Globalization Theory

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Experiencing Globalization

The concept of globalization implies, first and foremost, a stretching of social, political and economic activities across frontiers such that events, decisions and activities in one region of the world can come to have significance for individuals and communities in distant regions of the globe.

— (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999, p. 15)

On a beautiful New Zealand spring day in November, 1983, I was rushing to the office of the plant manager of a multinational company to submit my final research report on communication and quality circles. As I entered the factory, I found myself face-to-face with the union secretary. “This is great,” I said. “I was told you weren’t going to be here today. I was just on my way to give X [the American plant manager] his report and then was going to put your copy in the mail. But since you’re here, take the report now—it will save me a trip to the post office.” He thanked me and accepted the report (the same one I had prepared for management as per my agreement with both management and the union before starting the research project), and I continued to the head office. Once there, the plant manager and I went over the results and conclusions contained in the report. We discussed
some very positive findings as well as a few issues of contention that were apparent in my analyses of worker and managerial communication patterns. After an hour, I gave my final thank you’s and good-byes, then went home. My family and I left for a month holiday in Australia before our return to the United States to usher in 1984.

I was feeling really good. After completing my dissertation in 1982 on the relationship between social networks and development of children’s communication competence, I had just finished my first international study, building upon my dissertation findings and my interest in organizational participatory groups and networks. While my husband was on a Fulbright appointment in New Zealand, I had spent 6 months in Christchurch working in an American-owned tire manufacturing plant collecting qualitative and quantitative data from 258 union members, 25 supervisors, and 10 managers. I was a participant observer in at least 50 quality circle meetings and spent more than 75 hours on the production line with the union workers making tires. I had found that workers involved in quality circles were more knowledgeable about key organizational issues and procedures; had developed richer, more diverse, and more multiplex communication networks; and had more positive attitudes than workers who were not part of the quality circle program. However, I also found that the most dissatisfied workers in the factory were former circle workers who expressed frustration about particular issues based on their knowledge, networks, and experiences within the participation program. The paradoxical effects of participatory programs and the changing patterns of communication were theoretically and pragmatically interesting, and they extended my earlier work into a new domain.

One month later, when I returned home to the United States, three telegrams (no e-mail in those days) from the U.S.-based international division head were waiting for me. With increasing urgency, each message demanded that I call him immediately. I didn’t. Instead, I first called colleagues in New Zealand and discovered that 3 weeks after I left there was an unanticipated work stoppage (for the first time in 3 years). Several phone calls later, I was able to piece together what had happened. Directly after the union secretary received the report, he shared it with the line workers. In contrast, it took the plant manager much longer to get the report “down” to the supervisory level. He had first sent it to the United States, where executives evaluated what should be done with it. By that time, the workers were demanding some sort of reaction to some of the issues raised in the report as well as other concerns they had voiced. The supervisors (who hadn’t seen the report and therefore didn’t actually know what was contained in it except through rumors) were increasingly frustrated. When
the work stoppage occurred, the U.S.-based American management blamed not only me for writing the report but also the plant manager for letting me give the report to the union. The union workers were furious with the American management and New Zealand supervisors. The supervisors were angry with everyone, and the finger pointing continued for weeks. Within 6 months, the plant manager was replaced. Soon thereafter, the quality circle program was replaced with a new form of workplace participation, the relationship between union workers and the management changed, and within a few years a Japanese company bought out the multinational corporation.

How and why such serious consequences followed the dissemination of information that was relatively positive and already known by many was both upsetting and fascinating to me. There were many causal possibilities, but equally possible was that there were no links and the later events were completely unrelated. Certainly the last of the changes was completely independent of my study results. As a new communication PhD, I understood the importance of emergent networks and the significance of the patterns of communication for message production and reception. I knew the intercultural theories that would help explain the differences in the behavior, attitudes, and interpretations of the American and Kiwi management; the New Zealand and Polynesian union workers and I also recognized that subcultural difference existed between labor and management, and between salaried and hourly workers. All of these clearly were important pieces in filling in parts of the puzzle of the times. But these micro and macro theories did not provide a very satisfying or full explanation of the events that were unfolding. I needed to find a theory that encompassed the complexity and volatility of what was happening in the organizational world. And perhaps, as I honestly look back after all these years, I was also searching for a perspective that would strengthen my resolve that my role as a participant observer did not make me responsible for what was rapidly unfolding. A theory of globalization would help systematically contextualize these events.

In this essay, I will explore the evolution of globalization theory, focusing on the work most relevant for organizational communication. The first section, “Globalizing Organizations,” summarizes some of the earliest communication and management theories that addressed issues related to organizational communication in an increasingly interconnected world. These early theories were designed to (a) understand how organizational survival and efficacy in contemporary society is built upon the ability to understand and address cultural differences within the workplace and across markets (theories of divergence), or (b) identify the environmental, technological, and
organizational mechanisms that result in the similar structuring and organizing of experience throughout the world (theories of convergence). The next section, “Organizing Globalization,” addresses more recent conceptualizations of globalization and organizational processes that holistically incorporate the historical, political, economic, social, and cultural tensions and transformations that were and still are taking place. An explication of the various debates and approaches to globalization within and across these academic disciplines is presented. Significantly, a commonality across perspectives is the critical role organizations play in the development, maintenance, and transformation of the global system. The third section, “Theorizing Globalization,” clarifies the ways in which globalization is approached in contemporary literature through a brief survey of the metaphors and definitions found in globalization theories. The final section, “Communicating and Globalizing,” explicates the organizational communication implications of six dynamic and interdependent processes found within most theories of globalization.

Globalizing Organizations

In the last hundred years, the political interstate system came to provide the dominant organizational forms for cross-border flows, with national states as its key actors. It is this condition that has changed dramatically since the 1980’s as a result of privatization, deregulation, the opening up of national economies to foreign firms, and the growing participation of national economic actors in global markets. . . . Increasingly NGOs, government regulators, mayors, professional associations, and others operate transnationally and thereby constitute a variety of cross-border networks. (Sassen, 2002, pp. 1, 2)

The 1980s were a time of great upheaval in the world of organizations. What was happening in the American company I had studied in a very distant part of the world was related to the economic, political, social, and technological context that was facing all organizations across the globe. The world was changing—new communication technologies such as fax machines and portable computers were easing the flow and speed of communications across time and space (Rice & Associates, 1984); some organizations were becoming more powerful than nation-states and had larger GNPs (Feld & Jordan, 1988); partnerships between national governments, multinational organizations, and local communities were becoming commonplace (Perrucci & Stohl, 1998); and problems of the environment, human rights, and disease were increasingly seen as global and not national issues.
In short, economic integration was just one form of global exchange that was increasing exponentially; there were also escalations in political, cultural, and personal global interconnections. In other words, the boundaries between domestic and international organizing of all kinds, whether by nongovernmental advocacy organizations, corporate organizations, or nonprofit or volunteer organizations, were progressively more blurred. To understand any organizational communication phenomena, it was critical to understand how organizations were positioned in relation to the larger communicative, economic, political, cultural, and social forces of the times.

