of world business, the need for such research will grow as well.

The United States and Western European nations gave millions in aid to postsocialist countries to assist them in the transformation to a market economy. In the early 1990s, my university received a multimillion dollar grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to assist Poland in its transformation. Initially, the U.S. government did not include communication as part of this project; only after the Poles insisted that it be included was it added to the grant. The absence of international applied communication scholarship, thus, leads the communication discipline to be marginalized, even by the U.S. government. In my experience as a consultant to several businesses and organizations in postsocialist Europe, executives and leaders there have favorable views of communication theory, research, and practice once they are exposed to them. The communication issues involved in international commerce, therefore, need a much higher research priority from applied communication scholars.

**Intercultural Communication**

Many studies of the connections between people across national boundaries that may be considered applied examine various aspects of intercultural communication. Much of that work, by scholars such as Gudykunst (2001, 2003) and Ting-Toomey (1999), has application in its implications, even if the work is not applied in its focus. Hence, although Gudykunst engaged in extensive testing of anxiety/uncertainty management
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theory and Ting-Toomey developed face-negotiation theory, much of their research was concerned with how people might engage more productively in intercultural communication. Given the effects of globalization on the increasing amount of international interchange, through both business and leisure activities, intercultural communication skills become fundamental to communication competence (e.g., Baraldi, 2006; Miczo & Welter, 2006; Quingwen, Day, & Callaco, 2008; Starke-Meyerring, Duin, & Palvetzian, 2007; Ting-Toomey, 2007).

One place where the issue of international exchange is particularly salient is in higher education, perhaps the most highly regarded sector of the United States around the world. Each year, thousands of students from virtually every country in the world arrive in the United States to enroll in a university. One consequence of the high quality of U.S. universities is emulation by universities throughout the world. Over the past few years, I (with various colleagues in each location) have been involved in initiatives at several universities in Belarus, Indonesia, Macedonia, Poland, and Russia that are designed to improve pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment of students and faculty. Communication education research, thus, is an important area of applied scholarship (see Darling & Leckie, this volume) that should be extended to the international arena. Educational quality is a global issue because universities operate in an increasingly international context; therefore, communication educational practices across the world benefit from greater study.

Of special importance are the concerns and practices related to multicultural education and service learning, both of which applied communication scholars have much to offer in their implementation and assessment. For instance, in 2004, I attended a conference focused on multicultural education that was held in Jakarta, Indonesia. As a nation with a broad array of cultures, Indonesia needs to improve its multicultural pedagogy. The papers presented at that conference demonstrated that much needs to be done, and that communication education research can play a vital role in enhancing the quality of education across that nation. For example, as Husodo (2004), the keynote speaker for the conference, noted:

However, similarly to other developing countries..., the enlarging of opportunity to get elementary education is not able to significantly improve the human quality, either in work productivity, moral maturity, personal power and national discipline. It is due to the fact that the learning process experienced by educational participants tends to stress...hearing, recording and memorizing process and not...the teaching [and] learning process that can improve intellectual and vocational ability, strengthening personality and character. (p. 6)

Communication, as a discipline, has a rich tradition in the development of active learning that connects both intellectual material and presentational skills in ways that offer the type of pedagogy called for at the conference held in Indonesia. Service learning also can play a vital role in developing a more responsive education that connects learning to building better communities (see the essays in Droge & Murphy, 1999; see also Darling & Leckie, this volume). Service learning provides an excellent vehicle for applied communication research and, at the same time, offers a pedagogy that enhances both students’ education and the communities with which those students collaborate.

Another area of intercultural research with an applied dimension is that of contrastive rhetoric (generally, the study of linguistic practices across cultures), including studies such as that conducted by Shi (2004), which focused on issues of writing in a second language (see also the essays in Sharifian & Palmer, 2007). Although Americans primarily operate in the privileged language of English, many others learn English as a second
language out of necessity due to globalization. Multilingualism requires a tremendous set of communication abilities, even with the difficulties associated with performance in a second language. In turn, those who practice monolingualism miss the insights into culture that a second language provides, both by not having that second language and by not fully appreciating the difficulties associated with functioning in a second language.

Communication issues that arise around multiple language usage in multinational organizations are particularly ripe for applied communication research. Finally, some studies, such as the one by Valo (1998) that details the development of communication degree programs in Finland, offer insight into the spread of the communication discipline beyond the United States. The international development of the communication discipline is important to the development of applied communication research, for as the number of communication scholars and practitioners grows, so does the size of the disciplinary contribution to theory, research, and practice. The study of communication has begun to grow in postsocialist Europe and across Asia since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Much of the published work in those countries still lacks an applied dimension, although that focus slowly is increasing. The proceedings of the two Russian Communication Association conferences held in 2002 and 2004 contain applied communication research, mostly authored by U.S. scholars, as does an anthology edited by Leontovich and Parrish-Sprowl (2006), published in Russia, which includes the work of both U.S. and Russian communication scholars. International disciplinary growth, by its very nature, infuses an intercultural perspective into communication as a discipline and, more specifically, into applied communication research.

Conclusion

With the increasing recognition that globalization is capable of changing virtually every human activity, applied communication research can improve our understanding of how such change occurs and assist in developing practices that reflect new ways of communicating. Given that societies have become embedded in global realities, so must communication research, in general, and applied communication research, in particular. In any given year, the advancement of the discipline may be indexed by reading the collection of journals sponsored by communication associations, such as the National Communication Association (NCA) and the International Communication Association. In turn, the advance of applied communication research may be indexed, in part, by reading the Journal of Applied Communication Research and attending convention panels sponsored by NCA's Applied Communication Division. These applied research outlets offer scholarship that has much to contribute to our understanding of communicative practices associated with globalization trends.

Given the number and importance of the issues that arise from globalization, internationalizing applied communication research offers both a wealth of opportunities for communication scholars and the possibilities of growing appreciation of the value of applied communication research to scholars and practitioners working outside of the discipline. To connect with these opportunities and possibilities, in addition to conducting studies about globalization and its interconnected international environments, applied communication scholars should consider attending more conferences outside of their country or region; teach both short and long term in other countries; offer consulting, training, and development services internationally; and apply for grants that provide technical assistance on other continents. Such actions create connections with scholars from other places and provide opportunities to practice applied communication research elsewhere. Contributions of this nature can help to manage problems, apply and build theory, and
connect the communication discipline with critical contemporary world issues. In the final analysis, internationalizing applied communication research not only is necessary but also inevitable.

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