And so I began to search for theories of organizing and communication that would capture both the macro and the micro aspects of collective action in an increasingly interconnected world. I sought to find a theory that would provide constructs that would help me explore the significance of these permeable boundaries and interconnected networks through which interpersonal communication was framed and through which organizational decisions, reactions, and relations emerged. I needed a theory grounded in the fundamental principle that micro agents and macro structures interactively shape each other, but although many communication theories created space for the study of multiple levels of collective action, the ones I was familiar with did not embody or specify the historical, political, economic, technological, and cultural aspects that were needed. Nor did they capture the degree and intensity of increasing linkages between domestic and global organizing. I was in search of theory to help me understand this complex and rapidly changing organizational landscape.

It is important to note that “globalization” wasn’t a popular term at that time. The word “globalization” first appeared in Webster’s dictionary in 1961, but virtually no academic or journalistic articles or books published before 1975 included the words globalism, globalizing, or globalization (Scholte, 2000). In interpersonal and organizational communication, cross-cultural and intercultural communication were well established (e.g., the first Handbook of Organizational Communication published in 1987 had a chapter titled “Cross Cultural Perspectives,” Triandis and Albert). In mass communication, influenced heavily by the prescient work of Marshall McLuhan and his notion of the global village, there was a focus on media and international telecommunications issues.

It wasn’t until the mid-1990s that the terms “globalizing” and “globalization” were found in the organizational communication literature. Even as late as 1993, I published an article in The Journal of Applied Communication Research titled “International Organizing and Organizational
Communication” (Stohl, 1993b), although I recognize, in retrospect, that I was really writing about the globalization of organizational processes. In 1994, when researchers in other fields had turned their attention to the importance of macro-cultural issues in organizational studies (as evidenced, for example, by special issues focusing on globalization in many of the major organizational journals1), communication scholars were still lamenting the lack of attention to communication issues in the multinational organization (see Wiseman & Shuter, 1994, p. 7).

Therefore, it is not surprising that my early search for a comprehensive theory was unsuccessful. I was able to find theories of divergence and convergence. Theories of divergence (e.g., Hall, 1981; Hofstede, 1984; Triandis, 1983) focus on issues of cultural variability and how those differences make a difference in how people enact, organize, and make sense of their organizational experience. An underlying premise of these theories is that in contemporary organizations, traditional national boundaries mean less and intercultural communication becomes more central and important. Metaphors associated with divergence theories often emphasize the energy/synergy, excitement, beauty, creativity, and options enabled by allowing differences to flourish in a global workplace; for example, the global marketplace, kaleidoscope, bazaar, or garden (Contractor, 2002; Gannon, 2001; Mitroff, 1987).

Divergence theories, grounded in issues of practical rationality (Habermas, 1984), focus on human interpretation and experience of the world as meaningful and intersubjectively constructed. Communication is the essence of culture, and organizational effectiveness is rooted in the ability of people from different cultures to work together. Divergence theories identify key dimensions of cultural variability (e.g., power distance, monochronic/polychronic approaches to time, high context/low context). Each dimension is then associated with particular practices or interpretations (Stohl, 1993a). Many researchers in organizational behavior, management, and communication rely heavily on these theories to explain how managers can create cultural synergy, improve workplace satisfaction, facilitate team effectiveness, and manage differences (e.g., Bantz, 1993; Harris & Moran, 1999; Krone, Garrett, & Chen, 1992; Stage, 1999) in workplaces that are increasingly multicultural and dispersed across time and space.

In contrast, theories of convergence focus on how and why organizations are becoming similar worldwide (e.g., Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989; Hickson, Hinings, MacMillan, & Schwitter, 1974). The convergence literature refers to a set of imperatives embedded in the global economy that result in similar organizational structuring across nations. Even when cultural differences are recognized, the theories minimize these differences and emphasize the similarity of structural adaptation.
The changing patterns and structures of communication typically related to the demands of globalization require flexibility, responsiveness, speed, and efficient knowledge production, generation, and dissemination. These organizing features are most likely to be found in nonhierarchical, emergent, interorganizational and intraorganizational networks (Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1990; Miles & Snow, 1995; Monge & Fulk, 1999; Nohria & Berkley, 1994). A great deal of empirical work addressing convergence processes has been conducted by administrative science and strategic management scholars who have been concerned with the macro restructuring of global industrial and service sectors and transborder organizational alliances (e.g., Astley, 1985; Burger, 2002).

Convergence metaphors may be optimistic (e.g., a melting pot, the end of history [Fukuyama, 1992]), neutral (e.g., networks [Lipnack & Stamps, 1986; Powell, 1990]) or negative (e.g., cultural imperialism [Tomlinson, 1999]). In recent years, one of the most popular convergence metaphors was developed by the sociologist George Ritzer (1993) in *The McDonaldization of Society*. McDonaldization is “the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world” (Ritzer, 1993, p. 4). Ritzer powerfully demonstrates how across the globe, the four fundamental values of McDonald’s production—efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control through nonhuman technology—are being imported into many aspects of our lives, from childbirth to death, from sports and sex to education, economics, and entertainment. Basing his work on the classic sociological and organizational theorist Max Weber, Ritzer explores how rational organizational systems that seem to facilitate organizational survival turn in on themselves, leading to irrational and undesirable global outcomes.

Most convergence theories operate within a framework of technical/instrumental rationality concerned predominantly with issues of organizational survival and effectiveness. The theories posit mechanisms that increase the likelihood of organizational isomorphism (e.g., DiMaggio & Powell, 1991); that is, the tendency for organizations to become increasingly similar. These mechanisms are rooted in the increased competitiveness of the global market and the institutional mechanisms related to legitimacy (coercive mechanisms), modeling behavior (mimetic mechanisms), and the increasing professionalism and standardization of professional norms (normative mechanisms). I refer the reader to Stohl (2001) for a detailed review of divergence and convergence perspectives.

As fascinating and useful as these metaphors and theories were to me, however, they did not focus specifically on the mutually dependent micro and macro trends and meanings embedded in the increasing interconnectedness
of contemporary societies. Neither perspective alone or even both together adequately accounted for the complex organizational processes that I watched unfold throughout the 1980s. The environmental and technological pressures for the organization I studied to become more and more similar to other large global manufacturing organizations was obvious in its choice to implement a Japanese-based participation program of quality circles (the convergence perspective). That decision clearly clashed with the proprietary pull of cultural identifications, traditional values, and conventional practices of social life in the various ethnic groups that constituted the New Zealand workforce (divergence perspectives). However, there was little place in any of these theories to explore the theoretical and methodological issues and tensions associated with identity, technology adoption and adaptation, informational dynamics, economics, the role of nation-states, interconnectedness, and global regulatory organizations that clearly were critical features of the organizational landscape.

The insufficiency of these theories also became obvious at the 1992 conference at Arizona State University on new directions for organizational communication. I gave an address (Stohl, 1992) titled “Exploring the New Organizational Horizon: IGOS [international governmental organizations], INGOs [international nongovernmental organizations], and BINGOs [business international nongovernmental organizations].” In the paper, I claimed that our field needed to develop a global perspective, to study all forms of international organizing, and to rethink how we situated and understood the internal/external linkages of organizational communication. I even developed a preliminary agenda for organizational communication. I was, however, unable to provide a satisfactory response to a fundamental question posed by a respected senior scholar in the audience. “What,” he asked, “are the theoretical constructs of this new global system that would help us understand what is going on in organizations today?”

A final concern regarding both the divergence and convergence perspectives was that most of the theories treated the increasing intensification of economic, political, cultural, and social interconnectedness as neutral phenomena. Yet these processes and effects clearly have significant and long-term consequences for individuals, organizations, communities, nation-states, and society. Life in the New Zealand community changed in both large and small ways as a result of the increasing proportion of exchanges across borders that were taking place. Integration may promote prosperous stability as well as sow the seeds of discordant stratification. Theories of globalization need to provide constructs and theoretical propositions that capture the mutual oppositions, disjunctions, paradoxes, differentiation, and unity that are embodied in the process.
Organizing Globalization

Not another book on globalization! No doubt many a prospective reader will at first despair that a further title has squeezed onto already overcrowded shelves. Has this hype-propelled bandwagon not already slaughtered too many trees? (Scholte, 2000, p. xiii)

How the academic world has changed since 1984! Not only is globalization at the forefront of most discussions about contemporary society, it is “an idea whose time has come” (Held et al., 1999, p. 1). People everywhere are talking and writing about it. A plethora of new theories abound. Social scientists, philosophers, humanists, economists, journalists, public intellectuals, and others across the globe have written treatises addressing globalization.

Most generally globalization is seen as “the widening, deepening, and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life” (Held et al., 1999, p. 5), but it also is conceived more narrowly. When globalization is viewed as an economic phenomenon, the means of production, exchange, distribution, and consumption are highlighted, neoliberalism ideology is seen to permeate society, the world market dominates, and transnational links often transcend and supplant nation-states. When globalization is viewed as a political phenomenon, the exercise of power, coercion, surveillance, and control over people and territories is paramount. When it is conceived as a cultural phenomenon, symbolic exchange through rituals, everyday practices, mass media, face-to-face communication, and cultural performances are central. The intensification of global consciousness, reflexivity, perceptions of risk, the struggle for identity, and community are overriding features of this approach. Table 10.1 presents a selected list of globalization theorists and the relevant definitions, concepts, and constructs associated with each.

It is important to note that diverse approaches can be found within as well as across disciplines and that different aspects of, and positions regarding, globalization are highlighted and challenged. In political science, debates rage over whether globalization means the end of sovereignty, the demise of national political autonomy, the end of history, the closing stages of the social democratic era, and, most generally, where the real locus of power is in the global system (Fukuyama, 1992; Krieger, 1999; Ohmae, 1995; Waters, 1995). Globalization is variously framed as a unified process that is accelerating beyond the control of single nation-states, a process that is contingent upon governmental policies “making and unmaking globalization” (Holm, 2003), or business as usual where the power of the
### Table 10.1: Selected List of Globalization Theorists

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<th>Primary Areas of Focus</th>
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<tr>
<td>Arjun Appadurai (1997)</td>
<td>Globalization is characterized by two forces, mass migration and electronic mediation</td>
<td>Cultural globalization Migration Urbanization Identity</td>
<td>The complexity of the global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture, and politics that we can understand through cultural flows. Deterritorialization is one of the central forces of modern society. The imagination works as a social force, producing new resources for identity and energies for creating alternative ways of organizing society. Everyday experiences of inequalities can be countered with the</td>
<td>Five dimensions of global cultural flows: (a) ethnoscapes (b) mediascapes (c) technoscapes (d) finanscapes (e) ideoscapes Translocality Intercontextuality Post-national identity Diasporic public space Imagined worlds</td>
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<td>Ulrich Beck (1992)</td>
<td>Globalization is the intensification of transnational spaces, events, problems, conflicts, and biographies The processes through which sovereign national states are crisscrossed and undermined</td>
<td>Political, economic, and social globalization</td>
<td>There has been a change from the logic of wealth distribution in a society of scarcity to the logic of risk distribution in late modernity Society is confronted with socially created risks that endanger the survival of humankind; leading institutions</td>
<td><em>Risikogesellschaft:</em> Risk society Three Dimensions (a) extensions in space (b) stability in time (c) social density of the transnational networks, relationships, and image flows</td>
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(Continued)
The emergence of information-alism is the new material, technological-basis of economic activity and social organization. Three interdependent processes of the network society: 

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<tr>
<td>Manuel Castells (1996, 1997)</td>
<td>The emergence of information-alism is the new material, technological-basis of economic activity and social organization. Three interdependent processes of the network society:</td>
<td>Political, economic, social, and cultural globalization</td>
<td>Shift emphasis from post-industrialism to information-alism Distinction between information society that emphasizes the role of information in society and has been part of all societies and</td>
<td>The Network Society Informational society The Power of Identity Real virtuality New system of communication, based in the digitized network Integration of multiple communication modes, which includes and</td>
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<td>(a) information technology revolution</td>
<td>the “informational society” in which information generation, processing, and transmission become the fundamental sources of productivity and power because of the new technological conditions emerging</td>
<td>comprehensively covers all cultural expressions</td>
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<td>(b) economic crisis of capitalism and statism</td>
<td>Networks constitute the new social morphology of our societies</td>
<td>Timeless time</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(c) blooming of new social movements</td>
<td>The processes of social transformation of The Network Society</td>
<td>Instant time of computer networks/clock time</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bipolar oppositions between the Net and the Self</td>
<td>encompass social and technical relationships of production, culture, and power</td>
<td>Space of flows</td>
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<td>Cyberspace/place bound localities</td>
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<td>Anthony Giddens (1990, 1999)</td>
<td>“The intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.” A dialectical process</td>
<td>Political, social, and economic globalization</td>
<td>Modernization renders social processes—time-space distanciation, disembedding, and reflexivity—that make social relations more inclusive across the globe. Globalization is a process of uneven development that fragments as it coordinates</td>
<td>Time-space distanciation Disembedding Reflexivity Four Dimensions of modernity (a) capitalism (b) surveillance (c) military order (d) industrialism</td>
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| David Harvey (1989)           | The transition from Fordism to flexible accumulation via the mediations of time and space | Cultural and economic globalization Postmodernity | The experience of compressed time and space is the most important change in society | Space-Time compression  
Time can be reorganized in such a way as to reduce the constraints of space and vice versa |
| David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt, & Jonathan Perraton (1999) | The widening, deepening, and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life | Political, economic, and social        | The spatio-temporal and organizational attributes of global interconnectedness in discrete historical periods Four impacts of globalization (a) decisional (b) institutional (c) distributive (d) structural | Spatio-temporal dimensions of globalization  
The extensity of global networks  
The intensity of global interconnectedness  
The velocity of global flows  
The impact propensity of global interconnectedness |
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<td>Roland Robertson (1990, 1992, 1997)</td>
<td>The compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole Universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism</td>
<td>Cultural globalization</td>
<td>How people experience globalization</td>
<td>Relativization: each unit in the emerging world takes shape relative to others that surround it; challenges the stability of perspectives</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>The establishment of cultural, social, and phenomenological linkages between the self, the national society, the international system of societies, and humanity</td>
<td>Emulation: a single arena in which all actors pursue their goals in deliberate comparison with one another</td>
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<td>Globalization: the universal ideas and processes in globalization are interpreted and absorbed differently according to the vantage point and history of particular groups</td>
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<td>James Rosenau (2003)</td>
<td>The tensions between opposites that presently underlie the course of events and the development or decline of institutions</td>
<td>Political globalization</td>
<td>To understand the dynamics found within globalizing and local forces; explores how individuals orient themselves globally and locally and the relationship between these orientations and global issues such as human rights, global economy, and global governance</td>
<td>Interpenetrations: nexus of universalism becoming concrete and the particular becoming diffused</td>
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<td>Saskia Sassen (2001, 2002)</td>
<td>Economic globalization entails the importance of social connectivity and central functions,</td>
<td>Economic and social globalization</td>
<td>Restructuring of global cities leads to growing economic and social polarization</td>
<td>Distant Proximities: Fragmegration: pervasive interaction between fragmenting and integrating dynamics unfolding at every level of the community Local worlds: insular, resistant, exclusionary, and affirmative Global worlds: affirmative, resistant, specialized, and territorial</td>
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<td>cross-border mergers and alliances, and denationalized elites and agendas</td>
<td>The growth of the producer services sector is the transforming feature of global cities Place is central to the ways in which economic globalization is constituted The role of gender in shaping migration, transnational production, and a new configuration of inequality</td>
<td>World System Core, semiperipheral, and peripheral positions in the world economy are relatively stable because of military strength, ideological commitment to the system as a whole, and division of the majority into a</td>
<td>World System Core Semiperiphery Periphery</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Immanuel Wallerstein</td>
<td>Capitalist world systems spread across the globe World system: a unit with a single division of labor and multiple cultural systems</td>
<td>Economic globalization</td>
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nation-state is being reinforced or even enhanced (Hirst & Thompson, 1997). In sociology and political economy, there are serious disputes regarding the social consequences of the political, economic, and environmental changes wrought through globalization processes and the development of new information technologies (Schaeffer, 1997). Geographers emphasize the spatio-temporal dimensions of social life, some suggesting that time and space are now compressed and spatial barriers have collapsed, whereas others posit that there is even greater sensitivity to the variations of space (Harvey, 1989). New types of strategic territories articulate the cross-border flows central to globalization (Sassen, 2002). For some economists, globalization is the triumph and glory of capitalism and a free market over other forms of economic structuring, whereas for others the global transformation of labor markets and immigration patterns portends dire consequences for very large segments of the world’s population (Carnoy, Castells,
The principal challenge of globalization is related to issues of inequality, including the “disparities in affluence and also gross asymmetries in political, social, and economic opportunities and power” (Sen, 2002, p. 4).

Communication scholars’ theoretical predilections toward communication determine, in part, their views of the communication/organization/globalization relationship. For some, communication is a tool, a resource, and a rational selection mode that facilitates or inhibits organizational survival within the constraints and opportunities offered through globalization. Globalizing forces are a fact to which individuals and organizations must adjust. There is a recognition that communicative action influences and is influenced by the forces of globalization, but the institutional and environmental energies embedded within today’s technologies, social exchanges, and competitive markets create a powerful structural fulcrum that strongly sways collective and individual action. These scholars are interested primarily in theories related to the globalization of organizations and, hence, utilize theories that help explain the creation, maintenance, and dissolution of specific types of organizational structures and networks (e.g., Cushman & King, 1993; Jang & Barnett, 1994; Monge & Fulk, 1999).

For others, communication is an interpretive symbolic process that plays a constitutive role in shaping individual identity and organizational reality. Globalization is intersubjectively constructed and meaningfully evolves as individuals, groups, and organizations struggle to survive and compete across the world stage. Globalization transforms our work and our social lives (Cheney, Lair, & Gill, 2001; Conrad & Poole, 1997; Holmer Nadesan, 2001). The language of the workplace represents processes of power and control (Banks & Banks, 1991). The shift to network structuring is theorized to result in the weakening of social bonds, the loss of shared experiences, and the loss of trust and commitment (Sennett, 1998). Globalization contributes to new formations of identities (ethnic, sexual, professional, political, religious) that challenge traditional definitions of who we are. Scholars in this tradition tend to focus primarily on the organization of globalization and are concerned with issues such as how marginalized groups manage/ resist the tensions associated with the dynamic processes identified above (e.g., Deetz, 1992; Papa, Auwal, & Singhall, 1995; Trethewey, 1999). Feminist scholars view the institutions and processes of globalization as gendered, primarily created by and advantaging white Western male elites (Gottfried, 2000). Globalization, it is argued, is often detrimental to women on a global scale, although the adverse effects are often ignored. Townsley (2002), for example, empirically explores the ways in which the privileging of “flexibility” as a mode of production and service in neo-liberal economics
and neo-Fordist regimes stymies women’s full-fledged workplace participation and advancement.

In general, organizations are theorized variously to be at the root of the changes in contemporary experience, the cause of most of the problems associated with globalization, and the solution to the many challenges that we face. Organizations are largely responsible for the geographic dispersal and mobility that characterize globalization, while the construction of hypermodern office buildings, smart buildings, and global business centers, all created by and for large-scale organizations, affects how we all live and conduct our daily lives (Ciccolella & Mignaqui, 2002). The joint collaborations of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), corporate entities, and e-movements have changed the nature of collective action. Moreover, the technological and structural innovations that have such widespread implications for our everyday experiences, our sense of self, our relationship to our communities, and so on are often the unintended consequences of the search to decrease transaction costs of global organizations.

In general, organizations recursively structure, respond to, and restructure the global system. Issues as diverse as individuals’ rights to privacy, terrorism, the transmission of SARS, affordability of medications for AIDS victims, human rights, individual safety, the development and sale of chemical weapons, copyright infringement arising from downloading music from the Internet, air pollution, and global warming have several things in common, all of which implicate organizational communication practices: (a) They cannot be addressed successfully by individuals acting alone; (b) they will not be solved unilaterally, bilaterally, or even regionally; (c) they require cooperation from organizations across several sectors of society; and (d) information about these problem is no longer within the purview of any one individual, group, or organization. Digitized technology, the World Wide Web, and collaborative communication systems mean that there is no longer a monopoly of information held by any one elite group. Thus, there is an inevitable involvement of many different types of actors who had heretofore been denied access to or entry into the problem-solving arena.

Thus, it is not surprising that much organizational communication scholarship tends to reflect what social scientists call the transformationalist thesis of globalization (Held et al., 1999). Globalization is seen as a central driving force behind the rapid political, social, economic, and communicative changes taking place in contemporary society. Organizational activities are the primary means by which individuals, small clusters of people, and large groups influence the trajectory of globalization. Organizations may adhere to dominant cultural patterns, but simultaneously they adapt patterns
and structures to accommodate differences in, and pressures of, the global system. Significantly, unlike hyperglobalists (those who see globalization ushering in a new economic era that is creating new patterns of beneficiaries) and skeptics (globalization is not considered as anything new, and the same inequalities will remain and perhaps increase), transformationalists do not hypothesize about the long-term positive or negative effects of globalization; within this perspective, either scenario is possible (Held et al., 1999).

The emergence of globalization as an important theoretical perspective in contemporary organizational communication research is evidenced in many ways. Peter Monge (the same scholar who asked me the question at the 1992 ASU conference) urged communication scholars in his 1998 ICA Presidential address, “Communication Structures and Processes in Globalization,” to “reflect on our discipline from the perspective of globalization” (p. 143). He, too, set an agenda for organizational communication:

Organizational communication needs to examine global organizations, their roots in local societies, their homogenizing influences, and their impacts on individuals, relationships and families. It needs to expand its horizons beyond large profit making corporations and examine not-for-profit organizations, non-governmental organizations, international labor unions, worker collectives, and even the worldwide influence of religious organizations. It needs to address practical issues of child labor exploitations, equal pay for equal work, language problems in the workplace, gender inequalities, full and fair disclosure of corporate information and many others. The global imperative requires no less than that we apply our communication theories to address practical human issues. (1998, p. 150)

In the last 5 years, the field of organizational communication certainly has taken up this call. The New Handbook of Organizational Communication included a chapter on “Globalizing Organizational Communication” (Stohl, 2001). Organizational communication journals recently have devoted special issues and forums to organizational ethics and corporate responsibility in the global system (Conrad, 2003; May & Zorn, 2003). Organizational communication dissertations on globalization have been completed at many universities (e.g., Galarneau, 2003; Gibbs, 2001; Shumate, 2002; Townsley, 2002). The number of graduate and undergraduate courses on globalization is proliferating (see Arquette, 2003). Most organizational textbooks now include references to globalization and organizational communication (e.g., Conrad & Poole, 2001, Eisenberg & Goodall, 2001). At the time of this writing, the most recent textbook to be published in the area is titled Organizational Communication in an Age of Globalization (Cheney, Christiansen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2003).
Theorizing Globalization

Few terms have been stretched as far or proved to be as infinitely extendable as the word “globalization.” Few terms have come into widespread use at such “global speed” . . . taken over from English by every other language on earth. And few terms have been so widely disseminated in a context of widespread social atopia, without any prior inventory of its possible significance or time for scrutiny by citizens, thus leaving an aura of doubt concerning the conditions and meaning of its source. (Mattelart, 2002, p. 591)

But what exactly do we mean by globalization, and how do we theorize about it? It is somewhat ironic that globalization has become such a widely popular term and is used so frequently that it has lost a great deal of its meaning and focus. Generally, unlike early conceptualizations of convergence and divergence, today’s theories of globalization try to capture the oppositional and dialectic forces that simultaneously obliterate, maintain, and maximize homogeneity/heterogeneity within the global system. For example, Castells (1996) identifies the central issue of the “informational age” as “the bipolar opposition between the Net and the self” (p. 3). Sassen (2001) suggests that “the geography of globalization contains dynamics of both dispersal and centralization” (p. 3). Appadurai (1997) writes, “The central problem of today’s global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization” (p. 230). Mittleman’s (2000) book *The Globalization Syndrome* is subtitled *Transformation and Resistance*.

The metaphors associated with globalization have also evolved from simple, linear, complementary metaphors to richer and more complex and competing images. For example, like Ritzer’s (1993) work described above, Barber (1992) utilized McDonald’s as a global metaphor but did so in a way that more clearly articulates the dialectical tensions and oppositional forces rooted in globalization. Juxtaposing what he describes as the “two axial principles of our age—tribalism and globalism” Barber (1992, p. 53) explains his use of the metaphors Jihad versus McWorld:

The tendencies of what I am here calling the forces of Jihad and the forces of McWorld operate with equal strength in opposite directions, the one driven by parochial hatreds, the other by universalizing markets, the one recreating ancient subnational and ethnic borders from within, the other making national borders porous from without. The one thing they have in common; neither offers much hope to citizens looking for practical ways to govern themselves democratically. (p. 54)
Mirroring earlier theories of convergence, Barber identifies four global imperatives—market, resource, information technology, and ecological—that result in McWorld, which demonstrates increasingly similar organizational structuring and activities, interdependence, and homogeneity of values. Simultaneously, however, the many divergent sects and factions search for ways to maintain their image of self and cultural ways of life in light of the imperatives of convergence. As a result, Jihads develop. Narrowly conceived, identity driven and separatist, and fragmented, these value-driven Jihads work against any type of interconnectedness, interdependence, and mutuality. “The planet is falling precipitously apart AND coming reluctantly together at the same time,” Barber (1992, p. 53) notes. Most significantly, his theory suggests that “neither McWorld nor Jihad is remotely democratic in impulse. Neither needs democracy, neither promotes democracy” (p. 56).

The very same tensions of globalization are found in the metaphors of Thomas Friedman’s (2000) national best-seller on globalization, The Lexus and the Olive Tree. The Lexus automobile represents humankind’s drive for sustenance, improvement, prosperity, modernization, and financial security, often through the utilization of computer technologies. The olive tree represents our need for roots (linguistic, geographic, and historical) and community. The olive tree anchors us; it gives us identity and self esteem. Both of these strivings exist coterminaly:

This is why under the globalization system you will find both clashes of civilization and the homogenization of civilizations, both environmental disasters and amazing environmental rescues, both the triumph of liberal, free market capitalism and a backlash against it, both the durability of nation states and the rise of enormously powerful nonstate actors. (2000, p. xxxi)

These tensions, however, lead Friedman to a very different set of conclusions about globalization. Unlike Barber, he argues that the rapid and fundamental changes in how we communicate about, invest in, and learn about the world lead to greater democracy and individual freedom.

The oppositional forces that permeate these metaphors are also commonly seen in the definitions of globalization. Some of the more well-known and often-cited definitions include globalization as “the twofold processes of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism” (Robertson, 1990, p. 23), “bringing people closer together and places further apart” (Short, 2001, p. 15), and “The intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice
versa” (Giddens, 1990, p. 86). Rosenau (2003), in his recent book *Distant Proximities: Dynamics Beyond Globalization* (2003), captures the contradictory nature of globalization well. Distant proximities, he writes:

encompass the tensions between core and periphery, between national and transnational systems, between communitarianism and cosmopolitanism, between cultures and subcultures, between states and markets, between urban and rural, between coherence and incoherence, between integration and disintegration, between universalism and particularism, between pace and space, between the global and the local—to note only the more conspicuous links between opposites that presently underlie the course of events and the development or decline of institutions. (p. 5)

Rosenau coined the term “fragmegration” to convey “the pervasive interaction between fragmenting and integrating dynamics unfolding at every level of community” (p. 11). Consistent with other theories of globalization, the shaping, sustaining, and ameliorating of oppositions are grounded in the everyday practices rooted in interpersonal, group, organizational, interorganizational, and mass communication.

### Communicating and Globalizing

[T]he fundamental form of industrialized culture and society dominant for the past four centuries is now in a stage of transition. What we are witnessing, in fact, may be one of the turning points in human history: where one fundamental form of culture and society—that of industrialized nations and their modes of communication and information—is declining, and a different form is emerging. (Mowlana, 1996, p. 39)

So, 20 years after my first research trip to New Zealand, there is a multitude of globalization theories and perspectives to choose from. Rather than discussing each one separately, I will explicate common themes and unpack the communication implications of this body of work writ large. The choice of which particular theory to use must be rooted in the context of a particular research question and agenda. My search for a unitary, comprehensive theory was naive. Globalization is far too complex and far-ranging to be situated easily within one perspective. However, it is clear to me that research in organizational communication needs to be grounded in the dynamic theories and constructs of globalization. Thus, it is to this overarching global perspective that I will address the rest of this essay.

Across theories, there is a fundamental agreement that globalization represents (a) deep-rooted transformations in the texture and experience of
everyday life, (b) changes in the relationship between time and space, and (c) modifications in the relationships between the self and others. Boundaries and physical distances are seen to matter less in determining the shapes of societies, organizations, and individuals than they did in the past (Holm, 2003). Globalization is not a state of affairs; it embodies dynamic communicative, economic, cultural, and political practices and produces new discourses of identity. “It is not just an out-there phenomenon. It is an in-here phenomenon” (Giddens, 1996, p. 367).

Six dynamic and interdependent processes of globalization 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 realignments and restructuring of social interaction across time and space
6. Increases in global consciousness through processes of reflexivity

Communication is central to all six dynamic processes, providing many pathways for communication scholars to contribute to the understanding of organizing and globalization. German sociologist Ulrich Beck (2000) points out that globalization is produced and maintained in communicative action:

The globalization process lies in the empirically ascertainable scale, density and stability of regional-global relationship networks and their self-definition through the mass media, as well as of social spaces and of image-flows... a world horizon characterized by multiplicity and non-integration which opens out when it is produced and preserved in communication and action. (p. 12)

The Dramatic Increase in Economic Interdependence Worldwide

This first dynamic generates and is generated by new forms of organizational arrangements and communication processes. Interdependence necessitates flexible forms of cooperation within and between traditional and emerging organizational structures at the local, state, regional, and global levels. New types of cooperative agreements are being forged across domains (see, for example, Taylor & Doerfel, 2002), demanding reconsideration of
issues related to corporate responsibility and organizational communication practices with both internal and external stakeholders. For example, my work with colleagues analyzes foreign automobile manufacturers’ efforts to link up with civic organizations to help local communities facilitate new forms of social capital (Perrucci & Stohl, 1998) and also addresses the communicative implications of cooperation between a private international temporary work agency and a state-supported unemployment bureaucracies (Townsley & Stohl, 2003).

The turbulence, volatility, and uncertainty associated with economic globalization require organizational responsiveness, adaptation, and efficiency in communication systems that are not found in traditional hierarchical organizations **[quoted in Ch. 11] (Monge, 1995). These changes have many wide-ranging implications for the types of workplace training designed to improve the effectiveness of workers and managers (Reding, 2003). Most scholars agree that global forms will resemble temporary systems and ad hoc collaborations, and they will transcend spatial and/or jurisdictional boundaries (Stohl & Walker, 2002; Weick & Orden, 1990). Virtual organizing becomes commonplace (DeSanctis & Fulk, 1999; Poole, 1999), and face-to-face interactions are not necessarily the primary forum for relationship building, maintenance, or dissolution. Global network organizations, according to Monge and Fulk (1999), (a) are built on flexible emergent communication networks, rather than traditional hierarchies; (b) develop highly flexible linkages that connect them to a changing, dynamic network of other organizations, transcending their local country-bound networks; and (c) contain a highly sophisticated information technology structure that supports flexible emergent systems of communication. In their view, the global organization reflects communication relationships that transcend organizational levels and boundaries, and “flexibility implies that these relationships wax and wane” (p. 71). Changing patterns of communication as well as new rhetorics of organizing are central to the ways in which contemporary organizations of all types adapt to what some call post-Fordist conditions (Gottfried, 2000; Mattelart, 2002), the informational society (Castells, 1996), or the postmodern condition (Harvey, 1989).

The Intensification and Deepening of Material, Political, and Cultural Exchanges

The erosion of economic, political, social, organizational, territorial, and cultural boundaries suggests the radical erosion of what people talk about, how they talk about it, how frequently they communicate, which connections are mobilized, where people live and to where they emigrate, the ways in which they utilize both old and new media, and how they organize.
For some theorists, this increasing intensity causes and is caused by an increase in the functions that central locations play in the growing global span of organizations. Communication technologies may mean the end of distance, but location still matters. The very diffuseness of the global system demands concentrated financial infrastructures, management systems, and labor forces. Sassen (2000), for example, describes a “new frontier zone,” a political-economic space that “produce[s] new institutional forms and alter[s] some of the old ones” (p. 164). New types of global cities become the linking pins, “global circuits” for particular national economies that heretofore were marginalized. Moreover, global cities and the “new form of territorial centralization” become the site not only of a vast telecommunications infrastructure, highly specialized services, and industrialized industries but also the site of increased density, immigration, diverse work cultures, and multicultural exchange. For Sassen and others, these global conditions potentially enable disempowered actors to gain visibility and hence provide new opportunities for marginal groups and the development of a global civil society (Kaldor, 2003; Keane, 2003).

The intensification of linkages across social domains also is evidenced in the exponential growth in international governmental and nongovernmental organizations (Lechner & Boli, 2000), as well as the number of labor unions, small businesses, and social movement organizations that situate themselves globally rather than locally (Aram, 1999). The organizational dimension of global change and the building of a global civic culture are extraordinary. There are now more than 30,000 NGOs and IGOs just working on ecology and development (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). The numbers of partnerships, collaborations, and knowledge exchanges that take place on a daily basis are incalculable when we consider the coalitions that are developing among NGOs, IGOs, corporations, and governmental groups to address issues such as human rights (inside and outside the workplace), disease, public safety, and sustainable development (Cooperrider & Dutton, 1999; Kaldor, 2003; Keane, 2003). Even in interpersonal relations, the role of global organizing is taking on an increasingly powerful role. All one needs to do is look at Yahoo! groups to find global organizations designed to help people find mates, discuss the latest books they have read, generate grassroots movements, play games, engage in numerous other activities.

The Global and Rapid Diffusion of Ideas and Knowledge Enabled Through New Information Technologies

The third dynamic gives rise to the quintessential organizing structure characteristic of the age of globalization—the network. Corporate networks,
advocacy networks, terrorist networks, criminal networks, sport networks, tourist networks, interest-based networks, and so forth are integral parts of the global system. Monge and Contractor (2003) note:

These organizational and social forms, which are neither classical markets nor traditional hierarchies (Powell, 1990) nor both (Piore & Sabel, 1984) are built around material and symbolic flows that link people and objects both locally and globally without regard for traditional national, institutional, or organizational boundaries. . . . Built on the basis of flexible, dynamic, ephemeral relations, these network flows constitute the bulk of organizational activity (Monge & Fulk, 1999). Thus, global organizations are processes, not places. (p. 4)

Castells (1996) sees the technological and managerial transformation of production relationships and work processes in today’s society to be at the core of the new social structure. The fundamental changes in how we organize work, and the ways in which we distribute, consume, and accumulate material goods, are the primary means by which the informational paradigm and the processes of globalization affect society at large.

The rapid diffusion of information on a global scale has many implications for organizational communication. Traditional models of knowledge creation, transmission, utilization, management, learning, and sensemaking are no longer sufficient (Contractor & Monge, 2002; Hollingshead & Contractor, 2002). Weick and Order (1990), for example, argues that global social change organizations must develop new forms of organizing that utilize new technologies and engage in new kinds of sensemaking. Because knowledge is subjectively consumed and created, incomplete, and culturally tacit, knowledge management in global organizations requires contextual adaptation and reconfiguration.

Changes in information technology create many possibilities that can have large consequences for the identities, capacities, development, and strategies of organizations, groups, and the technologies themselves. Whereas medium-sized to mass audiences were until quite recently accessible exclusively to those who controlled the centralized media apparatus, new technologies are now closing this “media gap.” With the rise of micromedia (e.g., e-mail, chat rooms, and cell phones) and “middle” media (e.g., Web sites, Web zines, and Internet-based communication campaigns), organizations now have the potential to reach and involve their members in ways that until quite recently were not feasible (see, for example, Bennett, 2003). Large-scale audiences as well as highly targeted, specialized audiences thus have been brought into range for meaningful group participation by a wide range of public organizations, both new and old. Traditional models of
power, privacy, and surveillance are also challenged by the capacities embedded in the new information technologies.

The Compression of Time and Space

The fourth process changes the physical and psychological typologies and infrastructures of communication networks in both large and small-scale organizations. Time-space compression involves the shortening of time and a shrinking of space (Waters, 1995). The explosive growth of connectivity and the subsequent compression of time and space alter the transmission of information among networks, shrinking costs, maximizing speed, broadening reach, and eradicating distance. It involves radical changes in the ways we experience and interpret events (Norris, 2001, p. 20). It also enables increased intensity and robustness of relationships among family, colleagues, and people who have never met but have a similar goal or economic, political, or personal interest.

Space and distance disappear when people who are in different locations but are linked to a common communication technology (e.g., television, the Internet) simultaneously experience the same event, such as the assassination of John Kennedy, the bombing of the World Trade Center, or the World Trade Organization riots in Seattle (e.g., Monge 1998; Waters, 1995). Globalization theory distinguishes the first event from the other two insofar as in the latter events, new communication technologies (e.g., cell phones, the Internet, text messaging) enabled people across the world to simultaneously and interactively experience and organize the events together, facilitating the growth of a global consciousness through processes of reflexivity. Thus, globalization changes notions of present and absence: “it has made the identification and communication of boundaries—and associated notions of ‘here’ and ‘there,’ ‘far’ and ‘near,’ ‘outside’ and ‘inside,’ ‘home’ and ‘away,’ ‘them’ and ‘us,’—more problematic than ever” (Scholte, 2000, pp. 48–49).

But organizational relationships and identifications are not the only things that change. David Harvey, a geographer who is a key figure in linking globalization and postmodernism, writes that a major consequence of time-space compression has been to accentuate volatility and ephemerality of fashions, products, production techniques, labor processes, ideas and ideologies, values and established practices... Deeper questions of meaning and interpretation also arise. The greater the ephemerality, the more pressing the need to discover or manufacture some kind of eternal truth... (1989, p. 83)
The Disembedding of Events and Institutions, Which Permits New Realignments and Restructuring of Social Interaction Across Time and Space

The disembedding of human interaction from local to distributed contexts is strongly associated with the compression of time and space and is facilitated by and reacted to by all sorts of collective entities. As Giddens (1990) states, “In conditions of modernity, larger and larger numbers of people live in circumstances in which disembedded institutions, linking local practices with globalized social relations, organize major aspects of day-to-day life” (p. 26). Melucci (1996), for example, demonstrates how the lifting out of human interaction from the constraints of time and space, from local to global contexts, has radically changed social movements. Whereas most social movement organizations typically involved solidarity rooted in face-to-face interactions and “the ability of members to recognize others, and to be recognized as belonging to the same social unit,” today the ability to lift interaction out of the here and now enables collective action to arise as an “aggregation of atomized behaviors” (p. 23) that are completely externally oriented, that is, focused outside the boundaries of the group.

Castells (1996) describes the new ways in which the intensification of linkages and disembedding of events across time and space change the way we organize and interact in terms of “space of flows” and “timeless time.” Space and time are the “fundamental material dimensions of human life,” and the informational network society is organized around “command and control centers able to coordinate, innovate, and manage the activities and resources of networks of organizations in shorter and shorter time periods. Space is the material support of time-sharing social practices” (p. 441). In contrast to the space of place, where form, function, and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of a physical unit, the space of flows is the material organization of time-sharing social practices that work through flows. Timeless time occurs because the sequential order of phenomena performed collapses through instantaneous, discontinuous, or contiguous action. In other words, stable forms of place and identity are replaced with flexible flows drawn across borders.

Significantly, the subsequent disembedding of social institutions and organizations as they have been lifted out of their local contexts and restructured is a critical component of many of the most frightening organizations today (terrorist groups, international drug cartels, transnational crimes syndicates, etc.) (Arquilla, Ronfeldt, & Zanini, 1999; Williams, 2001) as well as multinational organizations. Today’s terrorist networks, for example, are often seen as “small worlds” with few degrees of separation and composed of
strong ties across personal, cultural, and ideological domains, with powerful hubs dispersed throughout the globe (see Arquilla et al., 1999; Stohl & Stohl, 2002).

Increases in Global Consciousness
Through Processes of Reflexivity

The reflexive changes in identities of peoples and groups moving from local centering to universal concerns implicates changes in discourses of identity and the constant reexamination of social practices in light of new information and new relationships (Giddens, 1990). People self-consciously orient themselves to the world as a whole; psychological barriers to intergroup identifications and one’s place in the world are reconsidered, potentially broken down, and reconfigured. Even when individuals and groups consider themselves separate from, or different from, the rest of the world, globalization theories suggest they establish their position in relation to the global system, what Robertson (1990) calls “relativization.”

This process reinforces alterations in cooperative and collaborative strategies and organizational structures for addressing social, economic, and political issues that individuals now perceive as transcending national borders or local entities. Global social capital is created, maintained, and dissolved in new types of organizational affiliations; public spaces and loosely coupled networks are created to express multiple identities; and new forms of organization and models of leadership, communicative channels, and emerging technologies are constitutive parts of this network of relationship (Bennett, 2003; Melucci, 2000).

Paradoxically, the increasing levels of global consciousness derived through processes of reflexivity and communication are also associated with increasingly local politics, a heightened sense of the importance of community, social movement organizing designed to counter the new world order, and individuals’ desperate struggles for identity. Most theories of globalization recognize that the search for identity has become a fundamental source of social meaning in these times of universal technological and economic decentering and destructuring. At one level, organizational identifications are superseding national, cultural, and ethnic identifications; people are “citizens of the world” and part of an evolving global civic culture. On the other hand, many people organize along communal identities that communicate inwardly, sharply distinguishing between in- and out-groups, and resist the economic, social, cultural, and political integration that is upon us. In the second volume of his globalization trilogy,
The Power of Identity, Castells (1997) explores these mutually opposing forces:

For those social actors excluded from or resisting the individualization of identity attached to life in the global networks of power and wealth, cultural communes of religious, national, or territorial foundation seem to provide the main alternative for the construction of meaning in our society. (p. 11)

In summary, the organizational communication implications for each of these dynamics are merely illustrative. My purpose here was to demonstrate that globalization theories help scholars identify what types of communication/organizational changes are happening within contemporary society, the tensions and paradoxes embedded within these communication practices, and the implications for our sense of self, our community, our nation, and our world. **[quoted in Ch. 11]** Globalization theories do not provide all the answers to all the questions I had about my New Zealand organizational experiences, but they provide a rich and complex framework for approaching the organization and the critical issues I was trying to address. They enable me to better understand my place in the world, my responsibilities, and my possibilities. No, I was not to blame for those events so very far away; they were indicative of changes taking place all over the world. But neither were my own behavior, reactions, interpretations, and sense of self at that time or subsequently independent of the phenomena.

The six dynamic processes of globalization have resulted in a remarkable transformation of the circumstances in which we live our lives. Personal, social, professional, and political organizing will play a central role in how we address the challenges and opportunities inherent in this social revolution. The world is in flux, as must be the questions we ask, the ways we go about finding the answers, and the theories we use as a guide. Organizational communication scholars can be at the forefront of these changes, utilizing these theories as well as producing new ones. We must continue to creatively connect globalization with the other vital theoretical traditions contained in this volume. As Hannerz (1996) states, “A theorist’s work is never done . . . ; there is always more thinking, rethinking, and unthinking waiting around the bends” (p. 22).

Notes

1. See, for example, the introductions to special issues including those by Calas (1994), Earley and Singh (1995), and Tichy (1990).
2. Castells (1996) makes an important distinction between the term “information society,” which “emphasizes the role of information in society” and has been part of all societies, and the “informational society in which information generation, processing, and transmission become the fundamental sources of productivity and power because of the new technological conditions emerging in this historical period” (p. 21).

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